Oil extraction and small scale gold mining have produced seriously degraded landscapes in the borderlands of the Peruvian and Ecuadorian Amazonia. In recent years the Peruvian and the Ecuadorian authorities have declared these sites of extraction as areas in sanitary and environmental emergency and as areas of environmental disaster, respectively. In this chapter I focus my discussion on the connections villagers and health practitioners establish between recurrent illness, other beings which populate forests and rivers, and hydrocarbons and heavy metals present in water bodies and soils.

Using conceptual tools such as person multiple and entanglements, I discuss how the villagers conceive of persons, bodies and thereby of illness as being and becoming through and in relations, and through the many acts of others. I suggest that illness is the product of undesired transformations that erase differences. The success of treatment rests on making visible the agencies of undesired processes of assimilation.

As persons and bodies, illness is, however, a multiple entanglement. The villagers also consider that illness may be the result of long time exposure to toxic elements which might produce cancer. I contend that the ways through which evidence making processes are carried out together with the bio-medical diagnosis and treatment practices, as enacted in these sites, confirm and negate the effects heavy metals might have on exposed bodies. While exposition is confirmed, its possible effects on bodies, as for instance cancer, seldom are examined. I suggest that a continuous state of indeterminacy is produced, which both fosters impunity and constitutes other ways of life and of being as undesirable and thereby as sacrificeable.