

SOCIOLOGY OF THE IMAGE: INTERCULTURALITY FROM THE GUARANÍ MBYÁ INDIGENOUS SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This text is the result of a research carried out between 2018 and 2020, based on the experience of a non-indigenous educator at a Guaraní Mbyá school called Guajayvi, in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil). Through narratives and reflections, the aim was to map the elements, movements, and processes that emerge from this educator's daily life, following clues for decolonizing theoretical-pedagogical practices in education. The experience highlighted the importance of adopting a unique way of learning shifting the non-Indigenous perspective from a text-centered view to the images and oral traditions that constitute the Mbyá Guaraní school. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's sociology of image of is a reference in this process, which, together with constant dialogue with students from the indigenous community, emerges as a way of understanding and learning the language of research from the images and oral traditions charged with the ancient cosmology of the Guaraní. The reflections aim to convey the Mbyá Guaraní people's deep awareness of their own history and wisdom, indicating paths for building of a critical interculturality from the indigenous school.

INTRODUCTION

This text is the result of a research conducted (2018-2020) based on the experience of a non-indigenous educator at a Mbyá Guaraní school called Guajayvi, located in the city of Charqueadas, Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil). Through narratives and reflections, the aim was to map out the movements that emerge from this educator's daily life, following clues for decolonizing pedagogical practices and adopting a unique way of learning, one that shifts the non-Indigenous perspective from written texts to the images and oral traditions that constitute the Mbyá Guaraní school. Silvia Cusicanqui's sociology of image serves a reference in this process, because, together with constant dialogue with students from the Indigenous community, it provides a way of understanding and learning the language of research from the images and oral traditions charged with the ancient cosmology of the Guaraní. This reveals the Mbyá people's deep awareness of their own history and wisdom, showing us ways to build interculturality from the indigenous school.

The school, as a product of modernity, is the institution that most reproduces and produces colonizing processes. From knowledge to the disciplining of bodies, we observe a school that builds subjectivities. Writing then addresses the concern of how to

conceive a pedagogy capable of decolonizing the school and the subjects within it. To this end, this text will present interculturality as a possible path for the decolonization of the school, using a Mbyá Guaraní school as a focus of reflection. However, we need to understand the conditions for intercultural dialogue, recognizing the need to overcome the notion that living under the same ground makes us an intercultural society; likewise, we must overcome interculturality that is often placed on a rhetorical and abstract level.

Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, a Cuban philosopher of interculturality, tells us that intercultural dialogue is the necessary path for recognizing the right to diversity to move beyond the rhetorical level at which it is still tied:

The challenge of intercultural dialogue lies precisely in ensuring that the recognition of diversity and indigenous traditions does not simply become a matter of the past but that they have the possibility and right to self-determination in the future. This means political participation at all levels of today's world organization. Interculturalism poses not only the problem of recognizing diversity at a rhetorical level but also the right to make the world differently. (Fornet-Betancourt, 2007, p. 47). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

For Fornet-Betancourt, recognizing diversity needs to be turned into practice, where Indigenous peoples are part of the different institutions of decision-making and power within society. We need to work on changes that realize these peoples' right to self-determination in the present and future. However, one of our greatest obstacles has been the non-Indigenous society's inability to understand and accept diversity as respect for subjectivities and as a human richness capable of strengthening our identities and ways of experiencing the world.

Taking an Indigenous or intercultural stance means, at the same time, engaging in a political battle to shift the world from a single civilization-al rhythm. There must be worlds where people who want to embrace a tradition also have a real place, and not just in a museum. The intercultural political project is not a world with museums but a world of worlds, as identities need real worlds. Therefore, for what we are dealing with, the preparation of a teacher should be linked simultaneously with social movements linked to other possible worlds. (Fornet-Betancourt, 2007, pp. 69-70) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

We find convergence between Fornet-Betancourt's thinking and the views of two thinkers who illuminated this reflection: Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Ailton Krenak. Cusicanqui, a Bolivian sociologist of Aymara origin, in her book *"Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: Una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores"*, states that "the Indian commitment to modernity focuses on a notion of citizenship that seeks difference rather than homogeneity" [Translated quote from its original in Spanish] (Cusicanqui, 2010, p. 71). Ailton Krenak, one of the most notable Indigenous Brazilian thinkers, in his recent book, *"Ideas para posponer el fin del mundo"* (2019), states:

We resist by expanding our subjectivity, not accepting the idea that we are all the same. There are still about 250 ethnic groups that want to be different from each other in Brazil, speaking more than 150 languages and dialects. (Krenak, 2019, p. 31) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

This firm conviction and exaltation in cultivating respect for differences and subjectivities seems to be a central point in our divergence as a non-indigenous society regarding the conception of identity and mode of existence of Indigenous peoples.

How can we recognize a point of contact between these worlds, which have so many common origins, but have diverged to the point where today, at one extreme, people need to live from a river and, at the other, people use rivers as a resource? In connection with this idea of a resource attributed to a mountain, a river, a forest, where can we discover a contact between our visions that will lift us out of this state of non-recognition? (Krenak, 2019, p. 51). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

While we cultivate the notion of uniformity and homogenization with the idea of a "national society", Indigenous peoples seem focus closely on a different priority: cultivating the people, community relationships, and connections with non-human beings, including all elements and existences shared on this earth.

1. THE FIGHT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR A DIFFERENTIATED EDUCATION

Indigenous peoples in Brazil have long fought for an alternative school model, as the current one has historically represented a space of profound oppression and erasure of their culture. The so-called differentiated school education, a constitutional right of Indigenous peoples, was established by the Federal Constitution of Brazil in 1988, specifically in the following article:

Article 210. Minimum contents for primary education will be established to ensure basic common education and respect for national and regional cultural and artistic values.

§ 2º Regular fundamental education will be taught in Portuguese, while ensuring Indigenous communities the use of their native languages and their own learning processes. (Federal Constitution, 1988) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

In Law No. 9.394/96, which establishes the guidelines and foundations of national education, we find:

Article 78. The Federal Education System, with the collaboration of the federal agencies for the promotion of culture and assistance agencies to Indigenous peoples, will develop comprehensive education and research programs to provide bilingual and intercultural school education to Indigenous peoples, with the following objectives:

I - Provide Indigenous peoples, their communities, and peoples with the recovery of their historical memories, the reaffirmation of their ethnic identities, the appreciation of their languages and sciences;

II - Ensure Indigenous peoples, their communities, and tribes, access to information, technical and scientific knowledge of the national society and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies.

Article 79. The Union will provide technical and financial support to education systems in the provision of intercultural education to Indigenous communities, developing comprehensive education and research programs.

§ 1º Programs will be planned with the audience of the Indigenous communities.

§ 2º The programs referred to in this article, including the National Education Plans, will have the following objectives:

- I - Strengthen the socio-cultural practices and the native language of each Indigenous community;
- II - Maintain programs for training specialized personnel for school education in Indigenous communities;
- III - Develop curricula and specific programs, including cultural content relevant to the respective communities;
- IV - Systematically prepare and publish specific and differentiated didactic materials. (LDB, 1996)

The specifications of the law highlight and justify the presence of many non-Indigenous teachers at the indigenous schools, as the failure to fully implement what is legally established often results in the filling of positions in Indigenous schools by non-Indigenous educators. Faced with this shortage and challenge, some non-Indigenous educators, driven by a belief in interculturality as a means to decolonize our education, have taken up this space, aiming to learn from and recognize Indigenous wisdom as part of our mixed heritage.⁴⁶

2. SILVIA CUSICANQUI'S SOCIOLOGY OF IMAGE: CH'IXI VIEWS

In her work "Sociología de la imagen: Miradas Ch'ixi desde la historia andina" (2015), Cusicanqui discusses a ch'ixi epistemology, presenting other expressions of the Aymara language, such as the notion of "taypi" or contact zone:

Proposing the universality (potential) of such ideas can become a way of walking along the paths of a sort of border consciousness or frontier consciousness, an approach that I have baptized as the Ch'ixi epistemology of the middle-world, the taypi or contact zone that allows us to live at the same time inside and outside the capitalist machine, using and at

46 The mestizaje to which we refer to the length of the text, supported many times in the Brazilian context giving support to the myth of racial democracy, treats our human, social and cultural constitution composites indigenous, black and colonizing peoples, whose history and involves the denial and invisibilization produced by colonized education.

the same time dismantling the instrumental reason that has arisen from its very core. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p.207) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

That is why it is important to see the Indigenous school as a contact zone where we can rethink our pedagogical and theoretical practices. I consider “ch’ixi perspectives” as views that distance themselves from the impossibilities imposed by a culture that cultivates a supposed purity and essentialism and that place us in a process of recognition as mestizos, from which we can then seek intercultural and decolonial education. This involves a permanent process of defamiliarization, estrangement, and distancing from hegemonic thought encompassed in our language and our way of considering images and oral traditions in a subordinate way.

Cusicanqui makes a strong distinction between the perspective of the sociology of image and the perspective of visual anthropology:

From the visual standpoint, the sociology of image would be very different from visual anthropology, insofar as in the latter an external gaze is applied to the “others” while in the former, the observer gazes at themselves in the social environment where they usually develop. In visual anthropology, we need to become familiar with the culture, language, and territory of other societies, different from the Eurocentric and urban society from which researchers usually come. In contrast, the sociology of image involves a defamiliarization, a distancing from the well-known, from the immediacy of routine and habit. Visual anthropology is based on participant observation, where the researcher participates in order to observe. The sociology of image, on the other hand, observes what it is already participating in; participation is not a tool for observation but its prerequisite, although it is necessary to problematize it within its unconscious colonialism/elitism. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 21) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

In this sense, we seek to think about and relate the meanings, symbols, and elements that we have been educated not to see, from a perspective we have been familiar with regarding the idea that images and oral traditions result from a so-called “cognitive shadow” on the part of oral tradition peoples, a hierarchical colonialist perspective of peoples and the knowledge they produce:

From a kind of situated and iconoclastic micropolitics, oral history work also broke with the myth of Indigenous communities immersed in isolation and poverty and locked in a past of immobility and cognitive shadow. This discourse has been the foundation of a long chain of civilizing actions, sometimes very violent, that continue to this day under deceptive guises, such as the discourse of “development” or “eradication of poverty.” (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 15) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Furthermore, it is important to note that the sociology of image, unlike visual anthropology, is not a practice of representation in which records are made to show an external audience but it is the analysis of all types of representation and what lies beneath them: “Images offer us social interpretations and narratives that, since pre-colonial times, have illuminated this social background and offer us perspectives of critical understanding of reality.” (Cusicanqui, 2015, p.176).

In her work, Cusicanqui also analyzes a letter from Felipe Waman Puma de Ayala, “*Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*.” This is a letter that Waman Puma, a Quechua chronicler of noble descent, wrote in 1615 to the king of Spain—at the time, Felipe III—but which was only discovered in 1909 at the Royal Library of Denmark. This manuscript features over 300 paradigmatic drawings, denouncing the cruel situation imposed by Spanish colonizers, including exploration, violence, and the diseases suffered by Andean populations. Cusicanqui considers the letter to be a visual theorization of the colonial system, highlighting the pillars of life—cosmology, labor relations, social relations, power relations—before, during, and after the Spanish invasion and the colonization period:

What I propose here is rather to read his drawings as a theory of colonialism, which points to basic concepts of the social, vital, and cosmic order, and which says what words cannot express in a society of colonial silences. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p.213) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

From a historical perspective, images can encompass meanings that words cannot: due to the impossibility of explicitly denouncing violence under the threat of punishment and, on the other hand, due to the imposition of an official language where prejudices originating from the colonizers’ worldview are embedded.

Waman Puma’s work reveals some central concepts, such as “Mundo al Revés”, unfolding through the images the changes in social order in the relations between Indigenous

peoples and colonizers, as well as how Indigenous peoples, from their cosmological perspective, understood this tragic event:

Mundo al Revés is a recurrent idea in Waman Puma's work and is part of what I consider his visual theorization of the colonial system. More than in the text, it is in the drawings where the chronicler displays his own ideas about pre-Hispanic Indigenous society, its values and concepts of time-space, and the meanings of that catastrophe that was the colonization and massive subjugation of the Andean population and territory to the Spanish crown. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 177) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

The author also highlights the damage caused by historicist views and the notion of "historical truth" that ignores the conceptual and moral frameworks represented in metaphors. For example, historians who point out a mistaken assumption of Waman Puma regarding how Atahualpa was executed do not recognize the intentional use of the symbolism of the "Headless Indigenous Society" by depicting the Indigenous leader with his head cut off. Cusicanqui asks:

Can it be argued that Waman Puma based his work on false versions, that he was a victim of misinformation or ignorance? Considering the importance of these figures, deserve more than a mere historical correction or clarification? The similarity of both figures naturally leads to a "flashback effect," which allows us to see in them an interpretation rather than a description of the events. The Indigenous society was decapitated. (Cusicanqui, 2015, pp. 183-184) [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

Cusicanqui emphasizes ethical judgment and historical interpretation as characteristics of Waman Puma's "gaze" into the past. In this sense, it is necessary to detach from a literal reading of what is represented in the images, aiming to observe the symbolic meaning portrayed in the images.

Inspired by Cusicanqui's sociology of image and seeking the foundations of an epistemology unique to Indigenous peoples, an experience begins⁴⁷, conducted between April and December 2019, based on clues for developing a decolonial pedagogical

47 The experience described here was carried out by one of the authors of this text, Prof. Marcia Tomazzoni, professor of an Mbya Guarani school. All the stories are based on this experience that inspires the ugly reflections.

practice. This involved observing the images produced by the students as traces of ancestral memory. This required, especially, distancing from the hegemonic conception that regards writing, to the detriment of images and oral traditions, as an irreplaceable parameter in the teaching-learning process. As Fornet-Betancourt (2007) states:

For my part, I consider that maintaining oral tradition is an expression of a whole worldview or, if preferred, of the will for cultural orality. Thus, the fundamental challenge is to know what world is being offered as a possible interlocutor to oral cultures. The prejudices that still exist are very strong. That is why we have to see if we are really trying to create a world where orality is also a way of organizing knowledge, preserving it and offering it to others. In other words, we should not fix writing or a technically elaborated program with concepts, etc., as the only form of communication. (Fornet-Betancourt, 2007, p.34). [Translated quote from its original in Spanish]

The concern with offering a present and a future in which both cultures present in the Indigenous school can dialogue and walk together demands that we “look” at images and oral traditions with the commitment and knowledge they require. In building this path, we select some images and an oral history to experience the practice of sociology of image in two ways: one as a pedagogical resource in the school, from which we started to think about the general themes for our classes, and the other as a decolonizing theoretical practice, from which we have research. In this way, I present the sociology of image as a decolonial pedagogical practice.

3. DECOLONIAL PEDAGOGICAL PATHS AND CLUES: SOCIOLOGY OF IMAGE FROM THE MBYÁ GUARANÍ GUAJAYVI SCHOOL

We will describe some moments from the daily life of a M'byá Guaraní school and how it affects the practices of a non-Indigenous teacher. This scenario raises deep questions about how interculturality produces decolonizing processes within the school and among those who are part of it.

When we began to reflect on decolonization from the indigenous school, in a process of building interculturality, we realized that the subject to be decolonized was the non-Indigenous teacher herself and all the Western and colonial apparatus that

the school carries, such as the school system (attendance, assessments, etc.) and the materials we use for studying. In this sense, we considered clues for decolonization in the pedagogical practice of a vast universe of images and stories produced by the Mbyá Guaraní students.

We present here a small selection of images—from the total of images analyzed, which have been recurrent since the beginning of our time at the school and of which there is photographic documentation: they are drawings and paintings of daily life, elements of community life, and Mbyá Guaraní cosmology.

These images generated a whirlwind of feelings and reflections, which over time transformed the perception of the school, the pedagogical process, and the language used in the Indigenous school. This teacher, who narrates the experience described here, was, for a few years, feeling that she was in a “different” school, not because differentiated education was respected and attended to in its particularities, but because she was surrounded by clues that led her to recognize a way of experiencing time and space, human relationships, and the school that had previously been largely distant from her, from the school and university spaces she had traversed.

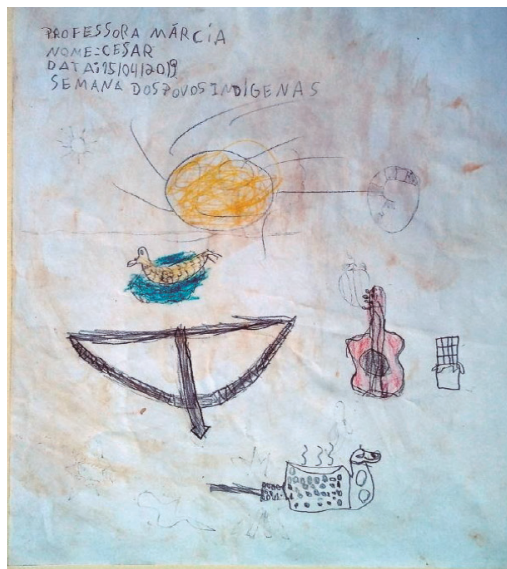
Figure 2 - Nhande Reko (“Our Way of Being”).



Source: Author's archive, 2019.

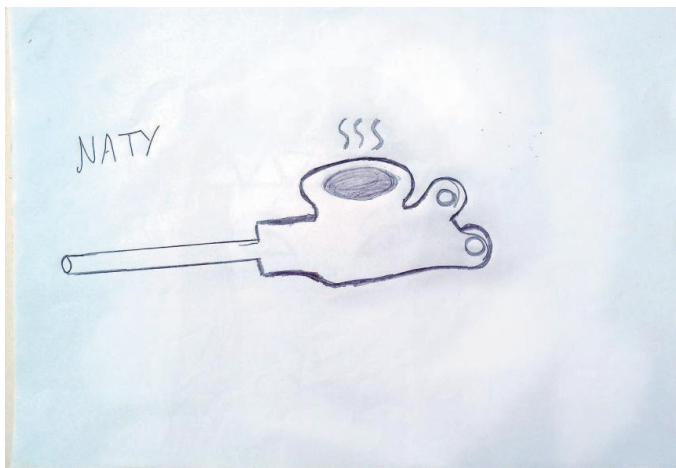
A man (ava) with akaregua (headgear) carrying a guy'rapa (bow and arrow), a woman (kunha) smoking his petyngua (sacred pipe) appear inhabiting and living the Nhande Reko. "Our Way of Being" refers to the M'byá Guaraní way of life (Mbyá Reko). The memory of customs, which are constantly updated through daily action is recurrent in the images produced spontaneously in class.

Figure 3 – Images during Indigenous Peoples Week.



Source: Author's archive, 2019.

Figure 4 – Petyngua (sacred pipe).



Source: Author's archive, 2019.

These drawings make us think of the deeply rooted awareness of what constitutes a good place for the Nhande Reko from the Guaraní perspective. According to the Traditional Knowledge Learning Booklet “Los Cuatro Cantos Sagrados”:

The Nhandereko is the traditional Guaraní way of life, involving all aspects such as the socio-political environment, territory, cosmology, and spirituality of being Guaraní. In the villages, the Guaraní live their traditional life through the teachings of the elders and the House of Reza, the Opy. This allows them to have a more spiritual and humanized education, thus maintaining contact and an emotional connection with traditions, customs, and nature. (Martins, D. T.; Moreira, H, 2018, p.22). [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

This notion of what is vital for their health and for Nhande Reko is learned from an early age by children. As stated by chief Maurício da Silva Gonçalves (2015):⁴⁸

Our elders and our older women always told us that before the white people arrived, we had a complete Good Life: we had forests, rivers, fish, game, and native fruits. This for us is Nande Rekó, the Guaraní way of living. In the memory of our ancestors, the entire coastline from Espírito Santo to Rio Grande do Sul is Guaraní territory, including Paraguay, Argentina, and Bolivia. In the past, we walked through our territory without fear and without limits. When the white man arrived, the great Guaraní struggle began. With the loss of land, the loss of our space. Today, looking at the Guaraní people, we see that most of the lands have been taken. And of those we still have, most have not been demarcated by the government, and therefore, we find that the Guaranís are living in a dramatic situation. (Gonçalves, 2015, n.d.) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

The contrast between the environment depicted in the images, where rivers often flow and lakes form, and the reality of the territory where the Guajayví community, many other Mbyá Guaraní communities, and other indigenous communities currently live, is striking. The living memory of a past in which they lived in harmony with nature and its beings, free and autonomous to practice and live their millenary wisdom that creates, produces food, and knows the cycles of the cosmos:

48 Available in <https://cimi.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Porantim381_Dez_Encarte-2015.pdf>. Access on 30 May 2020.

Indigenous otherness can be seen as a new universality, which opposes the chaos and colonial destruction of the world and life. From ancient times to the present, it is the weavers and poet-astronomers of communities and peoples who reveal this alternative and subversive web of knowledge and practices capable of restoring the world and returning it to its own course. (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 185) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

Figure 5 – The good place to live the Nhande Reko.



Source: Author's archive, 2019.

Far from monoculture, their drawings always show diversity among trees, plants, and animals that constitute the memory of a native forest. Guaraní women and men carry this legacy from an early age: autonomy to walk, know, create, walk, harvest, and eat the foods found in the forest. During our walks through the village, the search for food such as fruits and flowers always surprised and delighted me, not because I was unaware that this community—and many others—face food scarcity due to being allocated by the State to lands often extremely damaged by monoculture, but because I perceived great autonomy and knowledge of plants in the children. The more we interact, the more these characteristics of their way of living and educating stand out, as evidenced by how they behave in our classes: curious, creative, and passionate about fruits and animals.

Nhande Reko is part of the collective memory and consciousness of the Guaraní M'byá people as the ideal way of life, in an ideal space and time, a time prior to the colonial invasion. This does not mean that this people are unaware of the fact that this reality changed for some time and that they do not know how to face such changes. Their knowledge and modes of transmission teach them how to adapt, coexist, and resist the changes imposed by colonial invasion and colonialist apparatus.

Another strongly present and constant element is the image of Nhandexy (“our mother”), a sacred female entity for the Guaraní. For someone who was— and still is—starting to learn about Guaraní culture, the name of Nhanderu (“our father”), the central male sacred entity for the Guaraní, was frequently heard. However, I had never heard of Nhandexy until she started appearing in our classes through the drawings:

Figure 6 – Nhandexy (“Our mother”).



Source: Author's archive, 2019.

A woman holds the Earth: “Nhandexy has the power to send children to women on Earth,” explains Adriana, a student from the school. The allegorical nature of the drawing becomes evident as it represents the Earth in a size that fits in her lap, indicating care and protection for the Earth. As Benites states (2018):

Nhanderu created the Guaraní woman (Nhandesy) and had to create another man to live with her on Earth and populate the world; however,

that did not happen. Not resisting the charms of the woman he created, Nhanderu transformed into a man to live with the woman on Earth, even knowing he could not stay. As my grandmother used to say, Nhanderu is a spirit-like being similar to the air, without a body or fixed place, which is why we cannot see or touch him, only feel him. The woman, on the other hand, is of the earth, with a concrete body. (Benites, 2018, p. 76) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

At a meeting of Indigenous leaders in Viamão (RS) in 2017⁴⁹, Kaká Verá explains that Nhandexy represents, to the Guaraní, the idea of the Earth as our mother:

The first principle, which is present as a value and has traversed millennia, is precisely the idea of the Earth as a mother. In the Guaraní language, it is called Nhandexy: our mother. Some scholars even identify this principle as a beautiful metaphor, a beautiful symbol. This principle of the earth as mother is fundamental for there to be an exchange, an interaction, an understanding with this ancestral culture. Because really, the Earth is a great mother, a living entity, an intelligence, a consciousness; it is not simply a metaphor or an expression. And this is the first principle. (Kaká Verá, 2017, n/p) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

In line with Kaká Verá's statement, Benites (2018) adds:

Nhandesy's body is concrete, it is the ground we walk on. Nhandesy's body is what gives life and food. Nhanderu appears from above, as spirit, *nhe'e*, everything that is from above represents the male body: *ywytu* (wind), *pytu* (breath), air, aerial things; all these represent the male body. Nhandesy and Nhanderu complement each other; Nhandesy will always need the air, breath, wind, rain, and air would not make sense without the earth, without the ground. (Benites, 2018, p.90) [Translated quote from its original in Portuguese]

It is important to emphasize that, as a language of oral tradition, the spelling of words can differ across different communities, even within the same state. The Guaraní, known for their wandering nature, often have individuals from different states and even different countries with Guaraní villages in their communities and villages. There are

49 The full text of the Kaká Verá conference is available at: <<https://bodisatva.com.br/terra-e-de-nhanderu/>>. Access on 25 May. 2020.

also differences in spelling among Guaraní Mbyá, Nhandewa, and Kaiowá dialects. This is important to explain the different spellings of Nhandexy, with “x”, as used by this Indigenous community and the surrounding villages (Mbyá Guaraní); “Nhandetchy” as found in the Indigenous Knowledge Action materials I use as a reference in this text; “Nhandesy” as spelled by Sandra Benites, a Guaraní Nhandeva teacher working with Mbyá Guaraní school education; and “Nhandecy”, as referred to by the writer Kaká Werá, of Tapuia origin, who lived in a Guaraní village in São Paulo in the 1980s and deeply researched Tupi-Guaraní ancestral wisdom.

The images are accompanied by their names in Mbyá Guaraní’ with possible translations, based on conversations with the Cacique Acosta, older students, and also consulting the glossary in the book *“Educação Ameríndia: a dança e a escola Guarani”* (2015) by Ana Luísa Teixeira Menezes and Maria Aparecida Bergamaschi. We present the names in Mbyá Guaraní in a dialogue between languages and as a reflection of our daily construction of interculturality, where we are mixing forms of expression from our learnings.

We also note that the images presented here were produced since our first classes in April 2019. At the beginning, still unsure of where to start given the scenario reflecting the State’s profound neglect of the school and the community, the non-Indigenous teacher received these drawings in her hands as children and adolescents handed them over or called to show. Made with colored pencils or school paint, I began to notice the recurring presence of certain images produced by different students.

4. CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The struggle for land and the right to live their way of life (Nhande Reko) and the figure of Nhandexy are some of the central ideas portrayed through narratives depicted in the images produced by Guaraní children and youth. We think of what Cusicanqui says about Waman Puma’s visual theorization: the images and oral stories demonstrate a deep awareness of the contrast between the way of life before and after the European invasion and the social disorder caused by colonization. Mbyá Guaraní—like other indigenous peoples—have their own way of theorizing these events, producing and transmitting their knowledge to their youth and children, maintaining and updating the collective memory of their peoples.

What about us, the non-Indigenous people? How do we construct our memory of the colonial invasion and to what extent does the way it was constituted lead us to an uncritical repetition of history through education? How aware are we of the events we inherit? Decolonization requires a critical view and interpretation of the historical context with respect to our social and ethical constitution. How can we decolonize our pedagogical practices based on these images?

The images reveal that the M'byá Guaraní—like other indigenous peoples— continue to nurture the spiritual support on which they stand, ground that was invaded in the 15th century and later recounted in history books as the “discovery” of a place already inhabited by Indigenous peoples. In fact, the colonial invasion interrupts the stories of Indigenous peoples, but they, with their millenary wisdom, continue to cultivate the soil that cannot be seen with the naked eye.

From the drawn and painted landscapes, the Guaraní words spoken daily, and the perception of the invasion and colonization of the territory of Abya Yala, there is a vast and powerful set of knowledge that shows us a path toward decolonization of our knowledge and theoretical-pedagogical practices. To do this, it will be necessary to envision a future that accommodates, beyond writing, the images and oral traditions that sustain millenary cultures and knowledge.

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