Chapter 13

Ka’apor

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Wyrapitã Ka’apor

1 Introduction

This narrative concerns an old woman who farted on a boy, making him ill. The title, a synthesis of the narrative, was proposed by Karairan (Raimundo Tembê) on the 4th of August, 2016:

(1) a’i ymanihar ke kurumĩ pynu ixo
    aʔi    i-man-har-ke    kurumĩ ɾehe ʔ-pɪnu ɾɛhɛ
    old.woman formerly-NMLZ-AFC boy 3-fart 3-be
    ‘A long time ago, a woman farted on a boy.’

(2) aja me’ẽ ke kurumĩ u’y sepetu ixapekwar rupi kutuk
    aja-ɛ-ke    kurumĩ uʔi-sepetu ɾɛhɛ ɾupi ɾɛhɛ
    ANA-NMLZ-AFC boy arrow-spit 3-vagina hole 3-pierce
    ‘Afterwards, the boy pierced her through the anus with a wood-tipped arrow.’

The story was narrated by Wyrapitã Ka’apor, who is also known as Jamói, and recorded on the 15th of June 2014 in the village of Xie pihun rena (Centro Novo do Maranhão County, in the state of Maranhão). The transcription and analysis of the text were carried out by the storyteller and Gustavo Godoy, while he was conducting field research for his Master’s degree in Anthropology (Godoy 2015).
2 The Ka’apor and their languages

The Ka’apor are an eastern Amazonian people who live in the western part of the state of Maranhão. In the 19th century, they lived in the state of Pará and, before 1800, further west in the Tocantins River basin (Balée 1994: 30–32). In 1911, the Brazilian government began the process of pacification of the Ka’apor, who were known for attacking local colonists (Ribeiro 1962); the Ka’apor population in 1928, when so-called pacification was concluded, has been estimated at 5,000 people. The current population in the Upper Turiaçu Indigenous Land is 2,300. Some Ka’apor also live among the Tembé (TUPIAN), in the Alto Guamá Indigenous Land.

![Map of the Upper Turiaçu Indigenous Land and villages mentioned](image)

Figure 1: The Upper Turiaçu Indigenous Land and villages mentioned

The Ka’apor language is classified as belonging to the eastern branch of the Tupian family; it is part of the Tupi-Guarani set of the Maweti-Guarani sub-branch. The Ka’apor lexicon (Corrêa-da-Silva 1997; Balée 2006) shows colonial influences through the Língua Geral Amazônica (TUPIAN). Its argument marking is similar to Nheengatu (Corrêa-da-Silva 2002), which descends from Língua Geral.
Spoken Ka’apor is a vital language, actively transmitted between generations. Nonetheless, there has been a decline in the transmission of traditional genres, such as formulaic greetings and some types of songs. The Ka’apor have additionally developed a local sign language for communicating with the deaf, which has been in use since at least the 1940s (Kakumasu & Kakumasu 1988; Ferreira n.d. 1984; 2010).

3 Notes on the narrative

The theme of the narrative presented here is also found among other indigenous peoples. The Bororo (MACRO-JÊ) version tells of the origin of disease and begins with a grandmother farting on her grandson’s face after he refused to submit to male initiation. The Kĩsêdjê (jê) version deploys a flatulent mother-in-law (Nonato 2016: 1–2). The Kuikuro (UPPER XINGUAN CARIBAN) version is very similar to that of the Kĩsêdjê (Franchetto, recordings and field notes from 1981).

While the Ka’apor and Bororo versions should be considered “serious” narratives, for the Kĩsêdjê and the Kuikuro, the theme of the flatulent mother-in-law is a feature of short and funny (“ugly”) narratives. It is interesting to note the structural correspondences of the relations between the protagonists: a grandmother and grandson for the Bororo; an older woman and young boy for the Ka’apor; a mother-in-law and son-in-law in the Upper Xingu.

In the Ka’apor narrative, the eschatological event is intimately tied to the description of the behaviour of ancient killers, who were submitted to post-homicide seclusion. When the seclusion was over, the killers had to come out during the beer drinking ceremony (a drink made from the fermentation of cashews or manioc flat bread).

The plot involves four characters: a young boy (the protagonist), an elder woman (the antagonist), the youth’s brother (co-protagonist) and the war chief (auxiliary). The boy grows increasingly pale (tawa ‘yellow’), as the days go by, because of the intestinal gasses (pɪnu) that an old woman discharged on him. His brother grows suspicious and makes a small wooden-tipped arrow (uʔɪ sepetu) for the sick boy to kill the old woman. Feigning sleep, the boy stabs the arrow into the old woman’s anus as she tries to fart on him once again. The malevolent woman soon falls ill and dies. The young boy confesses the homicide to the war chief (tuʃa), who advises him to go into post-homicide seclusion, lying down in his room (kapɪ). Finally, the young killer comes out during the beer drinking ceremony.
The narrative is, in fact, a reminder of this now defunct part of the beer ritual: the coming out of the killer. Furthermore, one of the four characters, the war chief, is a figure of the past.

The beer-drinking ceremony brings to an end the restrictions that fall on those who find themselves in states of susceptibility, such as the killer; its central moment is the naming ritual. In the narrative, the war chief tells the boy that he should come out after the “lifting of the children” (line 34) when the sponsors present the name of a baby. The beverage ritual is here called akaju tıkwer ŋa ñu, “the cashew beer drinking moment” (line 37).

Figure 2: The storyteller Jamói, at the moment when the men ask about the name of his goddaughter (tajir-aŋa). Her name, Naná akir ‘unripe pineapple’, is then announced.

The killer would appear in the beer drinking ceremony carrying a pack of arrows. He remained at the place of the ceremony, looking east, immobile and impassive. An old man would go towards him with words of reprobation and revenge: “Hu-Hu-Hu! You attacked your comrade! Now it is you who will be (attacked)! Now I will draw your blood!”

The old man carried a tooth (from a trahira - a fish with a big mouth and sharp teeth - or from a Brazilian squirrel) which he used to scar the killer’s legs (line 42), so as to expel the morbid blood in his body (line 43). This blood contained part of the dead person. Failure to extract it would cause the killer to go mad, affected by the murdered enemy. After scarification, the killer’s vulnerability would come to an end, and he could then leave his room and wander the outside world without any danger (line 45) pe sɔɾɔka rehe wata atu i-fɔ ti).
4 Notes on transcription and annotation

The first line of the transcription is orthographic. The Ka’apor system of alphabetic writing is based on the phonemic analysis carried out by Kakumasu (1964); Kakumasu & Kakumasu (1988). Ka’apor has 15 phonemic consonants /p, t, k, kʷ, m, n, ŋ, ŋʷ, s, j, r, w, h, ŋ/; six phonemic oral vowels /i, ɪ, ɛ, a, ɔ, u/ and five nasal vowels /ĩ, ɛ̃, ã, ɔ̃, ũ/. In the orthography, the graphemes <ng, ’, x, y, e, o> represent IPA /ŋ, ʔ, ʃ, ɪ, ɛ, ɔ/. The <ái, úi> sequence represent /aj, u/. The <ãi, õi> sequence represent /aj, u j./

5 A’i ymanhar ke kurumĩ rehe pynu ixo.

‘A long time ago, an old woman farted on a boy’

‘Muito tempo atrás, uma velha pedou em um menino’

(1) taʔɪn u-kʷɛɾ 3-sleep ai pɪtun night pame each amɛʔɛ̃ old.woman ameʔɛ̃ dei aʔi child roguish 3-lay.down pfv oho ehe je 3-fart go 3-at hsy

‘Night after night, while a boy was lying (down), it is said that an old roguish woman came to fart on him.’

‘Dizem que, noite após noite, quando um menino estava deitado, uma velha escrota peidava em cima dele.’

1Recordings of this story are available from https://zenodo.org/record/997433
2There is no number distinction in the third person prefix, glossed simply as ‘3’. The allomorph of this prefix in active verbs is u-, when the verbal root is monosyllabic and does not contain the vowel /ɔ/. If the monosyllabic root has the vowel /ɔ/, the allomorph ɔ- is used. The third person person prefix ɔ- with the auxiliary verb -u ‘to lay down’ is a exception to this rule. When the verbal root has more than one syllable, no third person prefix is attached to it. In other words, the person mark is a zero allomorph (∅).
3Ka’apor does not have a system with several morphemes indexing different sources of the information, as in the grammaticalized evidentials used in Kotiria realis statements (cf. chapter 5 in this volume) or the more complex evidentiality systems of other Tupian languages, such as Kamaurirá, Tapirapé, and Karo. The reported evidential je ‘hsy’ (hearsay or reportative modality) is the only evidential morpheme in Ka’apor. Je does not imply disbelief on the part of the speaker in relation to the content of the mythical narrative, and it occurs in almost all sentences. This contrasts with the sparse occurrence of the quotative reported evidential -yu’ka and its pragmatic use in the Kotiria narrative (cf. Footnote 10 of the Kotiria narrative, Chapter 5). Indeed, in Ka’apor mythological narratives, the morpheme je codes a diffuse source of information, more like the ‘diffuse’ evidential -yu’ti in Kotiria (cf. Stenzel 2008).
G. Godoy and Wyrapitã Ka’apor

(2) pe pytun je tì pe pynu oho je tì
    pe pytun je tì pe pynu oho je tì
then night HSY again then fart 3-ho HSY again
‘Each night that came, she farted on him again.’
‘Outra noite chegava e ela peidava de novo.’

(3) taʔin u-kʷer-ta je tì ko aʔi i-haj-ke pɪɾoʔ-hũ je pe iʔar pe pynu hũ
taʔin u-kʷer-ta je tì ko aʔi i-haj-ke pɪɾoʔ-hũ je
child 3-sleep-FUT HSY again DEI old.woman 3-skirt-AFC strip-INTENS HSY
pe iʔar pe pɪɾoʔ-hũ
then 3-above-LOC fart -INTENS
‘When the boy went to sleep again, the old woman took off her skirt, it is
said; then (she) farted on him a lot.’
‘O menino ia dormir de novo e a tal velha tirava a sua saia; então, peidava
um monte nele.’

(4) pynupynu ate ehe je
    pɪɾu~pɪɾu-ate ehe je
fart~RED-INTENS 3.at HSY
‘She was really farting a lot on him.’
‘Ficava peidando muito mesmo nele.’

(5) pe oho je tì
    pe oho je tì
then 3-go HSY again
‘She went again (towards the boy).’
‘E ela foi de novo (até o menino).’

(6) taʔin ke itawa imu parahy ahy ipe je
taʔin ke itawa imu parahy ahy ipe je
child-AFC 3-yellow 3-brother angry-INTENS 3-DAT HSY
‘The boy was yellowish (sick), his brother was very angry with him.’
‘O menino estava amarelado, seu irmão ficou bravo.’

(7) “ne tawa te ne ke â ne jyty’ym te amô ’y”
    ne-tawa-te ne-keâ ne-jɪtɪʔɪm-te amɔ̃ ʔi
2SG-yellow-INTENS 2SG-AFC 2SG-lazy-INTENS another PFV
“You are yellowish and very lazy too.”
“Youça está amarelado e está preguiçoso também.””
(8) **pandu ’ym anu ta’yyn je tĩ**

pandu-ʔɪm~anu taʔɪn je tĩ

tell-NEG~RED child HSY again

‘The boy didn’t say anything.’

‘O menino não contava.’

(9) **pe pytun je tĩ, pe a’i [...] pytun pytɛr pe je**

pe pytun je tĩ pe aʔi [...] pytun pytɛr pe je

so night HSY again so old.woman [...] night middle-LOC HSY

‘Another night, the old ... [hesitation] in the middle of the night.’

‘Então, de noite, novamente, então, a velha ... [hesitação] era no meio da noite.’

(10) **pe a’i ihon ixo je ’y**

pe aʔi i-hɔn i-ʃɔ je ’y

then old.woman 3-go 3-AUX HSY PFV

‘Then the old woman went (towards the boy).’

‘Então a velha foi (até o menino).’

(11) **pe ihái ke musyryk je, pe ta’yyn ukwer atu je Pũũũ! japũi rehe pynu je**

pe i-haj-kɛ mu-sɪɾɪk je pe taʔɪn u-kʷɛɾ-atu je Pũũũ!

then 3-skirt-AFC CAUS-strip HSY then child 3-sleep-INTENS HSY IDEO

i-apũi rehe pmu je

3-nose LOC fart HSY

‘So, (she) she raised her own skirt, the child was sleeping deeply: Puum! She farted in his nose.’

‘Ela levantou a saia, o menino estava dormindo bem: Puum! Ela peidou no nariz dele.’

(12) **pe ... pe wera uwyr tĩ, pe imu panu ipe “myja ne xoha tĩ”**

pe pe wera uwɪɾ tĩ pe i-mu panu i-pe mɪja ne-ʃɔ-ha

then then light come again then 3-brother tell 3-DAT Q 2SG-be-NMLZ tĩ

again

‘So ... so the light (of the morning) came again, and his brother said: “What’s wrong with you?”’

‘Amanheceu de novo e o irmão perguntou: “O que está errado com você?”’
“Talk to me!” and his brother said: “The old woman is farting on me; every night she farts on me! That’s why I’m turning yellow.”

"Conte para mim!" e o irmão respondeu: “A velha está peidando em mim; todas as noites! Por isso estou amarelando.”

Then, his brother … made a small arrow with a tip of wood and a small bow for him.

Então, o irmão … fez uma flechinha para ele com ponta de madeira e um pequeno arco.

So this … so “Shoot!” he said to him.

Então … “Flecha!” assim disse (o irmão) para ele.

The boy went to sleep again, at night.

'O menino foi dormir de novo, de noite.'

The old woman came again.

'A velha chegou novamente.'
(18)  "So he ... the old woman raised her own old skirt, her pants.'

'Aí ele ... a velha levantou sua saia, sua calça, levantou alto, a sua saia surrada.'

(19)  'Her disgusting asshole opened towards the boy.'

'Seu cu nojento abriu muito na direção do menino.'

(20)  'So, he took the arrow and Sõõ! he shot it into her asshole, the arrow was stuck in her asshole. The nasty old woman screamed a lot.'

'Então, ele armou a flecha Sõõ! flechou bem no buraco de seu cu e a (velha) ficou com a flecha encravada. A velha foi gritando muito.'

(21)  'Then, the old woman didn’t fart anymore; the next morning ... Another day came.'

'Então a velha não peidou mais, na outra manhã ... Chegou outro dia.'

(22)  'So, night came again; [hesitation] the old woman didn’t return.'
'Veio a noite novamente; [hesitação] a velha não voltou, quando foi a noite novamente.'

(23) *pe ... pe atu u'y ipi'a kwar [rupi]⁶ upen u'am 'y pe pe atu u?i i-pi?a kwar [rupi] upen u?am ?i so so INTENS arrow 3-vagina hole [by] broke AUX.vertical PFV

'So ... So, the arrow broke in her vagina.'

Então ... Então, a flecha quebrou no buraco da vagina dela.'

(24) *amõ ukwer rahã a'i ame'ẽ a'i ke ma'e ahy je 'y amõ u-kʷer rahã a?i ameʔɛ̃ aʔi-ke maʔe-ahɪ je another 3-sleep SR old.woman ANA old.woman-AFC sickness HSY ?i PFV

'The next day, that old woman got sick.'

'No outro dia, a velha, aquela velha, adoeceu.'

(25) *pe sawa'ẽ, ame'ẽ ta'ynuhu ukwa je pe sawaʔɛ aʔi taʔɪn-uhu u-kʷa je so man ANA child-INTENS 3-know HSY

'That young boy already knew.'

'Aquele homem, aquele menino sabia.'

(26) "pe'ẽ a' i ihɛ rehe pynu ixo riki ã, ame'ẽ pytun rahã" peʔɛ aʔi ihɛ rehe pynu i-ʃɔ rikiã ameʔɛ̃ pytun rahã DEI old.woman 1SG in fart 3-be emphasis ANA night SR

"That old woman was farting on me that night."

"Aquela velha estava peidando em mim aquela noite."

(27) *sa'e ke pe tūiha ke saʔɛ-ke pe tui-ha-ke guy-AFC DEI stay-NMLZ-AFC

'There was the boy.'

'Ali estava o menino.'

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⁶Not performed in speech, but indicated in the analysis.
(28) yman te pe a’i ke manõ je ‘y
iman-te pe a?i-ke manõ je
lately-INTENS so old.woman-AFC die HSY
‘Later, the old woman died.’
‘Passou um tempo, a velha morreu.’

(29) pe ame’ẽ ta’yn tuxa pe pandu je
pe ameʔɛ̃ taʔm tufa-pe panu je
so ANA child chief-DAT tell HSY
‘Then, the child talked to the chief:’
‘Então aquele menino falou para o tuxaua:’

(30) “ihẽ ame’ẽ a’i ke ajukwa”
ihɛ̃ 1sg amɛʔɛ̃ ana aʔi-kɛ a-jukʷa
1SG ANA old.woman-AFC 1SG-kill
“This I killed that old woman."
“Eu matei aquela velha.”

(31) pe tuxa aja ipe je
pe tufa aja i-pe je
so chief DEI 3-DAT HSY
‘So, the warrior chief said to him:’
‘E o tuxaua assim falou para ele:’

(32) “kawi, ta’ynta jahupir rahã, epandu k’y hetaha pe”
kawi taʔm-ta ja-hupir rahã e-panu ki heta-ha-pe
beer child-PL 1PL-lift SR 2SG.IMP-tell KI many-NMLZ-DAT
“Beer, when we will lift the children, talk to the people.”
“Cauim, quando levantamos as crianças, fale para o grupo.”

(33) “apo kapy pe te’e eju ri”
apo kapi-pe teʔɛ e-ju ri
now room-LOC TEʔɛ 2SG.IMP-lay.down IPFV
“Now, go off to your room.”
“Agora, vá deitar no teu quarto.”
(34) \textit{pe sa’e kapy pe tūi je}
\textit{pe saʔe kapr-pe tuj je}
so guy room-LOC stay HSY
‘He stayed in the room (in seclusion).’
‘Ele ficou no quarto (em reclusão).’

(35) \textit{pe … akaju rykwər ngā’u je ’y, pe sa’e uhem je ’y}
\textit{pe akaju ɾɪkʷɛɾ ŋãʔ-ʔu je ʔt pe saʔe u-hem je ʔt}
so cashew juice 3PL-ingest HSY PFV so guy 3-exit HSY PFV
‘Then … Later, after they drank cashew beer, he came out.’
‘Então … Depois deles beberem o cauim do caju, ele saiu.’

(36) \textit{kapy ngi uhem}
\textit{kapr ì u-hem}
room ABL 3-exit
‘He left the seclusion room.’
‘Ele saiu do quarto de reclusão.’

(37) \textit{kujã ta ke upa mupinim}
\textit{kujã-ta-kɛ upa mu-pinim}
mulher-PL-AFC all CAUS-painted
‘All the women were painted.’
‘Todas as mulheres foram pintadas.’

(38) \textit{aja rahã sa’e a’e uhem ta’ynuhu, ta’ynuhu je}
\textit{aja rahã saʔe aʔɛ u-hem taʔin-uhu taʔinułu je}
ANA SR guy 3 3-exit child-INTENS child-INTENS HSY
‘At this moment, the young man left the room.’
‘Foi neste o momento que o jovem saiu da reclusão.’

(39) \textit{ma’e… huwy ke}
\textit{maʔe huwi-kɛ}
hesitation blood-AFC
‘And … The blood …’
‘Ee … Sangue …’

\footnote{Although there is no distinction between plural and singular in the third person prefix, Ka’apor has the free pronoun ŋã to index third person plural.}
(40) upa týmã mu’i huwy ke upa muhãj je
    upa timã mu?i huw-r-ke upa muhãj je
all leg scarify blood-afc all disperse hsy
‘The lower part of his legs was scarified; the (bad) blood was totally dispersed.’
‘A parte de baixo de suas pernas foram escarificada; todo o sangue (ruim) foi retirado.’

(41) huwy ahyha ke, a’i ruwy ke ame’ẽja saka je
    hũwí ahr–ha–ke a?i ruw-r-ke ameʔe̞-ja saka je
blood pain-nmlz-afc old.woman blood-afc dei-ana like hsy
‘The evil and toxic blood, it was as if it were the blood of the old woman.’
‘O sangue insalubre e mórbido, era como se fosse o sangue da velha.’

(42) pe ... aja rahã katu je ti
    pe aja rahã katu je ti
so ana sr good hsy again
‘So ... In this way he became well again.’
‘Então ... deste jeito o jovem ficou bom.’

(43) pe soroka rehe wata atu ixo ti
    pe soroka rehe wata atu iʃo ti
so outside by walk good 3-be again
‘And he was able to walk outside again.’
‘E ele pode andar de novo tranquilamente do lado de fora.’

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Non-standard abbreviations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>AFC</th>
<th>affected</th>
<th>HSY</th>
<th>hearsay, reported evidential</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>anaphora or cataphora</td>
<td>IDEO</td>
<td>ideophone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEI</td>
<td>deixis</td>
<td>INTENS</td>
<td>intensifier</td>
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<tr>
<td>HORT</td>
<td>hortative</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>subordinator</td>
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</tbody>
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