

Remember the living, forget the dead: kinship and memory among the karajá of buridina village (central Brazil)

Abstract

Hello! Hi, Renan! This is Eduardo.

Hi, Eduardo! Jeez, boy, you've never called us again; I thought you had forgotten us!

After a short stretch of time in which kinship studies, under the influence of Schneider's^{1,2} and Needham³ criticism, suffered a recess within anthropology, the 1990s witnessed a rebirth of the studies on the subject, although in new bases. In South America and elsewhere, these new studies have pointed to what we might call "performativity of kinship": relations are not given-by a biogenetic bond, for instance - but must be continually produced and therefore can also be unmade.⁴⁻⁷ These relations, as the "anthropology of everyday life" has pointed out,^{8,9} are produced in daily living, in which conviviality and commensality play central roles. But this nexus of relations does not produce kinship (ties) alone; at the same extent, it also produces persons, bodies and, ultimately, humanity. Indeed, all these issues are substantially merged in Amerindian sociocosmologies. If kinship is a process of bodily resemblance, of the making of analogous bodies, the process of production of the person coincides, to a large extent, with the production of kinship. And if the convergence of perspectives is a property of bodily similitude,¹⁰ and if reciprocal apprehension of humanity depends on this convergence - that is, being human for someone is to share his or her point of view-then, kinship and humanity are coextensive. The body, or rather, its production is here central. As Peter Gow¹¹ puts it, "bodies here [in Lowland South America] are made, not given and one ethnography after another has been showing how bodies are constructed and transformed by the sharing of substances such as food, words and diseases".

Keywords: kinship, human, fishing, hunting, cropping, food

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Introduction

Note what kind of things Gow characterizes as substances. This point is crucial to the argument of this article: words, affections, or memory, for instance-which we could situate as on an "immaterial" plane-participate in the process of kinship production to the same extent as food or procreation-something we could easily characterize as "material"-, for both "types of thing" produce bodies. Let us remember what Lucien Lévy-Bruhl¹² had taught us almost a century ago. For the "primitive mentality," as he calls it, there is no apartness between what we consider to be two dimensions of the world, the material and the immaterial: "The visible and the invisible worlds are only one and the events of the visible world depend at every single instant on the powers of the other. For spirits thus oriented, there is no purely physical fact".¹² And if "the notion of matter as a universal substrate seems wholly absent from Amazonian ontologies",¹³ it's completely inadequate to consider food and memory as "different types of things". But if the ethnographies of Amerindian peoples have sufficiently deepened the centrality of food in the process of kinship, it was only in recent years, after Peter Gow's brilliant ethnography,¹⁴ as well as his later article on Piro kinship,¹⁵ that affections, words and memory were to attract comparable ethnographic efforts. Even so, there are still few researches that focus on the subject -I would specially point to Miguel Carid's doctoral thesis.¹⁶

The aim of this article is to make a description of some aspects of the field of kinship in Buridina Karajá village focusing on its

construction and destruction by affections and, mainly, by memory. But if affections and memory are so central for the production of bodies as eating, I will argue that they do not operate in one single direction: kin are produced by remembering of the living, one is properly human because he or she remembers his or her relatives, but remembering the dead directs the process in the opposite direction, thus placing kinship, that is, humanity at risk. In fact, this two-dimensionality characterizes the process of kinship, which, as Viveiros de Castro¹⁷ pointed out, operates through the dynamics between the line that ascends towards potential affinity (alteration) and the line that descends toward body resemblance (kin making). Each kin making vector has as its counterpart one of alteration and vice versa: by remembering one another, the living are produced as same-kinded among themselves and, thus, as different-kinded for the dead; on the other hand, remembering the dead (specifically those recently deceased) produces oneself as same-kinded to them and therefore as different-kinded for the living. But before we proceed, I shall first situate the reader ethnographically. The Iny, Karajá, Javaé and Xambioá (Northern Karajá), speakers of a Macro-Jê affiliated language-the inrybè,¹ inhabit immemorially the Araguaia river valley. Most of their villages are located on Bananal Island (state of Tocantins). Buridina, the Karajá village where I have done fieldwork, is located at the confluence of the Red and Araguaia rivers-

¹Iny is the self-designation term of the three groups; rybè means "speech", "language", "manner of speaking." This Macro-Jê related language¹⁸ has a differentiation of speech according to the speaker's sex.¹⁹ Female and male variants of word are here indicated respectively by the symbols ♀ and ♂.

which in this region makes the border between the states of Goiás and Mato Grosso—and is the southern limit of the group's territory. Its spatial situation is atypical: it's a small village embedded in the very center of the touristic town of Aruanã (state of Goiás),² surrounded by the urban infrastructure except for the riverside. In the 1970s, its inhabitants began a process of intermarriage with the regional population that continues up to this day, so that approximately 75% of the current marriages involve a Tori (white, non-indigenous)—a considerable part of its population being thus mestiça, a term used by both the Karajá and the regional non-indigenous population alike to refer to those who have a Tori, non-indigenous ascending relative. Relations with the whites, therefore, are central to the sociality of Buridina and it is on this matter that my research focuses. The description of the process of kinship in this village which I undertake here, however, do not have the relation to the whites, or the *mistura* ("mixture"), as its guiding thread, although some of its aspects touch upon the question.³

They keep on coming since they're little: remember the living

Children have a central place in the process of kinship production within the domestic group. During the months of fieldwork in which I had the opportunity to be hosted at the house of one of the village families, I could observe how much of daily life revolves around "giving sustenance" to the children/grandchildren.⁴ Women spend much of the day cooking and tending the house, while men engage in various "productive activities" such as fishing, hunting, agriculture, temporary jobs in the town, fixed jobs as an indigenous school teacher, health agent, electrician or lookout which ultimate purpose is always the well-being of the family. In Karajá daily life, there is an association between women and the household, by the one hand and between men, exterior and otherness,⁵ by the other: husbands are

²To a more detailed description of the history of the village and its spatial configuration see Nunes20,21 Today, Buridina is located in an demarcated Indigenous Land divided into three plots, two in the state of Goiás (Karajá de Aruanã I and Karajá de Aruanã III) and another in the state of Mato Grosso (Karajá Aruanã II). For details of the demarcation process, see Braga²²

³This is not say, however, that the approach I present here is incompatible with a reflection on the relations with whites. It would be possible to make the same kind of analysis focusing on, for example, the food and affections considered by Karajá as non-indigenous. I explore this matter further in my master's dissertation.²¹

⁴The Karajá, like the related Jê speaking peoples, have a widely documented tendency towards uxorilocality.^{23–25} In Buridina, this trend is crossed by another logic, for the non-indigenous spouses of both sexes are brought to live within the village—part of weddings being thus virilocal.²⁰ But in both cases, the dynamics of the domestic group works in such a way that the new couple usually reside initially in their parent's/in-law's household, to later build a house nearby. At the beginning of the wedding, and sometimes even after the couple build their own house and already has some (small) children, parents/in-laws are the main providers of this core. Thus, the senior couple of a domestic group is always implied in the raising of both their own children and their grandchildren.

⁵More recently I have argued that this association is much broader. Indeed, women are associated not only to the household itself, but also to the residential segment of the village (the *ix̃y*), to kinship and, more widely, to humanity. That is to say, humanity (and kinship) assumes a feminine aspect. On the other hand, men are those who go out of the village frequently to fish, game and cropping, for instance, and therefore often roam through places where a myriad of "spirits" dwell. In addition to that, it is them who ritually transform into a wide range of non-human beings (the *aõni* ♂, see note 15 below), what happens in the ritual plaza, a inherently male place to which women cannot approach. There is thus an correspondent association of a male principle, alteration/transformation and otherness.²⁶

responsible for fetching firewood, bring meat (fish, turtle or game, as it may be), cropping or earn money to buy meat (chicken, beef or pork, the commercial options), rice, beans, oil, salt, sugar and manioc flour (the main components of this village's diet),⁶ while wives are responsible for preparing food for consumption, feed the children and keep the house clean.

In these activities breaks—especially in the early morning, late afternoon and evening—families gather, sitting on the front balconies or in the back of their house, always watching and taking care of children who roam the yard. They keep watching what they grab (potentially harmful or dirt/contaminated objects, for instance) that, where they walk—preventing them from getting too close to the river bank when alone—, what they do, bath them (or say them to do so, when they are a little bigger), dress them, comb their hairs, talk to them and, at various moments, draw them close to his or herself, hold them in their lap and caress them until they release themselves back to walking and playing around the yard. Children are always at the center of these moments of sociality and it is largely around them that everyday life revolves. If there are no children in a household, the Karajá say it is "sad".⁷

Food is also a central issue. Throughout my field research, for example, at the end of almost every meal I had with my host family, Renan, the head of this household, said, "Yeah, Eduardo, thus is our life." One day he completed the saying, which, however, was already implied: "Thus is our life, eating." The act of eating itself, or rather, sharing this moment with one's relatives, eating the same food as they do is important, but also what is eaten. They have their own food, which in Buridina is called "Indian food" or "Iñy food": in current diet, it is mainly crops as squash, manioc or watermelon, manioc flour (especially *puba* flour, 'water-flour'), fish, game meat and especially turtle (and their eggs), the Iñy food par excellence. I once talked to a man about the *mistura* and the children of the village while we observed two of his grandchildren being fed by his daughter. "You see," he said, "since they are little they eat fish and turtle. Thus their indigenous side¹¹ keep coming on, coming on".

On the other hand, chicken, beef or pork, rice, beans and industrialized food, among others, are "white food" or "Tori food" and the consumption of these foods direct the kinship process in the opposite direction. An anecdote illustrates an extreme case. In the 1970s occurred the first marriage occurred with a non-indigenous woman who followed the new tendency for white spouses to be brought to live in the village, in the house of in-laws. The Karajá man gradually stepped in to accommodate his wife's food preferences. Since at that time one did not eat chicken, eggs, beef or milk, the boys commented: "He's turning into an animal, he's eating chicken!" Even though the "Tori food" is now part of the everyday life of the Karajá of Buridina, if they only ate the food of the whites they would not be able to access the indigenous perspective, which is evident in the criticisms some made to those who, for various reasons, eat less fish and turtle: if they do not act like a Karajá should, it is because they eat too much of non-indigenous food—if they are "weak", for example, it is because they eat very little turtle meat.

Food is certainly one of the privileged means of kin production. Not

⁶The Karajá use to refer in Portuguese to this set of properly male activities as the obligation or the need "bring food home". This very expression is itself an evidence of how all of these activities are, ultimately directed towards the production of kinship.

⁷"Sadness" refers to a multiplicity of states contrary to proper human sociality; during mourn or when it lacks public, collective ritual activities, a village is also said to be "sad".²⁷

only because food affects the body, but also because of the relations and positions of kinship implied in the pair “to feed someone”/“to be fed by someone.” The care, attention and work put into the daily act of “giving food” participate in the process of producing and making bodies alike as much as food itself. And memory has a central place within it. Here I offer a short self-centered note, through my own experience of being related by the Karajá, to enlighten this process. Memory is central to the production of kinship in Buridina: it is by remembering one’s kin that one produces himself and others as kinsmen. The Karajá, however, do not often say it explicitly (although they sometimes do), for the importance of the memory of kinship is evoked especially when the kinship process “fails,” so to speak. That relatives remember each other is, it seems to me, a given in the Karajá’s world and therefore it is mainly when one should remember one’s relatives but does not that this fact is made clear. Or when there is a greatest uncertainty⁸ on the effectiveness of the process, as in the case of a Tori that gets to live a prolonged period with the Indians, tries to learn their language, takes an interest in their sociocosmology and willingly adheres to their eating habits: an ethnologist, it could be.

In March 2011, a workshop was held in Buridina in which some Karajá from Bananal Island were present. I was helping with the organization and documentation of the event. One day early in the evening, Renan and I went out to buy supplies for the workshop and I left, at his request, money with his eldest son to buy meat for our dinner, which would be prepared by his sister. We went to town and came back and, at the time we arrived back to the workshop’s location, Renan went to the school canteen where the meals were being prepared for the visitors, but where some of the locals ended up eating too and served his food. I followed him. As soon as we began to eat, her daughter passed by and saw us eating. When we returned home after the “daily journey”, she commented to me, mildly upset: “Hey, Eduardo, you guys ate at the canteen, right? It’s a good thing I saw it, because I was about to heating up dinner for you. I’ll no longer remember of you, you’ll see!” She then recalled another episode. One day, at the beginning of the fieldwork, I went to Aricá (as they call one of the sections their land) and ended up having dinner there, in the house of Renan’s sister Kari. When I arrived back at Renan’s, his wife entered the house and brought me a food plate she had kept for me. Having already eaten too much though, I refused it—what was off course very impolite of mine. Reminding me of this situation, her daughter repeated her mother’s saying at the time, that she “would not remember of me anymore.” After all, she had remembered of me, keeping me a food plate and I “did not remember of her,” I ate in another house without warning her.

This same issue appeared some other times during fieldwork. In the last days of my stay in Buridina due to my undergraduate conclusion research, I went to say goodbye to Kari. She, as several people do when I’m leaving, asked me when I would return, to which I replied that I did not know: I would go back home and write my work about the village. She said, “Do not forget of us. When you have a time, on your vacation, come, we’ll be here.” Sometimes, too, when I took too long to call Buridina again to talk to the Karajá, Renan told me that he thought I had “forgotten of them”, as in the dialogue quoted in epigraph. However, the call itself as well as every time I return to the village, reveals to them I have not forgotten. Though the first two comments on food mentioned above were made in a somewhat jocular

tone, both point to a crucial question: the reciprocity of memory. An act that evidences the memory of kinship is the result that reveals the effectiveness of the action of kin making (what I said above about my phone calls and my trips to the village serves as example). It is by the positive reaction of a child to the food his mother gives him or her, that is, when the child shows appreciation for the act of being fed and for the food itself, that woman “knows herself”,²⁸ as a mother. It is thus by the very process of production of a child as human, by the memory that his or her mother has of him or her and that makes her feed and care for him or her that the mother herself knows herself, that it, produces herself as such. Kin-becoming is a process of individuation that, as Simondon²⁹ puts it, creates not solely the individual but the pair individual-surroundings. The quotidian acts of “giving sustenance” do not imply a mother/grandmother, a father/grandfather “already constituted”, a child “to be constituted” or “in constitution.” The acts of “feeding someone” (“giving sustenance”) have no existence apart from the “acts of being fed by someone” (“being cared for by someone”), the former do not differ from the later as an active to a passive process. The effectiveness of kin making therefore depends on this reciprocity: if a child does not remember his mother/grandmother—if he or she does not call it by the appropriate kinship term, if he or she does not seek it to be fed, if he or she does not show to like her—both she will not be produced as human, as a relative and her mother/grandmother will not know/produce herself as such. To become kin, one needs to remember and to be remembered.^{10,30}

This reciprocal quality of memory is well illustrated by the Piro concept *nshinikanchi*, “mind, intelligence, memory, respect, love,” a quality that cannot be taught to children but must emerge spontaneously. “Its first and most important manifestation is intelligible speech; the use of kinship terms to attract attention and care is the most salient and powerful aspect of this ability”.¹⁵ Gow¹⁵ goes on speaking of the contexts in which myths are told. “When the old ones tell ‘histories of the ancients’ to their grandchildren, both the narrator and the listeners are demonstrating their *nshinikanchi*: the children, by showing interest in the unfolding of the narrative; the old ones by the very act of telling the story, by the fact that they are alive to tell it and to have living grandchildren to tell it to”.¹⁵ This Piro concept, indeed, provides a powerful translation for the centrality of memory, words and affections to the process of Amerindian kinship production. If the production of children as kin demands a reciprocal memory, there is, however, an asymmetry. Children appear as “objects” to their parents (which appear therefore as “subjects”): they need to make human. When we look at the relationship between the spouses, the question appears in a different manner. Such asymmetry, nevertheless, remains there. The distinction Marilyn Strathern makes between “person” and “agent” in *The Gender of the Gift*²⁸ helps to elucidate the point. The “agent,” she says, is a subject who acts with another subject—the “person”—in mind; the “person” is thus the reference, or the cause of the action of the “agent.” Here, therefore, the action and its cause are separate. When a Karajá man goes fishing, he does it with someone in mind (his wife) and it is this someone who compels him to act. This, in fact, is the problem of celibacy. As Peter Gow³¹ says about the Piro, if a bachelor does not produce, it is because he has no one—a spouse—to produce for. He is fed by his kin: these, in turn, produce because they are married, that is, they have a “person” who is the “cause” of their productive action.³¹

⁸Greater uncertainty, I say, because in a world where the effectiveness of actions and capabilities of people are only revealed by its effects, all relation is loaded with a certain amount of uncertainty.

⁹It is this idea of knowledge that permeates Marilyn Strathern’s *The Gender of the Gift*.²⁸

¹⁰This same idea of reciprocal constitution of parents and children is also present in Nicole Soares-Pinto’s analysis on the Wajuru kinship.³⁰

Karajá youngsters have no obligation to work. In Buridina, their parents sometimes ask their help in small tasks, but the “sustenance” of the household is responsibility of the senior couple. This responsibility is often translated by them as the obligation to “bring food home”, that is, to perform various activities with the purpose of obtaining food either directly—fishing, hunting or cropping—, or by obtaining money, which for the most part is reverted for the purchase of food. This is a charge imputed to men. An unmarried young man only goes fishing, produces crafts or engages in some form of wage work if it pleases him—if he wants to buy some goods, for instance. The reason, his own “desire”, is the same as when he decides to play or not to play soccer in late afternoon, for example. Likewise, a single girl has no obligation to keep the house clean or to cook: it is her mother who must do it. When they marry, however, they acquire obligations; or rather they come to have someone (a spouse) to produce for: the young man is compelled to “bring food home” and his wife is compelled to cook for him. Even if the newly-married couple still live in the house of their mother-in-law, the girl’s mother will no longer cook for her: she has to do it herself, because she has a husband (and soon enough also children) who compels her to do so. We see, therefore, that kinship production has a central place in Karajá daily life. Virtually every activity a man (married) engages in has the ultimate purpose of “bringing food home”; and, equally, practically all the work of (married) women has as ultimate effect the production of kinship.

But if I say that the spouses mutually “compel” each other to act, or rather to produce, this does not mean coercion in the strong sense of the word. Here, as in the case production of children as human, memory is central and equally it is only when the process of kinship “fails” that it is evinced and the relationship between spouses then may appear as coercion. In the course of everyday life, a man is always planning his fish expeditions or his craft production. He does not need his wife to tell him that he should fish, sell handicrafts, or engage in temporary work, he simply does, decides to do so. As Strathern²⁸ reminds us, although the “person” that the “agent” has in mind is the motive or the cause of his action, the agency is in the “agent”, not in the “person”-cause of its action. A man engages alternatively in one or other of these activities, therefore, because he remembers of his wife and of his children. In the same way, a woman cooks or cleans the house because she remembers of her family: her husband does not press her for her to do it. And it is only when one of the spouses does not remember him or herself of the other, when a man spends too much time without fishing and there is no more fish for his wife to cook or when a woman leaves for town before lunch or dinner, delaying the meal and leaving her husband and her children hungry, that forms of coercion appear: I have once seen, for instance, a woman that refused herself to cook for her husband because her gas ran out and he did not buy a filled cylinder—she did not want to cook with firewood. Memory, as I have tried to show, is as important to the process of kinship production as, for example, commensality. These two elements, however, seem to place themselves at different levels of the process. The act of feeding a child and doing so with a specific food produces his or her body as a kin’s body. Memory, however, is on a less immediate level, so to speak: it appears as a very condition of the process of kinship. Without the memory of kinship one does not produce, one does not feed his or her children, one does not take care of them, for it is kin memory that provides the flow of food, words, affections, various substances, in short, the whole range of elements whose circulation makes kin bodies alike.

We keep remembering it, it’s too bad: forget the dead

The centrality kinship for Karajá sociality appears in the world of the dead in negative: the worst punishment for anyone is to die of “violent death” or “shedding blood” (murdered or drowned, for example).¹¹ The “souls” of these people do not stay in the village of the dead, located right beneath the cemetery (wabàdè), but in their own, separated village towards ibràra (the direction contrary to the riverbank in the sun axis), but also in the underground. According to Rodrigues’ description on the neighboring Javaé (a closely related group who also refer to themselves as Inỹ), this is a dark place, there is a lot of gossip, objects such as oars and houses are worthless, one eats raw because there is no fire, the rain is hot and burns the dead, crops do not burgeon and, what is critical, they are constantly fighting one another because they miss their kin though “they cannot even recognize them”.²⁷ In the cemeteries, these dead are buried separately from those who died from other causes: the Karajá say that this is done so they will not torment the other dead, which, in their new condition, come to be known as wakuràsỹ ♀, woràsỹ ♂. With the decomposition of the person affected by death, there arises a new component, the kuni ♀, uni ♂, a sort of aggressive “ghost” in constant movement that “roams in search of its kin, returns to the house where it used to go, goes after those with which it had a close relationship. Its kin thus fear the deceased’s ‘soul’ who returns in the condition of stranger, of complete ‘other’ total, to assault and strike”.^{12,21}

Death among the Karajá, as well as among numerous other South American indigenous groups, operates a radical disjunction towards living.¹³ In its new condition, the dead becomes a different-kind: a kinship relation gives way to one of otherness. “That one who dies immediately acquires the condition of radical otherness in relation to the community in which it lived. Strangeness is greater in relation to its own kinsmen, whom the dead chase after in the dreaded condition of kuni, a starving, potentially cannibal being that is in permanent movement and that does not stop walking in despair, looking for of its relatives which it no longer recognizes”.²⁵ This transformation put forward by death, as Patricia Rodrigues says, is the reverse of that which a newborn suffers. The child, “though sharing the same vital

¹¹In later researches, I came to a slightly different understanding. The contrast here is not that between a violent death in which one perishes shedding blood and a “regular” death, caused by some disease (which, today, may be reckoned either as inỹ binana, “inỹ diseases”, that is to say, a state caused by sorcery, or tori banana, “Tori diseases”, non-indigenous in origin). Rather, the contrast is that between a quick abrupt death, when someone is perfectly healthy and perishes suddenly (murdered, drowned, attacked by an animal etc.) and a gradual languish caused by a sickness that leads more or less slowly to death. The first abrupt kind of dying generates a specter called hurè; the second gradual one generates a worosỹ. For a more detailed description, see Nunes.²⁶

¹²The kuni ♀, uni ♂ is a specter of a deceased. The Karajá use the term in a much broad, not precisely defined way, hence their difficulty to explain properly what are a uni as well as the not very much clear descriptions and definitions one may find about it in the ethnographies. In its most current use of the word, uni refers to the form in which the dead can “appear” (one does not necessarily sees them, but hear their crying or a another strange noise produced by them or simply a clearly unusual movement if the bush) singularized to the living, and thus in a dangerous manner—the woràsỹ, on the contrary, manifest themselves always as a collectivity.

¹³Desidério Aytai, who did fieldwork in Buridina village, emphasizes this disjunction. “Burial being carried in conformity with the dead’s category, the destruction of their property run as custom orders, and the food and drinks placed in the tomb, the Karajá have guarantee against the return of the dead. The concern with this guarantee is very apparent in the Karajá village. ‘The Indian is very afraid of ghost, more than anything else’ Hawakati.³³

substance with his or her kin, to a greater or lesser degree is born in the condition of stranger with regard to the parents' feelings. It's only with the passing of time that proper kin affection will be directed to he or she".²⁷ A Karajá man once told me that this new being "is born as an *aõni*"¹⁴ not as a human. "In indigenous South America, as we are well aware, humans are made out of others."^{4,15}

To die, we might say, is a direction reversal of the process of kinship: the dead will join the *woràsÿ* among whom it will now start anew to produce same-kindred relations. Among the Inÿ, this kin making does not assume, however, the feature most common among Jê speaking peoples. Among the Krahô, for instance, the disjunction in relation to the living is completed when, upon arriving at the village of the dead, the "soul" of the deceased eats the food offered to him or participates in a log race for which he is guest. If he does not eat, does not run and "remembers" of his living relatives-causing the dead themselves to remember that he has living relatives to care for-he may be able to return to them.³² Death is not a single and unequivocal process. When a Karajá falls asleep, for example, his *tákytáby* ♀, *tyytáby* ♂ leaves his or her body, the same that occurs in certain types of disease. These two cases are a sort of diminished deaths: there is always the danger that *tyytáby* ♂ will not ever return and the person will complete the "process" of dying.

Moreover, the *woràsÿ* are not so very kind to their new mate. Instead of offering him food—inducing him to see them as equals, thus turning him into one of them—they deceive him and subject him to a series of captious tests. The deceased is first deceived: the *woràsÿ* show him two roads, one very dirty, which leads back to the world of the living and another clean and broad one, which holds him among the dead. He is advised to go down the clean road, for in the dirty one there are many dangers that would end up killing him. If the deceased chooses to continue on the dirty road he is obliged by the *woràsÿ* to go by the other. They force him to eat spoiled food, to drink rotten or hot water, hit him, his eyes are sucked by *Kròlahi* ♀ *Áròlahi* ♂ (a big toad) and so on.^{25,27} The result of this deceiving is though the very transformation of the deceased into *woràsÿ*. Dead to the living, it becomes living for the dead.¹⁵ As Aparecida Vilaça⁴ had already noticed, the process of kin making takes place not solely through conviviality and commensality, but can also occur through aggression, predation or cannibalism. Both are "equally effective means of producing kin, despite constituting different kinds of processes":⁴ the result of a disease by *jamikarawa*, the theft of the soul by an animal, may result in establishing kinship relations between a man and a

¹⁴The term *anõni* ♀, *aõni* ♂, refers to a range of spirits that inhabit Karajá cosmos. On the one hand, it designates beings that are capable of "magical" actions, to follow Patricia Rodrigues²⁵ phrasing. Therefore, the great majority of mythical time's beings, from demiurges to first humanity and primordial animals, are qualified as *aõni*. The masked *ijasò* that shamans bring to dance in the village are also *aõni*; and also shamans, who are able to see, listen and talk to a number of *aõni*, travel great distances in a short stretch of time through the controlled extraction of their very "soul" or "spirit", are themselves said to be *aõni*. In this sense, we could say *aõni* does not designate a specific group of beings but "magical", non-human mode of action. There are, however, a class of being of monstrous form and habits, dangerous and potentially anthropophagi (*inÿròdu*, "people eaters"). Either as a class of beings or as a mode of action, the *aõni* is the epitome of Otherness for the Inÿ, and thus the antithesis of humanity. See Nunes.²⁶

¹⁵"When a Karajá dies, he goes through a process that makes him a *Worÿsÿ*. The deceased, accompanied by the *Worÿsÿ*, goes up the Araguaia River in search of cold water. In this place he meets a dead village's *hári* [shaman] and ask to be thrown into the cold water. The *hári* throws the deceased into cold water and thus he becomes alive again".^{23,26}

certain animal species that will turn him into a shaman.^{16,34} It is by an aggressive process of this sort that the *woràsÿ* make themselves "kin", same-kindred to the deceased, consolidating his condition of ex-human. However, it is important to note that this "kin making by aggression" is ambiguous: as in a kidnapping of a child, taken from within others (which for the child are his own kin) to be made kin, the act may be seen either as an aggression or as a kin making. In effect, the possibility of seeing this action in one or another way depends on the perspective one assumes.

Meanwhile, the living, in their own way, helps the *woràsÿ* in their task. As the deceased turns into another, a different-kindred, it is necessary to "forget him." To remember of the dead is a means of making oneself same-kindred to them, which puts one's humanity at risk: if it is by remembering of the living that a person becomes kin, same-kindred to other living, remembering of the dead can transform the person into a same-kindred to the dead, that is, into a dead person. This is, in fact, a central issue for Jê speaking peoples: if one remembers much of a recently deceased relative, the deceased may end up leading the person next to himself.³⁵ Although among the Karajá the matter is not so straightforwardly put, it seems to me that the same danger is at stake. During mourning, everything that characterizes Inÿ sociality is suspended. A death immediately interrupts any ritual activity or, if it occurs before the ritual begins, the "feast", as the Indians usually call their rituals, might be canceled or postponed, depending of the ritual. Because of the death of one of Raul Hawakati's sons, for example, the Karajá of Buridina canceled a trip they were about to make to participate in 2010 Santa Isabel's village *Hetohokÿ* (male initiation ritual). Death and mourning are "sad" events, thus incompatible with the "joy" that characterizes ritual time, for the festivity itself as well as because it promotes the meeting of kin living in different villages. Mourning is also a suspension of the communicative activity that marks the human sociality, for "life in society is conceived as the production of sounds".²⁷ Throughout mourning silence lingers, one cannot "cry, speak loud, laugh or display 'joy' in anyways".²⁷ This quietness is only broken by the female ritual cry, *ibru* (*iburu* in Javaé language), a wail that is heard in the distance and which melody and lyrics are aesthetically appreciated.¹⁷ Women, especially those of the deceased's family, cry for days after the death, losing her voices after some time, what does not prevent them to continue the lamentation—I will speak more of this ritual crying below. Throughout mourning, body cares such as hair cutting and body painting are also suspended, "one should not intermingle body painting, which is made for the individual to live, to accumulate energy and become desired, with feelings concerning death and the loss of someone".²⁷ When mourning comes to an end, this suspended state of the properly human life dos also finishes: women can no longer cry ritually—"which is not to say that the deceased's kin are obliged to be 'happy' or to participate in ritual life"²⁷—and all usual activities, including the ritual, are resumed.^{18,36}

¹⁶Marilyn Strathern says something similar concerning Melanesia: "If force is applied to an external object it is to display the imprint of one's own effectiveness, and in this sense to make the object part of one. Indeed, violence may have an assimilative effect in general".²⁸

¹⁷"Women produce an original speech, which is created at the moment of sorrow, following the cultural patterns of rhyme, sound, in sum, the rules that define what a 'beautiful' crying is. The audience that hears the music and lyrics judges the cries within aesthetic criteria, classifying women as 'great' singers or not, who may become famous in several villages".²⁷

¹⁸It should be noted that remembering the dead is especially dangerous during mourning. After it, or elapsed a considerable time after the death, the relationship between the living and the dead changes and acquiring a generally

Therefore, for life to take its course, in order for the living to continue making themselves alike each other, same-kindred to each other, it is necessary to forget the dead. This memory is disruptive because, as I said above, it directs kin making process in a way contrary to the production of kinship among the living. Memory produces relations, but in this case it is a dangerous one.¹⁹ In Buridina village I heard it recurrently formulated in terms of a spatial disjunction. One of the men that were central to the 1950s and 1960s village's restructuration after virtually all its population have been dispersed as a result of two sorcery related incidents, only accepted his brother's invitation to move to Buridina after the death of his daughter, who was still a small child. He was disgustful and preferred to start anew in another village.²⁰ I've heard other similar cases. Another man once told me he used to go with a Tori friend take Buriti palm sprouts in a place out of the town of Aruanã where these palms trees abound. Whenever they went there, they spent almost the entire afternoon chatting, only then to take the sprouts return to their homes. After his Tori companion died, he "lost his will" to go back in that place and began to pay someone to take the sprouts for him. There are also histories of garden sites that were abandoned for the same reason. A final example, An old woman, almost a year passed his son's death, told me she used to stay up late, up to three, four a.m., craft working at the front balcony of her house. "Not anymore", she said, "because we keep remembering it, it's too bad."

Memory seems, in effect, to be closely related to places, including with regard to one's territorial belonging (when Karajá say that someone is "original" of a particular place—a village, *hāwa*). This belonging is marked, for instance, by the memories that one has of fishing together with one's father, uncle or grandfather in a particular lake or remembers of his mother, aunt or grandmother making a ceramic pot (where she used to bake the pots, the part of the house or yard where she molded the clay, where she got clay from etc.). Places on the other hand, seem to be a component of kinship production process: through them (a garden, a lake or a house, for example) one feeds one's family and is fed by it, one remembers of one's kin and gives oneself to be remembered by them. Places retain this memory, being also constituted by it. Therefore, to abandon a place is one possible way to produce forgetfulness, a maneuver to forget those who death turns into different-kindred, to detach from oneself, so to speak, that dangerous memory and to allow life between the living to go on.²⁰ But I believe there are also other mechanisms to remind one

positive character. The *worāšy* are always accompanying the living in their daily activities, such as fishing, gathering or just wandering around; when the living will eat, they offer the meal for the dead to partake. The dead foretell failure in certain activities such as fishing, allowing the living to give up in time; they protect the living in various ways.^{23,36} The *worāšy* also take a crucial part in the great male collective initiation ritual, the *Hetohokō*.²⁶

¹⁹Dangerous to the living as well as to the dead, as a Karajá myth shows. The "spirit" of a man comes back to help his younger brother in fishing, for the young man is very unlucky. After fishing, "the older one leaves his younger brother close by the cemetery and asks him to no longer think of him and not to cry. At night, however, the younger one remembers his brother and cries. Then, at dawn, the spirits of the dead they launch themselves in the form of giant otters over the older brother cut him into pieces".³⁷

²⁰A case reported by Maybury-Lewis also evokes this relationship between places and memory: "Anything that makes a Xavante remember of a dead relative may trigger demonstrations of grief for years after death (...). One man tried to erase all signs of his wife's presence for everything that reminded him of her caused him deep sadness. He even retraced the path they had traveled together during the last hunting and gathering expedition in order to destroy all the shelters that she had built for not to bump into them later and thus avoid

that the proper thing to do with regard to the recently deceased is to forget them.

Remember to forget: a hypothesis about ritual crying

Ritual crying seems to be associated with the forgetting of the deceased. William and Jean Crocker report the case of a death among the Canela. They say the victim's family waited all night long to the soul of the deceased woman to return, "but all hope was lost when the first rays of sunlight hit the house. Once the lamentations (the ritual crying) start, the soul will not return".³⁵ They also say that if strong memories of a husband endure in the a widow's thinking and feelings, for instance, a formal friend may accompany her through every place within the village and in its surroundings where the memories are alive. The widow can remember vividly where she bathed and had sex with her husband or where they plucked weeds together in his garden. The formal friend hears the widow memories and joins her in tears. By prolonging the weeping her formal friend helps her exorcise her memories and to live in the present for the sake of her surviving family.³⁵ The authors state that the formal friend does it "helping her to grieve and cry in order to forget her loss".³⁵

Among the Karajá, the ritual crying no breaks out solely after death and during mourning: an accident that happens to a child or grandchild (as a stingray sting or a cut in the arm), an incident such as a crop theft or any event that reminds a woman of the death of a relative can prompt her to cry ritually.²⁷ However, here I will only deal with those cases related to death. During mourning, as I have said, normal life is suspended and it is thus in this very moment that it is more necessary than ever to avoid remembering of the dead. Accordingly, it is then that women cry in a most intense and prolonged manner. The memories, however, do not stop when the course of normal life is resumed by the ending of mourning. They enter into a state of latency, so to speak, which gradually loses power. Thus, motivated by some event, object or place, the memories of a deceased may violently return to the surface. It is in these "moments of extreme emotion",²⁵ that is, when the memory becomes more (or again) dangerous, that women²¹ "remember of" the dead one singing/crying. Despite the fact that the cries lyrics tell about the life of the deceased,³⁹ what seems to be their crucial aspect is that they insist on remembering that this person has died. Let's take a look at two cry lyrics published by Desidério Aytai.^{33,39} The first is "the cry of Ijeheri, an old Karajá of Fontoura village that, 16 years after his wife's death, still remembered and chanted his *hii* repeatedly for three days in a row and sometimes also during the nights".³³ The lyric is a repetition of the following three lines, virtually without variations.^{22,40}

hawky sodi [hāwāky ♀, "woman"; sohoji "one, only"] hawky warebe rurure [hāwāky ♀, "woman"; warābi, "of me"; rurure, "died"]

feel himself very sad".³⁸ We might as well recall that the destruction of dead's objects (or its burial with the body of the deceased owner—what happens in the Iny case) and the abandonment of villages due to one or more deaths are widely spread practices among South America's indigenous peoples.

²¹Aytai³³ says, *ibru* refers to female crying and *hii* to male crying.³³ Marcus Maia³⁹ endorses this statement: "although there is the neutral verb 'to cry', *rasybina*, which can be applied, as in Spanish [or English], both to men and women, there is the verb *robureri* and the noun *ibru* which apply to female crying, and the verb *rahinyeri* and the noun *hii* which apply exclusively to male crying".³⁹

²²The simplicity of the lyric is probably due to the fact that it is a male crying—it is women, as said, that master this form of speech; Compare, for instance, with the second transcribed crying. See Aytai's text to a music score transcription of the crying.

hawky warebe rurure [hãwáky ♀, “woman”; warábi, “of me”; rurure, “died”] The second “chant transcribed is a *ibrú*, woman’s crying, sung by Seweria in 1977”. I here present only the interpretation of the lyric provided to the author by the singer.^{23,33}

- a. Compasses 1-6: of me died [my] dear/beloved
- b. Compasses 7-14: meaningless
- c. Compasses 15-35: younger /daughter?/, I [am] unhappy, [she] is dead, is gone, died
- d. Compasses 36-57: mean older sister; after her death [I am] with great nostalgia, very, very sad
- e. Compasses 58-77: Indians living downstream to the north / being these also Karajá/bark/cursing the Indians / downwards increasingly?/
- f. Compasses 78-97: things younger sister when she remembers of them/of a person who is no longer present/then is restless, passed word[?]separation
- g. Compasses 98-107: meaningless

Marcus Maia³⁹ says that “in addition to making an inventory of the life of the dead one and of his kin’s pain, the *ibru* still fulfills a third function, which is to establish the reasons of death, which for the Karajá can almost always be attributed to supernatural enactments”.³⁹ This third “function”, of course, also ends up reinforcing the very fact of death. We might then ask ourselves, would the ritual crying really be a way to remember of the dead? Lima Filho²³ says that “women’s sharp morality ‘protects’ their kin. This same morality as well as the ritual cry predicts the threat of death, represented by the disease. When life is threatened by disease and sorcery, causing a situation of pre-death, women make use of what they know better to rescue the life”.²³ Life “among the living”, I would complement. The author does not tell us about the cries during mourning and after it, but his formulation appears to apply to these latter cases. Ritual cries break out in times when the memory of the deceased is definitely alive and unsettling the living. However, it does not seem to be a way to remember of the dead, but rather a reminder that one should forget of him. Hence the recurrence of the statement of the fact of death, as we can see in both transcribed lyrics. In the case of the cries posterior to mourning, a long time passed after death, it is as if the control context, which evinces the fact of death as a given and places the need to produce the separation between living and dead in the realm of human action, is slowly being relativized by the very repetition of “forgetting”: in the moments when this given is placed under suspicion, it is necessary to remember that one needs to forget, thus counter producing the very fact of death and re-polarizing the control.²⁴ Crying, as the Canela example cited earlier in this topic clearly shows, directs the attention of the suffering kin to where it should lay completely but does not due to the memory of the dead one: his or her living kin. Crying, in short, reminds the living that one should forget of the dead, if what one wishes is to stay alive, to remain human.

Final remarks: kin making, alteration and memory

Throughout this article I tried to demonstrate that memory is vital for the process of kinship. To the same extent as food and along with

²³This crying is also transcribed in music score.³³

²⁴On the given and the realm of human action, the control context and its repolarization.⁴¹

affections and words, for example, it participates in the production of bodies and in the making of them similar, same-kindred to each other; that is to say, the process of kinship. Unlike those other elements, however, memory is placed at a non-immediate level of this production, for it is memory itself that sets the very conditions of the process of kinship: one needs to remember of one’s kin in order to be able to produce them as well as oneself as such. Without kinship memory, there would be not process at all. But there those one should remember of and those one must forget of. If remember of someone produces relations towards that person, one needs to watch out who inhabits one’s memory. A kin that dies becomes a different-kindred: to remember of him or her will therefore make the living, remembering one a same-kindred to the dead, hence a different-kindred, like him, for the living. Concerning the dead, the thing to remember is not exactly themselves but the fact that one must forget of them.

As it might be clear by now, I here make use of the term “memory” in a broad sense, which encompasses both forgetting and remembering—it is this latter case that I mark in speaking of “kinship memory.” The production of kinship among the living encompasses these two aspects of memory: as a *Iny* produces him or herself as kin to other *Iny* and makes them his or her own kin by remembering of them, he or she simultaneously becomes a different-kindred to Others (the *Tori*, other indigenous groups, the dead, as it may be) by means of forgetting of them. However, one’s memories’ targets and directions are not fixedly established. If the appropriate for the living, to say it briefly, is to remember of the living and to forget of the dead, one can always remember of the dead and forget of the living—a dangerous process, but as we have seen, the *Iny* have their own means to prevent it. It is thus in this broad sense of the term that memory is vital to the process of kinship, for each kin making vector corresponds to one of alteration.¹⁷ What I wish to stress is that remembering of who one “should not” (the dead, for example) is, from the point of view of those who one should remember of (the living), an alteration. In some cases, indeed, the possibility of deciding whether what is happening is kin making or alteration is a matter of perspective. The *worasy* assault and deceive the newly dead to make themselves kin toward him, to make him one of their own; from the point of view of the (living) kin of the deceased, however, what *worasy* are doing is to stress the very difference between them and their deceased kin, or rather, their former kin. I have already mentioned here that which Vilaça says about the *Wari*. The forms of aggression that a future shaman suffers still to be perceived as such by the non-assaulted living: from the perspective of the animals that steal his soul, they are making him kin, same-kindred; but from the perspective of his kin that remain with their “soul” safe in the village, the future shaman is going through an alteration process. We might also remember the *Araweté* case: when eaten by cannibal gods, the dead complete the process of becoming same-kindred to *Maï*, thus turning into different-kindred to the living.⁴²

If memory thus has a key role in the process of kinship, standing as it’s very “operating conditions”, it cannot be crystallized as a mean of kin making regardless of who one remembers or forgets of and of the prospective at stake. For to remember of the living is to produce them and oneself as kin to each other, but to remember of the dead is to differentiate oneself from the living; to produce kinship towards one’s own (kin) is to produce difference towards Others and vice versa. Memory, such as the process of kinship itself, operates through the constant flow afforded by the two lines, the vectors of kin making and alteration which coexistence confers a dual dimension—a very

characteristic of perspective, as Tania Stolze de Lima⁴³ has shown—to each point of the process. As to humans, the part that is left for them to play is directing their attention and memory towards those who remain together with them, alive.

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Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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