To live is to be marked.
Naming practices among a Valley Nambikwara people

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Abstract: Naming of individual persons appears to be a universal human practice. However, the practice of naming, its sociocultural meaning and the conception of personhood involved, varies considerably among societies. Naming, for example, can be fixed, ostentatious, very public and a strong mode of social identification, as in Brazil. In the case of the Valley Nambikwara, as described by Fiorini for the Wasusu (in his unpublished PhD dissertation), names are reluctantly given, held with a degree of secrecy to outsiders, and are not to be pronounced in the presence of the bearer. Lévi-Strauss already described this in his famous book *Tristes Tropiques* (1984 [1955]), when the Nambikwara came to fame even outside ethnological circles. In order to interpret this practice, the linguistic notion of markedness may reveal some of the characteristics of the meaning of the reluctance and secrecy involved. Applying the linguistic notion of markedness to the naming practice suggests a conception of naming as an individualising act that derives from the contingencies of exceptional lived incidents in the daily lived world. Contingencies that stand out from normal daily life, these are the incidents that mark the person in question (many times in the body itself). Incidents that, in a way, are accidents, and that may happen again, so peoples may be renamed in the course of their life. Such incidents may be caused by some form of negligent actions by close kin, that is, an action not affecting oneself but some other person of their close kin. In fact, it seems that close kin are conceived of as being very much substantially the "same", and it is as if the marking of a person by a name is an undesired operation. Marking a person apparently emphasises an unwanted expression of separateness of the person by the differentiation from the "sameness" of the set of close kin. Names of persons and local groups seem to particularise with a negative kind of predicate: as if the ideal Nambikwara Person (proposed by D. Price), as well as his kin and his local group, should be 'unmarked' in order to maintain the completeness of the ideal Nambikwara Person and hence, in fact, maintain the completeness of the ideal Human Person. Neither the unborn nor the dead are named, the first not yet becoming a distinct Person, the second leaving behind being a distinct Person. Only the fully capable adult is fully a complete, and unmarked, Human Person. However, to live is to be subject to the contingencies of the lived world, and these produce the incidents that impact on the lives of everyone and that mark the Person, becoming expressed in a name. Reluctantly so, although names clearly relate to marking incidents, people insist that the names 'really mean nothing'. 'Unmarkedness' appears to be ideal (superior, general, and collective), markedness to be avoided (inferior, personalised, creating separateness).

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Viver é ser marcado. Práticas de nomeação entre um povo Nambikwara do Vale

Resumo: Nomear pessoas individuais parece ser uma prática universal. No entanto, a prática de nomear, e seu significado para a concepção da noção de pessoas, envolve uma variação muito grande nas sociedades humanas. Nomes podem ser, por exemplo, fixados, ostensivos, muito públicos e um modo de identificação forte, tal como no Brasil. No caso dos Nambikwara do Vale, como descrito por Fiorini na sua tese sobre o Wasusu, nomes são dados com relutância, mantidos em um certo grau de segredo para estranhos, e não devem ser enunciados na presença do nominado. No seu livro *Tristes Tropiques* (1984 [1955]), Lévi-Strauss já descreveu isso para os Nambikwara, oportunidade em que esse povo ganhou fama fora dos círculos dos etnólogos. Para a interpretação dessa prática, a noção *markedness* (ser marcado) pode revelar algo sobre as características do significado da relutância e do segredo. Aplicar a noção linguística de "marcado" para a prática da nominação sugere uma concepção de nominação como ato individualizante que deriva das contingências de incidentes excepcionais vividos no mundo da vida diária. Contingências que se destacam na vida diária normal, esses são os incidentes que marcam a pessoa em questão (e muitas vezes no próprio corpo). Incidentes, que, de certo modo, são acidentes, e que podem acontecer de novo, fazendo com que as pessoas possam ser renomeadas no curso de sua vida. Tais incidentes podem ser causadas por alguma maneira de comportamento negligente por parte de parentes próximos, ou seja, uma ação que afeta não seu agente, mas a alguma outra pessoa que é parente próximo. De fato, parece que parentes próximos são concebidos como sendo substancialmente o "mesmo", e é como se a marcação de uma pessoa por um nome fosse uma operação não desejada. Marcar a pessoa aparentemente enfatiza uma expressão não desejada de separação da Pessoa por meio de uma diferenciação do "mesmo" do conjunto de parentes próximos. Nomes de pessoas e dos grupos locais parecem singularizar a partir de um predicado negativo: como se a Pessoa Nambikwara ideal (tal como proposta por D. Price) devesse ser 'não-marcadas' para manter a completitude da Pessoa Nambikwara ideal e, com efeito, manter a inteireza da Pessoa Humana ideal. Algo que vale tanto para o conjunto das pessoas aparentadas do grupo local, quanto para o próprio nome desse grupo local. Tanto os não nascidos ainda quanto os mortos são nomeados: os primeiros ainda não se tornaram uma pessoa distinta; os segundos deixando para trás ser uma pessoa distinta. Somente uma pessoa adulta totalmente capaz é uma Pessoa Humana plena, não-marcada. No entanto, viver é estar sujeito às contingências do mundo vivido, e isso produz os incidentes que tem impacto na vida de todas e que marcam a Pessoa, muitas vezes assumindo a sua expressão em um determinado nome. Com muita relutância, já que, mesmo quando os nomes claramente se relacionam com incidentes, as pessoas insistem que os nomes na realidade 'nada significam'. Ser 'não-marcada' parece ser o ideal (superior, geral e coletivo), ser marcada deve ser evitada (inferior, personalizada, criando separação).

Palavras-chave: Nambikwara; nomes pessoais; "markedness"; noção de pessoa; nomes coletivos; Wasusu.

> *To live is to be marked. To live is to change, to acquire the words of a story, and that is the only celebration we mortals really know.* (Barbara Kingsolver, The Poisonwood Bible, p. 438.)

Introduction

The quote cited above comes from a fiction book written about a missionary and his family who went to the Congo to convert the African inhabitants. His personal success in this activity, however, remained quite limited, while the events in which the family members were caught up became fundamental and absolutely crucial for their further lives. To them, the lives led in a far-away little village in the interior of Congo – just when the Belgian Congo became an independent state with a great amount of turmoil – did leave indelible marks. This story is a fictional account of actual experiences of people close to the novelist and hence indirectly about the reality of colonialism and its effects on both the colonizer and colonized. This in itself forcefully reminds of similar colonial situations like, in this particular case, the permanent and intense interethnic domination in which the indigenous peoples in Brazil are fatefully locked, and, of course, are also indelibly marked. On the other hand, the idea of the events of life marking the people who live the inevitable diachrony of time concerns one of the most, if not *the* most, basic fact of life for all human experience. To live is always to be marked by the events of life. That is, when the temporal sequence of the flux of life composed of the expected normalcy of life actually overflows with the contingency of the, in some locally and personally relevant way, exceptional.

Albeit lives are not always as dramatical as in the novel, it must be remembered that the indigenous peoples of the Americas certainly suffered immensely in their more recent histories. And, as will be explored below, the Nambikwara themselves, in their own naming practices, entertain a specific sociocultural conception of how their lives are marked by events and how this is expressed in their names. For this reason, I already had thought of a similar title for this article when I read the pertinent, succinct and very well formulated phrases by Barbara Kingsolver. In sum, this article briefly discusses the impact of lived experience on the naming practices of one of the peoples of the so-called Nambikwara, the Wasusu, who live in the region known as the Guaporé Valley (a large area in Mato Grosso stretching north of the upper Guaporé river, near Pontes e Lacerda,

until Vilhena, the frontier with Rondônia; the Wasusu live nearest to Comodoro, a small town more or less in the middle Valley).

A few points need to be cleared up before actually starting the discussion. Firstly, the people usually called "Nambikwara" also did pass through dramatic events that, of course, indelibly marked their history. The last century saw genocides, forced removal from immemorial territory, terrible epidemics, just to mention some dramatic events of this kind of traumatic history (Price, 1989; Reesink 2010). On the other hand, despite these terrible losses, the same Nambikwara showed a surprising resilience and, as far as possible, they adapted and maintained a strong sociocultural continuity. Secondly, it often happens that the Nambikwara linguistic family is discussed as if it is a single ethnic unit, as if the "Nambikwara" are one people. Such assumption may be politically expedient for the dominant society, for a variety of reasons, but it is untrue for the peoples themselves who are thrown into the same category (Reesink, 2006). What exactly constitute these ethnic units is a point not completely settled by the experts on the Nambikwara: that is, at which higher level of inclusion, above the basic Nambikwara unit of the local group, can we speak of an "ethnic" unit? Somewhat differently from Fiorini, for example, I consider the Wasusu probably to be a "people", not just a partiality of the Guaporé Valley Nambikwara, a cluster known as Manairisu which includes several localized and differentiated local groups. These Nambikwara groups pertain to one sub-branch of the Southern Nambikwara language branch (with the other major sub-branch being the Savanna Nambikwara, on the Parecis Plateau). The other two major divisions of the language family comprise the Northern Nambikwara and the Sabanê, with the most divergent of all and consisting only of a single language. In sum, language branches are not, with the exception of the Sabanê, congruent with ethnic units.

Thirdly, in the years 2000-1, I have done some short periods of fieldwork among three peoples belonging to the Nambikwara ensemble and read as much as ethnography as possible in order to write about their ethnohistories of linguistic and sociocultural change and continuity (Reesink, 2010).[2] Research was done among the Latundê (Northern, in Rondônia), Sararé (Guaporé Valley, to the south of the Wasusu and the southernmost group), and Sabanê (most of whom today are living in the "Aripuanã

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Indian Park" in Rondônia, now the northernmost people). All these groups consider themselves to be different from other similar local groups. Because of the differentiation among the "Nambikwara", I use the expression "Nambikwara ensemble" as a way of speaking about the totality of peoples that speak the different languages of the Nambikwara linguistic family. The previous research has led me to raise some interesting points about the Nambikwara cultures and to suggest some alternative interpretations for those advanced by the ethnographers who, with much greater competence, did have the necessary time to do a more profound ethnography. One of these points concerns the conceptions of personhood, names and naming practices. In the book I suggest some thoughts about these particularly curious phenomena and here I will try to extend these ideas a little further. In fact, I listed some traces of what the ideal Nambikwara Person should be like – for example, being autonomous, yet always dedicated to caring and being generous to close others –, based especially upon the description and analysis of David Price (the major nambikwarista of the seventies and eighties of the last century). I also advanced the idea that markedness may be a useful concept to rethink some aspects of the question of naming and its relation to personhood.

Naming and the secrecy and the strict forms of restraint in the use of names have been extensively examined by Marcelo Fiorini in his ingenious and important ethnography on the Wasusu (with an input from peoples of the neighbouring Valley Nambikwara, the Manairisu). Fiorini's work results from years of fieldwork and other kinds of close contact with the Nambikwara and is the most important ethnographer after the work of David Price on the savanna Nambikwara.[3] Although not exactly phrased this way, Fiorini discusses the way events and bodily characteristics mark Wasusu lives and how these are closely related to the bestowing of names. It becomes quite clear that one aspect of Wasusu naming concerns the way lived experience marks the person and hence his name. Small wonder then, that, as said, I immediately recognized the appropriateness of the quote above when I read it after finishing the monograph and already was thinking along similar lines for the title of the current

[3] The most recent contribution concerns the work of Joana Miller on the Mamaindê, a thorough thesis well established in the current ethnology of Lowland South America. This people belong to the Northern branch of the linguistic family and its inclusion would lead us into too much discussion than possible in this article.

paper. Events in life really mark the Wasusu and the name of the person relates to this personal life history. In other words, a special event in the lived world marks the person and becomes fixed in a personal name. Concomitantly, on the other hand, as Lévi-Strauss, the most famous ethnographer of the Nambikwara ensemble noted in *Tristes Tropiques*, names are kept secret to outsiders and, in daily life, usually are not to be pronounced out loud, especially in the presence of the named person. Marked names that are not used for direct interaction, these two aspects call for a short reflection on the reasons for their co-occurrence.

Names and markedness

One of the inevitable facts of life is the naming of individual people and human groups. As far as I know all human collectivities confer some kind of name on their components. Names individualize the person or the collectivity thus named and names differentiate between persons and groups. Hence, such names are an anthropological subject that usually is mentioned in ethnographic monographies and has been subject to anthropological scrutiny as, for example, in Lévi-Strauss' influential books on classification practices, *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* and *La Pensée Sauvage*. In his immediately following series on the mythology of the Americas, in particular the Lowland South America region of his own previous researches, one notes a constant preoccupation with the names of mythological characters.

Markedness, a component or term being marked or unmarked, is borrowed from linguistics. Its use here is not in any way novel. When, in the forties and fifties of the last century, Lévi-Strauss took inspiration form linguistics, this was one of the concepts he started using for other domains. In fact, he took his lead from his contacts in New York with his friend R. Jacobson, a Russian linguist closely affiliated with the Prague school of linguistics of the turbulent times before the Second World War and who generalized this idea (cf. Lincoln, 2000:498). Afterwards, the very well-known linguist Greenberg elaborated and very considerably enlarged upon the notion in his linguistic work while he summarized his intellectual predecessors in this way: "Trubetskoy's analysis also incorporated one further fundamental Prague notion, namely that the binary oppositions each involved a hierarchy. Of the members of each opposition, one of the

members was, in a certain sense, preferred over the other. This preferred member was called the unmarked while the subordinate one was called the marked. The term marked was used because, characteristically, the marked member contained an extra element, the "mark" which made it more complex than the unmarked" (Greenberg, 1986:11-2). Here we only need to retain the idea of the unmarked being preferred and the contained element being in some way differentiated by a mark. In linguistics, Greenberg integrated a generalized concept of marking into a cognitive-linguistic theory of kinship universals (Hage, 2001:198). Nowadays a cursory look at the literature in linguistics reveals a large number of studies, which, on the other hand, leads us to much too complicated intricacies.[4] In other words, suffice to note here that the Prague school linguists elaborated the notion to stand for "(…) the asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship between the two poles of any opposition" (Waugh, 1982:299).[5]

In anthropology markedness does not appear to have had a very significant impact, however, such statement would require much more investigation. It did cause some stirs in the kinship studies that search for the characteristics of kin terminologies. Greenberg himself applied the notion on this kind of classification and several anthropologists took up this idea, even if, in 2001 and 2003, two of them argued that these were rather more like notable exceptions and that Greenberg actually deserved more attention in kinship studies (Hage, 2001: 198; Jones, 2003:306). The discussion of markedness in such terminological analyses is highly specialized, hence, again, I will choose only some authors relevant to the discussion on hand. Maybe the first author to do so, Scheffler extensively reviewed and criticized Greenberg's ideas and proposals but here the most relevant part concerns his reminder that: "In this context "opposition" should not be confused with mere binary or dichotomous difference, for such difference may be either equipollent (i.e., of the order '*x*'/'*y*') or privative (i.e., of the order '*x*'/'not-

[4] See, just as an example, a whole thesis from 2002 about a proposal of a "formal theory of markedness" within the linguistic "optimal theory". One point is the variety of markedness. "A complicating factor for markedness is that – on the surface – markedness distinctions are only partially uniform cross-linguistically. Markedness categories that are distinct in some languages may be fused – or 'conflated' – in others" (De Lacy, 2002:3). One linguist even proposed to abolish the notion for the analysis of grammar (Haspelmath, 2006).

[5] Ironically, it will be observed that "marked" seems to be the unmarked term in opposition to "unmarked", the latter being marked by the prefix "un". A curious possible inversion of semantic meaning for which I did not find any reference in linguistics, although somebody must have commented about this curiosity and whether this really is a pair characterized by markedness. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (Castro, 2002:424) does mention the same fact, for Brazilian 'Portuguese', where the same phenomenon occurs (and he also makes a frequent use of the notion in his widely known and influential analyses of the indigenous peoples of Lowland South America).

x') and it is only difference of the latter kind that fulfills the conditions of markedness" (Scheffler, 1987:203-4). This difference is important because one form is symmetrical, while the marked form is asymmetrical and the two should not be confused. On the other hand, in a general summarizing statement of his views, Jacobson came to the conclusion that: "The concept of binary opposition at any level of the linguistic system as a relation between a mark and the absence of this mark carries to its logical conclusion the idea that a hierarchical order underlies the entire linguistic system in all its ramifications." (Roman Jakobson; cited in Hage, 2001:197). Today, in fact, markedness now seems to be applied to various levels of language: phonological, morphological, semantical, syntactical. Therefore, Jacobson's emphasis clearly falls on pervasive hierarchical relations in language, a position which, possibly, influenced Lévi-Straus early idea that binary oppositions always decompose into hidden triadic forms and, thus, hide hierarchy. In my sense, hierarchies are, of course, a fundamental part of human sociality, but still should be demonstrated and not be assumed a priori (and the inverse).[6] In the Nambikwara ensemble both modes of equality and of possible hierarchy are present. In fact, however, they are famously known as one of the most egalitarian people on earth (famously because of *Tristes Tropiques*), but here I want to analyse an implicit hierarchical feature.

In the already cited early attempt by Scheffler, the author discussed what forms markedness could take and he disagreed with Greenberg both on markedness and on the results of the latter's analysis. However, markedness, that is its different modes of functioning and ways of expression, is actually not an easy subject. When Greenberg wrote a reply to criticisms levelled by Scheffler, he didactically outlines a set of modes of independently generating markedness, alleging his critic misunderstood some of his proposals. For example, Scheffler argued for utilizing only some of these modes, but Greenberg (1987) answered there would be no theoretical reason for such a limiting choice. Hage (1999b), the anthropologist who appears to have been the person most engaged in this kind of analysis, not only agreed with Greenberg, but he himself thought four modes of markedness to be relevant for his analysis when he applied markedness

[6] In his article in the fifties, "Les organisations dualistes, existent-elles?", when Lévi-Strauss tried to apply some linguistic ideas and tools to social life. This article, by the way, raises some questions about the proposed operation on how to transform the dual into a triad that are not usually thought of in the literature (Reesink, 1982).

as a solution to an unsolved problem on alternate generation terminology. In a later, more general, article, Hage included five of these modes. Such a discussion shows the difficulties of the theory and application of markedness necessary for an anthropological approach, but for the present case I will adopt the simple mode of an hierarchical opposition in naming practices. In a way, the inclusive definition of Jacobson may suffice: "Jakobson's 'over-all' definition of marking: "The general meaning of a marked category states the presence of a certain property A; the general meaning of the corresponding unmarked category states nothing about the presence of A and is used chiefly, but not exclusively, to indicate the absence of A" (Jakobson, 1971 [1957])" (Hage 2001:198).[7]

Names are, in very general way, a kind of markedness operation. That is, names imply a sociocultural conception of how the signifying operation of social naming relates the name to the person named. Hence it reveals something about several symbolic and significant conceptions about the person, as a kind of separate human being, and the sociocultural collectivity to which this person belongs. For example, in Brazil, and other countries of Europe or of some kind of European matrix, names are supposed to be fixed, mostly so for an entire lifetime, highly controlled by the State, and thought to be strongly singularizing and representational for the person. When the Brazilian army annihilated Canudos, not coincidently rebaptized (renamed) as Bello Monte by the religious leader Conselheiro, all men and many women and children who surrendered during last episodes of the war were beheaded and thrown into unmarked mass graves. Such acts were officially not to be condoned, but, in fact, unofficially allowed and even stimulated. The victims greatly feared this death for a religious reason that had to do with the salvation of their soul. Moreover, the interment in unmarked mass graves – completely ignoring their names and concealing their dead bodies from public view and recognition – was a deliberate attempt to expunge any possibility of personal and collective memory. A Christian grave should, on the contrary, be named and be kept proper in order for the person to be remembered and await resurrection. In other words, obfuscating their names and graves is like negating the right to exist, or have existed, as a distinct individual and a respected person (Reesink, 2013). It is, quite naturally, an important

[7] As said, I did not do a real search for the application of the markedness concept in anthropology. A quite cursory perusal of the literature, however, revealed only some publications about "race", gender, social classification of personality, kinship relations, and little else.

part of the revalued remembrance of Canudos as a genocidal war – that started some forty years ago – to remember and thoroughly emphasize the repressed names of the popular protagonists.

Names to be remembered feature in many different cultures, not just in the example mentioned. Names are more generally thought to fix identity and reveal "(…) a powerful connection between name and self-identity" (Bodenhorn e Bruck 2006:3). Names and naming imply the creation of a kind of intersectional nodal point by means of which a complex number of social relations and values are expressed, and which constitutes them in return. Bodenhorn and vom Bruck organised a collection of essays on the theme, with the summarizing and generalizing introduction just cited, because they felt it had been somewhat neglected in anthropology. Hence these authors survey the literature and the contributions in order to map the great variety of a "ubiquitous" phenomenon. However, as the same authors recognize, in the ethnology of Lowland South America names already were a significant subject, especially with respect to the Gê peoples studied in Maybury-Lewis's Central Brazil project of the sixties to seventies.

In his chapter, Stephen Hugh-Jones clearly demonstrates the same before discussing the Tukano language peoples of the Alto Rio Negro (Vaupes) region. What becomes quite clear is that the Tukano naming system differs considerably from other known complexes, for example the central Gê, and certainly from what follows on the Valley Nambikwara. The Tukano possess three main kinds of personal names and one of these, nicknames, reminds one of the case to be discussed below. One kind of names indicate strong extra-ordinary continuity with ancestors and ancestral groups ("spirit names"), but ordinary lived experience is also recognised in nicknames. Some of latter refer to the world of other living beings. "Other nicknames have some direct or oblique reference to the life, habits, physical appearance, or character of the bearer: as a child, Riti ("charcoal") was always dirty and G¨uso Lise ("caiman's mouth") was once bitten by a caiman. Invented and bestowed by assorted others, these one-off, non-transferable, biographical names serve to individuate the bearer" (Hugh-Jones, 2006:80). As we shall see in the next section, certain aspects of Nambikwara naming coincide with this kind of naming. On the other hand, a very rapid comparison with the Tukano is not meant to be elaborated into an exhaustive survey of similarities and dissimilarities of naming in Lowland South America but only to show that the Nambikwara probably represent one

particular variant in this ethnological region.[8]

On Wasusu names

For my purpose here let me resume what Fiorini (2000) discusses at greater length in the third chapter of his thesis. He shows how children acquire their first name and how during their lifetime new names may be bestowed until old age, with the final effacement of personal names after death. Parents are reluctant to give their infant a name. This even tends to obtain for the Brazilian names which are not secret and are freely used. The parents and close kin wait for something to occur that delineates the personality of the infant, a sign of individuality. As such, naming particularizes the individual and namesakes are ruled out. That is, Fiorini (2000:130) notes a "(...) tendency to act as if the very practice of naming one's child should ideally be suppressed." In my sense, this seems to concern a tendency to suppress naming itself, as if naming someone is not a very appropriate act for the person named. That would parallel the fact that names that pertain to oneself and close kin are held in secrecy. "To have one's name uttered is akin to an unwanted exposure of one's self. Likewise, one's kindred's names should not be uttered because, in some sense, they are extensions of one's self" (ib.:131). The link with close kin is a substantialized bond, a sharing of the same substance. What happens to close kin may affect any of those kinsmen. In fact, one does not utter the name of those potentially affected and thus the secrecy seems to coincide with, I would say, the persons who are most similar with oneself. The "Nambikwara Person" never says his own name aloud and, as least as much as possible, does not utter the name of those the Persons he holds to be his closest kin. In other words, it appears as if 'unnaming' marks the people who are closest and most similar to oneself. Or, in other words, a process of unmarking 'ourselves', the avoidance of marking the group of one's own similarity that generates a strong mode of identification.

Fiorini shows how not uttering a name is a matter of respect and how

[8] As names have been a topic, any excursion would be beyond the scope of this article. Marco Antonio Gonçalves (1992) made an early general survey but today the literature is much larger, and no such comprehensive survey is available. Viveiros de Castro did write an important annex to Hugh-Jones (2006) to discuss general features of naming in Lowland South America. There is no space here to pursue any real comparison.

pronouncing a name in the presence of the named or his close kin signals a strong lack of esteem. Withholding or disclosing a name thus expresses the state of a social and political relationship as seen from the enunciator: "(...) one identifies with people by withholding their names, or disassociates oneself from others by exposing their names in reference, thereby mobilizing and manipulating the amount of political collusion or dissent already present and accumulated within the social milieu" (ib.:132). Fiorini demonstrates in this way, I conclude, that 'name politics' reveals an in-group, an 'us', differentiating close Persons from 'them', other people who are dissimilar from oneself and us. Naming, or better perhaps, uttering names identifies the similar and differentiates those different from ourselves. And this community, as is very common in Amazonia, constitutes a community of substance. Naming practice for the young and the old are more relaxed than for the adults.[9] In that sense, the reason for not naming the infant does not derive from the strong injunction of the secrecy prevailing for adults. The Wasusu consider the infant and the young as slowly acquiring personality and correct social behaviour, that is, I would say, as yet incomplete Persons. Naming correlates strongly with the conception of personhood and its degrees of completeness.

This could explain the apparent ambiguity. As not being endowed yet with a personality, the infant cannot gain an identity that is separated from its close substantial relationship with its parents. In this sense, the relative freedom of speech of its name is countered by the fact that a child must acquire his own lived experience in order to differentiate itself and, as it were, to become 'marked'.[10] On the other side of the spectrum, the elderly people may be thought of as declining in the sociality of the complete Person as they find themselves on the way to death and extinction as a particular Nambikwara Person. It does not seem to be a coincidence that the "spirit image" that develops itself in parallel with, and in function of, the lived experience of the Person dissolves into the generalized collective category of the "Ancestor Spirits" inhabiting the sacred caves, losing their individuality. The unformed human being has yet to be marked by life; the dead spirit must divest itself from life's accretions and be

[9] It may be noted that kin terms and teknonymy enable the enunciator to make quite clear to whom he refers to without naming that person. A relaxed use thus reveals that the young and the old are less esteemed than people in their prime, seemingly fitting the pattern elaborated upon here.

[10] Hence a child will slowly acquire events and expresses its particularities. This is the conception of the irreproducibility of the individual (Fiorini, 1997:12).

transformed into a benevolent general ancestor. The oldest persons are thought to be able to transform themselves into animals, that is, they are becoming something else than a normal fully human Nambikwara Person. The name of the recent dead must not be pronounced by anyone and the spirit hence loses it familial character in order to be able to care for everyone in the local group.[11] Perhaps the unformed foetus must still gain its substantialized similarity to its kin while the dead must lose their earthly substance and these circumstances put them both in similar position with respect to the living Nambikwara Person.

Just like kin terms, Brazilian names convey the relationship of respect and pinpoint the Person himself with ease. This name enables one to speak of everyone without secrecy and to address the person directly. Of course, these names preferably become fixed labels, that is, in eyes of the dominant surrounding society. All people must be named with Brazilian names, actually a sociopolitical imposition, and these are used for all dealings with the outsiders. These names come in handy for in-group use and are current in daily use. The difference with Nambikwara names concerns the permanence and identifying force of Brazilian names. Nambikwara names are diachronically dynamic, they can change when very significant events affect the Person (the events never occur by chance but always find their cause in some kind of transgressive behaviour of close kin). Brazilian names identify the bearer in a strictly individual and fixed way. However, in a few cases name changing events even caused the change of the Brazilian name. Both systems, still following Fiorini, furnish means for constituting and cementing relationships. Although the Nambikwara name tends to be held as the real name, some Brazilian personal names had crossed into the set of Nambikwara names. More often, the attitude towards naming is analogous for both names. In this sense I would call attention to the fact that Brazilian names do follow Nambikwara practice of being unique to each Person. This implies a interference of the Nambikwara system with the Brazilian naming practice: every Wasusu appears to possess a different Brazilian name. In effect, this occurs, to the best of my knowledge, in all three peoples I knew in

[11] The recent dead still attach themselves to the living and thus must be avoided as they are dangerous to the living. Becoming a 'general ancestor' entails a process of cutting the ties of substantialized identity, becoming 'unparticularized', as it were. This may be a similarity between the unborn and the dead: they are not 'personalized'. Perhaps this may explain that the last representative of the Northern people of the Lakondê (according to Dona Tereza herself) told me that the dead spirits return to the womb (a cycle not mentioned anywhere else in the ethnographic literature on the Nambikwara, but with known parallels in Amazonia).

my fieldwork.[12] The 'unsharing' of the same name marks, consequently, all those people encompassed in one and the same set of Nambikwara Persons: those who recognize each other's uniqueness within the sameness of the larger group.

The Nambikwara person gains his name by means of his physical characteristics and the events caused by the behaviour of their substantially related close kin. What happens to a Person may corporally affect his close kin when this involves some social or moral fault. Accidents do not exist, and they may cause physical marks in kin who are not responsible for the transgression. The body itself inscribes the behaviour of close kin. This, I would stress, concurs with the concept of the sharing of substance of those close kin.[13] Both the connection is a bodily conduit and the result marked in the physical attributes of the body itself. Hence the presence of bodily features of a child conceived to be not normal and, similarly, those acquired in life, attracts social attention and children often acquire names because of them. Children's names are often terms of endearment yet still dependent upon kin behaviour, adult's name changes usually entail events which endangered the physical well-being of the Person. The general principle underlying naming implies a theory of causation, of connection between close kin, of sociocultural norms of transgression, of a passage through a serious liminal state, of a diachrony in life, and of bodily markers that culminate in a new name. And later in life the name "(...) often have a rather derogatory flavor to them. And yet, one should be reminded that the name's disparaging sense does not directly imply a reproach of the person named, but of his or her kin or kindred." (ib.:145).

As Fiorini (ib.:146) notes, names are "(...) part of a process of differentiation of individuals in the society. The name begins by differentiating a particular individual, and defining one as a unique human being". But he follows this emphasis on the particularising necessity of a Person with the fact that in this social theory the happenings of those in immediate social relationships to oneself may cause the genesis

[12] Actually, the sociocultural variation among the Nambikwara ensemble is little known and rarely discussed (just like the issue of peoplehood, cf. Reesink, 2010). The assumption that these peoples are all alike is false, but it remains uncertain how large the variation between them really is. Here I presume that naming practices might be quite similar, but I cannot affirm this with any certainty. I do assume that the Wasusu exemplify the Manairisu and probably the somewhat more differentiated Sararé. This is why the title of this article specifically mentions "some" Guaporé Valley peoples.

[13] A very common assumption in Indian societies concerns the shared tenet that personhood is produced through the consumption of determinate foods and it comprises a very salient dimension in the production of bodily substance. The food consumed thus constructs the substance of the person and 'you are what you eat' (but 'you don't eat what you are'; Reesink, 2010).

of names. As said, names must, possibly universally, exist to differentiate an individual from similar individuals and create a singularity. The Nambikwara theory expresses the singularity of the Person and his life history, but it can make it attendant upon a cause localised in those Persons most similar to oneself. To me one of the most curious aspects of this system refers to the analogy this creates with the social reluctance of naming and its derogatory aspect. In a way the complex appears to be reluctant to name and thus reluctant to singularise a Person. As if naming and singling out someone is an undesirable act, something that ought to be avoided but is accepted only because of its inevitability. Fiorini puts it in a slightly different way: in their concept an individual is not an isolated distinct self. "Their idea of the *socius* is rather akin to that of a group of individuals who may themselves temporally perceive one another as sharing a common identity. In this model of personhood, the individual is merely a part of the whole, but of a whole conceived as humanity itself, not as an ethnic or self-denominated group. For if this shared identity of group members is assumed, like the personal name, it can just as well be elided" (ib.:152).

To elide means first to omit or to strike out (something written), or, secondly, to eliminate or leave out of consideration or to cut short, to abridge (American Heritage Dictionary). This concurs with my conclusion of the general reluctance to name and a certain tendency as the desire of 'not naming', 'unmarking'. Naturally, the secrecy of the name and the injunction not to pronounce the name in the presence of respected people and their close kin once again may coincide with same proposition: it stresses the kin set over the component Persons, the collective over the singular. In this respect one last aspect merits discussion. Not all names refer to bodily events, body marks caused by collective and individual histories. A significant quantity of names is borrowed from the natural world, mostly from animals but also from plants.[14] Fiorini asserts that the names of animals for old people and topographically more distant people can be interpreted as an objectification inherent in naming. At one end of the spectrum people know what gave rise to embodied names, but they were at a loss over the meaning of animal names. That is, about the relation between the name and the named. Hence, these names "(...)

[14] Here Fiorini observes that other peoples from the Valley Guaporé use these names more often than the Wasusu, possibly indicating a relevant sociocultural variation. However, he does not discuss the possible implications.

should be seen as signs of maximal objectification, bordering on meaninglessness." (ib.:154). Names reduced to pure referentiality. Moreover, he argues that all names should retain a kernel of meaninglessness, of minimal meaning. Despite the obvious occasions generating embodied names, the Wasusu clearly state that certain names do not have sense and that all names are really "just names". Actually, elucidating the meaning of all names is thoroughly hampered by injunctions on enunciation and other aspects of the naming process (more complicated than pictured here).

In sum, despite the obvious relation between event and bodily marks that explain the need and meaning of a new name, Wasusu assert that all names ought to be regarded as just names. Two remarks by Fiorini stand out here. First, in his sense, a name does not account for the fullness of personhood. In a way he appears to suggest that a name removes a person from his humanity. Secondly, he argues that as tokens of identity and index of social relations the name could be completely void of meaning and still be functional. That is, to function (a word Fiorini does not use himself and probably would not), the name in itself suffices. What I find interesting in this concerns the implication that naming in this way is divested from both meaning and particularizing. A name marks the person hence, if meaningful, reminds the bearer and others of the regretful event that led to the naming. It is if the Person is detracted from the "fullness" of his humanity. The incident is painful for at least two reasons: it culls the Nambikwara Person from the collective nature of the close kin group, setting him apart, and this happens exactly due to an infraction from the very same kin. As if those who are most similar to oneself, of the same substance and where a strong relation of identity prevails, are the very cause to make one to be set apart and cause oneself to be separated in a relation of forced, involuntary (and outside one's own power), alterity. Instead of being the same and enmeshed with those persons of the same kind as oneself, the lives and failures of these similar persons may cause one to be carved out of the sameness. And, worse still, in a way as if to be detracted from one's humanity. In the end it seems that, ideally, the Nambikwara Person should not be named at all. It might then be no coincidence that adult names usually spring from alters (like affines), one never enunciates one's own name, and that the policy of secrecy avoids confronting the unfortunate singularity imposed by the name. It raises the possibility of the avoidance of markedness, of a desire to being unmarked.

Names, villages and peoples

A sociocultural feature among the peoples of the Nambikwara ensemble that is initially complicated for outsiders is that most, and possibly all, local groups and peoples lack auto-denominations. Moreover, more broadly, the exact notion of a group is ambiguous. The local group as a unit of primordial significance with the internal generalized sharing and the equilibrium of delayed reciprocity with other local groups sustained the identity of its members, but these *people* did not name this social organization. The village is named after a geographical attribute or an illustrious ancestor (Price 1978:153).[15] The word *Anúsú*, the 'Nambikwara People', also given in the sense of "person", is the expression in Southern Nambikwara.[16] It is this general notion to designate oneself that Price translated as the *Nambikwara Person* (the expression I borrowed above). This simple designation seems to put these people in the centre of the universe. This also concurs with the suggestion of Fiorini that the Nambikwara person and his close kin do not represent an ethnic unit but relate to "humanity". In my sense this implies that the Nambikwara Person actually represents the Human Person, as if the substantialized group of close kin in reality are those people who are the true Human Beings. Hence true Humans that transform into true Human Persons, making the Southern Nambikwara adults in their prime the most fully Human Persons. In other words, it appears that the only normal way to refer to oneself, one's close kin and co-inhabitants of the village places the Human Person as the central category to speak about oneself. Such conception, by the way, as is well known, is quite familiar in Amazonian peoples.[17]

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[15] "The village is the only social group that the Nambiquara recognize. They have no term with which to refer to smaller groups, such as the "family", and they have no concept of a larger group, such as the "tribe". Even the village group cannot be referred to abstractly, but only in relation to a leader or an ancestor" (Price, 1997:422).

[16] Price and Cook (1969:690) still thought the name to be *ánunsú*, but this in the Sararé region may mean "village" and not people (personal information by the linguist Borella, 2002). Hence, it is likely that Price changed his mind after his post-1968 experiences (he also changed field sites from the Sararê to the Kithaulú on the Parecis Plateau).

[17] When I wrote the first versions and the final version of this article, I did not consciously remember the famous article by Viveiros de Castro (1996) on perspectivism where he discussed exactly this phenomenon in a new way (see Castro, 2002). The following discussion, however, is quite close to his observations. The conclusion here, however, maybe an extreme case of a conception of 'endo-egalitarianism' (unmarked), combined with an emphasis on superiority over the exterior (marked).

The category of Nambikwara People – who are the essential Human Persons – and its ramifications at ever further removes can be described by means of markedness. The Person and then his family are unmarked, the other Persons or peoples are marked (see Hage, 1999a). Concentric circles surround the Person. In the hub the Nambikwara Person is inserted in the sharing set of his kin in the village.[18] Immediately outside this is the kin in other villages, that may be related and consider themselves as belonging to the same groups, a "village cluster". Price once gave the size of such a village cluster "sixty-five to one hundred and seventy square kilometers" (on territorial sizes, see Reesink, 2010:366). This places the cluster with their neighbours in one of the higher level regional social and geographical aggregates constituted by adjacent village-sets.[19] It would only be logical that if the people in the village-set are recognized as Human Persons and that their groups are not really named. In the third concentric circle would be allies with whom they exchanged women and objects, in a delayed reciprocity, for reasons sometimes more social than material. In the same way that sharing within the group is an expression of mutuality and disregard of possessions, these exchanges between more distant people were important in that they served a diplomatic function. Here we would expect to find naming, and here, today, we find the Wasusu, Sararé and others. If one names only others and never those recognized as too close, then the names index an important boundary that I translate as the limit of peoplehood (Reesink, 2010). Further from the centre still were the more distant village clusters where exchanges of women or goods were rare and inimical relations could easily occur. Next were the distant villages and clusters whose peoples may participate in shamanic attacks and warrior raids. Lastly, at an extreme social distance would be the other Indian peoples

[18] Actually, the normal village would consist of two groups, usually two close kin groups standing in a relation of marriage alliance. Thus, the close kin groups spoken of above could be read as equivalent to each one of these segments. On a higher level, the village and its sharing of meat does create a commonality to oppose the world outside.

[19] Price used "village cluster" in two different articles, but the difference in size makes the second cluster into the notion of "village" of the first instance. The second usage appears a review of the former consigning the attribute of a set to the former "village", that is, the same local group may have more than one village and then forms part of larger regional set. I actually favor the latter view (this seems to have applied to the Lakondê and concurs with the Sabanê transmitted idea of possibly all-inclusive category of "Kulimansi". In fact, around 1981 (Price, und: 1), he is quite clear that "Each local group consisted of a single village or two or more villages that were closer to each other than to other villages". The other possibilities are that Price simply forgot about his previous usage and mixed up the terms, or perhaps he adhered to the confusion created by history when, because of depopulation, the distinction between the two collapsed after a demographic catastrophe (when two or more neighbouring villages joined in a new blend to re-establish the social viability of group reproduction).

and the so-called "civilized" Brazilians. The placing of the "civilized" at the extreme denotes that some of the Nambikwara attributed the characteristic of being "inherently fierce" to the Brazilians. Such an attribution is rather ironic given the Nambikwara's reputation amongst the Brazilians used to be a "very fierce" people.

The village or village-set comes closest to be a self-contained and self-defined ethnic unit. Outside of it, everyone was "separate and different" (in the words of Price). Such people were always potentially dangerous and could only become allies through social action. And, on the outside of one's own collective, other similar units were named. Names usually with a more or less explicit connotation of a derogatory nature, just like personal names. The exterior relations between different village-sets were complicated, the exchange of women at times encouraged more peaceful relations. A segment of a village, within the web of a set of close villages, within the larger composite regional cluster with neighbouring similar clusters – surmising the possible recognition of some Nambikwara commonality between the more proximate linguistically related clusters – is a type of segmentary model no longer extant. The epidemics destroyed the demographic basis of most, if not all, villages and village-sets. Fiorini described the standard Wasusu village pattern of two houses facing one another across a plaza (2000). This is conceptually equivalent to a belief in an unnamed centre of people and endogamous kin surrounded by consecutively farther circles populated by increasingly "different and separated" others.[20]

Conclusion: the ideal Human Person

Finally, something may be said about the authority granted to the leader of a village, someone called "the capable one". A leader, at least before the interethnic domination from Brazilian society, functioned as *primus inter pares* of a band of peers. The leader was originally conceived of as the "capable person" and was usually the

[20] Funai usually thought, and still thinks, it simplest to join all groups into one "tribe" and deal with only "one people" instead of a multiplicity of ethnic groups. For the agency, a 'one people' model simplifies the approach for everyone, and agents and bureaucrats alike preferred the model of concentration that kept all these "similar groups" in one place. The Brazilian dictatorship used the falsehood of being "one people" to justify forced relocations on other people's land, violating rights and severely upsetting all involved ("nomadism" was another false excuse). All groups thus forced to leave their traditional homelands returned, after significant stress and losses, to their cherished territories (Reesink, 2010).

eldest of a set of brothers (by nature of this kin term, extended to include parallel cousins) who had the will to lead, could manage people and resources, was generous, knowledgeable, and a gifted orator (for example, Price, 1997:424). This description agrees with Lévi-Strauss' observations on leaders. Additionally, still according to Price (1972), in Southern Nambikwara, the root of the word "people" is the same as that of the verb "to share". If so, family and the mutuality of sharing (especially food) practically and logically entail one another. In every closely-knit kin descent group, one person served as the central representative figure. As such groups had no names, they were referred to either as descendants of a prominent ancestor or as the 'people among whom the current leader shares his things'.[21] Note that the only person whose name Lévi-Strauss could not record was the group leader. This man was the focal point of the groups' existence and traditionally must be unnamed by the people who view him as the centre of their contemporary social identity (cf. Fiorini, 2000).

This raises the basis for Price's disagreement with Lévi-Strauss about the image of leadership. Given the range and import of the original article in political anthropology which immediately influenced his own views when in the field, Price dedicated a separate publication to this issue (Price, 1981). Although his predecessor certainly observed very astutely the indigenous situation, some of the general impressions offered at the time are simply incorrect. Leaders definitely exhibited some notable characteristics that Lévi-Strauss observed: generosity, knowledge, hardworking and, especially, the acceptance of his authority by the group. Polygamy, contrary to what Lévi-Strauss believed, is not the privilege of the leader as compensation for his efforts – as it is in the contractual theory of a "primitive" and 'historical' group constitution often derived from this description.[22] Price agreed with this description of charitable, esteemed, and wise leaders. The leader is the initiator of activities, collective and individual, when the time is right by setting the hard-working example of the masculine social obligations. The Nambikwara metaphor stresses that the initiator is "he who is the

[21] As said, Price moved to do fieldwork among a people on the Plateau and did not stay in the Valley. However, the languages and, I suspect, the politics are quite close, and I feel justified to borrow his explanation here. On the other hand, as said, variation in Nambikwara ensemble is not sufficiently known to be quite certain.

[22] Lévi-Strauss asserted in an article for the Handbook of South American Indians (very likely penned in the early 1940s) "… polygamy is the privilege of the chief and other important men" (1948:366). He also credited the shaman as being distinguished with the same privilege and notwithstanding the common combination of being a shaman and chief, adds that he is sometimes a distinct man (ib.:369). This is an article which is mainly consulted by specialists so the contradiction with *Tristes Tropiques* goes widely unnoticed.

bottom of things" while the events finish by "coming to a head". Lévi-Strauss also added that the leader should also be of good humour and have a cheerful disposition, holding constant his emotions; preferably, he is a big and strong man. Although Price does not draw this conclusion, the outline sketched by Lévi-Strauss is iconic of the ideal of masculinity and represents what the most accomplished man should be. Among the Nambikwara in general a "big" (large) man tends to become a "big man". This entails the proposition that an ideal man is an autonomous and kind responsible man should be valid for all men, and, hence, one of them can only lead others by example (Price, 1981:692-4). This also explains the tendency of deferring initiative in collective enterprises, an inclination that is based in the idea that the initiator is responsible for any consequences (see Fiorini, 2000). In other words, it seems to me that the leader embodies the very model of humanity, he emulates the ideal Human Person, hence the ideal Nambikwara Person. Therefore, he is the centre of the village, he who must be the most accomplished Human Person, the least named and nameable (and yet, by definition named the more by the others who do not pertain to the village/village-set, who may name the group by his name).

Of key interest is the nature of the relation between the leader and the group. It is false that the leader's power is supreme; in fact, it is often the case that the village kin-group supersedes the leader. When a leader is unsatisfactory, the village may put another man into this position, even if this new chief never expressed such intentions (Price, 1981:699). Still, there is definitely a template reliant on the sociocultural notion of the "capable" older brother (ib.:693). Age is associated with knowledge, and, in pre-conquest times, with physical size. An older sibling is thought more capable than his younger brothers are. There is a clear tendency towards an agnatic core with the eldest brother as the primary candidate to function as the leader. Social constraints do arise, contrary to the overly volunteer-based picture conveyed before. The Nambikwara are flexible, and Price carefully pointed out that these are only tendencies, though his analysis of many leaders and groups substantiates this observation. The elder brother model essentially signifies the elaborated notion of a caretaker of his close kin, a family responsibility: "The Nambikwara leader is an elder brother who cares for his less competent siblings – that is the basic metaphor and often the actual fact" (Price 1981:703). More kinship than politics, the sibling set is the basic model of sociality

creating a sharing in-group that has a strong sentiment of belonging to this local group/village (Fiorini 2000).

Fiorini's thesis is fundamentally concerned with naming and the secrecy or the social mode of not addressing the person by his name. He elaborated on this complex relation of the constitution of name, person, and identity. No justice can be done here to his argument and the depth of his reasoning which recognized the process of naming as a systematic social practice. I believe that his material and reasoning lend support to the following, less-intricate, argument that differs slightly in its emphasis but does not contradict his analysis. It is interesting that if one equates "person" and family with local village, or points to an embedded nature of the "person" in his family group, this does not just explain the notion of an *Anusu* or *Anunsu* immersed within his kin without a differentiation. Just as the group name is unmarked by the group itself and stands out in a hierarchical relationship to the marked others, the secrecy of the personal name is shared with the closest kin analogously. Not saying the name of one's close kin creates an opposition with the free use of the name of more distant persons. Thus, the names of family are unmarked, set apart by the sharing of secrecy and mutual non-enunciation of names generates 'sameness'. However, the name itself results from the embodied individual history of each person. The name specifies the individual in his uniqueness and his own particular acquired attributes. As expected from a people who stress experience so strongly, a private name is created by unique life events (yet as an adult related to doings of his close, "same", kin). It is revealing that even the Brazilian names which are of free use, are never repeated within the same social unit (here, finally, as said, one could argue that this fact indexes the bounds of what, in contemporary parlance, should be called a "people").

Within the shared identity, the autonomous place of the individual is shaped by the name. Given that the normal gendered capabilities of a woman or a man covers more or less the whole spectrum of knowledge, the apparently 'immersed' person gains a more general individual autonomy.[23] All the attributes thought necessary for the leader

[23] This helps to explain both the surprising resilience of the survivors of epidemics to continue living, and the way in which their capacity was immediately put channeled into reconstructing the close 'sameness' within a local group. The leader seems to have been a masculine role and usually still is. In a way, there is a feminine ideal role but in most aspects gender appears to be quite equal too and the general markedness outlined should be valid for all.

of the village epitomize what this Person should be as Human Person and a Nambikwara Person. And finally, the leader is the most unmarked person in the village, in terms of secrecy, exactly because of his ideally being the model of humanity. He ought to be a complete Human Person, and names diminish the fullness and completeness of the Human Being. Naming marks, because life is lived, and events happen; but the ideal Human Nambikwara Person is an unmarked entity. Being unmarked is being superior, complete, and hierarchically above the marking resultant of naming – just like in markedness theory. Hence others are marked by naming and the Nambikwara Human Person and his kin, which are ideally identical in substance, never names himself. Other peoples, even "Nambikwara", are marked by a predicate that relates to the attribution of some unfavourably viewed trait (what usually appears to be related to a substance creation by some particular habit of consumption, that is, literally 'incorporated').

'Unmarkedness' is the ideal, possibly the desired perpetual state of the Nambikwara Person, and possibly before birth and after death. It is a superior, general state, and the ideal for collectivities. However, the lived diachrony and the very existence of individual and individualized bodies impose their subjection to 'evenementiality', creating singularity; on the other hand, the notion of the irreproducibility of the individual also imposes a recognition of uniqueness.[24] Markedness indicates inferiority, personalising and creating all of the individuals by separation from kin 'sameness', as if it detracts from the full personhood of equals (and in principle used for 'others', as 'one versus the many' – 'a vs non-a'). Neither the unborn nor the dead are named, the one not yet becoming a distinct, marked, Person, the other leaving behind being a distinct, marked, Person. Between the beginning of life and death, caught with the paradox of a static ideal of anonymous permanence and the actual flux of the real, naming (as seen above in all his aspects) must be suppressed as much as possible for oneself and one's own kind (as superior persons), yet it is imposed by the lived world. Perhaps the conception of the uniqueness of each individual and its own trajectory of distinguishing features must be recognized in some form of markedness, in being singled out, what,

[24] Perhaps a reason for the former practice of eliminating one child of identical twins at birth. Just like names appear to be necessarily completely unique to each Person this duplication seems to be intolerable. When among the Sararé outside pressure brought about the survival of both, the shamans created a special ritual in order to furnish the child with the lacking spiritual components. It is said, however, that many of the elderly did not approve of this operation and still harbour much animosity towards the formerly deficient twin (Reesink, 2010).

however, unfortunately creates inequality. That is, a differentiation between what, on the other hand, should be equal Persons, people in a state of unmarkedness. Suppressing markedness seems to be the result of the dialectical tension between difference and sameness, markedness and unmarkedness, equality and hierarchy: even when life is a trajectory of unique evenementiality, and there must be peak in human competence in adult life that creates inequality (and to each his name), the internal collective expression of hierarchy seems to be avoided at the maximum. Even if earlier research revealed one of the "most egalitarian social systems of South America" (Fiorini, 1997:1), possibly even of the world, it still may be better understood how this comes about when life itself appears to generate difference and, hence, the virtuality of hierarchy: its reluctant recognition within a search for a maximum of 'endo-egalitarianism' which is opposed to a clear 'exo-hierarchy', the marking of non-equal others.

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