Immanence and Fear[1]

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Introduction

"Imagine you are standing at the podium about to deliver a public lecture. Your voice cuts into the silence and you begin. No moment is so sheer, so existentially chilling". M. Lambek opened an inaugural lecture at the LSE with these words a short time ago (Lambek 2007: 19). This is a situation overwhelmingly familiar to any academic, however seasoned and however sure he or she may be of the quality of the lecture about to be delivered: namely, the fear that consumes us as we face the problem of beginning (and which Lambek has kindly just solved for me!). If the speaker is an anthropologist, perhaps, at this moment, another fear at (or of) the beginning will come to mind, one situated at the outset of the sequence of circumstances that led to him or her standing at the podium 'now': "Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight" (Malinowski 1922: 4). In fact, the sequence is self-similar—ontogenesis repeats phylogenesis—since at the same as this famous 'imagine' of Malinowski takes all of us back to the anxiety-ridden initial moments of our own field research, it also marks the historical instauration of the very idea of fieldwork, its originary narrative moment. For this reason, I highlight the 'imagine' that opens the two citations I have just quoted: both announce the intrinsic

[1] This is a version of the keynote speech delivered at the *Fear* Conference, Canadian, University of Toronto, 11 May 2007.

connection between fear and imagination. As we know, a minimal amount of imagination is needed to be afraid. Even the so-called instinctive fears, the 'animal fears', are no more or less than acts of imagination embedded in the ethogram of our species through an immemorial learning (to recall S. Butler's visionary book). Since we need to learn to be afraid. For example, I recently learnt to be afraid of the fear that others have of me when I manifest my intention to cross some of the multiple fractal borders constituting the geopolitical ecology of the present. If the border is, in diverse ways, the place of fear par excellence, it is equally clear today that the contemporary world is anything but a world without borders. The 'final frontier' is the universalization of the frontier; today everywhere is a frontier. Imagine the fear that constitutes living today in the 'centre' of a world that is nothing but frontiers, horizons, and infinite limits. Such is the current predicament of the denizens of the centre.

But it is possible to laugh about some fears, and, even more so, about some imaginations. In fact, if there is an idea that can be thought of as really comical today, with its pitiful mixture of naiveté and presumption, it is the belief of our immediate ancestors that the advancement of technology and science, the revelation of the mysteries of the cosmos and the organism, the expansion in the free circulation of things, people and ideas, the spread of literacy and the state of law—in a word, to use an old-fashioned word, progress—would dissipate the pervasive state of fear in which our more distant ancestors (or our contemporary primitives) lived. As is well-known, they lived in fear: fear of other humans, fear of nature, fear of death, fear of the dead. The light of reason, arriving to dispel the darkness of superstition and its imaginary fears, and science, arriving to lessen the impotence of humans in the face of real dangers, would finally allow us to attain a state of non-fear, a state of safety and knowledge. We would fear nothing because we understood everything: what could be fixed, would be.

It's unnecessary to dwell on the point that this prophecy has proven to be stupendously wrong. Other people's real fears of imaginary monsters have given way to a frightening proliferation of imaginary fears of real monsters. I say imaginary fears insofar as these are fears generated and managed by a gigantic political economy of the image, the 'cinematic mode of production' that defines late capitalism (as masterfully analyzed in Beller 2006). We have even started to define our society as a risk system—U. Beck's 'Risk Society' (1992), a society organized around risks created by itself, frightened of its capacity to annihilate its own conditions of existence. In other words, a society, that is afraid of itself (this, I believe, is what is dubbed reflexive modernization). It seems that the spread of reason has ruthlessly increased our reasons for being afraid. That is, as if reason has itself become the very thing to be feared.

I have no intention, however, of using my remaining minutes to entertain you with images of all too familiar fears ranging from fourth-world immigrants to global warming (talk about the fear that the poor primitives had of other peoples and natural forces!). Instead, I wish to talk about another 'society of risk'—a society of risk in an entirely different sense, in which risk is experienced not as a threat to the conditions of existence of a social form, but as its existential condition of possibility: its reason for being, or rather for becoming. In short, I wish to talk about the forms of fear in the native societies of Amazonia, or more precisely, exemplified by these societies, about another form of relating to fear.

In a marvellous short article published in *Society against the State*, P. Clastres (2003) asked: what makes Indians laugh? By analogy, I would ask: what makes Indians afraid? The response, in principle (and only ever in principle…), is simple: they laugh at and fear the same things—the things indicated by Clastres: jaguars, shamans, whites, spirits, and other beings defined by their radical alterity. And they are afraid because this alterity is the object of an equally radical desire on the part of the self. This is a form of fear that, far from demanding the exclusion or disappearance of the other in order for the peace of self-identity to be recuperated, necessarily implies the inclusion or incorporation, *of* the other or *by* the other ('by' also in the sense of 'through'), as a form of perpetuation of the other-becoming that comprises the process of desire in these Amazonian socialities. Without the dangerous influx of forces and forms that people the exterior of the *socius*, the latter will inevitably perish from a lack of difference.

Pudenda Origo

Let's begin again. If, as Nietzsche claimed, all historical beginnings are lowly, then it makes sense to begin down below—precisely with the "bodily lower stratum", in the Bakhtinian sense. I recommence then with a Brazilian proverb which tells us that: "*Quem tem cu tem medo* (Anyone with an asshole feels fear)". What this saying means is not completely agreed upon. I've already found (on the Internet, where else?) various extravagant hypotheses concerning, for example, the need to be continually on the lookout for the risk of being raped and sodomized, etc. Personally, I've always heard it used in a less sexually paranoid sense. What the proverb underlines is the common human predicament defined by the logically sufficient relation between being anatomically equipped with an anus and being subject to the emotion of fear. Presumably, this is a way of saying that fear (like the anus) is not something we are likely to parade, yet it remains undeniably part of us and fulfils its indispensable function of helping in life. This profound definition of fear through its juxtaposed correlation with a literally

'fundamental' anatomical condition—or, more precisely, physiological; there is perhaps an allusion to the sudden contraction or relaxation of the anal sphincter in frightening situations—this definition is, we should note, unmarked from the viewpoint of gender. The anus is that 'private part' shared by males and females; having balls makes no difference: everybody has an ass to cover… It is also unmarked from the viewpoint of species, given that the anus (or its equivalent) is part of the body plan of every animal. This suggests an image of fear as an essentially democratic emotion: organic, corporal, animal, universal. Everyone is afraid of something. The mouth of the enemy, for example—that is, the mouths of animals that prey on our own species:

> The Arawaks [of the Guiana region] have a saying, *haináro kamungka turuwati* (lit. 'everything has [its own] tiger [jaguar]'), as a reminder of the fact that we should be circumspect, and on our guard, there always being some enemy about (Roth 1915: 367).

But while anyone with an asshole feels fear, we have not all always possessed this remarkably convenient ontological loophole. There is an anus origin myth, told by the Taulipang Indians of Guiana and recorded in 1905 by Koch-Grünberg (in Medeiros 2002: 101–2), which is well worth retelling here. It will lead us back to fear by some unexpected paths.

> In the deep past, animals and people lacked an anus with which to defecate. I think they defecated through their mouths. Pu'iito, the anus, wandered around, slowly and cautiously, farting in the faces of animals and people, and then running away. So the animals said: "Let's grab Pu'iito, so we can divide him up between us!" Many gathered and said: "We'll pretend that we're asleep! When he arrives, we'll catch him!" So that's what they did. Pu'iito arrived and farted in the face of one of them. They ran after Pu'iito, but couldn't catch him and were left trailing behind.
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> The parrots Kuliwaí and Kaliká got close to Pu'iito. They ran and ran. Finally they caught him and tied him up. Then the others who had been left behind arrived: tapir, deer, curassow, Spix's guan, piping guan, dove... They began to share him out. Tapir eagerly asked for a piece. The parrots cut a large piece and threw it to the other animals. Tapir immediately grabbed it. That's why his anus is so huge.
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> The parrot cut a small, appropriately-sized piece for himself. The deer received a smaller piece than tapir's. The doves took a little piece. Toad arrived and asked them to give him a piece too. The parrots threw a piece in his direction, which stuck on his back: that's why even today the toad's anus is on his back. All the animals, birds and fishes received a piece. Then the small Karoíd eel came up and also asked for a piece. The parrots threw a piece towards him, which stuck to his throat: to this day his anus is on his throat.
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> That was how we acquired our anuses. Were we without them today, we'd have to defecate through our mouths, or explode.

Koch-Grünberg makes the following comment about this story: "Pu'iito is undoubtedly the weirdest personification of which we have record" (in Medeiros 2002: 57). An observation likely to receive the hearty endorsement of any reader.

The myth of Pu'iito immediately brings to mind a passage from the *Anti-Oedipus* on the collective investment of the organs in the primitive territorial machine:

> The mythologies sing of organs-partial objects and their relations with a full body that repels or attracts them: vaginas riveted on the woman's body, an immense penis shared by the men, an independent anus that assigns itself a body without anus […] (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 142–3)

Deleuze & Guattari also remark, "It is the collective investment of the organs that plug desire into the socius", and add:

> Our modern societies have instead undertaken a vast privatization of the organs […] The first organ to suffer privatization, removal from the social field, was the anus. It was the anus that offered itself as a model for privatization […] (142–3)

Pu'iito is one of the many Amerindian myths relating to speciation, to the process through which a virtual proto-humanity recalling that the original common condition of all beings is a pre-corporal state (the mythic figures are all spirits), though anthropo-morphic and anthropo-logical separates out into the different corporalities of the actual-contemporary world. The history of Pu'iito describes precisely the pre-corporal situation where the anus was a singular person (a spiritual, angelic anus, so to speak); it narrates the moment when the organ in question leaves its intensive existence, as a part identical to its own (w)hole, and is extensified, collectively invested and distributed (shared) among the animal species (In this sense, the Brazilian proverb with which I began refers to this socialized phase of the anus, its post-actualized and pre-privatized moment).

We should note that the myth does not involve giving each individual an anus that is identical yet his/her own, in the sense of his/her private property; instead, it involves giving the representatives of each future species an organ that is specific to it, in other words, one that characterizes each species as a distinct multiplicity; we are not yet within the regime of general equivalence. Still, every species has an anus—because, as the myth endeavours to explain, every species has a mouth. And it is through the mouth that the most decisive relations between the species in the post-mythic world take place: through inter-corporal devoration.[2]

[2] This links to an 'economic' problem in Amazonian ethnology and its focus on 'production' and 'consumption,' but not 'excretion'. No theory of waste (or getting rid of excess: Bataille, etc.). This issue of shit/pollution is also, obviously, an ecological question.

An Eye for a Tooth, a Tooth for an Eye

The pre-cosmological world described by Amerindian myths is a world completely saturated with personhood. A Yawanawa (Panoan of Western Amazonia) story begins: in that time, there was nothing, but people already existed (Carid Naveira 1999). [3] The emergence of the species and the institutionalization of the food chain, processes described in the myths, do not extinguish this originary universal personhood, they merely put it into a state of dangerous non-appearance, that is, a state of latency or potentiality. Every being encountered by a human over the course of producing his or her own life may suddenly allow its 'other side' (a common idiom in indigenous cosmologies) to eclipse its usual non-human appearance, actualizing its backgrounded personhood and automatically placing at risk the life of the human interlocutor (We shall shortly discover the reasons for this risk).

The problem is particularly acute when it passes through the mouth: "A shaman in Iglulik once told Birket-Smith: 'Life's greatest danger lies in the fact that man's food consists entirely of souls'" (Bodenhorn 1988: 1). This is not, then, the contemporary fear that our food is composed of 'transgenic organisms', but a fear of the latency of quite other hybrids, transontological intentionalities, non-organic lives that are just as, or even more, dangerous, inducers of corporal metamorphoses and abductors of souls. The theme is fairly well known: cannibalism is, for the native peoples of America, an inevitable component of every act of manducation, because everything is human, in the sense of capable of being human: this cosmic background humanity is less a predicate of all beings than a constitutive uncertainty concerning the predicates of any being. This uncertainty does not implicate merely the 'objects' of perception, and it is not a problem of attributive judgment; still less is it a problem of 'classification'; the uncertainty includes the subject, in other words, it includes the subject condition of the human actant who is exposed to contact with the radical alterity of these other people, people who, like any other people, claim for themselves a sovereign point of view. Here we approach one of the origins of fear. It is impossible not to be a cannibal; but it is equally impossible to establish a consistently one-way active cannibal relation with any other species—they are bound to strike back. 'Soul-food', in the Amerindian sense, is always dangerous: those who eat souls shall be eaten by souls.

In sum, these are worlds where humanity is immanent, as R. Wagner (1981) puts it; that is, worlds where the primordial takes human form; which does

[3] The Kaluli of New Guinea say the same: "At that time […] there were no trees or animals or streams of sago or food. The earth was covered entirely by people" (Schiefflin 1975: 94).

not make it in any sense comforting, much the opposite: there where all things are human, the human is something else entirely. And there were all things are human, nobody can be certain of being unconditionally human, because nobody is—including ourselves. In fact, humans have to 'decondition' their humanity in certain precise conditions, since the influx of the non-human and becoming-other-than-human are obligatory 'moments' of transition for humans. The world of immanent humanity is also a world of the immanence of the enemy.

Irving Hallowell makes an observation that recurs in many Amerindian ethnographies:

> My Ojibwa friends often cautioned me against judging by appearances. […] I have since concluded that the advice given me in a common sense fashion provides one of the major clues to a generalized attitude towards the objects of their behavioural environment—particularly people. It makes them cautious and suspicious in interpersonal relations of all kinds. The possibility of metamorphosis must be one of the determining factors in this attitude; it is a concrete manifestation of the deceptiveness of appearances (1960: 69–70).

Do not judge by appearances… I presume this warning is issued in virtually all cultural traditions, since it belongs to that universal fund of popular wisdom which includes many similar maxims. It belongs here because it is, of course, true—in a sense; or rather, in many different, culture-specific senses. Hallowell, though, is saying a bit more than 'appearances deceive' in the abstract: he says that the caution about the deceptiveness of appearances applies especially to dealings with persons, and that the notion of metamorphosis is a crucial factor. Indeed, if persons are the epitome of what shouldn't be judged by appearances, and if all (or most) types of beings are people, we can never take appearances at face value. What appears to be a human may be an animal or a spirit; what appears to be an animal or human may be a spirit, and so on. Things change—especially when they are persons. This, of course, has very little to do with our own familiar epistemological warning 'not to trust our senses'. What cannot be 'trusted' is people, not our senses. Appearances deceive not because they differ from the essences presumed (by us) to be concealed behind them, but because they are, precisely, appearances, i.e. apparitions. Every apparition demands a recipient, a subject to whom it appears. And where there is a subject, there is a point of view. Appearances deceive because they carry embedded within themselves a particular point of view. Every appearance is a perspective, and every perspective 'deceives'.

The question of distrusting appearances introduces us to the third organ relevant to determining what we could call the 'transcendental conditions' of fear in Amerindian socialities: the eye. Here I need to return to a typical motif of

indigenous cosmopraxis, one about which I have already written so exhaustively that I am unsure how far to go into it, because you may already be familiar with it. I am talking about Amerindian 'cosmological perspectivism', the idea according to which each[4] species or type of being is endowed with a prosopomorphic or anthropomorphic apperception, seeing itself as a 'person', while it sees the other actants of its own eco-system as non-persons or non-humans: as prey animals or predatory animals (everything has its own jaguar), or spirits (invariably cannibal or sexually voracious), or simply as artefacts of their own culture: jaguars see humans as peccaries, and see the blood of the prey that they kill as maize beer; the dead (the dead are not human; much of what I say here about animals can be said about the dead, since, in various aspects, animals are like the dead and the dead, like animals) see the crickets as fish; the tapirs see the salt licks where they gather as large ceremonial houses; and so forth. Each species is thus 'in' culture, occupying the position that humans (that is, the humans' humans) see themselves as occupying in relation to the rest of the cosmos. Hence, it is not just a question of each species identifying itself as a culturally defined humanity: perspectivism also means that each species possesses a particular way of perceiving alterity, a 'consensual hallucination'[5] device which makes it see the world in a characteristic way.

This perspectival divergence of the species is very frequently attributed to the quality of the eyes possessed by each species. The Ye'kuana of Venezuela say: "Each people have their own eyes […] The people [humans] can't understand the anacondas because they have different eyes […]" (de Civrieux 1985: 65–6). The theme is omnipresent in mythology, where magical eyewashes, the swapping of eyeballs and other ophthalmological tricks produce spectacular effects in which all the world turns inside out—a sure sign that the protagonists have crossed some kind of ontological barrier (from species to species, living to dead, etc.).[6]

But having different eyes does not mean seeing 'the same things' in a different 'way'; it means that *you don't know what the other is seeing when he 'says' that he's seeing the same thing as you*: we don't understand anacondas. The problem is one of perceptive 'homonymy', not 'synonymy'. Perspectivism is not a transpecific multiculturalism stating that each species possesses a particular subjective 'point of view' onto a real objective, unique and self-subsistent world: various cultures and one

[4] The pronoun 'each' should be taken in a positively vague sense, as the name of a continuous variation and not a distributive quantifier.
[5] This is, I believe, an expression by W. Gibson, the creator of cyberpunk.
[6] The notion of the 'different eyes' of each species is especially conspicuous in S. Howell's (1984) pioneering analysis of the cosmology of the Chewong of Malaysia, one of the relatively few non-Amerindian or non-Circumpolar peoples where perspectivism is strikingly prominent. So much, by the way, for 'oculocentrism' and the 'Western bias' towards vision. Other people have their own 'views' on the matter.

nature, in sum—Anthropology 101, that is. *Perspectivism does not state the existence of a multiplicity of points of view, but the existence of the point of view as a multiplicity*. There is just 'one' point of view, the one which humans share—like the anus—with every other species of being: the point of view of culture. What varies is the objective correlative of the point of view: what passes through the digestive tube of each species, so to speak. In other words, perspectivism does not presume a Thing-in-Itself partially apprehended by the categories of understanding proper to each species. We are not asked to imagine that the Indians imagine that 'something equal to x' exists (as if they were super-Kantians) which humans see as blood and jaguars see as beer. What exists are not differently categorized self-identical substances, but immediately relational multiplicities of the blood-beer, salt lick—ceremonial house, cricket-fish type. There is no *x* which is blood for one species and beer for the other: there exists a blood|beer which is one of the singularities characteristic of the human|jaguar multiplicity.

What defines these perspectival multiplicities is their constitutive incompossibility. A human and a jaguar cannot be people at the same time; it is impossible to experience blood as beer without becoming a jaguar, even if partially or temporarily. Perspectivism states that each species sees itself as people; however, it also states that two species cannot see each other reciprocally and simultaneously as people. Each species has to be capable of 'not losing sight' of the fact that the others see themselves as people and, simultaneously, capable of forgetting this fact: that is, able to 'not see it'. A particularly important point for humans—which is from where I am speaking—when they kill to eat. But although we need to be able to not see the animals that we eat as they see themselves, sometimes it is interesting to see them as they are seen by other animals; sometimes it is also useful, and even necessary, to see how certain animals see: to cure humans made sick by the spirit of a certain animal species (when the shaman must negotiate with the members of the aggressor species); to invest oneself with the predatory capacities of the jaguar or anaconda in order to attack enemies; to know how our world appears when seen from above (the sky) or below (the depths of the river), and so on.

G. Mentore (1993: 29) provides a concise formula for the cosmopraxis of the Waiwai of Guiana: "the primary dialectics is one between seeing and eating". The observation captures the fact that the theme of perspectival multiplicity is the intrinsic correlate of the generalized cannibalism defining the indigenous cosmopolitical economy. This complex combination between seeing and being seen, eating and being eaten, commensality and co-perceptuality is abundantly illustrated in the ethnographic record:

> According to the informant, a jaguar of any species that devours a human being, firstly eats the eyes of its victim, and very often is content with this. In actuality, the eye here does not represent the organ of vision, but a seminal principle which the jaguar thereby incorporates into itself (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1973: 245).

That this really involves eating the 'seminal principle' is not something I would unhesitatingly swear by. However it is quite a good example of the "primary dialectic between seeing and eating". Or again, in E. Kohn's thesis on the Ávila Runa of Peru:

> Several myth images explore how perspectivism can reveal moments of alienation and the break down of self-knowledge. This is evident in the myth regarding *juri juri* demons [*Aotus* sp., nocturnal primates with enormous bulging eyes]... This myth begins with an episode in which ten hunters make fun of the monkeys they have hunted and are punished for this by the *juri juri* demon. This demon eats their eyes out while they are sleeping (Kohn 2002: 133).

The author also records:

> When [jaguars] encounter people in the forest they are always said to make eye contact. [...] I should also note that one of the ways in which people acquire jaguar souls is through an application of a jaguar canine or incisor tooth dipped in hot peppers to the tear duct. Jaguar teeth that are intact and have not yet developed hairline fractures contain the souls of jaguars. People can absorb this—with the aid of hot peppers—through the conduit of the eyes (203).

In other words: an eye for a tooth, a tooth for an eye. M. Alexiades, discussing the *edosikiana*, spirits encountered by the Ese Eja of Bolivia, writes: "the *edosikiana* are invisible to everyone except the shaman: anyone who sees an *edosikiana* is devoured by it" (1999: 194). Interestingly, seeing here is being seen and, consequently, being devoured. In other cases, it is necessary to see so as not to be seen: this theme is frequent in hunting theories.[7] Indeed, the theme is pan-Amerindian, and is found in the popular tradition of many other peoples. In circumpolar cultures it is, as we know, fundamental; but it also appeared in Medieval Europe:

> [A] man who encounters a wolf has one chance in two of escaping: he needs to see the wolf first. The latter then loses its aggressivity and flees. If the wolf perceives the presence of the man first, though, the latter will become paralyzed and will end up being devoured; even if, with a stroke of luck, he manages to escape, he will remain dumb for the rest of his days (Pastoreau 1989: 167).

[7] Inversely, not being able to see (locate and kill) the animal is a common supernatural affliction in Amazonia, the so-called 'panema'.

An interesting permutation of the senses: if you are seen first instead of seeing, you will become mute... What needs to be remembered is that there is more in perspectivism than meets the eye; there is an entire theory of the sign and communication.

The Hunter's Lonely Heart

In her recent thesis defended at the Museu Nacional, in which she analyzes the importance of body decorations in the constitution of human personhood among the Nambikwara of Central Brazil, J. Miller (2007) cites an indigenous explanation for the danger of a person losing his or her body ornaments. Asked for the reason behind this fear, a young man with some experience of city life replied that his ornaments

> were like white people's I.D. cards. When white people lose their I.D., the police arrest them, arguing that without their identity card, they are nobody. The same happens when the spirits of the forest steal the ornaments of the Nambiquara. They hide them in holes in the forest and the soul (yauptidu) of the person becomes stuck in the hole as a result. The person becomes sick and no longer recognizes his or her kin. Without their ornaments, they are nobody (171).

"No longer recognizing kin" means no longer occupying the human perspective; one of the most important signs of metamorphosis (and every illness is a metamorphosis, especially when caused by soul abduction) is not so much the change in appearance of the self in the eyes of others, but the change in the perception by the self of the appearance of others, detectable by these others by a change in the behaviour of the subject in question: the sick person loses the capacity to see others as conspecifics, that is, kin, and begins to see them as the animal/spirit who captured his or her soul see them—typically, as prey. This explains why a sick person is dangerous.

But the point of more interest to me in this explanation is the relation between indigenous ornaments and the I.D. card, a fundamental object in the Brazilian State's system for controlling the population. The Nambikwara ornaments are 'like' the I.D. cards of white people because this document, as the Indians shrewdly perceived, is 'like' a Nambikwara ornament—it is a humanization device. While the person who 'lost' her ornaments, that is, had them stolen by the spirits, no longer recognizes her kin, the person who lost her I.D. card is no longer recognized by the State, and thus can be 'stolen'—arrested—by the police, and separated from her kin. In fact, the crucial comparison made by the young Nambikwara man was between the police and the spirits. The police, like the spirits, are always on the lookout for the chance to transform somebody into

nobody, and then make them disappear. Here we are approaching what seems to me to be the context par excellence for experiencing fear in indigenous Amazonia: the entry into a 'supernatural' regime. I use this term to designate a situation in which the subject of the perspective, or 'self', is suddenly transformed into an object in the perspective of another being. This other being, irrespective of its apparent species-specific identity, is revealed to be a spirit in assuming the master position of the dominant perspective, and submits the human to its definition of reality; a reality in which the human, by definition, is not human: it is a prey animal of the spirit, which devours the self, generally in order to redefine the latter as its conspecific (a sexual partner, or an adopted child).[8]

This is the 'war of the worlds' that forms the backdrop to Amerindian cosmopraxis. The typical confrontation takes place in the encounter outside the village between a person who is alone (a woman collecting firewood, a hunter, etc.) and a being that at first sight looks like an animal or person, sometimes a relative (living or dead) of the subject. The entity then interpellates the human: the animal, for example, speaks to the hunter, protesting against his treatment of itself as prey; or it looks 'strangely' at him, while the hunter's arrows fail to injure it; the pseudo-relative invites the subject to follow it, or to eat something it is carrying. The reaction to the entity's initiative is decisive. If the human accepts the dialogue or the invitation, if he or she responds to the interpellation, the person is lost: he/she will be inevitably overpowered by the non-human subjectivity, passing over to its side, transforming him/herself into a being of the same species as the speaker. Anyone responding to a 'you' spoken by a non-human accepts the condition of being its 'second person', and when assuming in turn the position of 'I' does so already as a non-human. The canonical form of these encounters, then, consists in suddenly finding out that the other is 'human', that is, that it is the human, which automatically dehumanizes and alienates the interlocutor. As a context in which a human subject is captured by another cosmologically dominant point of view, where he/she becomes the 'you' of a non-human perspective, Supernature is thus the form of the Other as Subject, implying an objectification of the human 'I' as a 'you' for this Other.[9]

[8] A few months ago, the Nambikwara forced the release of a young Indian man being held in custody in a neighbouring town. In front of the TV cameras recording the spectacle of a band of painted 'warriors' circling a police station, the Indians became simultaneously indignant and worried on hearing the freed young man declare that he had been fed and treated well in prison. They contradicted the boy: "you're not their kin, we are your kin; you were imprisoned" (Miller 2007: 248–9.). Get real! Anyone who accepts food offered by the dead—in a dream, for example—will become sick and die.

[9] An insight into this idea can be found in the recommendation made by the Achuar Jívaro, studied by A.-C. Taylor (1993), concerning the basic method of self-protection on encountering an *iwianch*—a ghost or spirit—in the forest. You must say to the ghost: 'I, too, am a person'... You

This, in sum, would be the true meaning of the Amerindian disquiet over what is hidden behind appearances. Appearances deceive because you can never be sure which is the dominant point of view, that is, which world is in force when you interact with the Other. Everything is dangerous; above all when everything else is people, and we, perhaps, are not.

I spoke of the lethal 'interpellation' of the subject by a spirit. The Althusserian allusion is deliberate. I see these supernatural encounters in the forest, where the self is captured by an other, and defined as the latter's 'second person', as a kind of indigenous proto-experience of the State; that is, a premonition of the experience of seeing yourself as a 'citizen' of a state (Death and taxes are not just the only two certain things in life; they are the same thing…). In an earlier work, I argued that the constitutive problem of Western modernity, namely, solipsism—the supposition that the Other is merely a body, that it does not harbour a soul like that of the Self: an absence of communication—had as its Amazonian equivalent the (positive or negative) obsession with cannibalism and the affirmation of the latent transformability of bodies—a total impregnation of the cosmos by subjecthood, a supposition-fear that what we eat are always, in the final analysis, souls: an excess of communication. Here I wish to suggest that the true equivalent of the indigenous experience of the supernatural are not our extraordinary or paranormal experiences (alien abductions, ESP, mediumship, etc.), but the quotidian experience, perfectly terrifying in its very normality, of existing under a State. The famous poster of Uncle Sam with his finger pointing in your face, looking directly at anyone who allowed their gaze to be captured by him, is for me the icon of the State: "I want you". An Amazonian Indian would immediately know what this 'spirit' is talking about, and, pretending not to hear, would look elsewhere.

I do not know what the presuppositional experience of citizenship is like in Japan, but in today's Brazil I can assure you that there is no-one who doesn't feel a tingle of fear on being stopped by the police—a highway patrol, for example—and asked to hand over his/her I.D. documents for inspection. Even if his/her documents are perfectly in order, even if you are a completely innocent person (and who is completely innocent?), it is impossible not to feel a cold shiver down your spine (or in another part of the body mentioned earlier) on being confronted by the Forces of Order. This is not simply derived from the fact that the police in Brazil are often corrupt and brutal, and that the citizen's innocence and a clean record do not guarantee very much there. Since we feel the same fear (once more, I can only speak of my own experience and of the environment familiar to me) on

must assert your point of view: when you say that you, too, are a person, what you really mean is that you are the 'I', you are the person, not the other. 'I, too, am a person' means: I am the real person here.

having our passport examined by Immigration in a foreign country, on crossing the metal detectors found in public buildings across the planet, on disembarking in an absolute non-place such as an international airport, on seeing the banknote we used to make a purchase checked for its authenticity by the shop assistant, on seeing yourself caught by a CCTV camera, and so on. Clearly, we almost always escape. Almost always nothing happens: or more exactly, *something always almost-happens* (see Rodgers 2004 for a brilliant exploration of this idea). This is precisely how the inhuman subjectivities that wander the forest are typically experienced by the Indians—they are usually only almost-seen, communication is almost-established, and the result is always an almost-death. The almost-event is the Supernatural's default mode of existence. We need to have almost-died to be able to tell.

What is this experience of uncertainty and helplessness that we feel when faced by the incarnations of the State or, in the case of the Indians, of spirits? We could begin by establishing that the modern State is the absence of kinship; this is effectively its principle. P. Gow observed that the jaguar, the typical antagonist of the natives of Amazonia in these (almost-)lethal supernatural encounters, is, for the Piro of Peru, "the very antithesis of kinship" (2001: 106). Old people tell Piro children:

> You should never joke about the jaguar. That one is not like our mothers and fathers, who are always saying, 'Watch out, I'm going to hit you, I'll hit you', but never do. No, the jaguar is not like that. That one just kills you! (110)

And here we are. It is no coincidence that the large felines are found as imperial symbols just about everywhere, including in indigenous America. And, if the jaguar-State is the antithesis of kinship, this is because kinship must be, somehow, the antithesis of the State; as we know, even there where kinship groups and networks are firmly ensconced in the State, it is through these very networks that powerful lines of flight enable an escape from the overcodification produced by the state apparatus. In regions where, on the contrary, kinship is assembled into a machine capable of blocking the coagulation of a 'separate' power, as in the Clastrean societies of Amazonia, it (kinship) is less the expression of an 'egalitarian' molar philosophy than one of the elements of a perspectivist cosmology where the humanity of the subject is always molecularly at risk, and where the ever-present challenge is to capture inhuman potencies without allowing oneself to be definitely dehumanized by them. The problem is how to make kin out of others (Vilaça 2002)—because kin can only be made out of others; conversely, one must become-other to make kin. While the Piro say that you should never joke about the jaguar, at the start of this lecture we heard Clastres's observation that the myths that most make the Indians laugh tend to put

the jaguars in particularly grotesque situations. On the other hand, the jaguar, this antithesis of kinship, is at the same time, for the Piro, the epitome of beauty—the beauty of alterity and the alterity of beauty. To avoid being devoured by the jaguar, you need to know how to assume its point of view as the point of view of the Self. And here is the crux of the problem: how to let yourself be invested with alterity without this becoming a seed of transcendence, a basis of power, a symbol of the State, that is, a symbol of a symbol.

The Enemy as Immanence

If we accept my recontextualization of the concept of Supernature, much of what traditionally falls under this rubric must be left out. 'Spirits' or 'souls', for instance, do not belong as such to this category; rather, the opposite takes place: everything that performs the role of antagonist in the perspectival war of the worlds 'becomes' a spirit or soul. On the other hand, much of what would not (for us) normally fall under this same rubric must be so redefined. We can take our earlier example of hunting. Hunting is, in a sense, the supreme supernatural context—from the perspective of both animals (when the hunter succeeds) and humans (when things go wrong and the hunter becomes prey). Warfare and cannibalism are other obvious contexts that can be construed as 'supernatural'. The analogy between shamans and warriors has often been highlighted in Amerindian ethnographies. Warriors are to the human world what shamans are to the wider universe: commutators or conductors of perspectives. Shamanism is indeed warfare writ large: this has nothing to do with killing as such (though shamans often act as spiritual warriors in a very literal sense), but rather with the commuting of ontological perspectives; another kind of violence, in the words of D. Rodgers, 'self-positivized violence' (2004).

Indigenous warfare belongs to the same cosmological complex as shamanism, insofar as it involves the embodiment by the self of the enemy's point of view. Likewise, the intention behind Amazonian ritual exo-cannibalism is to incorporate the subject-aspect of the enemy, who is hyper-subjectified, not shamanistically de-subjectified as in the case of game animals. Sahlins wrote that "all cannibalism is symbolic, even when it is real" (1983: 88); with his leave, I would rewrite the formula: all cannibalism is spiritual, especially when it is bodily.

The subjectification of human enemies is a complex ritual process. Suffice to say here that it supposes the complete identification of the killer with the victim, precisely in the same way as shamans become the animals whose bodies they procure for the rest of the group. Killers obtain crucial aspects of their social and metaphysical identities from the person of the victim—names, surplus souls,

songs, trophies, ritual prerogatives—but in order to do this, they must first become the enemy. A telling example of this enemy-becoming can be found in Araweté war songs, in which a killer repeats words taught to him by the spirit of the victim during the ritual seclusion that follows the killing: the killer speaks from the enemy's point of view, saying 'I' to refer to the self of the enemy, and 'him' to refer to himself. In order to become a full subject—for the killing of an enemy is a precondition to adult male status in many an Amerindian society—the killer must apprehend the enemy 'from the inside', i.e. as a subject. The analogy with the perspectival theory discussed above, according to which non-human subjectivities see humans as non-humans and vice-versa, is obvious. The killer must be able to see himself as the enemy sees him—as, precisely, an enemy—in order to become 'himself', or rather, a 'myself'.

The prototypical manifestation of the Other in Western philosophical tradition is the Friend is an Other, but an other as a 'moment' of the Self. If the Self finds its essential political determination in the condition of friendship, this is so only because the friend, in the well-known Aristotelian definition, is an other Self. The Self is there from the start, as the origin. The friend is the condition of alterity backprojected, as it were, under the conditioned form of the Subject. As F. Wolff (2000: 169) remarked, "the Aristotelian definition supposes a theory according to which every relation with an Other, and hence every mode of friendship, finds its grounding in the relationship of man to himself". The social nexus presupposes self-relation as its origin and model. The connection with property ideas is obvious. To quote M. Strathern quoting someone else quoting yet another source:

> Davis & Naffine (2001: 9) quote the observation, for instance, that Western property is based on self possession as a primordial property right which grounds all others. This axiom holds whether or not the self-owning individual is given in the world (being ultimately owned by God, Locke) or has to fashion that condition out of it (through its own struggling, Hegel) (2006: 23 n.57).

The Friend, however, does not ground an "anthropology" only. Given the historical conditions of the constitution of Greek philosophy, the Friend emerges as intrinsically implied in a certain relationship to truth. The Friend is a condition of possibility for thought in general, an "intrinsic presence, a live category, a transcendental lived condition" (Deleuze & Guattari 1991: 9). Philosophy requires the Friend, philia is the constitutive relation of knowledge.

Very well. The problem, from the standpoint of Amerindian thought—or rather, from the standpoint of our understanding of this other thought, is the following: what does a world look like where it is the Foe, not the Friend, that

functions as a transcendental lived condition? Where the other is not conceived as an other Self but, rather, as a Self that is Other? That was, after all, the real question behind the theme of perspectivism: if the concept of "perspective" is nothing but the idea of the Other as such, what is it like to live in a world constituted by the enemy's point of view? A world where enmity is not a mere privative complement of "amity", a simple negative facticity, but a *de jure* structure of thought, a positivity in its own right? And then—what regime of truth can thrive in this world where distance connects and differences relate?

The Other has another important incarnation in our intellectual tradition besides that of the Friend. It is consubstantial to a very special, actually, a very singular personage: God. God is the proper name of the Other in our tradition (interestingly, "the Other"—"the enemy"—is one of the euphemisms for the devil; this goes a long way to explaining how otherness is conceived by us). God is the Great Other, being at the same time the one who guarantees the absolute reality of reality (the Given) against the solipsism of consciousness; and the Great Self, the one who warrants the relative intelligibility of what is perceived (the Constructed) by the subject. God's major role, as far as the destiny of Western thought is concerned, was that of establishing the fundamental divide between the Given and the Constructed, since, as Creator, He is the origin point of this divide, that is, its point of indifferentiation. It is here, I believe, that the Fear of God truly originates—philosophically speaking, of course.

It is true that God no longer enjoys the limelight of history (still...). But before He died, He took two properly providential measures: He migrated to the inner sanctum of every individual as the intensive, intelligible form of the Subject (Kant's Moral Law), and He exteriorized Himself as Object, that is, as the infinite extensive field of Nature (Kant's starry heaven). Culture and Nature, in short, the two worlds in which Supernature as Originary Otherness divided itself.

Well then, to conclude. What is the truth regime proper to a radically non-monotheistic world such as the Amerindian worlds? What is the form of the Great Other in a world which is foreign to any theology of creation? I am not referring to a world created by the retreat of the Creator, such as our modern world, but a radically uncreated world, a world without a transcendent divinity. My answer to these difficult questions, given the time I have to develop it, will be mercifully short, and will simply repeat the gist of everything I said so far: the world of immanent humanity is also a world of immanent divinity, a world where divinity is distributed under the form of a potential infinity of non-human subjects. This is a world where hosts of minuscule gods wander the earth; a "myriatheism", to use a word coined by the French sociologist G. Tarde, Durkheim's fiercest—precisely—enemy. This is the world that has been called animist, that is, now to

use the term of our inanimist tradition, a world where the object is a particular case of the subject, where every object is a subject *in potentia*. The indigenous *cogito*, instead of the solipsistic formula "I think, therefore I am", must be articulated in animistc terms as "It exists, therefore it thinks". But there where, on top of this, the Self is a particular case of the Other (as in the worlds), such "animism" must necessarily take the form of—if you excuse the pun—an "enemism": an animism altered by alterity, an alterity that gets animated insofar as it is thought of as an enemy interiority: a Self that is radically other. Hence the danger, and the brilliance, of such worlds.

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