The two and its many: Reflections on perspectivism in a Tupi cosmology

Tânia Stolze Lima

To cite this article: Tânia Stolze Lima (1999) The two and its many: Reflections on perspectivism in a Tupi cosmology, Ethnos, 64:1, 107-131, DOI: 10.1080/00141844.1999.9981592

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.1999.9981592

Published online: 20 Jul 2010.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 595

Citing articles: 35 View citing articles
The Two and its Many: Reflections on Perspectivism in a Tupi Cosmology

Tânia Stolze Lima
Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil

ABSTRACT This article takes the wild peccary hunt as the basis for an ethnographic essay on an indigenous notion of 'point of view,' applied to the field of relations between humans and animals in the cosmology of a Tupi people, the Juruna. In addition to revealing the particular complexity of these relations, the concept of point of view reveals how the notion of double is irreducible to that of soul, how 'nature' and 'supernature' are perspectival effects, and finally how the hunt is included in a multiple bilinear spatio-temporal structure, evoking the 'labyrinths' that the Juruna paint on their skin.

KEYWORDS South American Indians, Tupi, myth, cosmology, shamanism, perspectivism

Anthropology has sustained two apparently contradictory hypotheses concerning savages: animism and ethnocentrism. From one angle, animals are seen to acquire human and social characteristics; from the other, humanity is seen to end abruptly at the limits of the tribe. In a dialogue with these two hypotheses, this article studies an aspect of Amerindian cosmologies which – despite scattered evidence of its diffusion throughout the Americas – has received little attention until now: the notion of 'point of view.' Taking as its ethnographic source a small Tupi population of southern Amazonia, the article studies how the notion of 'point of view' is generated and developed as an aspect of the Juruna's hunting of white-lipped peccaries (a type of wild pig). Past inhabitants of the islands along the middle and lower Xingu river, the Juruna today live in a single village located on its upper course, practising canoe navigation, hunting and agriculture.

The Shaman Goes Hunting
‘Dukare! Come and tell us where you saw the peccaries! But first go and fetch your warclub. Then remove your shorts, take a handful of cinders and

ETHNOS, VOL. 64:1, 1999
© Routledge, on license from the National Museum of Ethnography, pp. 107–131
rub them on your testicles. After that you can hold your club and tell us what you saw.' The Juruna burst out laughing. Mareaji is teasing his cousin who has just returned from a fishing trip claiming he passed by a herd of peccaries. The scene is one of 'joking' typical of the relationship between cross-cousins: here, the joke more or less says, 'I challenge you to show us all that you're a man!' Dusk arrives. The men have been gathering in front of Mareaji's mother's house and Mareaji leads the discussion, questioning a very ashamed-looking Dukare while arranging a hunting trip for the following day with the others. Dukare is very young still, only recently married, and so feels too shy to assume the organization of the hunt. Mareaji encourages him to take on this task while simultaneously assuming the group's lead.

Hunting peccary is a topic which animates the Juruna as much as their manioc beer, and within seconds the noise is such that I can no longer work out what the hunters are saying: everyone speaks at the same time, shouting loudly and imitating the explosion of guns, the hiss of arrows, the tooth-clacking of the peccaries and the noise of their flight through the forest. All the hunters have encounters to recount and mimic. They seem to be re-enacting their lack of fear. This particular type of hunt is taken to be a dangerous enterprise; the peccaries are violent and will turn to confront a hunter whose only means of escape then is rapid ascent of a tree, as happened to a hunter recently. None of this uproar that is occurring right now would happen at the moment of the kill. Should the hunter emit a cry, his soul may depart to live with the peccaries. The same fate awaits anyone who becomes frightened when face to face with the enraged animals: if startled, his soul flees and is captured by the peccaries.

But the hunt the next day was a disappointment. 'And the peccaries?' they ask Mareaji. 'Dukare was lying!', he replies. Lying, no. Everyone saw the footprints. Mareaji is still making fun of his cousin.

The Juruna dream of the chance to hunt peccaries in the river. When a herd is spotted crossing, they canoe in their direction and kill them with clubs. Sometimes, they have to dive to recover peccaries which have sunk beneath the surface. At least two people are required for each canoe: a pilot and a killer. There is no other hunt as lucrative; an average of between fifteen and twenty peccaries are killed each time, equivalent to about 500 kg of game. The excitement provoked is such that, if men happen not to be present, women will take up the hunt. As I once witnessed, the braver women arm themselves with lengths of wood (pestles or clubs) and board the canoes, rushing to kill the peccaries while pursued by passionate and contented shouts from the timider women left behind in the village. If a peccary is found
To be pregnant, the fetus may be interred in the village in compliance with a notion that this requires the peccaries to visit the place frequently, just as the Juruna themselves return to the sites where their kin are buried.

Compared with the hunting of other animals, the peccary hunt entails an additional symbolic dimension: the Juruna situate it within the shaman's field of action. Anyone taken with the desire to eat this game may, people say, appeal to the shaman to attract peccaries.

The peccaries live in communities divided into families and organized around a chief endowed with shamanic power. They inhabit subterranean villages and produce beer, which, from a human perspective, consists of no more nor less than an extremely fine white clay. This was told to me by a woman who dreamt of a peccary village in whose port she and I were bathing—that is, until we discovered we were actually stuck in a mire of what the peccaries claimed to be their fermented manioc.

The peccary-shaman is distinguished from others by the absence of bristles on its rear and by the red pelt on its face. It represents one of the auxiliary spirits the Juruna shaman can acquire during initiation. In dreams, the shaman sees this peccary transform into a man, and attempts to befriend it by offering a cigar to smoke. Once he feels friendship has been established, the shaman tells the spirit that the men of his group intend to hunt, and the peccary-shaman arranges with him the location and day when the peccaries will traverse the river. The hunters then depart.

The shaman's auxiliary must be left to survive; this applies even to those hunts which take place without shamanic intervention. No one worries about identifying the peccary-shaman in advance; it knows how to escape from the hunters by either swimming ahead of the herd towards the river's margin, or by quickly swimming along the course of the river. It is inevitably the one which succeeds in staying alive. If one or two others accompany it, the hunters also let them escape: they will be its wife and/or child. Should someone kill the peccary-shaman by accident, its body is thrown in the river as the meat tastes of burnt tobacco from its habit of smoking the shaman's cigar. Additionally, if killed, the peccary-shaman may carry the soul of the Juruna shaman with it, provoking his sickening and death.

At death, the peccary-shaman embarks on a singular destiny: its soul goes to live with those of the dead Juruna, cohabiting with them as an equal. In counterpart, a hunter who dies during the hunt turns into a peccary.

People speak of a time when shamans specialized in hunt shamanism, consuming a herb known as 'the peccary's drug' which grows on the surface of
rocky outcrops, within which dwell the dead. Anyone wishing to eat the game would say to the shaman: 'Go and call the peccaries!' To perform this task, the shaman used a whistle made of coconut husk, a replica of the whistle which the peccaries make and describe as their 'flute.' The peccaries would hear the music and respond: 'They're going to give a festival! Let's go! Let's go!' Jubilant at the prospect of dancing and drinking with the Juruna, they would take between one and three days to arrive, depending on their distance from the village at the time. On arrival, they would pour into the river and swim in the Juruna's direction, passing through their houses (situated on an island), and re-entering the water on the other side: 'At this point, you go and kill them,' the shaman would tell us. 'It was fabulous!' There was once a shaman who used to be visited by a peccary-shaman with whom he smoked, drank beer and danced. The visitor arrived accompanied by all its herd which only the shaman could see. When people asked him to bring peccaries, the shaman would invite the peccary-shaman to drink beer and arrange the hunt. Once he had entered into a trance, an interested hunter would tell the shaman: 'Bring me peccaries! Tame them for me!' 'Okay!', he would reply. On such occasions, pacifying the peccaries depends on a respectful or moderate use of language. But while all the more prudent hunters exclaimed 'My prey will be tame!' a man called Kingfisher-Head lost control and shouted 'My prey will wrench my pendulous testicles!' They reminded him of the need for caution, that one should not play with language at a moment like this, and on the following day they advised him to stay at home to avoid being seen by the peccaries. But he was reckless and ignored the warning. At the end of the hunt, his companions found him almost dead, his testicles pulled apart and his body perforated by the teeth of infuriated peccaries. He had just enough strength to tell his friends how he had been attacked. His soul departed with the peccaries that survived the hunt, travelling in the direction of the 'Amazon river.' Various other herds of peccaries met up with them during the journey and Kingfisher-Head showed himself to be an amusing companion, diverting them continually with his antics. All this was seen by the shaman during a dream and, so the Juruna say, he narrated the story as follows:

They went away roaring with laughter.
The peccaries are just like humans,
They would ask him:
'Tell us the names of things!'
'What is that?'

ETHNOS, VOL. 64:1, 1999
‘It’s this.’
They met the vagina-honey.
‘What kind of honey is that?’
‘This is the vagina-honey.’
They met the swallow-honey.
‘What kind of honey is that?’
‘This is the penis-honey.’
And the peccaries burst into laughter.
‘So, you mean it produces honey?’
‘The penis produces honey!’
The peccaries laughed ha! ha! ha!
He left together with the peccaries, roaring with laughter.
They asked him the names of animals, of types of honey...
He answered,
They burst into laughter,
‘So, you mean it produces honey?’
Thus, when a shaman is dreaming of a peccary,
Or when he is drunk,
We say: ‘Stop talking nonsense!’

Finally, the peccaries elected Kingfisher-Head as their chief. This unhappy soul acts as an ‘interpreter’ for the Juruna: when he hears a hunter shout out his name, he conducts the herd to cross the river close to the village (for a Juruna analogy between this function and the function of women as spouses, see Lima 1986).

Peccaries see themselves as part of humanity and they consider the hunt to be a confrontation in which they try to capture strangers. The jokes made by a hunter on the peccaries’ behalf allow the actualization of their point of view and desire. Within the order of human reality, the peccaries attack and kill the hunter, an event which to the peccaries appears to be simply a form of capture where, in effect, the unfortunate hunter becomes one of their partners. Feeding on coconuts and worms, participating in their dances and drinking their muddy beer, the captured hunter assumes, as time goes by, the aspect of a peccary. However, he never manages to adapt completely to his surroundings and, hoping to cure himself of injuries acquired in the forest and infected by dirt, he continually visits the peccary-shaman hoping to be cured. Finally, he is transformed into the herd’s chief.

By endowing peccaries with the sensibility to amuse themselves with the diversity of humankind or to laugh at the metaphors of others, the myth draws a parallel between the Juruna’s relation with peccaries and the relation existing between human groups speaking different languages (as the narrator makes
explicit), thus typifying it as a joking relationship characteristic of the conduct of cross cousins (virtual brothers-in-law), of strangers that become 'friends' or potential affines. It is precisely because potential affinity is a virtual aspect of the relationship with the peccaries that caution with language during the hunt is necessary, in order to inhibit the actualization of this affinity.3

As a result of all this, the Juruna conclude that 'the peccaries are like the dead.' Both are taken to live in subterranean villages and to be led by potential affines (and not kin); both become excited by the prospect of drinking beer with the Juruna and both attempt to capture them. A dead person may go to live with the peccaries and a peccary may go to live with the dead. In sum, just as the dead were invited until recently to drink beer, the myths affirm that the peccaries were also invited to drink with the Juruna – the big difference being that one does not have to suppress laughter in front of the dead: much the opposite.

From the point of view of both shamanism and the peccaries, the Juruna represent spirits. The gesture (mentioned above) in which the shaman passes his cigar to the peccary who turns into a human in the shaman's eyes has a precise meaning: he acts as the peccary's auxiliary spirit, and, as such, initiates the peccary into shamanism, just as the initiation of a human into the shamanism of the rock-dwelling dead depends on receiving a cigar from them. In other words, from a certain angle, the dead are for the Juruna what the Juruna are for the peccaries.

The Paradox of the Human and the Animal

'We have no belief, we explain nothing.' 'We don't believe: we live in fear!' These were the words of an Inuit shaman to Knud Rasmussen (a descendent of the Inuit, with perfect fluency in the language and familiarity with the culture from infancy), picked out by Lévy-Bruhl as proof of exceptional insight. In rejecting notions such as belief and cosmology, the shaman in effect rejects the notion of animism (Lévy-Bruhl 1931:xx–xxii). Naturally, within Lévy-Bruhl's intellectual venture there would be no place for – from his point of view – such a strikingly flawed notion: by affirming that certain people attribute human and social characteristics to natural beings, we suppose an ontological distinction between humans and nature which belongs only to our own thought; we then deprive ourselves of any possibility of approaching the system which we wish to understand.

The notion of animism, as Lévy-Bruhl asserts, is such an expedient way to describe and explain certain phenomena that even the primitives (very often aware of what their investigators would like to hear) may voluntarily adopt
this procedure (Lévy-Bruhl 1931:80). In fact, the Juruna (perhaps to please or displease both themselves and me, or, who knows, maybe to shorten the conversation) frequently seemed to enjoy succumbing to animistic rationalizations. On the other hand, a proposition such as 'the Juruna think that animals are humans,' besides deviating appreciably from their discursive style, is a false one, ethnographically speaking. They say that 'the animals, to themselves, are human.' I could, then, rephrase this as 'the Juruna think that the animals think they are humans.' Clearly, the verb 'to think' undergoes an enormous semantic slippage as it passes from one segment of the phrase to the other. What for us requires stressing because it sounds absurd - but also useful within an ethnographic description as a principle which allows us to reconstitute an alien rationality - is for the Juruna something that needs to be said (remembered and taken into consideration) because it is potentially both serious and perilous. The point is that animals are far from being humans - but the fact that they think so makes human life very dangerous.

Deprived of any theoretical interest since being put out of its misery by La Pensée Sauvage, I intend here to subject animism to an ethnographic critique. The result we will reach will not be new - identification being 'responsible for all thought and society' (Lévi-Strauss 1972:38), and predation determining 'the global order of cosmic sociability' within which social relations in their strict sense are included (Viveiros de Castro 1993:186). Nevertheless, the ethnographic material which we will traverse is essential to the elucidation of the human-animal relation in Juruna cosmology and, consequently, to determining various aspects of the notion of point of view within this cosmology. The Juruna will also allow us to expose the paradox of animism.

To start with, they could tell us: what you consider to be human characteristics (as you define them both naturally as well as metaphysically), do not belong intrinsically to human beings. We have to produce these characteristics in ourselves, in the body. As we shall see, anyone - animal or human - may produce the characteristics that best please themselves.

The new moon is the time when all forest animals train their offspring. The Juruna develop their children's capacities during half moon in order to avoid their rituals taking place at the same time as those of the animals. Physical strength (a requisite for success in hunting and warfare) is the main goal of these exercises. Nevertheless, other kinds of strength are also positively valued, such as mastication, verbal expressiveness and intelligence (in which hearing plays an essential role and which encompasses the faculty of belief). All of these forces take an incipient form which it falls to humans to develop,
improve or accentuate; in contrast to these we find, on one hand, volition – an intense force during infancy which older kin try to curb or make flexible – and, on the other hand, a social instinct, in the sense of an inclination towards communication with others. This social instinct undoubtedly constitutes the most important characteristic: it is instilled during the formation of the embryo by means of a ritual intervention into the expectant mother’s consumption of meat. The objective is to prevent the transmission of typical and complex animal behavior (including those of fish) to the fetus – namely, hostility-fear – as well as a type of behavior particular to the tucunare fish:4 cannibalism. As far as I can tell, the social temperament which the Juruna try to imprint on the embryo signifies precisely the absence of hostility-fear. This represents the lowest level of defensive force of which a living being is capable. Its ideal image is found in both the serenity (a mixture of trust and tranquility) demonstrated by the most varied species of animal young and babies (when well fed) towards humans, and the gratification that simple observation of this serenity brings. Put otherwise, to be sociable is not to be scared-violent.

This brief analysis of the human and social characteristics alluded to by the animist hypothesis allows us to apprehend several fundamental aspects of the Juruna cosmology. Human reproduction and socialization are based on interventions that neutralize an animal affect (aggression-and-fear), restrain volition and capture animals’ capacities and strengths (such as the exceptional hearing of the japiim bird,4 the denture of monkeys, or the resistance of the armadillo) or those of plants (such as the sound produced by bamboo).

Let us turn to another aspect, related to the notion of soul. More exactly, I wish to examine what we can learn about the soul from animals, putting aside – since they are of no direct interest to us here – all the dimensions related to the theme of death. Animals, as a wide variety of ethnographic data confirm, are the source for a synthetic apprehension of the notion of the soul as a personal principle. Approached from this angle, the notion refers to reflexive thinking and to self-consciousness as a human self, endowed – as such – with social relations, cultural behavior and the capacity to distinguish humans from animals. By recognizing themselves as persons, animals (as well as humans and spirits) have an ambiguous attitude towards Others (imama, which signifies a relation of alterity within various different fields: kinship, locality, language and culture): while wishing to approach and become friends, they feel afraid.

Dreams are the primary plane of communication between ‘real’ humans and various animal species (and other ontological categories such as ogres...
and spirits). Within dreams, an animal not only takes itself to be human, but, under certain conditions, it becomes human to another; it is identified as a person by another person, and the two may enter into a more or less durable alliance (that is, one which can be experienced in different nights' sleep).

I do not wish to become trapped in a paradox, arguing that the Juruna do not confuse human and animal since they attribute to the animals the capacity of not making this very confusion. Animism seems, in fact, to pose a paradox of a type identical to that which Lévi-Strauss (1973:384) named the paradox of cultural relativism and which could be formulated thus: To be animal is first of all to believe in human nature. This is, then, the paradoxical depiction of the animal: it makes the distinction human/animal and (yet) it does not perceive itself as an animal. In effect, animality is a condition that cannot be conceived in the first person; it is a form of other-consciousness, while self-consciousness refers directly to the human.

We thus reach two conclusions. The relationship between human and animal is marked by a contradiction between the same and the other: the animal's real alterity refers at the same time to its virtual identity. There is also a very clear dichotomy between dispositions rooted in the body and the attributes of the soul. If humans capture such dispositions from animals, they lend and share culture (language, an interest in the Other, the human/animal distinction, and forms of interpreting reality) with the animals. Nevertheless, we should not fail to recognize that by postulating that everything which exists has a soul, the Juruna are also postulating that cultural attributes are the attributes of the soul.

These facts directly evoke the notion of a 'reciprocity of perspectives' ('man and the world mirror each another') with which Lévi-Strauss argues in favor of overcoming the old dichotomy between religion and magic – the anthropomorphism of nature versus the physiomorphism of man – by sustaining (via a strange comparison between drivers in the traffic and the insertion of man in a world of signs) that 'man and world confront each other face to face as subjects and objects at the same time' (Lévi-Strauss 1972:221–222). It is within this theoretical context that I situate the notion of point of view.

The One and its Other

This notion raises questions which an analysis based on tropes not only abandons unresolved – as Turner (1991) argued concerning the analysis of Gê and Bororo rituals – but actually prevents us from locating. Notions such as metaphor and metonymy (or correlates, such as totemism and animism,
in Descola’s formulation) hamper our attempts to determine the underlying logic of apparently irrational propositions.

Among other propositions of this kind, the ethnographic material on the Juruna presents us with the following: from the point of view of the dead, the tucunaré is a corpse. Since tucunaré is one of the most important fishes in the Juruna diet, it follows that the Juruna are cannibals! However, instead of taking this equation as a variant of ‘the Bororo believe they are macaws,’ there is, it seems to me, another approach, since if the problem were reducible to a case of a metaphor, the Juruna would say in the first person that tucunaré is human flesh and would not include it in their diet (which is what in fact occurs with a species of ant whose taste is said to resemble that of human flesh). The phenomenon to which I wish to draw attention is not a trope, but rather the act of attributing to the other a judgment about oneself. Therefore, rather than simply tracing the symbolic relationships between terms such as tucunaré and corpse, I propose to search for a concept through which we may investigate the cultural conditions (and not simply the logical conditions) for the verisimilitude of such equations. In short, the question I wish to ask is: within what kind of world do such metaphors operate? A world in which tropes would merely represent, as Deleuze and Guattari (1988:77) argue, effects that ‘are a part of language only when they presuppose indirect discourse.’

One of the first phenomena to catch my attention during my fieldwork were the indelible, though elusive, marks left by the notion of point of view. Certain phrases spoken to me in Portuguese, such as ‘this is beautiful to me’ ‘for him, the animal turned into a jaguar,’ ‘to us, there appeared prey while we were making the canoe’ seemed to refer exclusively to the grammatical structure of a language which I did not master but which nonetheless became transparent through the Juruna’s Portuguese. Even after I began to put together one or two phrases, the constructions which invited these types of translation never ceased to sound strange: without doubt, I would classify them as the most difficult Juruna practice to assimilate. Amāña uhe wī – it is not easy to utter these words without becoming disconcerted, unpleasantly or otherwise. I felt I was saying ‘to me, it rained’ and not ‘it was raining there, where I was.’ This way of relating even the most independent and alien phenomena to the self leaves its mark on Juruna cosmology, yet I neither presume that all grammatical categories play the same role in a culture, nor do I believe that there is even a remote possibility that one of us could put ourselves in the skin of one of the Juruna in order to capture the sense which human life would assume in a situation in which, for us, suddenly, it became accept-
able, or at least perfectly valid, to say: it's raining for me. At most, this sense would relate to a virtuality which is within us, thereby turning us inside-out. Any subtle dragon, as Lawrence (1986) wrote, would sting us in the midst of plenty, given this great engine of a cosmos in which we live - and die of tedium.

I would like to stress, therefore, that the only native point of view which we can and would wish to reach has nothing to do with an imaginary identification, as Geertz (1983) incisively argued.

The ego or sociocentric principle through which the Juruna organize their experience is the correlate of a principle which at first sight is similar to relativism, at least as it is conceived by our common sense (anthropological or otherwise). Thus, for themselves, the peccaries play flutes which for humans are simply coconuts (emptied of the white flesh, the peccaries' food) which, nuzzled by the peccaries, provoke a sound similar to human ears to the sound of a whistle, but whose musicality, to the peccaries' ears, is as rich as that of flutes.

My hypothesis is, then, that we are faced not with two distinct and independent principles, but with one and the same conceptual apparatus - precisely the notion of point of view. Depending on the topic in focus, it sometimes evokes the centrism normally attributed to Amerindians (more so than to us) and sometimes a type of relativism which once observed among Amerindians leaves us unsure how to react.

Point of view implies a particular conception according to which the world only exists for someone. More precisely, whether it is a being or an event - and as we shall see, the evidence which emerges from my analysis indicates the inappropriateness of applying such a distinction to Juruna cosmology (Lévinas 1957; Viveiros de Castro 1996b) - what exists, exists for someone. There is no reality independent of a subject. However, as I will try to show in the following sections, it so happens that what exists for the hunter as he speaks about himself, is only a part of that which exists for another.

Elsewhere (Lima 1995:425-438) I argued against the possibility of interpreting what I then called Juruna relativism as a version of cultural relativism. I supported my argument on the strict dependency that cultural relativism maintains with a notion of nature, on its indisputable alliance with universalism, and on its inevitable compliance with the opposition subject/object. I then went on to show how the Juruna material favors a radically different theory.

Nonetheless, I should clarify that I do not deny that indigenous perspectivism could be considered a variant form of relativism, since, after all, nothing dictates that there cannot exist other ways of thinking relativism very dif-


ferent from those conceived by Western thought. The vertigo which we experience in a province of human thought where Protagoras does not meet any Plato need not prevent us from perceiving the existence of relativism. My point is that we are dealing with such a disparate conception of alterity and truth that the comparison with cultural relativism becomes a useful tool towards apprehending its specificity.

I can now deepen my perspective by turning to a re-reading of Viveiros de Castro’s works (1986; 1996a), where the theme of the Alien word (and cited discourse) — which comprises the songs of the dead and the enemy, among the Araweté — is analyzed from a perspective which allows me to expand my own, though adding some important adjustments. The approach I adopt here also derives from a reading of the interpretations put forward by Signe Howell (1984) concerning the Chewong (a group of the Malaysian Peninsula) and by Kaj Århem (1993) in his work on the Makuna (a Tukano group of Northwestern Amazonian). As we shall see, both sets of material present many parallels with the Juruna case.

However, I am unable to provide here an exposition of the complex analysis of the killer’s song — whose words interweave with the victim’s — nor of the shamanic songs, these being ‘the most complex area of Awarete culture’ (Viveiros de Castro 1986:542). Nor an exposition of the rich Chewong and Makuna materials. The interpretations of Howell and Århem, despite their care and effort not to characterize their material as relativism, both arrive at the latter, directly or indirectly, by revealing a polarization between the relative and the absolute. Among the Chewong, all beings are endowed with consciousness and all natural species (as well as different categories of spirit) possess a particular kind of eye. In a prosaic example, for the dog that decides to eat a child’s feces, the feces appear to be a banana. Hence, its action is only deplorable to the human eye. From the dog’s point of view, it amounts to perfectly reasonable behavior (Howell 1984:161). Put succinctly, the eye is to the different ontological categories what culture is to humanity: one cannot judge the behavior of others, since their perception of the world is determined by their eyes and their conduct is perfectly correct.

Among the Makuna, humans and animals share a common spiritual essence. The latter turn into animals in order to circulate in the world of humans, while turning into humans when they return to their own homes. Vultures, for example, who to all appearances eat corpses, see a corpse as a river abounding in ‘fish’ (as they designate the worms riddling the body). Inversely, certain regions of a river are taken to belong to the vultures, and

ETHNOS, VOL. 64:1, 1999
humans should not fish there since what seem to be fish are in fact vermin (Arhem 1993:116).

Kaj Arhem’s interpretation is based on the hypothesis of an essential humanity, or of a metaphysical unity of all beings, and on the conceptual opposition between this essence and appearances. Howell (1984:157, 159, passim) also invokes a ‘true nature of things’ and the actual title of the chapter where she develops this theme is itself revealing: ‘relativity in perception.’ No doubt both interpretations are consistent with the ethnographic material, but, as we know, when it comes to more general phenomena the ethnographic perspective can reveal itself to be excessively narrow. My material is no less narrow, and I hope that a comparative study of perspectivism in indigenous cosmologies will be undertaken. Having said that, I would still like to say that the conclusions reached by Arhem and Howell seem to me to be a little hasty. Let us take a closer look.

The shaman, able to see the world such as it is, able to discover and reveal the ultimate nature of things, is allocated a decentered point of view (Arhem, 1993:124). In my opinion, neither the notion of decentering nor that of the ultimate nature of things (Howell 1984:157, 159, passim) is particularly appropriate. The shaman is as bound up as anyone else (human, animal or spirit) within his system of references. By using this relativist formula, I do not intend simply to point out the obvious; rather, I wish to stress that the very insertion of the shaman in a world marked by the variation of points of view is determined by his solidarity (in the double sense of the term, negative as well as positive) with the human system of references. In particular, I would point out that the notion of decentering could never explain why, within Makuna ‘shamanic’ ecosophy, only certain regions of the river, belonging to the vultures, are inhabited by fish that the vultures do not eat because they are vermin to the vultures; fish which therefore should not be eaten by humans. Neither would it explain why it is only during certain periods that Juruna who eat tucunaré have to drink (another dose of) emetic to vomit (again) the smell of a dead relative’s corpse. In both cases – certain fishing areas or certain periods in life (mourning) – the other’s point of view dominates and the shaman is nothing more than its spokesman, or, as the Araweté say, the ‘radio’ where alien words are sung (Viveiros de Castro 1986:543). It remains true therefore that – even though he does not find himself looking from an elevated and singular point of view, and even though his function is not based on any kind of decentering – Howell and Arhem are right to point out that the shaman’s point of view is privileged. And precisely because it is the point
of view onto the variation between points of view pertaining to different
categories of alterity. Extending beyond this, at least among the Juruna who
no longer have shamans and who resist reviving this function, the point of
view of such variation is wisdom itself—and this is human (Lima 1995:438).

My first interpretation also focused on the material in a way which now
demands some adjustment. In a series of studies dedicated to what he called
‘Guarani metaphysics,’ Pierre Clastres (1974a; 1974b) pointed out that it is
not because Guarani thought refuses ‘the one’ that we should conclude that
it opts for ‘the many’—this opposition being far too Greek. It is neither ‘the
one’ nor ‘the many,’ but rather an affirmation of ‘the two.’ Truth, in Juruna
cosmology (which, incidentally, evokes innumerable parallels with Guarani
cosmology), since it is decidedly indifferent to ‘the one,’ to the point of view
of the whole, can be interpreted as plurality and polyvocality—projected, as
it is, over distinct cosmic spheres or dispersed amidst different points of view
(Lima 1995:438). However, this is only a general approach to Juruna per-
spectivism and it should not be understood as multiplicity according to its
acceptation in Western metaphysics. A more localized or careful approach
of the system of variation of points of view allows us to perceive a binary
system: tucunare/corpse, carrion/dried meat, water/blood, dried cassava/
rotten human flesh, humans/peccaries, and so on. All these categories being
the object of a dispute between humans and another category of alterity.

I do not think I diverge from Clastres’ hypothesis in what follows: I shall
now attempt to show that ‘the two’ also has its ‘many,’ or more precisely its
multiple. Let us now analyze the ethnography of the peccary hunt presented
at the beginning of this article.

The Animal’s Turn to Speak

The animal soul—which has to be distinguished from the human soul—has
as one of its aspects the fact that, in taking themselves to be humans,
peccaries possess certain items and practices typical of Juruna culture:11 beer,
shamanism, groups organized according to kinship, warfare, joking relation-
ships between affines, wind instruments, and so on. I should stress that this
unity is absolutely not in the service of an identification with the animal, but,
much to the contrary, of a variation between human and animal points of
view; that is, a variation between hunting and warfare. This is of crucial im-
portance. The notion of point of view acts as an articulator between the real
alterity and the virtual identity of the peccary in relation to humans.

We could say that what humans perceive to be a hunt, peccaries perceive
to be a war. However, this is an ambiguous formulation since it presupposes one and the same event, seen by two subjects so different that the apprehension of one would be irreducible to the other. The peccary hunt does not display the same reality seen by two subjects, following our relativist model. On the contrary, the hunt displays one event for the humans and one event for the peccaries. In other words, it unfolds in two parallel (or parallelistic) events,

humans hunt peccaries
humans are attacked by enemies

events which are also correlative, and which refer to no objective or external reality comparable to what we understand as nature. One is the referent of the other. We could say, then, that the hunt presents two dimensions, given as two simultaneous events which reflect upon each other.

Duplicity is the law of every being and every event. Let us take human experience as an example. It never presents a single dimension; it is double by definition. One dimension is that of sensible reality, in which tucunaré and corpses, peccaries and humans (and so on) are distinct; the other is that of the soul. The latter develops in dreams and its rules are not necessarily the same as those active in sensible reality. Put otherwise, the Other's point of view may impose itself here as truth to the humans. In this way, in the soul's perception (active during its dream experiences), a herd of peccaries stampeding in the forest corresponds to something else for the hunter, namely, one or more enemies.

In this context the experience of the human soul, unlike that of the animal, does not consist in an awareness of oneself as a subject. On one hand, as a vital principle situated in the heart, the soul is a part of the self and it fails to explain why the self is a (or one) person. On the other hand, the soul is the subject's double and, as such, it escapes from this very subject. The soul's experience is thus not of subjectivity, except in so far as some of its fragments may become apparent to consciousness. An example is the loss of soul, captured by the peccaries during a hunt (or by the dead in other circumstances): the hunter does not and cannot have experience of this – at the extreme, because he is still not dead. He loses weight and strength, and becomes profoundly melancholic. The shaman can inform him of the exploits undertaken by his soul in its life elsewhere, but if he is unsuccessful in bringing it back, the hunter dies. As for dreams, they can provide a partial insight into the life of the soul. The hunter may himself be able to recall fragments of the forgotten history of his soul's life among the peccaries.
The animal's experience also has two dimensions. We already know the sensible dimension of the peccaries' experiences, in which they see themselves as persons and act as humans: they drink their beer, play their flutes, and encounter strangers in the forest, in the river or near to their gardens.

If this play of symmetries produced by Juruna cosmology allows us to continue any further, we could deduce that the 'animal' dimension of the animal (the animal aspect of the peccaries) — since it is part of the sensible experience of humans, escaping the peccaries entirely as part of the self ignored by the subject — is for the peccaries what the experience of the soul is for the humans. If the animal could see itself, it would be facing its double. Well, this is as impossible as it is for a human to face his own soul. The subject and its double ignore each other.

The double is invisible not exactly because it is immaterial, or even because its substance is different from that of the body. Soul and body are concepts which primarily designate not substances but perspectival effects. These concepts operate by means of the notion of point of view which articulates the two dimensions of human experience (if my soul saw peccaries, I will see enemies), just as it articulates the sensible dimension of the body with the spiritual dimension of the soul. We could designate these last two dimensions 'Nature' and 'Supernature' while remembering that such concepts are necessarily dependent on someone's point of view; that is, they work as relational categories.

Before proceeding further, I would like to provide additional evidence for the interpretation I am proposing. Let us look at the topic of the capture of the hunter's soul by his prey. An 'apparently irrational' aspect of this, let us say, metaphysics of the hunt would be the following. Peccaries and humans in confrontation with each other during a hunt are alive — let us suppose. An elementary cosmological premise dictates that it is the soul of a living being that indicates the presence of this same living being to the souls (of the dead or of demons). That is, just as a living being cannot see (the body of) a soul, a soul can only see and act upon the soul of the living being. During a hunt, though, the soul of a hunter, should it be dislodged from the body as a consequence of the fear affecting the subject, not only becomes visible to the peccaries but it is also captured and goes to live with them, over time gaining the body of a peccary, one visible to human sight. My interpretation is thus perfectly justified: once projected as a double, the soul of hunters becomes part of the peccaries' sensible apprehension, in contraposition to the fact that the entity which for the peccaries represents their own double is a part of the
human field of sensible apprehension. Thus, what is Nature for humans inter-
sects the Supernature of peccaries, and vice-versa. That is why these cate-
gories, rather than distinguishing this world from the beyond in absolute 
terms, differentiate planes which compose every being and event. It is these 
categories which define the unity and the relativity of the two.

Let us now return to the parallel events forming the hunt. Every subject 
— hunters and warriors — has his own point of view as a 'sensible reality,' and 
considers the point of view of the Other as the super-sensible or 'supernatu-
rnal' dimension of his experience (it is not for nothing that the peccaries have 
their own shaman!) In this way, the event — which for each subject is the only 
true one — is considered by him from a double point of view: his own and that 
of the Other. In other words, both hunter and prey apprehend 'their' event 
from a double point of view,

the hunters chase prey which imagine themselves to be warriors
the warriors confront potential affines who act like enemies

such that the point of view of the Other incorporated by the subject repre-
sents a virtuality that may (or may not) become actual, depending on the 
action effected by each of those implicated.

Thus, the event as it exists for the peccaries (using a somewhat rude for-
mulation to our eyes, but one, in truth, well suited to the spirit of the Juruna) 
is reducible to a lie for the humans. Just as the hunters wish to impose their 
point of view on the peccaries, the latter would not lose the chance to do the 
same. They do not surrender to the enemy without fighting. Neither can the 
hunters, in their turn, ignore the dispositions of the prey. A struggle between 
hunters and warriors takes place.

In passing, it should be pointed out that framing this problem in relativ-
istic terms and then invoking an 'ultimate truth' would amount to failing to 
perceive the nature of the problem. And I stress once more that it would be 
totally inappropriate to search for any imaginary identification with the 
hunter. To put ourselves in his position would only lead us, ironically, to 
adopt the point of view of the peccaries. In addition, the approach I propose 
allows us to take a different perspective on the resistance which 'culturalist' 
anthropologists have raised against the ecological reading of indigenous 
warfare as hunting. In fact, it is not hunting, even more so as hunting is not 
what it is. But this absolutely does not signify that the hunters only practice 
warfare — this is still an imaginary interpretation. What the facts confronting 
us say is that hunters vie against warriors. Hunting incorporates warfare (just
as the hunter must incorporate the peccaries' point of view) but it should not be confused with it. As such, the attempt to interpret the relationship with animals as a projection of human relations entails a substantial ethnographic loss. The distinction human/animal is of profound importance to a way of thinking which is always prepared also to take into account the specific animality of the animal that acts as the Other.

Thus a fight takes place – a struggle between one's hunt and the other's war. The hunter's misfortune is the slipping of hunting into warfare. Aware of the supernatural dimension which the peccaries' point of view represents, the humans utilize any means available to try to hinder the peccaries from imposing their point of view.

While preparing for a hunt, one should neither play with language at the peccaries' expense, nor pretend to be the animal's cross-cousin or friend. During the hunt, one should avoid expressing fear by shouting, as if the hunter were the prey. If, for the peccaries, humans are potential affines and the hunt is a war, a hunter who accepts this point of view will encourage the actualization of the prey's virtual intention: peccaries will capture him (after attacking) and, dead to the humans, he will end up transforming into a peccary.

As it is specific to the dialogue between affines (where people wait for the right moment to joke, though not letting ironic humor pass without response – that is, where 'stimuli' and 'response' are constitutively separated by a lapse of time longer than in ordinary dialogues), to make jokes on the peccaries' behalf is to cede speech to them involuntarily, thus precipitating an inversion which is then felt in both parallel events:

- the peccaries kill humans
- the warriors attack and capture potential affines

The animal should not be given any chance to speak. This is also the message of the myth of Kingfisher-Head, as well as of those accounts which link the peccary hunt to the intervention of a shaman. If the shaman's words contain a moral, it could be formulated thus: Take care! peccaries are like us, so don't treat them as people or you too will turn into peccaries.

At the end of the hunt, the prey's soul accompanies its predator. The hunter approaches his relation to the killed prey from two different perspectives. He will say 'my peccary' (u-me-huda), using a possessive term that indicates that the object in question is in theory (and in fact) alienable, but he will also say 'my victim' (u-mita) to express that it is an inherent part of himself. When shared during collective meals, the meat, in the partial shape of a soul
(tooth, fur, pieces of bones), may bring misfortune to the hunter by biting, stinging or perforating the insides of his younger children's bodies. But this would take us into yet another dimension of Juruna cosmology, one beyond the scope of our present analysis.

The Two and Its Many

As a way of improvising some conclusions, I would like to point out a number of loose threads. (1) The hunter's speech, capable of unleashing a fatal dialogue with the peccaries, assumes here a role reminiscent of a sacrificial operation: it traces - 'in advance, and, as it were, by a dotted line' (Lévi-Strauss 1972:226) - an irreversible continuity between hunter and prey. Let us keep the images of anticipation and the dotted line and discard the notion of sacrifice. (2) The dream fragment 'killed peccaries' indicates that the soul has hunted peccaries and signifies that peccaries will appear on the hunter's path. The dream fragment 'running peccaries' indicates that enemies have pursued the soul and signifies that enemies will appear before the hunter. (3) Every being or phenomenon is two: the hunters, the peccaries, the hunt. (4) The notion of human soul does not refer to a subjective experience. As I shall show, this last thread ties up with the previous ones in a way which reveals how hunting traces a pure form of time: a bilinear multiple time.

The hunt here and now - constituted as two parallel events which reflect one another and which comprise, each one, two parallel dimensions which also reflect one another - could have been dreamt by one of the hunters. In this case, the hunt is a parallel event to another event taking place in another moment and place. That is, the hunt-and-its-other has itself its other, dislocated in time and space.

Stimulated by the pleasant experiences lived by the hunter, his soul, while he is asleep, seeks adventures in foreign territory, where very often the Other's point of view, speech and truth dominate. The next morning, if the hunter recalls having dreamt of killed peccaries, he will remain alert to what may be lying in wait for him. The dream may signify that his soul has carried on with a hunt which actually took place in his sensible experience in the previous few days, or it may signify a hunt that his soul has started and that will be for him to realize in the days ahead. The hunt's double can thus be either the prolongation of a past or an incitement of the future.

If the soul sees a herd of peccaries running freely, the hunter will fear being attacked by enemies. He will do nothing for the next two or three days, neither entering the forest, nor traveling by river. Nor will he narrate his
dream to anyone. But, could it be that the hunter’s fear has a specific connotation within this system? Yes, specific and positive. Instead of freezing in fear at the prospect of those approaching in his direction, he suspends all activities outside the village in order to remain safe. His fear is prudence. It is also much more than this. It is not that the enemy will pass by and so he should not be there, nor that at such a place in the forest, an enemy will pass by and the hunter runs the risk of passing by the same place, at the same time, and so of confronting him. It is a radically different way of conceiving time, a way that can be described neither as chance, nor as necessity. The dream is not a mirror wherein the hunter may see his future, but rather a parallel line of time where the hunter’s soul engages in a new event. There are neither accidental meetings, nor meetings determined by destiny. The hunter paralyzes himself because if he is not there, the enemy will not pass by either. His fear, beyond prudence – through the suspension of the activities that define the temporal line of the hunter – is an immobilization of the other time, a rupture of the event which was outlined for him from afar. The hunter refuses to reflect the image of the event which, far away, began to take shape against him.

If every event depends on its double to complete itself as such, and if the hunter, by means of his action-and-word, may (or not) offer himself as a mirror for the duplication of the event in his own sensible experience, it still remains for us to determine with greater precision how the one is articulated with its other.

In perspectivism – as Deleuze pointed out in his work on Leibniz and baroque thought, and whose concept of ‘the fold’ evokes the parallelistic perspectivism we are studying – there are no previously defined subjects nor objects: ‘the subject will be that which arrives at the point of view, or rather that which resides at the point of view’ (Deleuze 1988:27).

The hunt here and now – the meeting point of the two spatiotemporal lines – is also the moment when the appropriation of Speech is everything: it is this appropriation which will respond with an inflection to be released in any one of these two lines. Who will pitch himself into the other’s supernatural line, the hunter or the warrior? A hunt (virtual and real at the same time) takes place when humans initiate and sustain an inflection; it is the appropriation and affirmation of the human point of view by humans. Warfare (a simple virtuality which can be described as an accident to – or even death of – an inexperienced hunter) is the appropriation of the point of view by the peccaries. The hunter’s misfortune is the slipping of his hunting into the other’s war, just as the animal’s misfortune is the slipping of their warfare into a hunt.
In the life of the hunter not even words are representations. Seen from their performative angle, words are destined, during the planning of the hunt, to pass from one to the other, to circulate among all, without remaining fixed with anyone. Allied to every type of language (gesticulation, crashes, shouts, the hissing of arrows), words are the hunt itself, anticipating or outlining its double. It is through words that ‘before’ and ‘after’ are compelled to break into two, to pair up and reflect each other’s images. Words say what already happened tomorrow. And so even the temporal line in which sensible experience of the hunter unfolds is itself double.

Seen from their dialogical angle, during the hunt, words should remain withheld, an explosive silenced in order to become a silencer of all alien words. Now, nothing is anticipation, all is realization; the one and the other meet. First, speech simultaneously traces the line of the animal and the line of the hunters. Later it traces the point of inflection where the human hunt obliges the peccaries’ war to negate itself.

These, then, are the aspects of an Amazonian perspectivist cosmology to which the peccary hunt provides us access. The notion of point of view allows us to configure a structure which is, firstly, constituted by time: spatio-temporal lines or events and their doubles, and the doubles of their doubles. Secondly, the structure is a dynamic in which the virtual Speech of the animal is everything. Furthermore, it teaches us that reality for the hunter, when he employs speech to speak about himself, is a part of the various realities for others. Thus, the subject focused on by events is not the center around which its own world turns. Rather, it is a subject dispersed in cosmic space-time, duplicated between the life of the senses and the life of the soul, split between Nature and Supernature, and complicated by its Other – in our case, the peccary’s other.

But what you are proposing – my readers may argue – results in a hypothesis, if you allow me a play with words that amounts to the following: the formal structure of mythic narrative, which, moreover, mixes with its own substance, is the structural form of the time of the hunter. Thus, the hunter’s historical time, which you called bilinear multiple time, could be called mythical time. Your remark – I would retort – reminds me of what Joana Overing recently wrote: ‘We see our concept of linear and progressive time as an abstract principle that reflects reality such as it really is...’ (Overing, 1995:132). I would also like my concept to reflect Juruna reality, such as it really is. But do not understand what I have not said, namely that this multiple bilinear time would be the only temporal form which Juruna cosmology
outlines for them. For after all, how could we know in advance what configurations the tucunaré or the Words of the dead outline for the Juruna?

Post scriptum dedicated to Vanessa Lea. The Juruna draw beautiful labyrinth patterns on their skins, on their beer serving gourds and other surfaces, as well as weaving such patterns into their hammocks. My curiosity in this graphic art was aroused by the studied silence which Juruna people maintain around them. The man who gazes too much at the skin of a woman covered by such designs – trying to follow with his eyes the pairs of lines that meet and multiply, forming motifs which repeat themselves innumerable times and cover her entire body – runs the risk of losing himself in the paths of the surface of reality. And this only. The symbolism which I searched for in this graphism, in vain, has perhaps never existed, perhaps cannot exist. Who knows, since the culture itself acts as their commentary, perhaps these lines drawn on the skin are the pure forms of the structures formed by the lines of time? I cannot examine this problem here. But I must comment on a point of my analysis which remains inconclusive – one which becomes even more evident after evoking the designs made on the skin – namely, the open or closed nature of the temporal structure which I have described.

If we consider that the metaphysics of the hunt places one dream at the beginning and another at the end of the history of one hunt, given as an anticipated hunt and as a prolongation of a hunt that has already taken place in sensible experience; if we also consider that this metaphysics puts the past and the future in a metaphorical relationship or in one of parallelism, we could assert that the initial dream is parallel to the last dream, forming as such the frame for all the other lines of the hunt. The hunter’s history (leaving aside the fact that he bears on his skin scars which allow him to recall past exploits) is thus composed of uncountable motifs – many of which, through good or bad luck, are incomplete – framed by dreams (his own or of others, factual or virtual), these themselves framed by the long lines of the hunter’s Life and Dream.

Notes
1. This article is the result of a dialogue with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. It was first published in the Brazilian journal *Mana: Estudos de Antropologia Social*, vol. 2(2):21–47 (1996), and is republished here by special arrangement with *Ethnos*. The article was translated from Portuguese by Thais Machado-Borges and revised by David Rodgers.

2. The narrator seems to be suggesting that ‘penis-honey’ is the name given to ‘swallow-honey’. Such is not the case. These are varieties of honey produced by two different sorts of bees. As a further point, in a list with twenty-four names of honey, one can see the predominance of the association between particularities of the
The Two and Its Many

bee and particularities of animals. For instance, guan-honey is produced by a bee whose head is said to be reminiscent of the bird's; saúva-ant-honey is produced by a bee that smells like the ant. There are also some exceptions: spidermonkey-honey is produced by a bee whose legs are said to be like those of wasps. In certain cases, the name of the honey is associated with the entrance to the hive. Such is the case with vagina-honey which is produced by various species of bees.

3. For a distinction between potential and virtual affinity, see Viveiros de Castro (1993:167–168). It should also be noticed that the risk of abusing language transcends the sphere of hunting peccaries and assumes the character of a general rule of hunting. This is exemplified by the case of an ancestor who, one evening while planning a tapir hunt, could not hold his excitement and shouted: I am going to put my arm right in the tapir's anus and pull out its heart! He attempted this following day. But as soon as his hand had penetrated the animal's anus, it contracted its sphincter and ran away. The unfortunate hunter had almost completely turned into a tapir when he was later discovered by some hunters who had shot a tapir couple. Before dying, the male tapir told them who he was. The hunters left the body of the male to rot in the forest and ate the female tapir, in whose belly they found a human embryo.

4. TN: Peacock bass (Cichla ocellaris), a freshwater fish.

5. TN: Cacicus cela (L.).

6. In passing, I could not proceed further without mentioning the revival of the term 'animism' which Descola (1992) has recently proposed, aimed at creating a typology of forms of relation with alterity and with nature. Animism, according to Descola, represents a type of relation symmetrical and inverse to totemism. His working hypothesis admittedly raises theoretical questions specific to Amazonian ethnology, as well as more general and rather interesting methodological questions. But I could not discuss this work here without deviating from my main objective. Instead, I simply note that the reflections I present in this article are not linked (except very indirectly) to Descola's hypotheses, and that when I speak of animism, I am not referring to Descola's definition of the term.

7. In my ethnographic material, the notion of point of view is indicated in a very simple way: the objective forms of personal pronouns receive the postposition be, 'to/for' ['para' in Portuguese]. Nevertheless, there is a crucial difference between the notion of point of view itself and its linguistic expression: the latter has a much wider use. Thus, a sentence such as 'this is a tapir to me' simply means that the subject uses a particular meat in the same way another uses the tapir (Lima 1995:19). Or, in other words, the same linguistic expression is also used to make analogies.


9. ' Shamanic discourse is a theatrical play of citations of citations, reflections of reflections, echoes of echoes – a never ending polyphony where the one who speaks is always the other, who speaks about what the Other speaks. The Alien word can only be understood through its reflections' (Viveiros de Castro 1986:570).

10. There are an immense variety of ways in which the notion of point of view is expressed among the different Amazonian cultures and, probably, within each of these cultures. The Matsiguenga, for example, develop an aspect which appears to have
no parallel in the Juruna ethnography: from the point of view of the moon and other categories, humans are not seen as humans, but as tapirs or collared peccaries (Baer 1994: 224). I could not yet provide an exhaustive inventory for the Juruna, but I put forward the following patterns: (1) As a general schema, there are two subjects and two categories; these are distinct according to one of the subjects and undifferentiated according to the other. Distinction is a perspective generally adopted by humans and it follows that they are betrayed by this very gift for differentiation. (2) A category (empirical or not) related to a certain cosmic region transforms into another category in order to pass through other lands – transformation being a potential of the category itself which maintains its original point of view, that is, the point of view it had prior to transformation. (3) An empirical category which is devoid of a point of view undergoes an alteration because it crosses cosmic domains. (4) Animals take parts to be the whole. (5) In dreams, the meaning of images is determined by the other's point of view. (Thus, when the peccaries looked at my friend and myself, the river where we were bathing turned, according to our point of view, into mud, and according to the peccaries' point of view, into fermented manioc). It can also be seen that this problem refers to the (apparently) double question of metamorphosis and becoming, and to the heterogeneity of space. I am unable to approach either of these questions here.

11. This should be nuanced. Vultures, for instance, have certain cultural items which originally belonged exclusively to them, but were stolen long ago by the Juruna. Such is the case of a straw diadem, very typical of the cultural identity of this group (according to the Juruna themselves), which is said to belong to the vultures. Unlike other animals, vultures have, also among the Makuna, a certain cultural diversity: they share with white men the same China ware (Århem 1993: 116).

12. I use the term parallelism in its literary sense, according to the Jakobsonian theory of poetics (Jakobson 1963: 1967). This is the principle which predominates in indigenous mythical narratives and the Juruna even employ it in everyday conversation. Its appearance can be witnessed in the following commentary about the meal eaten by the souls during the festival of the dead (i ānay): 'The i ānay eat the food, but they do not eat, no. They say that the pans are empty, it's a lie! To them, all the food is finished; for us, the food is there. They only eat the fish's soul and, by eating, there is no more soul left for them. "There is no more fish! The pans are empty! You can eat as well... if there is anything left... you can eat too", they say' (Lima 1995: 260).

13. It should be noted that only death can effect this conjugation of the human soul with the subject. But since perspectivism is also active in the society of the dead that dwell in the rocks, as well as in their relation to the living and to the souls of the dead cannibals who live in a celestial village, the dead also organize their experience in terms of body/soul or subject/double.

14. Here too, the theme of the animal soul diverges from the theme of the human soul which, at death, presents a fundamental incompatibility with the corpse.

References


