

On the link –between an artisan, farmer, among others, Guaraní (Nhandéva) and a contemporary visual artist from Sao Paulo– that caused the emergency of artistic-cultural projects in co-authorship

Sobre el vínculo –entre una artesana, agricultora, entre otros, Guaraní (Ñandéva) y una artista visual contemporánea paulista– que hizo emerger proyectos artístico-culturales en coautoría.

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Abstract

The relationship between an artisan Guaraní-Nhandéva and a visual artist from Sao Paulo, in the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados, spontaneously gave rise to co-authored artistic-cultural projects. In order to reflect on the link that formed an interface, able to interact with both worldviews, an effort is made to apprehend what's *cultural inheritance* to Guaraní view. This exercise leads to assign *socio-political resistance* as a conductive element, perceived just as a symptom of an imposed historical conjunction. Even so, *discursive content* appears as a property more essential to Guaraní culture than *style* or *support*, which allows identifying that the *backyard farm* theme is useful to represent Amerindians Kaiowá and Guaraní cultures in a non-stereotyped way in art projects.

KEYWORDS: guarani; contemporary art; intercultural; decolonial; stereotype.

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Resumen

La relación entre una artesana Guaraní-Ñandéva y una artista visual de Sao Paulo, en la Reserva Indígena de Dourados, generó espontáneamente proyectos artístico-culturales en coautoría. Para reflexionar sobre el vínculo que produjo una interfaz, propicia a interactuar con las dos cosmovisiones divergentes, un esfuerzo es hecho por comprender qué sería *inherencia cultural* a la perspectiva Guaraní. Ese ejercicio lleva a la constatación de que el elemento conductor sería la *resistencia sociopolítica*, mismo que percibida apenas como síntoma de una conjunción histórica impuesta. Aun así, el *contenido discursivo* aparece como una propiedad más esencial a la cultura Guaraní que el *estilo* o el *soporte*, lo que permite identificar que, en proyectos de arte, la temática en torno a la *agricultura familiar* es apta a representar las culturas amerindias Kaiowá y Guaraní de un modo no estereotipado.

PALABRAS CLAVE: guarani; arte contemporaneo; intercultural; decolonial; estereotipo.

Summary – Sumario

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1. Introduction

Ethical concerns are inevitably implied in points of view that attribute an agency (Gell, 1988), a purpose in social contexts (Belting, 2011) or an aesthetics that fosters certain political attitudes (Rancière, 2011) to pieces of art. Being so, artists are prone to deal with this kind of issues, since they are committed to the role their art perform in concrete reality. Although this *leading role* aspect may be found in any artistic object —obviously, safeguarding different levels of performance intensity—, contemporary art forms and discursive contents make this kind of problems evident. Hal Foster's (2005) *The Artist as Ethnographer* provides a prominent reflection on this subject: dealing with art projects directly related to specific groups of persons, it shows the complexity of discerning what can be ethical or unethical in art.

As an artist, the author hereof prefers to produce a lower esthetical effect instead of a lower ethical one, since she understands that the aspects art activates in daily life are worthier than those it may represent to sophisticated culture of institutional art (Rousseau, 2012). This stance does not imply intolerance against radical forms in art neither defends censorship, since powerful esthetical forms —as those described by Claire Bishop (2006)— can be appreciated by their disruptive potential. In fact, it just denotes an effort made by an artist strongly convinced of the role of art in human history.

Firstly, this problem arose from the intention of making art by reflecting on two Brazilian Amerindian cultures, Guaraní-Kaiowá and Guaraní-Nhandéva¹. Both ethnic groups are weakened by conflicts against farmers who nowadays own the lands that originally belonged to indigenous populations. Besides, since the Brazilian government often privileges agribusiness' interests, aware of their ancestral heritage, the aboriginal populations risk their own lives to firmly resist. Taking into account this precarious and violent context, the reproduction of a modernist operation —the appropriation of *exotic* styles to produce artworks tailored to fit into the art world— would be extremely counterproductive (Lopez Rubiño, 2012).

The objection to this practice, from a critical approach, is not against artists who sell the products they create. Instead, it is against the absence of neutrality in an artistic discourse that ignores the conditions Guaraní have to face. The production of art based on alterities without the corresponding awareness, about the sense it projects on the addressed originary people, reveals an urge to make art for art's sake, an operation that exploit and objectify others' realities for an aesthetical and self-interested benefit. Aesthetics endows an artwork with the capacity to enhance the audience's experience with it; thus, when the power manifested by the piece serves merely to promote an aesthetical appeal or shock, it can easily perpetuate an alienated sense (Debord, 2005) upon those individuals or groups who

1. Considering that Spanish alphabet contains letters that are not available in English and Portuguese, Guaraní spelling in this article —except for contents accompanied by other references— reproduces that seen in Dooley (2006; 1998). Although Dooley (2006; 1998) mentions Kaiwá, this text uses Kaiowá because this form is the option usually found in academic texts on this ethnicity.

were used as a theme. Since this kind of piece does not foster a reciprocal agency for those who are, in a certain way, represented in it, this mechanism is not congruent with Kaiowá and Nhandéva worldviews, which prioritize notions such as *subsistence* and *collective reciprocity*.

These conflicts mobilize reflections about the harsh situation these indigenous individuals live through; likewise, they demonstrate that their culture has the potential to envision alternative systems to create a responsible society that can manage the planet's resources in a sustainable manner. In order to develop an essay on *ethical forms* in art related to alterities (Foster, 2005) —or *minorities*, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1980)—, the framework proposed herein is fully immersed in the approach of postcolonial studies and decolonial perspectives, and it comprises two main ideas. The first part, which addresses directly the representation of the *Other*, is originally based on Edward W. Said's seminal book *Orientalism* (1979) —where the author describes how Eurocentric vision created stereotyped images of the *Other*. The other approach is proposed by Deleuze (at Badiou, 2005: 12–13), who diagnosed that a global scenario plenty of minorities in conflict, which seek to gain visibility, generates defined market niches, a situation favorable to the performance of neoliberalism. Thus, although it mobilizes forces to compose a social organization thrived by plural voices, the idea of stereotyped groups —as those formed by feminists, Indigenists, Africanists, etc.—, that highlight their differences in a superficial manner, blurs specific cultural traits and synthesizes social diversity in simplified patterns likely to be absorbed by capitalist production system.

In his reflections against democracy, Slavoj Žižek (2008) states that social group activism —aimed at comprising the entire humanity in a single sphere of representative power— is not actually a radical stance. According to the philosopher, this activism struggles for a context where power structure, shaped by people with different origins, maintains the order that currently control the economic and political transactions around the globe. Therefore, the proposition hereof is that the more stereotyped an alterity's representation is, the more suitable for capitalism it becomes. Likewise, when the representation of a culture is more specific, it is more likely to embody notions not suitable for the market and to dig for alternative possibilities against the economic system prevailing in the globalized world. Besides, that type of representation exposes such cultures to parameters more autochthonous than Western ones.

These inquiries are certainly problematic and do not present clear solutions. However, Academia can be a platform to experiment ways of optimizing the ethical character that artworks reverberate in reality. For this purpose, this text develops a sort of essay about the contact between the author and a Guaraní-Nhandéva Amerindian. Its goal is to reflect on the nexus that allowed this interaction, an experience that gave rise to artistic-cultural projects in co-authorship. Since for Guaraní cultures the word is sacred, understanding the way their nouns and adjectives work is useful to propose a scale that indicates the intensity with which the forms produced by this encounter are likely to represent these nations. By means of some general terms —*discursive content*, *style* and *support*—, this measuring tool allowed outlining the concept of what can be *culturally inherent* to Guaraní.

Based on this context, *sociopolitical resistance* is understood as an adjective function, that is, as not inherent to Guaraní cultures. Therefore, according to the methodology proposed herein, the conclusion is that sociopolitical resistance provides a stereotyped representation of Amerindian cultures. The point is not to state that these cultures are not being currently characterized by this adjective in a proper manner, but that an Amerindian's representation centered on sociopolitical resistance is specially supported by a Western worldview. However, the section *Results* comes to the conclusion that the projects developed by the two women manifested a cultural inherence of Guaraní culture —a non-stereotyped character—, by means of the discursive content *kokue*, the backyard farm. Finally, the closure exposes additional reflections and arguments to evaluate the extent to which the abovementioned initiatives, developed in co-authorship, represented Guaraní cultures instead of generic Western culture, and to defend the non-stereotyped representation of native cultures.

2. Methodology: the *word-soul*

During the time the author stayed in Dourados, a county located in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil, to fulfill her research fieldwork with predominant Amerindian cultures in the region —Kaiowá (Guaraní-Kaiowá) and Guaraní² (Guaraní-Nhandéva)—, the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally and reached the region. The research was being developed within the scope of the University of Lisbon's PhD in Fine Arts, and this scenario led the artist to develop it through bonds of friendship with inhabitants from the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados. These personal bonds created a free-flowing and fruitful relationship between the author, a contemporary visual artist from Sao Paulo, and Kunha Ysapy³, a Guaraní artisan, farmer and mother. This article is aimed at understanding how the contact between these two subjectivities, whose daily work dynamics are evidently different, spontaneously gave rise to artistic-cultural projects in co-authorship, and to intertwine these achievements with an effort to escape from the automatic logics that directs the present writing.

The difficulty of this goal lies on the elusive nature of personal points of view, since they are built upon individual experiences and are not prone to be strictly determined within general mindsets. For instance, even if a given individual has a deep affinity with one schematic group —as Western or Amerindian—, he or she may reveal a specific perspective that helps them sustain their interpretations. Thus, the understanding of what is being observed chang-

2. In despite of local Nhandéva be usually referred as *Guaraní*, to avoid confusion in reading, in this article —except by the mention related to this note and by quotes— *Guaraní* refers to *Guaraní* nations in general. Meanwhile, *Kaiowá and Guaraní* refers to *Guaraní-Kaiowá and Guaraní-Nhandéva*, as it would be illogical, under the terms here exposed, to mean *Kaiowá and Guaraní* as *Kaiowá and others Guaraní nations*, because *Guaraní* itself embraces *Guaraní* nations in general, being *Kaiowá* included in it.

3. Although Dooley (2006; 1998) registers, for *woman* and *dew*, respectively, «*kunha*» and «*yxapy*», the term *dew* as *ysapy* is preferred due to the comparison with the forms more commonly cited, in the studies about *Kaiowá* and *Guaraní* cultures, which prioritize the use of the letter *s*. The word *ogapysy*, which refers to the indigenous house for religious purposes, is a good example of this case.

es according to the lived experiences' transformations. The British anthropologist Marilyn Strathern (1992: 10) observes how

such formulations acquire (...) their particular forms by the contexts in which they are deployed and carry different resonances in different domains of expertise. Indeed, they never carry over from one to another exactly.

This makes evident one of my starting points: that it matters what ideas one uses to think other ideas (with). Reproduction concerns everyone. Yet when human beings reproduce themselves, they inevitably do so with already existing and thus specific forms of themselves in mind.

In spite of the fact that this article's goal is influenced by a resistance to universalization, it is essential to pay attention to what should be placed, what should be thought about these exposed issues (Haraway, 2016), since this immanent complexity does not necessarily implies arbitrariness. Nowadays, indigenous individuals producing contemporary art are not a novelty. If the author had established a relation with an Amerindian contemporary artist, art itself would have been a mutual—and, in this case, understood here as universal—interface. But since it was established between a contemporary artist and a Guaraní-Nhandéva artisan, non-acquainted with the art world, something completely different happened.

Two facts may be useful to understand the perspective Kunha Ysapy—who remarkably had never visited a museum—used to deal with her artist fellow from Sao Paulo. In the first place, she produces two kinds of craftwork: the autochthonous ones, which are only used within her cultural environment, and those aimed at tourists, which serve as products to be exchanged for money. The latter ones usually present elaborated decorative elements, and their material privilege aesthetic beauty rather than technological performance. The second fact refers to the term Kunha Ysapy used to discuss any kind of art with the present author—be it, drawing, painting, sculpture, etc.—, *little drawing*.

In this case, figuring out how the Nhandéva consciousness viewed the present author and her intentions is not important, since that attempt would go beyond the possibilities of this reflection. Rather, understanding if the outcomes of the performance of cultural projects in co-authorship were reciprocal is more relevant. Xavier Albó's (2017: 6) statement, on Amerindian way of living, allows recognizing reciprocity in a production process driven by friendship. The Spanish scholar, who became a Bolivian citizen, states that «family networks, in and out of the community», that «become increasingly tighter by means of (...) exchanges and new alliances», are «key elements of daily life (...) with (...) different reciprocity practices»⁴. This could be the case for the abovementioned artistic-cultural projects:

4. Translator's version from the original «las redes entre familias, dentro y más allá de la comunidad» (...) «haciendo cada vez más tupidas por (...) intercambios y nuevas alianzas» (...) «elementos clave de la vida cotidiana (...) que tienen (...) numerosas prácticas de reciprocidad».

they are contemporary art —for present author— and another thing —for Kunha Ysapy— at the same time.

On the other hand, given the pandemic scenario in which the *in situ* experience occurred, the author was cut off from the Indigenous Reserve's natural resources, as well as from the possibility of building artistic installations there. Since she was not allowed to stay in indigenous land, but only to visit it, the materials used in the artistic artworks had to be industrially manufactured —bought in the city of Dourados, where the author stayed— or small sized, so that they could be moved by bicycle across the countryside from the Indigenous Reserve to Dourados, where they would be transformed into art pieces.

Instead of taking the objective circumstances that framed her experience as an obstacle that hindered her research, the Paulista artist focused on finding the appropriate solutions to carry out the work. First of all, she kept in mind Donna Haraway's premise set forth in *Staying with the Trouble*, according to which «how to address the urgency is the question that must burn for staying with the trouble» (Haraway, 2016: 6). In other words,

In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings (Haraway, 2016: 1).

Therefore, the issue was not staying still in the middle of an unexpected scenario and waiting for the ideal moment, but confronting, in present time, the foreseen objectives against the concrete ways to approach them. On the other hand, working with industrial artistic materials was not assumed as a problem. It is true that the use of traditional techniques and materials promote connections to the culture they belong, but, with this kind of dynamics, problems can arise if artists try to conceal the place from which they produce their artwork (Foster, 2005), since this illusionism is

analogous to what Kant called transcendental illusion, the illusion of being able to use the same language for phenomena which are mutually untranslatable and can be grasped only in a kind of parallax view, constantly shifting perspective between the two levels, no shared space (Žižek, 2006: 4).

According to this perspective, it is more ethical for a *white* contemporary artist to produce her pieces in a way that they openly show they were produced by a Metropolitan artist than to produce them in a way that they could be seen as the original objects from an aboriginal culture —since it may create the wrong perception that they are works produced by an indigenous artist. However, this premise is too limited to Western logics, since this worldview has recognized, in broad terms, indigenous identity in cultural manifestations visibly identifiable, such as indigenous rituals and artifacts. The fact that the fieldwork was carried out

during the pandemics also allowed the author to stay away from the alluring atmosphere of feasts, dances and music, and any intense sensory stimulation, since, during this period, rituals were suspended. Thus, her experience in the countryside was developed in an ordinary daily environment, not in an exceptional one.

A similar experience was described by Fabio Mura. After thoroughly reading about the Guaraní culture, the anthropologist—who had a degree in electrical engineering (Mura, 2019: 41)—felt some discomfort when he was living with Guaraní in their lands. The reason was that, during a routine where he expected to experience a magical, spiritual and prophetic atmosphere, he just encountered a concrete practice. This contrast showed him that the Western anthropological view about those natives—in a certain way and under the terms established in this article—was stereotyped: since it observed Kaiowá-Guaraní under special manifestations, and not in a daily ordinary situation, it came to inaccurate conclusions. A hint of this discrepancy is revealed by a situation noted by Mura: Kaiowá seem to prioritize socioeconomic functions rather than the uniqueness of forms and materials.

A sketch, of this engineered mental discrepancy, may be offered by a situation noted by Mura, which seems to indicate that the Kaiowá give importance on socioeconomic functions rather than on forms and materials' exclusivity. When his contact with the mentioned cultural group got deeper, the anthropologist went through a process that helped him to get rid of some prejudices, which were formed during his education, related to an alleged acculturation of native peoples in general (Mura, 2019: 38). Scholars who studied Guaraní cultures have generally considered these indigenous groups as prone to include the culture of *civilized men and women* within their own, since it is very common to see them buying industrially manufactured products, instead of producing what they need by means of their ancestral techniques. Mura cites Egon Schaden, who observes Guaraní as acculturated, in their «gradual *integration* to the society of whites»⁵ (Schaden, 1964: 8), since he considers that

As other processes within the field of culture, acculturation occurs, at the same time, within the personality and out of it, as well as within the cultural configuration and out of it. Only those who acknowledge its threefold nature, which is merged into a unity, will understand its living reality⁶ (Schaden, 1964: 5).

This *threefold nature* refers to «three different but interdependent planes: cultural, social and psychic»⁷ (Schaden, 1964: 5). But Mura's understanding confirmed that this alleged *unity* is a characteristic attributed by a Western perspective, which assumes a *pure reciprocity* be-

5. Translator's version from the original «*paulatina "integração" na sociedade dos brancos*».

6. Translator's version from the original «*Como os demais processos no domínio da cultura, o da aculturação se passa a um tempo na personalidade e fora dela, na configuração cultural e fora dela. Só lhe compreenderá a realidade viva quem lhe reconhecer a tríplex natureza, que se funde numa unidade*».

7. Translator's version from the original «*três planos distintos, embora interdependentes: o cultural, o social e o psíquico*».

tween the quality of the used object and the psychology that guides its social use. When Mura observed that even though Kaiowá normally used pumpkin containers, as their ancestors did, they also used plastic water coolers, he realized that, in fact, the Amerindian worldview privileges the functionality of objects, and not their formal or material aspect. The fact that they used industrially manufactured objects does not mean, *per se*, that they share the same perspective than *white* people about those objects. Mura came to this conclusion because he acknowledged that the use of industrially manufactured objects by Guaraní reflected the ancestral way of being.

The environment where Guaraní live nowadays in Dourados is awfully degraded, which makes it hard to obtain clay for the making of pots or vegetable fibers to weave baskets or fabrics. Pumpkin can be easily found in the area, since it grows quickly and it is *almost ready* when cropped: with few human interventions, it becomes a small water container. In the following quote, Mura (2010: 41) shows how this way of apprehending the connection between human existence and the economic and social spheres is not compatible with capitalism's values:

I was particularly interested in the logics of (mechanical, physical and chemical) outputs of the objects used by indigenous and especially in the way they chose them. I immediately understood that there was a precise logic used by the Kaiowá, which came from practical experiences, but I could not perceive in them any external imposition, be it technical or symbolic —such as, for instance, the need to establish a differentiated status between individuals or groups of individuals in relation to other groups.⁸

Thus, in an environment where certain traditional material resources are scarce, they cease to represent a normal element of a given culture and start to be characterized as rare and exceptional. In the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados, this swap from ordinary to exclusive can be seen in the case of thatch, a type of grass traditionally used to make roofs or walls of houses. Since it is hard to obtain these days —and since houses made of this material are constantly set on fire by saboteurs—, the scarce thatch in indigenous land is only seen in few praying houses; however, it is easy to find many evangelic churches in the Indigenous Reserve. Thus, the material is perceived as valuable in the context of the defense of indigenous spirituality, but not for those who climbed to a higher social position. This form is compatible with Guaraní *nhandereko*, the Guaraní way

8. Translator's version from the original «*fiquei particularmente interessado numa lógica de rendimentos (mecânicos, físicos e químicos) dos objetos utilizados pelos indígenas e sobre o modo como os indígenas operavam a escolha destes. Percebi rapidamente que existiam lógicas bem precisas operadas pelos Kaiowa, estas procedentes de experiências práticas, não conseguindo eu ver nelas nenhuma imposição externa, seja de tipo técnico, seja simbólica —como, por exemplo, a necessidade de marcar um status diferenciado de um indivíduo ou um conjunto destes perante outros grupos.*».

to proceed in which the reciprocal relations and the possibility to share the products from hunting, fishing, food and drinks in times of abundance are fundamental, as well as the relation of these activities with the territory, which is not seen as Mother Earth but as «the place and environment where the conditions that allow to be Guaraní occur» (Medina, 2001: 63). (...) there is nothing similar to the complicated authority or social positioning system proper of Andean world⁹ (Albó, 2017: 11).

Therefore, this good way of living is far from the Western ethos in many senses. Its sense is not guaranteeing the best life, but a good life. It has a bit of austerity, and it is not living better than others or at the expense of others¹⁰ (Gudynas, 2011: 233).

These clarifications show the relevance and complexity of how the works by Kunha Ysapy and the author should be thought about, in terms of theory, in order to understand what the extent of reciprocity they reached is. This study deals with the subject based on a reflection around the sense of word for Guaraní. These ethnic groups are broadly known for the relevance they confer to oral language, which caused wrong interpretations since the times of Jesuits, who considered them as non-superstitious since they did not worship images and hardly talked about divine things (Nóbrega, 1549: 150 by Clastres, 1978: 14). The Jesuit Manuel da Nóbrega, for example, noted this latter instance when the Tupinambá used to call thunders Tupã, being this action representative of the Guaraní manner of naming, which is sacred itself, since it provides conscious recognition to a concrete manifestation of divinity.

The translation for Guaraní word-soul is *nhe'ẽ*, and it includes the sense of *speech, sound and soul*. Based on the abovementioned reciprocity, the decision to use language as the core of the research is aimed at understanding if the outcome of the collaboration between Kunha Ysapy and the author represents a Guaraní *soul*, if the ancestral culture emitted a *native sound*, if it really *manifested itself*. Thus, the aim is to «go through the path of names-souls in order to try getting into the Guaraní imaginary and find in it an understanding that is part of a cosmology»¹¹ (Petracca, 2009: 61). For Guaraní, *name* is what «keep them alive and singular in a world increasingly homogenous, (...) and it confirms in the human and divine person

9. Translator's version from the original «de proceder en el que juegan también un rol fundamental tanto las relaciones de reciprocidad y el poder compartir la caza, pesca, comida y bebida cuando la hay en abundancia como la relación de todo ello con el territorio, visto ya no como Madre Tierra pero sí como "el lugar y el medio en que se dan las condiciones de posibilidad del modo de ser guaraní" (Medina, 2001: 63). (...) allí no hay nada parecido al elaborado sistema de autoridades ni al camino de cargos propio del mundo andino».

10. Translator's version from the original «Por lo tanto, este buen vivir se aparta del ethos occidental en varios sentidos. Su sentido no está en asegurar la mejor vida, sino en una vida buena. Tiene un toque de austeridad, y no es vivir mejor que otros ni a costa de otros».

11. Translator's version from the original «percorrer o caminho dos nomes-almas é tentar penetrar no imaginário guaraní e buscar nele um entendimento que passa pela cosmologia».

a determined quality of being»¹² (Chamorro, 2008: 274). Therefore, focusing on Guaraní singularity is an attempt to prevent a stereotyped treatment to this culture, considering its own rationality and logics, and to foster a non-Western worldview, one that does not promote a homogenization of global society. So, this approach may reveal a way by which Kunha Ysapy and the author hereof push reality to alternative states, since «the need is stark to think together anew across differences of historical position and kinds of knowledge and expertise» (Haraway, 2016: 7).

3. Name (noun): *cultural inherence*

During the Indigenous Agroecological Fair in Jaguapiru Village, in the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados, Leticia Larín (Sao Paulo, 1982) was introduced to the Guaraní farmer Rosilei Souza (Indigenous Reserve of Dourados, 1978), and she bought *mandi'o* (manioc) from her. During the conversation they had, Rosilei mentioned that she was preparing a book and Leticia proposed to collaborate. Due to this disposition, Rosilei invited Leticia to her home in Bororó, one of the villages in the Reserve.

The title of the abovementioned book is *Kunha Ysapy's biography: history and life of a Guaraní Indian*¹³ (Ysapy), *Kunha Ysapy* being Souza's indigenous name. In Guaraní, *kunha* means *woman* and *Ysapy*, *dew*. Native names of Kaiowá and Guaraní women, from the region of Dourados, include a noun or an adjective preceded by *Kunha*. They have this structure because names in «Kaiowá, as well as in other languages from Tupi-Guarani family», are not subject to gender categories, «since distinctions between female and male genders are not morphologically marked» in the names themselves. «Generally, this distinction is expressed through different lexical items, or even, inferred by the linguistic or extra-linguistic context»¹⁴ (Cardoso, 2008:42).

The use of the word *name* in the previous paragraph denotes the semantic amplitude described by Cardoso (2008: 32-33), since it encompasses the words that, *borrowed from other things'* names, give name to Guaraní-Kaiowá subjects. The scholar understands that, for Givón (2001 by Cardoso, 2008: 33), «words that express greater temporal stability are the names: *stone, house, mountain, tree, etc*»¹⁵. Nevertheless, Givón (2001:53) warns that «prototype adjectives occupy the same extreme time-stable end of our temporal stability scale as

12. Translator's version from the original «os mantêm vivos e singulares num mundo cada vez mais homogêneo, (...) confirma na pessoa humana e divina uma determinada qualidade de ser».

13. Translator's version from the original *A biografia de Kunha Ysapy: história e vida de uma índia Guaraní*.

14. Translator's version from the original «Kaiowá, bem como em outras línguas da Família Tupi-Guarani» (...) «uma vez que a distinção entre os gêneros feminino e masculino não é morfologicamente marcada» (...) «Geralmente, essa distinção é expressa por intermédio de itens lexicais diferentes, ou ainda, inferidas pelo contexto lingüístico ou extralingüístico».

15. Translator's version from the original «as "palavras" que expressam maior "time-stable" (estabilidade temporal) são os nomes» (...) «"pedra", "casa", "montanha", "árvore" etc».

prototype nouns», a notion that allows adjectives, in addition to nouns, to become Kaiowá individuals' names.

In order to clarify the idea about Kaiowá names perceived as temporally stable words, it's necessary to understand that the proportion of stable temporality in a word depends on the level of stability that it offers in the apprehension of a *thing*. Nouns usually name stable *things*, invariably complete in themselves. For instance, the abovementioned *mandi'o*, even when it is transformed by growth or cooking, is always as *mandi'o* as the other *mandi'o* that exist, existed or will exist. However, the characteristic *brown* of its bark, which may vary in different tones, can name the browns seen in many other *things*, which makes the adjective *brown* less temporally stable than the noun *mandi'o*.

Careful consideration should be given to this affinity —between grammar and meaning of Guaraní names— since, according to Dooley, although *mandi'o* means *manioc*, *pytã* is translated as «red, brown, earth color»; «colorful (that presents diverse colors)»¹⁶ (1998: xcvi); «to be red, rufous hair»¹⁷ (2006: 157). This mismatch, related to the idea of *brown*, highlights the explicit premise that worldviews, which rule apparently similar notions through divergent forms, are not analogous. According to Žižek (2006: 4), this situation can be understood in terms of the «insurmountable parallax gap, the confrontation of two closely perspectives between which no neutral common ground is possible». Nevertheless, «far from posing an irreducible obstacle to dialectics, the notion of the parallax gap provides the key which enables us to discern its subversive core». Therefore, to «theorize this parallax gap properly», the following comparison allows detaching the notion of *inherence* as a useful concept:

Since the perceptible physical properties of nouns tend to be their most time-stable features, we tend to also consider them inherent noun properties. To some extent, this carries over into non-physical adjectives, particularly those that code evaluative judgments of character traits, such as *good*, *bad*, *brave*, *thoughtful*, *nice*, *mean*, etc. By analogy with the prototype physical adjectives, these too tend to be considered inherent to the human (or animate) personality. The cultural ontology implicit here is that character traits, like physical traits, are largely fixed for the duration of one's life (Givón, 2001:54).

Thus, *inherence* is the aspect recognized in *something* as an essential property. This inherence of the *thing*, apprehended in the name of the *thing*, when transposed to the individuals' inherence, apprehended in the name of the *thing*, reveals the way by which Kaiowá name people. Givón firstly understands that the traits of a human being are, to a large extent, fixed during life. The persistence of a certain attribute turns it into an inherence of the corresponding subject. In Kaiowá culture, this circumstance leads to the idea of a name designating a

16. Translator's version from the original «vermelho, marrom, pardo»; «colorido (de várias cores)».

17. Translator's version from the original «ser vermelho, ruivo».

feature inherent to the person in question. At the same time, this *adjective function* implies a cultural ontology and indicates a scheme understood by Western view as *features put in evidence in the course of time* and by Guaraní worldview as *a destiny*. In other words, while worldwide spread European common sense recognizes a property as essential through a scientific method —by observing its recurrence on time—, Guaraní-Kaiowá culture catches the essential property in advance, drawn from a mystical act.

The «traditional name of a Guaraní expresses a destiny», «it serves for the creator (...) to recognize» its bearer and reveals «the Kaiowá and Guaraní spirituality». To name a child, «Nhande Ru Kaiowá watches, prays for three days and, on third day's dawn, becomes aware of the boy's or girl's name». The «traditional name, *héry ka'aguy*», is «child's language and life». The importance of *language* to an *ava* (man) derives from the fact that, unlike «other indigenous peoples, the Guaraní and Kaiowá recognize their speech (*nhe'e*) as sacred, as the greatest symbol of ethnicity, and through it they transmit their traditional knowledge from generation to generation»¹⁸ (Martins, 2020:51-61).

The «traditional Guaraní names are religious, connected to cosmology», «to animals and flowers» and related «to descendants' conception». «Men names refer to male activities, as hunting, fishing and working; and female names refer to female practices and to flora»¹⁹ (Martins, 2020:58-61). Once again, this reveals an instance where Guaraní view is more concerned about operational acts, than about materials elements. Although bibliographic sources, cited in this article, relate equally to Guaraní-Kaiowá and to Guaraní-Nhandéva, both cultures are linked by a common root. Furthermore, even when these appraisals refer to Kaiowá names, they reinforce the idea in relation to the name of the Nhandéva Kunha Ysapy. *Dew Woman* seems to inspire a destiny able to serenely moist the soil and the plants, making them more fertile and healthier. Maybe the Guaraní's choice on writing a book is partially due to this word's sacred sense.

Although Nhandéva culture developed in the past just through orality, a book is an adequate support for Kunha Ysapy to use her words to endow vitality, to Guaraní culture, in the present. This observation takes into account not the materiality of the support, but the «operator's technical and economic perspective; that means, which reasoning he or she could

18. Translator's version from the original «nome tradicional de um guarani expressa um destino» (...) «serve para que o criador (...) reconheça» (...) «a espiritualidade kaiowá e guarani» (...) «Nhande Ru kaiowá observa, reza por três dias e, na madrugada do terceiro dia, passa a ter conhecimento do nome do menino ou da menina» (...) «nome tradicional, "héry ka'aguy"» (...) «a língua e a vida de uma criança» (...) «de outros povos indígenas, os Guaraní e os Kaiowá reconhecem a sua fala ("nhe'e") como sagrada, como o maior símbolo de etnicidade, e por meio dela transmitem seus conhecimentos tradicionais de geração em geração».

19. Translator's version from the original «nomes tradicionais guarani são religiosos, ligados à cosmologia» (...) «a animais e flores» (...) «à produção de descendência» (...) «Os nomes dos homens fazem referência ao fazer masculino, como a caça, a pesca e o trabalho; e os nomes femininos fazem referência aos fazeres femininos e à flora».

have in face of a material world he or she estimated based on his own practical and symbolic needs»²⁰ (Mura, 2019: 45). As James Clifford (1988:17) states,

The world is increasingly connected, though not unified, economically and culturally. (...) Indeed, modern ethnographic histories are perhaps condemned to oscillate between two metanarratives: one of homogenization, the other of emergence; one of loss, the other of invention.

When Kunha Ysapy decides to write a book instead of using an oral recount, to share her voice, she is not promoting a sheer return to Guaraní ancestry. Rather, she seems to essay ways of activating her traditional culture into current context. «Perhaps there's no way back, for anyone, to a native land, only field notes for its reinvention»²¹ (Clifford, 1998:17). This article considers that, in this process of reinvention, the Nhandéva decided to keep what she understands as inherent traits of the Guaraní worldview.

Kunha Ysapy presents her publication as follows: «Kunha Ysapy decided to use simple words in this book because the Indian²² is simple»²³ (Ysapy). In addition of the fact that the content of her book deals with essential issues of Guaraní way of life, the author's writing style prioritizes simplicity, which she probably identifies as an essential quality of Guaraní being. Again, this is evidence of a mentality not focused on being recognized as exceptional, but as a part of a reciprocal community. As orality loses strength, Kunha Ysapy's written material emerges as a possibility to share ancient knowledge while preserving a specific communication style. Thus, the *style* and the *discursive content* of her work keep inherent features of this culture, even though the material *support* has been transformed in order to mobilize the Guaraní word.

20. Translator's version from the original «*perspectiva tecnoeconômica do operador; isto é, qual raciocínio este ultimo poderia fazer frente a um mundo material por ele avaliado a partir de suas necessidades práticas e simbólicas*».

21. Translator's version from the original «*Quizá no haya retorno para nadie a una tierra nativa, sólo notas de campo para su reinención*».

22. The word *Indian*, in this article, is synonymous of *indigenous*, since individuals from the aboriginal community of Dourados use to refer to themselves by this way. Unlike English, in Portuguese *indigenous* can also be translated by *índio* or *índia*, being the Indian –that was born in India– called by *indiano* or *indiana*.

23. Translator's version from the original «*Kunha Ysapy preferiu fazer este livro com palavras simples porque o índio é simples*».



Image 1. «Kunha Ysapy wearing Guaraní typical costumes»²⁴ – Image from the unpublished book *Kunha Ysapy's biography: history and life of a Guaraní Indian*²⁵. Photo by Marcia Pereira da Silva. Brasilândia, Brazil. 2010. (Source: © Rosilei Souza)

24. Translator's version from the original «*Kunha Ysapy em trajes típicos Guaraní*».

25. Translator's version from the original *A biografia de Kunha Ysapy: história e vida de uma índia Guaraní*. Umática. 2020; 3:135-170

4. Adjective: *sociopolitical resistance*

Kunha Ysapy's book includes texts and photographs taken in the Ofaié Amerindians village, where she lived when she was nine to twenty-nine years old. Images and texts are related and, in most images, Kunha Ysapy wears indigenous vestments and enacts the content described. *Image 1* appears on a section that describes material culture and is followed by a legend that reads: «Kunha Ysapy wearing Guaraní typical costumes»²⁶ (Ysapy). This format allows analyzing two aspects: the act of posing for a camera to represent traditional culture and the use of ornaments to characterize Guaraní-Nhandéva culture.

The high demographic density in Indigenous Reserve of Dourados makes *teko porã* (good way of living, to live in a correct and fair way) an extremely difficult task. In this overpopulated environment—which is very close to the city of Dourados—indigenous people do not usually dress in traditional ornaments everyday. Besides, the first case of COVID-19 in this indigenous land occurred before the author—who was in the region carrying out a fieldwork—could participate in ritualistic prayers. Therefore, her contact with elements of the local material culture was established, mainly, by her friendship and partnership with Kunha Ysapy. On July 3rd, 2020, the Nhandéva dressed traditional accessories for a photographic essay carried out by the shore of a stream in the Bororó Village (*Image 2*). The session was aimed at producing images for another book that the Nhandéva wants to write, about her memories of washing clothes along with her grandmother. The staging attracted some curious locals, who inquired about the purpose of the photo shoot.

This circumstance reveals the way the region's native material culture is observed by individuals from these ethnic groups themselves: they do not see them as neutral items, but as objects that are useful to identify their culture itself. Nowadays, Kaiowá and Guaraní commonly use Western clothing, so the display of adornments with ancestral connotations works as a public affirmation of their native worldview: ancestral accessories and instruments are worn and used mainly in ritualistic and political events. To a large extent, it could be said that the scope of the sacred has been impregnated by a political substance. On the other hand, the normalization of *whites'* fashion indicates that ancient Amerindian spontaneity has been disciplined (Foucault, 2008) and now it is restricted to certain spheres where ancestral practices are *normally* performed. This functionality is similar to that of traditional materials used in construction: their *normal* use is restricted to sacred environments; otherwise, they are seen as *indigenous*. Therefore, when the eye of the observer, invaded by a specific cultural feature—*indigenous*—, is not *foreigner* but *patrician*²⁷, an historical process unveiled by post-colonial studies is evidently concluded. That is, in Dourados, except for sacred places, Western view achieved to disseminate a notion of aboriginal artifacts as *indigenous*.

26. Translator's version from the original «Kunha Ysapy em trajés típicos Guaraní».

27. The use of this term is recurrent among indigenous people from Dourados.



Image 2. «Kunha Ysapy wearing Guarani typical costumes in a stream at the Bororó Village, Indigenous Reserve of Dourados». Photo by Letícia Larín. Dourados, Brazil. 2020. (Source: © Rosilei Souza)

In his book *Orientalism* (1979), Edward W. Said introduced the groundbreaking insight that colonization, in the process of creating an image of Orient for and by Europeans, conceived an imaginary that ended up functioning as a *mirror* for Orient itself, a reflection Orient used to reconfigure itself. From a macro perspective, the encounter, between natives of the territory currently known as Latin America and colonizers from Western culture, shows a similar dynamics. Since this relation was fostered by inequality of power, it caused deep transformations on indigenous parcels. Thus, the development of Amerindian notions in Western

cultural apparatus —in bureaucratic documents, artistic pieces, information on media, philosophical texts, anthropological writings, etc.— created a specialized arsenal of aboriginal themes, which influenced the concept natives have about themselves and made them to particularly consider their existence as totally tied to Nature.

On the other hand, in this colonization process, the management of natural resources under increasing domination (Guha, 1997), exploitation and extinction, progressively threatens the planet's cycles and people's health. In accordance with *Nhanderu's* (God, our true father) divine intentions, Kaiowá and Guaraní are destined to look after the ecosystem and to maintain it as similar as possible to the times of the origin (Clastres, 1990). To fulfill this mission, devoid of the ideal of progress (Krenak, 1992), a series of individual and collective expectations and practices —related to *life's quality* and *common well-being*— must be carried out. This prospect involves a strong criticism against Western history, including globalization, and is a firmament (Clastres, 1990) not only for Guaraní's but also for other indigenous cultures' worldview.

Thus, this *indigenous mirror* built by the West was also useful as a substance of contrast to the *Other* worldview, since the Western pleaded for possessing the Earth's economic system. «All of this describes» *Indigenism* «as an academic discipline. The *-ism* from *Indigenism* «serves to insist on the distinction of this discipline from every other kind. The rule in its historical development as an academic discipline has been its increasing scope, not its greater selectiveness» (Said, 1979: 50). This discipline, developed over time, imposed a series of adjectives onto the noun *indigenous*. Even when these *labels* implied deep discriminatory or idealized contents, they were —and are— useful to highlight problematic features of the accumulation of goods and capital. Said's appraisal still privileged a triumphant power, since he observed the influence of Western culture on alterity and ignored latter's influence in the former: even in hierarchical relations, influences occur in both ways. Thus, the reciprocal influence gave rise to a wide dissemination of these ecological notions, which today are seen on the World Wide Web as commonplace.

However, this global ecological awareness can be taken up by individuals prone to reproduce *colonized* mental frameworks, despite the end of colonial political system. Quijano (2005) named this *posthumous colonialism* as *coloniality of power*, being the term *decolonial* attributed to the trend emerged in Latin America aimed not at *descolonize*, but at promoting interpretations taken from other worldviews. Decoloniality, as well as the reflections of this article, echoes Haraway's (2016) proposal to regenerate the planet and its relations. The author suggests approaching problems through «becoming-with» strategies (Haraway, 2016: 25), at a personal scale and not based on ideals far-removed from individual possibilities. «Like all offspring of colonizing and imperial histories, I —we— have to relearn how to conjugate worlds with partial connections and not universals and particulars» (Haraway, 2016: 13).

In the abovementioned quote, Said showed his concerns about *Orientalism*, since it justified the formation of an academic discipline in History based on its progressive capacity to encompass a variety of issues. In this article, the substitution of *Orientalism* for *Indigenism*

works as a way of comparing and contrasting convergent colonial operations, and it allows political roles of indigenous prisms to have an impact in the global era. Strictly, contemporary Latin American Indigenism «must recognize in the 1910 Revolution», in Mexico, «its starting point, the beginning of its forging». However, considering «the existence of colonial and 19th century backgrounds»²⁸ (Bonfil, 1983: 142), the evident intercultural dimension in this actual trend, and the ascertainment that even in hierarchical relations influences occur in both directions, this text decides to understand *Indigenism* as a sphere in expansion. Thus, the term comprises all cultural production that, in some way, presents a link between *something* indigenous and *something* Western.

The gathering of all this information is not aimed at the reproduction of the «totalizing mirage of modern epistemology». On the contrary, the intention is to capture an outlook with no temporal, territorial or cultural borders, based on the main notion of interculturality, which «doesn't mean that the same logic is expressed in different languages, but rather that two different logics dialogue for the common well-being»²⁹ (Mignolo, 2007: 136-139). Although it is impossible to «entirely escape the reductionist use of dichotomies and essences», this look «can at least struggle self-consciously to avoid portraying abstract, ahistorical *others*».

With expanded communication and intercultural influence, people interpret others, and themselves, in a bewildering diversity of idioms —a global condition (...). This ambiguous, multivocal world makes it increasingly hard to conceive of human diversity as inscribed in bounded, independent cultures. Difference is an effect of inventive syncretism (Clifford, 1988: 22-23).

Therefore, the interpretation of the individuals adorned (Clastres, 1990) with Kaiowá and Guaraní elements, in the region of Mato Grosso do Sul, is a remarkable example of syncretism. The course of colonization ended up endowing the name (noun) *Indigenous* with the adjective *sociopolitical resistance*. Nevertheless, this adjective does not belong to Guaraní cultural heritage —that is, it is not a Guaraní destiny—, but it emerges from a historical conjunction. When Kunha Ysapy explains what led her to create her publications, she reveals a commitment to ancestral teachings: «my grandfather is telling me the stories, so I liked them and wrote this»³⁰ (Souza, April 24, 2020).

During the colonization process, the original environment for Guaraní practices was disturbed: the forest was invaded by parcels of land that constitute the Indigenous Reserve.

28. Translator's version from the original «debe reconocer en la Revolución de 1910» (...) «su punto de partida, el inicio de su forja» (...) «la existencia de antecedentes coloniales y del siglo XIX».

29. Translator's version from the original «espejismo totalizador de la epistemología moderna» (...) «no quiere decir que la misma lógica se expresa en dos lenguas distintas, sino que dos lógicas distintas dialogan en pro del bien común».

30. Translator's version from the original «o meu avô vai falando as histórias para mim, daí, eu fui gostando e escrevi isso aí».

Thus, the confinement of rituals in few prayer houses led to a political-activist extrapolation in public space. However, the discursive content to be transmitted remains unshakable. As for the style—traditional garments, ornaments and instruments—, perhaps the magical and communicational aspects, that used to mobilize Guaraní daily life, got restricted to rituals and struggle; as a consequence, the latter became a stage dedicated to the manifestation of the indigenous spirit. Based on these considerations, it can be concluded that, according to Kunha Ysapy's view, the scale of temporal stability on Guaraní cultures is: 1. Discursive content; 2. Style; 3. Support.

5. Results: *kokue* (bačkyard farm) as a discursive content inherent to Guaraní cultures

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Leticia Larín could hardly develop a fieldwork and produced an artistic piece about the importance of small farming for household fire (Pereira, 2004) in Kaiowá and Guaraní cultures. She had obtained two corns from the Nhandéva Cajetano Vera (Pirajuí Village, Paranhos, 1968) and the Terena³¹ Nelson da Silva Ávila (Indigenous Reserve of Dourados, 1967). She used the corns as frottage's surfaces to produce a piece that confronted symbolically and critically the strong agribusiness prevailing in Dourados. Upon seeing this artwork, Kunha Ysapy remembered the times when she used to walk, with her grandmother, carrying *mandi'o* from Indigenous Reserve of Dourados to sell it in Dourados city. Due to this memory, the Nhandéva decided to wear the artistic piece and the artist from Sao Paulo photographed her wearing it (*Image 3*). This piece of art was made out of a raffia bag, which the Guaraní did not notice: she just paid attention to the object's function. Since this type of bag is usually used to carry vegetables, she did not pay attention to its material nor to the fact that it was an artistic piece.

The artist commented Kunha Ysapy about an idea she had for a performance: walking with a bag on her back would remind local people that the ancestral spirits of that land were Guaraní. This idea came to the artist upon watching documentaries where ancient Guaraní appeared carrying not raffia bags, but baskets woven with natural fibers. When Kunha Ysapy showed her interest in carrying out the project, because she wanted to somehow *revive* a habit that became obsolete, she clarified that raffia bags would be enough to express the idea. For this purpose, both women reaped *mandi'o* from Kunha Ysapy's small farm, placed it inside the raffia bags they had made and, then, walked for about three hours to Antônio João Square, in the center of Dourados' city (*Image 4* and *Image 5*), with the bags hanging from their heads. Then, at the end of their walk, Kunha Ysapy and Leticia Larín used the *mandi'o* to set up the words *Marco Zero*³² (*Image 6*) around the stone landmark that represents the *Initial Milestone* of the local urbanization. With this action, they sought to spread the idea that

31. As this ethnicity isn't mentioned in Dooley (2006; 1998), its spelling follows the one more used in Dourado's region and that's coincident to the found at Mura (2019).

32. *Marco Zero* means Initial Milestone.

the original root of that region is the small farm in front of each house, a space free of poison³³ that embodies the Guaraní soul.

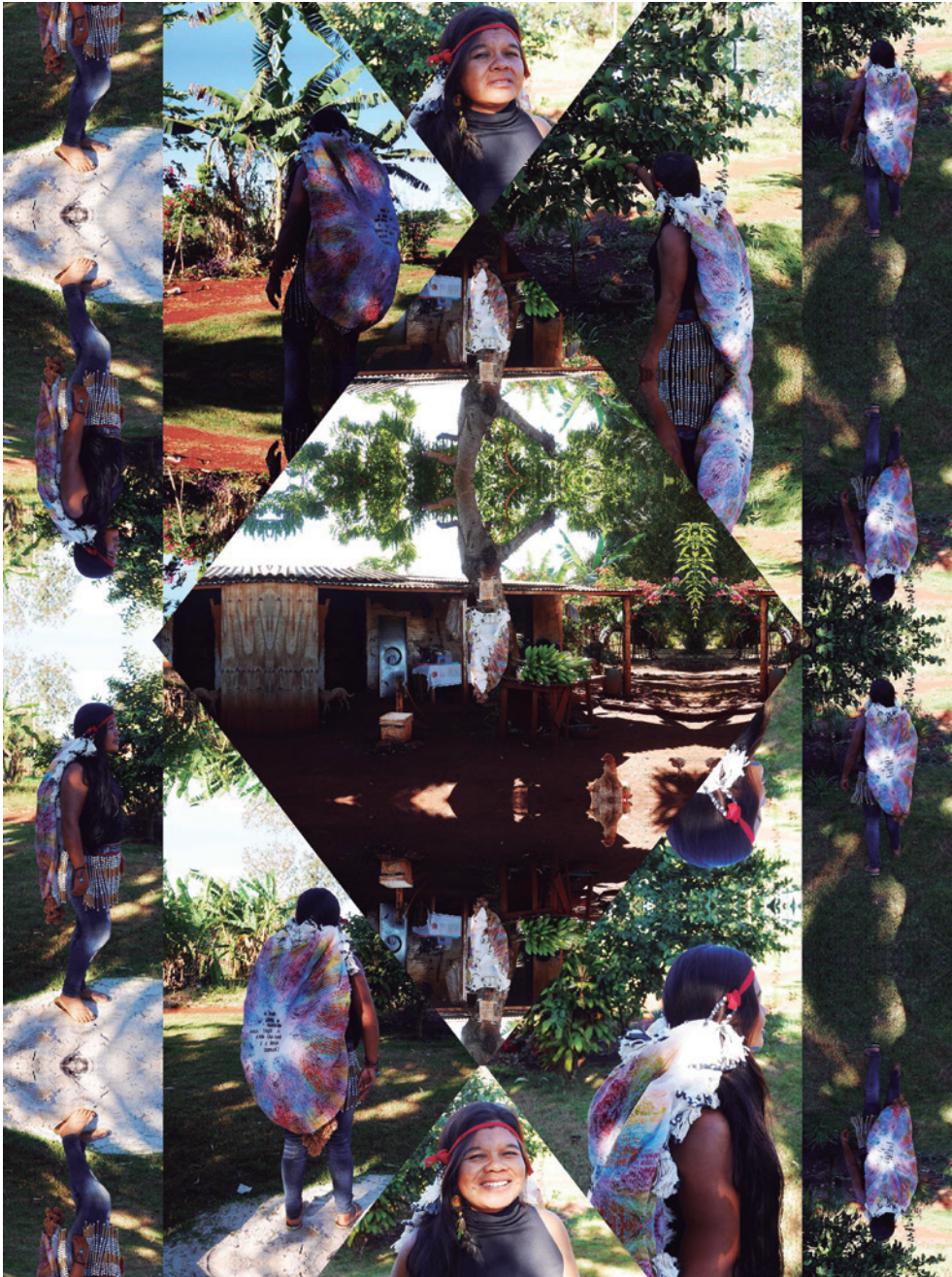


Image 3. *Kunha Ysapy Ajatapy Hina (The Rosilei Woman Is Making Fire³⁴) II* – Kunha Ysapy and Leticia Larín. Digital print on paper (116,64 cm x 87,58 cm). Dourados, Brazil. 2020. (Source: Author's Collection)

33. Indigenous local communities use the word *poison* to refer to *pesticide*, since this substance, largely spread to grow monocultures or to attack native people, weakens the fauna and flora of the region and causes diseases in indigenous subjects.

34. Translator's version from the original «A Mulher Rosilei Está Fazendo Fogo».



Image 4 and Image 5. *Initial Milestone: A Tribute To The Old Spirits Of Dourados' Earth*³⁵ – Kunha Ysapy and Leticia Larin. Performance (Approximately 3 hours of walking). Photos by Elle Souza. Dourados, Brazil. 2020. (Source: Author's Collection)



Image 6. *Initial Milestone: A Tribute To The Old Spirits Of Dourados' Earth*³⁶ – Kunha Ysapy and Leticia Larin. Performance (Approximately 3 hours of walking). Photo by Elle Souza. Dourados, Brazil. 2020. (Source: Author's Collection)

35. Translator's version from the original «Marco Zero: Uma Homenagem Aos Espíritos Antigos Da Terra De Dourados».

36. Translator's version from the original «Marco Zero: Uma Homenagem Aos Espíritos Antigos Da Terra De Dourados».

The day Letícia Larín met Kunha Ysapy, she had been invited to the Indigenous Agroecological Fair by Cajetano Vera, a teacher in Tengatui Marangatu Indigenous Municipal School, in the Village of Jaguapiru, Indigenous Reserve of Dourados. At this school, Cajetano runs an autonomous project to teach students how to grow agricultural plants. There, a small plantation and a seed bank are available to the inhabitants of the indigenous land, who can take seeds with them to cultivate their own small farms in the pieces of land at their homes. Nelson da Silva Ávila —a teacher in the same school, local leader and holder of a scholarship by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq)—, works with Cajetano to prevent the extinction of backyard farming on indigenous land.

As Guaraní consider the *word* as a person's soul, a subsistence relationship with nature can be seen as an essence of Kaiowá and Guaraní cultures. Kunha Ysapy commented that «when you're in the forest, in the water... you are joyful where there is a lot of forest: hunting and fishing, a space plenty of things»³⁷ (Vera, April 16, 2020). This awareness of a lifestyle free of misery, the result of an harmonic relationship with nature, is in conflict with consequences of the increasing substitution of local forests by large-scale monoculture plantations in her region: «I just remember a few things that my grandmother taught me, Indian is stronger through culture, forest, in a place with trees: here, there are no more»³⁸ (Vera, April 16, 2020). The territory of the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados is divided into small private plots and has substantially lost its native forest. It is almost impossible to hunt in the area and the remaining streams and swamps are, due to the soil exploitation, polluted and not suitable for fishing, bathing and washing clothes.

The Indigenous Reserve has a high demographic density, approximately 4.32 inhabitants per hectare (ha), estimation based on the 2010 demographic census³⁹ carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics⁴⁰ (IBGE, 2010). The contingents within the observed population were higher than 11.146, the same amount of people living in the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados at that time. This document presents other five indigenous areas, from six Federation Units, with a higher number of residents —those that declared being indigenous, those that did declared not being indigenous but considered themselves as such, and those who declared not being indigenous nor considered themselves as such. The approximate ratio, between the population's number and the official area of these localities, was deduced from data provided by a map prepared by Socio-Environmental Institute⁴¹ (ISA). The results vary from 0.003 to 0.033 inhabitants per hectare, except for the Fulni-ô land in Pernambuco, where originary people demographic density is 0.41 in a total population density

37. Translator's version from the original «*quando está no mato, na água... fica mais alegre onde tem muito mato: caça e pesca, tem de sobra as coisas*».

38. Translator's version from the original «*só lembro algumas coisinhas que a minha avó ensinou, índio tem mais força pela cultura, mato, onde tem árvore: aqui, não tem mais*».

39. This was the last census found on IBGE's web page.

40. Translator's version from the original «*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*».

41. Translator's version from the original «*Instituto Socioambiental*».

of 2.07. These numbers expose clearly how the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados holds a high population contingent, which makes *nhandereko* an extremely difficult task.

Since forests and water resources —which are basic for Kaiowá and Nhandéva cultural reproduction— are not easily available now, this indigenous land finds in agricultural dimension the possibility of accomplishing the *teko porã* (well live). Thus, Kunha Ysapy, Cajetano Vera, Nelson Ávila and other natives who make efforts to promote backyard farming in the Indigenous Reserve carry out a practice that goes against the local tendency: agriculture in small portions of land, for subsistence or in a small scale, and without the use of pesticides, i.e., the Guaraní way to deal with agriculture, is in open conflict with the capitalist model of production. As Nelson explained, they work to promote «the rebirth of the hoe's feeling; today, youth just think about their cell phones»⁴² (Vera, April 16, 2020).

Levi Marques Pereira, anthropologist and great connoisseur of the indigenous cultures addressed by this text, agrees with the perspective promoted by the group that allowed the author to carry out her fieldwork:

Nowadays, an important element in the economic status of a family is having one member as a wage earner employee, employed as a teacher, health worker or in administrative positions. A contribution is also made when old people present rural retirement. The indigenous population massively appeals to government assistance programs (maternity allowance, basic food baskets, scholarships, etc.) which generated a situation of almost complete abandonment of backyard farms. The prestige of backyard farming has greatly decreased, a sign of ongoing transformations with unpredictable developments; young people try not to depend on backyard farm, they prefer waged work, even temporary, in the local alcohol plants⁴³ (Pereira, 2004: 67).

The situation described by Pereira shows the relevance of initiatives put forward by Kunha Ysapy and the group with which she interacts, in order to defend *kokue* as a fundamental Guaraní practice to be maintained and disseminated. Focused on the project *Initial Milestone: A Tribute To The Old Spirits Of Dourados' Land*, all this information about the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados enlightens extremely significant issues. First of all, the conclusion in the previous chapter is that the connection between Kunha Ysapy and Letícia Larín was based on an element adjacent —*adjective*— to Guaraní cultures —*sociopolitical resis-*

42. Translator's version from the original «renascer o sentimento de enxada, hoje o jovem só pensa em celular».

43. Translator's version from the original «Atualmente um fator importante no status econômico de uma família é dispor de algum de seus membros como assalariado, empregado como professor, agente de saúde ou em cargos administrativos. Contribui também dispor de velhos com aposentadoria rural. O atendimento em massa da população indígena pelos programas assistenciais do governo (auxílio maternidade, cestas básicas, bolsa escola, etc) gerou uma situação de abandono quase completo das roças. Tem diminuído muito o prestígio da roça, indicando uma transformação em curso, com desdobramentos imprevisíveis; as pessoas jovens procuram não depender da roça, preferindo o trabalho assalariado, mesmo temporário, nas usinas de álcool da região».

tance— and not on an inherent one —*noun*. This finding is deemed by the author as problematic, since *sociopolitical resistance* is a concept that was added to Guaraní cultures in their interaction with Western culture. Thus, even if it is useful to promote the indigenous cause, it is subaltern (Guha, 1988) to a Western nexus and, therefore, it disseminates a colonial scheme (Quijano, 2005): it is more appropriate for a postcolonialist perspective than to a decolonialist one.

Sociopolitical indigenous resistance is aimed at pressuring States to carry out legal justice for native populations, and it is totally related to the emergence of Indigenism, a label under which different Amerindian worldviews join forces against the process of subjugation. Based on the considerations developed in these writings, *sociopolitical resistance* is the way —the *support*— through which these nations struggle to maintain a lifestyle close to the *Living Well* (*teko porã, nhandereko*) —the *discursive content*. To this respect, activism is the contemporary way to achieve the same *discursive content* maintained by the ancestors through everyday practices, which makes *sociopolitical resistance* less temporally stable than *ecological discursive contents*. That means that while the function of the former is *adjective*, the latter works as a *noun*.

Sociopolitical resistance is being printed as an *adjective* on indigenous cultures, along with the development of specific processes over time. It is not a Guaraní *cultural inherence* or a Guaraní *destiny*. Thus, in cases where activists work exclusively to achieve fair resolutions from their governments, they are driven by what Žižek (2008: xxvii) calls *democratic fundamentalism*: democracy deemed as the fundamental value of Western civilization and as the only possible solution. Instead, Žižek states that an accomplished stable State is an impossibility, a consideration congruent to that of Donna Haraway and inspired by Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001):

They emphasize that we must not be *radical* in the sense of aiming at a radical solution: we always live in an interspace and in borrowed time; every solution is provisional and temporary, a kind of postponing of a fundamental impossibility (Žižek, 2008: xxix).

Then, the representation of native people through art, showed as activist insurgence of a minority or focused on the *support* to current originary people struggles, promotes a stereotyped and exotic perspective on Amerindians, considering that

not recognition of the Others, the rejection to see them as they are, can hardly be considered as a form of valuation. Praising the Others only because they are different to me is a very ambiguous compliment. Recognition is incompatible with exotism, but non recognition is, in turns, irreconcilable with the praise of the Others; and, however, this is precisely what exotism would like to be,

a praise in non-recognition. That is its constitutive paradox⁴⁴ (Todorov, 2007: 306).

This conclusion is made from the idea that including Guaraní destiny in an artwork, improves the knowledge around this culture. On the other hand, if Guaraní are represented exclusively by features defined in the interaction with Western culture, the destiny evoked relates to Western logics. Taking this consideration into account, if the theme of the artistic-cultural project performed by Kunha Ysapy and the author is deemed to promote knowledge about the Guaraní activity of carrying *mandi'õ* —about the dissemination of backyard farming—, then, the performance motto turns into a concept —a *discursive content*— inherent to Guaraní cultures. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that even though both women tried to transmit sociopolitical resistance with their partnership, the motif they used is a discursive content fundamental to Kaiowá and Nhandéva cultures. It should also be noted that the author learned, *in situ*, important features of *kokue*, such as its capacity to provide food autonomy to populations in general.

Thus, *style* is the aspect that may be subject to analysis: the extent to which this performance worked both for indigenous and Western worldviews. Although it publicly shows a practice recognized in the region as traditionally indigenous and focuses on social harmony and on carrying manioc, it also automatically expresses sociopolitical resistance. The project achieves its goal of supporting Kaiowá and Guaraní struggle in the region of Dourados, by focusing on Guaraní cultural inferences instead of Western structures. By means of bicultural representation, indigenous and *white* worldviews, this piece seems to work together on problems that involve the area, but specially inspired by Guaraní *forms*.

6. Discussion: towards *hybrid composition* in art

The effort not to incur in stereotypes, when depicting natives in art, does not propose a return to ancestral times nor does it ignore the following Jameson's (1984: 184) statement:

This is, of course, the moment to observe that the *liberation* of new forces in the third world is as ambiguous as this term frequently tends to be (freedom as separation from older systems); to put it more sharply, it is the moment to recall the obvious, that decolonization historically went hand in hand with neo-colonialism, and that the graceful, grudging or violent end of an old-fashioned imperialism certainly meant the end of one kind of domination but evi-

44. Translator's version from the original «*el desconocimiento de los otros, la negativa a verlos tal como son, difícilmente pueden considerarse formas de valorar. Es un cumplido muy ambiguo el de elogiar al otro simplemente porque es distinto que yo. El conocimiento es incompatible con el exotismo, pero el desconocimiento es, a su vez, irreconcilable con el elogio a los otros; y, sin embargo, esto es precisamente lo que el exotismo quisiera ser, un elogio en el desconocimiento. Tal es su paradoja constitutiva*».

dently also the invention and construction of a new kind —symbolically, something like the replacement of the British Empire by the International Monetary Fund.

The world scenario is complex and hybrid. Even if specific kinds of power retain global control, mundane day-by-day is affected by a diversity of flows. Jameson's words, although they describe fundamental and concrete notions strongly considered in these writings, refer exclusively to the spheres of power. Oppression is a deep problem, it defines *forms* that become hegemonic despite being counterproductive to the individuals that empower them. Although viewing «the moment of hegemony and consent as the necessary form of the concrete historical bloc» (Gramsci, 2000: 195) is valid, it should not mean ignoring *other* forces that move into reality —flows that are also necessary forms of the concrete historical bloc.

It could be even said that this attention is the force, which can change hegemonic parameters and generate important transformations in daily life. The considerations exposed herein are not aimed at promoting Guaraní cultures in order to make them globally hegemonic or something like that, «the task is to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present» (Haraway, 2016: 1), having in mind a *pluriversal* world. The Argentine philosopher Enrique Dussel (2019: 35) uses this *pluriversal* path, to defend what he calls the *Aesthetics of Liberation*:

The *Aesthetics of Liberation* addresses that issue, and it knows that the path for a future pluriversal aesthetics (not universal by imposing the aesthetics of one dominant culture) will be a symphony (several expressions in dialogue and mutual learning), respectful of the analogical differences that will emerge among them.

Thus, we propose, as zapatistas proclaim in other horizons: *Another aesthetics is possible!*⁴⁵

This case does not strictly deal with *liberation*, but with carrying out individual practices evolved through certain goals. As a Guaraní cultural inherence, *kokue* manifests a knowledge acquired from indigenous practices, a knowledge that encourages the sharing of spaces. According to Donna Haraway (2016: 12, 22), it can be assumed that the *becoming-with* between the artist from Sao Paulo and the artisan from Dourados helped the former to understand the essential relevance of family agriculture for Guaraní cultures, for food autonomy

45. Translator's version from the original «A "Estética da Libertação" pensa essa temática, e sabe que o caminho para uma estética futura pluriversal (não universal pela imposição da estética de uma só cultura dominante) significará uma sin-fonia (muitas expressões em diálogo e mútuo aprendizado), respeitosa das distinções analógicas que se darão entre todas elas. / Assim, propomos, como proclamam os zapatistas em outros horizontes: "Outra estética é possível!"».

and for the Earth's health. With that knowledge, the author's voice can echo other Haraway's (2016: 10) words: «I am not interested in reconciliation or restoration, but I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation and getting on together. Call that staying with the trouble».

«Ontologically heterogeneous partners become who and what they are in relational material-semiotic worlding. Natures, cultures, subjects, and objects do not preexist their intertwined worldings» (Haraway, 2016: 12–13). In these process, «the details matter. The details link actual beings to actual responsibilities» (Haraway, 2016: 29). The situation of Kaiowá and Guaraní people in Dourados is hard —the high suicide rates among young population is an eloquent indicator—, but the social activations of these individuals play a role that interferes with the local destiny. In this article, the *word* is the *detail* chosen to try to responsibly illuminate the author's analysis linked to Guaraní cultures, since it can be understood that the state in which these originary people live provokes in them a crisis of the *word-soul*. Chamorro (2011: 51) explains the meaning of a «crisis of the word-soul» for Kaiowá communities: «Not having means for personal development, which according to Kaiowá worldview is a psychic-spiritual growth centered in the *word*, the youth gets *the rope*, an allusion to hanging, and strangles his/her vital fluid, his/her word-soul»⁴⁶.

In this context, maybe because of the agency embodied in the word, Kunha Ysapy –*Dew Woman*– turns to *lightness* to deal with the impositions that circumscribe her life, in a way to turn herself into the meaning of her own name.

There is a deep sense of belonging between persons and their names. Native people explain it by means of an analogy between human being and a flower and the name of people and the *dew* and the *mist*, represented in the ritual by cedar water and smoke. These elements *decorate* the *flower* and (...) link the people who were scattered during the Active Principle of Universe and, since one of their virtues is being able to bring new life, it renews and reanimates in every person their own beings. To better understand these metaphors it is necessary to take into account that the word *flower* and the expression *decorate itself* are used by the natives to refer to the being, to the heart, which consubstantiates people⁴⁷ (Chamorro, 2008: 273).

46. Translator's version from the original: «*crise da palavra-alma*» (...) «*Não tendo meios para se desenvolver como pessoa, que segundo o modo de ser kaiowá é um crescimento psíquico-espiritual centrado na "palavra", o jovem "cai na corda", uma alusão ao enforcamento, e estrangula seu fluido vital, sua palavra-alma*».

47. Translator's version from the original: «*Há uma relação profunda de pertença entre as pessoas e seus nomes. Os indígenas a explicam fazendo uma analogia entre o ser humano e a flor e entre o nome das pessoas e o "orvalho" e a "neblina", representados no ritual pela água de cedro e pela fumaça. Esses elementos "enfeitam" a "flor" e (...) vinculam as pessoas aspergidas ao Princípio Ativo do Universo e, sendo uma das suas virtudes o de poder vivificar, renova e reanima nas pessoas seu próprio ser. Para melhor compreender essas metáforas é necessário levar em conta que tanto o tema "flor" quanto a expressão "enfeitar-se" os indígenas usam para se referirem ao ser, ao âmag, que consubstancia as pessoas*».

As it was shown, even an oppressed state is overrun by *other* states, so there is no guarantee of a *final* result. The *final* condition is an illusory state, as humanity constantly creates provisional circumstances. Even with neoliberalism at its peak, global awareness went through—and is going through—significant changes, possibly as a result of the struggle of individuals as Kunha Ysapy and the function performed—the destiny enacted—by their speech.

In short, to put it in the words of the ex-constituent assemblyman and vice minister of Bolivia's Planification, Raúl Prada Alcoreza, «now the peoples are mobilizing against capitalism, we have passed from proletariat's struggle against capitalism to humankind's struggle against capitalism»⁴⁸ (Acosta, 2010: 24).

The perspective proposed by this argument envisions a world composed of a diversity of forms: it does not focus on solving human nature questions but on producing a reality open to a range of different mindsets, ways of living and ways of being. Letícia Larín learned from Kunha Ysapy that subsistence agriculture has the potential to sustain human lives away from capitalism. The hardships Kunha Ysapy, Cajetano, Nelson and other indigenous from Dourados face to maintain their ancestral culture is not incidental, since the different types of knowledge they possess are a strong weapon against the predominant system.

Multicultural means that the hegemonic principles of knowledge, education, notions of State and government, political economy and morality, among others issues, are controlled by the State, and under state control, people have the *freedom* to follow their culture as long as they don't jeopardize *the epistemic principles* that sustain politics, economics, state ethics. On the other hand, *interculturality* embraces two different cosmologies: Western and indigenous⁴⁹ (Mignolo, 2007: 139).

Evidently, global reality is multicultural and a deep sense of interculturality is harmful to the dominant system. Fredric Jameson's assessment is right, since today it is extremely difficult to imagine humanity, in general, ruled by an intercultural system or managed by alterna-

48. Translator's version from the original «*En definitiva, para ponerlo en palabras del ex-asambleísta constituyente y viceministro de Planificación de Bolivia, Raúl Prada Alcoreza, ahora se movilizan los pueblos contra el capitalismo, hemos pasado de la lucha del proletariado contra el capitalismo a la lucha de la humanidad contra el capitalismo*».

49. Translator's version from the original «*Multicultural significa que los principios hegemónicos del conocimiento, la educación, las nociones de Estado y gobierno, la economía política y la moralidad, entre otras cuestiones, están controlados por el Estado, y bajo el control estatal, las personas tienen la "libertad" de seguir adelante con su cultura siempre y cuando no pongan en riesgo "los principios epistémicos" que sustentan la política, la economía, la ética estatal. Por otro lado, la "interculturalidad" da cuenta de dos cosmologías diferentes: la occidental y la indígena*».

tive epistemic principles. Besides, a fatalist stance is not going to lead humanity's conditions into an intercultural dynamics. That is the reason these insights call up attention to Guaraní —or *Others*— cultural inherence, because practicing a sociopolitical resistance allows a reverberation of the scheme already in force and, in the end, the inclusion of the *others* in the dominant system. Thus, the proposal hereof is not based on *inclusion* or *exclusion*, but on creating together other forms, concomitantly autonomous forms. Žižek's (2006: 333) reflections reveal reciprocity about the importance of considering reality as such, without denying or trying to erase certain parcels:

if the state is here to stay, if it is impossible to abolish the state (and capitalism), why act with a distance toward the state? Why not with(in) the state? Why not accept the basic premise of the New Left's Third Way?

Furthermore, the goal of this argumentation is not to cancel the validity of indigenous activism, but to think how it can foster spaces of co-creation and self-determination. To this end, this proposal, carried out at an individual level, seeks to represent Amerindian natives in art in a non-stereotyped way: strategies proved to be useful for capitalism's power, for *sacking* of cultural heritage and for the homogenization of sociocultural practices should not be reproduced in this effort. David López Rubiño (2012) reveals that, despite the visibility it provides to aesthetics created by alternative ways of life, the appropriation of forms belonging to other cultures, in modern art, actually served to train the capacity to appreciate these artifacts under the perspective of Art. The author states that objects and forms that came from other cultures were subject «to a new category, that of a possible *Primitive Art* within our *Art System*; which decisively collaborated with what we could call the *Invention of Primitive Art*»⁵⁰ (López Rubiño, 2012: 100). With it,

Primitivist framework not only presupposes and provides the answers but it literally determines the questions that will be addressed to (or about) primitive societies, in such a way that certain characteristics are isolated and highlighted while others are shadowed, ignored or repressed, which confirms in every step the primitivist hypothesis⁵¹ (López Rubiño, 2012: 109).

In his essay, López Rubiño calls this *utilization* of elements from other cultures, without the corresponding awareness of the sense they originally represent —i.e., *instrumentalizing*

50. Translator's version from the original «en una nueva categoría, la de un posible "Arte Primitivo" dentro de nuestro "Sistema del Arte"; colaborando decisivamente en lo que podríamos denominar la "Inención del Arte Primitivo"».

51. Translator's version from the original «El marco primitivista no sólo presupone y provee las respuestas sino que, literalmente, determina las preguntas que van a ser dirigidas hacia (o a propósito de) las sociedades primitivas, de forma que se aíslan y destacan ciertas características mientras otras son oscurecidas, ignoradas o reprimidas, verificando en cada caso la hipótesis primitivista».

the production of the *Other* for private purposes—, *Primitive Ready-Made* (López Rubiño, 2012: 114). In the same way Marcel Duchamp appropriated industrial pieces and placed them under the label of *Art*, transforming them from everyday objects into *ready-mades* and extending the material resources and self-critical tools of *Art* itself, the modern nexus —the introduction of those *primitive* styles to artistic appreciation— conceals the original sense of this pieces and entangles them in a circuit schematized by European mentality. Dussel (2019: 25) calls this mechanism *aestheticide*, since the alleged Western *superiority*, «that pretension of centrality shall produce, inevitably, the denial of the value of all other aesthetics»⁵².

In addition to the formulation of this type of alterity cancellation, the terms exposed by Dussel allow facing two ways of making art: one guided by aesthetics and the other one by the practice —where ethics, politics, economics etc. are situated (Dussel, 2019: 19). The following Dussel's consideration, about the priority given to the economy, proves how aesthetics is useful for *something*, i.e., how it is exempted from neutrality:

The merchandise designed by artists (...) dazzles the probable buyer (...), and it seems to embellish the subject as if he or she used, for instance, a beautiful car. The merchandise achieves a higher price if it is beautiful and, as such, it becomes a *sign of differential value* (...). Fashion is an economic-aesthetic intervention in market, which confers higher exchange value to merchandise as it is a sign of difference for the one who wears it (as clothes) or uses it (as a car). The person who wears *fashionable* clothes is valued as superior, in accordance to the scale of values of capitalist society. (...) That means, the aesthetic sphere can be (and it is inevitable that it is) determined by the political sphere⁵³ (Dussel, 2019: 19–20).

Making and using an aesthetic to provide a privilege to the user, by means of an art piece, is opposed to the Guaraní mentality, where an *aesthetic* function is driven by anything that brings a feeling of belonging to the community. This aspect is observed even in the names of persons, which are scarce and reveal «the collective character of name and identity»⁵⁴ (Chamorro, 2008: 272). Thus, this feeling of a common destiny is an element that promotes a social organization woven by diversity. That is the reason why this exercise, by promoting cul-

52. Translator's version from the original «Essa pretensão de centralidade produzirá, inevitavelmente, a negação do valor de todas as outras estéticas».

53. Translator's version from the original «A mercadoria desenhada por artistas (...) deslumbra ao possível comprador (...), e parece embelezar ao próprio sujeito que usa, por exemplo, um belo carro. A mercadoria alcança maior preço se é bela e, como tal, mostra um "valor de signo de diferença" (...). A moda é uma intervenção econômico-estética no mercado, que confere maior valor de troca à mercadoria enquanto é signo de diferença para o que a porta (como o vestido) ou a usa (como o carro). A pessoa que tem roupa da "última moda" é valorada como superior, segundo a escala de valores da sociedade capitalista. (...) Ou seja, o campo estético pode estar (e é inevitável que esteja) determinado pelo campo político».

54. Translator's version from the original «o caráter coletivo do nome e da identidade».

tural interaction in deep, non-superficial, grounds, privileges the ethics before the aesthetics, since «the critical ethical-political principles will define the difference between aesthetics of the system in force as domination, and the aesthetics»⁵⁵ (Dussel, 2019: 24) that values other forms of existence under their own self-determination senses.

This being the case, the proposal of this essay defends a non-stereotyped treatment of worldviews in artworks that involve more than one cultural entity. If the outcome of the artistic collaboration between Kunha Ysapy and Letícia Larín had been exclusively copied from Amerindian sociopolitical resistance—which is not a Guaraní cultural inherence—the Guaraní word-soul would have not been uttered and the discursive content would have been in line with a Western logics. On the other hand, if the artistic outcome only expressed strictly Guaraní culture, the presence of the urban artist would be hidden, which would cover the real content of the relation with a *veil* and would hide all the conflicts the Guaraní people go through. In a certain way, omitting the problems involved in the relational processes reveals an aspect that Žižek (2006: 342) points out as a weak point of *human rights*: «The problem with human rights humanism is that it covers up this monstrosity of the *human as such*, presenting it as a sublime human essence». With it, the complex operation aimed at in this work can be summarized by means of a balance in the representation of the Guaraní essence—or the subaltern culture—without *essentializing* it and without exhibiting the Western element—or the dominant culture—as capable of offering a solution or, even worse, a *salvation*. Therefore, the non-stereotyped form of art exhibited here, a *hybrid composition* (Vidal, 2002), is the creation of connections and joint work in balance (*Image 7*).

55. Translator's version from the original «serão os princípios críticos ético-políticos que definirão a diferença entre uma estética do sistema vigente como dominação, e a estética».

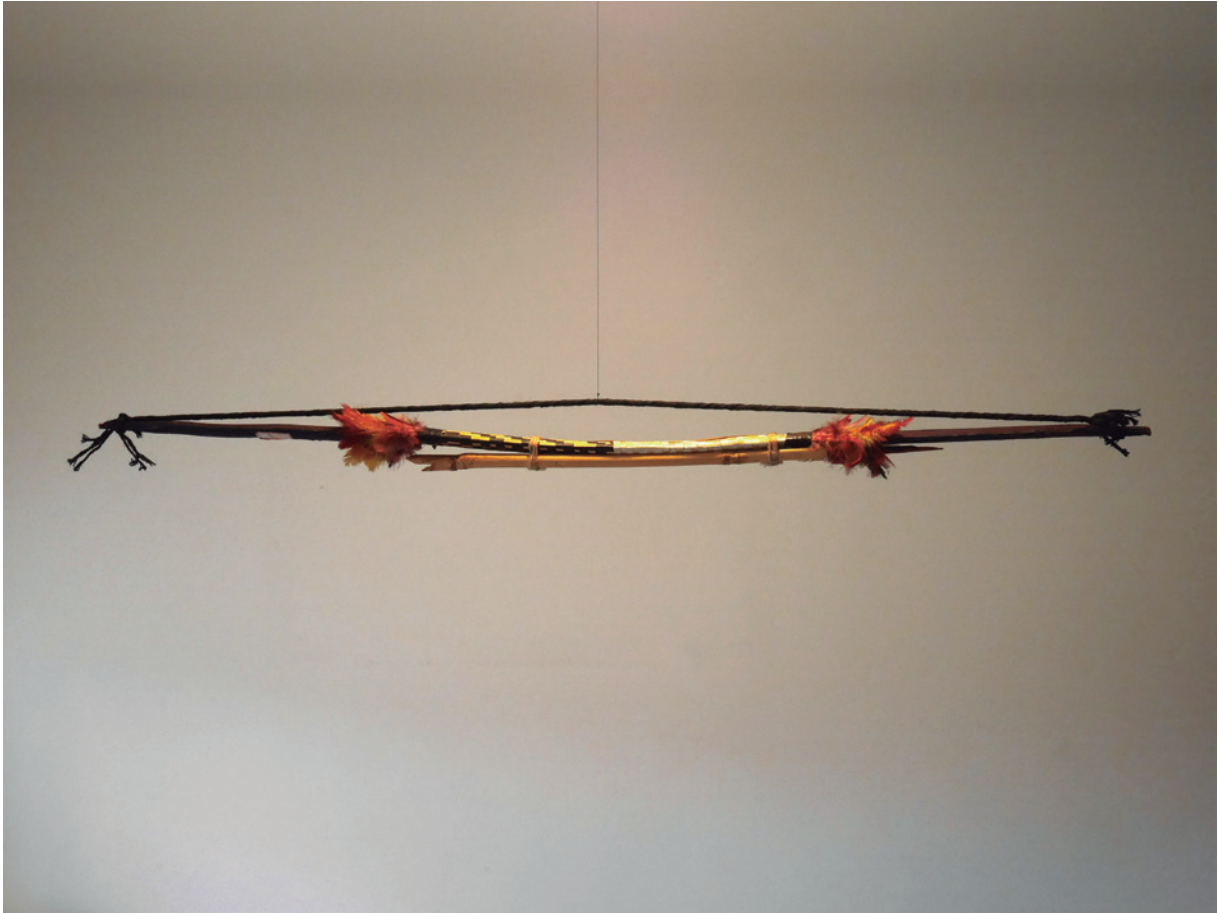


Image 7. *Friendship: everything is together in balance*⁵⁶ – Kunha Ysapy and Letícia Larín. Bow and arrows produced by Kunha Ysapy (75 cm x 84 cm x 7 cm). Dourados, Brazil. 2020. (Source: Author's Collection)

56. Translator's version from the original «*Amizade: fica tudo junto em equilíbrio*».

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