# Everything has its Jaguar. A narratological approach to conceptualising Caribbean Saladoid animal imagery

Paulsen, E.R.

# Chapter 4. The oral narratives of Amazonia. What 706 stories tell us

This chapter, combined with Chapters 5-7, forms the core of the present research. It introduces 706 narratives as a single and integral data set in order to establish an overall outline.

Chapter 4 contains an analysis of cultural phenomena established from the perspective of an individual who does not participate in the culture being studied (i.e., etic field research). Here the narratives are analysed by means of the (Western) narratological and structuralistic methods. This approach is chosen in order to: (a) identify any patterns or structures which enable a comparison as well as an analysis of the narratives, and (b) contribute to the clustering of the narratives based on either similarity in themes or shared motifs. For further details on the research methodology, see Chapter 3.

The basis of this chapter also serves as a background in order to investigate and interpret the clustered narratives central to this research. This procedure facilitates a more statistic approach which demonstrates that, for instance, certain motifs are related to specific actors.

The research question addressed here not only concerns which attributes and roles are ascribed to specific animals within the South American oral tradition but also with what or whom they are associated in the narratives, and in which context. Moreover, light is shed on the most common animal personages related to their ascribed roles as well as on the various

contexts (spatial and temporal) in which they act. By studying the various narrative functions the reasons for telling and listening to these narratives are also addressed.

Chapter 4 starts out with a number of general remarks on the 706 stories. In 4.1 (see below) their narrative functions and the linguistic affiliation are dealt with. This affiliation is also applied in order to illustrate their geographical distribution.

Following the set methodology, the narratives are then analysed according to the two narratological layers: fabula and story. The former layer comprises a series of logically and chronologically events caused or experienced by actors. These elements (actors, events, chronotope) are studied in 4.2, including their interrelatedness. The story-layer focuses more on how narratives are presented to an audience. This layer's elements, i.e., characterization and duration are addressed.

## 4.1 General remarks

Although the set methodology is based in the narratological layers, certain other qualifications are documented for each tale. Narrative functions (see 3.2) are documented in order to better understand why peoples tell stories. Next, linguistic affiliation is addressed. Although an exact geographical reference is usually absent, this affiliation does provide us with information not only on the storytelling peoples but also with an indication as to the regional context (see 1.3).

### 4.1.1 Narrative functions

The present research distinguishes five narrative functions which are all subdivided. Appendix C, Table C-2 provides us with the total number of narrative (sub-)functions as recorded for the 706 stories. Multiple narrative (sub-)functions can be encountered in each narrative. Table 4.1 delivers a visual presentation of the distribution of the various narrative functions, indicating the three dominant herein: (a) validating the world (40 percent; n=860), (b) encoding social behaviour (29 percent; n=633), and (c) informing (24 percent; n=512).

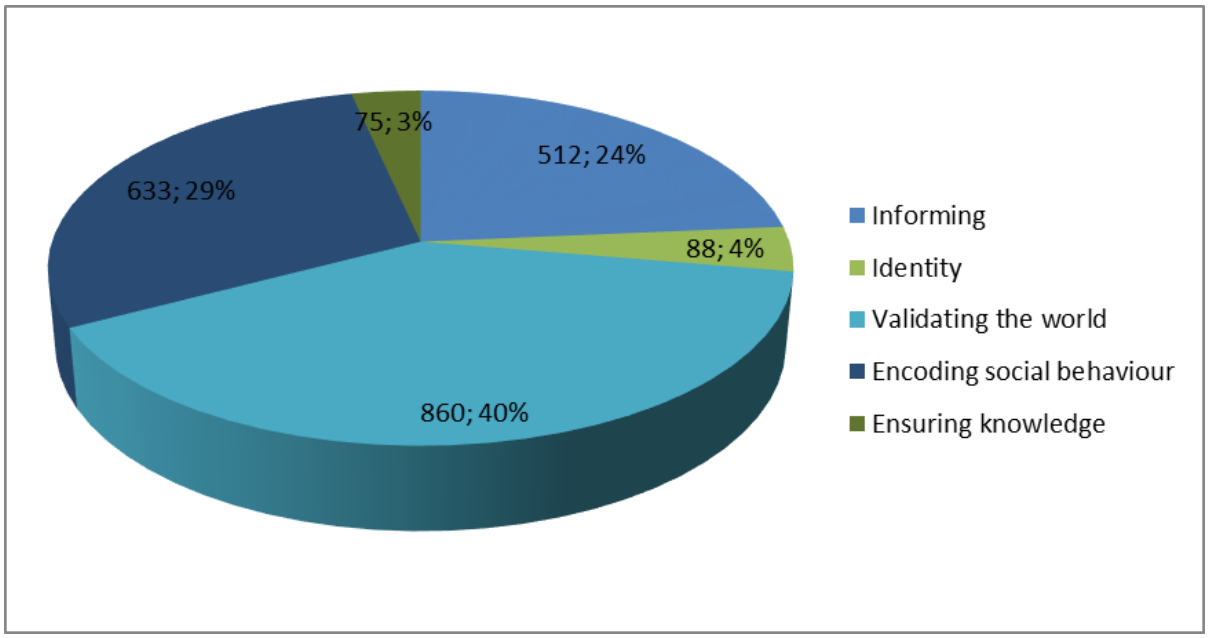
It is hereby shown that tales play an important part in understanding the world the Amerindians live in. As stated earlier (see 3.1.2), by creating new (story) worlds humans can not only influence and understand their world but also impose order to the otherwise disconnected events.

Encoding social behaviour prevails, too. By listening to narratives one becomes familiar with role orientation, shared norms and values. The underlying metaphors shape the skill of decision making. Needless to say, the act of storytelling, as well as the social context in which the act takes place, the act of "telling " itself, all, have a function pertaining to social cohesion.

Moreover, the total corpus of tales enables humans to combine elements as well as to understand how to (re)act in specific situations, both consciously and unconsciously (see also 3.1).

The narrative function informing endorses the importance of stories as a strategy to share and memorize information in the broadest sense. For instance, the sharing of individual and group experiences as well as more practical information on how to carry out certain activities e.g., hunting a certain animal, finding useful plants, building houses (see also 3.2).

**Table 4.1.** Distribution of narrative functions within the 706 stories (%).




### 4.1.2 Geographical and linguistic distribution

As discussed in Chapter 3, the linguistic affiliation is documented by means of language family and, when identified, the specific language. Geographical coordinates have been established for all these languages in order to plot the narratives (see also 3.3.1). Appendix C, Table C-3 lists the linguistic affiliation of all the recorded narratives (multiple language families have been recorded in certain cases e.g., Warao and Cariban versions). Table 4.2 presents an overview of the distribution of the various languages. For a visual presentation, see the map (Fig. 4.1, p. 109) of Central and South America indicating all documented languages for the narratives dealt with in this research.

**Table 4.2.** Linguistic affiliation of the narratives according to the language families (%).

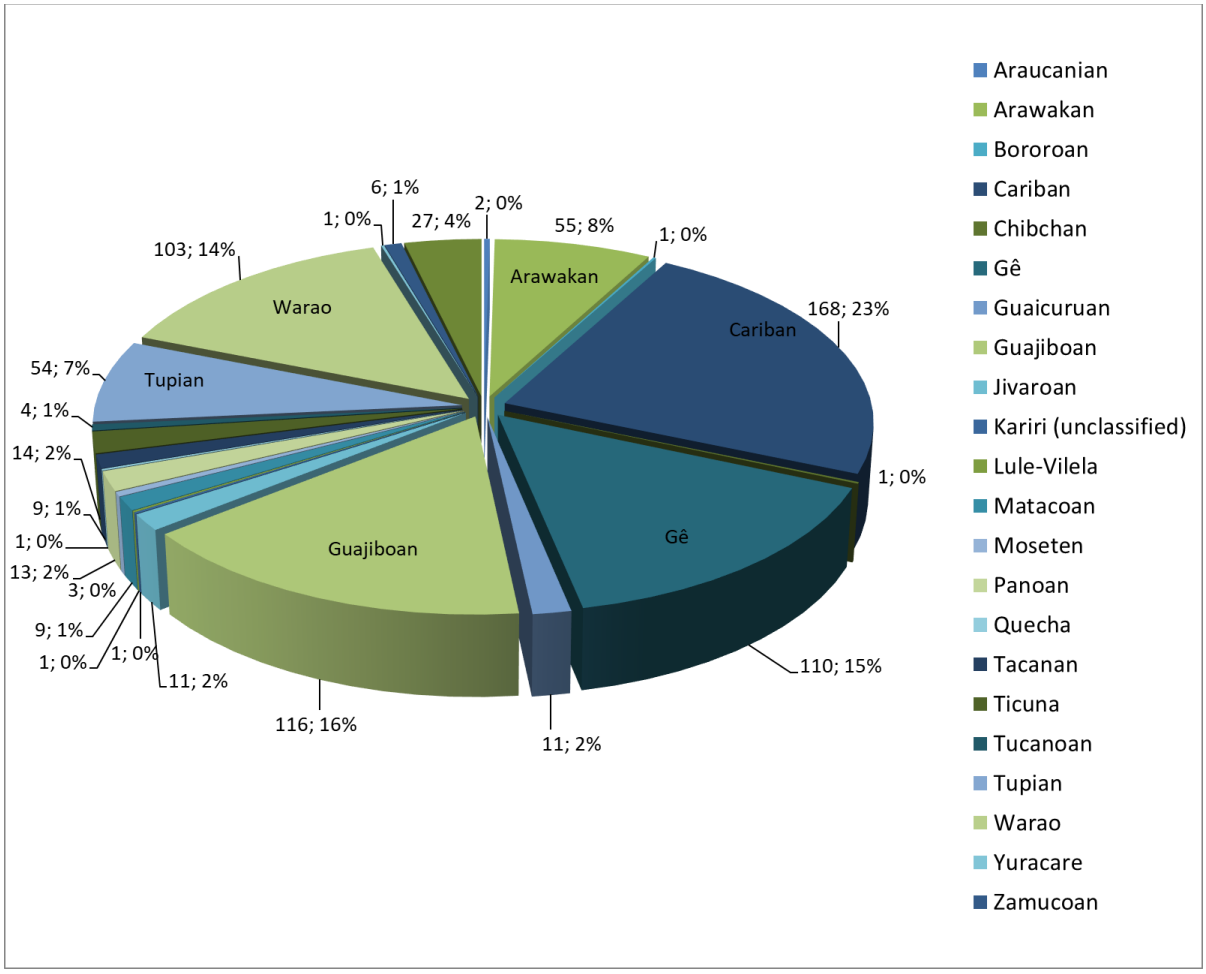



Fig. 4.1 illustrates the distribution of all the documented narratives referred to in the present research. As each language is only dotted once, a single dot can refer to a single as well as dozens of tales.[78] Close to 60 percent (n=419) of all narratives originate from the core area. Those not stemming from inside this core area, but from other parts of South America, are only included in order to indicate a wide distribution of motifs and themes (see 1.2.1). This approach explains the huge variety in language families, languages, the dominance of certain languages (i.e., core area) and the low number of other languages.

[78] Narratives with multiple records on language are encountered, for instance, when a Cariban as well as a Warao version of that same folktale exists. All in all, the 706 cases include 723 records on linguistic affiliations.

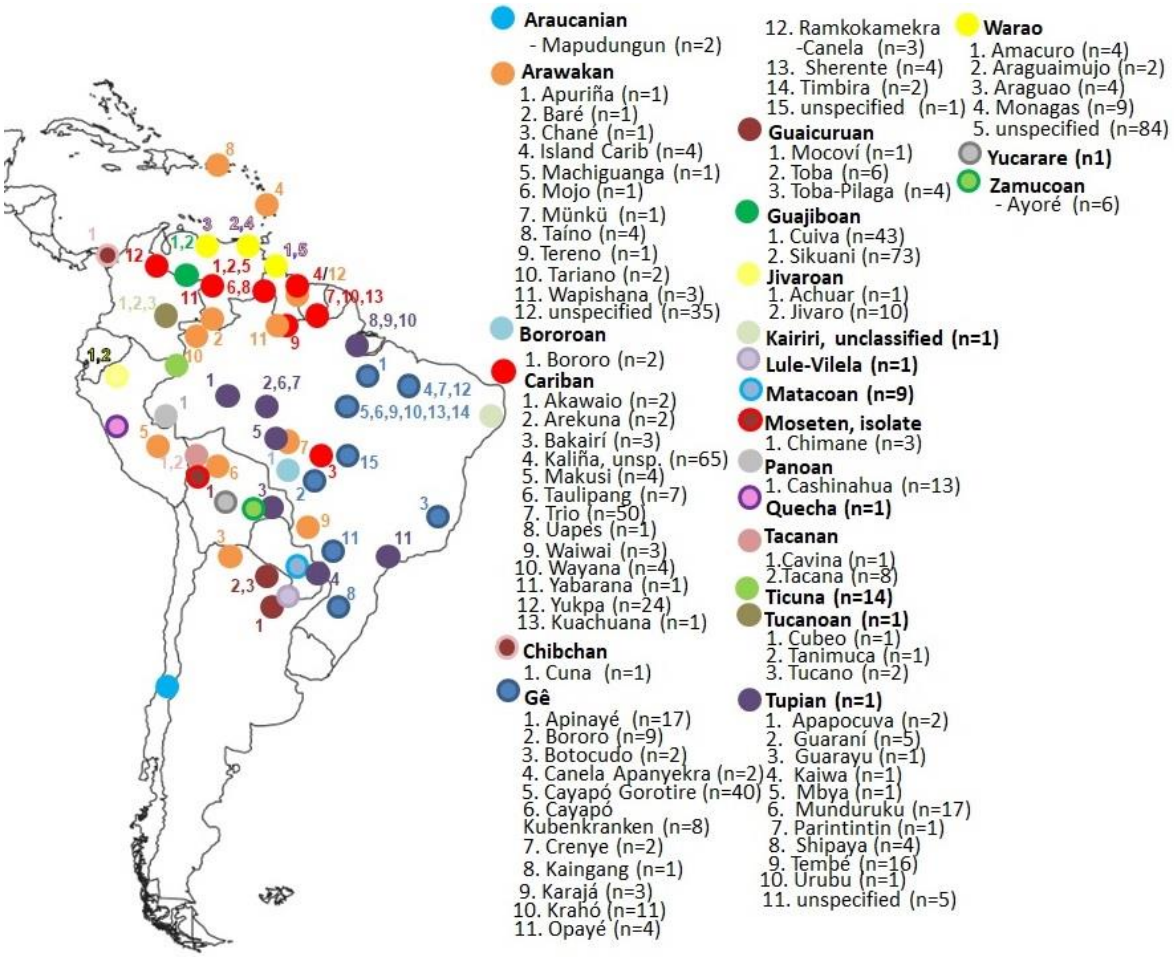



**Fig. 4.1.** Plot of all narratives (according to linguistic affiliation) in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

### 4.1.3 Final remarks

This section concerns the linguistic and geographical distribution of all narratives as well as the recorded narrative functions. Of the 706 cases, 60 percent stems from the core area. In total 81 languages, originating from 20 families, are dealt with. The Cariban, Guajiboan, Gê, and Warao are the most documented language families.

Here five types of narrative functions were examined. They serve to better comprehend the reason why the Amerindians told and tell these narratives. The most dominant functions are referred to as validating the world, followed by encoding social behaviour and informing. Ensuring knowledge and identity are the least common.

## 4.2 Fabula-layer: events, actors and settings

A fabula consists of a series of logically and chronologically related events either caused or experienced by actors. Here the fabula is researched according to the events/actions, actors and the chronotope of the narratives. These three elements are not only studied as separate phenomena but also interdependently. The reason for this is: their settings determine how a fabula is transformed into a "story".

Numerous motifs comprise direct descriptions of (major) events. Another way of viewing events is to look into main events, such as a quest (4.2.1). Next, the (animal) actors are described following the actantial model of Greimas (1987), to be succeeded by a description of the chronotope, i.e., the setting in space (forest, village, sky world, etc.) and time (day, night, sunset, etc.) in which the narrative unfolds and in which the actors and action are positioned. The final section (4.2.5) interrelates all the elements encountered in the fabula-layer.

### 4.2.1 Events: motifs and main events

#### *Motifs as descriptions of major events*

The narratives are categorised according to their motifs, while based on the methodology developed by Thompson and Wilbert (Thompson 1934; Wilbert 1974; Wilbert & Simoneau 1970, 1978, 1991, 1992; see 3.3.1). Certain motifs comprise a direct description of the (major) events within a particular narrative (e.g., A 541: a culture hero teaches arts and crafts). In total, almost 2,000 motifs were recorded for the 706 cases analysed for the present research. Here, in 4.2.1, the focus lies on motifs describing actions/events.

Table 4.3 includes the "Top 15" which lists motifs that either describe or announce an event/action. In general it becomes apparent that these events are universal themes directly related to the narrative functions: validating the world (motifs with Nos. 2 and 11 as mentioned in Table 4.3), encoding social behaviour (motifs with Nos. 3, 10 and 14), and establishing group and personal identity (motif No. 6). The fact that the event "transformations" is positioned at No. 1 here is to be expected because a fluid identity forms the basis of the Amerindian worldview. The motifs described as quests (No. 5), Tasks (No. 7), Journey to the other world (No. 9), Escapes and captures (No. 8) and Pursuits (No. 15) concern universal events on which most tales are built.

**Table 4.3.** "Top 15" of events/actions described according to motifs.

| | Description of motifs | Motif identification (letter+number) | Motif in X narratives |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Transformations (all variations) | D 90-800 | 586 |
| 2 | Origin of world and all in it (incl. animal traits and habits) | A-diverse | 504 |
| 3 | Deeds punished and punishments | Q 200-600 | 471 |
| 4 | Murder/death | B/C/D/F/G/ H/K/N/Q/S/T | 436 |
| 5 | "Quests" (for missing persons, objects etc.) | H 1200-1400 | 236 |
| 6 | Marriage (incl. offspring from marriage) | A/B/F/H/T A753.1.4/736.1.4; B600-655; F420.6.1/441.6.1;H301/310/382; T111-311 | 183 |
| 7 | Tasks (stealing, cutting trees, capturing animals etc.) | H 1010-1200 | 164 |
| 8 | Escapes and captures | K 500-800 | 159* |
| 9 | Journey to other world | F 10/11.3/30/62.1/ 80/92/101/112/117/127 | 106 |
| 10 | Thefts | A/D/F/H/K A1415.02;D657/2087; F357.+.; H1151.+.; K300/331/341.2.2/ 420/437/1643.+. | 99 |
| 11 | Universal calamities (flood/deluge/ fire) | A 1000-1010 | 77 |
| 12 | Man, woman hunting or lost has adventures | N 771.+. / 785 | 57 |
| 13 | Valuable secrets learned | N 440 | 56 |
| 14 | Punishment for breaking taboo | C 900-999 | 56 |
| 15 | Pursuits | C/E/F/R C986.1; E261.1; F402.1.10; R260 | 38 |

**Escapes 91x; Captures 58x*

### *Main events as predefined categories of actions*

Although numerous motifs provide an insight into the events or actions encountered, the narratives are also documented by means of predefined categories referred to as "main events" (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). The main event concerns: (a) the central point within the narrative, (b) the basis of all the other events, and (c) potentially the "quest" for a specific object. Sub-events could comprise pursuits, escapes, marriages, etc. Nonetheless, these main events do not exclude each other. For, in a single tale, more than

one (main) event can take place and perhaps even more records concerning a single main event, after being sub-divided. These events are documented in relation to the role of the animal actor (if any), and the setting in space and time. For instance, an abduction is related to the jaguar, which plays the role of an opponent within a forest setting. The present section provides an overview of these main events as well as a number of general remarks.

Based on the 706 stories, initially twelve events were differentiated to be subsequently categorised into the following main sections:

1. Quest for certain persons or objects
2. Rescue
   - of a missing family
   - after an abduction
   - warning leading to an escape
   - restoring order (e.g., repainting after the sky had fallen)
3. Truth finding
4. Contest
   - of endurance
   - of speed
   - of strength
5. Travelling, epic journey
6. Abduction of a person/animal
7. Deception.

The two most common main events, quests and rescue, are both also listed in the "Top 15" of most common motifs, see Tables 4.4-4.6. The motif quests holds the fifth (n=236) position, but quest as a main event is the second most dominant (n=81). The "Top 15" (see Table 4.3) does not include a category referred to as rescue. Nevertheless, the motif "escapes and captures", which occupies the eighth position (n=159) is intertwined with this main event. Both incidents are omnipresent in the cases studied within the scope of this research.

The third most common main event is referred to as deception (n=42). This theme is closely associated with trickster stories in which a personage acts clownishly/foolishly, breaks taboos, cheats and deceives others, etc. Motifs in the "Top 15" probably related to this main event, are for instance deeds punished, murder/death, thefts, and pursuits. Trickster tales are very common in Central and South America and very often directly linked to a specific personage such as the coyote (*Canis latrans*) of the Southwestern United States or the raven (e.g., in British Colombia). It may be added here that the trickster phenomenon is encountered across the globe (Abrams 1977; Reder & Morra 2010; William 1993). For all the main events interrelated with animal personages/roles, see 4.2.4.

**Table 4.4.** Main events recorded for the narratives.

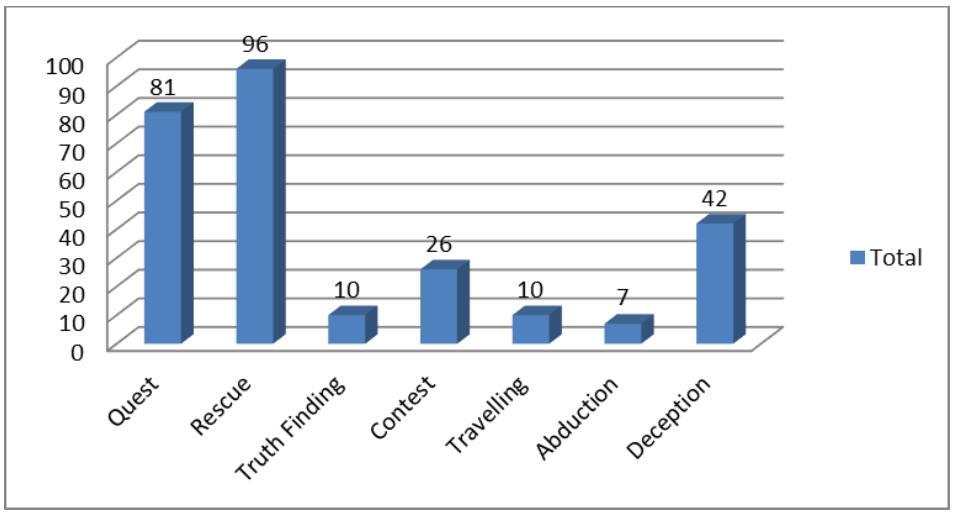



**Table 4.5.** Sub-division of the main event rescue (%).

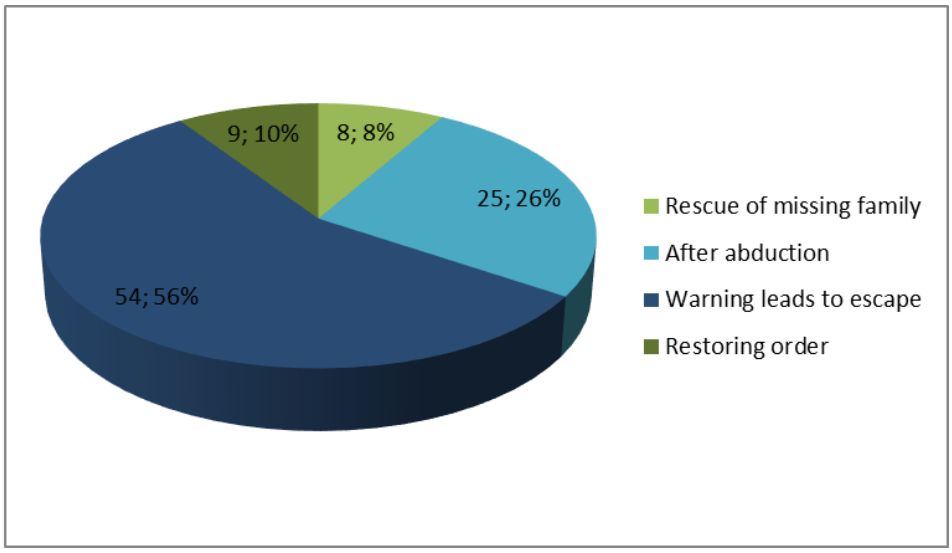
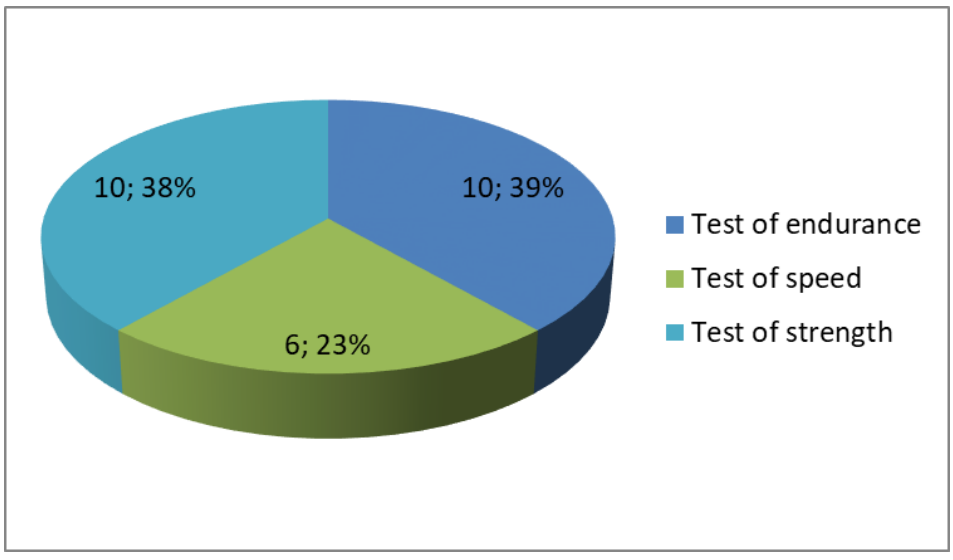



**Table 4.6.** Sub-division of the main event contest (%).

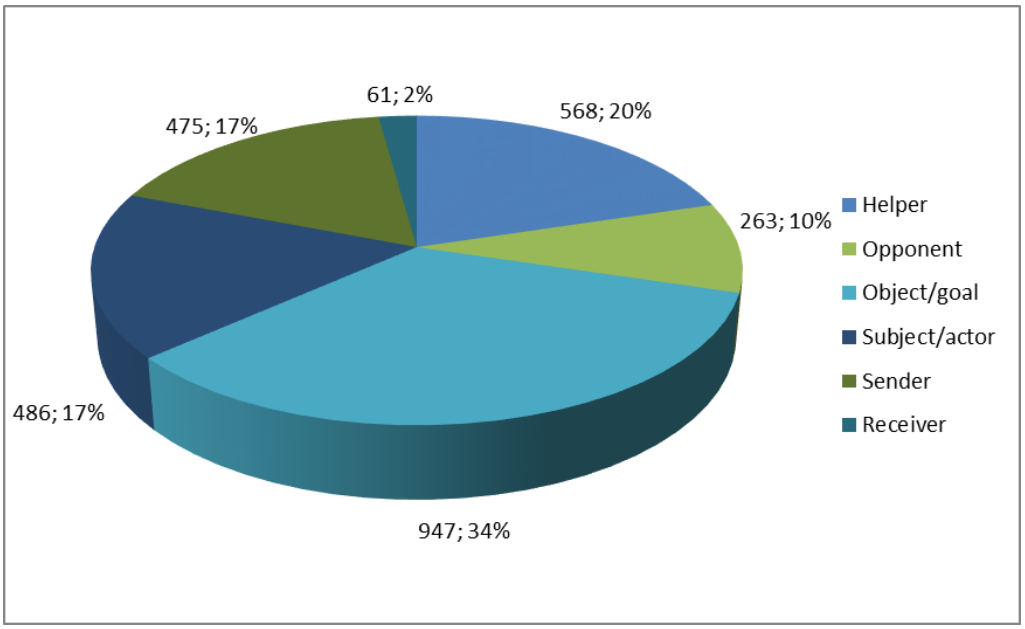


### 4.2.2 Actors (actantial model, Greimas)

Although the actantial model is very simplistic and (over)generalist, it fits the present research very well, considering the aim is here not to engage in a narratological study *pur sang* but to create a frame of reference for the archaeological interpretation of, for example, animal imagery. The role(s) ascribed to specific animal personages contain(s) certain implicit as well as explicit insights as to how these animals are perceived by members of indigenous ethnic groups who are either friend or foe.

Table 4.7 displays all the recorded roles for the animal actors mentioned in the narratives, illustrating not only that the role of helper dominates over opponent but also that the animal personages are more often object than subject. The role of receiver was least recorded, whereas the role of sender was repeatedly documented for the animal personage.

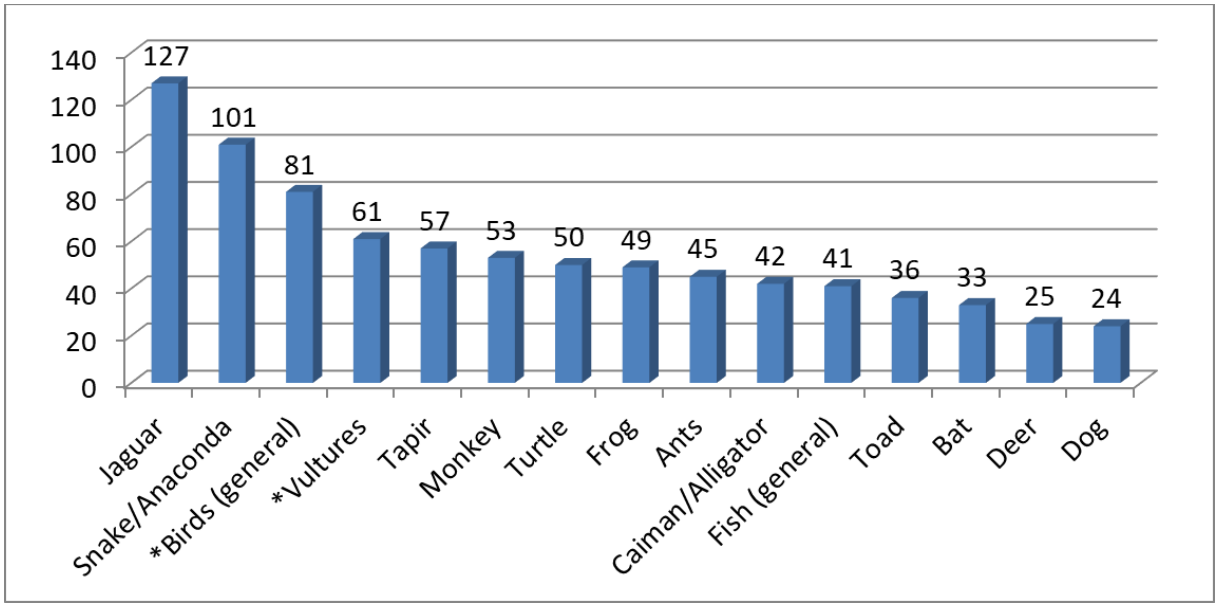
**Table 4.7.** General distribution of Greimas's actants.




#### *Animal actors, symbols and/or references in the narratives*

The analysis of the narratives focuses on the animal personages while including explicit as well as implicit references to animals (*signs*/symbols**). For instance, when an analogy is made: as strong as a jaguar. Or, for example, when parrot feathers are described as part of the Sun's headdress. Therefore not all references to animals imply a "role" for them within a specific narrative. As to instances whereby an animal fulfils a specific role, this has nevertheless been documented. Based on the 706 cases as many as 165 animals (including birds, fish, insects, etc.) have been recorded, resulting in 1640 records in total. Table 4.8 discloses the "Top 15" of most documented animals.

**Table 4.8.** The "Top 15" of most documented animals as encountered in the narratives.[79]




Nos. 1-3 tower high above the rest. No. 1, "Jaguar", greatly surpasses "Snake", whereas No. 3, "Birds (general)", form an ambiguous category. The reason for this is: it comprises an accumulation of unidentified, unspecified "birds" as well as general comments on "birds", which makes "Vultures" even more interesting as it is the most dominant of all specific "birds" (see note 79). Apparently, Table 4.8 reflects a preference towards certain animal personages (e.g., "Jaguar" occurs 5.3 times more often than "Dog").

### *Roles in relation to animal actor*

The next step is to look into the parts played by the various animal actors. Is there perhaps a correlation between an animal personage and its ascribed attributes and the role(s) it fulfils within the narrative?

Table 4.9 displays the fifteen animals along with their most ascribed roles. This table only provides us with a general comparison and is based on absolute numbers. Therefore, not surprisingly, the "Jaguar" scores high in all roles, being the most frequently documented animal personage, as indicated in Table 4.8. It must be taken into consideration that these roles are abstract and should not be confused with actual personages. It may be added here that a single personage can fulfil all these roles. Moreover, multiple actors can perform one and the same role within the same narrative.

[79] References to "Birds" occur most often, but references as to specific birds also exist of which the Vulture is observed most frequently. However, other specific birds are omitted from this "Top 15" in order to avoid any dominance of birds. Other specific birds to be listed the "Top 15" based on the number of occasions they occur are: the Birds of prey (n=57), Parrot-like birds (n=49), Nocturnal birds (n=40), Shorebirds and waders (n=34), the Woodpecker (n=31) and the Hummingbird (n=27). Needless to say, if all birds were to added up and placed in a single category, it would be the most dominant of all animal references.

**Table 4.9.** "Top 15" per actantial role.

| | Helper | Opponent | Sender | Receiver | Object/goal | Subject/actor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Birds (34/81) | Jaguar (51/127) | Jaguar (56/127) | Jaguar (8/127) | Jaguar (108/127) | Jaguar (76/127) |
| **2** | Jaguar (35/127) | Anaconda/ Snake (22/101) | Frog (27/49) | Birds (7/81) | Anaconda/ Snake (72/101) | Turtle (23/50) |
| **3** | Vulture (33/61) | Bat (13/33) | Vulture (27/61) | Turtle (4/50) | Tapir (43/57) | Anaconda/ Snake (23/101) |
| **4** | Anaconda/ Snake (26/101) | Vulture (13/61) | Birds (23/81) | Anaconda/ Snake (4/89) | Monkey (33/53) | Monkey (19/53) |
| **5** | Woodpecker (27/31) | Caiman (10/42) | Anaconda/ Snake (22/101) | Parrot-like (3/45) | Vulture (33/61) | Vulture (18/61) |
| **6** | Ant (25/45) | Monkey (10/53) | Tapir (20/57) | Monkey (3/52) | Caiman (31/42) | Frog (16/49) |
| **7** | Frog (19/49) | Birds (9/81) | Turtle (18/50) | Vulture (3/61) | Birds (26/81) | Tapir (15/57) |
| **8** | Hummingbird (17/27) | Owl (8/18) | Monkey (18/53) | Fox (2/16) | Peccary (27/33) | Birds (15/81) |
| **9** | Dog (17/24) | Fish (8/41) | Toad (16/36) | Opossum (2/19) | Frog (26/49) | Toad (14/36) |
| **10** | Parrot-like bird[80] (18/45) | Frog (8/49) | Fish (11/41) | Bat (2/33) | Bat (26/33) | Dog (13/24) |
| **11** | Monkey (15/53) | Mosquitoes (7/11) | Hummingbird (10/27) | Toad (2/36) | Fish (25/41) | Woodpecker (12/31) |
| **12** | Caiman (13/42) | Tapir (7/57) | Parrot-like bird (10/45) | Tapir (2/57) | Turtle (25/50) | Woodpecker (11/31) |
| **13** | Toad (12/36) | Turtle (6/50) | Tortoise (9/16) | Kiskadee (1/3) | Parrot-like (24/45) | Sloth (9/15) |
| **14** | Otter (10/19) | Ant (5/45) | Bat (9/33) | Duck (1/14)[81] | Toad (17/36) | Fox (9/16) |
| **15** | Fish (9/41) | Stingray/Otter (4/9; 19) | Deer (8/25) | Dog (1/24) | Deer (16/25) | Nightjar (9/22) |

In Table 4.9, the first number placed between square brackets concerns the total number of narratives in which the animal fulfils that specific role. The number following the slash refers

[80] The parrot-like birds recorded are: the ara, macaw, parrot, and parakeet (n=49 for 45 narratives).
[81] Other receivers with singular appearances are: woodpecker, lizard, heron, sloth, dog, spider, mosquito, eel, frog, wasp, otter, guinea pig, deer, ant, crow and gull.

to the total number of instances a certain animal has been documented. Therefore these numbers combined illustrate the relevance of that specific role for that specific animal personage. For instance, “Jaguar” holds the second position as a helper (i.e., Table 4.9 “Jaguar (35/127)”, as it occurs as a helper in 35 cases, but that is in 35 out of 127 occasions in which “Jaguar” is recorded. On the other hand, “Woodpecker” is encountered as a helper in 27 out of a total of 31 narratives.

For certain roles, a more detailed differentiation has been observed. For instance, the helper-role is further categorised in “provider of goods”, “animal helps with task”, etc. Table 4.9 reveals the total number of cases in which an animal fulfils a specific role. Therefore if in one narrative an animal is ascribed more than one category of (a) role(s), it has been scored as one.

### Helper versus opponent

Although it could be expected that helpers and opponents exclude one another, Table 4.9 shows that more than 50 percent of the most frequent helpers also appear in the “Top 15” of opponents. This is partly caused by the fact that the aforementioned Table is based on absolutes, and perhaps even because this dichotomy between helper and opponent, “good” versus “bad”, might not be that absolute. Nevertheless, when looking into the figures a number of general remarks can be distilled.

The “Jaguar” takes the role of opponent in 40 percent (n=51) of the cases this feline features, whereas in 28 percent (n=35) it plays the part of helper. “Bat” is present as an opponent in 39 percent (n=13) of the narratives it features in and is absent as a helper in the aforementioned “Top 15” (n=5; 15 percent). “Vulture”, on the other hand, has been ascribed the role of assistant in 54 percent (n=33) of the cases it appears in and in 21 percent (n=13) as an opponent. As to “Birds”, in 42 percent (n=34) helpers and opponents are encountered but in only 11 percent (n=9) of the narratives. “Ant” also occurs both as a helper and an opponent i.e., in 56 percent (n=25) as a helper and in 11 percent (n=5) as an opponent.

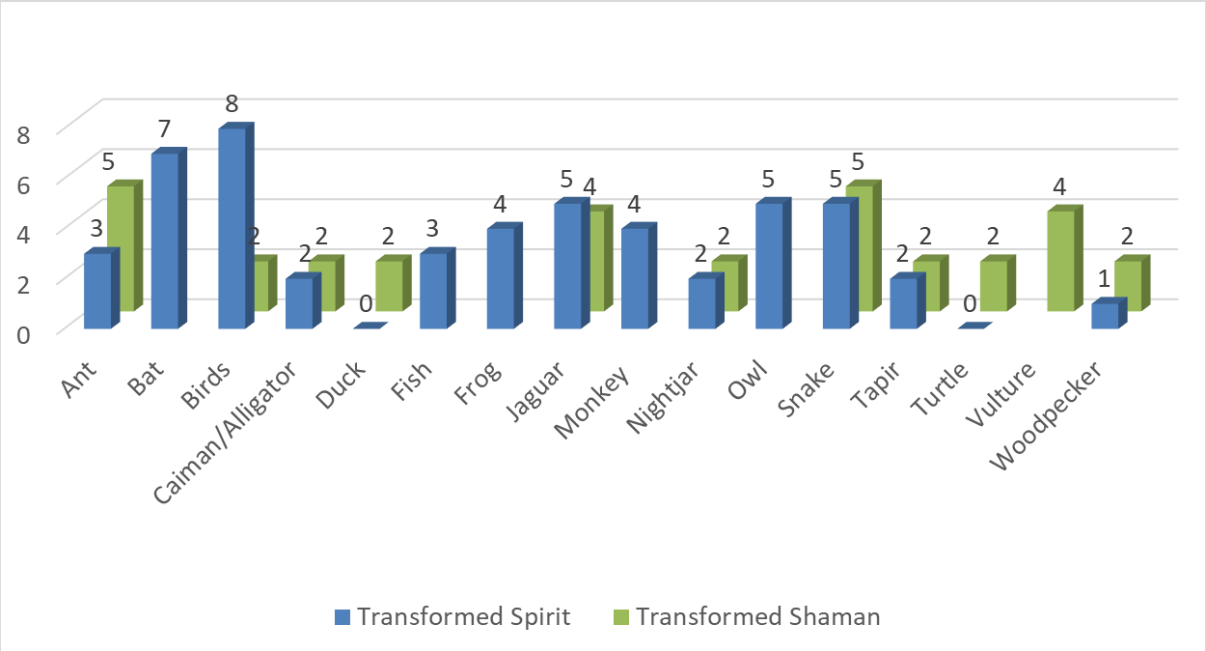
However, animals that “relatively” stand out as a helper are all absent in the “Top 15” list under opponent. The “Woodpecker” in 81 percent (n=25) is ascribed the role of helper, as are “Hummingbird” in 67 percent (n=18) and “Dog” in 71 percent (n=17). The same rings true when considering the animal personages that “relatively” catch the eye as opponents are: “Owl” 44 percent (n=8), and “Mosquito” 64 percent (n=7). Both are not mentioned in the “Top 15” list under helper.

### The secular versus “spirits” or shamans

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, which deal with the Amerindian worldviews and perspectives, humans and *significant other-than-human-persons** (e.g., animals, spirits) exist within a shared relational frame of interaction (see 2.3 and 3.4.2). That which is recorded as an “animal” personage could be the animal, animal-human or animal-spirit. In a number of

narratives it is explicit that a shaman transforms into an animal or, for instance, that a spirit "takes the form/wears the clothes" of an animal. This metamorphosis has been documented in relation to the animal personage, see Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10.** Animals explicitly described as (transformed) shamans and/or spirits.




It may be added here that the numbers as displayed in Table 4.10 should be studied in relation to: (a) the total number of occasions an animal has been recorded in the narratives, and (b) its role(s) and context within the narrative itself. Worth mentioning here, too, is the fact that "Bat", "Fish", "Frog" "Monkey", and "Owl" have merely been documented as transformed spirits.

Members of the category "Bat" are described as transformed spirits in seven out of 33 (21 percent) and as "Owl" in 5 out of eighteen cases (28 percent). "Fish", "Frog" and "Monkey" are less frequently described as spirits, when considered in relation to their respective total recurrences within the narratological data set. We encounter "Fish" in three out of 41 (7 percent), "Frog" in four out of 49 (8 percent) and "Monkey" 4 out of 53 (7.5 percent) tales.

The animal actors referred to as "Duck", "Turtle" and "Vulture" are only portrayed as (transformed) shamans. However, these totals are not very conclusive in absolutes nor are the relatives, in relation to the total number of records concerning these "animals". The category "Duck" includes a transformed shaman in two narratives out of a total of fourteen (14 percent). The reader should also keep in mind that these numbers only refer to records of "animals" explicitly described as a shaman/spirit. Several "animals" have been attributed with shaman-like qualities (e.g., "magic" curing, cursing).

### 4.2.3 Chronotope: a setting in place and time

In 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, the events and actors are the main focus point. The category setting forms the third element of the fabula-layer (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). Although all elements are intertwined and interdependent, they have been studied separately. As each personage and event is shaped within a context of time and space, part of their significance depends on this context.

The chronotope forms the background, as well as the context of an unfolding narrative and, must, therefore, be studied within its context. For a number of general remarks based on the documented dipolar oppositions, see sub-heading *The bias of dipolar oppositions*. For an in-depth analysis of the chronotope in relation to personages and events mentioned, see Chapters 5-7 (all sections under the sub-heading *"Animal" in the narratives*) and Appendix D for the full analysis of the stories.

#### *The bias of dipolar oppositions*

The most frequently applied method to research the setting within a narrative by means of a structuralistic approach comprise studying dipolar oppositions (e.g., inner/outer, light/dark). In theory, the number of oppositions to be investigated is infinite. However, as to the present research, the oppositions were determined beforehand in order to ensure that each and every narrative was equally documented, for the benefit of an overall comparison (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Fabula-layer*).

The downside of predefining oppositions is the fact that one is explicitly searching for them whereby overemphasising certain oppositions and underemphasising others is a possibility. I am well aware of the fact that this means of predefining creates a tunnel vision and in a sense enables a self-fulfilling prophecy. For instance, the opposition village versus forest is an opposition broadly accepted in academia as an inherent cultural opposition encountered within the study region (Caribbean and South America). Predefining village and forest as an opposition does indeed suggest the importance of this dichotomy.

However, what should be taken into consideration is: whose village or forest does it concern? For, in Amerindian cosmologies, humans and *significant other-than-human-persons** not only share a relational frame of reference but also uphold their own point of view. Animals and spirits, therefore, conceive their respective living quarters as a "village". All things categorised within a village or forest context is documented from the perspective of the human protagonist. This means of recording clearly limits the significance of this bipolar disposition. As to a narrative which unfolds in, for instance, a "Jaguar's village", this village setting is documented as a forest setting. The ambiguous, confusing element is: when interacting with "Jaguar" in its village, the context itself presumably transforms into "village" from an indigenous perspective. For analytic purposes, this very etic, i.e., Western-based, dichotomy serves to differentiate between events which either took place inside the village of the

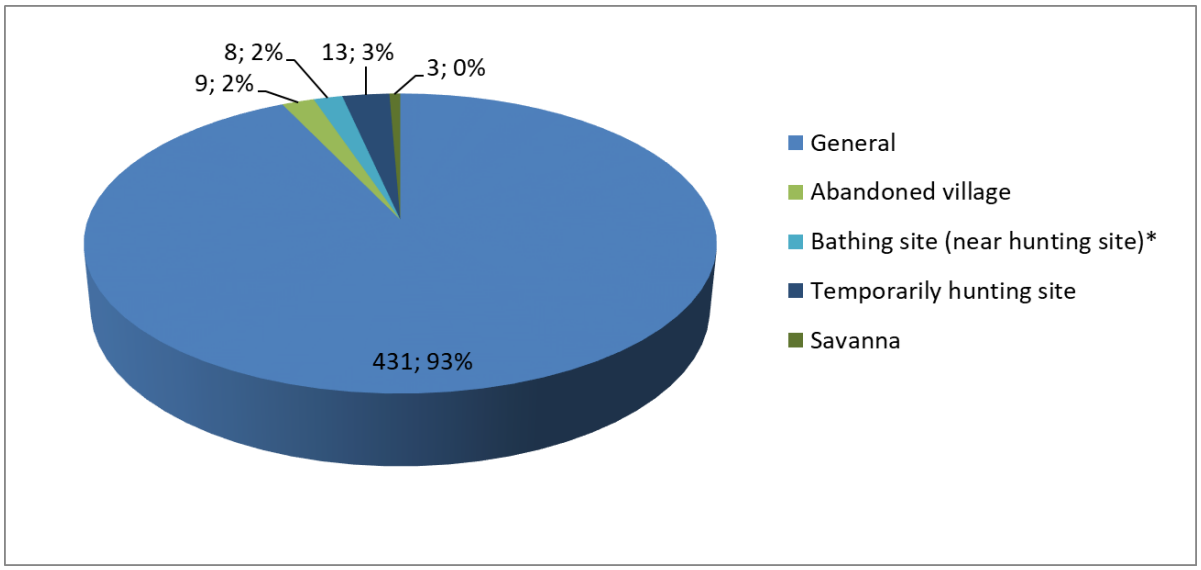
Amerindian protagonist or outside this context e.g., in a forest. Temporal hunting sites included in the present study are therefore part of the forest setting, too.

The predefined categories applied here comprise the spatial categories of village vs. forest and the temporal categories of day and night. Both the spatial and temporal categories are also subdivided. The subcategories for village and forest are entitled: (a) abandoned village, (b) bathing site, (c) temporary hunting site, (d) home garden/field, and (e) cemetery. Moreover, the subcategories for the provisional categories are sunrise and sunset.

### *The spatial setting: forest versus village*

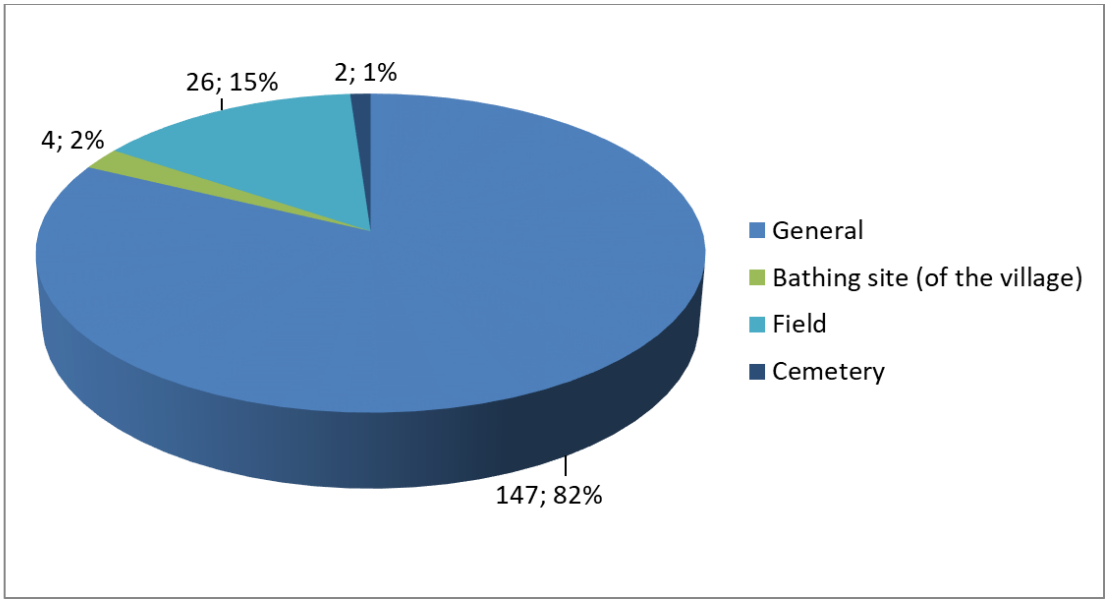
The forest (seen from the perspective of "humans") is associated with danger caused by predators, spirits (*significant other-than-human-persons**), whereas the village is associated with safety and nurture (see 2.3 and 3.4.2). If considered relevant, this dichotomy is documented for each and every acting animal personage. In total, of 643 records as many as 464 (72 percent) refer to a forest context and 179 (28 percent) to a village setting. For both settings sub-categories are established, see Tables. 4.11 and 4.12.

**Table 4.11.** Forest contexts as documented for the narratives.[82]




[82] Bathing sites frequented when hunting are differentiated from those that play a role in village life which are adjacent to and considered part of the village.

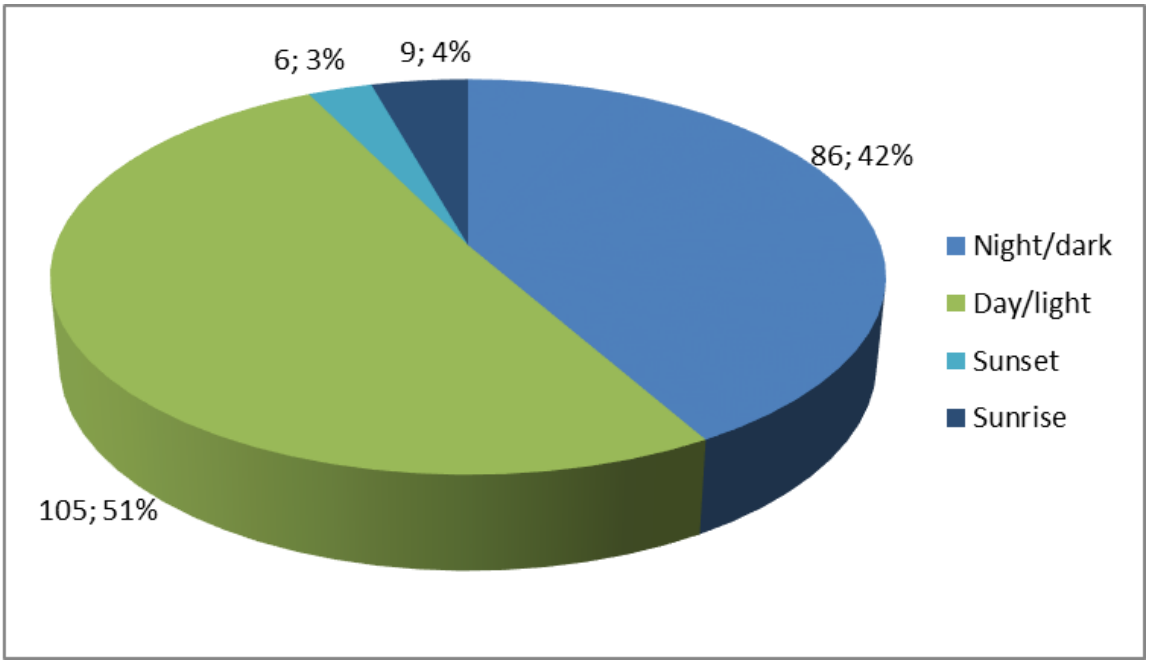
**Table 4.12**. Village contexts as documented for the narratives




### *The temporal setting: day versus night*

The opposition village versus forest resembles the opposition day versus night whereby the daytime is associated with the realm of humans and village life and considered to be (relatively) safe. On the other hand, the night which is associated with the realm of spirits and the forest is seen as dangerous. However, sunset and sunrise are also significant when referring to symbolism because of their liminal position: dusk and dawn are neither fully day nor night. Moreover, they can be considered gateways between the two separate realms in which humans and spirits reside. In Amerindian cultures, liminality and liminal positions are imbued with (ceremonial) symbolism.

**Table 4.13.** Distribution of the temporal settings.

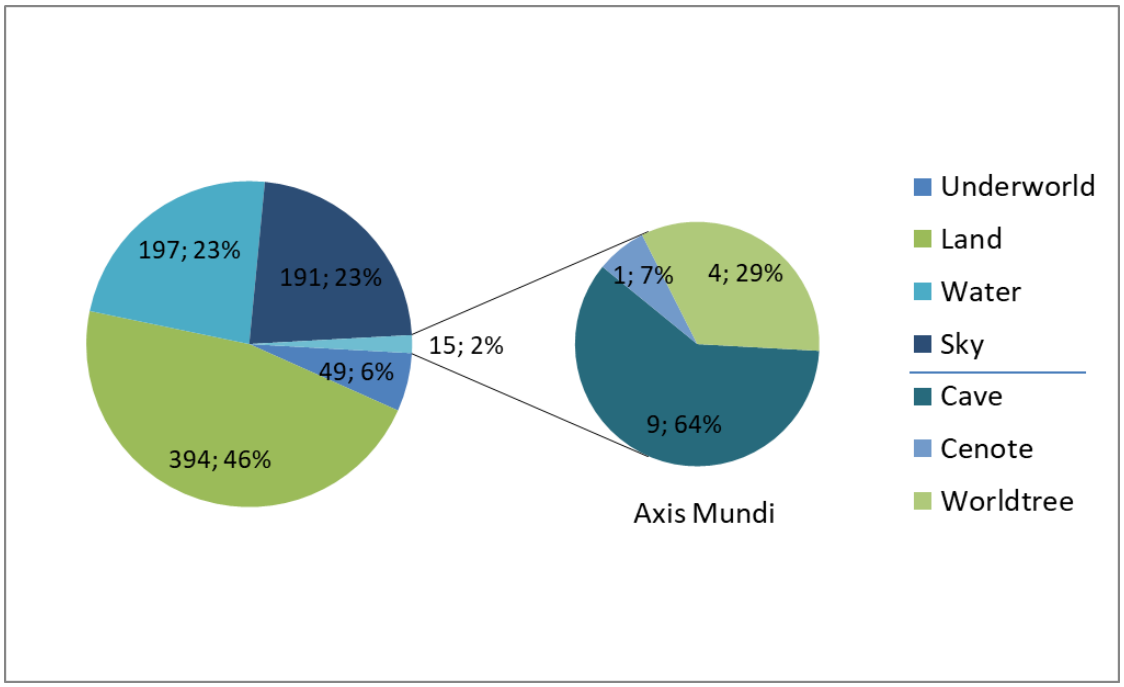


As Table 4.13 illustrates, narratives express only a slight preference towards a daytime temporal setting. Correlating this opposition in relation to the animal personages and the spatial setting is of interest. Is the phenomenon night significantly more associated with a forest and dangerous/malevolent creatures? And, does the liminal position of sunrise/sunset correspond with animals considered "liminal"? In Chapters 5-7, the animal personages are analysed not only by means of their various roles but also in relation to the setting of space and time. Each animal actor, or role, in relation to its temporal setting can then be compared to this general survey in order to determine if it is notably more associated with a certain setting (e.g., related to a daytime setting in considerably more, or less, than 51 percent of the narratives).

### *The setting in relation to cosmic layers*

Although the discussed oppositions provide us with certain insights regarding the setting of space and time within the narratives, the following categories have been predefined which are based on the Amerindian worldview and its cosmic layers: (a) land, water, sky, underworld, and (b) the *axis mundi* (a connection between the cosmic layers), e.g., cave (cenote), lake, world tree.

**Table 4.14.** Distribution of the cosmic layers.




The cosmic land-layer is most frequently encountered within the narratological context, followed by the water and sky-layers (see Table 4.14). The underworld occurs far less often. Caves linked to the *axis mundi* are the most common and are followed by the world tree.

As land is the realm of humans it is to be expected that the cosmic land-layer forms the preferred decor for any interaction. However, the significance of the cosmic layers can only

be revealed within a broader context, having been studied in relation to various other aspects of the chronotope, actor and actions.

### 4.2.4 Interrelated actors, actions and setting

The interrelatedness between the various elements of the fabula-layer is difficult to look into on a general level, as it is almost impossible to interpret the results. Certain aspects have nevertheless been highlighted here. They deal with: (a) the interrelatedness between the main events and the animal roles, and (b) the relatedness between animal roles with the setting in space (forest/village and the cosmic layer). In Chapters 5-7, this interrelatedness is analysed on the level of (smaller) clusters of narratives, to which the results of the present chapter are then compared in order to establish if any striking variations appear.

The results presented in Table 4.15 can be studied either based on the perspective of the main event, or that of the animal role. Apparently, when researched in the former manner, three of the aforementioned events (truth finding, travelling and abduction) are insufficiently dealt with.

Considering the interrelatedness between the main event and animal role (see Table 4.15), only the role of receiver (totalling 5) shows to be insignificant. The role helper is dominated by the main events rescue (50 percent) and quest (39 percent). The same pattern unrolls as to the opponent role for which the most dominant main event is once more rescue (39 percent), again followed by quest (27 percent).

**Table 4.15.** Interrelatedness between the main event and the role played by the "animal".

| | Helper | Opponent | Object/ goal | Subject/ actor | Sender | Receiver | *Total*[83] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Quest** | 34 | 12 | 20 | 17 | 10 | 1 | ***94*** |
| **Rescue** | 44 | 17 | 19 | 12 | 10 | 2 | ***104*** |
| **Truth Finding** | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | ***11*** |
| **Contest** | | 2 | 9 | 7 | 16 | | ***34*** |
| **Travelling** | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 4 | | ***10*** |
| **Abduction** | | 5 | 2 | | | | ***7*** |
| **Deception** | 4 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 9 | 2 | ***45*** |
| *Total* | ***88*** | ***44*** | ***60*** | ***58*** | ***50*** | ***5*** | |

The similar results for rescue and quest could be explained by the more epic nature of these main events. Little wonder they are also the only events in which all roles occur as do classical

[83] Discrepancy between these totals and the totals provided in Table 4.4, see p. 113 (displaying main events for all narratives) is caused by the fact that multiple actors in one narrative can be related to a single main event. For instance, when two animal actors are engaged in a contest with each other, they are counted as two records in Table 4.15 and only once in Table 4.4.

themes which perfectly fit the roles established by Greimas: "(rescuing) someone or something" leads to a narrative which features both a helper and an opponent. A clear objective, as well as a subject/actor striving towards this goal, can be observed here.

Regarding the two least recorded main events, in this case, truth finding and abduction, the former occurs most commonly in combination with the role of opponent which is followed by object/goal. Needless to say, the event of an abduction both encompasses an enemy (the abductor) and an object, which could either be the person abducted or the abductor (sought after in revenge). As to truth finding, not a single role sticks out. Both these main events are likely to occur in combination with one of the two dominant main events. Whenever someone has been abducted, a quest or rescue is likely to ensue. Truth finding would also presumably evolve into a quest.

As to the role the object/goal category plays, not only the main events quest (33 percent) and rescue (32 percent), but also contest (15 percent) and deception (12 percent) occur frequently. The role object/goal fulfils is also common both to a contest and a deception because an "animal"-actor is often the object (goal) of a contest. In addition, during a contest, the opponents often deceive one another.

As to the role subject/actor: the main events entitled deception (31 percent), quest (29 percent) and rescue (21 percent) are most dominant. The sender-role is linked to the main event entitled contest (32 percent). The probable reason for this is: a contest often starts, or is initiated by something an animal says or does, provoking another to enter a contest. Once again main events quest and rescue are related to this particular role (20 percent).

### *The roles in relation to the spatial context*

The roles, as well as the spatial context (village versus forest), are not interrelated and the variation is not significant (see Table 4.16).[84] For instance, within the forest context, in 21 percent of the documented roles, we observe an assistant, compared to 19 percent within the village context.

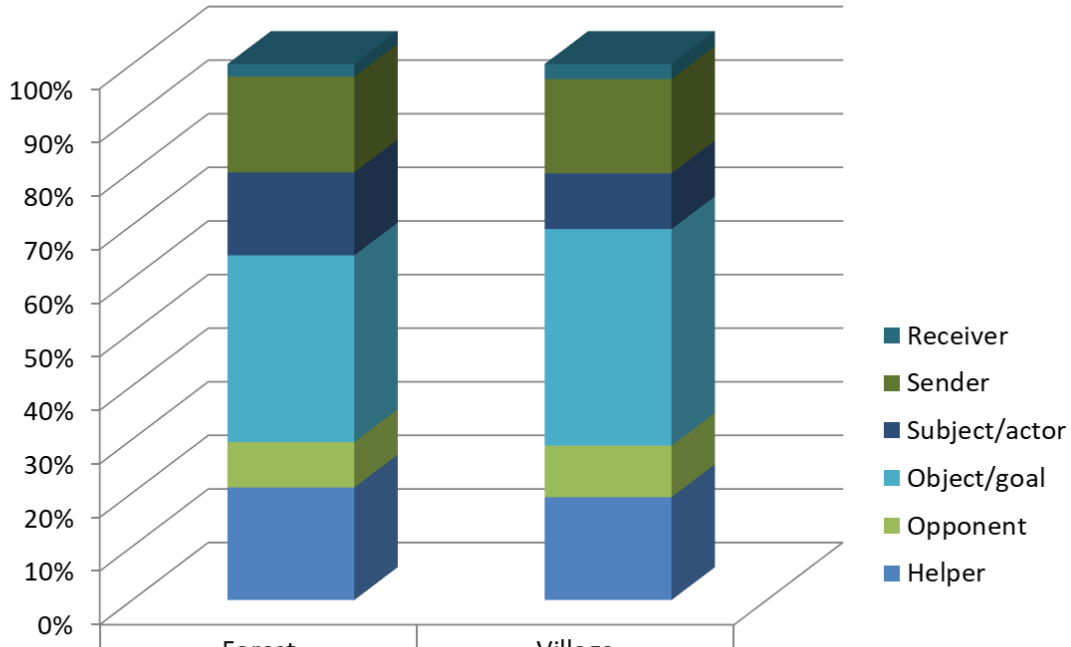
Even more surprisingly, whenever the roles are considered opposites (opponent vs. helper or object vs. subject) there is ostensibly little difference in relation to the spatial context. For instance, as much as 82 percent of all documented helpers appear within a forest context, compared to 78 percent of all the opponents. However, a minor discrepancy occurs as to the subject/actor-role vs. object/goal-role. Up to 86 percent of the recorded subject/actor elements appear within a forest context, compared to 78 percent of the object/goal elements. All in all, when investigating the variation in roles, the presupposed dichotomy between village and forest does not become apparent.

[84] $\chi^2(5) = 6.09$; $\rho = 0.30$ (not significant).

Contrary to the apparently absent interrelatedness between roles and the "village vs. forest" context, Table 4.16 does seem to indicate that the cosmic layers and roles are intertwined.[85] The underworld is dominated by the object/goal role, which could indicate that animals hide inside this cosmic layer, or perhaps even that animals originating from the underworld are hunted. The same goes for the dominance of the object/goal role in the water and a*xis mundi*-layers.

The elements subject/actor and object/goal feature most prominently in the land-layer. This observation was to be expected because the majority of animal personages are active within a forest/land setting. Animals associated with the sky-layer are more likely to serve as helpers, but also act as the object/goal. Again numerous protagonists travel in order to escape to the upper world. Birds are often caught (= object/goal) as their eggs, feathers and meat are desired.

**Table 4.16.** Distribution of roles in relation to the spatial context: village vs. forest.

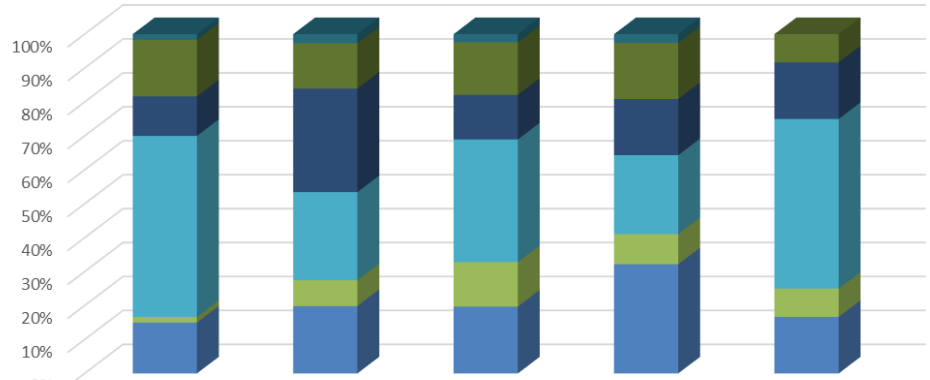



| | Forest | Village |
|---|---|---|
| Receiver | 24 | 7 |
| Sender | 181 | 44 |
| Subject/actor | 157 | 26 |
| Object/goal | 353 | 101 |
| Opponent | 86 | 24 |
| Helper | 213 | 48 |

[85] $\chi^2$ (23) = 74.58, $\rho < 0.01$ (significant). In this Chi-squared analysis, the category a*xis mundi* is omitted as it only consists of twelve records. This low number would obscure this statistic analysis (i.e., result in an expected value to fall below 1).

When these numbers (see Table 4.17) are examined from the perspective of the various roles it becomes evident that the helper is significantly more associated with the sky layer. The categories opponent, as well as object/goal, seem to be more related to water. The element subject/actor dominates the land-layer. The role of receiver is again insufficiently referred to albeit evenly distributed amongst the various cosmic layers.

**Table 4.17.** Interrelatedness between the "animal" roles and space (cosmic layers).




| | Underworld | Land | Water | Sky | Axis Mundi |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Receiver | 1 | 7 | 8 | 8 | |
| Sender | 10 | 35 | 52 | 52 | 1 |
| Subject/actor | 7 | 80 | 44 | 52 | 2 |
| Object/goal | 32 | 68 | 121 | 73 | 6 |
| Opponent | 1 | 20 | 44 | 28 | 1 |
| Helper | 9 | 52 | 66 | 101 | 2 |

### 4.2.5 Conclusions as to the fabula-layer

The fabula-layer considers the narratives to be a series of logically and chronologically related events either caused or experienced by actors. Its elements (actor, events, setting) are looked into both individually and interdependently because the arrangement of the abovementioned elements determine the way a "fabula" is transformed into a "story".

Central to the present study are the animal personages encountered in the narratives. By far the most frequently recorded "animal" is the jaguar. Snakes/anacondas, birds (in general), vultures, tapirs, monkeys, and turtles are repeatedly documented, too.

These "animal" actors are studied by means of their ascribed role(s) related to the context (both in space and time) in which they occur. The context of the narrative itself is crucial to the understanding of these roles. In each case they are shaped and interrelated: the protagonist strives for a specific goal while being assisted by some and opposed by others. Certain actors may profit, whereas others may not. Considering the six actants developed by Greimas (1987), the role object/goal dominates. A specific animal can be ascribed this role for

various reasons: it is being hunted or sought after in revenge. It can also be the object of one's desire (as a lover or (potential) spouse). Animals most often observed in this role are jaguars, snakes/anacondas and tapirs.

Three other common roles are: helper, subject/actor and sender. The helper role occurs twice as often as the less documented opponent-role. This indicates that, in general, animals regularly assist the protagonist to act as less frequently as an adversary. It has become apparent that certain "animals" are more likely to be depicted either as an opponent or a helper than others. In order to truly appreciate and soundly research any roles, the narratives themselves need to be investigated. This issue lies at the heart of Chapters 5-7.

Besides dealing with the ascribed role(s), it has also been documented which animal personages are clearly, and in a detailed manner, portrayed as (transformed) shamans and/or spirits. Owls and bats are more frequently described as (transformed) spirits, whereas ants, vultures, ducks and turtles are more often considered to portray shamans.

Events have been researched based both on (descriptive) motifs as well as on predefined categories of main events. The most common main events are: quest, rescue and deception (in which one tries to outsmart the other). However, murder and punishments are most dominant if any individual motifs are also taken into consideration. Other motifs deal with transformation, the origin of the world and all it consists of.

Any conclusions based on this general overview of events are in a way insignificant, as the events only subscribe what is widely accepted: the fact that, across the globe, stories include similar themes and describe similar events. This assessment is the outcome of the fact that: (a) the function of storytelling is universal in nature, and (b) the world created within a narrative is based upon worlds already at hand (see 3.1 and 3.2). It is perhaps far more interesting and meaningful to analyse the interrelatedness between animal actors/roles and the abovementioned events. Are certain animals indeed significantly more/less related to certain events? The present general overview forms the basic background to a more profound analysis of these events in relation to the actors and the context. For a further clustering of these narratives, see Chapters 5-7 and Appendix D.

The actors, as well as the events, are portrayed in a certain context (or chronotope) in space and time. The most recurrent setting in space comprises the cosmic land-layer and a forest setting as is to be expected because the land-layer is the domain of peoples. In addition, the relatively unsafe forest confronts the actors with ample opportunities, choices, problems and dangers. It is, therefore, the perfect setting for the five functions which storytelling encompasses. It may be added here that their internal time setting does not reveal a notable difference between day (light) and night (dark).

The interrelatedness between the various roles and the spatial contexts have also been analysed. This procedure disclosed no significant variation in any ascribed roles related to a forest or village context but did reveal an important variant whenever roles are related to the various cosmic layers. Hereby, when compared with other cosmic layers, the underworld seems to be attached to the role of object/goal, whereas the role of helper is apparently more linked to the sky world.

## 4.3 Story-layer: how the events are presented to the reader/listener

The story-layer concerns the concrete way in which events are presented to the reader/listener: the characterization of actors and the role time (duration) plays (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). Section 4.3 sets out to study the story-layer, taking the total dataset consisting of 706 narratives into consideration.

The way the animals are typified is the main focus of 4.3.1. This observation is succeeded by the second element of a narrative, i.e., time or duration and can be seen as an instrument with which to emphasize certain events/action and to deemphasize others, either by means of: (a) accelerating the course of events within a narrative, or (b) effectuating the complete opposite by lengthening the time span of a narration by way of describing (simple) events in great detail.

### 4.3.1 Characterization: the way the animals are introduced

Certain things are just not worth telling, as they are already both obvious and clear to the audience. A bird has wings and can fly. A jaguar has four legs and a tail. Therefore, matters made explicit or kept implicit provide us with a clue as to how an animal personage is perceived. A jaguar clearly has impressive claws and fangs. Nonetheless, these traits are emphasized whenever specifically mentioned by the storyteller.[86] Of course, everything presented in an explicit fashion is subsequently much easier recognised by a non-native researcher, contrary to the case whereby elements considered common or shared knowledge are omitted.

It has been established (see 3.1) that not only various types of knowledge exist, of which "symbolic knowledge" is one, but also that they are all interrelated and applied to make sense of the world. Moreover, they explain how *symbols** are conceptualised and therefore "understood" by humans (see 3.1.2). The explicit characterization of animals provides us with a direct link to their ascribed attributes.

[86] The animal personage includes the animal-spirit and the animal-human. The reason for this: physical and behavioural attributes are on occasion provided. For instance, the Jaguar-man dons a necklace consisting of jaguar teeth, or the Vulture-man owns a dirty black hammock, etc. For a more in-depth discussion on this subject, see 3.4.2.

The following types of characterization are established: (a) a direct mode whereby the storyteller describes each animal (or its aspects), (b) an indirect mode whereby no description is given; hereby the reader/listener thus only becomes familiar with the animal by means of its actions and role within the narrative, and (c) an analogous mode of characterization through a description (e.g., as fierce as X; a head resembling Y).

**Table 4.18.** Distribution of the modes of characterization.

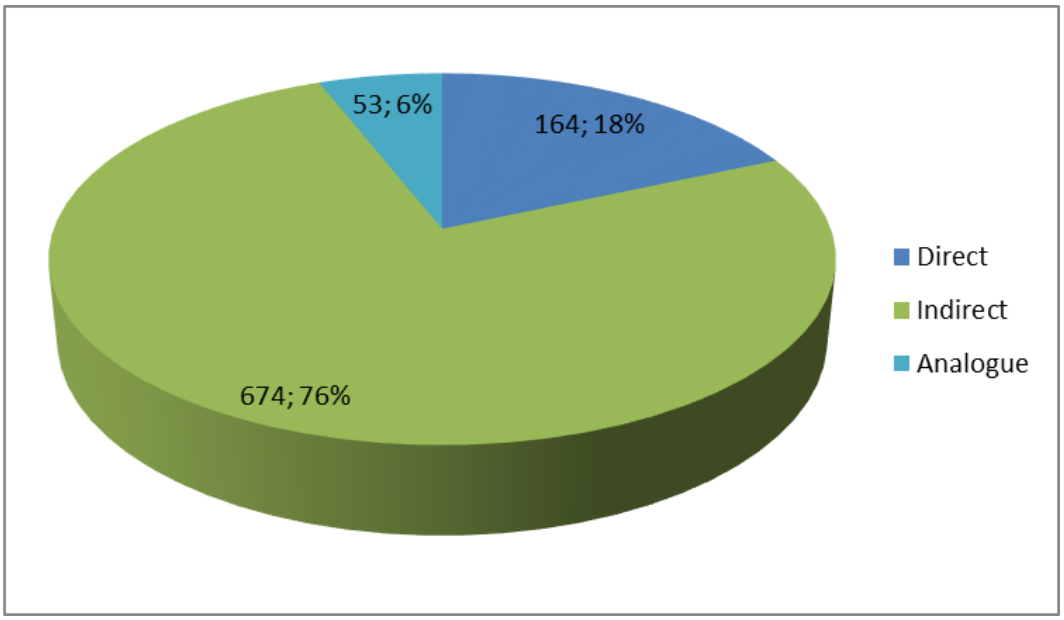


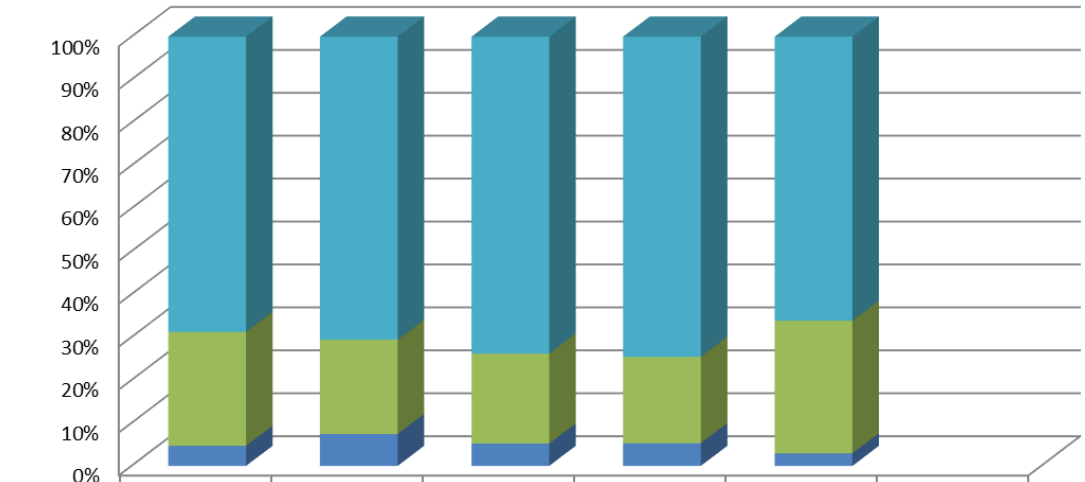

Table 4.18 discloses that 674 (76 percent) of the animal personages are indirectly introduced. As few as 164 (18 percent) of these personages are described directly, to a certain extent, by the narrator. In as little as 6 percent, the latter adopted an analogy in order to introduce or describe an animal personage.

It is expected that narrators prefer an indirect characterization. The reason for this is: a simple introduction of animal personages is often more than sufficient for an audience to conceptualise the animal as an actor/personage.

Table 4.19 zooms in on the way animals are characterized (Analogue, Direct or Indirect) in relation to their role(s) within the narrative. Again, a single animal may fulfil multiple roles in one and the same case. Whenever indirect characterization is considered the norm, the roles of the receiver and opponent are most likely to be emphasized by means of applying a different type of characterization. The role of sender is most often indirectly sketched, followed by the role of subject/actor. However, statistically one cannot encounter a significant variation between the various modes of characterization and any ascribed roles.[87]

[87] $\chi^2(10) = 14.17$; $\rho = 0.17$ (not significant).

**Table 4.19.** Interrelatedness between the "animal" roles and modes of characterization.




| | Opponent | Object/goal | Subject/actor | Sender | Receiver | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indirect | 205 | 618 | 412 | 367 | 45 | |
| Direct | 79 | 192 | 117 | 99 | 21 | |
| Analogue | 14 | 65 | 29 | 26 | 2 | |

It would be interesting to assess whether any other modes of characterization are indeed chosen if a role is presented "out of character", or if other modes of characterization are preferred in combination with specific motifs or narratological contexts. If so, this will become clear in Chapters 5-7 (all sections under sub-heading *"Animal" in the narratives*) when the analysis focuses on specific "animals".

Table 4.20 displays all the ascribed roles of the most recorded animals ascertained by means of the types of "characterization": "**A**nalogue", "**D**irect" and "**I**ndirect". It may be added here that in each case an animal actor can be ascribed multiple roles. When considering each role, the mode of characterization is identical. One also comes across narratives as to which any records regarding the mode of characterization are absent.

Analysing Table 4.20 and zooming in on these roles as opposites (helper vs. opponent), this dichotomy may be related to the preferred mode of characterization. For instance, having studied the modes of characterization in relation to the ascribed roles of "Birds", it turns out that the role of helper prevails. The reason for this is: this role numbers 24 records, compared to eight for "Birds" as an opponent. Regarding helper, as much as 75 percent (n=18) of "Birds" is indirectly characterized, whereas 25 percent features a different mode. However, as to the role of opponent with regard to "Birds," only 62.5 percent (n=5) is indirectly typified and 37.5 percent (n=3) of the "Bird" actors is described according to a different mode of characterization. Table 4.20 illustrates that the same holds true for the "Snake" and "Vulture" categories, which are also more often ascribed the role of helper than of opponent. Being ascribed the latter role, snakes and vultures are more frequently classified as examples of the Direct or Analogue mode. This observation may indicate that a different mode of characterization is chosen whenever an animal acts "out of character".

**Table 4.20.** "Top 12" listing the "animal" personages by means of their ascribed roles.

| | Helper | | | Opponent | | | Object/goal | | | Subject/ actor | | | Sender | | | Receiver | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A[88] | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I |
| **Ant** | - | 1 | 7 | - | - | 3 | 4 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | - | - | 1 |
| **Bat** | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 6 | - | 12 | 12 | 1 | 4 | 5 | - | 4 | 3 | - | 1 | - |
| **Birds** | - | 6 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 5 | - | 4 | 6 | - | 3 | 7 | - | 1 | 10 | - | 5 | 2 |
| **Caiman** | - | 6 | 10 | - | 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 20 | - | 2 | 6 | - | 1 | 7 | - | - | - |
| **Frog** | - | 3 | 17 | - | 5 | 5 | - | 8 | 20 | - | 3 | 13 | - | 4 | 17 | - | - | - |
| **Jaguar** | 3 | 6 | 27 | 4 | 8 | 41 | 8 | 17 | 70 | 5 | 13 | 57 | 2 | 9 | 42 | - | - | 6 |
| **Monkey** | - | 1 | 5 | - | 2 | 8 | - | 5 | 20 | - | 2 | 13 | - | 3 | 12 | - | - | 2 |
| **Snake** | - | 3 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 36 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 1 | 4 | 15 | - | 1 | 2 |
| **Tapir** | - | - | 7 | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | 24 | - | 2 | 12 | - | 1 | 13 | - | - | 1 |
| **Turtle** | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 3 | - | 3 | 11 | 1 | 4 | 16 | - | 1 | 12 | - | 1 | 2 |
| **Vulture** | 1 | 7 | 24 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 18 | - | 2 | 2 |
| **Woodpecker** | - | 5 | 13 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 7 | - | 2 | 9 | - | - | 4 | - | - | 1 |
| ***Total (n)*** | ***4*** | ***39*** | ***148*** | ***9*** | ***32*** | ***100*** | ***27*** | ***78*** | ***244*** | ***9*** | ***43*** | ***169*** | ***4*** | ***35*** | ***156*** | ***0*** | ***10*** | ***19*** |

The object vs. subject dichotomy is apparently not related to a preferred mode of characterization. The reason for this is: in the "Bat", "Jaguar", "Turtle" and "Woodpecker" cases, the ratio is very similar. There are nonetheless a number of exceptions in which the "Caiman", "Snake", and "Tapir" illustrate that the variation in modes of characterization is higher in the preferred role. The characters are almost always ascribed the role of object/goal in which they are by and large dealt with either by analogy or directly. Therefore, the preferred mode of characterization cannot be considered a tool with which to place an accent whenever any "acting out of character" occurs.

The aforementioned dichotomy is studied in more detail (see Chapters 5-7 and Appendix D). Table 4.20 only concerns the numbers based on the total dataset, which obscures any interpretation. The reason for this is: one personage may fulfil multiple roles within a single narrative, or that one case may entail multiple animal personages playing various roles (e.g., one "good" and one "evil" jaguar).

[88] These columns disclose the three modes of characterization for the ascribed role: Analogue (A), Direct (D), and Indirect (I).

### 4.3.2 "Time": a tool with which to (de)emphasize

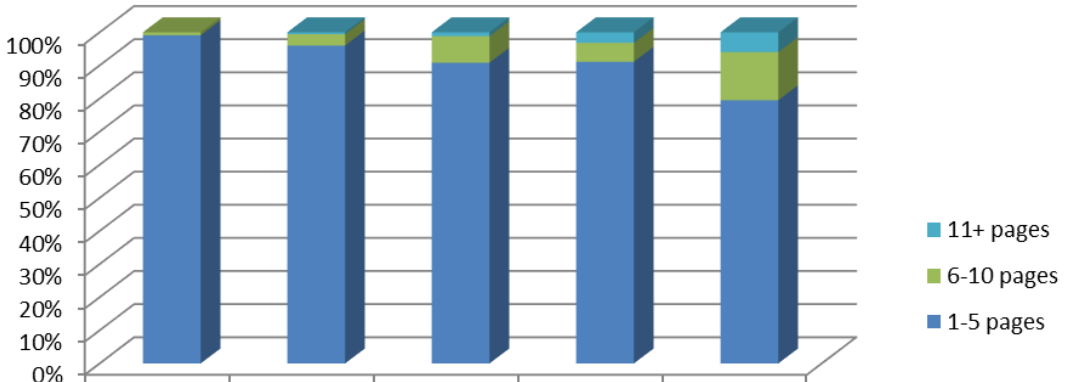
In the field of narratology, "Time", also called duration, is studied according to the relationship between: (a) real time, approached by means of the length of the narratives often linked to the total number of required pages, and (b) narrated time, i.e., the time as described in the narrative itself (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). For example, a single page can describe the origin of the universe over millions of years, whereas ten pages can describe the final seconds before a certain personage dies. All narratives dealt with in the present research are short: as much as 91.7 percent comprise between 1 and 5 pages. The lengthier examples cover up to ten pages. The techniques (e.g., summarisations and accelerations) the narrator adopts in order to manipulate time seem to be limited. In general, he or she describes scenes by means of dialogues which results in the equation: narrated time = real time.

Whenever any data on the narration time spans are recorded, the following distinction within the narrative is drawn between the below duration of time spans: (a) 1 day or less, (b) several days, (c) weeks, (d) months, and (e) years.

It has proved difficult to define the narrated time span. This issue is caused by the fact that, in the narratives, the elapsed time/duration is seldom explicit. Narratives with a short narrated time span and those with a lengthier narrated time span seem to be equally distributed. As many as 286 cases covered a short narrated time span (i.e., between a single day and several days), 87 cases a narrated time span of weeks and 274 cases a narrated time span of months or even years. Table 4.21 illustrates the ratio between the number of pages the narratives take up (i.e., real time) and the various categories of narrated time (i.e, the time in the stories themselves). Table 4.21 indeed reveals a relation between the two. Stories with a lengthier time span are also longer in real time, that is to say: they take up more pages.[89]

[89] The Chi-squared analysis confirms a link between "real time" and narrated time: $\chi^2(4) = 36.84$, $\rho < 0.001$ (significant).

**Table 4.21.** Duration: the narrated time in relation to real time.[90]




| | =< 1 day | Couple of days | Weeks | Months | Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11+ pages | | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| 6-10 pages | 1 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 17 |
| 1-5 pages | 110 | 168 | 79 | 143 | 93 |

The order of events does not often serve as an instrument to manipulate the contents of narratives. By and large, events are described in chronological order. It should nonetheless again be noted that these oral stories have been written down by non-native writers/researchers who may have utilised dissimilar techniques when compared with the (indigenous) narrator, simply because the audience of the non-native, often Western, writer is very different. He or she may have not only altered the sequence of events but also modified the use of time in order to suit his or her Western audience, adopting techniques familiar to us. By doing so the native tales become more accessible to the Western reader. Therefore only their literal transcriptions are in fact helpful when researching the native techniques which storytellers utilise. Unfortunately, the scope of this study does not include these transcriptions, as quantity is preferred over quality. A decision was taken to analyse a large number of narratives thereby renouncing an even more thorough narratological study on individual examples based on transcriptions. This quantitative approach provides the profound contextualisation of numerous animal actors, contributing to our understanding them to be *signs**.

It can be concluded that narratives dealt with in the present research are indeed short. Therefore, the techniques of summarisation and acceleration encountered here, for instance, relate to the numerous narratives which describe the lives of culture heroes from birth to adulthood. Here, too, the narrated time covers many years, whereas the real time can extend from between several minutes up to 60 minutes.

[90] The narrated time has not been recorded for all narratives (n=647 for 706 cases). Moreover, because certain examples are recorded by means of various sources, more than one record on one narrative is possible (only “real time” (i.e., number of pages) might deviate in those instances).

### 4.3.3 Conclusions on the story-layer

As the layer concerns the concrete manner according to which the narrator unfolds a story to his/her audiences, it is challenging to, on a general level, deal with all the layer's elements. Nevertheless, a number of general remarks have been placed regarding the two narrative elements referred to as "time or duration" and "characterization".

Apparently, by and large, the preferred mode of characterization is indirect. Nevertheless certain roles i.e., opponent and object/goal, the other two types of characterization occur relatively more often. In Chapters 5 to 7, the form of characterization is analysed on the level of clustered narratives. This may provide further insight into how narrators apply any characterizations in relation to specific animal personages and their ascribed role(s).

The presupposed relatedness of narrated time and "real time" is disclosed by means of this dataset. The longer the time span continues within the tale itself is, the more pages are filled.

## 4.4 Summing up

In the present chapter, the 706 narratives underlying this study have been analysed as a single dataset. The main goal was to reveal and research general patterns. This chapter is therefore very etic, hereby dealing with the data from a Western perspective by means of looking into structures as well as similarities. The data extracted from Chapter 4 are then compared to the data presented in Chapters 5-7, which will focus on narrative clusters.

At the heart of this research lie the featuring "animal" personages. In which chronotopes do they act? Which attributes and roles are ascribed to them? And, with what or whom are they associated with as to the narratives, and in which context? Various narrative functions have also been taken into consideration in order to better understand the narrators and their audiences.

### 4.4.1 Linguistic distribution and narrative functions

Of the 706 cases as many as *c*.60 percent originate from the core area. In total, 20 language families are represented as encountered in 81 languages. The fact that narratives from outside the core area (on occasion even far beyond) are included enables a broader perspective on the distribution of motifs. A wide circulation of motifs and themes indicates they are not only broadly known geographically but most likely are consistently present throughout time, too.

Information on narrative functions has also been documented in order to better comprehend the reason why the Amerindians told and continue to tell these stories. The most frequently encountered function is: validating the world, followed by two less frequent functions: encoding social behaviour, and informing. Less often represented are the narrative functions referred to as ensuring knowledge and Identity. This indicates that narratives most probably

served (and still serve) to not only make sense of the world but also to indirectly discuss either approved or disapproved behaviour, as well as social conventions.

### 4.4.2 "Animal" actors

The present chapter also disclosed which "animal" personages feature most prominently in the narratological corpus. The most recorded was, by far, the jaguar (*Panthera onca*). Other "animals" repeatedly documented were (aquatic) snakes (of the genus *Eunectes*), birds (in general), New World vultures, Central and South American tapirs, monkeys, and turtles. Although the iconography leads us towards the choice as to which creatures are to be further analysed in Chapters 5 to 7, certain "animals" (referred to as "anomalies") are also included. A premise of the present research deals with the fact that creatures often portrayed in the narratives are also likely to occur in the shape of iconographical zoomorphic features, see 3.1.

An important aspect of studying animal actors concerns their allocated attributes and roles. As to the six roles, or actants, proposed by Greimas, the object/goal role dominates. A specific "animal" actor can be entrusted with this role because it is either hunted or sought after in revenge. It can also be the object of one's desire (as a paramour or - potential - spouse). Three other common roles are: helper, subject/actor and sender. The opponent role is less documented and helper, for instance, occurs twice as often. This indicates that, in general, animals assist the protagonist more often than that they act as its adversary. The present chapter also demonstrates that certain animal personages are more likely to be assigned to specific roles.

It may be added here that owls and bats are more frequently and explicitly described as (transformed) spirits, whereas ants, vultures, duck and turtles are more often expressly depicted as shamans.

### 4.4.3 The events, motifs and setting in space and time

Another element of the fabula-layer comprises the most common events which all were related to quest, rescue and deception (in which one tries to outsmart another). However, when individual motifs were also taken into consideration (which concern transformation and the origin of the world and all it contains), we observed that murder and punishments were the most dominant.

Actors, as well as events, are portrayed within a certain context (or chronotope) in space and time. Events mainly take place in wooded areas during the daytime. Zooming in on the various cosmic layers, the land-layer prevails, followed by layers encountered in the water and sky worlds. The interrelatedness between these roles and their spatial contexts have also been analysed. This procedure did not disclose any significant variations in the ascribed roles related to a forest or village context but did whenever roles were related to cosmic layers. The underworld seems to be linked to the role of object/goal whereas the helper's role is more linked to the sky world when compared to other layers.

### 4.4.4 Characterization and duration

In the present chapter, the story-layer has also been the subject of analysis. This layer focuses on the concrete manner in which events and actors are dealt with. The way the animal actors are characterized (also referred to as the mode of characterization) is also discussed. Preferably, in general, this mode is Indirect. However, for a number of roles, opponent and object/goal, the other two types of characterization, have been applied relatively more often. These two modes (i.e., direct and analogue) can be seen as instruments with which certain aspects (both physical as well as behavioural) of a specific actor can be emphasized. Therefore it is interesting to investigate which aspects either explicate or emphasize a certain animal.

The presupposed relatedness of narrated time and real time, i.e., duration, does occur in this data set. The longer the time span within the narrative itself continues, the more pages are required. This aspect of duration cannot be studied without taking into consideration the fact that all tales met within the present study are written-down transcriptions. The techniques (e.g., acceleration and summarisation) applied in order to manipulate the narrated time may just as well have been added by the (Western) researcher/transcriber. In general, the duration of a narrative provides us with certain information on its nature. Is its contents more epic? Does it entail various episodes or challenges? Does it continue for months or even years? Does the tale resemble a fable in which a single event (e.g., challenge) is the main focus?

Chapter 4 forms the foundation, a basis for comparison and a tool to not only test but also interpret the outcome of the analysis of the clustered narratives dealt with in Chapters 5 to 7. Therefore the results of Chapter 4 facilitate a more statistic approach to Chapters 5 to 7.