# Tracking Guarani songs

## Between villages, cities and worlds

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### Introduction

In this text I explore how song works as a way of communication and transformation among the Guarani[1]. More specifically I examine song as a means of accessing Guarani conceptions of alterity, as well as processes of identification, de-identification and alteration. Concerned less with the musicological aspects of the songs per se[2], the article focuses on the networks involved in the generation, circulation and performance of *mborai*[3] (songs, also called *porai*) in various enunciative contexts and modalities. In these networks, relations of alterity and identity are founded on the *nhe'e*. Translated by Cadogan (1959) as 'soul-word' ('alma-palavra'), *nhe'e* corresponds to language and constitutes the agentive principle that singularizes the different kinds of subjects populating the world with their diverging capacities for understanding and action. As I explore later, singing *nhande py* (in the Guarani language,

1 The ethnographic material informing this article draws from my doctoral research conducted between 2005 and 2009. My fieldwork centred on the Ribeirão Silveira Indigenous Territory, located in the municipalities of Bertioga and São Sebastião, in São Paulo state, and inhabited by Mbya Guarani and Nhandeva Guarani (the latter being regionally identified as 'Tupi' since *nhandeva* is the self-denomination of all the Guarani groups). This research also included visits to villages in the state capital and contact with residents of other villages in the South and Southeast of Brazil, due to the intense flux of people between them.

2 Among the anthropological and ethnomusicological studies of Guarani populations, see for example Setti (1997), Dallanhol (2002), Bugallo (2003), Coelho (2004), Ruiz (2008), Montardo (2009) and Stein (2009).

3 Since most Guarani words are oxytonic, I only mark the accent on paroxytonic examples. The orthography for Guarani terms and phrases – written in italics except for proper names – is based on the Mbya Guarani dictionary published in 2006 by Dooley.

literally 'in us') corresponds to a movement of approximation between subjects who share *nhe'e* – both those who sing together in the same place and those who are dispersed in villages on the surface of this earth, *yvyrupa*, and in villages on other planes of the cosmos – and a simultaneously distancing from those subjects invested with other kinds of *nhe'e*.

The *jurua* – the term most commonly used by the Guarani of Brazil's South and Southeast to refer to non-indigenous people, which literally translates as 'mouth with hair' – are included in this latter class of people possessing another *nhe'e*, another 'soul-word', implying another way of understanding and interacting in the world. Usually the Guarani state that the *jurua* cannot understand the *mborai* and should not be allowed to hear them. This article, though, examines a recent shift in this stance in which a particular form of song – commonly called *mborai kyrĩ* ('song of the small ones', *kyrĩ*, or 'song of the children', *kyrĩgue*) – has come to perform an increasingly central role in the enunciation of 'culture' as a way of accessing all kinds of resources. The pivotal moment in this demand was the 1988 Federal Constitution and its recognition of the right of indigenous peoples to a *differentiated culture*[4], which led to the development of numerous cultural diversity policies and initiatives by various government agencies, civil society organizations and private companies, as well as international institutions and forums[5].

Ethnographic contexts in which these policies and projects are embedded, as well as the discursivities associated with them, have received considerable attention in anthropology, where 'culture' has gradually been losing its status as an analytic category to become an object of multiple local translations. This theme is explored by Marshall Sahlins (1997, 1997a) in his analysis

4 Article 231 of the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution recognized originary rights – that is, anterior to the formation of the State – over the lands traditionally occupied by indigenous populations, as well as those lands needed for their physical and cultural reproduction. The Constitution also guarantees respect for their social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions.

5 In the international context, the recognition of the territorial, political and sociocultural rights of native peoples is gradually being achieved with the dismantling of colonial systems from the second half of the 20th century onwards and, in Latin America, with the growth of resistance movements against the region's dictatorships and the implementation of democratic systems. In relation to the United Nations (UN), Carneiro da Cunha highlights the shift from the post-war universalist position, which emphasized non-discrimination and political participation, whose emblematic moment was undoubtedly the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to an emphasis on minority rights from the end of the 20th century, culminating with 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2009:17).

of 'culture' as a sign that circulates in discursive networks whose reach is global but whose meanings are necessarily informed by particular cosmological reference points, such that the 'local' is always more encompassing than the 'global'. Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (2005, 2009), in turn, highlights the dimension of 'culture' not only as a native discourse but also as a metadiscourse – hence the author's decision to place the word in quote marks – implying a self-reflexivity motivated by the formulation of alterity not only as a *discourse about the other* or *about the self*, but also as a *discourse about the self for the other*. This elicits an investment in rendering the statement intelligible or using it to provoke an effect, even when meanings are not shared – in other words, when the signs in play are interpreted according to different connections or frameworks of meaning production.

In contemporary ethnology, many works have focused on Amerindian perspectives or translations in the area of policies, projects, events and other initiatives pursued under the rubric of 'culture' (or associated with it, such as 'nature' or 'ecology'). Unfortunately there is no space here to review this literature – which includes works like Albert & Ramos (2001), Andrello (2005, 2006), Barcelos Neto (2004), Coelho de Souza (2005), Cohn (2008), Gallois (1989, 2005), Gordon (2001, 2006), Kelly (2005), Mello (2003), Menezes Bastos (1996), Montero (2006), Turner (1991) and Viveiros de Castro (2000, 2002, 2007), among many others. Taken as a whole, though, these works help shed light on the topics explored in this article, whose aim is to explore the networks of translations, effects and transformations enabled by the *mborai* (songs). In particular I shall focus on the setting that the Guarani of the Brazilian Southeast identified as the inaugural moment in the formation of child and youth choirs for the purpose of presenting shows to the *jurua* and producing CDs, as well as the growing presence of these choirs in the everyday life of the villages.

The rest of this text is divided into four sections. The first section examines *nhe'e* as a guiding vector in the constitution of alterities and identities, one of its objectifications being song. The next section focuses on the modality of *mborai* corresponding to shamanic chants[6], also called *tarova*, while the third section turns to the *mborai kyrĩ* and the formation of choirs. Finally the concluding section explores the importance of songs, understood in their

6 Translated by the Guarani in Portuguese as 'reza', prayer.

different enunciative contexts and modalities, as a means of producing effects, relations and transformations.

## Invisibility, proximity and discontinuity

'Invisible people' is the expression used by Viveiros de Castro (1987) for the Guarani in his foreword to the classic work by Nimuendaju, highlighting the difficulty met by scholars in fitting them into sociological models. At least until the 1980s, the Guarani were the object of various studies based on acculturation theory. Similarly, people who see them on the highways and in urban centres selling craftwork or plants frequently associate the Guarani population with acculturation, nomadism and begging. From the viewpoint of my Guarani interlocutors in villages along São Paulo's north coast and in the state capital, this sort of 'cultural invisibility' involves maintaining a combination of physical proximity and ontological discontinuity with the *jurua* amid the multiple exchanges implied in trading, donations, land claims, alliances and conflicts of various kinds. The *jurua* are typically considered to be another kind of people with whom it is inappropriate to have children, or indeed to share knowledge and modes of communication with *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry*, literally 'Our Fathers' and 'Our mothers'[7], immortal inhabitants of cosmic domains where nothing perishes, who send *nhe'e* to the Guarani. The latter explains another of their epithets: *nhe'e ru ete* and *nhe'e xy ete*, "true/sublime fathers and mothers of the *nhe'e*".

The demiurge – the one who made himself and the other *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* – is *Nhanderu* Nhamandu Papa Tenonde, or simply *Nhanderu* Ete. *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* form couples, the most mentioned of which by the Guarani are Tupã, Nhamandu or Kuaray, Karai, Jakaira and Vera. Those who were once human and attained *aguyje*, perfection or divinization, without passing through death, are called *Nhanderu Mirĩ* (little). These *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* live in different abodes with their sisters and brothers, who are also *nhe'e ru ete* and *nhe'e xy ete* (including the female names Takua, Jera, Jaxuka etc., and the male names Jeguaka, Jejoko, Jaxy etc.). The first name of a Guarani person usually corresponds to his *nhe'e ru ete* (for men) or her *nhe'e xy ete* (for women).

7 N*hande*: our; *ru*: father; *xy*: mother; *kuéry*: collectivizer.

Among the Guarani with whom I studied, most people hypothesize that the *nhe'e* of the whites is confined to this earth, or to layers close to it, without any access to *nhanderu amba*, the abode of *Nhanderu kuéry*, located in celestial regions of the cosmos[8]. Indeed another name given to the whites is *yvypo*, which can be glossed as "those who were made and belong to this earth"[9]. Conversely, the singularity of *nhandeva'e* ("those who are us", the self-identification of all the Guarani groups) derives from the celestial/divine provenance of their *nhe'e*, embodied in the language that they share and modulated by names (*-ery*) derived from different celestial regions.

There is no room here for a detailed exploration of these names[10], suffice to note that they are communicated – usually to someone with considerable shamanic potency, a *karai*, who performs the central role in the *nhemongarai*, the naming ritual – in dreams or during songs involving communication with *nhe'e ru ete* and *nhe'e xy ete*. In turn, these *mborai*, shamanic chants, are commonly received in dreams by someone who becomes an *oporaiva* ("one who chants"). People also use the term 'dream' (*-exa ra'u*, "to see while asleep") for the visions seen during the chants, accompanied by dancing (*jeroky*). Hence dreaming, singing and dancing all converge as modes through which the *nhandeva'e* connect with the *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry*, where the *nhe'e* functions as a sign of continuity. Exploring a similar point, Hélène Clastres identifies language as the common measure between humans and divine beings (1978:88-9). And the language of divine interlocution is primordially a song. As Irma Ruiz emphasizes, the Mbya of the Argentinean Misiones region say that song and dance are the forms in which the divinities vocalize and move about in the celestial abodes (2008: 76).

But not only there. *Nhe'e kuéry* – a generalized term for the inhabitants of the celestial domains, who are children/extensions of *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* and whose vital principle is the same as that of the *nhe'e* sent to the bodies of newborn Guarani, but who lack a perishable body – also come to the *yvyrupa*, the surface of this earth, to sing and dance with humans. The preferred space

8 My interlocutors identify these domains on a vertical axis, arranged in regions indicated as closer to or further away from the surface of the earth, as well as in the east, west, north, south and centre of the sky. But reaching these domains entails crossing the sea, which takes the form of a fold between worlds with the convergence of the vertical and horizontal planes.

9 *Yvy*: 'earth'; *po*: 'hand' or 'people of…' (a place or domain).

10 See, among others, Cadogan 1959, Ladeira 2007 and Macedo 2010.

for this encounter is the *opy*, translated by the Guarani and in the literature as 'prayer house'. Ideally an *opy* is built after identification of an *amba*, a privileged locus for the connection and circulation of *nhe'e* between *yvy* and *yva*, earth and sky. A lightning strike in the forest can reveal the existence of an *amba*, potentially precipitating the construction of an *opy*, or this indication may occur in a dream. The *opy* usually takes the form of a rectangular building with a wooden structure, adobe walls and a palm leaf roof. The two ends of the *opy* ideally match the course of the sun with the *amba* (translated by some people as the 'altar' where the objects used to connect with *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry* are placed) facing the rising sun and the doorway at the opposite end.

During curing sessions (*-moataxĩ*, literally blowing tobacco smoke, accompanied by *-pyxy*, rubbing hands on the affected parts of the body), chants (*mborai*) and dances (*jeroky*), the door and any windows of the *opy* should remain closed to prevent the entry of pathogenic agents. These are numerous in kind – the most prominent being the agentive part of the subject, *ãgue*, which remains on the earth after death – yet they share the fact of belonging to this earth, *yvyrupa*, also called *yvyvai* ('bad' or 'imperfect' earth), in contrast to the celestial/divine origin and destiny of the *nhe'e* of the Guarani. Hence the opening of this inter-world channel must be matched by the closure of the *opy* to other channels of agency. Even in the curing sessions, which involve interaction with pathogenic agents from this earth – the *ãgue* or *-ja*, spiritual owners of different domains –, the aim is always to excorporate them, extracting them from the body of the subject and from the *opy*. After the tobacco blowing and suction, therefore, the object in which they are embodied (small stones, lumps of earth, insects or invisible objects) must be burnt in the fire on the ground or in the bowl of the *petyngua* (pipe) itself.

Ideally the *jurua* – or *yvypo*, "people of this earth" – should play no part in the *opy* life, lest *Nhe'e kuéry* are repelled or weakened, facilitating pathogenic agencies. However the places where the Guarani live, their *tekoa*, are mostly located close or next to *jurua tetã*, the towns and spaces of the whites, since the Guarani inhabit the region with the densest and oldest non-indigenous occupation in Brazil, as well as Argentina and Paraguay[11]. Approximately

11 According to the publication *Guarani Retã 2008* (CTI et al.) (http://www.campanhaguarani.org.br/pub/publicacoes/caderno_guarani_port1.pdf), the Guarani speaking Mbya or Nhandeva number around 6,500 in Argentina and 28,200 in Paraguay.

10,500 Mbya Guarani and Nhandeva Guarani live in the South and Southeast regions of Brazil (Funasa 2010), where they are dispersed in around 150 localities (CTI 2010). Many of these villages are built next to the highways or close to the urban centres, where the Guarani sell their craftwork and sometimes specimens from the Atlantic Rainforest[12].

Despite this proximity, in most of the *tekoa*, especially those where Mbya form the majority, marriage with non-indigenous people is rare and indeed controversial. The same applies to institutionalized or systematic work outside the village. Even when selling their products the Guarani typically say little, in most cases preferring to keep conversation with *jurua* to a minimum. For sure this kind of relation is far from being a univocal or fixed pattern: interpersonal bonds of friendship and complicity do exist with whites. But in everyday contexts or in the speeches made in the *opy* there is usually a recurrent emphasis on the *jurua* as another kind of people, whose difference is not historically or culturally constituted, but is an ontological difference, resulting in distinct affections. *Jurua* food, though tasty and desirable, leaves the body heavy; *jurua* things and customs attract *anhã* (an aggressive principle that some people say is the spiritual owner, or *-ja*, of the whites[13]); and marriage to a *jurua* can cause the *nhe'e* to flee or *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* to refuse to send a name to any children the couple might have.

Although ideally absent from both the *opy* and the *tekoa*, the *jurua* are always nearby and surface in many Guarani narratives and exegeses. Yet these discourses are not intended for the whites to hear and are usually pronounced in Guarani. Contrary to the direction taken by 'ethnicity' – where the codification of differences and their enunciation to the other constitute

12 There are Mbya Guarani individuals and families in other states and regions, such as Maranhão, Tocantins and the south of Pará. Mato Grosso do Sul (MS) is home to approximately 45,000 Kaiova and Nhandeva (the latter corresponding to around a third of this population, just as they form the minority in the South and Southeast regions, though the data differentiating them from the Mbya are imprecise). However, at least among the inhabitants of the Riberão Silveira IT, there are no recognized close kinship relations or visits connecting them to these families in MS. According to the publication cited above, *Guarani Retã 2008*, the Guarani populations as a whole amount to 100,000 people distributed in approximately 500 villages and/or communities in Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Bolivia.

13 Gallois (1988) and Viveiros de Castro (1986) have both explored the figure of *anhã* among Tupi-Guarani populations. As they each point out, it does not involve a singular entity but a 'spirit-effect'. The latter, however, may be personified depending on the context of the enunciation. Among the Guarani, there are diverse narratives in which the *jurua* are described as the pets of *anhã*, or in which *anhã* is named as the brother and rival of the *Nhanderu* demiurge Papa Tenonde. In other narratives recorded by Cadogan (1959) *anhã* comprise an ancient people with grotesque and amusing features.

the idiom of a given interactive context[14] –, until recently the aforementioned strategy of 'cultural invisibility' tended to prevail among the Guarani. In other words, no investment was made in formulating difference in a way that made it intelligible to the other: rather, the intention was to conceal this difference from the other, enunciating it *nhande py*, 'among ourselves' ('in our language'). This does not mean that relations are not framed by ethnic markers. The Guarani have already known themselves as 'Indians' to the whites for a long time, a condition historically associated with hardship, violence and shame. From the Guarani perspective, though, their difference is not historical but ontological, meaning that the *jurua* cannot and should not see what singularizes the Guarani, namely their connections with *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry*. This opacity is also combined with considerable plasticity in relation to what is visible in the world of the *jurua*, such as the clothing and other items acquired in the towns or from whites who visit the villages.

However the process of acquiring official recognition of lands on the São Paulo coast and plateau in the 1980s, and above all the 1988 Federal Constitution, put considerable pressure on this strategy of cultural invisibility. Recognition of rights and the access to all kinds of resources led to 'culture' being consolidated as the main idiom in the relation between the Guarani population and the *jurua* and their institutions. Hence while previously 'being an Indian' in the eyes of the *jurua* had in most contexts been synonymous with adversity and hardship, not being considered 'so Indian' (especially in comparison to Amazonian peoples) was now an even bigger problem. Here the main challenge has been to balance the display of 'culture' – in the sense employed by Carneiro da Cunha (2005, 2009), as a metadiscourse on its own singularity – with preserving the strength of the *opy*, which presumes the latter's closure and opacity to those who do not share the *nhe'e*. One of the responses to this challenge has been the proliferation of choirs, whose repertoire of songs involves a less restricted circulation than the shamanic chants, the latter being sung by specific adults and the former

14 In the sense formulated by Carneiro da Cunha (1985, 1986) of a "language of differences" in which cultural elements are selected and combined in a way that establishes a contrast with other groups. Here the author extends the logic of totemic systems, as analyzed by Lévi-Strauss, to the understanding of multi-ethnic systems. Just as totemism makes use of differences in the 'natural' series (animals or plants as totems) to conceive the social, the multiethnic system makes use of the 'cultural' series to codify differences, rendering them intelligible to others who do not necessarily share the same cultural premises or regimes.

mostly by children (*kyrĩgue*) and young people (*kunumĩgue*). However, before turning to the choirs, in the following section I wish to describe some aspects of the *mborai* performed in the *opy*.

## Inside the *opy*, between worlds

*Aguyje*, to attain plenitude or perfection, corresponds to acquisition of the divine perspective and is the vector orienting practices in the *opy*. As I explained earlier, *opy* act as centres for diffusing and catalyzing relations on distinct planes, since they are where the collective experience of interlocution with *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry* occurs in its most incisive form in cures, baptisms[15], songs, dances and discursive modalities. The *opy* also amount to intra and inter *tekoa* zones of convergence, either through physical participation in the rituals, which may involve people from other villages, or through the communication potentially established between different *opy* via the shamanic chants.

Each *opy* is typically associated with a couple, the *xeramõi* and *xejaryi* (or *karai* and *kunhã karai*)[16], who lead the shamanic chants sessions and cures. The *xeramõi* is also commonly called 'pajé' (shaman) in Portuguese. However there may also be others *oporaiva*, shaman-singers, who conduct their own chants or help the shaman in the curing sessions. Each *opy* has its own dynamic, defined by the local relational configuration. There is no space to

15 As well as the attribution of names, which indicate the origin of the *nhe'e*, the Guarani in the region covered by my research also translate as 'baptism,' *nhemongarai* or *ykarai*, rituals devoted to certain crops or products, such as *avaxi ete'i* (a variety of maize), *ka'a* (mate) and *e'y* (honey). What distinguishes these products is that they comprise gifts from *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry*, and the ritual of bringing specimens to the *amba*, praying and blowing smoke from the *petyngua* (pipe) over them foregrounds their divine origin, or their condition as products not of this earth, making them the most appropriate cultigens for consumption by the Guarani. These baptisms of products are also prime occasions for hearing and communicating the names of newborn children.

16 *Xeramõi* and *xejaryi* can be translated literally as 'my grandfather' and 'my grandmother' respectively. Here I use the first person singular inflexions of the terms since these are the forms most commonly used by the Guarani with whom I had contact, even when the relations do not reflect this degree of kinship. These expressions also possess a wider sense, referring to the class of older people and/or those with greater shamanic knowledge. The designation *karai* is generally associated with this shamanic potential. However it needs to be emphasized that the status of *kunhã karai* is only attributed to some women: the *xejaryĩ* can accompany the *xeramõi* in the *mborai*, in preparing the *petyngua* and in other activities in the *opy*, without being recognized as *kunhã karai*. Whatever the case, though, the male and female actions in the *opy* are central to these practices and according to Ruiz synthesize the configuration of *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry* in couples (2008:60).

explore my ethnographic material in detail here, so I shall pick out just a few aspects specifically relating to the chants and dances. These are performed facing the *amba*, where the musical instruments are kept when not in use: *mbaraka* (5-string guitar), *mbaraka mirĩ* (rattle), *takuapu* (female rhythm staff or tube, usually measuring about a meter in length and 5 to 10 cm in diameter), *rave* (3-string 'rabeca' or violin)[17] and *popygua* (male percussive instrument made from two bound lengths of wood); the *xeramõi*'s paraphernalia – including the *jeguaka* (headdress) and *mbo'y* (necklaces); and sometimes other objects or samples of cultigens considered to be gifts from *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy*, like the *avaxi ete'i* (a variety of maize). The *amba* also stores the *apyka*, a canoe-shaped container used to hold water mixed with sap from the inner bark of cedar trees in the *nhemongarai* (naming rituals). Also called *karena* or *nhe'ery*, it is via this canoe-container that *Nhe'e kuéry* arrive to take part in cures, songs and dances, while it also enables transportation to the celestial abodes of *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy*. The name *apyka* is also given to the stool used by sick patients during curing sessions, when their *nhe'e* is brought back by the *xeramõi* to the body after expelling the pathogenic agent. It should also be noted that the arrival of the *nhe'e* in the body of a newborn is also expressed as *guemimbo apyka*, "to take a seat", just as being conceived is *nhemboapyka*, "to be given a seat" (Cadogan 1959:42). Similarly the body provides a seat to the *nhe'e*, the soul-word (ibid:101). We can therefore identify a homology between the canoe, stool and body as supports for *nhe'e* and, at the same time, as potential forms of transportation for *nhe'e*. And the same can be said of the *amba* itself.

Finally another object found in the *amba* in many *opy* is the *kuruxu*, a wooden cross. Among the Guarani whom I asked about this object, there is no consensus about its Christian origin, but everyone points out that its meaning for the Guarani relates to the different domains of *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy amba* from where the Guarani names/*nhe'e* originate. According to a Mbya narrative collected by Cadogan (1959), the surface of the earth is supported on five *pindovy*, palm trees, which align with the dwellings of the *Nhanderu* (centre, east, west, north and south). In the version recounted by the Apapocuva (a Nhandeva subgroup) recorded by Nimuendaju, the demiurge made a rock

17 The *rave*, however, is not usually played in the shamanic chants but in the musical pieces performed in the intervals between them, or before the chants begin, which include the *mborai kyrĩ* and the music called *xondáro*, an expression examined below.

to serve as a prop for the earth (*yvy ita*) and placed a wooden cross, *yvyra joaça*, on top, which still supports it (1987: 67 and 143). Ladeira (2007), in turn, was told by the Mbya that the demiurge used the cedar tree to prop up *yvyrupa*, which ideally should also be used for the *kuruxu*, as well as the *apyka*, *petyngua*, *popygua* and *rave*. Reinforcing the homology between these objects in propping up the universe, Meliá remarks that singing and praying with the ritual staff is a way of preventing the world from collapsing (1991:68). Likewise Montardo (2009) was told by her informants that it is during the night, in the absence of the sun (*Nhanderu Nhamandu* or *Kuaray*), that people need to sing, dance and play instruments to hold up the world.

The frequency of *mborai* varies depending on the *opy*, the time of year and the everyday factors of the local context. But they are usually more intense in the period known as *ara pyau*, the 'new time,' which roughly corresponds to spring and summer, when *Nhe'e kuéry* are at their strongest. In the *ara yma*, 'old time' (roughly autumn and winter), though, they become more vulnerable and seldom come to the *opy* to take part in the *mborai*. During this part of the year, the Guarani also remain more confined to their settlements. In *ara pyau*, though, going by my experience in the Riberão Silveira IT, there is *mborai* almost every night in the *opy*, but the number of participants is fairly fluid. Those always present are usually the kin living nearest to the *xeramõi* and *xejaryĩ*, including children, grandchildren, other family members and their respective spouses. People who are more distant in terms of kinship or residence tend to participate more intermittently, though this frequency intensifies when they are ill or passing through more vulnerable phases of the life-cycle[18]. A night in the *opy* may involve just one or several *mborai*, depending on the number of *oporaiva* and the disposition of the people involved. When there is no curing session and only close members of the *xeramõi* and *xejaryi*'s family are present, the ritual may last less than an hour. But when the *opy* is full, it usually lasts many hours and in the case of *nhemongarai* (naming ritual) generally only finishes at sunrise.

The start of a *mborai* can be pinpointed as the moment when the

18 Here I should emphasize that my ethnographic experience was focused on the Riberão Silveira IT, composed of five residential clusters where the distance between the houses and the *opy* frequently involves a lengthy trek. In smaller villages where everyone lives closer together, this dynamic does not apply.

*oporaiva*[19] heads to the centre of the *opy*, or the front of the *amba*, and begins to perform a melodic speech during which he usually moves from side to side, or walks in circles, without looking directly at those present. The contents of this speech usually include evocations and praises to the *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* through expressions like *porãete*! and *aguyjevete*! – true/divine/sublime (*ete*) 'beauty' (*porã*) and 'plenitude'/'perfection' (*aguyje*) – and the effort to acquire *pyaguaxu* (literally 'large heart', which people translate as courage) and *mbaraete* (strengthening). Ideally the *oporaiva* should include expressions only used in the *opy*, very often characterized by a metaphoric connotation, as well as specific forms of diction or cadence, defined by Ruiz (2008) as *recto tono* (a uniform tone). This intonation may be accompanied by the *popygua* or the *mbaraka mirĩ*, though it may also be unaccompanied by any instrument. As I was able to witness in two *opy* in the Riberão Silveira Indigenous Territory, the *mborai* may also be begun without this initial *recto tono* intonation, when the *oporaiva* heads directly to the *amba*, picks up the *mbaraka* (guitar) and places it vertically next to his chest. According to an explanation given to me, the guitar should be kept upright to match the correct posture of everyone singing in the *opy*. The strings are not fingered, but only plucked in the central region of the instrument, offering a rhythmic support to the song in the same way as the rattle (*mbaraka mirĩ*). Some *oporaiva* also chant without the *mbaraka*, using the *mbaraka mirĩ* instead.

Standing with his back turned to those present, facing the wall where the *amba* is located, the *oporaiva* starts to pluck the guitar strings and invoke the names of *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* to whom the chant is directed[20]. Aside from these invocations, most of the *mborai* is comprised of vocalizations – like *hehehe! heche heha!* and other interjections in different melodic lines – producing a crescendo of exaltation, expressed in the volume and effort expended in the chant. Ruiz identifies this climatic moment of the *mborai* as *tarova*, translated by the author as 'to speak louder' (2008:74). My interlocutors in the Riberão Silveira IT, however, sometimes refer to the shamanic chant as a whole as *tarova*.

19 As a rule, the *oporaiva* is a man, but some Guarani told me that there are cases of a *kunhã karai* leading the chant at the *amba*, something that I never witnessed.

20 The songs may be addressed to many *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy*, to all of them or specifically addressed to some of them. People say that the songs of Nhamandu (Sun) are calmer and those of Tupã (Thunder) stronger, often causing the *oporaiva* to shout and become more agitated.

As soon as the *oporaiva* moves over to the *amba* and begins singing, he is followed by female and male accompanists, called *xondária* and *xondáro* respectively[21]. The configurations vary but generally the *xondáro* all line up side-by-side facing the *amba* and positioned diagonally behind the *oporaiva*. The *xondária* line up either in the opposite diagonal or behind the *xondáro*. Both groups reply to the *oporaiva*'s chant, reproducing each melodic phrase or a variation of it, the women in a more high-pitched tone, an octave higher (see also Ruiz 2008:67 and Montardo 2009:133). While the female accompaniment is indispensable, the chant can dispense with the male chorus[22]. The *xondáro* usually accompany the song with the *mbaraka mirĩ* as a binary rhythm marker, while the *xondária* use the *takuapu*, or merely sing and dance arm-in-arm without everyone using an instrument[23]. Generally the closest kin are the first to stand up to accompany the *oporaiva*, but when the more people join him, the stronger the chant will be[24].

During the course of the *mborai*, the *oporaiva*'s body may move about or stay in the same place, stepping from side to side, in both cases with his back turned to those present. If he turns to face the others for a few moments, he will keep his eyes closed, since the sense in play is hearing and not seeing. The visions that he might have during the chant are translated precisely as 'dreams' ,*–exa ra'u* ('see sleeping'), as indicated earlier. In other words, what is

21 The expression originates from the Portuguese word 'soldado' (soldier) and carries various meanings. The term *xondáro* was applied to those who performed tasks that shamans had to avoid, such as hunting, carrying out violent sanctions, sending messages or accompany people on journeys, as well as protecting the group from attacks by whites, other indigenous peoples or wild animals in the villages or on the paths. Today the Guarani distinguish between various modalities of *xondáro*, including those who accompany the *oporaiva* in the *mborai*, those who guard the door of the *opy* ensuring that it stays closed during these songs and sometimes the political leaders who advise the *xeramõi*, especially in the dialogue with the *jurua*.. *Xondáro* also names a type of dance and instrumental music featuring the sound of the violin, guitar, rattle and drum.

22 I saw various *mborai* being sung without a male accompaniment in the Riberão Silveira IT, especially on days when there were few people in the *opy*, but there was always a female accompaniment. On the importance of female participation in the *mborai*, see Ruiz 2008.

23 Bugallo and Ruiz are two of the authors who have discussed the various meanings of the *takuapu* and its link to the female condition. Ruiz emphasizes that the *Nhandexy* communicate with each other through the instrument, and cites Cadogan (1959) in mentioning the instrument's association with the female body or bones (2008:67). Bugallo meanwhile states that the *takuapu* are evocative of the female condition, but the instrument is also associated with sexuality and fertility (2003:61).

24 The relation between the *oporaiva* and the *xondária* and *xondáro* appear to echo what Menezes Bastos (2007:302) describes as a centre-periphery relation, formulated in an analogy with the Amerindian image of asymmetric twinhood as a generator of movement and meaning, as theorized by Lévi-Strauss.

seen is not what is there, and those that are there do not need to be seen, like *Nhe'e kuéry*, who are present – and more so the stronger the chant – but are invisible, *jaexa e'y va'e* ("those who we don't see"). In turn, the *xondáro* dancers mark the rhythm with their right and left feet alternately during the *mborai*, while the *xondária* do the same by moving their feet slightly forward and back again. Both groups remain in virtually the same spot while dancing, meaning that their body movements are not extensive but intensive. As the song grows in strength and fills the *opy*, these steps become quicker and can turn into jumps. The same may occur with the body of the *oporaiva*, who intensifies his steps and sometimes walks to the middle of the *opy*, when the *nhanhembojeare* occurs: here the *xondáro* and *xondária* form a circle (or two concentric circles of men and women) in which everyone jumps holding hands and spin around with the *oporaiva* in the middle. The stronger the chant, the longer this lasts. The *oporaiva* may enter into a kind of trance and have to be held by someone. The same can occur to those dancing around him. I have seen women lose consciousness but continue to jump, supported by others, until they fainted completely.

In both the body and the voice (or in the body of the voice) the vector points upwards[25]. Dance and song therefore operate as a machine of lightness, since their objective is to remove the carnal and perishable portion of the body so that it becomes light enough to travel with *Nhe'e kuéry* to the dwelling places of the immortals. This abode is also called *yvy marãe'y*, "the never-ending land" ("a terra de nunca acabar"), as a Guarani man defined it to Schaden (1974:171), also translatable literally as "the land that never perishes" and known in the literature as "the land-without-evil". The Guarani say that some *xeramõi* in the past managed this feat, sometimes accompanied by all of those dancing and singing with them and the *opy* itself. But today this is unviable, one of the reasons being the increased weight of the body caused by the food of the *jurua*, which has become the everyday diet in most villages. However even when not accompanied by bodies, the *nhe'e* travel through dreams, songs and the smoke of the *petyngua* – enabling it to learn

25 Here we can note a parallel with what Menezes Bastos has called the intersemiotic chain of ritual, which establishes connections between music, dance and other nodes through translation, in which each node comprises a signifying expression of signifiers from other channels, dislocating them, though, from the signifiers that they mimetically produce as a consequence (2007:298 and 303).

about things that are happening or may happen in other villages[26]. Just as the person who dreams must have his or her *nhe'e* back before awakening (or else succumb to illness and death), though, the chants take and bring back the *nhe'e*, finishing with a melodic descending movement. As the Mbya man Vera Poty told Marília Stein, the majority of the *mborai* end up 'down below,' as a place whence they return (2009:281). Guarani chants are usually transmitted by *Nhanderu kuéry* in dreams or in exceptional situations while awake. This song does not necessarily result in a new and unique melody: instead what the person receives is the capacity to lead the chant in the *amba*, which may or may not have a singular style. Some shamans only visit other villages (usually to offer shamanic services, like treatment of diseases or naming) with their song accompanists (generally members of the family who take part in their day-to-day *mborai*), since they know how to accompany his way of singing. Some songs are also associated with specific occasions, such as the *ykarai* or *nhemongarai*, for example, the ritual for naming children.

Not everyone can become an *oporaiva*. My interlocutors say that if the person has not dreamt or recognized his own capacity to do so, he cannot sing. As I heard said, his voice "remains weak, it doesn't become a shamanic chant"[27], and he may even faint and collapse. Some people say that the Guarani, unlike the *jurua*, can never "sing just to sing" the *mborai*. This can make the singer ill, felling him. For the Guarani, the song is always an inter-world interlocution with *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry*. Without this interlocution the song is ineffective, or opens up a channel that leaves the body susceptible to hostile agents. And for the same reason that the Guarani cannot "sing just to sing", other types of people cannot sing as the Guarani sing. This singularity is inscribed in the body by the *nhe'e*, such that many people say that only the Guarani have the pitch needed to sing in their way and to play the instruments properly. According to Timóteo (Vera Popygua), then chief of Tenonde Porã village in the São Paulo capital, "the *jurua* never succeed because their voices cannot reach the same height. This pitch is illuminated through *Nhanderu*"[28]. Among the Guarani, though, while only some re-

26 When speaking about the connections made during the shamanic chant, the Guarani frequently use the metaphor – common among Amerindians – of a radio (with its sound waves) or a mobile phone that links the villages to each other and to the celestial villages.

27 "A voz fica fraquinha, não vira uma reza".

28 "Os *jurua* jamais conseguem porque não é sua altura de voz. Essa afinação é iluminada através de

ceive their chant and can lead the *mborai* in the *amba* as an *oporaiva*, everyone can accompany the *mborai* as a *xondáro* or *xondária*. Moreover everyone who shares the *nhe'e* can sing a different repertoire of songs, but which also constitutes at once gifts/messages from *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry* and gifts/messages to them. In contrast to the specialization demanded in the *tarova*, this repertoire is called *mborai joa regua*, "song of everyone together", as they call the repertoire of the choirs.

## Songs everywhere

The *mborai kyrĩ* (songs of the little ones) or *mborai kyrĩgue* (songs of the children) are not chanted with the guitar in a vertical position or with people facing the *amba* and dancing with their backs to everyone else gathered in the *opy*. In contrast to the *mborai tarova*, which primarily feature vocalizations that do not result in day-to-day words, these songs possess lyrics (always in Guarani). Indeed Stein emphasizes the pre-eminence of the words in the identification of a song, since the same melody can receive different lyrics and each version is taken to be a different piece of music (2009:199). The circulation of the *mborai kyrĩ* is also much less restricted, with the songs being chanted both in the *opy* and in everyday situations[29].

When I asked people in the Riberão Silveira IT about the first *mborai kyrĩ* that they remembered, my interlocutors usually cited those heard from their mothers and grandmothers, who sang to them as children when they were going to sleep, were tired or ill. Some people say that if children are lulled to sleep with *tarova*, their *nhe'e* might wish to return to *nhanderu amba* (the abode of *Nhanderu*), since it is still only lightly connected to the body. But the *mborai kyrĩ* are not just sung to infants or limited to lullabies: they can be sung while performing day-to-day tasks and on the *tape*, the pathways, while walking somewhere. However in the Riberão Silveira IT they say that the *mborai kyrĩ* cannot be "sung just to sing" either: in other words, just like the shamanic

*Nhanderu*" (cited in Delane, Almeida & Samuel dos Santos 2008:35).

29 In this article I take the *mborai kyrĩ* as a modality of song associated with choir repertoire since the latter corresponds to a classification used by my Guarani interlocutors. But *mborai kyrĩ* can be reclassified on the basis of other parameters. Stein, for example, studied different modalities of child songs, identifying a complex network of musical categories that includes gender divisions, age groups etc. The author focused on what she classified as *nheovanga mborai* (play songs), *mitã monguea* (lullaby songs) and *nheovanga* (sung games) (2009:197).

chants, they imply a connection with *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry*.

Today people – frequently young and single or recently married, generally accompanied by children – regularly gather to sing these songs with a *mbaraka* (guitar), *mbaraka mirĩ* (rattle), *aguã pu* (drum) and *rave* (violin) as part of everyday village life or for presentations in the village and beyond. Female and male voices can sing in unison or may be divided into two groups, depending on the song and occasion. In terms of instrumentation, the melodies develop in the same harmonic environment defined by the chord that results from the specific tuning of the guitar (Coelho 2004). The latter is acquired from the *jurua*, but must gain its own language/agency, a process which one Guarani man told Montardo is like that of a child learning to speak (2009:164). In the insert to the CD *Ñande reko arandu*, Timóteo Vera Popygua says that before the Portuguese arrived the Guarani already made a guitar made from armadillo shell, each of whose strings was associated with a *Nhanderu*: Tupã, Kuaray, Karai, Jakaira and Tupã Mirim (or *nhanderu* Mirĩ).

The use of the guitar and its native designation as *mbaraka* was also recorded by Montoya (1876) in 1640. According to a Mbya teacher in Itaoca village (Silveira 2008:21), the strings were made from woven palm fibre, later substituted by monkey fur and currently by nylon, retaining the 5-string arrangement. The *rave* is a 3-string violin made from cedar wood with animal fur strings, fabricated by some people who know the technique among the Guarani (as in Jaexa Porã village in Ubatuba/SP) or acquired from the *jurua*. For its part, the *mbaraka mirĩ* is generally made from a gourd (*Lagenaria sp.*) filled with *yvaun* seeds (black and small) and fitted with a wooden handle (see Montardo 2009:163). Finally the *aguãpu* is usually made from a cylinder of *pindo* wood (a palm tree) and a leather lid.

As with the *tarova*, the origin of this song repertoire is recognized as a transmission from *Nhanderu* to someone in a dream or while awake in a state of concentration/listening, *japyxaka*. There is no idea of authorship, therefore, but rather the distinction of the subject to whom a *Nhanderu* recognized the capacity to receive a song. The distinguishing feature of those *mborai* not classified as *tarova* is that all *nhandeva'e* can sing them. Hence the songs are learnt and taught according to the flow of people through the *tekoa*, whose multilocal dynamic has been superbly explored in the work of Pissolato (2007). Like people going to meet their kin or to encounter new possibilities of kinship, the songs travel and transform as they pass through the villages.

There is, therefore, an extensive repertoire of songs known in most of the villages of the Brazilian South and Southeast, including different versions – for example, different words to the same melody, as cited above. Some of these songs are associated with a *tekoa*, a person or a kingroup, but most of them are not identified with any specific origin, having allegedly existed since *ymaguare*, the ancient time.

One of these journeys undertaken by these songs was observed by Schaden, who accompanied the arrival of a Guarani Mbya group coming from the south in 1946 and who stayed for a while in Itariri village, on the São Paulo coast, along with the Guarani Nhandeva. The author writes that "the Nhandeva considered them somewhat 'disturbed' due to their mania of wanting to cross the sea" (1974:169). Having lived in the region for a long time, the Nhandeva told the author that only after dying would they arrive in 'paradise'. In any case, during this period of living together the Nhandeva in Itariri learnt various songs from the Mbya that told about crossing the ocean, which they would later repeat, just as they did with carnival marches learnt from the non-indigenous coastal population living in the nearby small settlements. Schaden records a number of stanzas (1974: 158), some of which I reproduce below (using his orthography, though with some adjustments to the translation):

> *Ore oroopota para ovai / oro u ãuã takuarý-porã.*
> [We want to cross the sea, where we shall encounter the beautiful/sublime taquara bamboo]

> *Djaterei katu era, txeryvy / para ovai /djaa djirodjy / djaa yvy ree.*
> [Let's go together, my older brother, cross the sea, let's dance, let's leave the earth]

> *Txeretã mombyry / ndavyai / Avaka porã repoti ndautseire / djurua mbotavyve yvyguare*
> [My place is very far; I'm not happy here. I don't want to eat beautiful ox manure. The *jurua* want to turn us into a few, we the oldest of the earth]

These songs, whose themes recur throughout the *mborai*, express both the desire to cross the ocean, leaving this earth behind in search of a divine land, and the animosity of the *jurua*, who want to reduce the Guarani to a few and whose other name heard in the speeches in the *opy*, aside from the

aforementioned *yvypo*, is *hetava'e kuéry*, "those who are many." But here I wish to comment on a more recent journey of one of these songs overseas – to Portugal. Timóteo Vera Popygua, from Tenonde Porã village in the São Paulo capital, recalls that in 1992, when he was not yet the chief but a young leader, he was invited to take part in Portugal in the 500 year commemorations of the arrival of the Europeans in America. As he took to the stage to speak, he recalled a song that he had first heard from his grandfather, and he sang it, entrancing a huge audience. Some years later, in 1996, Timóteo took part in organizing an event called Intertribol, uniting football teams from various indigenous communities at the Ibirapuera Sports Arena, in São Paulo, and coordinated by the Solidary Community Program, run at the time by the Federal Government. They were discussing what to present during the opening event when he remembered this song and the big impact it had made on the Europeans. So he decided to gather about ten children from the village and record the song to be used in the opening[30].

According to Timóteo, this decision was fairly controversial and met with numerous reservations, especially among the elders who said that the songs should not be shown to the *jurua* since they came from the *Nhanderu*. Timóteo's decision collided with the Guarani's historical stance of 'cultural invisibility', which determined that life in the villages and in the *opy* should ideally be kept out of the sight and hearing of the *jurua*. But Timóteo argued that it was time to show them that the Guarani were not just a "legend from the past", nor 'acculturated', emphasizing that "the Guarani are 21st century" (here I use his expressions[31]). And Timóteo recounts that when the

30 I registered his statement, which was published in Ricardo e Ricardo 2006: 32-33: "Em 1992, teve convite de Portugal e eu fui representar os Guarani nos 500 anos de resistência. E lá em Portugal eles estavam comemorando os 500 anos de descobrimento da América. Eu estive em Lisboa, e depois em Algarves, onde partiram na caravela com Cabral. Lá estavam em torno de 10 mil pessoas participando da festa, estava ministro lá, e eu estava lá. Aí fui e me apresentei. A partir de quando me levantei ali, me lembrei de um canto, um canto que meu avô, que ainda é vivo, pai da minha mãe, cantava quando eu tinha cinco, quatro anos. Eu levantei, peguei o microfone e cantei. E na hora dez mil pessoas, ficou tudo caladinho. Eu estava sozinho ali. E no alto subi, cantei. Parece que tudo parou ali. Eu cantei. Aí depois eu falei sobre a minha tradição, de qual etnia eu era. Falei um pouco também em guarani com eles".

31 In Timóteo's words: "Os mais velhos falaram: 'Não! O canto das crianças é uma coisa muito relevante, uma coisa sagrada, por que você fez isso?', me cobrando. Só que, nisso, já veio na minha cabeça que o Guarani é considerado um Guarani no passado, Guarani é uma lenda, aculturado. Não só *jurua*, as outras nações indígenas também falam. Aí eu dizia assim que era importante pelo menos divulgar a língua, divulgar o canto das crianças para mostrar que o Guarani está vivo, o Guarani está presente, que o Guarani também é século XXI. Tive essa discussão. Aí os mais velhos começaram: 'Acho que tudo

*nhaneramõi kuéry* ('our grandparents', or the elders) heard the song they were highly impressed: they thought it was beautiful and remembered this and other *mborai* they had heard as children. So many of them decided to form their own groups of children's and youth choirs in their villages.

Since this point in the mid 1990s, the choirs have multiplied in Brazil's South and Southeast regions, resulting in the recording of CDs and frequent presentations to the whites in different locations. Echoing the words of Timóteo, during the recording of the first CD, *Ñande reko arandu*, another leader, Luis Karai, then living in Sapukuai village, remarked in a report recorded for TV USP that it was time to "reveal the secret", which was the strength of Guarani songs and that this would "open the minds of a lot of people"[32].

Singing in choirs can be traced to the influence of Jesuit missions as far back as the colonial period, but my Guarani interlocutors say that it was only following Intertribol that these child and youth songs really came to the fore. The choirs also began to have a significant presence in the daily life of the villages, both inside and outside the *opy*, in most cases – though not all – linked to a *xeramõi* or a political leader with links to a *xeramõi* and his *opy*, where the rehearsals are usually held. On their travels to provide shamanic services (treatments and baptisms), some *xeramõi* take their young choir, often formed by the children and grandchildren of the adults who accompany them in the *tarova*. Groups of children and youths (sometimes joined by adults) also commonly sing *mborai kyrõ* in the *opy* before the shamanic chant or between one shamanic chant and the next. The Guarani today emphasize the importance of the children's song in strengthening all those present in

bem, acho que ele tem razão'. De repente, na abertura do evento, tocou aquilo no estádio. E todo mundo ficou surpreso. O João [da Silva, *tamõi* na aldeia Brakuí, em Angra dos Reis/RJ] falou assim: 'Puxa, que lindo. Eu também sei essa música, cantava quando criança'. Parece que aquele instante despertou todo mundo. Todos mais velhos falaram: 'Eu cantava também quando criança'. Aí todo mundo voltou para as aldeias e já falava: 'Vamos fazer um grupinho, eu posso ensinar as crianças'. Dentro de um ano, muitas aldeias já tinham um grupinho. Antigamente, quando estava descendo o dia, as crianças se reuniam, cantavam para ir purificando. Depois isso não acontecia mais, e de repente veio acontecer o CD e os corais" (Vera Popygua 2006: 33).

32 "Nós temos a língua, nós temos tudo que deus deixou pra nós. Mas estava em segredo. Agora não tem mais como esconder. Muita gente fala que os Guarani perderam tudo porque não estão mostrando, não está em público. Então as pessoas que trabalham na aldeia, que acompanham a comunidade, vêem que tem reza, as crianças dançam, cantam, tem som que é diferente desse som da cidade. Então tudo isso [a produção do CD] eu tenho certeza que vai abrir a cabeça de muita gente".

the *opy*, since the *nhe'e* is still not very 'stuck' in the body of the children, but neither the spirits of this earth, like *ãgue kuéry*. As I was taught, "the child's body is purer, which is why it brings strength, *Nhe'e kuéry* draw near"[33]. Moreover Stein raises the hypothesis that the higher-pitched voice of the children resonates in the upper region of the skull, as though "escaping upwards", favouring the connection with *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* (2009:283).

As well as in the *opy* and in everyday events, as mentioned earlier, the choirs also frequently perform presentations for students or tourists visiting the villages, as well as performing in schools, public places and various kinds of institutions. Sometimes they receive a fee for the songs, at other times the contractors pay for their transportation costs and food, and the Guarani receive money from craftwork and CD sales, often sold by relatives of the choir members. They also frequently present *xondáro jeroky*, dances and proofs of physical skill, in the shows for whites. These dances also form part of everyday life in the villages, performed in the *opy* and on the clearing in front of it, the *oka*. The *xondáro jeroky* was intended to make the body sufficiently light and agile to become invisible in the forest. In the presentations to the *jurua*, though, the intention is to become visible in the urban spaces. Along with craftwork (commercialized for a long time), these presentations and particularly the choirs became the flagship for the inclusion of the Guarani in the world of cultural events and products in the wake of the 1988 Constitution, when the legal framework was widened and there was a flourishing of projects and policies for promoting and protecting the so-called *indigenous cultures* by both state agencies and civil society.

The singular timbre of the Guarani children's singing, combined with melodies that are 'agreeable to western ears', typically have a big impact on every kind of audience. The first CDs of Guarani choirs also had a considerable repercussion among other indigenous populations. Mello, for instance, comments on the impact of a Guarani CD given to the Waujá: "they were hugely impressed, spending hours each day listening to it, despite some people claiming that 'the Guarani aren't true Indians', Indians like them, the Xinguanos. One day before returning to the village, they suggested I produce a CD of Waujá music with them in the same mould as the Guarani recording"

33 "O corpo da criança é mais puro, por isso traz fortalecimento, *Nhe'e kuéry* se aproximam".

[34] (2003:13). Something similar occurred among the Yudjá, also inhabitants of the Xingu Indigenous Park, who in 2008 proposed a cultural exchange in the Riberão Silveira IT, which I was able to accompany, as part of a project sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and ISA. They wanted to learn about the processes involved in producing CDs and swap experiences with the Guarani on the subject.

The strategy of "revealing the secret", to use the expressions of Timóteo and Luis Karai, with the aim of making their 'culture' visible, intensified and led to shifts in the movement begun in the 1980s in the Brazilian Southeast with the focus on land claims. Immediately prior to the 1988 Constitution and the homologation of a cluster of lands in the Serra do Mar (mountain range) and the São Paulo plateau in 1987, *jurua* allies of the Guarani invested heavily in outlining and projecting 'Guarani culture', assuming the role of issuing statements on behalf of the Guarani in the media and during legal processes, headed by the work of the CTI (Centro de Trabalho Indigenista). During this political process, an interconnected complex of villages was made apparent, dispersed across a discontinuous area and interspersed with towns, farms, parks and highways. By way of explaining the demographic instability of these villages and the formation of new ones, including migrations to the Serra do Mar from Brazil's southern regions and from other neighbouring countries, some authors cited the intense mobility of Guarani social organization – especially in those villages with a Mbya majority – linked to cosmological motivations centring on the search for the Land-without-Evil, situated overseas, stimulating the journey to the edge of the ocean, *yvy apy*, the extremity of the earth (Ladeira & Azanha 1988)[35].

In the 1990s a new generation of Guarani leaders – young men who had accompanied the older generation in meetings and political campaigns in the 1980s – began to take over the dialogue with the whites, elaborating and transmitting discourses as part of the on-going land claims, public policies and cultural events that flourished over the following decades. Hence recent

34 "...ficaram muito impressionados, passando horas do dia ouvindo-o, apesar de alguns afirmarem que 'os Guarani não são índios de verdade', índios como eles, os xinguanos. Um dia antes de voltar para a aldeia, propuseram-me que produzisse junto com eles um CD de músicas Wauja nos mesmos moldes daquele dos Guarani".

35 It is also worth highlighting the pioneering MA dissertation by Ladeira on the Mbya in the Serra do Mar region, completed in 1992 at PUC and turned into the 2007 publication cited above.

years have been marked by a concomitant movement of political agendas, an increasing densification of inter-village connections (through kinship, politics, shamanism, productive activities and entertainment) and cultural production for non-indigenous consumption. Not by chance many of the leaders of the first choirs transformed into young community chiefs, who today are among those leaders most responsible for promoting 'culture' and making demands to the *jurua*.

In 1998 the first CD was recorded in São Paulo state as part of the Memória Viva Guarani - *Ñande Reko Arandu*[36] project (Guarani Living Memory), involving choirs from the villages of Tenonde Porã (São Paulo/SP), Sapukai (Angra dos Reis/RJ), Silveira (Boracéia/SP) and Jaexa Porã (Ubatuba/SP). The recording was made in the latter village where a studio was set up inside the *opy*. The TV USP channel produced a documentary on the process of recording the CD and the first presentations. In the film Timóteo says: "It's time for us to show our secret, which is our song, just as the *jurua* show their songs. Let's hope that the CD recording makes us stronger"[37].

The CD received the same name as the project, *Ñande reko arandu – Memória viva guarani*, and was released in 1999, on the even of the 500 year anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in Brazil. The CD insert includes a text by Timóteo with the following observation: "The Indian also belongs to the 21st century. So, in this sense, by recording the songs, we are also presenting 500 years of resistance to the domination of the white peoples". He adds: "We have been concerned not with recovering but with preserving our culture. What we have and maintain. Despite the enormous pressure on us"[38]. Timóteo's comments also emphasize many of the themes that have been informing relations between the Guarani and the *jurua* in the contemporary world, including the preservation of nature, the harmony between peoples and the celebration of cultural diversity.

The *Ñande Reko Arandu* project led to the creation of the Teko Arandu

36 An expression that can also be translated as 'our knowledge or wisdom of life', or 'our way of living with wisdom'.

37 "Está na hora da gente mostrar nosso segredo, que é nosso canto, assim como os *jurua* mostram o canto deles. Vamos torcer para que a gravação do CD nos fortaleça".

38 Respectively: "O índio também é século XXI. Então, neste sentido, através da gravação dos cânticos, a gente vai estar apresentando, também, 500 anos de resistência à dominação dos povos brancos" and "Nós temos nos preocupado não em resgatar, mas em preservar a nossa cultura. Que a gente tem e mantém. Mesmo sofrendo muita pressão".

Institute under the direction of the Mbya man Adolfo Vera Mirim and assistance from Maurício Fonseca, a non-indigenous consultant from the Solidary Community Program who had been one of the coordinators of the Intertribol and CD projects, later working with the Guarani via Cepam (a state agency supporting local councils) and subsequently via the São Paulo State Indigenous Council. The Teko Arandu Institute was responsible for producing the second CD, which involved the participation of ten villages in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, bringing together around 300 children and young people.

The coordinators of both CDs and associated events were Adolfo Vera Mirim, Timóteo Vera Popygua and Marcos Tupã, as well as Fonseca as a consultant. The three Mbya were leaders of the choirs from Silveira, Tenonde Porã and Jaexa Porã villages, respectively. This was also the period when they began to consolidate their position as political leaders in their villages and in demands that included a network of villages in the Southeast. During the recordings for the first CD in 1998, Marcos Tupã had recently become chief of Jaexa Porã village, replacing his father Altino. A short while after he moved to Krukutu, in the São Paulo capital, and at the start of the 2000s became chief there. Adolfo became chief at Ribeirão Silveira village in 1995. And Timóteo told me that he had become chief at Tendonde Porã in 2003.

In the insert to the second CD, Fonseca points out that the work "is the result of a broad cultural movement intensified by the recording of the CD *Ñande reko arandu – Memória viva guarani*. This movement stimulated the revival of the child choirs, the composition of new songs and the recovery of song modalities that were falling into disuse such as the lullabies and female flute themes"[39]. Called *Ñande arandu pygua*[40], the second CD was launched in 2004 and its insert also provides information on the songs and other cultural aspects. It notes, for example, that the songs come from "cosmological regions: the east (rising sun), abode of Nhamandu; the west (setting sun), abode of Tupã; the south, abode of Jakaira; and the north, abode of Jekupe"[41].

39 "...resulta de um amplo movimento cultural intensificado a partir da gravação do CD *Ñande reko arandu* – Memória viva guarani. Esse movimento motivou a revitalização dos corais infantis, a composição de novos cânticos e a recuperação de modalidades que estavam sendo esquecidas como os acalantos e os temas de flauta feminina".

40 The title can be translated as 'our knowledge' (or 'our memory') from here or now.

41 "...regiões cosmológicas: do leste (sol nascente), morada de Nhamandu; do oeste (sol poente),

Both CDs thus express a big investment in displaying of 'culture'.

The *tarova*, on the other hand, were not included in these CDs. In a film recorded in 2009, Timóteo declares that the shamanic chants will never be included in the presentations to whites. However in the Riberão Silveira IT a CD was produced in 2008 – *Mensageiros* (Messengers), performed by a single choir and sponsored by the Cultural Action Program of the São Paulo State Culture Office – which features recordings of several *tarova*. When I asked the Mbya producer of the CD whether this decision had stirred any unease among the other Guarani, he said no because the *xeramõi* himself has allowed the recording and had the authority to do so. Another resident of the Riberão Silveira IT told me that the shamans know when they can do something or not, meaning that if the *xeramõi* permitted the recording, then the *Nhanderu* had not opposed it. But the same person added that the *xeramõi* had been alarmed by the fact that the equipment failed to register anything on the first recording of the *tarova* for the CD, meaning that the work had to be redone.

Along with the question of what can be included on the CDs, another aspect responsible for arousing a fair amount of controversy is the growing demand from whites to watch the shamanic chants in the *opy* and to receive Guarani names. This demand is met to varying degrees according to the context and the *xeramõi* involved. Some TV programs have also recorded these rituals, including TV Globo's 'Fantástico', which filmed in an *opy* in the Riberão Silveira IT. However, in the cases I was able to observe, it was not unusual for strategies and separations to be created during the performance of rituals shown to white people. In terms of the attribution of Guarani names to the *jurua*, in both the Riberão Silveira IT and in the Pyau *tekoa* (in Jaraguá, São Paulo/SP), the naming procedures I was able to watch were separated in the ritual and different (simplified) for the whites. Whatever the case, the presence of *jurua* in the *opy* during rituals such as shamanic chants, cures and baptisms is always a potential source of controversy, and often cited as the reason for something that went wrong, such as the failure of a chant, someone becoming ill and various kinds of adversities.

Looking beyond the *opy*, the *xeramõi* frequently diagnose sicknesses – *mba'eaxy*, 'that which is suffering, pain' – as the outcome of an excessive proximity to whites and their things, provoking the dissatisfaction of the

morada de Tupã; do sul, morada de Jakaira; e do norte, morada de Jekupe".

*nhe'e* and their departure from the victim's body. In the case of 'spiritual sickness' especially, the subject is overwhelmed by a strong feeling of melancholy or fury, losing any awareness of who he or she is or what surrounds them[42]. In one example, a Mbya teacher who was suffering from a strong 'spiritual sickness' in which he could barely get out of bed, went to be treated in the Jaraguá village (Pyau). There the *xeramõi* told him that his work in the school and during education policy meetings had distanced him so far from *Nhanderu* that he no longer had any tobacco smoke left in his body, which made him susceptible to *mba'eaxy*. Even so, excessive proximity to whites and their things/knowledge, or opening Guarani things/knowledge to them, may or may not have negative implications. As illustrated by the example of the CD with recordings of shamanic chants, there does not seem to be an *a priori* interdiction on what should or should not be done or shown. Or if there is, it can be reversed according to circumstances. The affections to which each person is subject depend on the relational configuration in play, meaning that positions are not fixed and the agents are multiple.

In the current setting in which the *jurua* and their things, music and knowledge are ever closer and more accessible, it is undeniable that the opacity of the Guarani in relation to what connects them to *Nhanderu* has also become increasingly flexible. The presence of the *jurua* as participants and even as sponsors of rituals is sometimes a point of controversy, sometimes not, with some whites even smoking *petyngua* (pipe), dancing and singing with the Guarani. Marriage to *jurua* remains a fairly conflict-ridden issue, but even in mythic terms the Guarani recognize that in *ymaguare*, the ancient time, there was a man, Jekupe, who married a white woman, but they both sang and danced with such intensity that they managed to achieve *aguyje*, becoming immortalized and escaping the flood that destroyed the First Earth[43].

## Knowing and being known

42 These forms of sickness are associated with other causes too, such as the sadness (*ndovy'ai*) caused by separations from spouses or consanguine kin, which weaken the body, exposing it to the entry of pathogenic agents. These include attacks by *itaja* (owner of stones) or *ka'aguyja* (owner of the forest) or other owners while trekking through forest, in a dream and in other contexts. Or they may even be caused by the shamanic agency of another Guarani, referred to as *ipaje*, 'sorcery'.

43 In another version of the myth, Jekupe commits incest by marrying his paternal aunt.

The dynamics involved in what should or should not be shown can be apprehended using the distinction developed by Carneiro da Cunha (2005, 2009) between vectors of shamanization and collectivization in processes of enunciating 'culture'. While collectivization relates to the construction of a 'we', usually combined with ethnic markers, shamanization refers to differentiating processes in which the production and circulation of knowledge implies distinctions, specializations and restrictions that are both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic. In terms of the *tarova*, the shamanization vector has predominated since not everyone can sing in front of the *amba*, much less remove pathogenic objects from people's bodies with *petyngua* smoke or return *nhe'e* to their bodies through chants. The *opy* world is surrounded by distinctions and restrictions, or 'secrets', so as to avoid affections from the *jurua*, *ipaje* (shamanic attacks) from other Guarani or hostile spirits (like *ãgue*) in general. As mentioned earlier, the idiom of sickness is extremely important in the relations between subjects and in the production of meanings, whose networks have become denser and tenser with the growing presence of the *jurua*, their institutions, things and knowledge close to the villages and, increasingly, inside them – whether in the village school, the Funai post or in people's houses in the form of CDs, DVDs and TV programs, for example.

The novelty of the choirs was 'showing the secret', the songs presented as an emblem of 'Guarani culture' in a collectivizing mode, through a particular form of *mborai* with a less restricted circulation than the *tarova*. But new differentiating mechanisms have also been generated, like the distinction derived from receiving new songs from *Nhanderu* (i.e. the capacity to compose them) by some Guarani, or the distinction of leading a choir (associated with its position in a collective) or the capacity to build a network of contacts with *jurua*, resulting in presentations or the production of CDs, both of which generate financial and symbolic resources.

In terms of the content of the *mborai*, there is a clear thematic reiteration in the repertoire of the choirs, which can be identified even in the songs recorded by Schaden in the 1940s, as Coelho observes (2004). Stein (2009) also notes that several of the recordings made by the author in the field match the repertoire of child songs recorded by Cadogan. One of the most recurrent themes is the crossing of the ocean to reach the divine land. For example:

*Orema / roje'oi aguã / yy guaxu rovai / roaxa mavy / yvyju mirĩ / roexa mavy / rovy'a*

*aguã / rovy'a aguã*
[Let's travel to the other side of the ocean. When we cross to the divine golden land, we shall be happy]

Another theme is the journey guided by *nhanderu* (or *oreru*[44], 'our father', which may refer to the elders or the divine ancestors) to this divine land. For example:

*Oreru tenonde / emombe'u'i / ma rupi pa roiko'i aguã*
[Our father in front, show us the place where we shall live]

Or again:

*Nhanderuvixa tenonde / gua'i tove katu ta'imbaraete / ta'ipy'a guaxu nhande're'raa / tape mirĩ rupi*
[Our leader in front, have the strength and courage to take us along the divine path]

There are also frequent meta-references to song and dance as moments of encountering *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry* and celebrating with them, producing joy (*-vy'a*) and strength (*-mbaraete*), both among those on this earth – whose bodies acquire radiance, *hendy*, on such occasions (Montardo 2009) – and among the *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy*, who express themselves through sunrays and lightning. This appears, for example, in this song recorded by Schaden (1974: 158), which I reproduce here using his orthography):

*Eguedjy, tupã-ray / djadjapo pieta porã / djadjapo pieta, overa*
[Come down, son of thunder, we'll hold a beautiful festival, we'll hold a festival, lightning is striking]

And in another example:

*Nhamandu ouare / nhama'e reve / nhamonhedu'i / mborai'i / mborai'i / jajeroj y'i / jajeroj y'i / Tupã retãre / nhama'e ma ramo / overa Vera / joguerovy'a / joguerovy'a*
[Nhamandu (Sun) climbs into the sky, we look towards him. We let him hear our songs, our songs. We dance and dance. From the abode of Tupã (Thunder) we see the lights of the Vera (Lightning). They are joyful, they are joyful]

44 *Nhande* corresponds to the 'we' inclusive and *ore* to the 'we' exclusive in relation to the other interlocutors.

A recurrent expression in the *mborai* is *nhamonhandu*, which my interlocutors translate as 'making ourselves heard', referring to *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuéry*, who are both the source of songs and to whom they are commonly addressed. At the end of each *mborai*, everyone frequently exclaims *porãete, aguyjevete!*, meaning 'true/sublime beauty/kindness' and 'true/sublime perfection/plenitude', respectively, as cited above. Aside from the moment of the *mborai*, these expressions are frequently used in the *opy* between those greeting each other, in shamanic chants and in discourses in front of the *amba*. People usually translate these expressions as thanks to the *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* and to everyone else present or absent, but they also refer to the quest to obtain the divine condition (full, perfect, beautiful) or getting close to it. Hence the ultimate aim of these songs is *aguyje*, divine becoming, and at a lesser level, the joy and strength to live on this earth, despite its many adversities. It is necessary to hear and be heard by *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy*, to receive songs from them and to sing to these immortal beings who are simultaneously the source and destiny of their *nhe'e*, and whose connection needs to be maintained during the time spent on this earth. Here is another example of the centrality of the *nhamonhandu*:

> *Kyrĩ gue'i peju katu / nhamonhendu mborai / jajerojy, jajerojy / nhanderu, nhandexy ete / oexa aguã / jajerojy / nhanhembo'e'i*
> [Come children, we'll make them hear our songs, we'll dance and dance so that our true/divine father and mother see us, we'll dance, let's revere/pray/learn]

As many Guarani say, the presence of *jurua* in the shamanic chants hinders or even impedes *nhamonhendu mborai*, 'making ourselves heard' by *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy* through the medium of song. With whites present it is more difficult to attain the state of concentration (*japyxaka*) and the heat and radiance that connects bodies during the dance. As mentioned earlier, *Nhe'e kuéry* prefer not to travel from *Nhanderu amba* to the *opy* when the latter contains the *jurua* or the *ãgue*, spirits confined to the earth. But as the comments of the leaders cited above make clear, in the case of the choir songs, performed for shows or CD recordings, considerable investment has also been made in recent years to making themselves heard, perceived (and respected) by the whites through songs. Certainly these involve distinct enunciative contexts. On this point, Stein argues that kin and divinities are pushed into the background of the communicational field during

presentations to the *jurua* (2009: 262). But I do not think that this inevitably occurs, since the beauty and strength of the songs (always in the Guarani language) are indissociable from the singular (and divine) capacity conferred by the *nhe'e*. This singularity is energized by the commotion typically provoked in the *jurua* audience. Hence even when performed outside the *opy* and for the whites, the songs can become the connecting bridge between those who share *nhe'e* – human and divine – and between those who share the condition of living on this perishable earth in a perishable body – *nhandeva'e* and *jurua*. Though enacted in distinct codes, these different orders of relations intersect in the *mborai*.

Translation: David Rogers

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