Notes on the Yanomami's Dreams [1]

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to understand some aspects of Yanomami dreams, such as their relationship with the night and with the *pei utupë* – the "vital image", one of the constituents of the Yanomami person. To highlight these connections, I present the daily life of a collective house and moments of a *reahu* intercommunity feast. I also touch on the myth of the origin of night and the notions of the Yanomami person and cosmos, seeking to demonstrate how the relationship between the night, the emergence of the ability to dream, and the feeling of longing, presupposes another relationship between the night and the manifestation of the *pei utupë*. I also try to demonstrate how the *reahu* intercommunity feast, when funeral rites are held, is a simulacrum of the heavenly life of the spirits of the dead (*pore*), the posthumous destiny of the Yanomami, the feast thus taking the form of a great dream.

KEYWORDS

Yanomami, dreams, image, nostalgia, death

In the late afternoon I go to visit old Luigi, the oldest shaman of Pya ú who is about 80 years old. I sit on the stool and get close to his hammock so that he can hear me clearly. Luigi looks at me and smiles. He looks at the un-roofed center of the communal house (*maloca*), searching for something in the sky that I cannot see. He points with his long arm and tells me:

- "*When you are gone and the sky is like this I will miss you*."

The sky was like when the sun sets at dusk, an orange colour was taking over the horizon and gradually giving way to darkness. Along with the moon and the stars, taking over the space, the sounds of the night creatures arose: you could hear the sound of crickets and frogs, and of the Yanomami, who, having come back home, gathered with their families around the family fire that heated the food, bodies, and conversations.

Night fall is the moment when people feel *saudade* - longing for others. It is also only at night that one dreams, so the Yanomami tell me. This article is an attempt to understand why the Yanomami associate dreaming and longing with the night.

To this end, I describe a day in the daily life of the *maloca* of Pya ú [2], including also moments of a *reahu* feast. Besides the daily life and the feast, I discuss the myth of the origin of the night and the Yanomami notions of personhood and cosmos, trying to demonstrate how the relationship between the night and the emergence of dreams and feelings of longing implicate another, deeper, relationship between the night and the manifestation of the *pei utupë*, i.e., the vital image of the Yanomami person.

I also try to demonstrate how the intercommunity *reahu* feast, when funerary rites are held, is a simulacrum of life in the sky of the *pore* (spectres), the posthumous Yanomami destiny, which is also to say that feasts are like a great dream.

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During the day there is no room for dreams, life must be taken care of. Men go hunting or go to the food gardens with the women, the children play, and whilst playing, take care of their younger brothers and sisters. Not even dogs remain still, they go to the forest with their owners in hope of returning in the evening with some game. hens fly all over the place, taking a shit in everyone's house and are immediately chased away with sticks. The pet capuchin monkey also wastes no time, while the hens are gone, sneaking up to their nests and stealing their eggs. When someone sees it and screams, the monkey desperately runs through the center of the house trying to dodge a rain of sticks and objects that fly towards him. The eggs keep falling and breaking on the ground while the monkey climbs through the roof of the house and runs away into the bushes.

During the day, the communal house is empty, everyone is very busy. With the exception of the sick and the elderly, no one lies in their hammocks during the day. The

2 | Pya ú is the Yanomami community where I carried out my fieldwork. It was located in the Toototopi region, in the demarcated Yanomami indigenous territory, Amazonas State. A year after my last fieldwork the Pya ú theri entered into a conflict with a Yanomami community located across the border, in Venezuela. After a series of events, they moved to the Xihopi region near the Mapulao River and currently constitute the Kawani community. I stayed in Pya ú, for 11 months, in stages beginning in November 2015 and ending in February 2017. At that time, Pya ú had a population of 154 people divided into two *malocas*, separated from each other by a short walk of less than 1 km.

women return home around noon, bringing baskets full of manioc and other foodstuffs brought from the garden: sugarcane, maize, papaya, banana, etc. They lay their baskets down in front of their houses and immediately begin to peel the manioc; then they grate and squeeze the mass that will be baked and transformed into *beiju* (cassava bread) - the next morning.

The men who have gone out to hunt begin to return before dark, in the late afternoon. This is always a time of great expectation, women and children wait to see if their sons, husbands and brothers have returned with any game.

The house, which remained empty all day, then comes to life. Sunlight gradually becomes more and more scarce; it is the circle of fires that gives life to the collective house and the shadows projected on its lower walls. Each family gathers around the pots cooking the meat of the animals hunted during the day; while it cooks, hands appear from all sides dipping the *beiju* in the boiling broth, temporarily appeasing people's hunger for meat. It is now that matters are brought up to date. The children noisily dance and play in the center of the *maloca*, as if they couldn't hear the insistent calls of their mothers to stop playing and come back home, because it is already dark. But it is only when the food is ready that, in the blink of an eye, the children's gangs break up and the little figures run towards their fires, looking for a piece of meat to eat with *beiju*, manioc or cooked banana.

While eating, people listen to the *hereamu*, daily speeches delivered by the elders, the *pata thë pë*, in the center of the house. These speeches begin as soon as it is dark or at dawn, before sunrise, and deal with such topics as news heard over the radio, the organization of daily tasks, or the planning of an upcoming feast. In general, these speeches las for hours, often well into the night.

Gradually the house becomes silent again, everyone goes back to his/her hammock, the dogs lie among the ashes of the fires trying to warm themselves, the children sleep with their hunger for meat satisfied. Each family sleeps around a fire, which is kept alight throughout the night by the constant fanning of the women. It is they who keep the bodies warm.

The communal house sleeps, but sleep is usually cut by the cry of a child or the chant of a shaman. It is the time of dreams.

The Yanomami's night corresponds to the animals' day. While the Yanomami sleep and dream, the animals roam the forest. Night is also the day of the *pore* - the dead - and of the *xapiri pë*, the spirit helpers of the shamans. In the same way, when the Yanomami wake up in the daytime to go about their business, these animals go to sleep, for it is night for them. This inversion between day for the living and night for the dead/spirits/animals seems to be fundamental to understanding the relationship between dreams and night. I will return to this issue later on.

In the Yanomae language there are several words used to express the act of dreaming. *Mari* is one of them, it means "dream" (noun) and when followed by an

orienting suffix it becomes a verb. *Kurama-* and *thapi* are two other words that also refer to dreams, but when dreams were recounted to me by the Yanomami of the Pya ú, they were used less[3]. *Kurama-* is a transitive verb that refers to dreams in which one sees people who are far away, or in distant places (Lizot, 2004: 183). Now *thapi* is a noun that means "dream", "premonition", "omen" that one has in a dream; *thapimou* is to dream of a distant place, of absent people or of a dead person (Ibid.: 434).

There is also the verb *he tharëai* which means to dream of someone, to hear noises while sleeping or a vision obtained under the effect of hallucinogens. *He tharëprou* means to see in dreams something that one clearly remembers, and can also refer to the ability to remember places or events of the past (Ibid.: 81).

Almost every night a shaman chants. They say that their helper spirits, the *xapiri pë,* come down the ropes of their hammocks getting close to their bodies, trying to wake them up: "*We want to sing, wake up, father*!"[4] The shaman then awakens and begins to chant into the night.

Another reason they sing at night is related to dreaming about relatives. This was the case of Person, a shaman who had dreamed of his mother who was very ill. When he saw the *pei utupë*, that is, the vital image of his mother in the dream, he sang to send his *xapiri pë* to the *maloca* where she lived. Claudio, too, had dreamed of his mother on another night, but in this case she had already passed away years ago. He said that he woke up with sad thoughts and so he started to sing.

Dreaming about the dead is not exclusive to shamans, anyone can be affected by this type of dream, which in general causes extreme commotion because it revives in the dreamer the memory of the dead relative and establishes a communication path between the living and the dead, a path that should be abolished. It is during these oneiric visits that the pain of mourning is revived and may continue unceasingly until the ashes of the dead person undergo the due funerary treatment (Albert, 1985: 640).

Dreams about distant relatives are sort of an attenuated form of dreams about the dead, since in both cases they deal with people who are not present. What is made evident, above all, is the temporal/spatial distance that, on the one hand, separates the living from the dead, and on the other, living relatives who are in distant places.

The possibility of bringing people together or bringing places together brings us back to the different spatial and temporal dimensions that are put into relation during dream time, *mari tëhë*. One of these dimensions corresponds to mythical time, that the shamans, whether through the use of the *yãkoana* or in dreams, constantly access.

Returning to the chants of the shamans, those chanted at night are the same as those chanted during the day, but there is a crucial difference between them: during the day the shamans inhale *yãkoana*, at night they do not. Under the effect of this hallucinogen, the shaman's *pei utupë* detaches from his body and travels through different times and places, letting himself be carried along the luminous, mirrored paths of his helper spirits, the *xapiri pë*. He sees things that ordinary people cannot even imagine.

3 | According to the most up-to-date publication on Yanomami languages in Brazil, there are six languages of the Yanomami family: 1) Yanomam, Yanomae, Yanomama or Yanomami; 2) Yanomami or Yanomami; 3) Sanöma; 4) Ninam; 5) Yaroamë and 6) Yãnoma; divided in turn into sixteen dialects (FERREIRA; SENRA; MACHADO, 2019). The language spoken by the Yanomami of Pya ú is 1) Yanomae and the terms described in Lizot's dictionary (2004) would correspond to 2) Yanomami.

4 | "*Yamaki amoamuu pihio, wa rarayou, hwapa*! "

In the dream, not only the shamans, but all people undergo this separation between body and image. An analogous process occurs at the moment of death: the body, *pei siki*, decomposes, the image, *pei utupë* is permanently detached from its material base and is transformed into a spectre, *pore*, which henceforth will live on the other side of the sky, the *hutu mosi*.

Yãkoana is a hallucinogenic powder that is the result of a meticulous process of extracting, drying, and pulverizing the resin from the bark of a tree (*Virola enlogata*), which can also be mixed with dried leaves and ashes to enhance its effect.[5] This powder is inhaled by the shamans during their daytime shamanism sessions. The world to which the *yãkoana* gives access is made purely of images, and it is the shaman's own image, once separated from the body, that will travel through this imagetic universe, allowing him to see mythical events as they unfold in a space-time *continuum*.

In a universe made purely of images, vision is an important attribute. *Y*ãkoana inhaled during the day triggers the same process as dreaming during the night. Both give access to a world of images. Images that are always in the outside world, but that can only be accessed through the image that is inside of the body, the *pei utupë*.

The image leaves the body during dreams and acts like a *pore*, a spectre. Similarly, when a shaman is under the effect of *yãkoana*, he is said to be *poremu*[6]. This same word is also used to refer to a person who speaks asleep. In fact, speaking asleep is clear evidence that a person is dreaming. This is why the Yanomami say that dogs also dream, their sleep barking and grunting is an explicit sign of their oneiric capacity.

We have seen, therefore, that both *yãkoana* and dreams act upon the image, or rather, it is through dreams and *yãkoana* that the image acts. However, *yãkoana* should only be inhaled during the day, while dreaming can only happen at night. Inhaling *yãkoana* at night could trigger a kind of excess, since night, being destined for dreaming, has already made possible the separation of what during the day remained united, the body and its image.

This explains why the *yãkoana* is inhaled only during the day and not at night. However, it is important to note that dreams and shamanism are not opposed to each other; on the contrary, they are sides of the same coin that actively and continuously complement each other[7].

However, the question of why it is only at night that one dreams and why it is only at the end of the day that one feels nostalgia remains unanswered.

In an attempt to elucidate these issues I present below the myth of the origin of the night.

MYTH OF ORIGIN OF THE NIGHT

In the beginning night did not exist, it was always day. So people walked a lot in the forest, hunted and returned with their prey and ate it.

- Go hunting, for there is no such thing as night! " - said the elders.

5 | For a more detailed description of the substances that can make up *yãkoana* and their effects see Albert & Milliken (2009: 114-116).

6 | Where *pore* - spectre, ghost; and *-mu* - derivational suffix that serves to describe a function attached to a nominal. Thus, *pore + mu = poremu*, to act like a spectre, like a ghost.

7 | As Albert puts it: "Nocturnal shamanism, associated with dreams, is a fundamental part of Yanomami shamanism. Initiation and shamanic work seem to dominate the dream production of the shamans, whose dreams are thus mainly made up of hallucinatory remnants of daytime shamanism". See Note 23, p. 616 (Kopenawa & Albert, 2015).

There was a Yanomami called *Yawarioma* who always walked through the forest. Slowly, he went in all directions. One day, walking alone, he heard the voice of the night. It was the curassow, which said:

- ɨi-hɨ.

He was the night, calling the name of the rivers in all directions. Crying, he said:

- ɨi-hɨ, ii-hɨ, in that direction is the Tootototopi River. ɨi-hɨ, ɨi-hɨ, that way there is the Marito river.

This is how *Titiri*, the curassow, owner of the night, used to speak. Before he taught us the name of the rivers, we did not know. It was with these words that he taught us the name of the waters:

- ɨi-hɨ, ɨi-hɨ, in that direction is the Palimi u river, ɨi-hɨ, ɨi-hɨ.

So *Titiri* said. That's when *Yawarioma* heard and looked for the curassow. But he could not see him because around *Titiri* there was complete darkness. Yawarioma returned home and told his mother:

- Mother, in the forest there is a curassow, but all around him it is dark.

The mother gave the following instructions:

- Put pitch (warapa koko) on a stick and then light it with fire. Then shoot the curassow with your arrows.

Yawarioma returned to the forest in search of the curassow. He took the pitch and put it on a stick and lit it with fire. Then he lifted the stick and the fire illuminated *Titiri*. He was there, sitting on a branch. After *Yawarioma* could see him, he shot him. "*Thaiii! Thikuuuu! Throuu!*[8]".

Thus the great night spread everywhere, and the voices of the nocturnal animals were heard. The Yanomami slept. Before, the Yanomami didn't sleep at night, so they didn't dream - it was always day. In the old days, night didn't exist.

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This is one of the versions of the myth of the origin of the night that was told to me by Luigi, one of the great shamans of Pya ú. In the midst of our conversations, he tells me about the shamanic journeys he makes and the myths he knows through his dreams. He always makes a point of saying that one can only dream at night. Before the emergence of the night, Yanomami slept when they felt like it and went out hunting at any time, they were coming and going all the time.

In other versions of this myth, Yanomami copulated in broad daylight, hiding behind the smoke of their fires (Cocco; Lizot; Finkers, 1991). With *Titiri's* death, the temporal order is established. From then on, night will be the time to sleep and dream. Daylight will be for daily chores, hunting, gardening and fishing. A spatial order also emerges: before, the Yanomami did not know where they were going, but *Titiri* named the rivers and mountains, thus mapping the paths of the forest.

8 | Onomatopoeias are fundamental parts of Yanomami narratives. In the case of the myths, which are generally narrated by the shamans, besides making the narrative richer and the shaman's performance more admirable, onomatopoeias bring with them details that, far from being merely an artifice of the language, indicate an acoustic refinement through which the Yanomami perceive and give meaning to the world around them. Thus, it was explained to me that these three sounds that follow immediately after *Yawarioma* has seen the curassow correspond respectively to three moments: the snap of the bowstring at the instant when the arrow is shot at the curassow; the moment when the arrow hits the target; and the moment when the curassow falls spinning to the ground. For further considerations on the acoustic experience of the Yanomami, see Albert's "*The polygrotic forest,*" available at: https://subspeciealteritatis.wordpress.com/2018/11/05/a-floresta-poliglota-bruce-albert/

In the above myth, *Yawarioma* tries to shoot the curassow, but darkness reigns around him. Following his mother's advice, the hero lights *warapa koko* on the tip of a stick and illuminates the curassow and fatally shoots him.

Warapa koko[9] is a type of easily combustible resin that is used, among other things, to light fires. It is also used by the Yanomami when they want to stop dreaming. This was the case for Ailton, who, after his grandmother's death, saw her constantly in his dreams. Distressed, he told his mother about it. She immediately prepared some *warapa koko for* him, heating it in the fire and rubbing it against his skin. From that night on, Ailton stopped dreaming.

9 | *Warapa koko* is a flammable resin taken from the *warapa kohi* tree *(Protium spp.)* and used, among other things, for improvising torches at night. See Albert & Milliken (2009: 90). See also *warapa* entry in Lizot (2004: 465).

As we have seen, in the myth, *warapa koko* illuminates the curassow, owner of the night and of darkness, so that it can be seen by the Yanomami. Rubbed on the body, this resin makes the person stop dreaming. Here, the *warapa koko* - which symbolizes light - is to the curassow - symbol of night and darkness - as day is to night.

warapa koko (light) : curassow (darkness) :: day : night

In this equation, dreams would appear at the opposite pole to *warapa koko*, since the latter has the quality of ending dreams in the same way it does with the darkness around the curassow. Light puts an end to night and dreams; and these two, in turn, are opposed to the day. Thus, in a world where there was only light, dreaming could not exist.

If this equation suggests connections between dreaming and night time, it still does not fully clarify why the Yanomami say that they only dream at night. We could easily say that one only dreams at night because it is when one sleeps. This obvious statement, even if it answers our question, does so only superficially. In the myth, as we saw, before the origin of night, the Yanomami slept during the day, but could not dream. It was only with the establishment of night that they dreamed for the first time.

Here there seems to be a deeper relation between the connection of vital image of the Yanomami person, the *pei utupë*, with night time, and the opposition between the correspondence of the night of the living and the day of the dead/spirits/spectres.

In order to clarify these questions a bit more, I will now describe some moments of a *reahu feast*. These feasts are held between communities linked by ties of kinship and alliance and are held on occasion of funerary rituals. For the dead to be definitively separated from the world of the living, their ashes must be given the proper treatment. Let's go to the feast.

REAHU - THE FEAST OF THE DEAD

Fatima calls me, we are late. The *maloca* is empty, not even the dogs remain. The women are already in the forest. At the end of the landing strip, we take the path to the left to find the other women. Despite her haste, Fatima stopped, went into the bush and took a stem from a plant, rubbed her fingers over it to remove any splinters and delicately inserted it into her nasal septum. She looks at me and smiles satisfied, as if she had found the last missing detail to complete her party look.

- You act very much like a girl, Fatima![10] - I tell her, smiling and playing with her vanity.

She smiles back at me and replies:

- When there is a feast, I become young. Then, when the feast is over, I become old again[11].

We headed for the clearing that is a few meters from the communal house. There we find the women and children. The smell of *urucum* is everywhere and paints the bodies. Little mirrors with orange plastic frames pass from hand to hand. With sticks or straws made from the stems of plants found along the way, the women make small brushes with which they will paint each other. They stick one end into the containers of *urucum* and jars of gentian violet and delicately draw sinusoidal lines on each other's bodies.

It is a total frenzy. This is the moment before the presentation dance we will do when we enter the *maloca*. The guests are already waiting for us. It's our turn to dance for them. The men also usually prepare for this moment, but for some reason only two elders show up; and the women, furious, paint themselves cursing the laziness and lack of participation of the men.

After a period that lasts for hours, all duly painted and adorned, we move in single file towards the house, letting out euphoric cries announcing our approach. Inside the house, no less excited shouts respond to our arrival, indicating that they are already waiting for us. We stop in front of one of the entrances to the house and slowly people decide who goes in with whom and who goes in first.

Then the younger ones, the boys, enter, duly ornamented and carrying their bows and arrows in their hands - but sometimes it may be a rifle, spears or any object used to perform the dance. This moment is marked by an air of extreme jocosity, especially among the men, who sometimes look for unusual objects to make their performance funnier[12].

They enter dancing, taking steps back and forth. Stopping a few moments in front of those inside the *maloca*, they throw their object on the ground, then pick it up and go ahead until they go around the whole house. And they leave the same way they came in, giving way to those who have not yet danced. The girls enter with new palm leaves that have been duly plaited or frayed while they were painting themselves. They enter in pairs, trios or alone. Then the elders enter.

Meanwhile the shamans inhale *yãkoana*, dance and sing outside the *maloca*. During this period, it is common for the women to also inhale a little of the hallucinogen, to rid themselves of shyness, so they can dance more at ease. They shake the objects they carry in their hands. And, in the case of the elderly women, the *patayoma*, who dance frantically, they wave their arms beside their ears, as if they were lifting an imaginary weight.

The previous day it was the opposite: we, the hosts, impatiently awaited the arrival of the visitors, who performed this same presentation dance on the first day of the feast. As visitors, at the end of the dance, the men squat down next to each other inside

10 | "*Kaho wa mokomu mahi, Fatima!*".

11 | "*Reahu kuo tëhë ya mokoprario, waiha reahu maprario tëhë ya pata korayu*".

12 | This presentation dance that guests perform at the beginning of a *reahu* feast reproduces the dance of the *yarori*, the first human/animal ancestors who appear in the myth of the origin of fire. (see Kopenawa & Albert, 2015: 612-13, note 17).

the house with their bows and arrows in hand, waiting for their hosts. These arrive euphoric and greet their guests frantically, hugging them and saying friendly words.

They then take them, one by one, to the place where they are to sling their hammocks. The women, who are sitting near one of the entrances to the house and surrounded by children, when they see their husbands being assigned a place, run in the same direction, carrying their baskets with all the family paraphernalia: hammocks, pots, bowls, knives, everything they will need to spend the next few days.

Everywhere you look, hammocks of various colors and fabrics pile up on top of each other swinging energetically. Inside the hammocks, brothers-in-law, cousins, relatives who have not seen each other for some time catch up. An atmosphere of joy and flirtation hangs in the air, and voices and laughter can be heard everywhere.

Meanwhile, in the center of the house, in broad daylight, the drinking of banana porridge begins. The drink, which basically consists of piles and piles of cooked banana diluted in water, is stored inside the trunk of a large tree (like a canoe), which, weeks before, has been cut down and carved for this purpose.

Brothers-in-law offer each other gourds filled with porridge. The larger the container, the greater the challenge. And, in the absence of a gourd, cut plastic bottles, aluminium basins, and plastic jugs also serve the purpose well. The man who receives the gourd overflowing with porridge must empty it, preferably in giant gulps, under the auspicious eyes of the others, who, upon seeing the empty gourd, shout enthusiastically. Women also give and receive gourds, always targeting men with whom they have a relation of affinity. It is unthinkable to refuse a gourd. Rescuing a man who is being bombarded by women bringing gourds from all sides, other men appear, offering these women even bigger gourds.

Among youths, this moment of offering the porridge constitutes a great occasion to approach the girls and boys they want to meet. This is the beginning of what may later become sexual intercourse. The children, with their small bowls, also participate in this moment. The boys, with their bellies stuffed, complain, but take the drink offered by the girls - and run towards the canoe to get more porridge to offer the drink in turn.

The men "attack" their brothers-in-law, and the women "attack" potential husbands. In this duel there is an opposition between consanguineal and affinal kin, but also between men and women. In the latter case, the offering of porridge need not always symbolize an attack, it may also suggest a sexual interest, especially when it comes to the youngsters. This rivalry between men and women will also appear at other moments throughout the feast.

A challenged man proves his bravery by drinking to the end. Running away from an offered gourd or stopping before all the porridge is finished is a sign of cowardice. The duels continue for hours on end. As the canoe empties, the bellies fill and dilate; and, before they explode, the liquid is vomited out in fierce jets that spurt in all

directions, leaving the floor of the center of the house yellowish and with a sour smell of banana that impregnates the air.

Each vomit incites the general mood even more: the men shout, and more full gourds are offered to the one who has just vomited. A mixture of exhaustion and mockery takes over everyone. And before nightfall, stuffed, they puff up their swollen bellies with a certain degree of pride and walk slowly towards their hammocks, where they will remain until the next day or the next event.

WAYAMU CEREMONIAL DIALOGUES [13]

Night falls, and the hammocks are still bustling. The fires are lit, heating the pots and people's conversations. In the sky a full moon illuminates the center of the house. Almost unnoticed, two men walk into the middle, squat down and begin to sing rhythmic phrases. One is the host, and the other is the guest - and both remain for a long time in this ceremonial dialogue, bringing news from afar, exchanging messages, talking about the feast. The people around don't seem to pay attention, but everyone listens, or almost everyone. Throughout the night, the pairs replace each other, always keeping this format: one host and one guest.

The youngest - and therefore least experienced - usually speak first and stutter throughout this arduous test that requires great skill. Laughter erupts from one side of the *maloca* to the other, with hilarious comments being made about the novices' performance. As the night progresses, the house falls silent, and the *wayamu* continues. Now it is the more experienced ones who go to the center, the *pata thë pë*. This dialogue will last until daybreak. When the first rays of sunlight strike, the men return to their hammocks. Before they can sleep, the *maloca* awakens, ready to prepare more banana porridge for the afternoon.

13 | *Wayamu* is a ceremonial dialogue performed in the context of the *reahu* intercommunal feast. Precisely because it is ceremonial, it constitutes a very refined verbal art characterized by complex wordplay and figures of speech, such as metaphors, metonyms, synecdoche, etc. For a more detailed description of *wayamou*, see Lizot (1991) and Kelly (2017).

THE NIGHT DANCES

And so, another day of celebration.[14] And, when you think that this night there will be some rest, another sleepless night ensues. It is the night when the women dance. Just like in *wayamu*, almost involuntarily, a group of girls starts to chant. One girl sings but, shy, gets out of tune - to the delight of all, who laugh. men's shouts of encouragement can be heard from all sides of the *maloca*.

Gradually, other women join the small group. Women carrying their babies, girls holding their brothers' hands, old women leaning on sticks to be able to join. They walk along the covered part of the house, going around the inside of the *maloca*, and so they go on, throughout the night. The youngest ones who do not join the group are urged by the others to get up from the hammock and join the chorus. As the hours pass, the body can no longer stand it and the voices become hoarse. Even so, they continue,

14 | The durante of Yanomami feasts varies from a few days to weeks. This depends on a number of factors, rangings from the purpose of the feast (to destroy the deceased's belongings or bury his ashes) to the number of guests and the food available. A meticulous calculation must be made by the organizers so that there is no shortage of food and no complaints.

encouraged by the older women, the *patayoma*, to keep on until dawn.

During this time of night dancing and singing, a kind of rivalry between men and women also emerges. Women should dance the whole night long and, if possible, not let the men sleep. The girls swing the boys' hammocks, shake noisy gourds, tie all sorts of knick-knacks to their feet, and stomp the ground hard to make themselves heard. The boys sling their hammocks elsewhere or even in another *maloca* to escape the onslaughts of the women.

The roosters begin to crow, which doesn't mean that it is dawn, because in the forest these animals crow at whatever time they want. But it's a sign that you still have to resist a bit, because in a while the sun will rise and finally the women will let out their collective cry and go to the river to bathe before lying down in their hammocks.

But dawn breaks and the feast continues. There is no time to sleep. During the day, during these feasts, there is a lot to do. The porridge that will be eaten that same day needs preparing. Depending on the amount of meat, the men go out hunting. If there is some good fishing spot, the men go out in search of *timbó* (plant-based toxic fish poison), and the women go together with their *xote he* baskets and children to catch as many fish as possible.

Night falls again, and this time it is the men who sing. Like the women, they begin little by little. The youngsters, followed by the groups of children, sing. One sings first, and then the group repeats the song in chorus - and so they continue for a dozen or so times, until another youngster, under pressure from the others, sings a new song.

Singing, they take the same route as the women: they go around the *maloca*, passing in front of all the fires. The boys are much more incisive in their attempts to keep the girls from sleeping. They beat on pots stolen from their mothers and grandmothers, drag around plastic bottles full of pebbles, use anything they find that they can beat, making a fuss; and, whenever they can, they give the girls' hammocks a strong jolt.

The girls, in turn, sling their hammocks higher and higher to avoid the youngsters' pranks. Even so, the boys don't give up and, even with the girls' hammocks tied 3 meters above the ground, they keep throwing them objects. Other girls retaliate by throwing water or anything that sticks to the boys' hair. The youths retreat; during the rest of the night, there are only shadows running in different directions and laughter all around. The *patayoma* scream, protesting against the theft of their pots, and furious at the fuss the boys make. These protests only further fuel the youths' intent, who happily continue their ruckus into the night.

The men end their singing at the crack of dawn; and, as the women did, they go to the river to bathe and try to get some sleep. But they can't; a new day begins.

This period of dance[15], as well as all the jesting between opposite sexes, evidences a sexual (in)tension that impregnates the feast's atmosphere. No wonder these provocations occur predominantly among single girls and boys, that is, among

15 | The dances are not necessarily performed in this order: women one day, men the next. It is also common, on the same night, for men to sing first and then women, or vice versa, or for men and women to dance together.

young people. The night is also the ideal moment for amorous encounters, since it is during these feasts that people from other *malocas* circulate. Because of the tumultuous nights of singing and dancing, it is also easy to sleep in other people's hammocks without arousing suspicion.

Another day dawns, and the bunches of hanging bananas[16] are getting smaller - a sign that the feast is coming to an end. Each day, bunches and more bunches are lowered and cooked in huge aluminium pots to prepare more porridge, which will be, once again, duly offered, taken and vomited. The women go to the garden to get as much manioc as possible and return with their baskets laden. The girls also accompany their mothers in these tasks. They spend the day peeling kilos of the tuber they will then grate, squeeze and, the next morning, prepare for the *beiju* the visitors will take back home along with smoked meat.

The next morning, very early, the iron plates are already placed on the firewood stoves. The mass extracted from the manioc, already sifted, is transformed into a white, moist flour that will be shaped by the hands of the women, who, with the aid of a knife, finish the large discs of *beiju*.

The smoke from the hearth fires covers the entire lower part of the house and rises upwards until it meets the sun rays filtered through the straw ceiling, forming numerous beams of light. The smell of freshly baked *beiju* is penetrating and impregnates the *maloca*. The discs are piled up and delivered to the feast organizers.[17] On the last day, they, along with other elders, *pata thë pë*, will divide the *beiju* along with smoked meat, to be delivered to each visitor for their return journey.

THE FUNERARY MOURNING AND THE SUNSET

Mourning marks the climax and the end of the *reahu*. At this moment it becomes evident why everyone has spent days gathered in the same house. There is a dead person to be mourned, and his/her ashes need to be appropriately buried. Funerary mourning takes place in the late afternoon.[18] Gradually the women gather in front of the house where the gourd containing the ashes of the dead person is. The men, the children, the youths follow. Everyone huddles together and begins to cry.

The *patayoma*, with blackened cheeks, raise their arms, and, in tears, praise the virtues of the deceased. Some walk in pairs, linked together by their arms, going from one side to the other, crying their lamentations, remembering moments lived with the deceased. Sometimes, when there are clothes or any object of the deceased to be destroyed, they lift the piece in question, hug it, pass it from hand to hand, until it ends up burned in the fire. The flames intensify with the combustion of the object, as do the screams and cries. Everyone cries, children, youths, elders.

A hole is dug deep below the home fire of the family offering the feast. The gourd that has been passed from hand to hand is finally opened, and the ashes are

16 | The banana bunches are hung immediately after the return of the hunters, who spend 10 to 15 days in the forest on a collective hunt, *hwenimu*, when they also smoke the meat that will be distributed at the end of the feast.

17 | The feast organisers can be men or couples who have received a gourd with the ashes of the deceased and have committed themselves to hold the funerary ritual. The gourds are left in the care of the women. It is in front of their houses that the banana bunches are hung and it is also on top of their fires that the smoked meat that will be distributed at the end of the feast is suspended. It is in the pillar of their house that, at the end of the *reahu*, the ashes of the dead will be buried.

18 | During fieldwork, I participated in four *reahu*. In one of them, mourning was held at dawn. In another, a *pata* called people to mourn, saying that although the sun was still high, it was already time to mourn. That day the weather was cloudy, and the man thought it was later than it actually was. This detail was commented on by the women when we returned home, noticing that it would still take a few hours for the sun to set and that, therefore, they had mourned ahead of time.

spilled into the hole. The cries erupt louder, painful laments are uttered. Next, banana porridge is poured over it, and then everything is covered with earth. Slowly, with the same silence with which it was formed, the group of people breaks up, each one going to his/her hammock, without uttering a word. Some people continue to cry and lament from their hammocks. Night falls, and for a moment the house is silent.

But this silence does not last long. A group of women go to the center of the house and form a circle with their backs to each other. They then chant songs without leaving the circle. This lasts for a few minutes. After a while the circle breaks up, and from then on there is no more singing, dancing or ceremonial dialogues. The night passes quietly, not a voice, not a child's cry, not even a dog's bark is heard. It seems that, by consensus or by fatigue, everyone understands that the feast is over; and the communal house sleeps wrapped in a deep silence.

The next morning, the guests take their baskets laden with smoked meat and *beiju* and make their way back to their communities. As they leave without looking back, the hosts come out to see them off. The house, which was once pure effervescence, empties, and life returns to its normal rhythm.

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After this brief description of moments of a *reahu*, I highlight some points that shed light on the theme of dreams and the feeling of longing.

As can be seen, during these feasts, the night is the moment when almost everything happens: ceremonial dialogues, dances, chants, etc. Nobody sleeps and there seems to be a predominance of the day of the dead over the night of the living, given that the latter seem to behave like *pore* (specters of the dead), as I will explain later.

The funerary mourning generally takes place in the late afternoon, a time when, as we have seen, the Yanomami say they miss their loved ones.

The *reahu* therefore offers more elements that corroborate the Yanomami's assertions, but they still do not solve the question of the relationship between dreams and the night and the emergence of feelings of longing. To better understand this relationship, I present below a brief description of the Yanomami person and cosmos.

PEI UTUPË AND HUTU MOSI

The Yanomami person[19] is formed by different components: *pei siki* corresponds to the skin, the corporeal envelope. Besides the vital organs, lungs, heart, liver, etc., the following components are found inside the body: the *pei uuxi*, "interior" and the *pei ~~mi~~ amo* "center" of the body. There is also the *pei utupë*, which refers to the "essential image" and the *nõreme*, which corresponds to the "vital principle". The *pei pihi* is conscious

19 | For the purpose of the analysis I propose in this article, I seek to detail here only the component of the Yanomami person that corresponds to *pei utupë*. For a more detailed description of this theme among the Yanomae see Albert, 1985: 139-156. Among the Yanomami of Venezuela see Lizot, 2007: 287-293.

thought. Outside the body there is the *rixi*, which corresponds to the animal double that every person has since birth (Albert & Gomez, 1997: 47).

At the moment of death, the *pei utupë* leaves the body and becomes a kind of specter, *pore*, and goes to live in the *hutu mosi*, the sky. Similarly, when dreaming, this separation between the body, *pei siki*, and the image, *pei utupë*, also takes place. The difference is that during dreams, the image returns to the body before the person wakes up. Upon death, this separation is irreversible. The image turns into *pore*, a spectre that lives on.

And alive the *pore* will live on at the *hutu mosi*, which is the first heavenly level of the Yanomami cosmos. The level on which the Yanomami live is just below, *hwei misi*. It is in the *hutu mosi* that the *pore* and some mythological beings live. Above it, there is a second heavenly level, *tukurima mosi*. Below the level where the Yanomami live, there is also a subterranean level, *hoterima mosi*, inhabited by cannibal beings that feed on some components that make up the Yanomami body and on pathogenic substances sent by the shamans (Smiljanic, 1999: 52-54).

Thus, after death the image turns into *pore* permanently, and goes to join his/her dead relatives in the *hutu mosi*, a heaven that is characterized, above all, by being a constant feast. There everyone lives happily, surrounded by a huge amount and variety of food. Upon arriving at the *hutu mosi*, the *pore* undergo a process of rejuvenation, they become young women and men again, and as such, they are always properly adorned, they dance and sing all the time, and of course, they make love enthusiastically. [20]

But the *Pore* do not live only feasting: they also garden, hunt and fish, and carry out the same daily chores they used to do when they were at Yanomami level. They also take part in raids against enemy groups.

The *pore* marry the same people they had married in the Yanomami level and with them they have the same children. In time, they too grow old and when they die, they turn into giant flies. In the descriptions I was given, these flies descend and go to live in the forest of the living, but far from their *malocas*. In other accounts, they go to live on an even higher plateau, above the sky, in the *tukurima mosi*. (Albert, 1985: 632; Smiljanic, 1999: 54).

If we pay attention, there is a remarkable similarity between the *hutu mosi*, where the *pore* go upon death, and the *reahu* intercommunitary feast. Let us recall that the *pore* heaven is characterized, above all, by being in a constant festivity. There is an abundance of food and exuberant licentiousness. Moreover, when the *pore* arrive, they undergo a process of rejuvenation. I recall here Fatima's phrase: "*When there is a feast, I become young. Then, when the feast is over, I become old again*". The moment of the *reahu* is, without doubt, the moment when everyone becomes young again, and the enthusiasm and participation of the older people is proof of this. They all paint and decorate themselves, take part in the dances and chants, and throughout the celebration they encourage young people to actively participate.

During the *reahu*, day is replaced by night. The important activities take place

20 | These characteristics of the heaven of the dead are very reminiscent of the descriptions of Cocanha, an imaginary country, described by poets and thinkers since the Middle Ages, as a land of abundance, idleness, youth and freedom. (See Cocanha - Várias faces de uma utopia. Hilario Franco Junior, 1998). This Cocanha, in turn, is very reminiscent of Carnaval, marked, among other things, by a suspension of daily work and an emphasis on sexual licentiousness. The day before the *reahu* began, a Yanomami told me in Portuguese, "*Tomorrow, our carnival begins!*"

after dusk: dances, chants, ceremonial dialogues, all last until daybreak. There is an abundance of food prepared especially for the occasion. It is during these celebrations that young people experience intense moments of sexual intercourse. Nobody sleeps, and there seems to be a predominance of the day of the dead over the night of the living, since the latter seem to behave like *pore*.

However, what does it mean to say that the living behave like the dead? We have already seen that the ambience of the *reahu* feast comes very close to that of the heaven of the dead. And for this approximation to become even more true, it is necessary that the living experience the night as if they were the *pore*, dancing and singing in what for them corresponds to the day.

But there is more. This approximation between the heaven of the *pore* and the feast of the living seems relevant also because it points to a central aspect of the *reahu* itself. It is necessary that, during the entire feast, the living behave as *pore,* so that at the end of the feast they can perform the definitive separation of the living from the dead. It is only at the end of the *reahu*, with the funerary mourning and the burial of ashes, that such separation takes place. The living then return to behaving like Yanomami, i.e., alive, and return to their communities to carry on with their daily lives, while the dead person is removed from the living coexistence, and his/her memory obliterated.

It is as if the *reahu*, as well as dreaming, were the anticipation of everyone's death. The feast is at the same time the rupture and the maintenance of the relationship between the living and the dead, but also the anticipation of the inescapable fate of each person, the death that awaits everyone. In this sense, we could say that the *reahu* seems to constitute itself as a great dream, since all the living behave as if they were *pore*, [21] but without dying.

However, if we look more closely, this apparent inversion between day and night is only partial, because, if on the one hand, the night of the living is transformed into the day of the *pore,* the same does not happen during the day of the living, which, as we have seen, continues to be the day, with the Yanomami carrying out the activities related to the feast, even if they have spent the whole night awake. What seems to happen is that the day of the living remains the same, and the inversion only happens at night, when the Yanomami behave as *pore* and the night "becomes" day too.

We could say that what happens is an endless day that begins with the day of the living and continues with the "day" of the *pore*: a scenario similar to the one prefigured in the original world, when an absolute day reigned and night had not yet been created.

We must also admit that, if the *reahu* feast approaches the heaven of the dead, it does so only in a caricatural way; because, if the *Hutu mosi* is a world of abundance and plenty, things in the world of the living happen differently. During the *reahu*, even when there is a mobilization of the host community with the objective of having the largest possible amount of food, an indispensable condition for the realization of the feast,[22] this abundance is only relative.

21 | Let us remember here that dreaming is when the *pei utupë* separates from the body and wanders. This happens during the night, which corresponds to the day of animals, spectres, spirits, etc.

22 | If there is no banana, you can also have a feast with palm fruit porridge or even manioc.

As we have seen, the bananas are used to prepare porridge, which is drunk almost every day of the feast. Even if it is much appreciated and fills the Yanomami's stomachs, banana porridge does not satisfy hunger; and the smoked meat, which has been hunted weeks before the beginning of the feast, cannot be consumed before the end of the feast, when it will be distributed to the guests upon their departure.

Those who have come to the feast and who were not necessarily invited by the *pata thë pë*, [23] If they do not have any close relatives who can feed them during the feast, end up going hungry. It often happens that some people return to their communities before the end of the feast, saying they have nothing to eat. Besides a general uneasiness, this is an embarrassment to the host community, for there is nothing more *shiimi* (stingy) than to offer a feast without having enough food to feed the guests.

This also happens when the feast, for some reason, lasts longer than expected. In general the *reahu* lasts from 3 to 7 days, depending on a number of factors.[24] When this period is exceeded, coexistence starts to become a problem.

Although the guests find themselves in a community where they are surrounded by people with whom they are linked by ties of kinship and alliance, they are not at home. The hosts, who have enthusiastically welcomed the beginning of the feast and the arrival of the guests, begin not to tolerate what they previously celebrated. This also happens in the case of feasts that end, but the guests refuse to leave.

The occasion of a *reahu* feast is a moment of great joy and reunion with relatives, but it is also a moment when one is not at home. The guests, after some time, yearn to return to their homes and tend their gardens. In the same way, for the hosts, receiving relatives is a great occasion to catch up on news and carry out all the exchanges that maintain their networks of alliances. However, after a while they also want to be among their own and return to their daily lives.

In this sense, it is clear that, although the *reahu* feast seems to constitute a specular form of the *Hutu mosi*, it is so only at first glance. Seen more closely, one realizes that a world like that of the dead cannot be achieved on earth, unless it is done in a caricatural way. This simulacrum of the world of the dead is also not fully realized precisely because of what separates the living from the dead: the body. After days of not sleeping properly, and sometimes not eating properly, people hope for the last day of the feast, both because it is the apex of the feast and because the bodies of the living cannot take it anymore and need to rest.

Let us return for a moment to the theme of longing we have not left since the beginning. We saw that, during the *reahu*, the moment of mourning occurs precisely at the end of the afternoon, which is when the Yanomami say they long for their loved ones. It is others, living or dead, who awaken in us dreams of nostalgia. It is the person who is the object of the dream who is the subject of the feeling. In this context, the feeling comes from the other, from outside, and the person who dreams becomes vulnerable to it, when night falls and the image emerges.

23 | Normally, these "uninvited guests" are youths, but it is common for some adults to attend feasts to which they have not been formally invited. This restriction on the number guests happens especially when there is not enough food to offer and preference is given to those who had a direct link with the deceased and the *pata thë pë of* the host community.

24 | These factors include, among other things, the number of guests, the relations of the dead person him/herself, and also the purpose of the feast. Here I have described a *reahu* in which the ashes of the deceased were buried, but there are feasts in which the purpose is to destroy the *matihi pë* (belongings) of the deceased. These are usually smaller and attended by fewer people.

CONCLUSION

By day the body is raw materiality and what is seen is what is nearby, it is not possible to "see" much further when the sun is high in the sky. Night is when, through dreams, the *pei utupë* can travel to distant and unknown places. Day and night establish another relationship: that between the nearby and the far away.

By day we live and see what our eyes can see, it's as if the daylight obscures what is hidden in the density of the body, the forest and the world. At night, the image, freed from the body, can truly see afar. Travelling to places where the body has never been, the *pei utupë* wanders, always at the risk of getting lost and making the body suffer.

One does not dream during the day, because the day is of the living, of bodies, of matter that rots upon death. Night is the world of images, of the dead, of shamans' helper spirits, the *xapiri pë*. It is in the Yanomami person's *pei utupë*, where what really matters is found. From the feeling of nostalgia that is so present in the life of this People, to the deeper and more refined knowledge that the shamans have of the myths and dimensions that make up the Yanomami cosmos. Feelings and knowledge need to pass through the image so that they can actually gain importance and then impinge on the body. It is through the image that everything is consolidated and where everything begins and ends.

If, on the one hand, one must be alive to be able to dream, one must also die a little each night to continue dreaming. The daily death that is experienced each night in dreaming is the simulacrum and anticipation of the ultimate death that reaches everyone, the definitive death that separates the body from the image, the living from the dead.

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