We are Mehinaku: myth and ceremony among a tribal people
Mehinaku are a refugee group of about 250 people living in a multi-ethnic area.

First photo near time of contact (1894)
Rites of Intensification (cycle):
- enhances group solidarity
- dramatizes the values of a culture
- marks or confirms one's social, ritual or political status within the group

Relationships between the sexes expressed in ritual

Male and female differences portrayed in ritual:
- opposition
- complimentarity
- separateness
- Antagonisms

Sexual symbolism
Female puberty confinement
Myth and ritual as models and justification for differences between men and women
The Rituals

- **Matapu**: spirit of pequi fruit used to frighten women. Formerly women ruled then men stole the sacred flutes from them and gained ascendancy.
- **Yupay**: comical anteater driven away by women because of his unwanted sexual advances.
- **Alukaka**: women attempt to pull desirable men out of line.
- **Yuyutu**: men take revenge on women by smearing them with black grease.
- **Mapulawaja**: terminal ritual where men dressed as pequi spirits must be fed and honored to insure a good crop.

Other issues considered:

Romantic notions of
- Peace (they were driven out of their homeland and now have a peaceful existence in the Upper Xingu)
- Environmental conservation (they are unable to damage the environment)

Mehinaku representation of themselves to us: we are human and not savage Indians

Threats to their existence by
- miners
- missionaries
- ranchers

Problem of new needs and dependence