

Time and Memory in Indigenous Amazonia  
Anthropological Perspectives

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2

## If God Were a Jaguar

Cannibalism and Christianity among the Guarani  
(16th–20th Centuries)

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Every coming-to-be is a passing-away of something else and every passing-away some other thing's coming-to-be.

—Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.3

To perish is to cease to be what one was; to be changed is to exist otherwise.

—Tertullian, *The Resurrection of the Flesh* LV

“Ore kurusu ñe’ngatu ra’y, kurusu ñe’ngatu rajy, ore ára jeguaka ra’y” (We are sons and daughters of the cross of the good word, we are sons of the crown of time). This self-description comes from the Kaiová, a Guarani subgroup from Brazil and Paraguay.<sup>1</sup> Kaiová is a corruption of *kaaguá*, meaning “forest dwellers,” a generic term applied to Guarani populations that evaded absorption by the colonial system. *Kurusu*, in turn, is an indigenization of the Spanish and Portuguese word *cruz*, or “cross,” and functions as an extremely productive concept in present-day Kaiová cosmology. The term refers to the support of the earth, set to collapse in the final cataclysm. But it can also mean a person, since someone who has died is referred to as an ex-cross (*kurusu kue*), and it refers also to an instrument used by shamans, who carry a cross in one hand while shaking a maraca in the other (Chamorro 1995:61–62).

What do the Kaiová mean when they claim they are the children of the “cross of the good word,” those who emerged from the “foamy base of the cross” (Chamorro 1995:60)? What status should we ascribe to this self-definition and

how should it be interpreted? Is it an imitation of misunderstood Christianity or a mere veneer concealing an authentic indigenous religion beneath? These are just some of the questions that haunted twentieth-century Guarani ethnology, and that had earlier tormented missionaries as far back as the first centuries of colonization, men for whom deconversion and cryptopaganism were problems on a par with teaching the mysteries of the Faith.

However, this is not the usual image of the Guarani living in the Jesuit missions of Paraguay. Here they are more often depicted as passive recipients of catechism, thanks to the virtue of the priests or to a sort of cultural preadaptation to Christianity. As early as the sixteenth century, chroniclers mentioned the greater propensity of the Guarani toward conversion (when compared to the Tupi)—an idea later reinforced by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mission historiography, which boasted of the missionaries’ apparent success in religious conversion.<sup>2</sup> Modern anthropology has tended to concur with this image: “on the face of the earth,” wrote Schaden in the 1950s, “there is undoubtedly no people or tribe to whom the Evangelical Word is better suited than the Guarani: my kingdom is not of this world. The entire mental life of the Guarani converges toward the Beyond” (1954a:248).

But rather than assuming that this inclination “toward the beyond” reflects a disposition to conversion, anthropology has interpreted it as the source for resistance, tradition, and memory. Although far from monolithic, the image of the Guarani produced by twentieth-century anthropology implies such a high degree of religious continuity that contemporary indigenous cosmologies come across almost as protohistorical relics that somehow survived the colonial process unscathed. We are faced by a dilemma, then: How can we reconcile the image of miraculous conversion with the tenacious resistance of a creed that apparently underpins an identity impervious to change and alterity?

I propose that examining the zone of ambiguity between these two poles—pure discontinuity and pure continuity—is much more productive. Over recent decades, new approaches to the history and anthropology of religious missions in native South America have enabled us to reconstruct the complexity of the phenomenon (Wright 1999; 2004) and to question the myth of the Jesuit reductions (Castelnau-L’Estoile 2000; Pompa 2003; Wilde 2003a). However, the same critique has yet to be applied to the ethnography of the Guarani. Even historical studies continue to repeat entrenched mistakes and questionable interpretations as though they comprised raw empirical data.<sup>3</sup> Here I attempt to make a start on this critical work by exploring—rather than repudiating—the idea of transformation, taken here as a process that unfolds in time (a history), as the production of a topological space (a structure), and as a native category. My aim is to dissolve

some of the traditional views found in the literature and thereby make room for new interpretations. The limits of the text are determined by this objective, meaning that I shall restrict myself to what Melià (2004:176) has called "El Guarani de papel; esto es en papel" (the paper Guarani—that is, the Guarani on paper).<sup>4</sup>

In previous works I have examined some of the classical dichotomies of anthropology—structure and action, myth and history, form and process—and proposed fresh analyses which, though making use of these binary opposites, do so by altering the relationship between them. When employing the notion of "mythical agency," I have maintained the distinction between myth and history while rejecting a widely accepted contrast framed in terms of passivity and activity (Fausto 2002a). Likewise, by emphasizing the pragmatic conditions through which certain beliefs are actualized in particular historical situations, I have insisted on their persistence over the long term (Fausto 2002b). I now wish to tackle these issues within a wider time frame, focusing on Guarani "religion," information on which extends back as far as the sixteenth century. My purpose is to show how this religion was transformed and to examine the directions taken in the process of becoming modern Guarani "religion." My working hypothesis is that contact with mission-based Christianity and the experiences of colonialism led to a growing denial of cannibalism as a source of shamanic power and social reproduction—a process I call "dejaguarization." I also suggest that the eclipsing of cannibalism created space for the emergence of a new concept, love, that acquired a central place in Guarani cosmology.

To pursue this hypothesis, I begin with a synopsis of the colonial situation experienced by the Guarani in Paraguay. I then discuss and criticize the composite image produced by Guarani ethnography via two procedures: firstly, a revision of the history of the missions and, secondly, a structural analysis of the transformations found in latter-day Guarani and Amazonian cosmologies. I conclude with a number of comparative observations concerning other processes of "dejaguarization" in Amazonia.

### The Guarani during the Early Colonial History

The huge indigenous population inhabiting the Atlantic coast of South America and the Rio de la Plata estuary in the sixteenth century came to be known as Tupi-Guarani. The term combines the names of its two constituent blocks: the Tupi, who lived north of present-day São Paulo, and the Guarani, who extended south as far as the Lagoa dos Patos and along the Paraná, Paraguay, and Uruguay rivers. Ascertaining precisely when this distinction became consolidated in the literature is difficult, but it was already starting to take shape in colonial times (see Edel-

weiss 1947, 1969). Nonetheless, local designations tended to predominate during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: names such as Tamoio, Tupinambá, Tupiniquim, Tabajara for the Tupi and Carijó, Itatin, Tapé, Guarambarensé for the Guarani. Derived from the native word for "war" (Montoya 1876), it was the latter term, Guarani, that became the generic designation for the southern block.

The first contacts of the Guarani with Europeans date from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The oldest information is the report produced by the Norman captain Paulmier de Gonneville, who landed on the coast of Santa Catarina in 1503 and remained there for six months. Until the mid-sixteenth century, the Guarani lands and the Rio de la Plata basin served merely as an eastern route to the Andean mountains and their abundant mineral wealth. In 1524 the Portuguese explorer Aleixo Garcia, escorted by the Guarani, succeeded in reaching the Incan Empire from the Brazilian coast. News of his expedition stimulated the Spaniards to explore the Rio de la Plata, founding Buenos Aires in 1536 and Asunción the following year.

Colonization of the region gained impetus, though, only when it became clear that the Andean mines had been monopolized by the conquistadors of Peru. In 1556 the *encomienda* system was established in Paraguay, designed to control the use of indigenous labor in the region surrounding Asunción.<sup>5</sup> This system entailed a rupture with the previously more volatile relations, regulated by alliance and kinship, between the Guarani and the vastly outnumbered Spaniards (Necker 1979:31–32). Implantation of the *encomiendas* may well account for the escalation in indigenous rebellions, already violently repressed since at least the beginning of the 1540s.<sup>6</sup>

From the 1570s onward, these rebellions began to be expressed in a shamanic and/or messianic idiom. The earliest records of these movements coincide with the start of missionary activity in Paraguay, an enterprise carried out by the Franciscans with the support of the governor Hernando Arias de Saavedra, who saw in the system of *reducciones* a solution to two problems: limiting the power of the *encomenderos* and pacifying the Guarani.<sup>7</sup> The combination of military action and Franciscan catechism—in a context of brutal demographic decline caused by epidemics and warfare—paved the way for the installation of the Jesuit missions. These flourished in the first decade of the seventeenth century and soon achieved hegemonic control over missionary work in Paraguay, although they were severely hit by slave hunters from São Paulo between 1628 and 1641. Several centers of Jesuit activity were destroyed or abandoned during this period.

The 1640s witnessed the economic, spatial, and military reorganization of Paraguay, which led to a stabilization in the reduction system (Monteiro 1992:493). This stabilization did not mean the isolation of the missions, though. They re-

mained linked, albeit in somewhat tense fashion, to both the colonial politico-economic system and to the Amerindians who resisted reduction—the so-called *monteses* or *caáguara* (forest dwellers). In fact, these appellations encompassed a wide variety of people. The *monteses* included refugees from uprisings, fugitives from the *encomienda* system, and former neophytes from the missions, alongside people and groups who had no experience of living with non-Amerindians. Despite the constraints imposed by the *encomienda* system and the reduction regime, the colonial situation was much more flexible than commonly imagined, including in terms of the circulation of people and things. Indeed, the history of the missions was always marked by large demographic fluctuations, whether these comprised the silent and constant movements of indigenous individuals and families or the intense migrations and epidemic crises that occurred at various moments from the very outset of missionization.<sup>8</sup>

The demographic crisis and the concentration of the Guarani population in the provincial and missionary villages had created uninhabited zones that afforded relative isolation to the *monteses*. However, the expansion in yerba mate harvesting led to new incursions into these areas in search of fresh fields, leading to contacts with supposedly isolated Guarani populations. The diversity in the historical experiences of these *monteses* can be glimpsed in missionary reports. For example, already in the eighteenth century, Jesuit priests established contact with the Tarumaés “who had learned about the *crucíferos* (‘cross bearers,’ i.e., the missionaries) through ‘hearsay’ and had adopted the *‘kurusú poty’* [the flower of the cross]” (Susnik 1980:188). This indicates a prior history of relations with the colonial religious universe. During the same period, the Jesuits made contact with another Guarani people, the Mbaeverá, who supposedly showed no signs of Christian influence, living as their ancestors had done and following their shamans who, in the words of Father Dobrizhoffer, “arrogate to themselves full power of warding and inflicting disease and death, of predicting future events, of raising floods and tempests, [and] of transforming themselves into tigers” (1784) (1970:63).

Cutting a long story short, around this time we start to observe a growing cultural distinction between the *monteses* and other Guarani populations, combined with a progressive merging of the Guarani inhabiting the provincial towns and local missions, as well as a blending of these latter populations with the poor mestizo population. This process was strengthened by the expulsion of the Jesuits in the second half of the eighteenth century, which helped weaken the system of reductions and accelerate the absorption of the native population into the surrounding economy and society.<sup>9</sup> The end result was, on one hand, the forming of a rural population that eventually became part of independent nation-states

in the nineteenth century (Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Brazil) and, on the other, an indigenous population recognized as Guarani, the subjects of anthropological study in the twentieth century.

### The Guarani and Their Ethnography

The first ethnography on the Guarani was published in Germany in 1914 by Curt Nimuendajú. His work focused on Guarani groups living in the state of São Paulo, although they had originally come from Mato Grosso do Sul. This population began migrating eastward at the start of the nineteenth century, stirred by the messianic hope of reaching *ywy maráey*, an expression that Nimuendajú translated as the “Land-without-Evil,” a translation that achieved common acceptance in the subsequent literature.<sup>10</sup> The migrations were led by shamans who announced the imminent end of the world and called on people to follow them, amid chanting and dancing, to a land of plenty with no disease or death, which was often believed to lie overseas.<sup>11</sup>

At the start of the twentieth century, the Apapocuva—People of the Long Bow, the self-designation used by the principal group studied by Nimuendajú—were in permanent contact with national society. They had adopted a series of non-indigenous traits, such as clothing and the use of crosses and Christian names, but, according to the author, maintained a typically indigenous mythoreligious conception of the universe, founded on the idea of an eventual (and recurrent) cataclysm. As far as Nimuendajú was concerned, “Christian tendencies” were entirely absent from the Apapocuva worldview since the key motifs of their religion were “archi-indigenous.” Its specificity lay in the theoretical elaboration and practical productivity of these motifs, an outcome of the suffering inflicted on the people over the preceding centuries (Nimuendajú 1987:131). This prompted Nimuendajú’s comparison with crypto-Judaism: just as Heine became a Christian in order to be left in peace as a Jew, so the Apapocuva adopted the outward signs of Christianity as a way of remaining inwardly Guarani (1987:27).

Nimuendajú’s book set out the main issues for Guarani ethnography over the following decades, especially questions concerning the authenticity of their contemporary religion. The latter topic reemerged during the 1950s in the work of Egon Schaden, likewise an ethnologist of German extraction and an adherent of acculturation studies. Concerned with tracing the nontraditional aspects of indigenous life, Schaden argued that Guarani religion had suffered profound Christian influence but, rather than obliterating native culture, the assimilation of new elements had accentuated “to an extreme certain key values of primitive tribal doctrine, reinterpreting Christian teaching in light of these” (1969:105).

This vague idea of historico-structural transformation remained unexplored in Guarani ethnography over the 1960s and 1970s. Instead, discussion focused on cultural preservation and identity.<sup>12</sup> The key work from this period is *Ayvu rapyta: Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá*, published by León Cadogan in 1959. The book presents the Mbyá of the Guairá as an isolated population that had conserved, as Schaden writes in the preface, “their traditions in their original purity: that is, with no modification caused by Christian influence, whether at the time of the Jesuit missions, or in more recent times” (1959:5). Among the narratives collected and translated by Cadogan, it was the first set, entitled “Ñe’ê Porã Tenonde” (The first beautiful words), that attracted the attention of most later scholars.

Presented as a secret and esoteric tradition to which the author succeeded in gaining access only after years of working with the Mbyá, “Ñe’ê Porã Tenonde” describes the origin of the supreme divinity, the foundations of love and human language, the creation of the first earth, and its subsequent destruction by the universal flood. For Cadogan (1959:68–70), the flood closed the first part of the “religious annals of the Mbyá,” their “most sacred chapters,” and what follows, he argues, are no more than legends similar to those of other Amerindian peoples.

This passage from mystical religion to primitive mythology leads Cadogan to ask whether this contrast indicates grafting or syncretism: “the profound religious concepts,” he writes, and “the elevated language . . . of the chapters which make up the first part . . . could well have been extracted from the annals of a race much more cultured than the Mbyá” (1959:70). But he rejects this hypothesis, proclaiming the uncorrupted authenticity of the “Ñe’ê Porã Tenonde” on the basis that these First Beautiful Words were unknown to the whites and supposedly preserved from missionary influence. We thus move from Nimuendajú’s cryptopaganism, seen as a defense mechanism against national society, to a secret religion transmitted over the centuries in the depths of the forest.

This is the move that Pierre Clastres would ultimately achieve when he published many of Cadogan’s texts in 1974, along with others collected by himself. In his introduction, Clastres characteristically collapses opposite poles of Western thought into one single formulation as a way of undermining its structure. Images of purity succeed each other, but not of primitiveness. For the author, the Beautiful Words of Guarani religion, which still today “resonate within the most secret part of the forest . . . preserved from all corruption” (1974:7–8), harbor a profound metaphysics, comparable to the great traditions of reflexive thought. They express a desire for superhumanity and immortality, contemplating the world and its misfortunes, and providing the apex to a religious universe that is “the substance of Guarani society,” “its very source and the goal of the Guarani will to live” (8).

This profound adhesion of the Guaraní to their religion was, the author argues, primarily a political fact—both a sign of resistance to the ethnocidal process of conquest, and the result of an autochthonous political crisis that predated European colonization. Clastres postulates a growth in the power of Tupi-Guaraní chiefs and the emergence of chiefdoms around the end of the fifteenth century, in turn provoking a wave of opposing religious movements stirred by the prophetic discourse of the great shamans. Urging the people to abandon everything and depart in search of the Land-without-Evil, these shamans, Clastres suggests, catalyzed the desire of a society keen to retain its self-identity and prevent the emergence of any irreversible political division.<sup>13</sup> European arrival in the Americas, however, had an immediate impact on this process. Colonial violence and the takeover of indigenous territories made large-scale migrations unviable. Hence, “closed from praxis, the Guaraní desire for eternity found its outlet in the elaboration of the Word; it flowed to the side of *logos*” (1974:10).

Clastres’ hypothesis replied to the question that first puzzled Cadogan: What was the origin of these Beautiful Words explaining the origin of our First and Last Father (Ñande Ru Pa-pa Tenonde), of Him who gave birth to Himself in the primordial darkness and who, through His wisdom, engendered human language and love, even before creating the first earth, which He created only to destroy, commanding another divinity to build it anew, but now suffused with sorrow? Its origin, said Clastres, was Guaraní religion folding in on itself, provoking the replacement of mythology by metaphysics.

Thus the problem of conversion that haunted the seventeenth-century Jesuits was transformed into a twentieth-century anthropological problem of contamination and identity. While ethnographic studies have correctly shown how contemporary Guaraní religion lacks a series of dichotomies typical of Christian soteriology, it has tended to exclude any transformation whatsoever in favor of a pure and impermeable nucleus of Guaraní religiosity.<sup>14</sup> This essentialism—already expounded by Nimuendajú—was reinforced by the “discovery” of the Mbyá of the Guairá, immediately depicted as the last representatives of an untouched “Guaraní-ness.”

### Histories of Un-conversion

The conception of culture and tradition underlying the ideas of purity and authenticity in Guaraní “religion” is difficult to sustain in light of contemporary Amazonian ethnology. It is particularly difficult to match this conception with structuralist-inspired ethnographies, whose emphasis on alterity and affinity provide a non-identity-centered formulation of indigenous societies and cosmolo-

gies. How are we to reconcile this perspective—which has proved highly productive in ethnographic terms—with the portrayal of the Guarani as a people closed in on themselves, resistant and impermeable to the otherness of the whites?<sup>15</sup>

This impermeability appears in stark contrast to what we read in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century chronicles. Here we find numerous passages exemplifying the complex appropriation and reworking of Christian symbols by Guarani chiefs and shamans. As early as 1594, Father Alonzo Baranza mentions rebel movements led by Indians claiming to be the pope or Jesus Christ (*apud* Melià 1986:39). The same themes surface in Barco de Centenera's poem (1602) that recounts the revolt in 1579 of Guarambaré, commanded by Oberá, a messianic leader who claimed to be the son of God, born of a virgin. The poem tells of a baptized Amerindian who, having lived in a village subjected to the *encomenderos*, left it to preach throughout the land, promising liberty to the natives and ordering them to sing and dance. The most common of these chants was "Obera, obera, obera, pay tupa, yandabe, hiye, hiye, hiye," which can be translated as "Splendor, splendor, splendor of the priest, God for us too, let us pray, let us pray, let us pray" (Melià 1986:36, 113).<sup>16</sup>

The Jesuit reductions provided the setting for various conflicts between priests and Guarani, confrontations in which each side made use of the other's weapons.<sup>17</sup> In the case of priests, this was usually a ploy to curb a "magician" or "sorcerer." But in general the two sides converged, albeit equivocally, in terms of their imagery of the supernatural and the intervention of extrahuman powers in the human lived world. Chiefs and shamans, for their part, were avid consumers of Catholic rituals and liturgical objects, prompting accusations by the Jesuits of their "pretending to be priests." Father Antônio Ruiz de Montoya narrates how the cacique Miguel Artiguaye, "donning a small cape made of beautiful feathers and other adornments, simulated mass. He placed some towels upon a table and on them a manioc pie and a vase, elaborately painted and filled with maize wine, and, talking through his teeth, held many ceremonies" ([1639] 1985:57).

Although these religious conflicts were often dissipated through threats and derision, occasionally they escalated into actual violence. In 1628, for example, after initially permitting missionaries to enter his lands, Neçu, a Guarani cacique and shaman, ordered them all to be killed. After their deaths, Neçu, "to show he was a priest, albeit a false one, donned the liturgical paraphernalia of the priest and, thus attired, presented himself to the people. He summoned the children before him and proceeded to eradicate, through barbaric ceremonies, the indelible character which baptism had impressed upon their souls" (Montoya [1639] 1985:201–202). This "debaptism" seems to have been just as important an act to the Guarani as baptism was to the priests. They scraped the tongues of children

who "had tasted the salt of the sapient spirit," as well as their backs and necks to "smudge the holy ointments," and inverted the ritual, washing the children from their feet up to their heads.

This use and abuse of Jesuit imagery indicates that, from the native point of view, what was at stake was not a conflict between two "religions" in the sense of two mutually exclusive orthodoxies or creeds (see Greer 2003).<sup>18</sup> As Viveiros de Castro (1993) has shown, the Tupi-guarani style of religiosity was opposed to any kind of orthodoxy. Unlike the Catholic missionaries' belief in God and the Scriptures, their faith in their shamans was entirely provisional, a credence based on trial and error. Moreover, the reduction system did not consist of two watertight worlds divided by an impermeable frontier; it formed a social network involving not only the circulation of goods but also a constant flow of reinterpreted signs. The missionaries had no control over the meanings produced in their interactions with natives: once placed in circulation, their ideas acquired autonomy (Griffiths 1999:9). In fact, this process was already under way in the adaptation of native categories required in translating the catechism into indigenous languages—a task that relied on the aid of bilingual informants and continued from one ritual event to the next.

The main problem for the Guarani was not how to return to a lost identity but how to appropriate the powers that the Europeans, especially the priests, seemed to possess.<sup>19</sup> And here the reworking of rituals and the use of sacerdotal clothing and liturgical objects played an equally crucial role. Such practices were not simply disrespectful parodies of Christianity or artifices of the devil, as the Jesuits thought. Nor were they mere subterfuges to conceal a pure "Guarani-ness," as Nimuendajú would conjecture centuries later. These objects and habits were like the masks used in indigenous rituals to make a spirit present, or the jaguar skins worn by shamans to metamorphose into the feline (Fausto 2003, 2004). At issue was not representation in the dramatic sense but transformation. The intention was to appropriate the special capacities that priests seemed to possess—an idea that the missionaries reinforced by likewise attributing mystical powers to the habit that went beyond its institutional function.<sup>20</sup> Here we can take literally the saying that the habit makes the monk.

Native appropriation of the imagery and power associated with the missionaries rarely took the form of actual devouring, which was otherwise one of the classic Tupi-Guarani methods for capturing external identities and subjectivities. The Jesuits were not a favored target for anthropophagy. Much the opposite: eating them seems to have been avoided, this fate being reserved for native neophytes (see Montoya [1639] 1985:83, 165–166, 235). At the start of the seventeenth century, the martyrs of the Company of Jesus killed by the Guarani had their bodies

dismembered and burned, insinuating it was necessary to reduce them to nothingness in order to avoid shamanic vengeance and deny them the posthumous immortality they had proclaimed in life. There is a notable similarity between the way in which the priests were killed and the way in which, in indigenous myths, a demiurge is put to an end<sup>21</sup>—the difference being that, in the latter narratives, the bodies of primordial shamans are indestructible, a sign of their power and their immortality.<sup>22</sup>

Montoya's account of the dialogue between priests and their killers prior to their execution suggests that immortality was one of the disputed issues, although native and European conceptions of it diverged ([1639] 1985:202–203, 234–235). Faced with his imminent death, the missionary would affirm that his captors could kill his body but not his soul, for this was immortal. Concerned as much with the soul as with the body (or maybe because they did not postulate this dichotomy), the Guarani proceeded to tear the victims apart before burning them. They separated their members, cut open the torso, and removed the heart. This was the fate of Father Cristóvão de Mendoza, whose heart, “which burned with love for them,” was shot by “obstinate archers” who pronounced: “Let us see if your soul dies now” (Montoya [1639] 1985:234–235).

### If God Were a Jaguar

We do not know if the priests' souls were immortal or not. But did their words and deeds leave their trace in the religious discourse of the Guarani? As we have seen, most ethnographers have answered this question with a simple denial, or have appealed instead to the dichotomy between essence and appearance by asserting that Guarani religion (culture) remained self-identical over time. Conceived as a set of firmly interiorized and zealously protected beliefs, this religious essence was identified as the core of Guarani existence and identity: an inner nucleus preventing them from dissolving into an amorphous state of syncretic indifference. But here we must pause to ask whether transformation has to be denied in order to affirm the identity of a culture and hence its distinctiveness. Is it really necessary to conflate the problem of individuation with the problem of the Same and the Identical? And finally, “what does it mean to remain the same through time?” (Ricoeur 2000:98). From a structural point of view, duration over space and time implies transformation, and the problem becomes one of recognizing the limit beyond which a structure ceases to be itself. From a phenomenological point of view, the question is, how can one become an other and still think of oneself as the same? Let us leave this last question pending and turn first to the problem of transformation at the structural level.

This question brings us to what I have dubbed “dejaguarization”: the negation of cannibalism as the general condition of the cosmos and as a mechanism for social reproduction. Contemporary Guarani cosmology is characterized by an antichesis between people and substances that are otherwise closely associated among other Tupi-Guarani peoples, including the diametrical blood/tobacco and warrior/shaman oppositions. This disjunction is manifested in various areas of Guarani thought, beginning with their concept of the person, where we encounter a dichotomy between two animating principles that can be roughly identified as a “divine” soul and an “animal” soul.<sup>23</sup> The first is normally called *ayvu* or *ñe'ê* and glossed as “word-soul.” Its origin is divine and it falls to the shaman to determine its exact source during the naming ceremony. This he undertakes through chants, quizzing the various divinities about the origin of the soul and its name (Nimuendajú 1987:30).

This preformed heavenly soul is followed by another, generally called *acyguá*, a word that, Nimuendajú tells us (1987:33), derives from *acy*, meaning “pain” and “lively, violent, vigorous.” *Acyguá* is both what causes pain and something that is vigorous. The literature betrays a fair degree of ambiguity in characterizing this soul. Sometimes it appears as a regressive animal-soul responsible for sexual urges, violent impulses, and the desire to eat meat. At other times it is identified as the soul of a specific animal whose qualities determine the character of the person, such that the *acyguá* of a butterfly will not pose the same threat as that of a jaguar. Nonetheless, the jaguar seems to correspond to the ideal-type dominating the symbolism of the *acyguá*, and to become a jaguar is the fate of every human being who fails to behave in a properly religious and generous fashion.

This dichotomy between distinct animating principles is expressed in two extreme configurations of the Guarani male person: on the one hand, the man who allows himself to be dominated by the animal soul and the desire to eat raw meat, and whose fate is to become a jaguar; on the other, the ascetic who dedicates his life to achieving a state of maturity-perfection (*aguyje*) and whose fate is to become immortal. As Hélène Clastres has shown (1975:113–134), this dichotomy possesses both ethical and alimentary implications: the first is the selfish hunter, who eats his prey in the forest so as to avoid sharing its meat; the second is the generous hunter who hands over all of the game to his kin and abstains from eating meat.<sup>24</sup> Vegetarianism is an essential condition—along with dancing and chanting, accompanied by manioc beer drinking—for joining the gods. “Because of this way of life,” the Apapocuva say of the great shamans, “their bodies became light: the *acyguá* . . . has been subjugated, while the *ayvucué* returned whence they came: during shamanic dances their souls left the earth and returned to *Nandecy* [Our Mother], *Nanderyquey* [Our Older Brother] or *Tupã*. At times, one found

their dead bodies, at other times they ascended in their living body" (Nimuendajú 1987:62).

Tameness, generosity, avoidance of meat, participation in rituals—all these should guide the conduct of a Guarani man so that his word-soul controls his animal-soul. Finally, at death, these two components of the person are definitively sundered. The ex-word-soul (*ayvu-kwe*) returns to the sky after a journey littered with obstacles, while the *acyguá* becomes a dreaded specter, the *anguéry*. This kind of posthumous duality is also found in various Tupi-Guarani groups in Amazonia, but the Guarani case reveals a crucial permutation: the eclipsing of cannibalism as a central operator associated with death and shamanism.

For the sake of comparison, we can take the Araweté case as an example. Here we also find a verticalized cosmology and an emphasis on shamanic relations with divine beings. The Araweté postulate the existence of a single soul called *i*, naming both the vital principle and a person's shadow. At death, this soul splits into two components: a posthumous projection of the shadow (a specter known as *tá'owe*) and a spirit (also referred to as *i*), which ascends to the sky. This spirit is then devoured and made immortal by the gods, whose epithet is "eaters of the raw"—that is, jaguars. Araweté shamanism occupies precisely the mediatory space between humans and these jaguar-gods (Castro 1992:90, 201–214).

Similar ideas are found among the Asurini of the Tocantins with, however, an interesting twist. They postulate the existence of a single soul during life known as *iunga*, which is deposited in women by the divinity Mahira. As death approaches, it splits into a celestial aspect and a terrestrial one: the first joins Mahira in Tupana, while the second becomes a specter known as *asonga*, a cognate of the Tupinambá *anhanga*, a cannibal spirit associated with the dead. The spirit that ascends to *Tupana* ceases to be of any importance to the living, while the specter remains earthbound and becomes an auxiliary spirit for dreamers, playing a key role in the encounters between shamans and the celestial jaguar, the ultimate source of all shamanic power (Andrade 1992:217–249).

In both cases—and despite these permutations—the jaguar-operator is positively associated with shamanism. Indeed, this is the case among most Amazonian groups, where the most powerful shamans are those who have fearsome predators as their spirit familiars, eaters of blood and raw meat (see Fausto 2002c). But this articulation has been severed in the case of the contemporary Guarani: the shaman is an anticannibal and the spirits who supply him with chants are either the divine souls inhabiting the "country of the dead" or themselves divinities lacking predatory traits. While initiating the anthropologist Miguel Alberto Bartolomé, the Chiripá shaman Avá Nembíara asked him to remember the animal he had last killed. He then described the vegetarian diet the anthropologist was to follow

thereafter and advised Bartolomé to allow himself to be guided by love alone (Bartolomé 1977:103). Cannibalism as a model for a person's relation with the Other seems to have been substituted by another relational form whose central category is love (*mborayhu*).<sup>25</sup>

The disjunction between shamanism and predation—as well as the exclusive association of the first with an immortal, divine soul—opened up the way for a transformation in the Guarani notion of the person and the emergence of the concept of the *acyguá*: the jaguar-part of the person, representing the Other of the gods and the human desire for immortality. Thus *acyguá* is what traps us in this existence of misfortunes (*teko achy*) and prevents us from reaching the Land-without-Evil (H. Clastres 1975:114). As constitutive alterity, the animal-soul must be denied and controlled through a vegetarian diet, a particular aesthetic (witness the productivity of the concepts of beauty and adornment), and through what various authors, perhaps under the influence of Ignatius Loyola, have termed *spiritual exercises*. The male ideal is not the warrior who captures an alien subjectivity by killing his victim, thereby acquiring knowledge and creativity. Rather it is the shaman who strips himself of his alterity in order to become divine in the image of a god who is not a jaguar.

## Maize Religion

Let us return to corporeal immortality, a condition that elides the experience of death. As we have seen, this destiny is reserved for the great ascetics who achieve maturity-perfection (*aguyje*) rather than for the killer. A Chiripá shaman explains that "our ancestor left the living world without dying. . . . As a result, we must not eat meat when we dance; we can only eat the food that Nãnderu [Our Father] sent us" (Bartolomé 1977:87). But what is this food that Our Father left for us?

In the case of the Chiripá studied by Bartolomé, part of the answer can be located in a mythical episode inserted into the saga of the twins—a variation of a myth found throughout South America, but one that, to my knowledge, has no counterpart among the Amazonian Tupi-Guarani peoples. The Chiripá myth tells us that every time Kuarahy—the sun, son of Nãnderú Guazú (Our Great Father) and the older of the twins—created/raised an animal, the Tupi-Guarani demon Añang invented a way of hunting it. Here predation emerges not as an *a priori* given, nor as a condition set down by the demiurge, but as an artifice employed by his cannibalistic rival. The myth stresses the absolute disjunction between divinity and predation. The shamans establish relations with nonpredatory divine beings, whose pacificity contrasts with many of the spirit familiars of Amazonian shamans.



While meat should be avoided, other foods must be consumed. These include white maize, the core element of one of the main contemporary rituals: *avati-kyry*, frequently glossed as “baptism of the white maize” but literally meaning fermented maize drink. This is a beer festival, but one very different from those practiced by the sixteenth-century Tupi-Guarani in the run-up to their cannibal feasts, or those held by the Parakanã as a means of acquiring the speed and agility to track game. Rather than transform drinkers into agile and voracious predators, Guarani maize beer makes them light enough to approach the divinities.

The Guarani feast is held to baptize the new crop of maize and resembles various Amazonian rituals that aim to desubjectify animal prey to make them edible. Maria Kaiowá, a Guarani woman, explains: “we need to love [the maize], because it is a child, we need to sing for it to ripen . . . so that when we eat it . . . it doesn't make our bellies swell or make us angry. We have to pray so as to prevent it from killing us” (quoted in Chamorro 1995:91; see also Schaden 1954b:57).<sup>26</sup> Maize is for the Guarani—as game is for Amazonian peoples—a person, and it needs to be shamanized to become safe for daily consumption. Eating it without praying first, failing to treat it with due love, would be tantamount to a form of cannibalism.

Although use is made of crosses, altars (*mba'e marangatu*), kneeling and even mention in the songs of biblical figures like Noah, the crucial idea is that the ritual represents the baptism of Jakaira, the divinity who created the second earth after the flood—a function that other Guarani groups attribute to Kétxu Kírítu (Schaden 1969:109, 110, 125). The ritual's central theme is the renewal of the maize and takes place at the end of its period of ripening: this corresponds to the divinity's departure. The body of the maize remains behind to be eaten, while its “master” (*avati jára*) leaves for the heavens, from where he returns with each new crop.

If we imagine this cycle to contain an echo of Christ's saga and the maize to be his body, it is perhaps safe to assume blood corresponds to the “indigenous wine” or maize beer. Indeed this appears to be the function of the fermented beverage, which causes drunkenness but makes the drinker well-behaved and tame: precisely the opposite of Tupinambá beer and other substances—frequently associated with the blood of victims and menstrual blood—which in Amazonian rituals inspire a violent and creative energy in people (see Fausto 1999). For the Kaiowá, maize contains a vital force called *jasuka*, which guarantees its continual renewal. Paulito Kaiowá explains this concept: the beer “is the first juice of *Jasuka*. . . . *Jasuka* is for us what the motor is for whites, with the difference that *Jasuka* is natural rather than artificial. . . . it serves to give us life and renew us. Some people are so renewed by *Jasuka* that they no longer die, they remain new like a child who has just had his lip pierced” (Chamorro 1995:99).

The fermented drink also appears in another Kaiowá ritual, the boy's lip-piercing rite, also known as *mitã ka'u*, “the child's drunkenness.” The purpose of the ritual is to “cook” the boys to prevent them from becoming violent and angry (Chamorro 1995:115). Those who fail to have their lips pierced stay raw and tend to become either predators or prey, since they “smell more pleasant to the jaguar” (Schaden 1954b:111). Prohibited to women, the ritual aims to induce a pacific disposition rather than instill a predatory potency in the young—the goal of Tupi-Guarani rites in the past, and of the initiation of boys among the Barasana (see C. Hugh-Jones 1979) or the *arutam* quest among the Jívaro. By donning ritual clothes and adornments, which likewise enter seclusion, the boys are said to “become true son[s] of Tupã,” children “without evil” (*maranëy*) (Chamorro 1995:111, 118).

The “boy's drunkenness” ritual involves cooking and cooling the novices. The feast “makes them cold” (*emboro'y*) and prepares them to live according to the nonviolent, “cold way of being” (*reko ro'y*), a theme developed in the prayer chants:

My father cools our mutual body, bringing joy to the earth;  
My father cools our mutual word, bringing joy to the earth;  
My father cools anger, bringing joy to the earth.  
(Chamorro 1995:115–116).<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps this idea of “cooling” was already present in the universe of the seventeenth-century reductions, when Montoya compiled his *Vocabulario y tesoro de la lengua guarani*, illustrating the entry for the word *roi*, “cold,” with the expressions “Roiçã hápe ahaihí Tupã” (I coolly love God) and “Cheracubo cûe Tupã raihûbari iroi imã” (I cool myself in God's love).

### The Work of Forgetting

Let us now turn to my second question, concerning the problem of transformation and temporality, which I expressed in phenomenological terms as follows: How can one be different and yet continue to think of oneself as the same? Or, to adapt this question to our present topic: How did the Guarani make theirs a religious discourse that bears the marks of an alien discourse? How can they truly be the “sons of the Cross of the Good Word”?

The religious universe of the Guarani is filled with symbols, ritual routines, and figures derived from Catholicism. Various authors, Schaden in particular, have dedicated themselves to identifying these elements. The cosmic sequence of divinities commences with a supreme deity called Our Father (Ñanderu) or

Our Master (Ñandejara) who gives birth to himself in the primordial darkness, adorned with a crown of flowers from which emerges the primogenital bird, the hummingbird, who later reappears as the messenger of the gods (Cadogan 1959:14; P. Clastres 1974:18; Bartolomé 1977:105). In the Apapocuva version, Ñanderuvucu emerges amid the darkness and finds himself alone save for his antithesis, the Eternal Bats, cannibal beings who fight endlessly among themselves. In his chest he carries the sun (Nimuendajú 1987:143), the resplendent heart that permeates Guarani religious imagery and can probably be traced back to the cult of the Sacred Heart.<sup>28</sup> The Chiripá say that when someone reaches the state of perfection (*aguyje*), when he is dry and incorruptible (*kandire*), “flames [emerge] from his chest as evidence that his heart is illuminated by divine wisdom” (Bartolomé 1977:84–85). This is the same wisdom that enabled Ñamandu Ru Eté to produce the light of the flame out of himself and create the foundations of both human language (*ayvu rapyta*) and love (*mborayú rapyta*) (Cadogan 1959:19–20).

Turning to the saga of the twins that, according to Cadogan, inaugurates the second part of the “religious annals” of the Mbyá of the Guairá, we find that the main protagonist is Kuarahy, the Sun, the older brother of the Moon. Among the Mbyá of other regions, Kuarahy is conflated with Kétxu Kírítu and with Ketxúita, personae frequently identified with each other.<sup>29</sup> The Mbyá of Chapecó say that after the first earth was destroyed by the flood, Kétxu Kírítu re-created the world (Schaden 1964:109, 123)—a world once again about to end since the cross holding it up will soon give way. The gods will then come with “*ponchito, chiri pá* and *tembetá* of destroying fire . . . [and] all the earth will burn” (Chamorro 1995:63). There will be a new flood. Then the gods will change their fiery clothes for cold clothes (*ro’y*) and prepare a new earth, perfect and eternal, “that nothing petty could ever change” (P. Clastres 1974:140).

The version of the twins saga found among the Guairá Mbyá reveals an important transformation. This Pan-American myth recounts the adventures of two brothers—sons of the same mother but different fathers. Among the Tupi-Guarani, the elder brother is the son of the demiurge Maíra and represents shamanism and immortality, while the younger is the son of Opossum, symbol of death and decay. In the First Beautiful Words, however, the Sun creates the Moon from himself after the jaguars kill his mother. He makes a companion, whom he calls brother, but denies they are twins since they did not share the same uterus.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps we can extract a more general observation here, bearing in mind that, according to Lévi-Strauss, the myth of the twins deals with the impossibility of a perfect identity and expresses the “opening toward the Other” (1991:16) typical of Amerindian cosmologies. Perhaps the Guarani have been drifting toward this identity-based temptation, this “self-folding” (*pli sur soi-même*) mentioned by

Pierre Clastres. If so, wasn't he right, except for the fact that the Beautiful Words were not “sheltered from all stain”?

Despite all the marks of an alien discourse and these multiple signs of transformation, the Guarani were not led to think of themselves as others, for they made this alterity entirely their own. This meant forgetting the process through which they appropriated and transformed an alterity that simultaneously transformed them. But how do we define this other form of forgetting? Is it simply a failure to remember typical of a society without history and without writing—an unfortunate pathos that blocks any conscious recognition of the fact that human activity is a making that unfolds over time? Or are we faced with an active-passive phenomenon that implies a specific mechanism for producing a sociocultural world and a collective memory?

Analyzing a similar process among the Yanésha, Santos-Granero in this volume suggests that such a mechanism results from a combination of mimesis and forgetting, which works to revert or neutralize relational asymmetries by appropriating the power of the other as if this had always been one's own. Extending this idea, perhaps we can see in this process, as Severi (2000) suggests, a paradoxical mode of social memory, one capable of simultaneously obliterating and recording a traumatic history in an imagetic and ritual form. This may explain the sadness that the Guarani say pervades maize baptism, an emotional tone difficult to understand within the more general context of Amazonian rituals, frequently translated by Amerindians themselves as fiestas.<sup>31</sup>

Appropriation and forgetting haunted the sixteenth-century Jesuits. For them, the difficulty in converting the Tupi-Guarani lay in the fact that their memory and will were incapable of retaining God's word. They avidly consumed the Good News, only to forget everything soon afterward. As Viveiros de Castro suggests, “the problem is thus one of determining the meaning of this blend of openness and stubbornness, docility and inconstancy, enthusiasm and indifference with which the Tupinambá received the Good News—one of understanding the meaning of this “weak memory” and “defective will” of the Indians, comprehending this modality of believing without faith, fathoming the object of this obscure desire of being the Other, but in their own terms” (1993:371).

While this blend was a structural feature of the relationship between Tupi-Guarani peoples and whites, the historical situation also favored such mixture. Epidemics, forced migrations, the collapse of social networks, *mestiza je*, and new interethnic contexts in which people of different origins were brought together—all of these factors disrupted the traditional networks of cultural transmission, while simultaneously expanding the possibility of cultural reinventions. The very discontinuity of the colonial process—which alternately advanced into indigenous

territories and withdrew from them, either attracting or repulsing indigenous populations, in response to economic cycles and political variations—strengthened the work of forgetting.<sup>32</sup> This dynamic flow and counterflow allowed native societies a degree of autonomy in re-laboring and re-creating contents produced and circulated during periods or within regions of denser interethnic interaction (see S. Hugh-Jones 1996:52–53, for example). Rarely documented, these facts have tended to remain overlooked. Ethnohistory has focused its attention on those moments when the world system expanded and on those areas where there was a continuous interaction between whites and Amerindians. This creates the false impression that indigenous history is history *only within this relationship* and that only two ways of conceiving this history therefore exist: either a gradual and inexorable imposition of an external dominant model (in which case indigenous history is simply the history produced by others), or the repetition of the Same against the alterity of history (in which case indigenous history is merely an affirmation of the identical, irrespective of the passage of time).

### Conclusion

In order to found a new ethic of love (*mborayhu*)—which was probably built on native concepts of generosity and reciprocity, and nurtured by the “love thy neighbor” ethic of the Christian message—the Guarani concealed the footprints of the jaguar. They either turned the jaguar into pure negativity or shrouded it in silence. Although the shaman-ascetic’s zoomorphic stool (*apyka*) frequently represents the feline, the head is nonetheless absent, for “one should neither see nor recognize the jaguar, nor even say its name” (H. Clastres 1975:133).

Indigenous people living in the missions were taught to imitate the pathos of Christ (and the priests) while simultaneously refraining from any attempt to appropriate the agency of the jaguar. As Guillermo Wilde notes, the Jesuits’ annual reports (*cartas anuas*) reveal a recurrent association between “forest tigers,” sorcerers, and the devil. For the Jesuits, this was all the same battle. God-made-as-man subverted the predatory logic of indigenous ontologies (Castro 1993; Fausto 2001): the divine pole became the pole of passive prey, a role played out in each act of communion.<sup>33</sup> Moving from the enemy eaten publicly in the central plaza to the divinity devoured in the mass involved a profound shift, unleashing a series of transformations. This explains the notable absence of blood in Guarani rituals and cosmologies, a symbol as central to indigenous cultures as it is to Christianity. The blood of Jesus—token of a sacrifice that the missionaries yearned to emulate through martyrdom—could not be appropriated. The ethic of tamedness and ascetic shamanism implied a new combination of three basic substances: blood,

beer, and tobacco. The Guarani assimilated the last two and negated the first. It is no accident that Jakaira, the owner of the maize used to make beer, is also the creator of tobacco, a substance meant to protect humans from misfortune.

This process of transformation was neither random nor amorphous, as might be imagined. Although unfolding in a context of sociodemographic crisis, these appropriations and reappropriations, interpretations and reinterpretations, did not just evolve into an array of disparate cosmologies. Much the opposite: today we can speak of a contemporary Guarani cosmology and recognize versions of one and the same structure through its variations. We can also identify various Christian motifs that have been particularly productive, like the concept of love. As Montoya would say, the missionaries conquered the Amerindians, “with love and gifts” ([1639] 1985:208)—accompanied, of course, by the armed interference of the Spaniards and converted Amerindians.<sup>34</sup> But we should not overlook the love of the devoted missionary who, as he is executed, asks of his killers: “sons, why do you kill me?” (200). The imperative of love had a longer-lasting impact on Guarani thought than the threat of punishment and hell, a response similarly found among the Yanesha described by Santos-Granero (1991 and this volume).

This does not imply the disappearance of all figures of devoration, but most likely the channeling of cannibalism into magical forms of aggression and sorcery. A “religion of love” may be accompanied by extreme levels of violence, as we can see in the Yanesha complex of child sorcery accusations and executions (Santos-Granero 2002), or in the eruption of factional conflicts among the Kaiowá-Ñandeva at the beginning of the twentieth century, which led to the dissolution of political unities and the death of many people accused of witchcraft (Mura, 2006).

Be that as it may, I would argue that, in the Guarani case at least, we observe a replacement of familiarizing predation as the hegemonic scheme of relating with others by love as the basis of power and religion. And here we can see a real shift in point of view: persons and collectivities are no longer perceived to be constituted through an identification with the predator position but, on the contrary, with the position of familiarized prey. Such perspectival inversion may serve as a form of resistance in contexts of great asymmetry of power, as Rival (1998, 2002) and Bonilla (2005) have similarly argued.<sup>35</sup>

But what breach allowed the Christian message of universal love, peace, and brotherhood among human beings to penetrate into the indigenous lived world? It appears to have resonated precisely where predation is projected onto social relations among kin—where an ethic of reciprocity and generosity is continually assailed by cannibalism as an essential mechanism for social reproduction. The question is: How can predation of the outside be prevented from becoming the

measure for relationships on the inside? How can one be a jaguar without eating one's own kin? Wherever this paradox was acutely posed, we can observe a series of transformations in the notion of the person, in the diet, and in ritual practices. These did not always result from Christian influence or even from the presence of Europeans—at least not directly. In the case of the upper Xingu, for example, this appears to be the product of an Arawak cultural base and a historical necessity to absorb peoples with distinct linguistic and ethnic origins in the wake of the territorial pressure caused by the European Conquest (see Heckenberger 2001, 2005; Franchetto and Heckenberger 2001; Fausto et al., forthcoming). In the case of the upper Rio Negro, on the other hand, the diminution in the space of predation involves a long history of contact with colonial agents followed by periods of isolation, likewise in a context of accommodation between different ethnic groups (S. Hugh-Jones 1994, 1996:145; Wright 1998).

Although I shall have to develop these points another time, I wish to conclude with an observation concerning what Stephen Hugh-Jones (1994) has called “dual shamanism”—that is, the distinction between two types of religious specialists, who occupy complementary poles of Amazonian shamanism. The disjunction I discussed in relation to the Guarani has been emerging as a constitutive element of the shamanism of upper Rio Negro peoples from at least the nineteenth century, actualized in the figures of the *payé* (the jaguar-shaman: morally ambiguous, concerned with relations with the outside, and associated with hunting and warfare) and the *-kubu* (the divinity-shaman: pacific and generous, concerned with relations with the ancestors, and associated with collective rites of passage and the baptism of first fruits).

In contrast to the Guarani case, this dichotomy implies the complementarity of shamanic functions rather than the negation of one of the poles. Nonetheless, we can observe the progressive decline of the jaguar-shaman in the upper Rio Negro, after a flourishing during the messianic movements that spread throughout the region from 1857 onward. According to Hugh-Jones, the leaders of these movements, the “*pajés* of the cross,” were people who had some contact with national society and who blended jaguar-shamanism with Christian elements. Following the decline in prophesism and the effective installation of new Catholic missions in the region by the beginning of the twentieth century, we witness a growing rejection of jaguar-shamans, whose position was associated with both warfare and hunting (1996:145).

The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Guarani shamans who led large or small revolts against the colonial system were, evidence suggests, warriors and jaguars too: they sang and danced, drank beer, prophesied, favored hunting and warfare, and may well have continued to eat human flesh. Perhaps like the Santidades

of the sixteenth century, they also continued to wish that the invading Europeans could be converted into game so they could eat them (Monteiro 1999:1012). All of them were ultimately defeated through violent repression, missionary activity, epidemics, internal rivalry, or growing disbelief. The contemporary shamans, perhaps “closed off from *this praxis*,” founded their action and authority upon another source, love (*mborayhu*), and another practice, asceticism. As a result, today they are able to reprimand whites for not possessing what the shamans were once told they lacked: “if this world is going badly and heading toward destruction,” said *ñanderu* Fernando Taper to the anthropologist Egon Schaden (1969:118), “it is because civilized people are not very religious.”

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### Notes

1. Today the Guarani number approximately 125,000 people. They are divided into four major blocks: the Kaiowá or Pai-Taviterã, with about 30,000 individuals living in Brazil and Paraguay; the Mbyá, with about 20,000 distributed along the Brazilian coast, in Paraguay, and in Argentina; the Chiripá or Nandeva, whose 15,000 people live in Brazil and Paraguay; and finally the Chiriguano, most of whose population of 60,000 live in Bolivia (Assis and Garlet 2004). I do not deal with the Chiriguano case in this essay, and hardly take into consideration the internal differences among the Guarani peoples. I

hope to overcome these shortcomings in a future work. The opening quote is taken from Chamorro 1995:35; I changed the translation of *ara* from “universe” to “time.”

2. The idea that the Guarani were more susceptible to catechism than the Tupi began to circulate among the Jesuits in Brazil around the 1550s, especially in São Paulo where the border zone between these two large Tupi-Guarani blocks was located (Monteiro 1992:487). As Eduardo Viveiros de Castro suggests (1993:419), there was a large degree of idealization in this judgment.

3. A common mistake is to take the ethnological literature relating to the Guarani as a description of the Guarani pre-Conquest and, therefore, as a ground zero providing the basis for measuring post-Conquest transformations. This ethnographic projection onto the historical past creates a vicious circle in which later facts end up explaining earlier facts; see, for example, Bailey’s characterization of pre-mission Guarani (1999:148–150) as well as Ganson’s portrayal of Guarani culture (2003:12–24). Another common error is to collapse the spatial and temporal, as when a Tupi migration begun on the coast of Pernambuco in the mid-sixteenth century is used as evidence of the originary nature of the search for the Land-without-Evil by the Guarani, which was observed only from the nineteenth century onward.

4. Hence, I fail to distinguish with due care the different ethnographical and historical situations involving the distinct Guarani groups. Furthermore, I limit myself to the hegemonic view of shamans and religion, though I suspect that there is much more to be said about contemporary shamanism in relation to accusations of sorcery and magical violence; see, for instance, Mura, 2006, on the Kaiowá and Lowrey 2003 on the Guarani-speaking Izoceño of Bolivia.

5. The system assigned the entire Guarani population living within a 250-kilometer radius of Asunción to some three hundred Spaniards, called *encomenderos*, who had the right to demand services from them (Necker 1979:31).

6. On Guarani resistance, see, among others, Susnik 1965:215–228; 1980:164–172; Necker 1979; Melià 1986:31–41; Ripodas Ardanaz 1987; Roulet 1993.

7. *Reducción* (henceforth “reduction”) was the term applied to designate the mission’s physical location and its function, since the missionaries were said to “reduce” the Indians to “civil and political life” (Montoya [1639] 1985:34). At the start of the seventeenth century, new legislation regulating the relations between natives and non-natives helped strengthen the power of the religious orders and restrict the activity of the *encomenderos*. Of particular importance are the Ordinances of Alfaro, published in 1611, which ended up codifying these relations for much of the colonial period (see Necker 1979:118 et passim).

8. In the eighteenth century, large oscillations occurred between 1715 and 1720, and between 1735 and 1740, as well as after the Madrid Treaty (1750) and the so-called Guarani war (1754–56) (Ganson 2003:108–112).

9. Thirty years after their expulsion, the population of the thirty Jesuit missions in the Paraná-Paraguay basin, which amounted to almost 90,000 people in 1768, had collapsed

to half that number. This depopulation resulted from the combined effect of epidemics and migrations. Many Guarani headed to the towns, while some found work in the countryside. They temporarily or definitively entered the local economy as unskilled workers, cowboys, artisans, bakers, and the like (Ganson 2003:125–136). Others—about whom we know very little—returned to the forest, becoming *monteses* once more. For a description of the social transformations in the wake of the expulsion of the Jesuits, see Wilde 2003a, chap. 5.

10. This is how Nimuendajú explains his translation: “. . . Land Without Evil, *Yvy marãey*. *Marã* is a word no longer used in the Apapocúva dialect; in ancient Guarani it means ‘disease,’ ‘evil,’ ‘slander,’ ‘mourning-sadness,’ etc. *Yvy* means ‘land,’ and *ey* is the negation ‘without’” (1987:38). Melià (1986:106) suggests that the meaning of *yvy marãey* in the seventeenth century was the one given by Montoya (1876), “intact land,” and that it acquired a religious connotation only in the nineteenth century when the migrations studied by Nimuendajú took place (Melià 1990:45; see also Noelli 1999 and Pompa 2000). It is also important to note that the term *marãey* was an extremely productive concept in the missions, designating the virginity of Ñandesy (Our Mother), the chastity of priests, purity, and the absence of sin. In Parakanã we find the cognate *-maron yým*, which appears in warfare narratives and means “not injured,” “untouched.”

11. Some Mbyá groups identified this place as the Land of the Ketxuíta, or Ketxu Kritu (Schaden 1969:125). Schaden relates the tragicomic episode involving the Mbyá of the coast of São Paulo who, in the 1940s, met with Brazil’s president of the republic “in the hope of obtaining tickets to travel by sea to Portugal, which they believed to be closer to paradise” (1954b:178). In vain. Instead they were transferred to the village of Pancas, which, ironically enough, lay in the state of Espírito Santo (Holy Spirit).

12. This is due to various factors, some of them internal to anthropology, others external. In the 1940s and 1950s, we can observe—at least in Brazil—higher value being attributed to the notions of tradition and cultural preservation, which led to important changes in the indigenist policies of the Brazilian state.

13. An analysis of Pierre Clastres’ hypotheses, which was based on scarce historical and archaeological evidence, lies beyond my present scope.

14. It would be interesting to analyze how this ideal of resistance, identity, and spirituality approximated the views of the new Christian missionary tradition (post-Vatican II) to the ethnology of Guarani peoples. This tradition took the Guarani to be a privileged expression of *human religiosity* (if we take seriously the Christian theory of the divine soul, religiosity is necessarily internal to every human being and anterior to the Gospel). The contradiction inherent in this tolerant posture is that it cannot deny the unique and true character of the Christian Revelation without also denying the institution itself. Another kind of “tolerant” posture has recently appeared in evangelical missionary work. The Fale network of evangelical organizations nowadays campaigns in favor of the “religious freedom of indigenous peoples” as part of the “right to free choice” (see [www.fale.org.br](http://www.fale.org.br)). In one of its pamphlets we can read, alongside phrases by indigenous pastors, a declaration by

Marcolino da Silva, identified as a "Guarani shaman": "I replied [to a pastor who appeared in my village]: No, I'm sorry. You can take your Bible and your car and leave. . . . I have my own religion . . . and I cannot swap my religion for another one." *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*: the Guarani continue to be the only Indians in the South American lowlands to whom Christian churches (and some ethnologists) like to attribute a true religion.

15. See, however, Anne-Christine Taylor's analysis in this volume of the two different regimes of relating to the outside found among the Jivaro.

16. It is important to note the presence of mestizos among the followers of Oberá. Mestizos and Amerindians with experience in the reductions had a noteworthy participation in various "messianic" movements, suggesting that they occupied an important mediatory position in the circulation and digestion of new ideas (see Hugh-Jones 1996:53). Examples include the figure of Juan Santos Arahualpa, who commanded the uprising of the pre-Andean Arawakan groups in the eighteenth century (Santos-Granero 1993), and Venancio Cristo and his successors who made themselves into prophets among the Baniwa in the nineteenth century (Wright and Hill 1986). See also Vainfa's analysis (1995) of the Santidade do Jaguaripe, which emerged in the Recôncavo of Bahia in the 1580s, and whose imagery appears to have been gestated in the Jesuit missions.

17. This is a phenomenon observable throughout the New World, since the convergence between the functions of missionaries and of shamans inevitably led to rivalry. As Gruzinski (1974) has pointed out, whenever a priest sought to show his superiority over the shaman as a religious specialist, he admitted to confronting him in his own field and, therefore, facilitated his incorporation into the native cosmology. The Jesuits, in particular, knew how to make use of this convergence, in both South America (Haubert 1966; Fausto 1992; Castro 1993) and North America (Griffiths 1999:15–18; Steckley 1992).

18. The Amerindians did not show themselves to be resistant to matters of faith, but rather to matters of custom. In the seventeenth century the greatest impediment to conversion, at least in the eyes of Montoya, was no longer anthropophagy but polygamy, particularly that of "chiefs." The Spanish Crown recognized the chiefs' special status, giving them titles and the staff of office, exempting them from obligatory services to the Crown and the *encomenderas*, and entrusting them with the organization of the *encomienda* system at the local level (see Ganson 2003:57–68 on the *cabildo* system). In the reductions, frequently excluded from the network of *encomiendas*, the priests conquered local leaders by means of "gifts of little value" (Montoya [1639] 1985:197), but demanded that they take only one woman in legitimate matrimony. It was not rare for the chiefs to rebel and mobilize not only troops but also shamans (actually, many caciques were also shamans).

19. As Wilde points out, this appropriation had a paradoxical effect in the eighteenth-century missionary context, when it served as a "potent means of symbolic absorption into the dominant society" in conditions of subordination (2003b:218). Here Wilde is referring to the staffs and other insignia of office conferred on the indigenous *cabildantes* by the Jesuit priests. It is difficult to ascertain whether symbols of power existed among the Guarani

before the European Conquest. We know for sure, though, that the "staffs of power" had a considerable impact on Guarani religion, appearing for example at the beginning of the Beautiful Words, where Nanderu is said to carry the "insignia rods" (*yuyra'i*) in his hands (Cadogan 1959:14). The *chiru* (crosses and insignia rods) of the contemporary Kaiowá can be traced back to the same context. The assistants of current Kaiowá shamans, who must protect the *chiru*, are called *yuyra'ija*, the "rod owners," just like those who occupied the position of bailiff in the missions (Mura 2004; Wilde 2003b:220).

20. In his *Crónica Franciscana de las Provincias de Perú*, Diego de Córdova Salinas tells of a Spaniard who, on seeing his expedition surrounded by fire on the pampas, made use of Father Bolaños's robe to calm the flames, leading the fire to recognize "la virtud que Dios habia puesto en él y, prestando a su poder obediencia, se apagó todo, dejando a los circunsrantes tan maravillados como tiernos, de ver el respeto que el fuego tuvo al manto" ([1651] *apud* Necker 1979:49).

21. In a Guarani version of the saga of the twins, for example, the grandmother-jaguar tries in vain to roast them but is incapable of destroying their bodies, and ends up raising them as pets (Cadogan 1959:73–74). Likewise, in the Gê myth of Auké, the protagonist becomes white after being incinerated by his maternal uncle, who had already tried to kill him many times because of his constant metamorphoses (Nimuendajú 1946:245–246).

22. Montoya appears to believe that something similar occurred to the bodies of the martyrs of the Church (even though they died): when the Guarani killed Fathers Afonso and Roque, "so as to eliminate all traces of the martyrs, they made a great fire, in which they threw the two bodies and the heart of Father Roque. This, however, remained whole, the fire of charity winning over the flames which burned from the material log, the purity of that heart remaining as gold purified in the fire, that heart which is today kept in Rome with the same arrow that pierced it" (Montoya [1639] 1985:203). Father Roque's bones were kept at the Concepción Mission. On the eve of the Guarani War, which followed the Treaty of Madrid (1750), a group of seventy armed Indians headed there in order to ask for his protection (Ganson 2003:95). On the importance of Father Roque as a Guarani symbol of the alliance between Jesuits and the Indians in the reductions, see Wilde 2003b:98–99.

23. Important variations exist among the various Guarani subgroups. Here I use the Mbyá data, recorded by Nimuendajú at the start of the twentieth century.

24. With the exception of the meat of the white-lipped peccary, an animal designated as "the fine pet" of the divinities (see H. Clastres 1975:127; Ladeira 1992; Larricq 1993).

25. I lack the data to carry out an in-depth analysis of this category among the contemporary Guarani. I am unaware of any dense phenomenological description of this affect in the literature. Montoya used the term in the seventeenth century to translate the Christian notion of the loving God and God's love into Guarani. Cadogan translates it in the Beautiful Words as "love (those near to you)." Pierre Clastres corrects him, suggesting that the original meaning of *mborayhu* was "tribal solidarity" (1974:27). Hélène Clastres prefers "reciprocity" (1975:116). It would be interesting to look for evidence of the appro-

priation/transformation of the concept of love in the historical records, focusing not only on the repressive and pedagogical practices of missionaries but also on the ambivalences and anxieties lived by indigenous peoples. Such experiences may be inscribed in bas-relief in the less edifying chronicles and the description of particular cases.

26. The prayer is a dance-chant performed under the auspices of a shaman, a *ñanderu*. It describes the cyclical process of maize renewal, which ripens but never dies, adorns itself with "liturgical" clothes and feathers, and makes itself into seed again (Chamorro 1995:79–81).

27. "Che ru ojoetê emboroy embohory ywy / Che ru oñoñe'ë emboroy embohory ywy / Che ru piraguái emboroy embohory ywy." I have altered the translation slightly. On cooling and warming in the context of producing the rod-insignias (*chiru*), see Mura 2004.

28. The cult of the Sacred Heart—whose iconography typically involves depiction of the organ on the chest or in the hands of Jesus, from where it emits rays of light in all directions—dates from the end of the seventeenth century, following Jesus's appearances to Saint Maria Margarita Alacoque. The Sacred Heart is strongly associated with the Catholic notion of love. In his appearances, Jesus told the future saint: "This is the Heart which so loved man; which spared nothing of itself in showing them its love until it was finally expended and consumed. And in recognition I receive from most of them nothing but ingratitude through the contempt, irreverence, sacrilege, and coldness that they have for me in this Sacrament of love" (*Catolicismo*, July 2004. www.catolicismo.com.br). We know that the iconography of the Sacred Heart was adopted by Jesuits in the eighteenth century; the Chapel of the Sacred Heart in the church of Saint Ignatius in Rome dates from this period. We also know that nine hundred engravings of Jesus's heart were sent to Argentina and Paraguay in 1744 in a single ship (Bailey 1999:164).

29. Other versions suggest that the Ketxuíta was not a god, but a Guarani from Paraguay who had reached a state of maturity-perfection (Schaden 1969:109).

30. One of Cadogan's informants explained this absence of twinning in the myth by saying that the birth of twins is a divine punishment on the couple: "the young Indian who revealed the belief told me that it would be a great inconsistency for the Mbyá to worship twin gods, if they themselves believed twins to be an incarnation of the devil and did away with them at birth" (Cadogan 1959:70–71).

31. A Guarani man said to Chamorro, "Those who are not Kaiowá think that the *jerosy* is all feasting and happiness, but the *jerosy* is pure sadness!" (1995:94).

32. A two-sided forgetting, by the way, since it also enabled whites (including anthropologists) to "rediscover" populations who very often had already been under missionary influence, traded with the colonizers or resisted them centuries earlier. The rubber boom that swept Amazonia after the 1860s was one of these key moments of "rediscoveries," and left us with many of the ethnic designations that today make up the ethnographic map of the region.

33. I thank Wilde for personal communication about the *cartas anuas*. On the use of

images of Christ and martyrs in the South American Jesuit missions as a way of "inciting pathos," see Bailey 1999:147; 167–169. On the active-passive makeup of relations and persons in Amerindian ontologies, see Fausto 2002c.

34. Epidemics also played an important role here. Missionaries exploited the idea of divine punishment, associating it with the diseases (Montoya [1639] 1985:208). Since those born and raised in the reductions were probably less susceptible to Western diseases than the unreduced population, it is possible that epidemics claimed more victims among resistant souls: "The other delinquents, the pestilence exiled from this life. . . . It was very visible that the pestilence claimed victims only among them, for it forgot the remaining populations, who kept their health and life" (191).

35. Bonilla shows how the Paumari of Western Amazonia tried to control nonindigenous predation by identifying themselves as "familiarized prey," that is, as clients adopted by "good patrons."

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