

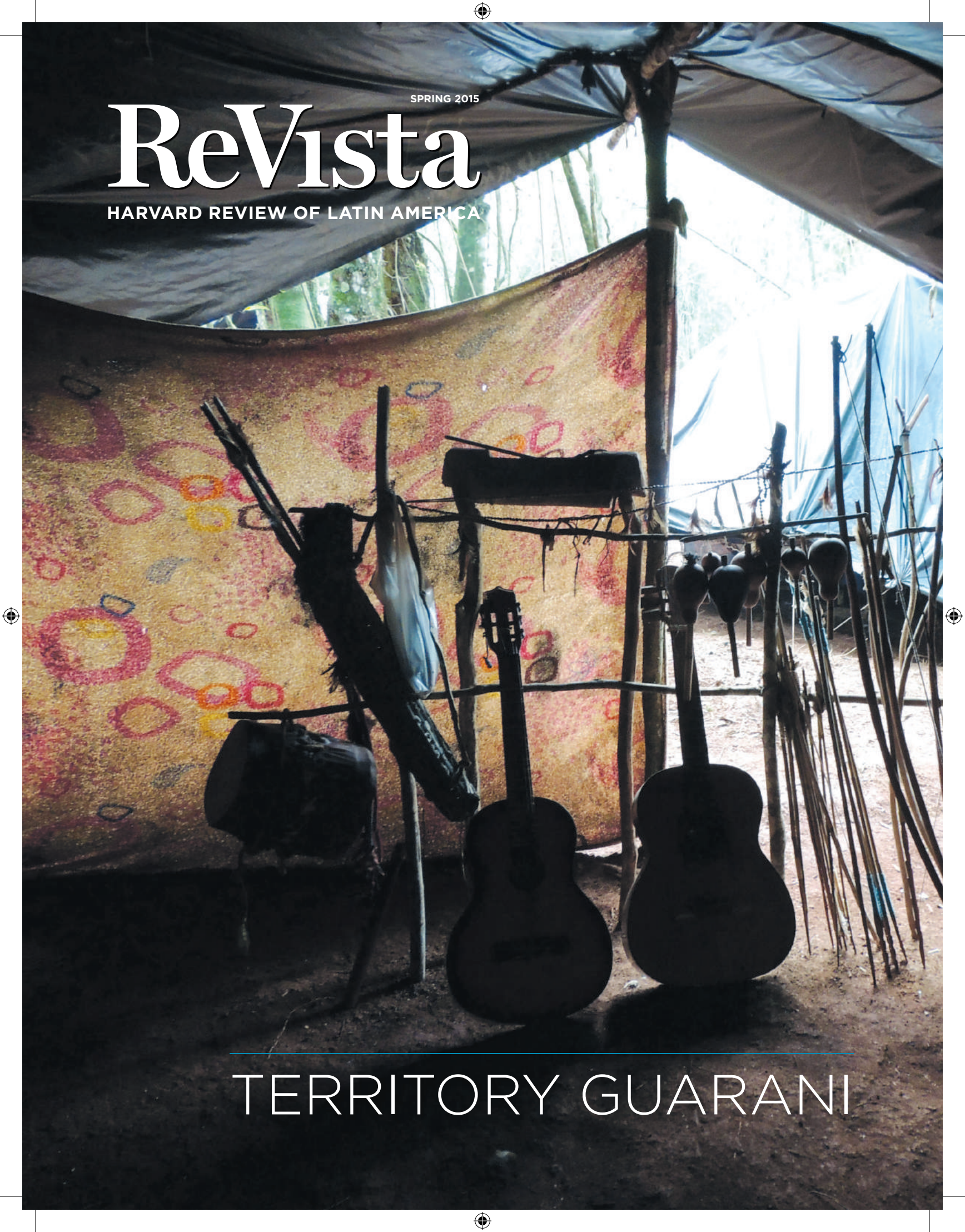
SPRING 2015

# ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA

---

TERRITORY GUARANI



## Territory Guarani

DRCLAS receptions are bustling affairs, sparkling with ample liquor, Latin American tidbits and compelling conversations. It was at one of these receptions that Jorge Silvetti and Graciela Silvestri first approached me casually regarding an issue about the Guarani.

Reception over, I tried to conjure up everything I knew about the subject. Not much. In *ReVista's* Fall 2011 issue on Bolivia, Marcia Mandepora, the rector of the UNIBOL-Guarani "Apiaguaiki Tüpa" in Machareti, had written an informative article about the university's endeavors to explore indigenous linguistic and cultural perspectives.

Even before then, in 2000 Nieman Fellow Benjamín Fernández, a Paraguayan journalist, and Nieman Affiliate Lizza Bogado, a well-known Paraguayan singer, taught me how much Guarani culture permeated their country. Nearly everyone was bilingual, and Lizza sang in both Spanish and Guarani.

I began to imagine the *ReVista* issue as one on indigenous rights, culture and bilingualism.

Then Silvestri, a professor of architecture at the Universidad Nacional La Plata in Argentina, gave her Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor Lecture on the Guarani. It wasn't what I expected. The talk looked at the Guarani territory that she defined "in more than one sense as aquatic." "The omnipresence of water in the region challenges our usual ways of thinking of the world, both culturally and technically," she observed. Here was a vision that both incorporated culture and embodied it in physical space.

I began to understand why two professors of architecture had suggested this theme and was eager to embark on the project.

Jorge Silvetti, a native Argentine, had long intrigued me as an architect's version of a Renaissance man. The Harvard Graduate School of Design hosts studios all over the world, and his have ranged from sports urban culture in Buenos Aires to the museum of Maya archaeology in Copan, Honduras, to touristic development in the Istrian Peninsula, Puntizela, Croatia.

I couldn't think of two better guides.

So off we went, exploring many aspects of the Guarani. As the issue evolved, I watched it morph into the theme of Guarani territory—a space, a place, an identity that comes together from a long and complicated crossborder history and emerges into a future challenged by issues such as natural resources, the building of hydroelectric dams and deforestation.

Someone asked me if there was enough to say about Guarani territory for an entire magazine. Actually, there's too much. We ended up focusing on the territory spanning Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil. There's so much more to say about indigenous culture and indigenous rights—and, indeed, we hope to do an issue of *ReVista* on the subject.

As I wrapped up the issue, I began where I started, with Marcia Mandepora's essay.

"Oil and gas—as well as ranching, logging and industrialized fishing—have all affected indigenous communities in negative ways," she writes. "Nonetheless, as well sites and pipelines dot and crisscross the region, indigenous organizations have taken a stance of engagement rather than opposition....(T)he question is how to transform how these activities take place in indigenous territories."

Territories. That's her word too. And I invite you to explore the theme with us and to keep the conversation going.

**VOLUME XIV NO. 3**

DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER  
FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

**Director**

Brian Farrell

**Executive Director**

Ned Strong

RE<sup>V</sup>ISTA

**Editor-in-Chief**

June Carolyn Erlick

**Copy Editor**

Anita Safran

**Publication Interns**

Gabriela Farrell

Isabel Espinosa

Carlos Schmidt Padilla

**Design**

2COMMUNIQUE

www.2communique.com

**Printer**

P+R Publications

**Contact Us**

1730 Cambridge Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

Telephone: 617-495-5428

**Subscriptions, Back Copies and Comments**

jerlick@fas.harvard.edu

**Website**

revista.drclas.harvard.edu

**Facebook**

ReVista, the Harvard Review of Latin America

Copyright © 2015 by the President and

Fellows of Harvard College.

ISSN 1541-1443

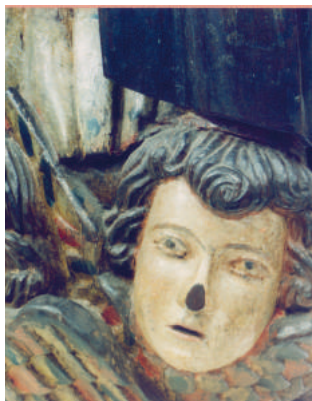
*ReVista* is printed on recycled stock.

This issue of *ReVista* is made possible  
through generous support of

**Santander Universities Global Division.**

Sovereign





# ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA

SPRING 2015

VOLUME XIV NO. 3

Published by the David Rockefeller Center  
for Latin American Studies  
Harvard University

## TERRITORY GUARANI

### FIRST TAKES

- Shaping the Guarani Territory *by Jorge Silvetti and Graciela Silvestri* 2
- Territories and Territories *by Carlos Reboratti* 7

### SHAPING TERRITORIES

- Along Yvyrupa's Paths *by Maria Inês Ladeira* 10
- The Many Meanings of Yerba Mate *by Julia Sarreal* 12
- A Bilingual Country *by Benjamín Fernández* 15

### WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

- The Guarani and the Iguazu National Park *by Frederico Freitas* 18
- The Invention of the Guarani Aquifer System *by Martin Walter* 23
- Beyond the Dam *by Alfredo Máximo Garay* 26
- Building the Future *by Oscar Thomas* 29
- Y marane' ÿ rekávo *by Bartomeu Melià, S.J.* 33

### ARTS, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

- Chamamé for Dummies *by Eugenio Monjeau* 36
- Guarani in Film *by Damián Cabrera* 40
- A View from the Museo del Barro *by Lia Colombino* 43
- A Country of Music and Poetry *by Lizza Bogado* 46

### HISTORY: JESUITS AND BEYOND

- Guaranis and Jesuits *by Tamar Herzog* 50
- Transformed Worlds *by Artur H. F. Barcelos* 52
- Jesuit Reflections on Their Overseas Missions *by Ana Carolina Hosne* 56
- Imagining Guaranis and Jesuits *by Guillermo Wilde* 58
- Total War in Indigenous Territories *by Milda Rivarola* 61

### IN MEMORIAM

- In Memoriam, Nikolau Sevchenko 65

## IN EVERY ISSUE

### BOOK TALK

- Transforming Cities through Architecture 67
- A Review by Sergio C. Muñoz*

- For the Love of Lucy 68
- A Review by Pedro Reina-Pérez*

- Empathic Cosmopolitanism 70
- A Review By Susan Antebi*

### BUILDING BRIDGES

- The Road Towards Universal Coverage 72
- in Mexico
- by Rocío López Iñigo*

### ONLINE

Look for more content online at [revista.drclas.harvard.edu](http://revista.drclas.harvard.edu)



#### ON THE COVER

Marcela Kropf captured this image of the Guarani camp located within the Iguazu/Iguazu National Park.

## Shaping the Guaraní Territory

BY JORGE SILVETTI AND GRACIELA SILVESTRI

THE STRETCH OF LAND IN ARGENTINA, BRAZIL and Paraguay originally occupied by the Guaraní is an extended region in the heart of the River Plate basin, whose environmental characteristics—jungles, impetuous rivers, tropical weather—suffered profound transformations in the last two centuries. Moreover, it is seldom recognized as a unity, traversed as it is by national or provincial borders. As architects, we asked ourselves how one could define this fragment of land as a “territorio”—the first problem we confronted. To find the answers, we organized a DRCLAS-sponsored international and multidisciplinary workshop, “Territorio Guaraní: Culture, Infrastructure and Natural Resources in the *longue durée*,” in April 2014.

Many diverse factors contribute to the recognition of an area *as a territory*; the way in which they all mix, crisscross and overlap defines its character. Such a realm resembles more a flexible and open fabric than a geometric figure defined by its contours; the threads that weave this fabric are not only those of current events, but also those of history, memory, myth and interpretations, all of which leave persistent traces. A territory thus is not a collection of data but a constructed tissue: it matters what pressure we would apply to one thread or another; which inquiry we would follow over others to bring out a certain picture, one which would not be the only possible one.

We began by building thematic maps based on physical cartography, vegetation and hydrographic extensions; historical-political domains such as the old Jesuit *pueblos*; the successive frontiers of the two Iberian powers; social formations such as the extension of the Guaraní language and the continuous migrato-

ry flows of peoples; technical issues such as the impact of the hydroelectric dams and the advance of new crops. This territorial drawing imagines a desired future by articulating geopolitical initiatives of infrastructure and market integration. Thus in the course of our inquiry historical paths and present hopes became interwoven with material marks.

Within this perspective, Carlos Rebortatti’s article presents the multiple figures that we allude to when we speak of the *territorio Guaraní*: the virtual territory of original groups; the “territory within a territory” of the Jesuit experience; the accelerated fragmentation of the new independent nations’ constitutional era; the growth of cities; the territories of savage agro-industrial exploitation, or the new infrastructures that reunite the territory beyond the political formal borders...a true palimpsest of traces constructed in the *longue durée*.

What characterizes this ever-changing spatial system, product of such diverse processes? In principle, the rivers are the most visible manifestation of a quality of a territory that we defined, literally and metaphorically, as “aquatic.” Powerful and dominant currents such as the Paraguay, the Paraná, the Uruguay and their multiple tributaries tie up the regional history: before the European arrival, they were the migration path of native expansion; they became the ways in which foreign powers penetrated and communicated; today, the rapids and falls of the Paraná and the Uruguay are the sources of shared hydroelectric energy. The theme of “the river” is recurrent in the arts, literature and music of the region. Even more, it is the principal character of the “territories” of the imagination:

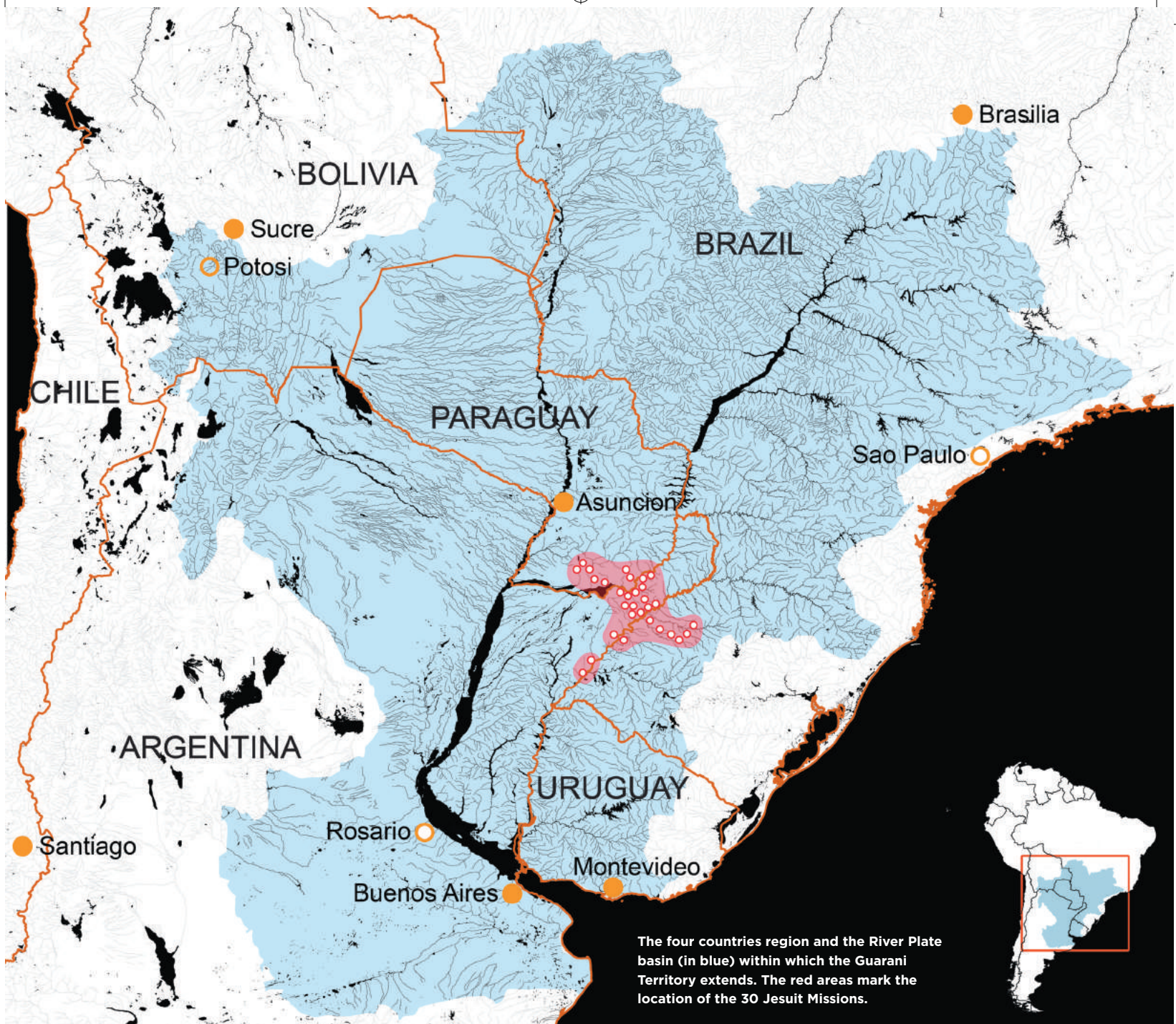
“Some say that the Paraná divides the

coasts of the three countries. But in reality, it is a liquid thread that unites them, transforming them in a legendary fourth country” (A. Varela, *El río oscuro*).

Beyond rivers, diverse “forms of water” have been and are utilized, dominated, suffered or enjoyed in the region. Hydrogeologists have recently confirmed the hypothesis of the existence of a huge reservoir of subterranean water, the *acuífero Guaraní*. The idea of a major and interconnected aquatic system, as Martin Walter writes, only emerges within a climate of ideas in which varied actors—scientific, political and social—began to focus on the territory as a whole, breaching the fierce national boundaries. For Walter, the idea of the *acuífero* as a unified system is a subproduct of regional democratization and of the autonomy hard-fought by the local academic institutions, reminding us that “natural” events are also political events promoted by many actors. On special occasions they assume symbolic significance: Bartomeu Melià’s article, starting from the central role that water has in the current ecological discourse, approaches the *acuífero Guaraní* as the “genuine water,” the *tierra sin mal*, the Guaraní paradise. It is too a political text in defense of native communities being pushed to abandon their lands.

Yet, despite all the importance of the “water” element, to label our study “aquatic” could have suggested a geographic determinism that we explicitly wished to avoid. Thus we decided to qualify “territory” with a trait that is predominantly cultural: and beyond the multiple characteristics we chose “*Guaraní*.”

In principle, *Guaraní* refers to a language. Benjamin Fernández tells us that the Paraguayan Guaraní (*joporá*) is spo-



ken by 90% of the population of an effectively bilingual country, unifying it with its identity and its history. The language is not only official in Paraguay but also in the province of Corrientes (Argentina), extending beyond national frontiers. Around eight million people (or 87% of the area's inhabitants) speak the language, now one of the three official languages of Mercosur (the regional multination common market). It possesses a distinctive particularity among American native languages: it is not only spoken by indigenous communities but by all groups and social classes: it is the only pre-Columbian language spoken by a

large non-indigenous community. Moreover, it colors the Castilian inflections spoken in the region (for example, the word *che*, of widespread use in Argentina and known all over the world as the nickname of the hero of the Latin-American left, derives from the Guaraní expression "my lord"). Old Guaraní words continue to name geographic accidents, regions and cities.

Indigenous Guaraní had not been a written language: it was the Jesuits who gave it a grammar and a syntax and made it into one of the *linguas generales* used for the evangelization of the natives. The Jesuits made their alliances with groups

that were already hegemonic in the region and whose tongue—according to the Jesuit Montoya, who so beautifully translated it to legible character—possessed a richness and variability that made him affirm that it was "dressed of nature" (*vestida de naturaleza*). Its idiomatic plasticity, its oral transmission (mainly via women), and also the appropriation of the Paraguayan Guaraní as a mark of "national identity" present a paradoxical and complex history as a constant element in the many phases of the formation of the nation-states and societies of the region.

Yet the definition of the territory as



Paraná Ra'anga (guarani: *Figure of the Paraná*) is a photograph by Facundo de Zuviria of the lower Paraná River, 2010.

*Guaraní* was one of the principal and controversial topics of the workshop. Many feared that such a denomination would hide the fact that diverse communities preceded the arrival of the *guaraníes*; or sidestep the fact that for five centuries the territory has also been populated and inhabited by creole families, immigrants and slave descendants.

What is meant beyond language when we say “Guarani”? The Spaniards used the name for all the diverse groups in the region, no matter what they called themselves. The conquerors’ *guaraníes* also absorbed non-Guarani peoples (as slaves or allies), always responding to their particular ethos, or “way of being” (*ñande reko*). Under this cultural and linguistic unity, the *guaraníes* operated as a system of relatively autonomous communities.

Many of the traits of such “Guarani way of being” have remained in present-day communities: as Maria Inês Ladeira explains, the spatial disposition of the villages is directly associated to a continuing social fabric, integrating its past while modifying its experiences and relationships beyond national borders and administrative boundaries. Certainly life was not the same when the Guarani groups came up to more than two million people moving around a vast territory, as compared to today’s drastically reduced population of around 180,000 souls.

Tamar Herzog poses a hypothesis of special interest: the Spanish and Portuguese threats and evangelization practices made all these diverse communities identify themselves as one, the Guarani.

Herzog dwells perceptively on the successive fragmentation of the territory from the beginnings of the conquest—when the Spanish and Portuguese crowns established the first state boundaries in a world where the European concept of private property did not exist—recognizing a moment of particular intensity during the establishment of the Jesuit foundations, the “territory within another territory” as referred to by Reboratti.

The Jesuits initiated their evangelization in the northern frontier, today’s São Paulo in Brazil. But the consolidation of events moved southwest to the area that we identify as the heart of the *territorio*, the 30 *pueblos* that towards the end of the 17th century hosted around 100,000 inhabitants, controlling a geographic realm that Herzog compares to the size of California. While many indigenous reservations and missionary communities ruled by Jesuits and other religious orders existed in the Americas, the Paraguayan missions continue to fascinate those that visit their extant ruins.

Here Ana Hosne situates the Jesuit order within world history, considering its actions as one of the first and most efficient global expansions of European culture. From their recent Chinese experience the Jesuits learned an adaptive posture toward evangelization that became their advantage when compared with the more dogmatic demeanors of other religious orders.

But if, as Hosne demonstrates, the Jesuit desire to establish the ideal *platonian city* gave impulse to their

undertakings—and the quasi-identical urban plans of all the missions suggest such sought-after perfection—the reality of the *pueblos* suggests complex forms of spatial occupation and an active relationship with the immediate natural environment. Recent conservation work allowed us to value the numerous faint traces of drainage, watering, quarries, orchards and fields of pasture—a complete sanitary and productive system unusual for its times even in Europe.

New studies have also shed light on the architecture of these *pueblos*—from the adaptation of the indigenous typologies of inhabitation to the magnificent churches and *colegios* that even today leave visitors in awe. This *arquitectura mestiza* and the rich artistic output that emerged from the Jesuit workshops constitute a continuous subject of debate.

The Jesuit experience affected the contemporary imagination even after the expulsion of the order. Guillermo Wilde discusses the different views about the nature of the missions, polarized between those that are apologetic or anti-Jesuit—a division still in use today. Wilde reminds us of the Hollywood version, but also of Michel Foucault’s suggestive concept of the Jesuit state as heterotopy. The Jesuit adventure also inspired those in the following centuries who imagined this region as places to “begin from zero”: central Europeans, political fugitives of all types, writers and poets.

According to Wilde, such simplifications of the narrative about the Jesuits left in the shadows the active participation of

the indigenous people. In the same vein, Artur Barcelos underlines the active role of the Guaranis—real actors barely seen both in the Jesuitic historiography and in its adversarial narratives, where they are presented as passive recipients or as infantile victims. Barcelos offers a panoramic history of how the Jesuits, confronted with the *bandeirantes'* attacks, decided to concentrate their settlements in the broad swath that transverses the Paraná and Uruguay rivers with its epicenter close to what today is the location of the bi-national entity of Yacyretá—the land where the moon shines, in Guaraní.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits, the subsequent period of modern national formation is the key to understanding the fortunes of the territory in the last two centuries. A successive fragmentation of the Hispanic area, in spite of efforts to maintain the unity of former colonial territories, contrasts with the Portuguese ability to maintain and expand its sovereign domains over broad areas that could only be virtually claimed. Local wars between neighboring provinces or recently invented nations desolated South America. The most brutal was staged in the *territorio Guaraní*: the so-called *Guerra de la Triple Alianza* (War of the Triple Alliance) from 1864 to 1870, with Paraguay fighting against allied Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

About 90% of Paraguay's male population was annihilated in this war. Milda Rivarola qualifies it as the first “total war,” in which the only alternative was to exterminate the enemy: a ferocious overture to the modern wars to come. For Rivarola, the responsibility for human extermination lies with both the allied and Paraguayan governments; the true victims were those who, without taking any belligerent initiative, were sent to the massacre: the *indios*. War and its consequences also swept clean the very source of life of all these native groups: the land. The new order emerging from the war would also systematically deny land to indigenous and rural communities.

It's not surprising that one of the central issues of the workshop was the rela-

tionship between environmental justice, sustainability of infrastructural development vis-à-vis natural resources, and the historical and present choices of contemporary nations that share the region.

The new environmentalist discourse gives prominence to social conflicts arising from deforestation, soil exhaustion resulting from extensive “monocultivos” such as soybean crops, or the large holdings of productive areas in the hands of international groups (see the recent debates about holdings owned by Harvard University in Iberá, in the Argentine province of Corrientes). This is particularly sensitive in the region we are focusing on, where large areas have been set aside for provincial and national conservation. Frederico Freitas illustrates these new conflicts with the history of the emblematic Iguazú National Park: the park's creation, stimulated by the Iguazú Falls magnificent natural wonder straddling the Argentine-Brazilian frontier, took place during the early decades of the 20th century, responding to a Rooseveltian vision based on “soft management” of natural resources and, eventually, the impulse of tourism—an important source of regional income.

Today, the conflict is focused instead on the rights of indigenous communities, Guaraní in their majority. Yet the socio-environmental problems exceed the traditional communities' claims. While these people are the most severely punished, the technical and productive transformation directly affects much vaster sectors of the rural and even urban populations. Many of these contested infrastructural transformations also constitute the basis for development for the countries that share this territory—particularly the hydroelectric plants. Without energy sources to sustain industry and communications, the very policies that aim to attend to the general social welfare are unachievable.

During the second half of the 20th century, the generalized idea of progress was often represented by large engineering works. Yet we must remember that the brutal dictatorships of the Southern

Cone countries did not hesitate to raze entire communities and natural resources to achieve their objectives: the case of Itaipú is one of the best known examples, where the destruction of the *Sete Quedas* and the expulsion of its population—still ongoing—could have been avoided.

The history of the dams mirrors the history of their countries. The Argentine-Paraguayan dam of Yacyretá-Apipé, proposed in the early 1920s and signed into being with an initial 1973 binational treaty, was only fully implemented in 2011. By then, reestablished democracies made room for a broader cast of actors and the proliferation of debates. Current managers in charge of operations try to heed ecological damages through environmental, urban and social reparation and compensation, as Oscar Thomas, director of the Binational Entity of Yacyretá, and Alfredo Garay recount in this issue. Yet discussions about future new hydroelectric plants remain controversial because no other viable alternatives exist for the production of reliable and sufficient energy.

To just imagine forests, marshes, waterfalls and communities all coexisting in harmony with the earth is to ignore the territory's inclusion of modern large cities: the extension of São Paulo (the largest metropolis in South America); Asunción (the Paraguayan capital); Corrientes and Resistencia (both provincial capitals on the Paraguay river); Posadas and Encarnación (facing each other on the Argentinian and Paraguayan sides of the upper Paraná). In the so-called *triple frontera* (triple frontier) almost 700,000 permanent inhabitants spread themselves between Foz de Iguazú (Brazil), Puerto Iguazú (Argentina) and Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), without counting the 50,000 transient laborers and the nearby rural communities, as well as burgeoning tourism.

Many cities were established during early colonial times; others grew from Jesuit mission sites; others, such as Resistencia and Formosa, are recent, created after the *Guerra Guazú* and populated by European immigrants. The Spanish cit-

ies were conceived as “civilized islands” amidst a menacing territory which was only worthy of extractive exploitation, while the Portuguese foundations were more akin to factories. These legal-territorial structures were modified during the last centuries to become part of the new nation-states: cities which were once united by a river (such as Formosa and Clorinda or Resistencia and Alberdi) became separated by these water streams.

The nation-state is a late European creation. We all learned early on the virtues of the nation-state: in addition to the ideals of independence, equality and freedom, the Americas added with enthusiasm the opening of their borders to “all the men in the world who wish to inhabit this land” (as the original Argentinian Constitution still announces), even if such integration is still far from idyllic. Particularly in Argentina and Uruguay, free mandatory education and health services encouraged whole communities to move towards the urban centers where all the benefits of civilization were readily available. The price was not only the homogenization of customs and traditions and an imbalance between urban and rural life—a major topic of the region’s literature—but also the emergence of a culture that accentuates the traits of openness, mobility and fusion.

The articles addressing the arts emphasize this aspect. Lia Colombino presents the history of the Museo del Barro, one of the principal artistic centers of Asunción, which put “erudite” art on an equal footing with popular and indigenous art—a proposal that explicitly breaks down the internal boundaries between cultural expressions.

Such convergences also emerge in the Lizza Bogado and Eugenio Monjeau’s articles about music. The first, written by one of the most appreciated Paraguayan singers, makes a much-felt mention of Argentinian singer Mercedes Sosa, underlining the transnational sources of popular songs. Montjeau focuses on a characteristic genre of this territory: *el chamamé*. Disregarded in its early days, the *chamamé* appears today as one of a

highly and original sophisticated musical construction: Guarani in its voice, Spanish-central-European in its rhythm, “immigrant” in its instruments, its brief history is a vibrant testimony to how novelty emerges from the contact and fusion of diverse cultural manifestations.

Finally, with an unexpected potency, current cinema in the region gives testimony of this complex world. Damián Cabrera points to the elusive *Guarani* element of this territory’s culture, in order to underline the originality of the latest cinema productions. While the physical territory under study had been the stage of many films—all *rioplatenses* recall Armando Bó and Isabel Sarli’s films of the 60s and 70s—the actual Guarani voice is heard for the first time only recently: the indigenous voice in Marcos Bechis’ *Terra vermelha*, the rural voice in *Hamaca paraguaya*, by Paz Encina, the urban Guarani of *7 cajas*, by Juan Carlos Maneglia and Tana Schembori.

In this overview we have attempted to stress the aspects that transform the Guarani space into a changing territory, mixed and fluid as water, multi-ethnic and informal—where the national frontiers, more than lines of breakage are spaces of active exchange. Julia Sarreal describes it with her account on the inefable and ubiquitous presence of yerba mate, Guarani territory’s defining crop and today the shared “national” infusion-drink of Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Southern Brazil.

In spite of shared features that characterize this area as a common territory, most studies have emphasized a larger frontier: that which separates Brazil from Spanish-language countries. These two parts of South America have established firm cultural bridges only in recent decades, and we want to emphasize this line of enquiry; we can not understand this “aquatic” place establishing rigid cultural or political frontiers.

That’s why we decided to conclude with a brief text from one of the most creative aesthetic experiences of the previous century—the Paulist artistic avant-garde’s association with the indigenous

world—by underlining one of the most controversial aspects that all *tupí-guaraní* peoples shared: ritual anthropophagy. Oswald de Andrade and Tarsilia do Amaral rendered this “scandal” into a metaphor for a key mode of being which seems to be shared by the people of the River Plate basin, past and present: to “consume” the enemy meant to assimilate him, as described in their “manifesto antropológico.” To properly allude to this foundational episode of the South American avant-gardes, re-read today enthusiastically in the River Plate, we included a fragment of *Orfeu estático na metrópole*, by Brazilian author Nicolau Sevcenko, who passed away in August 2014—as our homage to those that have disseminated the richness of this multitudinous and paradoxical land.

**Jorge Silvetti** is the Nelson Robinson, Jr. Professor of Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design where he has taught since 1975. He was chairman of the Architecture Department from 1995–2002. He teaches design studios (including among others “The National Archives of Argentina,” “La Reserva Ecológica of Buenos Aires” and “The School of 2030: Complexo do Alemão, Rio de Janeiro”) and lectures on history, contemporary theory and criticism (*Architectural History I: Buildings, Texts, and Contexts from Antiquity through the 17th Century*). He is currently teaching a course/studio entitled “Chamamé: The Intangible Rhythms of the Guarani Region.”

**Graciela Silvestri** was the 2014 Robert F. Kennedy Professor at Harvard University. She is an architect and Ph.D. in History (University of Buenos Aires), Professor of Theory of Architecture (University of La Plata) and researcher at CONICET. She was a curator for *Paraná Ra’Angá, expeditionary travel along the Paraná River*. Among other books, she has published *El color del Río: Historia cultural del paisaje del Riachuelo and El lugar común: Una historia de las figuras del paisaje en el Río de la Plata*.



# Territories and Territories

The Shifting Guarani Space **BY CARLOS REBORATTI**

**TERRITORY IS ONE OF THOSE USEFUL WORDS** with relatively different meanings—but not different enough to prevent us from using it in diverse circumstances without necessarily falling into conceptual errors. Whenever we use the word “territory,” we are referring in principle to an area defined by the existence of something or someone, which imbues the term with meaning (in our case “Guarani territory”).

This area generally refers to a concrete space, posing questions of territorial definition: what are the borders? Who determines them and how? What are the effects of territorial change? To demonstrate the wealth of possible answers, we are going back in history some 2,000 years, when the Guarani people already inhabited the area approximately located in what is today the eastern part of Paraguay, southwestern Brazil and northeastern Argentina. First, let's define “Guarani territory” simply as the place where Guaranis lived. However, it was not an exclusive territory, since other ethnic groups also lived there, and the Guarani people did not claim to control the entire territory. Given the character of the Guarani presence, it was a virtual territory. Because of their semi-nomadic lifestyle and without any permanent architecture, they left no visible traces and did not organize the territory. We could say, however, that although fewer Guarani exist today than before the arrival of the Spaniards, they left an indelible stamp: their language.

This territory began to slowly fragment after the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors arrived. They came from a culture in which land ownership is a fundamental factor (and possibly totally foreign to the idea the Guaranis and other indigenous groups had about the land). The first thing they did was to create borders on the space where they considered

they had the right to exclusive possession. The Spanish were the first to claim this right, defining their possession of the territory where the Guarani people lived. Two symbols seal this claim: the founding of Asunción and the decision that the Guarani area lay within the geographic domain of the Viceroyalty of Peru. The virtual territory was transformed into a concrete and exclusive one; this type of territory needs maps to formalize its borders. In the first Spanish maps, notably imprecise, it's easy to figure out that the Guarani territory had changed “owners,” and the Spanish crown now controlled (or desired to control) the area. The Guayrá provincial government was created within the Peru Viceroyalty to emphasize this point. Given the absence

of what we today call infrastructure, the first marks of ownership were cities (sailing ships don't leave lasting imprints nor do long marches by foot or on horseback). First the Spaniards founded Asunción, then Corrientes and Concepción.

In the 16th century, another innovation sprung up: a territory within a territory. The Jesuits arrived with a clear idea of territorial organization: to gather large groups of indigenous people into urban centers connected through a network of roads. This organization was meant to last: the buildings are made of stone and still stand. With the Jesuits, the territory became concrete, formal and organized. The problem arose with the definition of its eastern limits, disputed by the Portuguese who advanced from the virtual line of Tordesillas towards the west, pushing the Jesuits across the Uruguay River. As often happens, the formal (political) limits of the territories were not decided from within the territory itself, but from afar: in 1767, the Viceroyalty of the River Plate was created. Although the new viceroyalty covered almost the entire Guarani territory, it broke it into three fragments: the Paraguay regional government, the provincial government of the Missions (created where the Jesuits, expelled ten years earlier, had founded their missions) and the River Plate provincial government in the extreme north. These were partly formal territories and partly virtual: basically no one was really sure what the Missions' territorial limits were, and this ambiguity lingered in the years to come.

From 1810 on, territories began to be fragmented yet once again, corresponding to the border definitions of the new republics: Paraguay and Argentina started to define their borders based on the old regional governments, while Missions remained a zone of weak formal



**St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier illuminate the world with their torches, copper engraving by the Guarani Indian Juan Yapari, for a Guarani edition.**

presence of the state. The fragmentation would continue until the end of the 19th century with the end of the Paraguayan War, when the two countries and Brazil—now an independent republic—defined their borders through bilateral agreements and international mediation. At the same time, the three countries created the domestic divisions necessary to rule their territories: provinces in Argentina (Corrientes and Misiones), departments in Paraguay (Alto Paraná and Canendiyú) and states in Brazil (Santa Catarina and Paraná).

Beyond the formal borders, and sometimes just ignoring these borders, other territorial processes were taking place related to the exploitation of natural

the rich forest, leave few indelible marks except for two: the docks on the Paraná River that were used to ship yerba mate production and in many cases grew into new settlements, and the *picadas*, rudimentary trails deep in the forest hacked out to reach the yerba mate plants, which would be used for the next territorial actors: the colonizers.

In the 20th century, colonizers began to arrive from far and wide to the old Guarani territory in search of land: in Argentina, the federal government set up colonies in Misiones to attract Central European immigrants, who first worked with yerba mate and then tung and tea; in Paraguay, colonization was more spontaneous early on, by thousands of peasants

for more land to plant, expanding to the heart of the Guarani territory, demolishing what was left of the Atlantic forest in Paraná and advancing to eastern Paraguay in one of the most devastating and swift processes of deforestation on the planet. Curiously, the territory that was fragmented among countries reunified, only half-jokingly, with the appearance of the “Soy Republic,” now controlled not by the state but by agrobusiness. Rivers resumed their old importance, and the Paraguay-Paraná axis was transformed into a cargo corridor to the Plate River.

The rivers also were protagonists of another moment of territorial organization with a series of dams constructed all along the Paraná, Uruguay and Iguazú Rivers. Some dams are huge, like Itaipú and Yacyretá, designed to provide electric energy for large urban centers. Their regional impact has been controversial, in part because of the flooding of great extensions of land and the displacement of entire towns, and in part because these dams do not leave an imprint on the territory beyond this flooding.

As we can see in this quick and necessarily incomplete overview, the Guarani territory is constantly transforming and its uses have been modified over the years, along with its forms of organization and the populations that identify with it. Successive territorial fragmentation has radically modified the Guarani geography, according to the historical imprints corresponding to each given moment, some very obvious like the formation of cities, others less tangible like culture and language, although the Guarani language persists as a continual imprint through the names of places in the region: Mondai, Itacaruaré, Cunha Porã, Caaguazú.

*Carlos Reboratti is an Argentine geographer and the head researcher for CONICET on environmental resources in Argentina. He is the author of several books, including La naturaleza y nosotros: El problema ambiental, Claves para todos and Del otro lado del río: ambientalismo y política entre uruguayos y argentinos.*

## The rivers, language and even the harvesting of yerba mate helped shape the Territory Guarani, a region that is constantly transforming itself.

resources and the value of property. The rich Atlantic forest, the specific space of the former Guarani residents and the base for their material existence, began to be exploited by the colonial powers. While the dispersed indigenous population practicing some migrating agriculture had had relatively little impact on the forest, that could not compare to the impact of those who were cutting down timber and harvesting wild yerba mate, beginning in 1880. The rivers were used to transport the lumber, which limited the exploitation to relatively small zones because of the technical characteristics of the production and transport of wood. The gathering of yerba mate, on the other hand, was organized through the concession of large territories and operated by Argentine or Brazilian companies. In his narrative about a trip he made to Misiones in the late 19th century, J.B. Ambrosetti described the area as one where the state had practically no presence, a curious form of spontaneously organized territories. Yerba mate and the lumber trade, forms of mining

from the center of the country, partially replaced later by an influx of Brazilian colonizers. In Brazil, two strands of immigration converged: the first were corn and bean farmers from German and Italian colonies in Rio Grande do Sul in the southern part of the country, established in the 19th century; the second came later, spurred by private colonization from Paraná based on coffee production. The presence of frost determined the borders of these two communities. In the mid-20th century, the former Guarani inhabitants and the Atlantic forest too had been cornered and decimated by the advance in agriculture, and the new territory was organized by a dense network of towns and cities connected by roads: Encarnación, Posadas, Eldorado, Montecarlo, Cascabel, Chapecó...

And other powerful actors came on the scene to generate new changes in the organization of the Guarani territory: soy and the dams. With international trade eager for food products, soy, produced in southern Argentina and central Brazil, stimulated farmers to search



# SHAPING TERRITORIES

The Guarani territory—spanning four countries—has been shaped by many factors, including culture, language, war, the Jesuit presence and even yerba mate.

- Along Yvyrupa's Paths 10
- The Many Meanings of Yerba Mate 12
- A Bilingual Country 15

Painting by Brazilian artist Juan Leon Palliere (1865) of gauchos roasting food and drinking mate.  
From: Bonifacio Carril, *El gaucho a través de la iconografía* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1978).

# Along Yvyrupa's Paths

Beyond Borders **BY MARIA INÊS LADEIRA**

*My little sisters, my parents, it is true that all things here in the world are really difficult for us. Our word, every time it comes out of our mouths, it is Nhanderu eté (our true father) that releases it. Let him see that we talk, that we are happy. (...) From distant places, through the real walk, that is how you arrived to our village. We, as human beings in this land, we face many obstacles in order to keep in touch with other villages. However, through this walk that happened under the guidance of Nhanderu, because only he can open up our ways, it was possible for us to meet here on this land"*  
(Shaman from Fortin Mborore, 1997).

**I STARTED LIVING WITH THE GUARANI IN SEPTEMBER 1978**, after the inhabitants of a small village on the outskirts of São Paulo built a modest wooden room as their own school and had asked the government for an instructor to teach them to read and write in Portuguese.

I lived with the chief's (cacique) family. Often, at dusk, he sat in front of his house and welcomed recently arrived visitors. Conversation quickly followed and, depending on the subject, there was mate or tobacco. Throughout the two years dedicated to teaching this community, although I did not master the Guarani language, I learned to recognize those people that came from distant villages, bringing seeds, medicinal plants and other goods offered as gifts to relatives in addition to news. Sometimes they spent long periods of time in the village to sell handicrafts in town and participate in rituals. Gradually, I was able to understand the close ties between the villages located on the Brazilian southeast coast and the countryside of Paraná state, with which this community had close ties, and learned who their shamans and caciques were.

In the following years, I started working towards the recognition of indigenous territorial rights at the Center for Indigenist Work (Centro de Trabalho Indigenista, CTI), and I had the opportunity to visit Guarani villages in other regions of South America. I came to understand that the spatial configuration of their villages relates to the social thread in a continuous composition. Old and new relationships interact, integrating the past and projecting the future of the village's territorial basis. The comings and goings of generations result in constant communication, allowing for the renewal of experiences and updating memories, while continuing to exchange knowledge, rituals, and growing and breeding practices.

Throughout the centuries, the Guarani territory has been formed by an intense and extensive network of relationships crisscrossing national borders, political boundaries and administrative divisions. The Guarani population at the time Europeans arrived is estimated to have been two million; it is currently 250,000 (including Bolivia).

During the 16th and the 17th centuries, chroniclers identified as part of the "Guarani nation" groups sharing the same language found from the Atlantic coast to the Andean slopes, inland: communities were named after rivers, streams, or after characteristics based on physiography and/or political leadership models. Linguistic, social and cultural variations found among these groups were sometimes indicated, in time and space, through the use of various ethnonyms.

Despite current Brazilian classifications—Mbya, Nhandéva, Kaiowa—and their correlates from different countries, new arrangements among subgroups were promoted by the advent of colonization, the operation of Jesuit missions

and indigenist politics, but, above all, by the Guarani social dynamic itself.

Currently occupied Guarani lands are discontinuous and small in size, interspersed with farms, roads and cities with little or no native forest. For this very reason, these remaining forests are crucial to maintain the balance of the Guarani way of living. Given the shortage of fertile land in the slopes, in order to practice their ancient cultivation techniques, the families living in the Atlantic coast need seeds and other traditional produce grown by those living on the hinterland plains. Likewise, families living in regions deforested by agribusiness benefit from native species found in wooded villages.

The Guarani conceive their traditional territory as the base that sustains their villages, which, in turn, support the world. The process of expropriation of their traditional territory takes on a multiplicity of meanings about the nature of borders, as experienced by Guarani families dispersed all over their extent territory.

Guarani families living in Guairá on the border between Brazil and Paraguay are a case in point of such a loss: after having their ancient lands plundered by agricultural and animal husbandry exploitation or mostly destroyed by the flooding caused by Itaipú's construction, they live, at present under critical conditions, without even having recognized citizenship. Close to the Atlantic Ocean, and very distant from the border area, conflicts caused by land expropriation and struggles for the recognition of historical Guarani rights also proliferated. The most frequent strategy employed in depriving the Guarani from their lands is to label them as foreigners, no matter which side of the national borders they live on.

Even if constantly living under

restricted situations, the Guarani people as a collective precept claim to have no borders. Their domain over a vast territory has been asserted by the fact that their social and reciprocal relations are not exclusively bound to villages located in the same region. They take place within the framework of the “world,” in which linkages between distant and close villages define this people’s spatiality.

The Guarani still claim the amplitude of their territory, even if they do not hold exclusive rights over it. This territorial space where their history and experiences have been consolidated is called *Yvyrupa* (*yvy*=land; *rupa*=support), which, in a simplified translation, means terrestrial platform, where the world comes into being. According to the Guarani, the act of occupying *Yvyvay* (imperfect land) follows the mythical precept related to the origin of their humanity, when ancestors from distant times were divided into families over the terrestrial surface (*yvyrupa*) in order to populate and reproduce Nhanderu tenonde’s (our first father) creation.

In the course of my work, I was able to observe some aspects of Guarani’s spatial mobility. I knew that contact among people, even when they are set apart by national borders, happens in their own ways, including by crossing rivers, using different means of transport or walking. The CTI stimulated many exchanges of seed and plants, but I hold a special memory of the first trip I made. My aim was to observe how the Guarani living on the Brazilian coast, at the tip of the world (*yvy apy*), and their counterparts in Argentina and Paraguay would talk about the world. I assumed I would hear theoretical statements about their multifaceted territory’s current conditions, declarations that would extrapolate the political discourse produced by the young leadership.

On the morning of January 1997, a group formed by spiritual leaders and elders from seven villages headed west with their luggage filled with memories of different times and places. The journey began in Barragem village, São Pau-

lo, which was coincidentally, the first village I had ever visited. Five villages were visited in Argentina and five more in Paraguay. The first one was Fortin Mborore, where we arrived late at night, after the inevitable problems on the borders. The farewell took place 18 days later, at the ruins of Trinidad.

In each village, the inhabitants, standing in line and following protocol, would greet us: *porã eté aguyjevete!* The visitors were welcomed with the sound of flutes, maracas and rabecas, or celebrations in the *Opy* (the ritual house). After this, hosts and visitors’ speeches alternated. Speeches about the journey’s significance and critical comments on the gravity of the landholding situation stood out.

These speeches deserve to be analyzed carefully in their entirety, but that would go beyond the scope of this article. I transcribe only part of the texts that depict common principles, recognized in rhetoric as the origin of ceremonial words re-elaborated according to current local circumstances and according to the idea of a land with no state borders. In these greetings, mentions to the relevance of the walk (*guata porã*) oriented by deities and following mythical precepts stand out. During highly emotional moments, leaders would refer to the task of achieving *yvy marãey* (the eternal land, where all deities live).

• I don’t know how to reach the word of the old ones to greet you. Admittedly human, I can not reach a word that comes from Nhanderu. We are already grownups, for this reason we already know what is good and what is bad. We are already old, for this reason we know how to thank him, the one who created humanity, we, the Nhandéva, men and women (...). For this reason, you also came to this land and you will see beautiful things that our ancient grandfathers have left to us, (...) it was him who gave courage to you so that we could communicate with each other, play and speak. And may this strength pass to our children, granddaughters and grandsons. I don’t have many words, but your presence makes me happy.

• I am speaking, me, for being human, I also have difficulties to reach wisdom. Despite this, no matter where we are, we are all equal, we speak the same language and we know how to see. (...)

• This is the reason why we are making efforts to have only one thought, everywhere, always with the same strength. We all want to have health, the same joy, the strength you have, we want to have it. Because we are relatives, brothers, the blood that flows in us is the same.

• I came to see my relatives. I was at Iguaçu village when they arrived and I came along with them. I saw many beautiful things (...) we remembered our relatives and together we worked to follow the same words in Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil (...). Because, we caciques will assemble and, as for today, we will have no borders. We, the Guarani, will go to any village.

• No matter where we walk or where we go, it were Nhanderu Kuéry (our divine fathers) that have put it on this world, the place where we step. (...) and this has happened because of Nhanderu, only he can free the way.

• I also want to say a few words. It is true, many things are difficult. Not all roads are free for us. There are many evils that can hit us. (...) But with the help of Nhanderu, you made this journey and this is good for us and for you too. So, it is Tupã’s son that protects us. (...) it is Nhanderu’s will that this event goes forward, that it happens again.

• Everyone that came will not easily be forgotten. I will keep to the rest of my life the place where our grandparents stepped, planted and tried cross to *Nhandery retã* (Nhanderu’s place, *yvy marãey*, the land of eternity). We believe in Nhanderu so that he further enlightens our thoughts, so that we follow the same path as our old grandparents.

• We saw the place where the old ones managed to cross to *yvy marãey*. They are the ones who were left and I saw the elders’ efforts to cross the world. (...) the grandparents that did not succeed, walked down by the sea so that they could

cross it from there (...) for this reason, we have to look at the ocean (...) everyone that lives today has the same destiny and those who strive will succeed.

• I am very happy because my relatives came here to our village. Today, you are already going back to your villages. You, that are my grandmothers and grandparents are already grown (...) When you arrive to your village we want you to remember us and to tell to your grandchildren about us. I did not believe when you arrived. But what is important is that I saw my grandmother, now, your hair is already white, because your mother and father gave much advice to you and you followed it. (...) And you have already seen me as I am. So, now that you are leaving, I am left with this sadness in my heart. But what can I do? (...) I told myself: I no longer have my grandmother, the grandmother I had is already dead, but I saw that I have another one, and that you are already a grown-up. So, now you know, my grandmother, that I come from a village called Pastoreo. (...) I am a leader and I am really happy. You will go back to your village and you are taking a part of me with you.

In engaging with Guarani paths, it becomes noticeable that while Mercosur establishes commercial rules, it does not take into account intensive and widespread flows of interchange that have been happening for centuries among hundreds of villages that, together, make up the same territory. Nonetheless, the bonds and flows among the Guarani people have not been interrupted. Despite all problems related to the recognition of their land rights and citizenship, and other bureaucratic formalities, the Guarani people continue on their timeless paths.

*Maria Inês Ladeira is a member of the Center for Indigenist Work (Centro de Trabalho Indigenista, CTI) Coordinating Office. She holds a Ph.D. in Human Geography from the University of São Paulo and a Master's Degree in Social Anthropology from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo.*



## The Many Meanings of Yerba Mate

Across Borders, Sharing a Guarani Drink

BY JULIA SARREAL

I FIRST ENCOUNTERED YERBA MATE AS A Peace Corps volunteer in rural Paraguay. Everywhere I went, and at all times of the day, I saw small groups of people passing around a hollowed out cow's horn or gourd (*guampa*) filled with ground leaves and a single metal straw sticking out of the top. I had never thought of drinking from a cow's horn or gourd. Drinking out of the same metal straw (*bombilla*) was even more jarring. Wasn't anyone worried about germs? When I tried to refuse an offer of yerba mate from my neighbor because I had a cold, she responded that she had added some herbs especially for colds and so I had even more reason to share the mate

with her. She wasn't at all concerned about catching a cold from me!

Drinking yerba mate is a communal activity. One person in the group (the server) pours some hot water (or cold water for *tereré*) into the *guampa* and passes it to a companion who dutifully sucks all of the liquid from the shared straw and returns the *guampa*. The server then refills the *guampa* with water and passes it to another person in the group. Conversation flows as the process repeats itself until the yerba

*Un alto en el campo* by Prilidiano Pueyrredón represents a typical Pampas scene, the tree, the gauchos and the mate.

mate loses its flavor—about thirty minutes. Peace Corps training taught me the cultural importance of mate; most Paraguayans cannot imagine anyone not drinking it—and I quickly learned that sharing mate was a great way to make friends and gain acceptance. Yerba mate’s stimulating properties intensified my appreciation for the drink and soon I was consuming large quantities throughout the day...until I could no longer tolerate my mind racing every night for hours after everyone else had fallen asleep and I learned moderation.

Until recently, yerba mate was an exotic substance brought to the United States either by tourists returning from the Southern Cone or nostalgic expatriates wanting to maintain an important cultural practice from their homeland. Health food stores were the first to promote yerba mate and, as interest spread, enterprising websites materialized touting a long list of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and general health benefits associated with the plant. Companies like Guayakí (founded in San Luis Obispo, California, in 1996) began marketing yerba mate as a healthier alternative to coffee and tea. Now yerba mate tea bags and iced mate are sold in national chains like Safeway, Walgreens, and Walmart and Guayakí is installing automated brewing systems in university cafeterias to expand its appeal to young people. Yerba mate has also entered the trendy energy drink market. Such campaigns have largely been successful. In 2014, Guayakí reached \$27 million in sales—primarily to United States consumers—and the amount is growing at over 26% per year.

Yerba mate has long been integral to the identity of Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and southern Brazil where it is ubiquitous. Walls of different yerba mate brands fill grocery store aisles and the telltale paraphernalia are found in homes, workplaces, schools, parks and automobiles—everywhere a group might convene. Yerba mate is different from other stimulants like coffee and tea because of the deep cultural meaning associated with the special manner in which it is drunk.

Individuals staying up late for work might drink mate by themselves, but generally it is a communal, not a solitary, pastime.

As part of a grant from the Institute for Humanities Research at Arizona State University (ASU), I recently gathered a group of Argentines, Paraguayans, a Brazilian, an Uruguayan and a U.S.-born scholar of Latin American studies to discuss the cultural significance of yerba mate. All of the participants agreed that drinking yerba mate is much more than getting a caffeine fix; it is a cherished opportunity to relax and converse with friends, family, co-workers, or even strangers. As Milagros Zingoni originally from Nequen, Argentina described, “I wake up with this [yerba mate] and when I return from work at 5 or 6 my husband and I drink this again. We usually have dinner at 8 and by 11 I am drinking this again.” Whenever someone visits, yerba mate is prepared and conversation ensues. Mate is not only about friendship and conversation; it is also a way to build connections with strangers. It is an open invitation to engage with someone new.

According to David William Foster, an ASU professor who has been studying Argentina for more than half a century, “One of the singular characteristics of Argentine culture is this omnipresence of the mate...No matter how high you go on the social scale, no matter how high you go on the intelligentsia scale, everybody is drinking mate, this indigenous drink.” Despite its cultural importance, not everyone in the Southern Cone is a fan. Foster noted that Jorge Luis Borges, who couldn’t have been more Argentine, didn’t drink yerba mate.

One of the most important aspects highlighted by the participants in the panel was that yerba mate is socially inclusive. It transcends almost every barrier—social, racial, economic, gender, and sexual orientation. Milagros gave the example of how when she was a child and HIV was becoming a big issue, a couple of doctors purposefully shared their mate with HIV patients in order to encourage Argentines not to be so afraid of people with HIV. Drinking mate can also more

informally bring people together and build a sense of community among those who would not otherwise interact in such an intimate manner. Enrique Yegros (Paraguayan) recounted how every day when he walked to school as a child, the security guard would be drinking yerba mate and would share it with him. In fact, anyone that Enrique passed on the street would share yerba mate if he asked. But of course, not everyone feels comfortable asking for mate from a stranger.

All of the participants concurred that yerba mate pervaded their lives in South America, but many did not realize its importance until they moved to the United States. Diego Vera, a Paraguayan, commented that he had never given yerba mate much thought until recently. When he was back in Asunción doing some paperwork with his American wife, she pointed out that in every single government office someone was drinking it or had it on a desk. As Diego explained, “[yerba mate] is such an intrinsic part of us that you really don’t think about it until somebody else points it out.” Thinking back, Diego says that he can’t imagine his childhood and many conversations or scenarios with his mother and grandmother without yerba mate. Enrique summarized, “[Drinking yerba mate] is part of the culture, you are born with it.”

Even while Paraguayans, Uruguayans, Argentines, and southern Brazilians share an enthusiasm for yerba mate, they also embrace regional differences. Brazilian yerba mate is greener and more finely ground. Even though it is drunk only in the southern part of the country, regional differences still exist. João Pessato was born in Rio Grande do Sul, where his family drank yerba mate with hot water but when his family moved north to the warmer state of Mato Grosso do Sul, they changed to drinking it with cold water. Paraguayans also drink yerba mate with both hot and cold water but most Argentines and Uruguayans would never think of using cold water. Paraguayans also differ in their practice of adding yuyos (herbs) to the water. These yuyos can be either medicinal or refreshing. Diego



**“Mate jardín” (Mate Garden) by Facundo de Zuviría, 2010. The gourd container for the dried leaves prepared for the infusion of hot water, the metal “bombilla” to suck the tea-like drink, and a bouquet of fresh leaves of yerba mate (*ile paraguariensis*). Right: The author as Peace Corps volunteer, 1998-2000 in Curuguaty, Paraguay, sharing a yerba mate with friends.**



described how as a child, his family would send him to the *yuyera* (the woman who sold yuyos) in the market. Based on how you felt or what you dreamed, the *yuyera* chose specific yuyos from her supply and prepared them in front of you with a mortar and pestle. Many Paraguayans grow yuyos in their own yard or garden. The idea of flavoring the yerba mate has been catching on. Many companies now sell packaged yerba mate with citrus, mint, or herbs and some are adding more experimental flavors such as guaraná and coffee. Companies also market an extensive variety of yerba mate styles to appeal to every taste (for example: low powder, with stems, without stems, smooth, intense, aged). But there is little cross-over among countries. Supermarkets in each country sell national brands of yerba mate, and during the panel at ASU, all of the participants patriotically claimed their country’s yerba mate as the best.

Such beliefs derive in part from yerba mate’s incorporation into each country’s national identity. The gaucho—adopted by Argentines, Uruguayans and southern Brazilians as emblematic of their country’s rural past—is remembered as an avid yerba mate consumer. National memories of yerba mate are not limited to the rural areas. Belle Époque-era immigrants to both the city and the countryside quickly adopted yerba mate as a way to assimilate. In Paraguay, national identity is linked to *tereré*, and many

attribute its popularization to soldiers fighting in the Chaco War (1932-1935).

Connections with national identity have the tendency to obscure other meanings and origins. Argentine Gustavo Fischman commented during the ASU panel that yerba mate has been nationalized, and as a result, “very few people will make the direct connection that we are drinking something that has indigenous roots.” Most of the panelists agreed. The Paraguayans recognized that Guarani artisans make and sell yerba mate paraphernalia, but otherwise admitted that little is known about the drink’s Guarani origins.

Like most caffeinated substances, Europeans initially found yerba mate repulsive: a green bitter drink consumed by Indians! It was unlike anything most Europeans had ever drunk. Other caffeinated drinks like coffee and tea would take another couple of centuries to become popular in Europe. Moreover, Spaniards were not initially looking for new and foreign substances to introduce back home. The conquistadors were much more interested in finding mineral wealth and saving souls, and as Rebecca Earle points out in *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492-1700*, Spanish settlers were much more interested in replicating their old-world Spanish diet in the Americas than they were in bringing foreign foodstuffs and strange substances back to Europe. Still, the use of yerba

mate spread fairly rapidly among European settlers to South America.

Yerba mate’s growing popularity in the colonial period created some controversies. European settlers and travelers to the region wrote extensively about the drink’s many supposed attributes. On one hand, it was reputed to give strength, rejuvenate, and clarify the senses and was often described like a wonder drug that could cure a variety of maladies. On the other hand, too much yerba mate was described as a vice that was addictive and made people lazy and willing to do anything to get it. Most authors conceded that yerba mate was a good thing when used with moderation.

By the 18th century, most people in the Río de la Plata region consumed yerba mate regardless of racial or economic background. From elites to novitiates in Jesuit colleges to slaves and Indians, most everyone drank it daily and reputedly valued it as much as, if not more than, any basic foodstuff. Day laborers were known to refuse to work if they didn’t receive their expected ration of yerba mate. The reach of the drink extended to Peru, Bolivia and Chile and almost everyone writing about the Río de la Plata region mentioned it. They frequently compared it with chocolate, coffee and tea—all foreign drinks introduced to Europe. Its resemblance to tea was especially emphasized.

Despite yerba mate’s widespread use in South America, its popularity did not spread outside of the region until recently. As an alternative tea or energy drink, yerba mate is adopting different cultural practices in the United States, Europe, and Asia. But still, the unique communal form of drinking—along with all of the connotations associated with friendship and the building of social connections—remain strong in South America.

**Julia Sarreal** is an Assistant Professor at Arizona State University. She received a Ph.D. in Latin American History from Harvard University in 2009 and is the author of *The Guarani and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History* (Stanford University Press, 2014).



# A Bilingual Country

Paraguay and the Guarani Tongue **BY BENJAMÍN FERNÁNDEZ**

IF YOU ARRIVED IN A COUNTRY WHERE ALMOST 90% of the inhabitants speak Guarani, an official and national language along with Spanish but do not identify themselves as “Indian” or aboriginal (and even the tribe has disappeared), you would think they suffered a severe identity crisis. However, we Paraguayans are very proud of our bilingual (Spanish and Guarani) condition and of Guarani as an assimilation tool for our many different cultures: Mennonites from Europe and Canada, Russians, Ukrainians, Arabs, Japanese, Koreans, North Americans, Indians from India and Europeans from every corner of that continent.

Immigration has been encouraged in Paraguay in part because the country was almost completely depopulated during the so-called Great War (1865-1870). Some say as little as 15% of the population survived after confronting the combined forces of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. That was an extremely high price to pay in military and civilian victims to defend its territory, identity and culture.

Paraguay was reconstructed by women—the majority of men perished, as Brazilian author Julio José Chiavenato explains in his book, *American Genocide: The Paraguayan War*. He cites a letter sent by the Duke of Caxias, the commander of the Brazilian Army to Emperor Don Pedro II on November 18, 1867:

It is impossible to triumph in the war against Paraguay...instead of being a war that strives for legitimate aspirations, it is a war determined to destroy, to annihilate. This demonstrates beyond a doubt that even if we had 200,000 troops to continue the war against Paraguay, we would have to reduce the entire Paraguayan population to ashes in order to triumph; and this is not an exaggeration because I am in possession of some

irrefutable data that if we managed to kill all the men, we would have to combat the women, who would replace them with equal courage and martial fervor and with the impetus and determination inspired by their lost relatives that feeds their desire for revenge. Would such a triumph against a people be acceptable? We could, perhaps, count on elements to obtain such a victory, but if we obtained it, what would we have achieved? ....

It would mean conquering not only an entire people, but a vast cemetery in which we bury all the Paraguayan population and resources with a hundred times more the Brazilian population and resources. And what would we be in this vast cemetery? We would be the grave-diggers who have to bury the ashes of our victims, and we would have to answer to God and the world with its outcries and, more than this, with the Paraguayan nation disappeared and the Brazilian population disappeared in proportion to its greater size, who would hold the responsibility, if not Brazil and Brazil alone, for the damage caused by this war and its subjects (p. 205).

The text is more than eloquent about Brazil’s perception of this largely unrecognized war whose cruel legacy is still perceptible in Paraguay, reflected in the courage of its men and the commitment of its women. A few months ago, Pope Francis, an Argentine, recognized the importance not only of the reconstruction of the nation, but also the very preservation of its culture through its mother tongue: Guarani. Language is our principal tool to affirm our identity as a nation and as a collective. We shield ourselves from a hostile world through our language. It defines our character, temperament and personality. We absorb every other culture with the assumption that learning the language is a key to understanding and inte-

gration. Paraguay has the highest level of bilingualism in all of Latin America. Nine out of ten Paraguayans speak both languages, and it is impossible to understand the subtleties of the Paraguayan culture without understanding some Guarani.

A few years ago, former U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay James Cason, now the mayor of Coral Gables, Florida, decided to learn Guarani. He had done such a good job that his farewell was a song concert in Guarani at a large local theatre. We felt very proud of him for his effort and interest in understanding the country.

## A LANGUAGE WITH MANY NUANCES

Paraguay is a complicated country with a language that is difficult to explain; for example, there are five ways to say “dawn” (*ko’é*, *koé*, *ti ko’embota*, *koe ju*, *koe soro*). It takes about three minutes for the sun to dawn, but it requires five different expressions to describe it in Guarani.

Guarani is an onomatopoeic language that imitates the sounds of nature, so a waterfall may be called *chololó* or *charará* to describe the unique characteristics of Iguazú as one of the largest waterfalls in the world. Or it plays with the very name of the country: some define Paraguay as the “land of the *payaguaes*,” an indigenous group which the first Spanish conquerors found when they arrived in 1525.

To understand Paraguay as a nation, one must examine how the aboriginal language was used to reconstruct the country’s pride and confidence. The language is a mask and shield to protect us from the outside world. Paraguay is a country without a coast and in unique isolation. It was defined a century ago by the famous Spanish writer Rafael Barret as “difficult and beautiful, where some people have luck, but the country



Although Paraguay does not have a coast, water forms an integral part of its landscape.

doesn't." This phrase left an impression on our own famous writer Augusto Roa Bastos, who declared, "misfortune fell in love with Paraguay." In a certain fashion,

## Guarani has been an assimilation tool in Paraguay for many different cultures that have migrated there.

we like to perceive ourselves as strange, complex, inscrutable and different, and success sometimes feels uncomfortable to us, perhaps as a result of national trauma; when Paraguay was the most developed nation in Latin America, the Great War punished the country and left the impression that success is the closest thing there is to tragedy.

The question of identity is forged in the language and gives each Paraguayan a sense of pride, although in the process this syncretism generates conflicts. Thinking in one language and expressing oneself in another—disglossia—is still an unresolved issue. Although the 1992 Constitution established Guarani as an official language, the levels of bilingual instruction are far from developing both languages on an equal basis, leading to a linguistic mixture known as *jopará*, a neo-language similar to Spanglish in the United States. The Guarani language

now has its own Academy that dictates uniformity in writing, thus making the obligatory teaching of Guarani in private and public schools an easier task. Even though the national currency is printed in the two languages, there is still a long path before education becomes truly bilingual, achieving a true degree of both oral and written fluency.

Paraguay has managed to develop traits of its culture through a complex language that contributed to establishing isolation as its central characteristic. "An island surrounded by land," as Augusto Roa Bastos described the country, reflects metaphorically the characteristics of a culture that has taken refuge in its language to keep itself vibrant, different and unique.

Guarani is largely a cultural construct. The tribe does not now exist, but its presence remains in the 17 surviving ethnic groups that reference its grammatical roots in their own lan-

guages. Ours is a country that embraces, absorbs and "submits" in the best sense of the word to recent arrivals, even making notably different cultures part of its obligatory usage. In a few years, these people are absorbed through the language that defines the Paraguayan cosmivision and reality.

Although the promotion of Guarani is slow, the dynamics have been so great that the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy decided to include Guarani words in its Spanish edition, thus registering the increase in the use of *jopará*, the Spanish-Guarani mix.

Paraguay's great challenge is to deepen its cultural values and to avoid the debates that certain sectors of the intelligentsia put forth about the real utility of the Guarani language for Paraguayans. The cultural value of Guarani helps us not only to understand the identity of Paraguayans, but of the entire region that extends to Argen-

tina, Brazil, Bolivia and even Uruguay. The names of cities and towns with clean Guarani roots have led Mercosur to recognize Guarani as a language. The Plurinational State of Bolivia, as the country is now officially called, includes the Guarani nation. In these times dominated by globalization, a return to local roots seeks to recognize the universal in the local.

Today, politicians take Guarani language courses to improve their pronunciation because they know that without speaking Guarani, no one can get elected in Paraguay. Films in Guarani are becoming popular, and well-known singers in the Spanish-speaking world have recorded songs in Guarani, such as Joan Manuel Serrat of Spain with "Che Pykazumi" (My Dove). Courses in Guarani are also being offered at major universities throughout the world.

For now, we can say that Spanish speakers also speak *jopara* and a scarce few speak pure Guarani; the language has now become a living laboratory in Paraguay in which its use is preferred for its cultural value—making it different and distinct in the world.

Identity issues are better known for being a factor for crisis in the world. However, in Paraguay, the use of Guarani emerges as a reaffirmation of the national capacity to coexist with other languages and cultures and, at the same time, of being a powerful factor for cohesion for the foreign-born communities who make up this country of seven million in the center of South America.

The language has been an instrument of recognition and defense, one that has helped reconstruct the country after the genocide of the Great War. A country, a language, an identity and a projection... that is no small thing in the rich history of the subcontinent.

**Benjamín Fernández Bogado**, *Nieman Fellow '00*, is a Paraguayan lawyer and journalist who has written more than fifteen books on democracy and freedom of the press. He is a university professor and the founder of *Radio Libre* and the financial newspaper *5Días*.



# WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

From the Guarani aquifer system to modern hydroelectric dams, the region's rivers have shaped its territory.

- The Guarani and the Iguazu National Park 18
- The Invention of the Guarani Aquifer System 23
- Beyond the Dam 26
- Building the Future 29
- Y marane'ỹ rekávo 33



# The Guarani and the Iguazu National Park

An Environmental History **BY FREDERICO FREITAS**

**IN SEPTEMBER 2005, A GROUP OF 55 GUARANI** Indians occupied a forested section of the Iguazu National Park in the state of Paraná in southern Brazil. You may recognize Iguazu as a park and tourist destination on the Brazilian side of the famous Iguazu Falls. However, it also protects 400,000 acres of Atlantic forest, one of the last large continuous stretches of this endangered biome. The Guarani came from the overcrowded Ocoí reservation on the shores of the Itaipu reservoir, some twenty miles from

the park where they lived. Chief Simão Tupã Viliálva said the group intended to use the occupation to pressure the Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI), the Brazilian Agency for Indian Affairs, into solving their land shortage problem. Through the occupation of Brazil's most visited national park, the Guarani demanded a solution for the dozens of families whose land was encroached by farmers and the Itaipu lake in the 570-acre Ocoí reservation.

The Guarani remained in the Iguazu

National Park for eighty days, only agreeing to leave after being promised by FUNAI officials to be taken to Guarapuava, headquarters for the FUNAI office for Western Paraná. They wanted a face-to-face meeting with FUNAI officials to present their demands for new land. FUNAI brought in a bus to transport the Guarani, but instead of heading to Guarapuava, the driver took them to another reservation, Tekohá Añetete, in Diamante do Oeste. There, FUNAI officials planned to cram the 55



The Iguazu/Iguaçu National Park spans the Argentine-Brazilian border, but the center of attention is the mighty Iguazu/Iguaçu Falls.

Guarani in an existing and already overcrowded reservation shared with other indigenous groups. Perceiving FUNAI's deception, the group led by Viliálva was infuriated. As they were getting off the bus, a clash took place between the Guarani and state officials; a police officer was shot with a Guarani arrow. Eventually Itaipu Binacional, the company behind the hydroelectric dam, decided to intervene and acquired a new 600-acre area adjacent to the Tekohá Añetete reservation providing land for some of the Guarani families from Ocoí.

A couple of hundred acres did little to assuage the chronic land shortage suffered by the Guarani at the Ocoí reservation. In October 2013 a new group of eight individuals once again occupied the Iguazu National Park. By the end of May, the group had swelled to 25. The

Guarani who entered Iguazu claimed their people had inhabited those forests, the Ka' Aguy Guasú (big woods), before the park's creation in 1939. They argued they were not responsible for the transformation of nature into soy plantations, grazing fields, factories, roads and cities. Therefore, they should not be penalized by exclusion from the last continuous stretch of Atlantic forest in Western Paraná. They demanded that part of the national park be declared an indigenous reservation, thereby correcting what they saw as a historical wrong committed by the Brazilian state when it created a protected area that barred indigenous peoples from the forest.

Were the Guarani from Ocoí correct in claiming they had lived in the area occupied by the national park before

its creation? It depends on where one sets the threshold. Unquestionably, the Guarani and other indigenous groups like the Kaingang had lived in the area way before the creation of the national park. However, what is not clear from the historical record is whether they had been driven away from the territory of the park at the moment of its establishment by park authorities, or prior to that, by settlers.

Before beginning my research in the history of the Iguazu National Park, I believed the Guarani would be a constant presence in the historical documents. After all, in the last three decades the historical scholarship on national parks has brought to light a common pattern of eviction of indigenous communities in the creation of protected areas devised to be devoid of people (but not tourists). So I believed I would find documents indicating Indian displacement in the creation of the national park. Instead, what I found was mostly silence. For the first decades of the park's existence, hardly any source indicates the presence of Guarani or other indigenous groups in the park area. The first time they appear in park documents is in a 1967 memo by René Denizart Pockrandt, then the director of the Iguazu National Park. Pockrandt suggested the indigenous peoples roaming the Argentine-Brazilian border be settled inside the Brazilian park as a touristic attraction, a suggestion that never became a reality.

Another type of evidence of the presence of Guarani within the limits of the park was provided by anthropologist Maria Lucia Brant Carvalho. In her Ph.D. dissertation, Carvalho interviewed Narcisa Tacua Catu de Almeida, a senior member of the Guarani community in Ocoí, who claimed to have lived in two different Guarani communities in the area encompassed by the park from 1934 to 1962. Almeida cites a first, violent eviction in 1943, followed by another in 1962. However, it is unclear who pushed the Guarani away from the park since park authorities

had only tenuous control over its territory for the first thirty years. The park then existed mostly only on paper.

Brazilian authorities finally moved to enforce the Iguazu National Park as a protected area in the 1970s, and nowadays the park stands as an island of rain-forest surrounded by a sea of farming landscape. The park presents a significant area covered by old-growth forests, since sixty percent of its territory has been established as an “intangibile area,” a designation banning human settlements and all types of human activities except for scientific research and surveillance. Park zoning allows more intensive human activities such as tourism in the remaining area, but it bans permanent dwellers and extractive activities. In this way, the Guarani claim to the park’s natural resources puts them at odds with environmental authorities whose mission is to keep a territory free of most types of human interventions.

Brazil established the Iguazu National Park in 1939 following the creation of the Argentine Iguazú National Park on the other side of the border five years earlier. Both parks were intended to protect each side of the bi-national Iguazu Falls, the massive 1.7-mile-wide series of waterfalls located on the Iguazu River, at the border shared by the two countries. The parks also extended inland, sheltering more than 555,000 acres of the original Atlantic forest that, in the early 1940s, still covered most of the Brazilian southwest, Argentine extreme northeast, and the Paraguayan east. Eighty years of successive waves of colonization, mostly by Brazilians of European descent coming from Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo, transformed what was a sparsely inhabited frontier of forests and mate gathering into an expanse of crop fields and mechanized farming. The region became a center for the green revolution transforming the Brazilian (and later Paraguayan) hinterland in the 1970s and 1980s. The two parks, therefore, contained the last large stretch of forest cover in the Triple Frontier, thus earning the status of UNESCO heritage sites in the 1980s.

The Iguazu National Park in Brazil originated with the donation of an estate by the government of the state of Paraná that included the Iguazu Falls on the Brazilian side. The original proponents wanted to transform the area into a national park to guarantee Brazilian access to the waterfalls. From 1939 to 1944, the park was limited to the donated estate’s original 12,350 acres, but in 1944 the federal government decided to incorporate new land into the park to protect the forest from loggers, increasing its size to 400,000 acres. Large public land tracts comprised the bulk of the land used in the park expansion. However, there was a problem: for the expansion, the federal Forest Service used public land that was in judicial dispute between the Brazilian federal government and the state of Paraná.

The long court battle between state and federal governments ended with a 1963 Brazilian Supreme Court ruling in favor of the federal government. The decades-long juridical uncertainty about who owned the national park’s public land, coupled with the land grabbing practices that plagued western Paraná, allowed hundreds of southern Brazilian migrants to acquire land and settle inside a section of the national park. In the 1970s the Brazilian military dictatorship decided for the costly and politically difficult removal of the 447 families (about 2,500 people) living inside the Iguazu National Park. The great majority had arrived in the 1950s and 1960s, and they came to occupy seven percent of the park’s area. They had built farms, villages, schools, roads, and even a chapel inside the Brazilian park. After the eviction, infrastructure that could not be removed by the settlers was torn down by park authorities. Over the years, a secondary forest grew over most of the area formerly occupied by farms.

Inadvertently, the resettlement of these 447 families of white settlers served to reintroduce the Guarani into the history of the Iguazu National Park. The area where the Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA), the

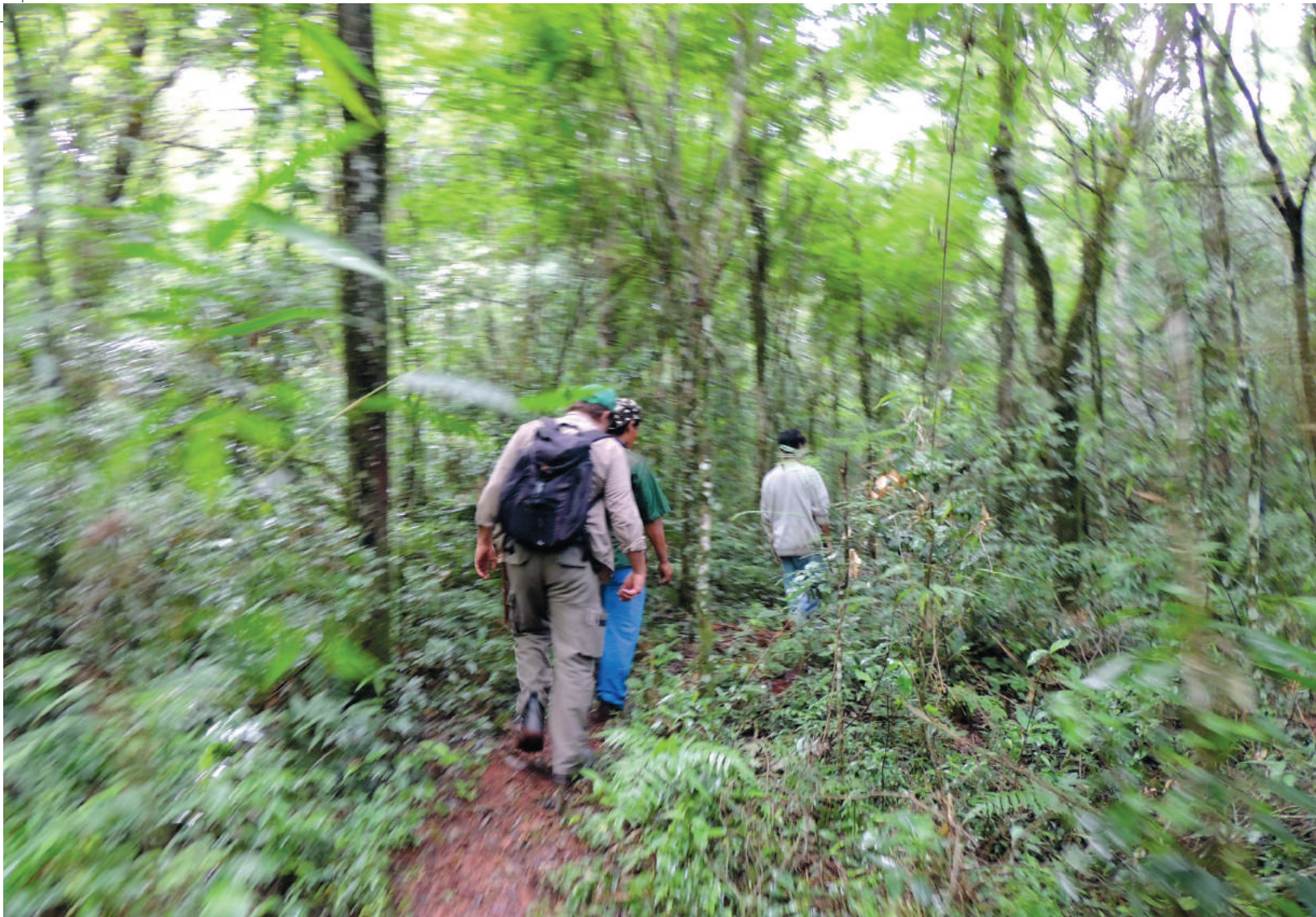
Brazilian agency for agrarian reform and colonization, chose to relocate settlers in the early 1970s already harbored a group of Guarani. Inside the chosen area was Jacutinga, a small Guarani community engaged in fishing and subsistence farming near the confluence of the Ocoí and Paraná Rivers. This Guarani community was not under the radar of FUNAI, and in its survey INCRA classified their members as squatters. In order to prepare the terrain to receive the settlers evicted from the Iguazu National Park, INCRA started pressuring the Guarani to leave the Ocoí area. Many decided to flee to Paraguay or Argentina, but some resisted. The agency brought in henchmen to harass them, burning their houses and confiscating their fishing and agricultural tools.

INCRA’s attack on the Guarani drew the attention of a local human-rights activist, lawyer Antonio Vanderlei Moreira. In 1975 Moreira accused INCRA employees and their hired gunmen of threatening, assaulting and burning the houses of Guarani and peasants living in Ocoí. In 1977, a committee formed by INCRA and FUNAI officials was established to investigate the presence of Indians living inside the Ocoí estate. The 30,000-acre tract had been expropriated by INCRA in 1971 to receive the 2,500 settlers evicted from the national park. It was named Projeto Integrado de Colonização - Ocoí (PIC-OCOI), “Ocoí Integrated Colonization Project.” The INCRA-FUNAI committee found 27 Guarani living inside PIC-OCOI near the banks of the Paraná River. To accommodate these individuals they created the Ocoí reservation in another area inside PIC-OCOI. The small area set to be an Indian reservation had originally been designated as forest reserve for the incoming settlers. The Guarani ended up enclosed in a small reservation surrounded by the farmers relocated from the Iguazu National Park.

In 1982, the creation of the Itaipu res-

**Photo of the Guarani camp inside the Iguazu National Park in November 2013 by Marcela Kropf.**





Guarani men hike on the trails to their camp inside the Iguaçu National Park in November 2013.

ervoir flooded part of PIC-OCOI, swallowing a big chunk of the land available for both the Guarani and the white settlers. The Guarani found themselves in a narrow, 570-acre swath of degraded forests on the banks of the new reservoir, trapped between the new lake and the relocated farmers. Life in such conditions was hard, and the Guarani suffered all sorts of environmental problems: erosion by lake waters, contamination of lake water by pesticides from neighboring farms, endemic malaria, and encroachment by the surrounding farms. At the same time, the population of the Ocoí reservation continued to increase due to natural growth and new arrivals from other Guarani communities. In 1986, the Guarani started a campaign for new lands and pressured the World Bank for a solution—the bank had financed the building of the Itaipu dam. They sent a Harvard-trained anthropologist, Shel-

ton H. Davis, to assess the veracity of the Guarani claims. Davis' report, along with a new report by Brazilian anthropologist Silvio Coelho dos Santos, president of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology, convinced Itaipu to work for solving the problem of the overcrowded reserve. The company acquired a 4,300-acre estate in Diamante do Oeste to accommodate the Guarani families from Ocoí. This was the same reservation to which the Guarani group occupying the park in 2005 would be deceitfully taken by FUNAI.

The Guarani who entered the Iguaçu National Park for a second time in 2013 have already left the park, following a court order issued in August 2014. However, the overpopulation problem at the Ocoí reservation, where about 600 hundred people share 570 acres, still persists. The existence of a protected area containing the last large remnant of Atlantic forest in the region became a point

of contention between environmental authorities and indigenous groups. What the former see as crucial reserve of a dwindling biome, the latter see as the retention of natural resources that should be made available to the region's indigenous peoples. Yet, after recognizing the difficulty in changing an environmentalist paradigm that sees national parks as an off-limits territory for people, the Guarani, by resorting to occupations, have turned the park into an instrument for leveraging their position in their struggle for access to land.

*Frederico Freitas is a Ph.D. candidate in Latin American History at Stanford University. His research focuses on the environmental history of the border between Brazil and Argentina in the twentieth century, and the creation of the two national parks of Iguaçu, in Brazil, and Iguazú, in Argentina.*



# The Invention of the Guarani Aquifer System

New Ideas and New Water Politics in the Southern Cone **BY MARTIN WALTER**

ON OCTOBER 19, 1979, THE PRESIDENTS OF ARGENTINA, Brazil and Paraguay gathered in Asunción to sign an agreement setting general principles for the utilization of the Paraná River, a major waterway shared by the three nations. The agreement enabled the construction of hydroelectric dams in the basin and eased the tensions resulting from the competitive exploitation of the watershed. Decades later, in 2003, authorities from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay would meet again to launch a cooperative process to determine how to govern their shared waters. This time, the objective was to develop instruments to manage and protect the Guarani Aquifer System (GAS), a transboundary groundwater basin spanning over more than 1.1 million square kilometers and considered one of the largest freshwater reservoirs in the world (see Figure 1). By 2010, the countries had implemented several new local-level policies and ratified a framework agreement to manage and protect the aquifer system.

Countries in the Southern Cone had been quarrelling—and striking agreements—over shared surface waters since colonial times, but policy for the GAS was in many ways different. Similar to other shared water policies, the governance mechanisms created for the GAS emphasized each of the countries' inalienable sovereignty over the resource and enshrined reciprocal no-harm and sustainability as guiding principles for the future exploitation of the resources. However, the GAS policies dealt with an entirely new kind of water resource—transboundary groundwater—for which few countries in the world have managed to strike formal governance agreements. More importantly, they were developed at the initiative of local non-state actors

supported by international organizations. Unlike previous shared water policies created to respond to the needs and plans of national authorities, the new shared water governance instruments were expected to help promote local and sustainable development.

Ideas played a key role in the development of the GAS policy. Indeed, the notion of a transboundary groundwater body in the Southern Cone only emerges in the final decades of the 20th century. Before then, although the existence of aquifers in the region was well known, scientists had failed to identify the transnational linkages between groundwater bodies. The aquifers that make up the GAS were studied as separate entities under different names. Understanding local aquifers as a single interconnected basin subverted the established compartmentalized approach to the study of local groundwaters that had prevailed until then. Local hydrogeologists first theorized and then defended this view in opposition to the interpretation of experts from canonical disciplines of geology and hydrology. Seminal hydrogeology studies conducted during the 80s and 90s would provide empirical support for the single aquifer system theory. At the same time, hydrogeological research contributed to the development of new epistemic communities, leading to the emergence of a new group of experts who shared the belief that the regional aquifer existed, and that its resources would require new policies in order to be protected. Regional hydrogeologists agreed on a unified name for the aquifer system—the name “Guarani” was chosen for its sociocultural implications instead of a more conventional nomenclature—as well as on a strategy to gather

further financial resources to study the aquifer. In the late 90s, scientists wielding a new idea kick-started a process of international cooperation among political entities, a process that would shape policy for the waters of the GAS.

The idea of the GAS was scientifically controversial because the geological formations that make the GAS are extremely dissimilar across the region, but it was also politically compelling. The existence of a unique system of connected aquifers implied that groundwater exploitation decisions were interdependent. It meant that groundwater exploitation practices were having an impact beyond jurisdictional borders, and that some degree of international coordination would be necessary to adequately exploit the resources in the medium to long term. Also, the unified conceptualization of the aquifer system helped draw additional attention to specific local management challenges, for it turned them into components of a larger, more strategically significant shared water governance issue. The idea of a unique regional aquifer helped to raise the profile of provincial challenges in the national political agenda and obtain additional resources.

The invention of the GAS can also be understood as a byproduct of democratization. With democracy, regional academic institutions gained autonomy from central government decision-making. New academic disciplines such as hydrogeology blossomed and focused on new issues relevant to local and regional interests. Political change helped people to focus on new problems relevant to local economic development. At the same time, more permeable borders facilitated the development of transnational knowledge networks and epistemic communi-

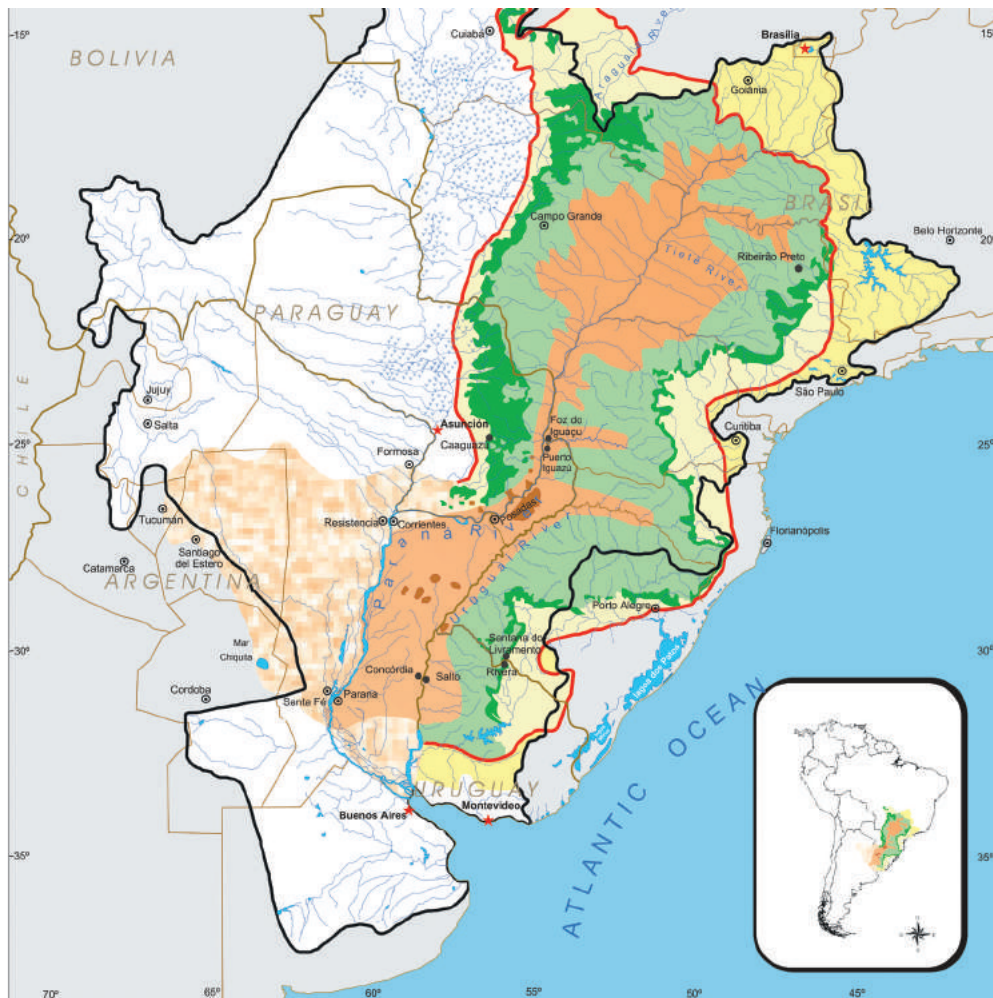
ties by helping to foster the social relationships behind the transnational policy initiative. The international cooperation process that would lead to policies for the

GAS reflected the initiative of local actors seeking practical solutions to their problems, rather than the strategic response from centralized authorities that was

prevalent in the decades that preceded democratization.

Indeed, the invention of the GAS was the expression of new international rela-

### SCHEMATIC MAP OF THE GUARANI AQUIFER SYSTEM



#### LEGEND

- Drainage water do not related to the Guarani (no belonging to the system)
- Potential Indirect recharge areas
  - From surface runoff
  - from underground flows
- Potential direct recharge areas
  - porous regime: Guarani outcrops
  - fractured/porous regime: basalts and sandstones
- Potential discharge areas
  - porous regime: Guarani outcroppings
  - fractured/porous regime: basalts and sandstones
  - fractured/porous regime (relation to Guarani to be defined)
- Prata watershed basin limit
- Paraná geological basin limit
- ~ Rivers
- ~ Wetlands
- International Boundaries
- State/Provincial Boundaries
- Cities
- ⊙ State/Province Capitals
- ★ National Capitals

Approximated Scale: 1:13.600.000  
 0 100 200 300 km

**Notes:**  
 - Schematic map produced by CAS/SRH/MMA (UNPP/Brazil) approved by the Project Steering Committee - Project for the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Guarani Aquifer System (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay - GEF/World Bank - OAS).  
 - Colored portions represent the areas which, potentially, belong to the Guarani Aquifer System. The aquifer limits are not completely defined in Argentina and Paraguay.

**Sources:**  
 - South America Hydrogeological Map, 1996, DNP/CPRM/Unesco.  
 - Guarani Aquifer Hydrogeological Map, 1999, Campos H.C.  
 - Map of Geological Integration of the Prata Basin, 1998, Mercosul/SGT2.  
 - Map of hydrogeological integration of the Prata Basin, in elaborating, Mercosul/SGT2.  
 - Geological Map of Brazil, 2nd Edition, 1995, MME/DNPM.  
 - Geological Map of Rio de la Plata Basin, 1970, OEA.

tions in the Southern Cone. Still, new ideas cannot explain policy outcomes. Governance instruments for the aquifer system developed concomitant to the increasing demand for the resources in the region. Groundwaters were becoming an increasingly crucial component of diverse economic activities—i.e., the supply of fresh-water for urban consumption in southern Brazil, crop irrigation in Paraguay, and thermal tourism operations in Argentina and Uruguay. These practices led to the slow yet noticeable quantitative and qualitative deterioration of the resources. Lack of regulation encouraged, for example, the proliferation of groundwater wells, the contamination of recharge zones, and the absence of proper well-drilling standards. These new problems prompted demands for solutions.

The regional scale of the aquifer system catalyzed the recognition of the potential geostrategic value of the resources and prompted the involvement of public officials at the national level. Driven by the demands of regional scientists and local stakeholders, but reflective of the strategic interest of the national governments, groundwater issues entered the political agenda. The countries engaged in a process of multilateral cooperation and established a project—co-financed by an international organization, the Global Environment Facility—for the assessment of resources and the established regulatory frameworks in the year 2000. The initiative helped develop a knowledge base for the development of policies aimed at the protection and sustainable management of the aquifer system. The international cooperation project concluded in 2009 with the production of a strategic action plan for the GAS, which was rooted in concrete management policies at the local, regional and national levels. Information gathered through the cooperation process was centralized in a system of publicly accessible geographic information to aid decision-makers. On this basis, local stakeholders implemented new well drilling standards,

determined minimum buffer zones between wells, and protected vulnerable recharge areas. The action plan also led to the signature of a multi-lateral framework agreement in 2010, which outlined general non-binding principles for future transboundary groundwater governance in the region.

If anything, the process that led to the creation of the governance instruments for the management and sustainable exploitation of the GAS shows the many roles that scientific knowledge plays in modern environmental politics. Information about transboundary groundwaters was simultaneously instrumental to the introduction of the resources in the political agenda and the political negotiation of concrete management provisions. In fact, the process of political recognition of the resources was inseparable from the emergence of new theories about the aquifer system's scale and from the struggles for peer recognition of the regional scientists. Moreover, official negotiations about the “new” shared resources—the waters stored in the Guarani Aquifer System—resulted from the mobilization and interest of actors who, historically, had been marginal in regional politics. Instead of being designed and directed exclusively according to the preferences of central government agents, the governance of the aquifer system was fostered by subsidiary political authorities and non-state actors: expert networks and international organizations.

Tracing the role of ideas in policy-making is a challenging endeavor, for they are both the expression of contextual factors and powerful drivers of change. The recognition of groundwater problems results from the interplay of particular groundwater exploitation patterns, the increased understanding of the factors behind hydrogeological conditions, and the changing social value attributed to the services provided by the resources. None of these factors, taken individually, is sufficient to explain the entry of groundwater problems in the political agenda. Reliance on groundwaters increases the value of

the services provided by the resources, albeit only given a “sufficient” understanding of the factors behind the deterioration or depletion of the resources. Simultaneously, the value of groundwater resources is shaped by the availability of hydrogeological information and modeling techniques because it both exposes the causes of groundwater degradation and determines the stakeholders' ability to exploit and to manage groundwater resources. The interactions of these three factors highlight the social nature of groundwater problems.

The processes of social construction that lead to the recognition of groundwater problems are too often ignored by the literature dedicated to water governance. Problems tend to be taken for granted—seen as existing *a priori* of the policy-making process—or, alternatively, framed as purely instrumental to the strategic preferences of political actors. In this sense, perhaps the most significant contribution of the constructivist approach to international water policy is that it highlights a constitutive phase of the policy process. It emphasizes that the recognition of groundwater issues is concomitant with the formulation of preferences vis-à-vis the management of the resource; in other words, it stresses that the acknowledgement of groundwater problems is inseparable from the involvement of actors in the political process and from the entry of the resources into the political agenda. This is a process driven not just by “objective facts,” but also by the changing meaning of these facts in specific socio-historical contexts.

*Martin Walter is currently a consultant at the Inter-American Development Bank. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Northwestern University and the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, and his work deals with the socio-political intricacies of implementing projects for the protection and sustainable development of natural resources. He can be reached at [mw.martinwalter@gmail.com](mailto:mw.martinwalter@gmail.com).*

# Beyond the Dam

Intervention Strategies for a Resilient Environment **BY ALFREDO MÁXIMO GARAY**

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMMENSE YACYRETÁ** dam took place on a territory with a very powerful story. The transformation of the society and the environment of the place where it was built did not begin in 1958, when Argentina and Paraguay signed an agreement that commissioned the design of the first project. It did not begin in 1973 with the signing of the Treaty of Yacyretá Binational, or when construction began in December 1983. The dam was constructed on layers of indigenous legacies, wars, territorial disputes and a unique mission history. It can be considered a transition territory—a reality in motion over centuries.

For Spanish conquerors at the time of the Jesuit missions, the large rivers that form the Paraná Basin (Paraná and Uruguay rivers) had two major obstacles to navigation: Salto Grande (a waterfall for which the existing dam has been named) on the Uruguay River, and the Rapids of Apipé (current location of the Yacyretá dam). The colonial occupation took place on the navigable sections (up to Asunción). However, upstream, the Spanish conquistadors proceeded with uncertainty because of the dense subtropical forest that hampered their mobility and the exploration of the ground.

For the Guaranis, rivers provided the main means of communication; their economy had the forest and the river at its core. It was just on the side of these northern basins where the Jesuits promoted the creation of small autonomous population centers—called missions—with their own agricultural production. The system of the Jesuit missions covered a vast territory. Other forms of colonial occupation relied on the original native settlements, some of which had achieved a great agricultural development, especially in the fertile valleys of the Andean mountain range known as

the Inca Trail. However, the Jesuit model prioritized the natural limits of the forest and the upper basins of the major rivers, where people used to live with little accumulation of agricultural surpluses. This part of the ancient Guarani territory is known as the region of the Jesuit missions, a land that towards the end of the 16th century was marked by a model that proposed a different kind of relationship between two different cultures. The Guarani people conceived of the Jesuit missions as a land without evil, and in this environment they experienced the transition from a hunting-based economy to an agricultural-based one.

In the first half of the 19th century, the upheavals of independence movements distributed the banks of the rivers among different nations, enhancing the conception of these lands as a battlefield. The violence that defined the period of the conquest was reintroduced as either border disputes or fratricidal wars.

By the late 19th century, communication through rivers stimulated a new system of settlements on their banks. This settlement process was left to colonizing companies and they gathered potential settlers (agricultural workers) from impoverished regions of Europe. The arrival of these new immigrants—German, Polish, Swiss, Ukrainians and other Europeans—with their own languages and idiosyncrasies—had a strong cultural impact on the existing population, which had already undergone several mutations over the course of five hundred years. The new immigration accelerated the transformation of forest to farmland, displacing native people who could not prove their land titles.

As depicted on the maps of the Military Geographical Institute in the early 20th century, these lands seem to be perceived as possible battlefields. Dur-

ing the industrial development phase of the second half of the 20th century, the prevalence of this geopolitical view (doctrine of national security) delayed the development of the Region (“Region” describes the metropolitan area of Posadas, the municipality of Candelaria and the city of Encarnación in Paraguay). At the beginning of the 80s, Mercosur, a subregional bloc made up of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, came into existence and this viewpoint was revised, multiplying the construction of infrastructure projects in order to link the Region with other parts of the country.

The presence of different post-independence nations that lived on these river banks resulted in intense commercial activity, increased fluvial activity and the growth of border cities. Population movements from one bank to another show the profound unity of the people from this Region, people whom the old independence fighters like San Martín, Artigas or Andresito Guacurarí never conceived as different from one another.

The construction of the Yacyretá dam—as happens with most large hydraulic works—had an obvious impact on the characteristics of the Region. From the start, the project gave priority to the continuity of navigation along the Paraná River, and already in 1905 the proposal included power generation. In 1958, an agreement between Argentina and Paraguay commissioned the design of a first project that started in 1973 with the signing of the bi-national Treaty of Yacyretá. Work began in December 1983. Yet the Yacyretá projects appear to be full of contradictions. During the 90s, a major crisis took place that interrupted construction, making it clear that any project should include the viewpoint of local stakeholders. The new program

aimed at compensating flooded land area by setting up new ecological reserve areas. Moreover, the program committed to developing flood barriers and regional infrastructure works such as bridges and roads to rebuild the urban tissue of the affected cities, and to redirect the commercial flow of the city of Encarnación—whose dynamics shifted from the port to the bridge—and lastly, to relocate the affected families on both sides of the river.

From the physical point of view, Yacyretá became a concrete dam of 1,908,000 m<sup>3</sup>, channeling an average flow of 14,000 m<sup>3</sup>/sec. over a planned maximum of 95,000 m<sup>3</sup>/per sec. About 13,000 m<sup>3</sup>/per sec. pass through 20 turbines. This flow seeks to produce more than 3,100 MW with an annual average energy output of 20,700 GWh/ year. This meets 22% of Argentina's energy demands. The dam turned the course of a 213-mile stretch of the Paraná River into a 1,800 km<sup>2</sup> lake (21,000 Hm<sup>3</sup> of water), which made it necessary to build flood barriers, reconstruct the urban area, build roads between Posadas and Encarnación, and develop environmental pro-

units. The commercial district in Encarnación was relocated to three urban sectors with 3,000 new stores.

The project's huge dimensions have considerable impact on a territory that has experienced profound social, economic and cultural transformations, among which the growth of the cities is one of its most eloquent expressions. The idea of a land in transition places people in the context of a reality in motion, reinforcing the need to develop and achieve a more stable horizon for territorial and social resilience.

Resilience is understood as a human group's response or ability to recover from confrontation with adverse conditions, developing a set of traits that define its cultural identity. The group exists in relation to the characteristics of the spaces it inhabits, but is also shaped by its experience of ruptures, fusions and transformations.

The impossibility of reversing certain historical processes or major transformations makes it necessary for people to adapt to a new reality by becoming resilient. When big changes are imposed, as in the case of the dam, actions must aim

imagination and the ability to act). From this perspective, the building of the dam (and its changing effects) promotes a constant rearrangement of the positions taken by the different actors involved in the project, forcing those responsible for its implementation to become involved in true strategic planning.

In the case of Yacyretá, society's perspective about this project has changed profoundly during the years between its development, initiation and completion. The assessment of the environmental and social impact has led to the review of the initial criteria for safekeeping the territory and creation of resilience. Moreover, the dam project has stimulated more ideas to ensure sustainability, such as preservation areas and the implementation of environmental protection and social development policies.

It is interesting to analyze the factors that led to stopping the project in the 1990s. The attempt to privatize the venture in the context of neoliberal policies emerging from the Washington consensus presented difficulties in confronting increased costs. The original project faced doubts about its contribution to national energy development. It was not clear how the project would move forward, but there was a clear need to identify the impact of these works on local development. Locals required infrastructure and needed to adapt to the urbanization of the villages affected by the completion of the dam (with water rising from 76m above sea level to 83m above sea level).

The work plan developed between 2000 and 2014 (which allowed resuming the works) had a hugely positive impact on the urban tissue of the villages. Many tasks are still pending, but the economic benefit (related to the generation of electricity) guarantees the necessary resources for their funding.

The investments had huge economic impact, with a million dollars injected daily into the Region's economy. Previously, the construction of the Itaipú dam on the border of Paraguay and Brazil had had a similar impact, generating

## The impossibility of reversing certain historical processes or major transformations makes it necessary for people to adapt to a new reality by becoming resilient.

tection areas. These works resulted in 3 million m<sup>3</sup> of excavations, 24 million m<sup>3</sup> of fills and embankment, 3 million m<sup>3</sup> of rock protection and 62 miles of road works for renewing urban areas, bridges and access to the cities. Furthermore, 383,000 acres were to be set aside for new environmental reserve areas, managed by park rangers and environmental operators, and 1,500 acres provided for urban parks and green areas, along with 5,000 linear meters of beaches and the construction of 8,500 social housing

to correct unwanted effects of the transformations. Also, analysts and managers must pay close attention to the evolution of the reality under the new conditions. Then they can plan by analyzing what steps must be taken to develop the region from a sustainable development perspective.

The viability of a project is more closely related to the complexity of interventions than to its size. The problem is to align a wide range of stakeholders with diverse positions (interests, collective

more than US\$5 million daily for the community. Investment in the Yacyretá dam created 15,000 direct jobs, and another 20,000 that resulted indirectly with the work on the project. Migration increased as a result, with the Region's population increasing from 80,000 to 500,000 inhabitants in the last decades. Increased migration in turn acceler-

ates urbanization and the accompanying demand for housing, equipment and public services.

With growing environmental quality and compelling landscapes, these settlements attract tourists, migrants and those seeking to start new businesses. Real estate booms with more square footage built each year.

From the social viewpoint, the Metropolitan Area of Posadas (which includes Garupá and Candelaria, but not Encar-

nación) has improved its position in the levels of Unmet Basic Needs (NBI), which is a measure of structural poverty instead of merely insufficient income. In 2010, 13.9% of the population had unmet basic needs, compared to 18.25% in 2001. The infant mortality rate also fell from 29 per 1,000 in the 90s to 9 per 1,000 today.

Although migration to the area—well above the national average—multiplied demand for housing, public services and urban infrastructure, the Region presented improvement in the cities, while rural areas with their traditional productive methods show a slower rate of improvement.

Once urgent problems related to dam construction have been resolved and sustainable development takes off in local communities, broader issues emerge,

such as the integration of the Region in the national and global context as well as the role and participation of the most disadvantaged people within this development process. At a local level, the experience of large social groups (ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, immigrant populations) is key to the development process that involves a transition lasting for several years. A social imaginary that takes into account the effects of these transformations must be fashioned in the process.

## The dam project changed the Region's productive profile. Energy, rather than agriculture and forestry, now has the greatest share of the regional GDP.

ates urbanization and the accompanying demand for housing, equipment and public services.

The dam project also changed the Region's productive profile. Traditional economy was based on agriculture, mainly yerba mate, tea and tung. In the 70s, paper and forestry became leading industries with significant environmental effects. Energy has now replaced those industries with the greatest share of the regional GDP, leading to discussions about the development of new hydroelectric projects.

In the process of developing these projects, cities have become increasingly important, and along with rejuvenated cities came more vibrant border trade centers. In the measure that these cities assume complex roles as service providers, their significance increases.

One idea to address this issue is to build a cultural space—the Museum of Cultural Heritage—that would represent the profound changes experienced by the society of the Region. This museum would seek to study, exhibit and preserve the cultural and environmental legacy left by ancestors of the current population, hoping to develop the tangible and intangible potential of cultural identity.

This cultural center would also develop research projects and create opportunities for exchange and dialogue. The production, classification and exhibition of museum material and the creation of meeting places, events and other forms of expression would show the cultural production in this region, permeated by the experience of the Guarani people.

This museum will be located in a crucial spot in the new Posadas waterfront (El Brete sector), becoming a milestone for the past and present, telling the Region's powerful story of resilience and adaptation.

One idea to address this issue is to build a cultural space—the Museum of Cultural Heritage—that would represent the profound changes experienced by the society of the Region. This museum would seek to study, exhibit and preserve the cultural and environmental legacy left by ancestors of the current population, hoping to develop the tangible and intangible potential of cultural identity.

This cultural center would also develop research projects and create opportunities for exchange and dialogue. The production, classification and exhibition of museum material and the creation of meeting places, events and other forms of expression would show the cultural production in this region, permeated by the experience of the Guarani people.

This museum will be located in a crucial spot in the new Posadas waterfront (El Brete sector), becoming a milestone for the past and present, telling the Region's powerful story of resilience and adaptation.

*Alfredo Máximo Garay is an Argentine architect, president of the Antiguo Puerto Madero Corporation and a professor in the Urban Planning Department of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). He also teaches at Boston's Lincoln Institute and several other universities in Argentina and Paraguay. He was contracted by the Entidad Binacional Yacyretá to work on the urbanization process of the coastal strip of the cities of Posadas (Argentina) and Encarnación (Paraguay).*

	2001	2010
Misiones Province. % Households with NBI*	23,50%	15.63%
Metropolitan Area of Misions. % Households with NBI*	18,25%	13.9%

(NBI=Unmet Basic Needs)

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENSUS 2001, 2010



# Yacyretá

Building the Future **BY OSCAR THOMAS**

**A HYDROELECTRIC PLANT IS ABOUT MUCH** more than water and energy. It is about community and environment, urban planning and resource development. It is about the future and the past of the surrounding area.

In 1973 the governments of Argentina and Paraguay signed the Treaty of Yacyretá to build one of the world's most important hydroelectric power plants on the Paraná River, the fastest-flowing large river in South America.

The option for a hydroelectric plant was clear: oil, used as a fossil fuel, had to

be replaced by a renewable source.

As I am myself an architect from the province of Misiones, in Argentina, I was determined to take advantage of the development of the hydroelectric plant to transform, in a positive way, the situation of those who would be affected and to improve the urban planning for the region's most important cities and the surrounding area.

The actual construction of the power plant took 34 years, from 1978 to 2011. Finally inaugurated in 1998 with a reservoir level seven meters (7.65 yards)

lower than originally designed, the plant was producing only 60% of anticipated energy. A number of engineers and architects focused on achieving the maximum production of electric energy. At the same time, they had to ensure the adaptation of the inhabitants affected by the new reservoir level. All this took place in the Argentine provinces of Misiones and Corrientes and in the Paraguayan departments of Itapuá and Misiones. The reservoir area would encompass 1,500 square kilometers (nearly 590 square miles).

Yacyretá had already built an impor-



Nature has returned to the area of the hydroelectric plant. Wood storks and other birds grace the landscape of the Iberá estuary.

tant bridge linking both countries over the Paraná River. However, the transformation of the surrounding region was still pending. The nearby cities had experienced accelerated growth without any urban planning. Some 700,000 inhabitants—especially the 80,000 who lived in the coastal regions under unsanitary conditions and recurrent floods—would have to be taken into account with the flooding of the reservoir. The environment would undergo changes that would alter its equilibrium.

I felt compelled to come up with possible solutions. Perhaps, being from Misiones, I was especially sensitive to the impor-

tance of the rivers—their historical, as well as environmental, importance. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Jesuits and the Guarani-speaking indigenous peoples built more than thirty urban settlements supported by the rational exploitation of water, land and cattle-raising. The streams provided the water they needed for their own consumption and served for fishing, boating and as an energy resource for water wheels and hydraulic mills. I thought that history was not only memory but also a fund of experiences that could serve us now and in the future.

We had to come up with solutions for the high energy requirements of both

Paraguay and my country. Completing the reservoir would provide it. The adequate functioning of the Yacyretá undertaking would be the guarantee for the necessary investments for the region.

My home province is a land of rivers and streams, the red soil and the jungle. No element from that habitat could be damaged. Maintaining the quality of the water would be one of our most important objectives.

Some 1,500 square kilometers were set aside as ecological reserves to compensate for the land flooded by the dam for the Yacyretá hydroelectric plant. Actions centering upon the aquatic





environment involved monitoring with an eye towards conservation, as well as building capacity for local and regional governments to do the same. We can now contemplate environmental sustainability in the context of a new balance, with images of a neotropic cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) feeding on the common armado fish (*Pretodoras granulatus*) and several other Paraná tiger fish found in the vicinity of the dam. Nature has returned. Storks and tuyuyú birds known as American wood storks (*Mycteria americana*) grace the landscape of the Iberá estuary. All the actions carried out for environmental

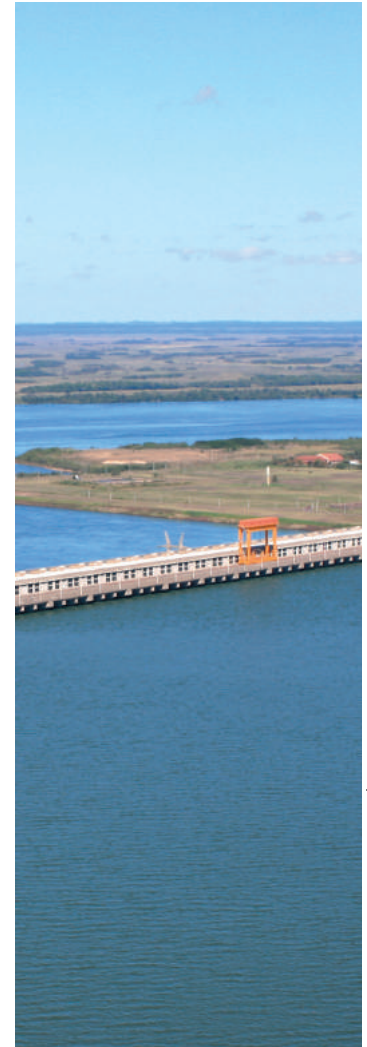
preservation are carefully explained to all the region's communities.

The past of this region was always present as an element of identity. At the Ayolas museum, we displayed the archeological pieces found during the earlier explorations for the development of the hydroelectric plant. The Guaraní and Kaingang indigenous groups had left traces of their ways of living and teachings to connect us with nature.

But my concern was not only the past; it was the future. The cities in the region had to be renewed. In Paraguay, Ayolas, Santos Cosme and Damián, San Juan del Paraná, Carmen del Paraná, Cambyretá

and Encarnación were about to experience changes. In Argentina, the cities of Ituzaingó, Posadas, Garupá and Candelaria would form part of the project. Each would undergo urban reform plans jointly agreed upon with local governments that would integrate the different sectors of the city. Various enclaves were separated not only by streams but by the absence of the necessary road infrastructure. By constructing bridges and providing roads, we would transform vehicle circulation and the means of transport.

There were other challenges to ensuring future growth. Renovation and improvements had to be provided to



hospitals, schools, public administration, security and services; likewise, recreational areas, parks and squares and riverside promenades had to be developed.

Thus, a new connection could be formed with the landscape and, especially with the Paraná River. The result would be the formation of urban coastal areas with access to the water for all.

The city would be thought of as a whole, a living, growing organism.

The population affected by the Yacyretá undertaking received social and health assistance programs. People were moved to housing developments, harmoniously integrated into the city that offered infrastructure and community services. Mem-

bers of indigenous communities were provided with property titles to well-constructed homes, as well as bilingual schools and social services.

All the cities in the project expanded towards the river. Encarnación has become a river resort; Posadas has considerably increased its number of tourists. The urban and rural sectors now have a better access to the cities after the construction of roads and bridges across streams.

Looking back over the changes that have taken place over a decade, I believe that the Yacyretá hydroelectric undertaking has had strong regional impact. The best way of making the most of its construction and energy production was

**A bird swoops to catch a fish in the vicinity of the hydroelectric dam; urban and rural communities have better access after the construction of roads and bridges.**

to see the project as a way to improve the living conditions of all the people in the region by providing the vital infrastructure. That infrastructure would have been impossible to achieve without the hydroelectric sector.

For future hydroelectric undertakings in the region, we will have to bear in mind the past experiences. Only if we integrate the necessary projects to improve the daily lives of the residents will we find support for the construc-



tion of these new works. And only with these new projects will we find adequate renewal energy for the area and beyond.

**Oscar Thomas**, who hails from the Province of Misiones, Argentina, is an architect and executive director at Yacyretá of the Binational Entity of Yacyretá for Argentina. He is the Argentine President for the Argentine-Brazilian Joint Technical Committee for the Construction of the Hydroelectric Plants in Garabí and Panambí. He has taught at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning of the UNNE of Argentina and at the Faculty of Architecture of the Catholic University of Paraguay.

# Y marane'ÿ rekávo

## Looking for Uncontaminated Water

BY BARTOMEU MELIÀ, S.J.

IT IS NOT ONLY THE EARTH THAT IS FILLED WITH impurities. So is the water. Lifeless waters extend throughout the earth, and not only on its surface. Like cholesterol-clogged arteries, contaminated waters also circulate with difficulty deep inside the earth—under the world's skin.

The search for water will be the quest of many—indeed all—in this 21st century. Where can this clear and crystalline resource be found, these waters of life in the desert, this optimistic and powerful liquid that sings in the creeks and roars in the waterfalls, shining with the brilliance of a diamond hidden in the bowels of the earth?

### THE MYTHIC BEGINNINGS

The Guarani, anchored in the future for centuries, believed water to be their place of origin, the center of their earth. We are reminded of the mythic account of the Mbyá, as told by León Cadogan in his book *Ywyra ñe'ery: fluye del árbol la palabra* (Asunción, CEADUC, 1971, pps. 57-58).

*Everything happened in the place  
where Our Grandmother lived,  
in the Authentic Water.*

*This happened in our land in  
years gone by.*

*This happened before our land  
was destroyed.*

*(Because today's earth is merely  
a semblance of that earth.)*

*And Our Grandmother lived in  
the future center of the earth.*

*She held the staff of authority in  
her hand as*

*in our future earth she lived.*

*She had a son, but she had neither  
a father nor a mother.*

*She gave birth to herself.*

Thus, the heart of the earth is water, *Y Ete*, the authentic water, the true and real water. Water is the heart of the earth; it is where life began. Earth's life is water. Today, as it happens, this Guarani prophecy has turned into a subject of more prosaic plans, but equally vital for the future, not only for the countries of Mercosur, but of the entire world.

### FROM MYTHOLOGY TO A TECHNICAL REPORT

The Guarani territory is home to what is considered the largest aquifer on the planet. The Paraguayan public is perhaps unaware of this fact, but specialists have been well aware of it since the 1970s, and those who engage in geopolitics have probably been negotiating this issue for quite a while. I myself found out about the aquifer quite late and as strange as it may seem, it was through the Guarani of Brazil, who are worried about what is happening to their water and if it will meet with the same sad fate as their land.

So I quote here from a technical report: "The Guarani aquifer is certainly one of the largest reserves of subterranean fresh water in the world with an accumulated volume of 45,000 km<sup>3</sup>."

The interesting thing about this enormous wealth is that it corresponds almost exactly to the geographical and ecological limits occupied by the Guarani people prehistorically. It is really just that the water reserve be known as the Guarani aquifer. Cutting across borders, just as the original Guarani territory did, it occupies some 325,000 square miles in Brazil, 87,000 square miles in Argentina, 28,000 square miles in Paraguay and 22,400 in Uruguay. That is, the aquifer is an enormous body whose veins branch out for 463,322,590 square



An aerial view of the hydroelectric plant; the Guarani worry about bad waters.

miles. And the waters are so pure that one can drink them untreated because of a natural process of bio-chemical filtration and self-cleaning in the subsoil.

My dear readers, many of you will have noticed that I am quoting a technical report I received from my Guarani friends, authored by the expert Aldo da C. Rebouças, who has written many papers on the subject.

## The Guarani territory is home to what is considered the largest aquifer on the planet.

The search for this pure water, this *Y Marane'j*, truly fills us with admiration, but it also leaves us apprehensive. Who will take ownership of this Genuine Water, this *Y Ete* from the place of Our Grandmother, which is to say, Mother Water?

The conquerors were always looking for the latest El Dorado wherever they went, if not just over the horizon, then right under their feet. The curious thing is that the discovery of the great aquifer was something of a disappointment; they

were looking for oil and only found water. And now the most valuable liquid of the future is that simple water, pure water.

### BAD WATERS

Bad waters are what worry the Guarani nowadays. If the land has already been destroyed, isn't the water next? The risks involving the improper use of subterranean waters are on the horizon. More

or less deep wells are already being dug without adequate technology, with the goal of immediate exploitation, exclusive and self-interested use that sucks up enormous quantities of this precious water, turns it into soft drinks and beer and sells it on the market. And the pollution of the upper aquifer, already quite affected by this extraction, could easily contaminate the deeper levels.

The treatment of the waters of the Guarani aquifer has been relatively good

until now, but for how long? Speculators and businessmen can set up a system of water trafficking—with its parallel to drug trafficking—that would mean death to the life that comes from the Genuine Water, the *Y Ete* of the Guarani people.

The Guarani aquifer is a true bank of water of countless value that cannot be wasted nor left in the hands of unscrupulous agents. It is a deposit of extremely high value that should be protected and ethically administered.

“The accumulation of urban and/or industrial residues without adequate technology, as well as the uncontrolled and increasing use of modern chemical components in agriculture, are potential sources of contamination of the subterranean waters. It must be remembered that pollution reaching the ground level or superficial waters can reach deep aquifers or can be confined, depending on the degree to which deep wells continue to be built, operated or abandoned without adequate technology,” warned Brazilian groundwater expert Aldo da C. Rebouças.

The ethical and political implications of this situation cannot be overlooked. Water is no longer a free good that anyone can use arbitrarily; it is a natural resource with social and economic value—and the groundwater even more so than the surface water supply.

Looking for a *tierra sin mal*—a land without evil—the Guarani found this *Y Marane'j*, an unexplored, deep, transparent good that bestows life, clarity and goodness, always and whenever it continues to being *y sakä* (transparent water), and *sati* (clear water), and *porä* (good water), and *ete* (true and genuine water).

This place of flowing water is rightfully known as the Guarani Aquifer. Its brilliant and appropriate name should not be stained with the evils of capitalist contamination and self-interest.

**Bartomeu Melià, S.J.**, is a Jesuit historian, anthropologist and linguist who focuses on the Guarani people. His work involves the study and the protection of the Guarani language, as well as advocacy for its use.



---

# ARTS, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Arts, language and culture help provide the virtual bonds for a territory that is always shifting; from film to music to the plastic arts, they connect the Guaraní territory.

- Chamamé for Dummies 36
- Guaraní in Film 40
- A View from the Museo del Barro 43
- A Country of Music and Poetry 46

# Chamamé for Dummies

A Listening Guide to the Music of Corrientes **BY EUGENIO MONJEAU**

**THERE IS A TRADITIONAL ANDALUSIAN DANCE**, the vito, inspired by the “St. Vitus dance,” a name given to Huntington's disease for centuries. Symptoms of this disease include twitching that sometimes hinders walking. Nevertheless, patients, considered victims of a dance mania of sorts, made pilgrimages to the chapel of St. Vitus, in Ulm, Germany, hoping to be healed by the saint. In the province of Corrientes (which makes up, along with Entre Ríos to the south and Misiones to the north, the Argentine Litoral) there is also a mania, although not as dangerous: the chamamé. It manifests itself in various ways, but the most common symptom (as with the pilgrims) is dancing. Festivals are higher forms of dances. The Fiesta Nacional del Chamamé takes place during ten days in January, the hottest month in one of the hottest places in Argentina. The 104° F temperature and hours of uninterrupted music send thousands of revelers into a kind of trance. My goal with this short article is to prompt you, dear reader, into a domestic, modest and tidy version of that trance.

But first, some history. According to Argentine expert Rubén Pérez Bugallo,

roots for the chamamé. There is a Spanish-Peruvian base, he reasons, with a 6/8 beat, typical of the so-called Ternary Colonial Songbook, to which those other 3/4 European forms are added:

One fine day, Europeans and locals decided to make music together. Those coming from Europe brought their accordions and two types of rhythms: the binary polka and schottische and the ternary waltz and mazurka. The men from the hinterland brought their guitars and strummed along, rhythmically loyal to the call of tradition: 6/8. [...] As far as the result of this mixture is concerned, it's a known fact that in any spontaneous instrumental association the rhythm is dictated by the accompaniment—which in this case meant the local guitar. [...] Indeed, an accordion mazurka accompanied by a guitar in 6/8 rhythm results in something hardly distinguishable from a chamamé. (Rubén Pérez Bugallo, *Chamamé: Raíces coloniales y des-orden popular* [Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 2008], pages 110 and following).

Pérez Bugallo traces the first appearance of the term “chamamé” to the February 17th, 1821, edition of the Buenos

Spanish dance in vogue at that time in all Latin America. The fact is that the term disappears from documents until 1930, when RCA Victor uses it as a label for the song “Corrientes poti” by Paraguayan singer Samuel Aguayo. From then on, chamamé is established as a folk genre in its own right and its name remains unaltered.

Chamamé's orchestration barely extends beyond the aforementioned guitar and accordion. A traditional full band consists of accordion, bandoneon, guitar and double bass. Even though the beat is one of the most characteristic elements of the genre, due to its polyrhythm, syncopation and off-beats, percussion is not part of the typical instrumentation (although it has become common in recent times and some traditionalists complain that the Fiesta Nacional del Chamamé should be called the Fiesta Nacional de la Batería—drums—instead). All of chamamé's rhythmic richness lies, on the one hand, on the written score, and, on the other, on the skill and sensitivity of the performers (somewhat schematically: the bandoneon—of sweeter tone and greater ductility—carries the melody, while the accordion is tasked with the beat and most of the ornaments).

Singers are added to this typical formation in traditional ensembles. Sometimes it's a single voice, but more often duets with sharp nasal voices singing falsetto in parallel thirds and sixths. Interestingly, even if we go by Bugallo's Creole-Central European origin hypothesis, the largest and best part of the repertoire is sung in Guarani. The subgenre known as “chamamé caté” (from categoría, Argentine slang for elegance; chamamé classification isn't final, but we can mention, besides caté, chamamé kangui—sad, in Guarani, slower and more melancholic, and its opposite, the chamamé

**All music mentioned in this article can be heard at:**  
[grooveshark.com/chamamefordummies](http://grooveshark.com/chamamefordummies)

the chamamé is the result of a mix between certain Spanish musical forms that entered the American continent through Peru, continued on to Paraguay, and then arrived in Argentina, and certain Central European popular dances from the 19th century, such as the waltz and the mazurka. Pérez Bugallo specifically argues against the idea of Guarani

Aires newspaper *Las Cuatro Cosas*, in which the priest Francisco de Paula Castañeda is said to have “danced a chamamé over someone's head.” According to Bugallo, it's a political metaphor (Father Castañeda was a known polemicist) and actually “chamamé” was only a translation to jopará (Guarani spoken by Spaniards and locals) of “fandango,” the



**Top: Chamamé musicians enjoy playing; bottom: two children dance the chamamé in Puente Pexoa, Corrientes, Argentina.**

maceta, popular, very rhythmic, typical in dances and festivals) is always sung in this language, which is widely spoken in the Litoral. All correntinos—residents of Corrientes— incorporate it, to a greater or lesser extent, in everyday speech, even those without indigenous ancestors, and it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that almost all chamamés include some Guaraní terms in their lyrics. Furthermore, Guaraní is an official language of Corrientes Province.

Whether in Guaraní, Spanish, or a mixture of the two, chamamé's lyrics

often talk about local characters, animals, people of the Litoral and, above all, the Paraná River. The correntino poet Albérico Mansilla (who penned the beautiful chamamé "Viejo Caá Cati") has said: "The river is to chamamé what adultery is to tango." But I'd like to point out something usual, if somewhat unexpected, which also links the chamamé to the tango, but as opposites. While the latter tirelessly explores the theme of jail (where the lunfardo slang itself originated), theft, guns and all kinds of illegal activities, chamamé has a close

link to the army and, as heard in the songs themselves, "authority." Mario Milan Medina's "La guardia de seguridad" is a humorous correntino's admiration for the police. The character, an aspiring policeman, sings: "¡A los yanquis y a los bolches, / si los llevo a encontrar, / les voy a encajar una sableada, / para que se dejen de bochinchar!" ("Yank or commie, / if I come across you, / I'll cut you down, / I'll shut you up!"—a Cold War chamamé!). There are scores of chamamés dedicated to chiefs of police (Tránsito Cocomarola's



The duo Rudi (guitar) and Nini (accordion) Flores have developed a kind of chamber chamamé.

“Comisario Silva”) and to Independence heroes (the chamamé “Sargento Cabral” is known for the beauty of its lyrics and music and is a tribute to a correntino soldier who at the Battle of San Lorenzo stood between the enemy bayonets and the injured body of another correntino, General José de San Martín—you might have seen his statue in Central Park—to protect him; legend has it that Cabral uttered his last words to San Martín: “I die with a glad heart, sir, for we have beaten the enemy”).

The origins of chamamé date back to the civil war between the litoraleños (Litoral residents), who supported territorial autonomy, and the supporters of central administration by Buenos Aires. There are stories about chamamés being played by military bands on both sides after battles, and until a few decades ago there were certain chamamés which couldn’t be played during elections because they aroused violent passions in militants of the political parties that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in the context of this confrontation between Corrientes and Buenos Aires. Moreover, militias

have a particular importance because of their role in transporting musical forms throughout the colony. Let us consider the troops marching down from Peru to the current Argentine territory and going through Paraguay, at the time the Viceroyalty of the River Plate was founded. Guitars were de rigueur luggage for any group of soldiers. According to Pérez Bugallo, for example, “the Canary polka or chamarrita must have come to us when the Brazilian army marched through our territory [during the terrible 1864-1870 Paraguayan War, which pitted Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay against Paraguay, EM].” The chamarrita is now a vital part of the Litoral repertoire and has been defined as having “the beat of a horse trotting without reins,” poetically portraying another local appropriation of a form of European origin.

My relationship to the genre goes back to 1997. One day my father brought home a chamamé record and said: “You have to listen to this. It’s awesome.” I laughed and mocked him. I was repeating one of the “intellectual” platitudes of the Argentine middle class: chamamé is low quality

music, restricted to the province of Corrientes, to correntinos living in Buenos Aires and, generally, to the poor. Rarely in my life have I been so compelled to admit a mistake as when my father, in a car on the road and giving me no alternative, played the very same record; seventeen songs in which rare instrumental virtuosity combined with passages both austere and expressive.

It was the album *Por cielos lejanos*, by Rudi and Nini Flores. Rudi (guitar) and Nini (accordion) are two correntino brothers who for three decades have been developing a sort of chamber chamamé. It’s as if they managed to capture the spirit of chamamé, isolate it, study it and display it in each of their recordings. By means of a thorough understanding of their predecessors (including their own father, the remarkable bandoneon player Avelino Flores), their formal music studies and the uncanny edge that comes from their being brothers, Rudi and Nini seem to have arrived at the purest expression of chamamé. They can be taken for a sort of chamamecero archetype.

First of all, the music of Rudi and Nini



is a perfect example of chamamé's inherent tension between, shall we say, high and low culture. The chamamé is, just as I thought before listening to it for the first time, popular music that is played for thousands of people at festivals that last entire days, music of precariously produced records and improvised concerts in poorly lit bars. But it's also music that can only be played by masters. The whole chamamecero repertoire is sustained by the virtuosity of the accordionists, who have at their disposal an infinite variety of dynamics and tone colors to use. The genre takes the instrument to its utter limits. Perhaps this ambiguity began to form with chamamé's very origins, when a Spanish rhythmic tradition deeply rooted among the locals encountered sophisticated European salon dances. (We may add here that just as there are sister cities thousands of miles away, chamamé has a genre brother in the United States: bluegrass. Both have European origins but were raised upon the banks of American rivers, both are part of the national folklore, both feature amazing instrumental development despite being truly popular music—not only by the virtuosity required but also by the singularity of their emblematic instruments: the accordion and bandoneon for chamamé, and the banjo for bluegrass. Their melodies proverbially unite joy and sadness and produce unwavering devotion, while to the ears of the uninitiated all chamamés and bluegrass sound the same.)

Rudi and Nini Flores also resume that tension between local music and European music, in this case even biographically; they settled in Paris in 1994, at a time when the chamamé still belonged, in view of the middle class, to the poorer classes. While they weren't the first chamameceros to come to France—Raúl Barboza had preceded them—they were the first to make refinement their novelty, while Barboza had adopted an edgier style that sought sophistication by appealing to the hotly disputed Guaraní and jungle roots of the genre. With the Flores brothers, waltz, polka and mazurka return to Europe hand in hand with

chamamé, which later returns to Argentina as a music genre with instrumental, rhythmic, harmonic and melodic sophistication. The chamamé was thus introduced to small concert halls, cultural centers and traditional bookstores in the city of Buenos Aires.

But chamamé is also musically ambiguous due to the styles of its main composers and performers, some of which are closer to the local spirit, to the 6/8 beat, while others are more lyrical, more Central European. I mentioned that the first chamamé labeled as such was recorded in 1930. Rudi and Nini Flores formed their group in 1984 and their most relevant discography is approximately dated in the decade after 1997. What happened between the beginnings and what I personally consider the zenith of the genre? Who preceded Rudi and Nini and forged the thousands of recordings, lyrics and melodies of the chamamecero heritage? The list of musicians is endless and I'll mention just a few names for the reader to look up: Tránsito Cocomarola, Ernesto Montiel, Isaco Abitbol, Tarragó Ros (chamamé maceta champion and the first Argentine musician to sell more than a million records), Damasio Esquivel, Pedro Montenegro, Blas Martínez Riera.

I'd like to dwell briefly on the first three, who possess quite different playing styles even though there are some contact points among them and Montiel and Abitbol started out in the same group. Abitbol's style is the most lyrical and melancholic. Montiel, on the other hand, plays much more forcefully. What you hear in his phrasing and in the way he drags his notes is a kind of contained violence. This is especially noticeable in the waltz-like "La vestido celeste" or in the "Gente de ley" chamamé. Abitbol never had a similar sound, and is, in fact, the composer of the lyrical chamamé par excellence, "La calandria." Cocomarola's style is very elegant; it's not violent like Montiel's nor melancholic like Abitbol's, but includes some very fine tunes, such as "Kilómetro 11," arguably the most famous chamamé of all time, so successful that it was worthy of a video clip, or "Pri-

sionero." It's no coincidence that among the three, the most lyrical two have chosen the bandoneon as their instrument, while Montiel chose the accordion. Rudi and Nini Flores explained in an interview published in the newspaper *Clarín* on November 30, 2004: "In Corrientes, the north was Cocomarola's, while the south, was Montiel's. We always lived in the capital, and it was all Cocomarola. Montiel had a more dynamic, more seasoned, southern style. Cocomarola, on the other hand, was more serene, more lyrical, sadder."

"Nueva ilusión," a chamamé by Rudi and Nini, displays, on the one hand, the lyricism of Cocomarola's tradition, and, on the other, the duo's own sophistication. It was the first to captivate me on that road trip in 1997 and remains my favorite chamamé: it starts off as an idea that is simple and brilliant at the same time; the melody is slightly melancholic without being sad and is flawlessly interpreted. But it also has another merit: it is impossible to say, perhaps due to the Flores brothers' personal and professional background, what part is European and what part is local. Perhaps the "New illusion" referred to the brothers' excitement about their arrival in Paris; or—who knows?—it's perhaps a carpincho (capybara) jumping about to escape from the jaws of a yacaré (alligator) on the banks of the river. Like most chamber music this chamamé has no lyrics, so that, dear reader, is up to you.

*Eugenio Monjeau studies philosophy at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and works at the Centro de Experimentación del Teatro Colón, devoted to Argentine contemporary opera and ballet, and at the Asociación por los Derechos Civiles, an organization committed to strategic litigation and civil rights. In 2010 he took part in the Paraná Ra'Anga expedition through the Paraná River, led by former DRCLAS Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor Graciela Silvestri, and contributed to a book of the same name. He has written for La Nación and Clarín about politics and aesthetics.*

# Guarani in Film

Movies in Paraguayan Guarani, about and with Guaranis **BY DAMIÁN CABRERA**

**THE FIRST FILM SPOKEN IN GUARANI I EVER SAW** was from the United States. It was the movie *Jesus* (1979), co-directed by Peter Skyes and John Krish, dubbed into Guarani and customarily broadcast on television during Holy Week in Paraguay. My generation had not grown up seeing ourselves on the screen. With films like *Hamaca Paraguaya* (Paraguayan Hammock, 2006) by Paz Encina or *7 cajas* (7 Boxes, 2012) by Juan Carlos Maneglia and Tana Schémbori respectively, films in Guarani are now achieving international projection as well as local popularity. Today we Paraguayans can see ourselves on the screen and listen to ourselves— in our own languages.

In Paraguay, speaking Guarani is charged with ambiguity: it evokes both fondness and contempt. In Spanish slang, the word *guarango*—the contemptuous nickname for those who speak Guarani—means “rude, vulgar.” It’s as if the use of the language were somehow a mark of vulgarity. However, at the same time, others celebrate “the sweet Guarani language” as the most important legacy of the Guarani culture to Paraguayan society. An indigenous language, from the linguistic family Tupí-Guaraní, Guarani is today spoken in Paraguay by the largely non-indigenous population.

“The history of Paraguay is the history of the Guarani language,” says the anthropologist Bartolomeu Melià in his book *Mundo Guaraní* (Guarani World, 2011). The history of Paraguay is also one of prohibition of this language and the assumed exclusion that came from speaking it. But it is the history of persistence.

In an emerging and increasingly prolific scene in Paraguayan film, Paraguayan Guarani is being heard at the international level, making visible its history. But does speaking Guarani mean being Guarani? Perhaps the new cinematic move-

ment gives us the opportunity to reflect on these questions, both in terms of the status of the language and of the various types of belonging associated with Guarani: the indigenous world, the Paraguayan peasant and the urban dweller.

**GUARANI IN FILM ALSO HAS ITS HISTORY, AND NOT SUCH A RECENT ONE.**

“The first films in Guarani were silent,” observed actor and writer Manuel Cuenca, author of *Historia del Audiovisual en Paraguay* (A History of the Audiovisual in Paraguay) (2009), in which he details the country’s film production. Since the beginning of the 20th century, 35-millimeter movies—silent, in black and white—have depicted Paraguay’s indigenous and peasant communities, with protagonists who sing or speak in Guarani. *Codicia* (1954), by Argentine director Catrano Catrani, was the first spoken fiction film to incorporate dialogues in Guarani. Basing his work on the Paraguayan novelist Augusto Roa Bastos, who also wrote his own adapted screenplays, Armando Bó produced *La sed* (1961) and *El trueno entre las hojas* (1975); in which, in addition to dialogues, one can also hear a song in Guarani, “Adiós Lucerito Alba” by Eladio Martínez. (Isabel Sarli’s nude scenes in this film made her famous, and she appeared again in *India* (1961) and *La burrerita de Ypacaraí* (1962), by Bó.) *La sangre y la semilla* (1959) was the first Paraguayan-Argentine co-production. Palestinian director Dominique Dubosc filmed his first works in Paraguay at the end of the 60s. Capturing the voices of his protagonists with a poetic tone, he depicts the life of a Paraguayan peasant family and that of the Santa Isabel lepers’ colony respectively in *Cuarahy Ohechá* (Le soleil l’a vu) (1968) and *Manojhara* (1969).

Although several films are about Guarani or include them in the narrative, many have used other indigenous groups or even non-indigenous actors to represent them. In his films that reference the Guaranis, Bó used Paraguay’s Maká tribe, which in reality form part of the Mataco linguistic group. In the first scenes of *India*, the lyrics of a song announce “india Guarani...,” with the Argentine actress Isabel Sarli depicted as an indigenous woman; paradoxically, it is not difficult to find in schoolbooks photographs of the indigenous Maká group with captions indicating that they are Guarani.

Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons were the principal actors in a story based on the original Jesuit missions in Paraguay, *The Mission* (1986), directed by Roland Joffe and with music by Italian composer Ennio Morricone. In spite of my efforts, I could not recognize the “guarani” spoken by the indigenous actors in the movie and not even the words uttered by Irons. *The Mission* was not filmed in Paraguay: the scenes supposedly taking place in Asunción were filmed in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia; one of the film locations was at Iguazu Falls in Brazil; the indigenous people are not Guarani; for the most part, they are indigenous Waunanas from the Colombian Pacific region of Chocó. But the gap is not as great as it seems: an Argentine indigenous leader, Asunción Ontiveros, plays a Guarani chieftain; in the accompanying explanation of the making of the film, entitled *Omnibus: The Mission*, Ontiveros spells out the common problems shared by the Waunanas and the Guarani, and indeed all the indigenous peoples of the Americas: the land.

Although all fall under the umbrella of Guarani, there is actually more than one Guarani language; and although



Clockwise from top: Three contemporary films featuring the Guaraní: Paz Encina. *Hamaca Paraguaya*. 2006. Photo by Christian Núñez; Luis Zorraquín. *Guaraní*. 2015. (Fotograma); Enrique Collar. *Costa Dulce*. 2013. (Fotograma)

some of these languages are called something else, they are as Guaraní as the others, identical in spite of their differences. In *Hans Staden* (1999) by Luis Alberto Pereira, the Tupinambá indigenous people are played by non-indigenous actors. Based on Staden's stories and spoken in classic Tupí (of the Tupí-Guaraní linguistic family), the film has realist pretensions: the director insists on a type of neutral stance devoid of interpretation (unlike other films that examine the same theme), but it is based on a previous text, a testimonial discourse saturated with interpretation; thus, the representation of the indigenous people—more than the story itself—reminds us of the blackface tradition in U.S. film at the beginning of the 20th century.

Aren't there any Guaraní actors?

Yes, there are: one can see them in *Terra Vermelha* (Birdwatchers, 2009) by Marcos Bechis. This is the drama of the Guaraní-Kaiowa (known as Pãi Tavyterã in Paraguay) on the border of Paraguay and Brazil. They play themselves in their own language to show the threat agro-business poses for their way of life, with suicide by young people becoming an increasing social trauma. The drama portrayed in the narrative turns out to be real: indigenous leader Ambrósio Vilhalva (Chief Nádio in the film) acts out his death, and less than a year later, he was assassinated in real life.

Indigenous people are represented by others or exposed to the gaze of others. But perhaps this reality will soon change. With a language that belongs to the same linguistic family as that of the Guaraní, the Aché have been shooting

films. Norma Tapari and Ricardo Mbekrorongi made the documentaries *Non-djewaregi/Costumbres antigas* (2012) and *Tõ Mumbu* (2012), respectively, in which they gathered oral histories from their grandparents, in the context of the djawu/Aché Word project, which seeks to rescue Aché culture through literary production, photography and audiovisual documentation.

#### THE GUARANI IN CONTEMPORARY PARAGUAYAN FILM

Is this my voice? It's like hearing oneself for the first time in a recording, to see oneself finally reflected on the screen. *Hamaca Paraguaya* is the first Paraguayan film I've seen. The experience was extraordinary, and so was the film. Journeying through history, it presents an image of time: the idea of a flickering,

vacillating waiting/hope (which in Spanish happens to be the same word: *esperar*) that goes back and forth but always stays in the same place, despite the instability. The circular dialogues are inscribed in a scene equally structured in a circular fashion. In *Hamaca*, there is a desire to represent Paraguayan time, which perhaps can be imagined as a crossroads with another temporal memory, that of *oguatáva* (caminante/walker). Guarani is present in the *jeroky ñembo'e*, which is at the same time a prayer and a dance, equally circular.

Paraguay experienced a rough period following the Curuguaty massacre on June 15, 2012, during a police raid on homeless peasants; the confrontation took 17 lives, and spurred a congressional coup, disguised as a political trial, that resulted in the impeachment and removal from office of then President Fernando Lugo. For some viewers, watching *7 cajas*, which treats this period, is a cathartic experience. For several months, movie theaters were full. When I went, the social phenomenon spoke (literally) as loudly as the movie itself. Spectators were noisy, laughing at the top of their lungs and applauding; the theater was filled with the excitement of self-recognition.

Beyond the story, its portrayed and imagined universe and its use of language, *7 cajas* can be understood as a metaphor. It's not only a matter of showing the only mechanisms the poor can resort to in order to circulate their own images in the overloaded market of images. A scene of emergencies also reveals something about the conditions in which the Paraguayan filmmaker operates: the character Victor could be just another filmmaker looking for resources to produce images and put on the screen his stories, and in that very process, become someone.

These two Guarani films are the best known on the international level, but they are not the only ones. And there are more on the way.

In 2002, Galia Giménez premiered *María Escobar*, based on a song in Gua-

rani by the same name, very popular at that time among all social classes. The short subjects *Karai Norte* (Man of the North, 2009) by Marcelo Martinessi and *Ahendu Nde Sakupái* (I hear your scream, 2008) by Pablo Lamar are two masterpieces of Paraguayan film. The recently premiered *Latas vacías* (Empty Cans, 2014) by Hérib Godoy and *Costa dulce* (2013) by Enrique Collar take up the theme of *pláta-yvyguy* (treasures buried during the 19th-century war, a subject that has fired the Paraguayan imagination through prolific works of art); both films are spoken in peasant Guarani, and the action takes place outside Asunción, with regional actors who have not attended traditional acting school, thus providing a fresh voice to new Paraguayan film. Meanwhile, *Luna de cigarras* (Cicadas' Moon, 2014) by Jorge Díaz de Bedoya, in which Guarani is shown along in the border zone, along with Spanish and Portuguese, has been nominated for Spain's Goya Awards.

In the documentary realm, Guarani has flourished in an extensive list that ranges from the patrimony of the silent era to acclaimed pieces that register peasant and indigenous voices such as *Tierra roja* (Red Land, 2006) and *Frankfurt* (2008) by Ramiro Gómez; or *Fuera de campo* (2014) by Hugo Giménez. In *Yvyperõme* (2013) by Miguel Armoa, the declarations of a Guarani shaman, proclaiming that "before we were the wizards of the woods; now we are the wizards of soybeans," testifies to the traumatic and transformative times Paraguay is experiencing.

Stigma and prohibitions on Guarani had threatened its existence, and the transmission from one generation to another was seen as difficult. Wouldn't the fact that the mainstream media talk and write in Spanish, rather than Guarani—despite the fact that the majority of Paraguayans speak Guarani or are to a certain degree bilingual—have something to do with that?

In 2015, the film *Guarani*, by Argentine director Luis Zorraquín, will have its premiere. Not only is it spoken

almost entirely in Guarani; the movie itself is about the Guarani language. The film and the journalistic treatment of the subject to date can serve to explore the ambivalence surrounding Guarani today: the variations of Guarani of the Guarani indigenous people and the Guarani of the Paraguayans. John Hopewell suggests in the magazine *Variety* that the film is about questions and identity in a narrative featuring "a traditionalist Guarani fisherman, and his granddaughter." A Spanish News Agency EFE dispatch published in Paraguay's ABC Color de Paraguay confirms that the film is about "a story of the uprooting and survival of the Guarani indigenous culture." Both reviews are mistaken: the film is the story of a Paraguayan and his finding strength in the language in a bet on the future.

But what does all this lack of clarity mean? The word guarani signifies a lot: it is the name of a language and the name for a culture; sometimes it is used as an ethnic nickname for Paraguayans; it's the name of stores, diet teas and sports clubs.

The persistence of Guarani in a society that is more western than indigenous is also ambivalent: the secondary language of Paraguay, its hegemony seems inconsistent in a country that vehemently rejects all that is indigenous. But the "discourtesy" of its resistance is felt more strongly all the time, overcoming the silence also of the big screen, where Guarani is spoken louder and louder. Every single time, louder and louder.

**Damián Cabrera** is a Paraguayan writer. He is a Master's candidate in Cultural Studies at the University of São Paulo. A participant in the seminar of Critical Cultural Space/Critique (Paraguay), he is a member of the collective *Ura Editions and the Network Conceptualismos del Sur*. He is the author of the novel *Xiru* (2012), for which he won the Roque Gaona Prize the same year. He can be reached at [guyrapu@gmail.com](mailto:guyrapu@gmail.com)

Note: Titles are translated into English only when a formal English title exists.



# Animating Peripheries

A View from the Museo del Barro BY LIA COLOMBINO

**THE MUSEO DEL BARRO IN ASUNCIÓN** IMMERSSES the visitor in a collection of images and objects, often in a somewhat disordered fashion, not all categorized or classified in the way such institutions tend to present them.

The Museo del Barro, as the Center for Visual Arts is commonly known, houses collections of Popular Art (the Museo del Barro) and Ethnic Art (Museum of Indigenous Art), as well as several expressions of Urban Art of Paraguay and Ibero-America (the Paraguayan Museum of Contemporary Art).

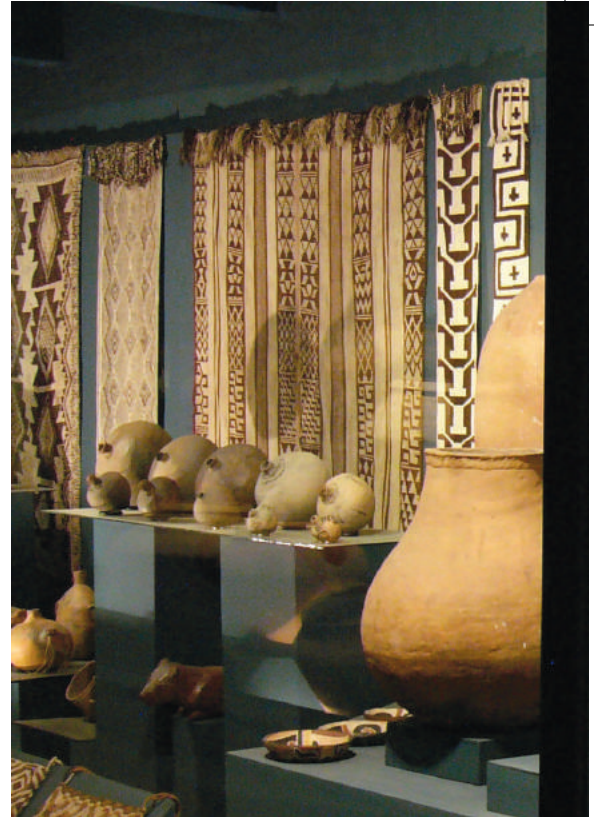
The visitor might encounter a collection of popular masks, an ample assortment of Franciscan and Jesuit images, striking ceremonial costumes or the

impressive selection of Iberoamerican art, including works by Ricardo Migliorisi, Carlos Colombino and Osvaldo Salerno. The temporary exhibits are widely varied, from a showing of some emerging artist to large overview exhibit that bring together different works on document on 19th-century portraiture in Paraguay to a collection of the recent production of the weavers of *ao poi*, an indigenous cloth that takes its embroidery from the type used on colonial shirts.

The museum has three entrances from a central patio. From there, the visitor can lose herself in a circular game, always returning to the same site. There is more than one way to go through the

Museo del Barro; one does not always read from left to right nor begin as focus groups mandate; everything is left up to chance and no particular sequence is required. The museum leaves open the possibility of felt experience, rather than just inform the passive gaze of a directed spectator.

It seeks to erase the distinct ways of classifying art, doing away with the boundaries between the popular, indigenous and urban in Paraguay. Thus, the Museo del Barro preserves the ambiguity of being a museum without totally being a museum. It attempts to skirt the boundaries of the concept of a museum while at the same time renders this concept ill-fitting and permeable.



It is an art museum as fluid as the definition of art itself, which here has tried to include, in the words of Paraguayan art scholar Ticio Escobar, “the beauty of the other.”

#### A BRIEF HISTORY

The Center for Visual Arts/Museo del Barro came into being through several initiatives over the course of forty years. What makes it unusual is that it has been created by artists, anthropologists and art critics. Originally, it emerged as a project that would function on the margins of the state and in opposition to its politics.

The Center’s three museums sprang into life independently. However, they eventually came together under one roof as one project. The Center’s roots go back to 1972 with a Circulating Collection started by Paraguayan artists Olga Blinder and Carlos Colombino. As its name implies, the collection did not have its own space and moved from one place to another.

In 1980, a permanent space for the collection was sought, with the Museo del Barro inaugurated in a small house. Artists Osvaldo Salerno and Ysanne Gayet, along with Carlos Colombino, spearheaded the effort. Art historian Ticio Escobar later joined the group. In 1984, the first exhibition space was

opened and later developed into the three collections integrating the Center for Visual Arts.

The group had long been interested in popular and indigenous art, inspired by poet and art critic Josefina Plá, a native of the Canary Islands who settled in Paraguay, as well as such important personalities as Brazilian-Paraguayan artist Livio Abramo, Jesuit indigenous rights champion Bartomeu Melià, and Olga Blinder herself.

The treatment of the works in this museum makes it possible for popular and indigenous art to be seen as equal to urban or “erudite” art. The museum seeks to provide a dialogue between these types of art in spite of their differences, striving to undermine the official myth that popular and indigenous art can be reduced to “folkloric,” “authentic,” “vernacular,” “our very own.” That is, popular art can often be trivialized, stripped of its subtleties and differences.

When Ticio Escobar, who has given deep thought to Paraguayan art from this triple perspective (popular, indigenous, urban) in a systematic way, wrote *La Belleza de los Otros* (1994), he recounts there the foundational story set out in *El brazalete de Túkule*. Túkule, a powerful Ishir shaman, is delicately making a bracelet called oikakar (created from vegetable and hand-tied, one by one,

**Photos from left: The Museo del Barro’s modern exterior; traditional ceramics and woven textiles; a detail from the painting “La Próxima Cena” (The Next Supper), a xilopainting by Carlos Colombino.**

with small and oversized feathers). Escobar questions why it is necessary to add a line of multicolored feathers to something which appears to have already been finished, and receives this answer: “So that it looks more beautiful.” This bracelet is functional—ceremonial, shamanic and ritual—but at the same time, it is aesthetic: it should attract our attention through its shining beauty.

The language of difference emerged intuitively at the beginning. First came the practice and then the theory; the Museo del Barro followed a path that revealed itself in the middle of the journey. It went about constructing itself in fragments from total chance until it jelled (although it never completely jelled) in one place (actually in two—that of the physical place and its conceptual place).

Paraguayan art finds in the Museo del Barro a space in which we can see ourselves from multiple perspectives, talking to the “we” that in Paraguay means we are two (or at least two, since language always puts that duality in evidence). In Guaraní, the language of the majority of the Paraguayan population,



there are two words for “we,” one which is inclusive (*ñande*) and the other which is exclusive (*ore*). These two ways of saying “we” make up a specific way of understanding identity. If the official culture tries to propagate a unified “national being” through diverse means, the language itself gives the lie to this concept.

#### DEVELOPING DIALOGUE

The idea of setting up a dialogue and bringing together the artistic productions of Paraguay’s different peoples came about through an unplanned action. While Ticio Escobar was writing *Una interpretación de las artes visuales en el Paraguay* (An Interpretation of Paraguay’s Visual Arts, published in two volumes in 1982 and 1984), he was faced with the dilemma of how to verbalize these differences and to find a place within an official history that denied these differences.

With his book *El mito del arte y el mito del pueblo* (The Myth of Art and the Myth of People), Escobar consolidated his thinking about the equivalence of popular and indigenous art alongside so-called erudite art. This analysis laid the foundation for a more conclusive discussion about modernity and also about the nature of the erudite and the popular, no longer facing them off as binary contradictions, but in terms of exploring them and defining relationships. Escobar’s text sums up

the vocation of the Center of Visual Arts/ Museo del Barro. It departs from art theory to enter into cultural theory with all its political implications: the disputes for the hegemonic control of the symbolic capital of a territory evolved into a nation.

The Museo del Barro significantly adopts the praxis of this text, the theoretical basis that ties together questions that have arisen through doing. This concept of art set forth by Escobar and, by extension, at the museum—this manipulation of material forms that shake up the senses—permits the insertion of the concept of popular art into the writing of another history of art and to begin to dislocate Eurocentric concepts. These new ideas concern the autonomy of art, the concept of contemporaneity and of uniqueness.

#### ART FOR INDIGENOUS AND PEASANT COMMUNITIES

One of the major discussions regarding the use of the word “art” to talk about the aesthetic-poetic productions of non-Western cultures has to do with a concrete fact. These cultures do not use the word “art” to describe the production of material objects nor, for the most part, do they consider their production to be art.

However, art history has no qualms in using this category when it considers that one production or another corresponds to its own past. So, for example, Egyptian art

or cave paintings are categorized as art.

Likewise, both indigenous and peasant art appeal to the senses when they seek to represent the world in which they live. According to Escobar, certain cultural moments are thus stressed and safeguarded, resulting in tense configurations equivalent to what the West understands as art.

#### PARTICULAR NOTES

Both indigenous and popular art have particular characteristics that differentiate them from modern or so-called contemporary art. These forms of art, unlike modern art works, have not needed to appeal to autonomy to separate themselves from a belief system. They have guarded a narrow relationship with it and at times the forms are intimately connected to ritual. The poetry that surrounds an object is mixed up with both beliefs and everyday life in such a way that they cannot be separated out. In this sense, the postulation of an indigenous or popular art form questions the notion that for art to be art, it must be devoid of function.

The notion of originality is also called into question, since these cultures work for the most part along the lines of traditions from the past, and their ways of resignifying and relaborating these forms propose other paths than those taken by erudite art. The question of who authored a work is not a primary one,

although with the passage of time this is changing, and many ceramic makers and wood carvers are signing their works.

Popular or indigenous art strengthens its forms and creates dense meanings that correspond to the conditions of existence and production of the community in which they are created; indeed, this perspective of thinking about art shakes up the established conventions of what centers of learning have defined as “contemporary art.”

#### THE MARGINS

The Museo del Barro, with every action it has undertaken—often outside the scope of what is considered usual for a museum—has tried to make more malleable the borders of certain academic categories. Following this model, it finds other ways of involving itself in the world.

The postulation of indigenous and popular art comes from this ability to make the borders between different types of art more flexible. It looks to shake up the certainty of fields of knowledge; to move apparently fixed concepts so that we can observe that reality moves, letting one see what is out of sight. It appears.

Indigenous and popular artists, from their ways of responding to their reality, attack the gaping wound that the Western conception of the history of art has left open. The work of Ticio Escobar and the effort that the Museo del Barro has demonstrated from the beginning bear witness to these processes and contribute to the continual shaking up of the borders that have been, perhaps for way too long, unmovable.

*Lia Colombino is the director of the Museum of Indigenous Art that is part of the CAV/Museo del Barro. She teaches at the Instituto Superior de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción and coordinates the seminar Espacio/Crítica. She is part of the Conceptualismos del Sur network.*

# A Country of Music and Poetry

## The View from Paraguay **BY LIZZA BOGADO**

**AS A PARAGUAYAN SINGER AND COMPOSER,** I had the privilege of performing once with Mercedes Sosa in Asunción. When I visited her at a later date in Buenos Aires, she confided that the first songs she had ever recorded in Argentina were Paraguayan, and she gave me the original recordings of this music, which I shall always treasure as a memento of our long conversation that day.

Sosa, an Argentine, was linked to Paraguayan music. Paraguayan singer Luis Alberto del Paraná first connected her with the Dutch recording firm Philips, allowing her now famous voice to reach the world. She told me that she had never forgotten that. Paraguay is a musical country, so it's not strange that singers like Paraná and his group “Los Paraguayos” conquered the European musical market in the 1960s and have been recognized alongside the Beatles by Queen Elizabeth and the general public in London's Albert Hall.

Ypacarai” (Memories of Ypacarai), while Argentine composer Zulema de Mirkin wrote the words of the song without ever having seen the lake to which it refers. The 1947 Civil War sent a generation of talented poets and musicians into exile, for the most part to Buenos Aires, including Flores and Mirkin.

The verses of guarania songs generally involve love and breakups, hometowns, landscapes and feelings about the country expressed through melancholic singing. For many years, serenades were the customary way of conveying the state of one's heart, but with increased urbanization, the serenade is becoming less popular. Still, it's impossible to think of any party without the Paraguayan music that defines who we are and how we are.

#### A COUNTRY AND ITS MUSIC

It's not an exaggeration to say that Paraguay is its music. The 36-string harp provides a resonance and register that

## Still, it's impossible to think of any party without the Paraguayan music that defines who we are and how we are.

The two best-known musical and folkloric genres in Paraguay are the polka with its very lively rhythm, based on a European beat, and the more recent guarania, with a slower cadence, clearly reflecting the Paraguayan character—sometimes wrapped up in a deep sadness or melancholy. In 1925, José Asunción Flores created the guarania, and Demetrio Ortiz immortalized the rhythm from exile with his iconic song “Recuerdos de

give a unique sound to the country's musical groups. The harp arrived with Catholic missionaries, probably of Celtic origin, but indigenous craftspeople adopted the harp—an instrument also used in other countries such as Mexico, Venezuela or Colombia—and gave it a very particular sound that is now exported throughout the world.

Music is not only tied to the country's intrinsic spirit, but also to its two inter-





Argentine singer Mercedes Sosa popularized Paraguayan music.

national wars. The first was known as the Great War or the War of Paraguay, a name that was given to it by the members of the Triple Alliance (Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay) in 1870, and the Chaco War against Bolivia in 1932-35. Several songs with a clearly patriotic stripe make up the repertoire of all the groups and singers who sing about national themes. These songs recount battles lost or won and brave soldiers—songs created to raise the spirits of Paraguayan soldiers as they go into battle. In the 2011 Bicentennial of Independence, the country immersed itself in the songs and poems that recounted the rich history of Paraguay. It was a singular moment in our history that showed how music defines us as a people and as a nation.

Paraguayan tunes such as “Mis noches sin ti,” “Lejanía,” “Pájaro campana,” “Galopera,” “Cascada” and “Reservista Purahei” (copied by the celebrated Armenian-French singer Charles

Aznavour in his song “La mamma”) form part of Paraguay’s classic repertoire, and folklore groups both in the country and in other Latin American countries frequently perform them.

More recently, both poets and musicians searched for new themes that make reference to the past. Among them are several notable efforts that have described the problems of social inequity and great injustices in land distribution or in equal opportunity. These groups emerged in response to the long dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989) as part of the “Nuevo Cancionero” (New Songbook) movement, giving rise to such songs as “Despertar” (Awakening), made popular by Mercedes Sosa. Rebellious, outspoken poetry has a long tradition in the country and many of its great voices—Elvio Romero, Teodoro S. Mongelós and Herib Campos Cervera—did much of their work in exile. Recognizing the power of

song, the dictatorship persecuted these Paraguayan cultural expressions.

Themes dedicated to the courtship of women also abound: listen, for example, to (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srJRYW8DRKs>). One hymn of love is “Nde resa kuarahyame” by Teodoro S. Mongelós that says in its third stanza:

Ajuhu mba’ e iporáva che py’ a guive  
 ahayhúva  
 yvypórape omoíva jeguakáramo Tupã  
 ysyry rendaguemícha hovyü  
 ha ipyko’ éva  
 vevuimínte ahëtuséva nde resa  
 kuarahy’ á.  
 Reikuaáma aarohoryva reikuaáma  
 mamoi tépa  
 sapy’ a amanoha ára ikatúne che ñoty  
 che rejántekena Mirna nde resa  
 kuarahy’ áme  
 tosyry jepi anga che ári tapia  
 nde resay.

Clockwise from top: a muddy trail in Paraguay; the yacaré (alligator) inhabits Paraguayan rivers; a ship travels on the river; the rivers often inspire music and poetry; water is everywhere.



Translated to Spanish:

He encontrado la hermosura  
que entrañablemente quiero,  
la que de ornamento puso  
Dios en la faz de la tierra.

Como un cauce de arroyuelo  
de cóncavo azul oscuro  
suavemente besaría  
esa sombra de tus ojos.

(I have found the beauty that I so desperately desire, that God put as an ornament on the face of the earth/ like the dark blue stream of a little brook, I would softly kiss the shadow of your eyes.)

Paraguay is a beautiful but harsh country that softens only through song. Its painful history seeps out in verses in Guarani and in Spanish that form part of the guarania movement like “India” or “Nde rendape ayu”... in it we recognize what we were, what we are and what we want to be.

*Lizza Bogado is a Paraguayan folklore singer who has made more than fifteen records. She has performed widely in theatres, television and large concert venues in Paraguay and throughout the world. She is the composer of well-known songs in her native country such as “Un solo canto,” “Herencia” and “Paraguay mi nación guaraní.”*





---

# HISTORY: JESUITS AND BEYOND

The Guarani territory shares a history marked by the presence of the Jesuits, as well as the violent tragedies of persistent wars.

- Guarani and Jesuits 50
- Transformed Worlds 52
- Jesuit Reflections on Their Overseas Missions 56
- Imagining Guarani and Jesuits 58
- Total War in Indigenous Territories 61

# Guaranis and Jesuits

Bordering the Spanish and the Portuguese Empires **BY TAMAR HERZOG**

**THE TERRITORY WE CURRENTLY IDENTIFY AS** “Guarani” is presently divided between Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Although this partition of a community across national boundaries is a historical phenomenon more common than most assume, there is something particularly telling in this case. The location of the Guaranis near what would become a border between the rival empires of Spain and Portugal and then the various competing Latin American states was not accidental. Instead, it was directly related to who they were, how they came to be, and what were their relations with the powers that sought to dominate their territories from as early as the 16th century.

The first Spaniards who arrived to the region in the 1530s registered the existence of various native groups with distinct denominations such as the Chandules, Carios, Tobatines, Guarambarenses, and Itatines (to mention just a few examples). According to their narratives, the members of these groups lived in an extended territory between the rivers Paraguay, Paraná and Uruguay. Spanish reports admitted that members of these groups were distinguished from one another, but nevertheless suggested that they shared sociocultural traits and a language. Subjected to *encomienda* (an institution that in theory sanctioned their work for Spaniards in exchange for conversion and military protection) the Guarani became allies first, vassals of Spain second.

It was during this period—the late 16th century—that Spanish documentation began to categorize the members of these diverse groups as “Guarani.” It was also during this period that, through their interaction with Europeans, the members of these groups enhanced their relations with one another, gradu-

ally forming a single community and a single language, now identified as “colonial” or “creole” Guarani. Pervasive processes of mixing and cultural change also lead to the diffusion of some of these shared sociocultural traits and language to other individuals inhabiting the area, including descendants of Spaniards and mestizos.

The emergence of “the Guarani” as a distinct human group was thus tightly connected to colonialism. It was further enhanced by the activities of the Jesuit order, whose members began in the 1600s congregating the natives of the region into missions. By the end of the 17th century, there were some thirty such missions, with a total population of at least 100,000 natives. By the early 18th century, the geographical extension of this Jesuit enterprise was some 150,000 square miles (about the size of California). Nonetheless, while some historians portrayed the Guarani as passive receptors of European-imposed processes of change and ethnogenesis, a new historiography suggests that the Guarani were active participants in the developments that led to their formation, evolution, categorization and change. This new historiography further argues that their location in a contested area between rival powers and states greatly influenced the way these mutations happened because, by inhabiting a region that was to become a frontier, the Guarani had a greater freedom to negotiate who they were and who they would become.

The best-known episode in this longer story of how territorial conflicts between empires and states allowed natives a greater independence and a greater agency were the events that followed the signing of the Treaty of Madrid in 1750. In that treaty, which determined how Spain and Portugal would divide

the South American continent between them, the Spanish king promised to evacuate all the settlements that were founded on the territory recognized as Portuguese. Among other things, this promise implied the obligation to evacuate seven Jesuit missions with some 30,000 Guaranis. The treaty made special arrangements for this evacuation, specifying that the missionaries would abandon the missions with their residents (the Guaranis), who would thereafter be resettled elsewhere within the territories recognized as Spanish. While residents and Jesuits could take with them all moveable goods, the houses, buildings, churches and lands would remain intact and would be transferred to Portugal.

Unsurprisingly, news of this agreement stirred an uproar. Discussions regarding its legality and wisdom took place both in the Spanish court and the Americas. The Jesuits sent missives to the Spanish king, first asking him not to sign the treaty and then criticizing him for ignoring their plea. Natives residing in the missions also protested against the order of evacuation. In a famous letter dated 1753 and written in Guaraní, Nicolás Ñenguirú, leader of one of the Guaraní communities, asked the governor of Buenos Aires if the news was accurate. He suggested that outrageous as they were, the instructions must be the result of a Portuguese plot, not the genuine mandate of the Spanish king. After all, Spanish monarchs knew better. They had always thanked the Guaraní for their loyalty and service, and always promised them not only rewards but also protection. Under these circumstances, how could a Spanish king order an evacuation, which surely would cause the Guarani great harm, expelling them from their lands in order to give them to the Portuguese? How could the king

mandate that they give away all that they had achieved by their labor? If such were the case, what was the point of bringing them to the mission in the first place? In his letter, Ñenguirú described the growing rage in his community and confessed that he could no longer control his men, who refused to listen to his explanations. But he himself was not clear of what he could say as he too did not understand how this could have happened.

Many other Guarani leaders sent similar missives. They also corresponded among themselves and with the Jesuits, trying from as early as 1753 to coordinate a common response. This restiveness was probably the reason why, eventually, most Guaranis refused to abandon their villages. The Spanish and the Portuguese responded to this disobedience with violence, unleashing a war that took place between 1754 and 1756 and led to an enormous death toll and to the destruction and abandonment of most missions. Paradoxically, the difficulties in implementing the treaty of Madrid led to its annulment in 1761, leaving the territory of the Jesuit missions—now in ruin—under Spain.

While many accused the Jesuits of instigating the resistance and indeed believed that they might have written or at least co-authored many of the letters attributed to natives, it is currently agreed that by the mid-18th century the Guaranis had sufficient knowledge and familiarity with things Spanish to write such letters as well as to initiate, organize and carry out resistance. Clearly, by that time, some Guaranis were not only able to read and write, but they also understood that letters were a means of communication as well as a channel to express grievances. Among native elites, there was also an acute awareness of what was at stake and which arguments could carry the day. There was sufficient native political articulation, with substantial collaboration among indigenous people living in different villages. For present-day historians, therefore, rather than attributed to Jesuit long-hand, these events testified to the existence of a

Guarani body-politic with a potential for self-government.

How the different Guarani groups acquired this identity, knowledge and grassroots organization is hard to ascertain. Certainly, the various groups shared many traits and communal existence before the arrival of Europeans. However, the presence of Spaniards contributed to the emergence of a Pan-Guarani identity that stressed what was common (rather than what was different). The use of Guarani as the lingua franca of this particular colonial world also led to homogenization, as did the arrival of missionaries and the subjection of many (although not all) Guaranis to a common religious teaching and a common daily discipline. Because of these processes, Guarani, which originally consisted of a family of spoken languages became a single, written language. The congregation in missions also allowed the settling of different Guarani groups in particular places, and the relationship between the diverse missions permitted the intensification of relations between these groups. But it is also possible that what allowed the Guaranis to be identified as a group and be distinguished from other natives was precisely their location on a territory contested among empires and crowns.

Returning to the 1750 episode, the Guaranis who refused to evacuate the missions explained that they would rather fight than leave their lands to the Portuguese, whom they considered their enemies. Identifying themselves as vassals of Spain, the willingness of the Guarani to come to the missions in the first place was probably tied to Spain's rivalry with Portugal, as well as with other native groups allied with them. In the missions, the Guaranis were protected from serving Spaniards (in encomienda or elsewhere) and received tools and instruction; they were also protected from captivity by slave traders from São Paulo, who in the early 17th century expanded their activities to the area the Guaranis inhabited. According to statistics mainly based on Jesuit reports, between 1628 and 1631, for example,

some 60,000 mission Indians were captured by these slaving expeditions, which sometime were manned by as many as 2,400 individuals, both native and European. To resist these expeditions, from the 1630s Jesuits armed and militarily trained the Guaranis. The only army present on the border during the 17th and the early 18th century, Guarani soldiers were constantly sent to defend Spanish interests. This military involvement—mainly against the Portuguese—confirmed (to Europeans) the bellicose nature of the Guarani, but it also stressed their proximity to the border and their rivalry with the Portuguese.

Despite claims that Guarani resistance to the evacuation of the missions in the 1750s confirmed the suspicion that they were disloyal to Spain, it is clear that the natives living in the missions initially identified their own interests with the persistence of Spanish presence. Not only did they resist leaving houses, crops and land, they also feared that if they fell under Portuguese control they might be enslaved and their communities dismantled. Yet, if in the 17th century the Guarani chose Spain, later they changed their minds. There are plenty of indications, for example, that during the war following the Treaty of Madrid (1754-1756) perhaps as many as 3,000 Guaranis who were disillusioned with Spain had transferred their loyalty to Portugal. They did so in groups and gradually, as they witnessed the unfolding of the drama that forced them to abandon their missions without clear destination and without royal assistance.

Location on the border thus determined the way the Guarani would be defined and how they would act. Yet, contrary to common narratives, the border did not exist before the Guarani were created as a group, nor were prior-established Jesuit missions caught up in the struggle for hegemony between Spain and Portugal. On the contrary, both the Guaranis and the missions were the instruments by which Spain sought to exercise and increment its control.

The reason the border between Spain and Portugal ended up passing back and forth in that region, therefore, was precisely the continuous struggle over the allegiance of the Guarani. It is clear, for example, that during the 18th century Jesuits expanded their territories (and, as a byproduct, those of Spain) by transferring some Guaranis to the eastern bank of the River Uruguay. This politics of population transfer to a territory whose submission to Europeans was not yet determined—it was unclear whether it would fall under one European power or the other—implicated the Guaranis in European debates. The Guaranis, furthermore, were not only to occupy the territory but also to patrol it against Portuguese pretensions. But if initially the Guaranis expressed strong anti-Portuguese sentiments, by the 1750s many of them felt betrayed by Spain (and Jesuits). Aware of these complexities, from the 1750s, the Portuguese attempted to attract these dissatisfied Indians by offering them better treatment, abundant gifts and certain privileges. The Portuguese also intensified commerce with these groups, promising their members that they would be allowed to remain in their villages. Here again, a population transfer had the potential to affect where the border would pass: in 1801 the seven missions became Portuguese not by virtue of a military conquest or an international treaty, but because of the initiative and consent of their Guarani inhabitants, who now wanted to become Portuguese.

*Tamar Herzog is Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American Affairs and Professor of Spanish and Portuguese History at Harvard University. She is also an affiliated faculty member at Harvard Law School and a Radcliffe Alumnae Professor. Her most recent book, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Harvard University Press, 2014), studies how boundaries were formed on the ground by neighbors and how the right to land was discussed, negotiated, obtained or denied.*

# Transformed Worlds

## Missionaries and Indigenous Peoples in South America **BY ARTUR H. F. BARCELOS**

**IN 1610, A SMALL GROUP OF JESUITS BEGAN** what would become known as one of the largest indigenous evangelism experiences in colonial America. The effort began in Asunción in colonial Paraguay.

For more than 150 years, indigenous groups who resided in the subtropical woods and forests of the La Plata River Basin were contacted by the Jesuits and came to live in nuclei called “reductions” or “missions.” The Jesuits evangelized many indigenous groups, but focused on the Guarani, speakers of Tupi-Guarani who, after a process of about 4,000 years of dispersion from the Amazon region, in the 16th century settled huge territories that now belong to Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. For decades, historians, anthropologists and archaeologists have studied the process of evangelization that got prodigious results in a colonial America where indigenous people suffered strong demographic shrinking across the continent since the early years of the conquest. To have a somewhat clearer idea how the Jesuits and the Guarani sealed pacts that allowed the foundation of more than thirty reductions, it’s necessary to take a look at these historical agents. The Jesuit order, founded in 1539 by Ignatius of Loyola, a Spaniard from the Basque region, arose in the context of the Roman Catholic Church’s reaction to the growth of Protestantism in Europe. This order, from the start, was highly selective, attracting students from wealthy families and seeking men with demonstrated high intellectual abilities at their colleges and seminaries. In just over ten years, the Jesuits already had thousands of members and considered themselves prepared for

the great task of bringing Christianity to America’s indigenous people, following in the footsteps of the Franciscans, Benedictines and Dominicans. In 1549, the first group of six missionaries arrived in Brazil, a colony of Portugal. It was the beginning of a long learning process in ways to approach and perform the conversion of the natives.

A few years later, Jesuits were also sent to the Spanish colonies, reaching the Viceroyalties of Peru and New Spain. Cultivating their great political skills and connections, the Jesuits soon were able to establish colleges and manage urban and rural properties, participate in the internal trade of the colonies and thus able to finance forays to areas where the native peoples had not yet been Christianized. With their architects, geographers, musicians, theologians, astronomers and linguists, the Jesuits served as missionaries in almost all regions of America at the service of the kings of Portugal, Spain and France, but first of all loyal to the pope.

The main goal of the Jesuits was to convert as many Native Americans as possible to Catholic Christianity. However, as they would learn in practice, and based on the experience of other orders, they realized that the best way to accomplish this would be to break with the ancestral traditions of indigenous tribes and introduce European customs and habits. Thus, the fight against polygamy, funerary practices, consumption of alcoholic beverages and, especially, the campaign against local spiritual leaders, provided some of the principal initial challenges. In contrast, the organization of traditional forms and use of space by indigenous people was also a focal point



for the success or failure of the Jesuits.

The missionaries made many mistakes before coming to understand the best ways to convince very different groups to accept a common proposal for a radical transformation of their lives. That was also the case of the Guarani living in the tropical and subtropical forests of South America. For thousands of years, these indigenous people had practiced a way of life based on extended families, composed of a patriarch and his household—his wife, daughters, sons, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and brothers - and sisters-in-law. These families, called *Tevys*, varied in size and could

reach dozens of members. The Guarani economy was also organized within the families, including cultivating gardens deep in the woods. Corn, beans, squash, peanuts and cassava were the main crops. In addition to the seasonal collection of vegetables the Guarani also were devoted to hunting and fishing.

The Spaniards used a word from a Caribbean indigenous language, *cacique*, to refer to the principal men of these families. Among these *caciques*, one man assumed, eventually, the political leadership of the village. His prestige, achieved through oratory and success as a warrior, in addition to his *Tevy* relations network,

**Clockwise from top: Church ruins of San Miguel Arcángel, recognized as World Heritage by UNESCO; Base of a wooden sculpture made by the Guarani from the Jesuit reductions. Museu Júlio de Castilhos, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil; Statue made by the Guarani from the Jesuit reductions. Museu Júlio de Castilhos, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil.**

was the guarantee of political power. However, shamans or *payés*, spiritual leaders of the villages, had as much or more power than the chiefs and were central figures in Guarani culture. Healings and the interpretation of dreams, along with knowledge of medicinal herbs, allowed these shamans to influ-



Map of the Jesuit missions. Father José Cardiel, 1752

ence groups through their inspirational speeches, delivered at parties and celebrations. The Guarani were recognized as skilled and proud warriors by the first Spaniards who encountered them. The Jesuits recognized the Guarani as the most prepared of the indigenous groups to be Christianized. This assumption of superiority and permeability to contact is still a complicated issue for the experts. It may have been a reflection of the Guarani ability to negotiate with the Spanish colonists and the Jesuits to survive amid the violence of the invasion of their ancestral territories.

Facing the resistance of the Spanish colonists, who sought in every way to exploit Guarani labor, the Jesuits

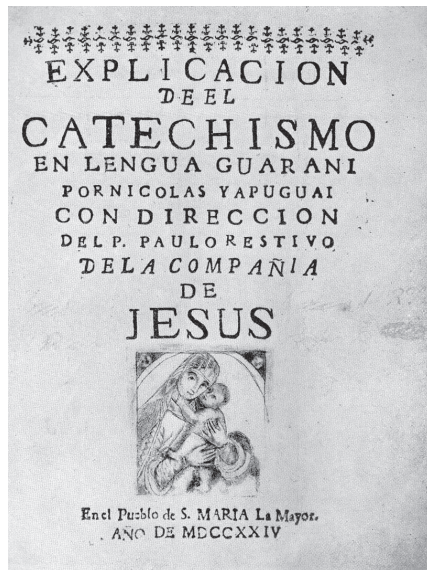
managed to found reductions in three regions: in Itatim (part of the current state of Mato Grosso-Brazil), in Guaira (part of the current state of Paraná-Brazil) and at the Tape (part of the current state of Rio Grande do Sul). These were all areas of Spanish rule under the old Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. The main obstacle came from the Portuguese possessions in Brazil. The so-called Bandeirantes, from Sao Vicente and Sao Paulo, in their forays to find precious stones and metals, as well as slave labor, launched successive attacks against the Jesuits and Indian reductions, forcing a retreat to areas closer to the Spanish cities and towns. By 1640, the missionaries had settled with the Guarani—whom they had

managed to convince to come along—near the Paraná, Paraguay and Uruguay River banks, far from the attacks of the Bandeirantes. Forty years later, the Jesuits returned to the Tape, after the 1680 founding of Colonia do Santissimo Sacramento by the Portuguese on the banks of the La Plata River directly opposite Buenos Aires. This Portuguese gesture was considered a clear affront to the Spanish Crown. It was also a central point for smuggling goods into cities like Santa Fe, Cordoba, Corrientes, Asuncion and Buenos Aires itself. Sacramento became the focus of disputes spanning nearly a century.

In this context, the Jesuits decided to work in the Tape and created seven new reductions between 1682 and 1707. Added to 23 existing reductions, the total of 30 was mostly made up of Christianized Guarani. The first half of the 18th century witnessed a strong increase in the participation of Guarani reductions in the regional market of the La Plata River. The new reductions boosted the economy, contributing significant amounts of yerba mate used as an herbal tea by indigenous people and consumed widely in the Spanish cities, where the population was primarily indigenous or mestizo. Cattle farms also supplied reductions with meat, and hides were exported to European markets. The 30 villages, with some fluctuations caused by epidemics and the constant call of the Guarani to face the Portuguese, reached a high mark of 150,000 residents.

The Jesuits trained selected artisans and artists among the indigenous peoples and taught them new trades that awakened their latent talent for sculpture, woodwork, jewelry, painting and music. From this “courtyard of craftsmen” came tables, chairs, cabinets, sacred statues, paintings, silver ornaments, and musical instruments such as bass, horns, bassoons, harps, dulcimers, guitars, fiddles and flutes. The music was not just performed to delight the ears of the priests. Its role was much broader. It encouraged the religious observance, stimulated work in the fields, gave the





This 1724 book is a Jesuit catechism in the Guarani language.

last farewell to the dead and especially created the atmosphere for the great religious festivals held in the central square against the background of monumental churches facing single-story houses. One can imagine the effect that the incense smells, the lighting of torches and candles, the procession with the Patron Saint with music filling the air with melodic sacred chants had to the senses of the Guarani.

These centers contributed to global evangelization. In addition to rural areas of crops, resorts, rodeos, and the paths that interconnected the reductions, the Jesuits also relied on large crosses and chapels to remind the native peoples of the Church's vigilant presence about their souls. Material benefits also provided incentives: the planting of cotton guaranteed the clothes and fabrics used for different daily tasks. Yerba mate, which previously had been cultivated in remote areas reached by the indigenous people in long and painful expeditions, began to be cultivated along the villages. The raising of sheep, mules and horses was added to the grazing of cattle. The Jesuits established *oficios de misiones*, actually commercial and accounting offices, in the region's main Spanish cities, to take care of sales and purchases for the reductions

with accurate records of all procedures. The Guarani themselves exercised civil administration of the villages, occupying public offices such as mayor and chief magistrate. The militia formed by the Guarani protected the reductions and served on several occasions as the reserve army of the Spanish authorities. The Jesuits faithfully paid their annual taxes to the state, while ambitiously expanding their activities inspired by their motto *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*—for the greater glory of God.

This wide network of villages developed broadly by 1750, a year that the Treaty of Madrid began to contribute to its downfall. The crowns of Spain and Portugal signed the treaty to end the uncertainty of their borders in the colonial world, throwing the areas occupied by the Guarani reductions into turmoil. Moreover, the reductions became political currency for the two Catholic sovereigns to exert their respective power. The treaty proposed that seven reductions on the eastern bank of the Uruguay River would be exchanged for Colonia del Sacramento. The monarchs thus intended to put an end to the conflict of interests in the La Plata River. Indians and Jesuits were ordered to move to lands west of the Uruguay River and the seven reductions would be delivered to the Portuguese with their entire building infrastructure.

Guarani resistance to the move led to the 1754–56 “War of the Guarani” that prevented the work of the Treaty of Madrid Demarcation Committees. Defeated, the Guarani then witnessed Spanish and Portuguese troops occupy their reductions. An iconographic map of the San Juan Bautista Reduction still exists in two versions from the occupation, one in the General Archive in Simancas, Spain, and the other in the National Library in France. Both provide valuable historical sources about Guarani reductions.

Even though Treaty of Madrid was annulled in 1761, the crisis it had triggered was enough to collapse the structure of the 30 Reductions and to shake the morale of priests and Indians. The

campaign against the Jesuits, which increased every day on the European continent, gained momentum with the resistance of the Guarani to the treaty. The Jesuits were accused of collaboration and encouraging indigenous revolt and they soon faced retaliation. In 1759, they were expelled from all Portuguese dominions in Europe and America. In 1767, it was the turn of Spain to take the same action. More than 5,000 Jesuits from various parts of America were forced into exile, mostly in Italy. In the early 19th century, the remains of the old reductions were already a picture of decline and desolation. The Guarani were mingling into colonial society. The independence of the Spanish colonies, which began in 1810, contributed the incorporation of Guarani territory into the spaces of the new nations. Some reductions became towns; others remained in ruins amid the forests and fields of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. Today, some of their remains are local tourist attractions, where they evoke a glorious past. However, the excitement visitors feel on seeing the ruins of imposing churches does not translate into an understanding of the historical destiny reserved for the Guarani and other indigenous peoples from other latitudes of America—peoples that today struggle to have their land rights recognized and their cultures preserved. As much as the Jesuits attempted to ensure the survival of Guarani who accepted the conversion and life in reductions, their extreme zeal and natural distrust of the political and intellectual abilities of the indigenous people did not allow a true emancipation.

*Artur Henrique Franco Barcelos, a historian and archaeologist, teaches archaeology at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande—FURG, Brazil. He is a specialist in the history of the Jesuit evangelization in colonial America. He is the author of O Mergulho no seculum: exploração, conquista e organização espacial jesuítica na América espanhola colonial (2013) and Espaço e Arqueologia nas Missões Jesuíticas: o caso de San Juan Bautista.*

# Jesuit Reflections on Their Overseas Missions

From China to Paraguay **BY ANA CAROLINA HOSNE**

**WHEN YOU THINK OF JESUITS IN THEIR MISSIONS** around the world, you—the casual reader—might not think of Plato or ancient Greek authors. Yet two of these mission experiences—Paraguay and China—richly illustrate how the humanist tradition of the Renaissance with its emphasis on Greek and Latin classics influenced those faraway experiences through the lens of Plato's Republic. In particular, as John O'Malley has pointed out in *The First Jesuits* (Harvard University Press, 1992), this emphasis adopted by the Society was a new kind and degree of engagement with culture beyond the traditionally clerical subjects of philosophy and theology, and much of what they taught only indirectly related to the Christian religion as such.

Jesuit school education in its Ratio Studiorum, i.e. Plan of Studies, which reached its final form in 1599, included a systematic study of Greek authors such as Demosthenes, Homer and Socrates in its humanities and rhetoric courses. As the Society's missions expanded on a global scale, these authors would serve as an inspiration for the Jesuits to appraise, describe and appreciate their own mission spaces. More specifically, I focus here on how Jesuits turned to Plato's *Republic* as a reference against which to assess different aspects of their missions in China and Paraguay.

Let's look first at Paraguay. In 1604, the General of the Society of Jesus, Claudio Acquaviva (1543-1615), established the Province of Paraquaria, naming Diego de Torres Bollo as its first provincial, and key promoter of the Guarani settlements known as reductions—*reducciones*—in the Paraguayan province that encompassed the present-day republics of Paraguay, Argentina, the south of Brazil and Chile (Chile did not become part of the

province until 1625). From the beginning, missionary activity in Paraguay focused on the foundation of reductions, i.e. settlements in which the Guarani were organized into communities and indoctrinated into Catholicism, as well as protected from Brazilian slave traders. The native peoples were “reduced” or congregated in these communities to lead a “civic and human life,” which meant leaving their isolated huts, distant from one another and scattered across the mountains and valleys. Reductions themselves were not new, since they had already been implemented in the Peru mission. But in Paraguay they acquired other characteristics, for instance, that of a mixed economy, combining common areas of land with private property and production.

Inspired by the reductions, Jesuit José Manuel Peramás (1732-1793) wrote a work in Latin, *De administratione guaranica comparate ad Rempublicam Platonis commentaries*, in his treatise *De vita et moribus tredecim virorum paraguaycorum*, edited in Faenza in 1793, immediately after his death. In each chapter, Peramás' essay, “The Republic of Plato and the Guarani,” draws an analogy between the organization of the Guarani reductions and Plato's *Republic*. In his view, Plato's utopia, embodied in the reductions, had become possible thanks to the wisdom of the Catholic Church and the Spanish monarchy.

Peramás draws attention to the combination of private plots and common areas of land in which every citizen worked for the community on certain days during the year. This indeed reminds us of elements of the socialism in the *Republic* dialogue, expressed in Socrates' desire to achieve happiness for the whole city, and not just for a particular group. Peramás's

also shows how the polis, the city, and its urban organization are nothing but a physical realization of a “civil Christian society.” Music, dance and the arts, as well as “useful” arts such as carpentry, were essential for the instruction of citizens. As citizens, they could not be rulers of that civil Christian society. The number of magistrates among the Guarani was that indicated by the Leyes de Indias. Since the Guarani did not have terms to refer to these colonial posts, the Jesuits created translations in their language, Peramás explained in his essay.

Like Peramás in Paraguay, the Jesuits in China would also resort to Plato's *Republic* to assess their mission in the Ming Empire. The China mission was established by two Italian Jesuits, Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), in the city of Zhaoqing, in Canton province, during the late Ming period. Ricci's humanistic education at the Roman College provided him with useful tools to access the literati circles in China, which were to a great extent composed of scholar-officials, i.e. those who held posts in the Ming Empire (1368-1644). Their support, friendship and patronage were essential for the Jesuits to be allowed to stay on Chinese soil, in a mission in which they did not have a colonial power on their side. Over time, Ricci gained knowledge about the painstaking examination system to obtain these posts and become part of the imperial bureaucracy. Confucian learning was at the core of the training required for the candidates, who had to master the mandatory Four Books and the Chinese classics. This insight into the Chinese political system led Ricci to claim that China had accomplished what all the other nations could not; that is, the ideal of Plato's *Republic*, embodied in the Con-

fucian literati. He says:

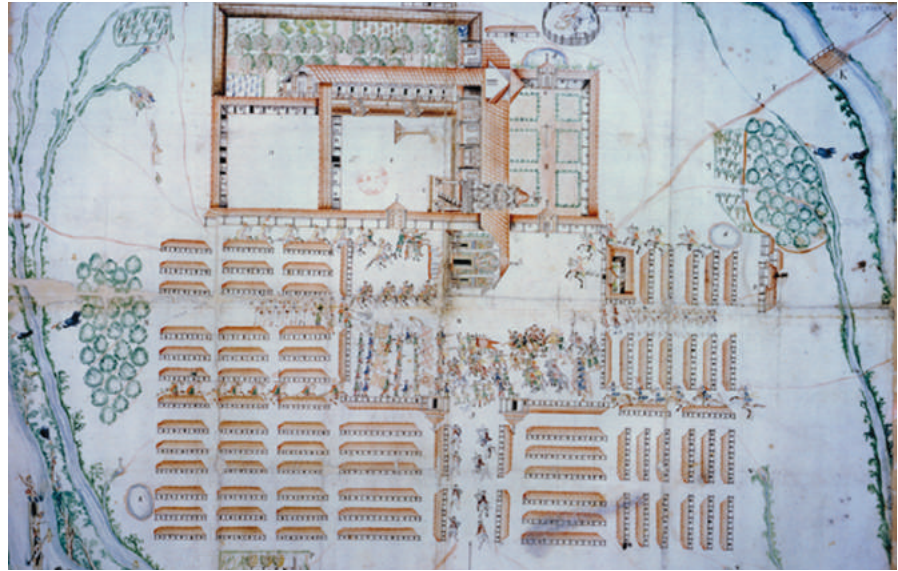
[...] it raises admiration that these people who have never traded with Europe have achieved as much by themselves as we did in contact with the whole world; and I just want His Highness to assess this by evaluating their government, to which they put all their efforts and see in it so much light, leaving behind all the other nations; and if, to nature, God might want to add our divine holy Catholic faith, it seems that what Plato speculated on in his Republic, China put into practice. (Pietro Tacchi Venturi SJ, *Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci S.I. Comitato per ler onoranze nazionali con prolegomena* [Macerata: Giorgetti, 1911-1913], 2 vols; Letter to Giambattista Roman, Treasurer of the government in the Philippines, Zhaoqing, September 13, 1584, II, p. 45).

Moreover, it was the literati whose main concern was the good governance of the “Republic;” their main role as rulers made them completely different from those in other nations and, according to Ricci:

... if we cannot say that in this kingdom the philosophers are Kings, at least we can certainly claim that Kings are governed by philosophers.” (Matteo Ricci, “Storia dell’Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina,” in *Fonti Ricciane. Documenti originali concernenti Matteo Ricci e la storia delle prime relazioni tra l’Europa e la Cina, 1579-1615*, ed. Pasquale M. D’Elia [Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1942-1949], 3 vols.: I, p. 36 ).

In sum, Ricci’s observations echo Plato’s *Republic* and the reasons why philosophers, because of their natural abilities and virtues, were fit to rule the city (Plato, *The Republic of Plato*. Translated with notes and an interpretive essay by Allan Bloom [USA: Harper Collins, 1969], Book VI, especially 485a-b).

Putting these two missions, China and Paraguay, in perspective as well as the different analogies with the Socratic Republic dialogue that both of them inspired, allows us to reflect on the roles



Plan of the Reduction of San Juan Bautista, circa 1756. Collection of the National Library in Paris, Plans and Maps section.

assigned to the Chinese scholar officials on the one hand, and the Guaranis, the citizens of the reductions in Paraguay, on the other. Matteo Ricci in China assimilated the Chinese literati, his peer group, as those who resembled the philosopher-kings of Plato’s *Republic*. They were not only a part of the empire; they ruled it, while in turn consummating western speculation on the roles assigned to philosophers in the Socratic dialogue.

In Paraguay, the Indians had been made the inhabitants of a city, the cornerstone of a harmonious civilized Christian community. This city, as described by Peramás, reflects what Angel Rama so brilliantly described in *La Ciudad Letrada* (The Lettered City) (Montevideo: Arca, 1998) regarding the development of an urban culture in Latin America. Rama sees the city, the baroque city, as a material, visible and sensitive manifestation of the colonizing—and civilized—order in which community life developed. And that city was ruled by a more assertive one within it: the lettered city, in turn the shelter of power and the executive of its commands in Spanish America, composed of a distinguished group of religious men, administrators, educators and a whole body of professionals all closely related to that power. The lettered city was, in part,

the result of the need for the Christianization of a vast indigenous population, which was to be incorporated into the realm of European values, even though these populations did not believe in or comprehend them.

This huge task, which required the help of these men of letters, could only be carried out in urban settings, inhabited by “citizens,” both serving an imperial project and strengthening its ties with the Crown. Following Angel Rama, we may suppose that in colonial Latin America the Jesuits belonged to the “lettered city,” as opposed to the colonized society, which “did not have knowledge of letters,” as Peramás indicates in *La República de Platón y los guaraníes*. Unlike the Chinese literati—Ricci’s friends—the inhabitants of the reducciones were not part of the lettered city, a city—and Republic—the Jesuits in Paraguay had created for them to live in.

*Ana Carolina Hosne is a Marie Curie Experienced Researcher at the University of Heidelberg, Cluster Asia Europe. She is the author of The Jesuit Missions to China and Peru, 1570-1610: Expectations and Appraisals of Expansionism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013).



# Imagining Guaranis and Jesuits

Yesterday's History, Today's Perspective **BY GUILLERMO WILDE**

**BEGINNING IN 1610, JESUITS FOUNDED A SERIES** of towns for indigenous peoples in the southern region of America. These towns, known as “missions” or “reductions,” achieved enormous territorial, demographic and political importance. In the first decades of the 18th century, Paraguay’s thirty missions became home to 140,000 indigenous residents. They spoke the Guaraní language for the most part, and it became the basic means for conversion to the Christian faith.

Each reduction had two Jesuits, a priest and his companion, in charge of spiritual and “temporal” administration, helped by an indigenous elite who performed administrative and ecclesiastical jobs. These people could read and write in Guaraní, Spanish and Latin. The

priests strictly supervised all daily tasks, making sure that the natives fulfilled their obligations of attending mass and working in the farms, fields and ranches, which provided the basic goods for all the towns: corn, yucca, cotton, yerba mate and meat. Other activities also took place in mission workshops, where most of the sculpture and ornaments for churches were created. Music too entered the lives of indigenous people in the missions; they both copied musical scores and manufactured several types of musical instruments. In one of the mission churches, Santísima Trinidad, a well-preserved frieze depicts angel musicians playing harp, violin, trumpet, claves and even maracas. We can only imagine the unique sounds that combined the music

brought from Europe with the resonant elements of the earth.

In spite of their apparent success, the reductions were afflicted time and time again by epidemics and devastating conflicts that decimated the population. Outbreaks of smallpox, measles and fevers constantly plagued the communities, causing many deaths. During all of the 17th century, slave-hunting adventurers from São Paulo conducted raids to capture native peoples from the missions, causing the early destruction of many of these towns.

Religious expression was the chosen means to overcome the traumatic effects of these crises, and Jesuit teachings emphasized Christian forms of native devotions such as the cult of the Arch-



Left: Church Ruins of San Miguel Arcángel, recognized as a World Heritage site by UNESCO; Right: Angel with maraca, a musical instrument.

angel Michael and the Virgin Mary. The Jesuits varied in their attitudes toward unorthodox indigenous religious expressions, sometimes rejecting such modes of worship and at other times assimilating them. Sometimes they promoted the incorporation of local visual and aural elements into the dominant Christian practice, ranging from church decorations to the celebrations of the liturgical calendar. Although the history of this experiment ended abruptly with the expulsion of the Jesuits from all Spanish and Portuguese territories in 1767, the native peoples maintained their system of government in the missions and continued their devotional practices, at least until the civil wars that engulfed the region from 1810 on.

Throughout the last three hundred years, historical literature and fiction have found a frequent theme in the missions. The Jesuits spread news about this distant corner of the American colonies through the European continent and provided valuable information about the natives with whom they had had contact. Reacting to this information, the European public soon developed highly polarized opinions. While apologetic stances defended the missions as a noble experiment of civilizing the indigenous people who resided in the forest, the anti-Jesuit

position perceived the religious order as exploiters of the natives who sought to create a kingdom independent from the Spanish and Portuguese crowns. The first stance was represented in the numerous letters and chronicles written by the Jesuits themselves and by a non-Jesuit book expressing great admiration for the Jesuit experience: *Il cristianesimo felice* (Happy Christianity, 1743) by Italian author Ludovico Muratori. Indeed, Jesuits exiled to Italy continued the defense of the missions long after the order had been expelled from the Americas. José Manuel Peramás, one of these Jesuits, wrote a striking text, *La República de Platón y los guaraníes* (Plato's Republic and the Guaranis), in which he compared the virtues of the mission organization with the tenets of government established by the classic teacher of ancient times. Even anti-Jesuit authors such as Montesquieu and Voltaire would not begrudge praise for the Jesuit rule in the South American forests as a perfect expression of good government.

The ample 18th-century literature also included many anti-Jesuit voices that began to impose in Bourbon Europe a decided opposition to the power that the Jesuits had acquired in the previous centuries. The Marquis of Pombal in the case of Portugal and Count Pedro Rodrí-

guez de Campomanes in the case of Spain were among the order's most vociferous opponents. Both insisted that ambitious Jesuits were dangerously creating a state within a state, a flagrant threat to the Iberian crowns. Their opinions were heavily influenced by a renegade former Jesuit, Bernardo Ibáñez de Echavarrí, author of *El Reino Jesuítico* (The Jesuit Kingdom, 1762), a book almost simultaneously published in Spanish and Portuguese. The author argues that the Jesuits had created an independent political organization among the Guaranis that had the Iberian crowns as its target. In the same period, a rumor was spread that in Jesuit Paraguay, a king called Nicholas I had been anointed with his image on coins especially minted to circulate throughout the region. Although the Jesuits systematically denied the allegations, a well-known cacique, Nicolás Ñeenguirú from Concepción mission, who had a decisive role in the so-called *guerra guaranítica* (Guarani War), was suspected of being Nicholas I. The cause of the war was the border treaty of 1750, in which the Spanish and Portuguese crowns agreed that part of the mission territory would now fall under Portuguese rule. The Guaranis rose up in arms to protest this decision and prevent the treaty from being implemented. Armed confrontations between

the Guarani militia and the Portuguese-Spanish troops continued during 1754 and 1756, ending with the defeat of the Guarani after many deaths. This war spurred the enmity of the Iberian crowns against the Jesuits, who were accused of instigating the natives to resist the decisions of the monarchies.

Disputes about the nature of the governance of the missions continued during the 19th century. Various proponents of the romantic movements vindicated the Jesuits as creating a utopian society that Europeans ought to pursue as a model. For example, among German backers of the Jesuits was Eberhard Gothein, who published *Der Christlich-soziale Staat der Jesuiten in Paraguay* in 1887, comparing the Jesuit Guarani experience with the imagined utopia of Italian theologian Tommaso Campanella in his *Civitas Solis*. Years later, the reductions inspired the socialist ideas of Cunningham Graham, one of the founders of the Scottish Labour Party, who wrote the short book, *A Vanished Arcadia*, devoted entirely to the vindication of the Jesuits' labor in Paraguay.

At the beginning of the 20th century, however, Leopoldo Lugones published *El Imperio Jesuítico*, a well-known book in clear opposition to the Jesuits and subsidized by the Argentine government. Some years before, Paraguayan intellectual Blas Garay wrote *El comunismo de las Misiones de la Compañía de Jesús en Paraguay* (Communism in the Jesuit Missions of Paraguay, 1897). The text grew out of a foreword that the author had written to the reissue of *Historia de las misiones* (The History of the Missions) by Jesuit Nicolás del Techo (written in 1687). With a harsh tone, Garay refers to the legacy of the missions as very negative in the history of the country. Years later, Maria Fassbinder, a German author, published *Der Jesuitenstaat in Paraguay* (The Jesuit State in Paraguay, 1926) and Fritz Hochwaelder, an Austrian author, wrote *Das Heilige Experiment* (The Holy Experiment, 1941), both of which supported the Jesuit endeavors. In the context of World War II, the Swiss

author Clovis Lugon published *La république communiste-chrétienne des Guaranis* (1609-1768). In the 1980s, the debate opened up again with the film *The Mission*, which presented a benevolent portrait of the Jesuits and their evangelical work among the Guarani.

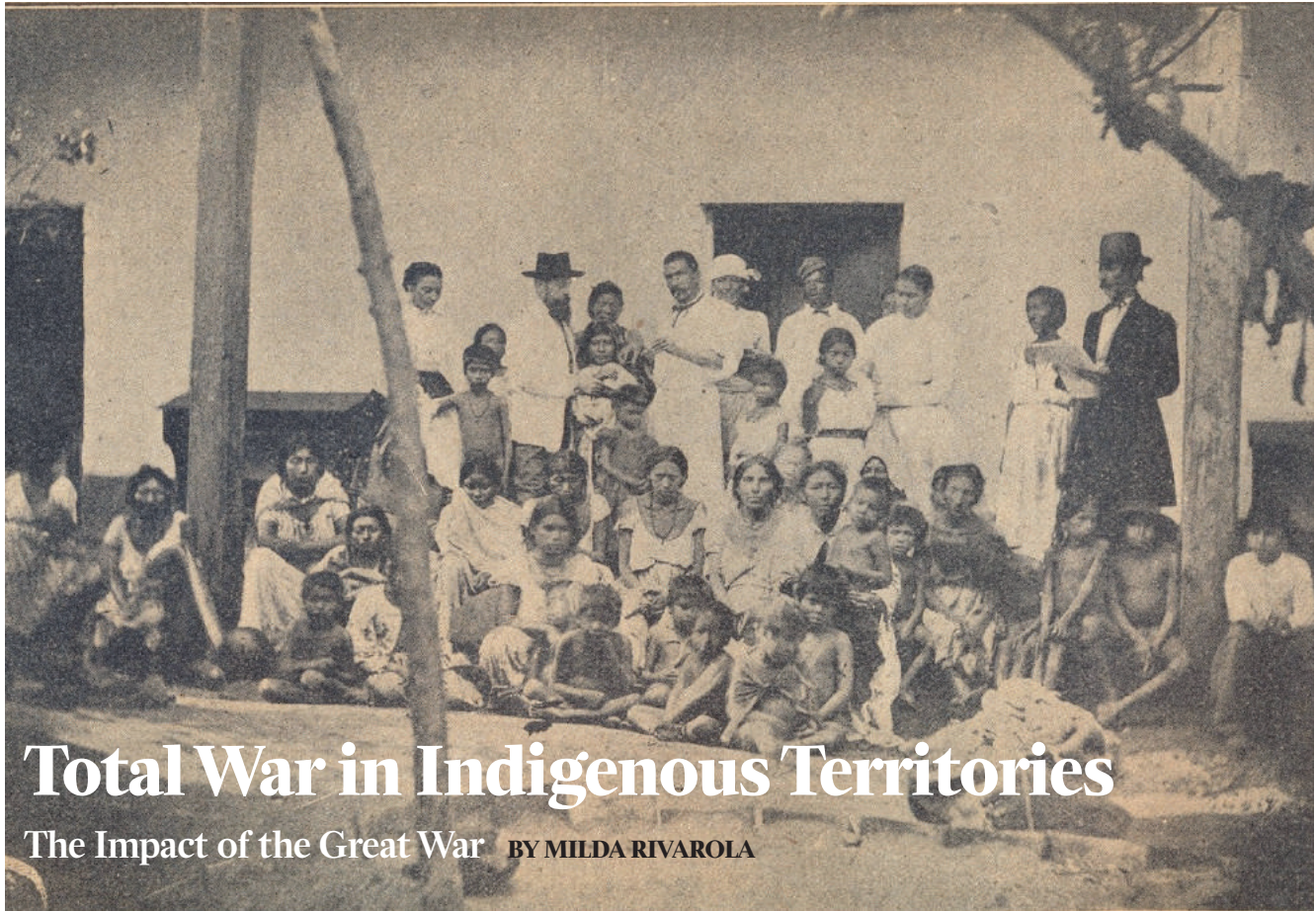
The cited examples illustrate the renewed interest in the missions over the course of the last century in which favorable apologies inevitably confront anti-Jesuit stances. Generally, the literature tends to conceive the missions as a "state," "republic" or "empire," from a political viewpoint, and as a "paradise," or "utopia" from a religious or philosophical viewpoint. French philosopher Michel Foucault referred to the Guarani missions as a "heterotopia," a place or space of otherness that does not fit in with a hegemonic concept and functions in accordance with its own logic.

If indeed the debates have been eloquent, the opposition of the opinions has tended to create an excessively simplified view of the internal situation of the missions over the course of time. The result has been to present missionary governance either as a beneficial and civilizing regime or an oppressive enslaving system. This narrow set of views has also impeded any analysis of indigenous participation and responses in the formation of the missions. The indigenous population was considered as homogenous and passive in that process. The European debate about the missions appears, in this sense, very far from reality. Likewise, the insistence of the notion of a state in reference to the missions has tended to isolate them from the regional context in which they operated. In effect, the missions participated in a network of circulation of people and consumer goods in the River Plate region. Various Jesuit establishments traded products like yerba mate and leather hides throughout the entire region and had considerable influence in the policies of the colonial authorities. In turn, the Guarani natives participated in regional militia and helped the authorities in Buenos Aires and Asunción in different economic activities and in defense

of the territory.

The missions constituted an "imagined community" that over the course of 150 years incorporated very diverse populations that had to adapt to a single pattern of spatial and temporal organization. That meant that the people had to adjust to new technologies, ranging from those directly linked to the construction of buildings and food storage to that of writing or map-making, that did not previously exist in indigenous contexts. The introduction of a routine life in which attendance at church alternated with farm work clearly was a radical break from the traditional indigenous forms of organization of time and space. The process of transformation of the indigenous way of life was slow and prolonged, and the attitudes of the indigenous people toward the colonizers varied. Initially, many political leaders and shamans energetically resisted evangelization. Later, they devised strategies to negotiate their entrance into the missions and participated directly in the governance of the communities through institutions such as cabildos (administrative councils) and militias. In the political and economic circumstances that affected the region of Paraguay and the Plate River, the missions gradually transformed themselves into a space of refuge for much of the indigenous population and thus served as a vehicle to reconstitute social and political ties and recreate native forms of religious identity. Although the mission residents could no longer practice their own religions as they used to, they adopted a type of Christianity *sui generis*, and they participated directly in the constant negotiations and readaptations that characterize the entire period.

**Guillermo Wilde** teaches at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín and is a senior researcher at CONICET in Argentina. He is the author of *Saberes de la Conversión: Jesuitas, indígenas e imperios coloniales en las fronteras de la cristianidad and Religión y Poder en las Misiones de Guaraníes* (*Latin American Studies Association Book Award, 2010*).



# Total War in Indigenous Territories

The Impact of the Great War BY MILDA RIVAROLA

**THE WAR OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE (1865-1870)** was the first total war on the American continent. Whether one uses the technical definition of German general Erich Ludendorff that involves a complete subordination of politics to war, leaving Paraguay with only two alternatives, victory or utter defeat, or if one uses the more ample definition of a total war as affecting the whole of society, economy and territory of a country, this war, also known as the Great War, engulfed the region.

Although it started and ended in indigenous ancestral territories, and directly or indirectly concerned a dozen pre-Columbian nations, studies on the Great War have forgotten these protagonists. Without taking any military initiative, the indigenous peoples ended up being the biggest losers of the tragic campaign.

This war pitted small Paraguay against the two South American powers—the

former Brazilian Empire and the Argentine Confederation—and another small country, Uruguay. On December 1864, Paraguayan forces attacked Mato Grosso (1 on map, p. 64), with its small Brazilian towns (Corumbá, Miranda, Albuquerque) surrounded by Indian villages Kadiweu-Guaycurú, Xané-Guaná and Guato.

The war ended five years later in March 1870, with the defeat of Paraguay in Cerro Corá, state of Amambay, a wild region with hundreds of Guaraní villages from the Mbyá Guaraní, Avá Guaraní and Paĩ Tavýterá tribes (4 on map). Unlike Mato Grosso Indians—who had casual encounters with the Portuguese—these Guaraní had no contact with Paraguayan society except for clashes with yerba mate (*Ilex Paraguayensis*) harvesters, who had ventured into the region since the early 19th century.

Two other disputed areas, where there

had been small battles, were also populated by natives. Large Nivaklé and Toba groups were living in the lower Chaco (2 on the map), from the banks of the Pilcomayo to the Bermejo River. The area did not experience Spanish (criollo) occupation until 1870. Guaraní villages had also been settled in Candelaria on the left bank of the Paraná (3 on map) since the times of the Jesuit Missions.

After the war, both of these areas were left under Argentine rule. Even before the Paraguayans started selling public lands (1885-1890), the government of Buenos Aires sold land for the benefit of large producers of sugar, tannin essence and yerba mate.

## INDIAN ALLIES? PARAGUAYAN INDIANS?

In anachronistic readings, nationalistic writers boasted about how “their natives”



identified with the “national cause.” However, the few military memoirs mentioning indigenous people provide a different account. Indeed, given that the emerging nation-states from the Rio de la Plata would be consolidated only after—and in part thanks to—this international conflict, it seems unlikely that the various indigenous communities, harassed like animals or in a fragile truce with local authorities, could feel any kind of patriotism.

On the Paraguayan side, the matter was even more complicated because of the Allied propaganda campaign, which described the enemy—Paraguay—in newspaper articles and campaign reports as “wild,” “Indian raiders,” or as an “Indian camp” army. More scholarly accounts explained the “blind submission” of the troops to Marshal Francisco Solano López as a consequence of the Guarani servitude in the Jesuit Missions.

Offsetting these allegations, Paraguay didn’t claim that indigenous people provided military support. However, some memoirs—such as those of Frenchwoman

Dorotea Duprat de Lasserre, Brazilian Viscount Alfredo d’Escagnolle Taunay and Paraguayan geographer Hector F. Decoud—did describe contacts with the Guarani during the final stages of the war.

Uncontacted Guarani indigenous tribes living in the jungle were called

At the same time, in exchange for substantial gifts, some individuals served the retreating Paraguayan army as skillful local guides (baqueanos) and spies (pomberos) in jungle trails that led to areas occupied by the Allies. During the last part of the journey (that took place

## Indigenous peoples suffered many casualties during the war, but there were also tangential longer-term casualties such as the massive outbreak of smallpox.

Cainguaá—without further distinction—by the Paraguayans. López established confinement camps for women such as Panadero (in what is now Canindeyú state) or Espadín in Mbya and Avá-Guarani territory. The Cainguaá approached these camps to barter food with these starving women for clothes, jewelry and utensils. They also guided those who managed to escape from these camps to the Brazilian encampments.

in the forests and hills of what is now Amambay state), the Paraguayan army had to employ Paĩ Tavyterá guides from another large Guarani tribe also known as Kaiowá in the Brazilian Mato Grosso.

Some Indians from the Chaco region—such as the Guaycurú (Qom), traditional owners of the Paraguay River—had been providing services to the Paraguayan government since the times of the dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, who





ruled the country from 1814-1840. In their fast canoes, they also served as postmen between the fortress of Humaitá and Asunción in the early years of the conflict.

The role of indigenous people has been better documented in Brazil. Since the 18th century, the Mbayá-Guaycurú (Caduveo or Kadiweu) and the Chané-Guaná (Terena, Guaná) from southern Mato Grosso fought against the Portuguese occupants of the Pantanal. But after a hard initial resistance, the Guaycurú agreed to a peace treaty with them at the end of the colonial times.

Their attacks on Paraguayan criollos and Guarani Indians had no truce, however. Warlords and aggressive horsemen, they attacked Paraguayan villages regularly, stealing cattle and capturing slaves. The toponymy of the north (Apa, Aquidabán, Agaguigó) recalls its ancestral sovereignty. Hostility worsened with increased persecution by dictator Rodríguez de Francia and with the support of Brazilians who gave them guns and bought their loot such as cattles and horses.

Some Guaycurú Indians, known as

“Captain Lapagate’s men,” carried out a weak resistance to the 1864 Paraguayan invasion of Coimbra. Together with Brazilian villagers and slaves, a Guaná group from the Mission of Bom Conselho was captured and taken to Paraguay, where few survived the end of the war. This tribe also began ambushing and attacking Paraguayan convoys, stealing horses, weapons and food.

The Guaná and Guaycurú harassed the new invader: in two clashes of 1865, the Terena took eleven Paraguayan lives and kept their cattle. That same year, an armed group of Kadiweo-Guaycurú commanded by a Brazilian officer plundered San Salvador, taking weapons, ammunition and women. The plunder was not—as noted by military chroniclers—the smallest of incentives for indigenous warlike fervor.

The group also led the displaced inhabitants of Miranda, Coimbra and Albuquerque to the hill ranges, helping them until the Imperial army could retake the area. The Kadiweo-Guaycurú and their Brazilian officer acted as expert

**Page 61: Paraguayan prisoners (women and children); this page, left: Caduveo Indians. Marqués de Wavrin, 1926. Above: Caingúá Indians, Post Card, circa 1900.**

guides and advance squads to the Brazilian military in a sparsely mapped area; their watchmen reported on Paraguayan troop movements and performed the toughest tasks such as digging trenches and graves, opening footpaths and loading war materials.

At the end of the war, the Kadiweo—equipped with modern weapons provided by the Empire—even protected the area of Rio Blanco (south of Coimbra) and Villa de Miranda, and were responsible for overseeing the banks of Alto Paraguay, amid fears that the remainder of the Paraguayan army could cross to the Mato Grosso.

#### THE DISASTERS OF WAR

Indigenous peoples suffered many casualties during the war, but there were also tangential longer-term casualties. Smallpox swept the Brazilian troops in Mato



# History and Myth

## Nicolau Sevcenko, *in memoriam*

*This excerpt is published in memory of Nicolau Sevcenko, a Harvard professor and international expert on Brazilian cultural history, who passed away on August 13, 2013. Focused in São Paulo avant garde, seduced by the most daring cultural practices of native people, such as ritual cannibalism—shared by different ethnic groups of the zone, tupi, guarani, ecc—this excerpt treats a creative way in which this pre-Columbian past is incorporated into a regional or national “identity”—Nicolau Sevcenko, Orfeu extático na metrópole. São Paulo, sociedade e cultura nos frementes anos 20, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1992. Fragments from Chapter 4 “Da história ao mito e vice-versa duas vezes.”*

[...]

It's well known that Blaise Cendrars inadvertently set off the “rediscovery of Brazil.” Following his example and seeking to make Rio de Janeiro and the historical cities of Minas Gerais better known, Olívia Penteadado had formed a group made up of Mário de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral, René Thiollier and Godofredo da Silva Telles. In Rio, Cendrars often visited the favela's hill on his own and became friendly with Donga, Manuel Bandeira and a bunch of young people from “Cinema Poeira,” “a club for select black folk.” In the public jail in Tiradentes, Minas Gerais, he met a prisoner accused of murder and cannibalism, whose story, which included reflections on the meaning of ritual cannibalism in tribal communities, he would relate in his 1926 book *Elogio de la vida peligrosa* [*Eulogy for a Dangerous Life*]. For the poets on the trip and for Tarsila, the itinerary would reveal the historic, ethnic and cultural roots that they eagerly sought to give substance to their modernist perspective. From these trips they would derive the impressions, stimulations and images

that would seek a fusion between modern languages and the national theme, which Oswald de Andrade dubbed the Movimento Pau-brasil (Aracy Amaral, *Blaise Cendrars no Brasil e os modernistas*, São Paulo, Martins Fontes, 1968, pp. 39-77). The way this entire process started has been summed up clearly by Paulo Prado, who followed it closely and thoroughly. In the preface of a poetry collection, *Pau-brasil* by Oswald de Andrade, he notes its specific dedication “to Blaise Cendrars, on the occasion of the discovery of Brazil”:

The poetry “pau-brasil” is Columbus' egg, this egg [...] in which no one believed and ended up making the man from Genoa rich. Oswald de Andrade, in a trip to Paris, from the height of an artist's workshop in the Place de Clichy—the center of the universe—discovered, amazed (*deslumbrado*), his own land. The return to his homeland confirmed, in the enchantment of his manuelinos, the surprising revelation that Brazil existed. This fact, which some had already suspected, opened his eyes to a radiant vision of a new world, unexplored and mysterious. The “pau-brasil” poetry had been created. (Paulo Prado, “Poesia pau-brasil”, in Oswald de Andrade, preface to *Pau-brasil*, São Paulo, Globo, 1990, p. 57.)

The publishing house Au Sans Pareil, headed by Cendrars, issued the book in Paris in 1925 (Aracy Amaral, *Blaise Cendrars no Brasil e os modernistas*, op. cit., p. 73). But the previous year Oswald de Andrade had already elaborated a “Manifesto of the Pau-brasil Poetry,” published by the *Correio da Manhã*, shortly after the “discovery” trips. The tone was grandiose and axiomatic, as was usual with the “manifesto” genre. The idea was to forge a synthesis composed of historical, modern, ethnic, tropical, national symbols that

would produce the joint final effect of “Brazilianness.” Isolated elements were juxtaposed with others, and emphasis placed on demonstrations of strong elements that brought these qualities together: music, dance, fiestas, food delicacies, sex and religion; instinct, emotion and myth.

Poetry exists in the facts. The slums of saffron and ochre in the greens of the favela under the cobalt blue sky are aesthetic facts.

The Rio Carnaval is a religious fact for the race. Pau-brasil. Wagner succumbs in the face of the Botafogo samba schools. Barbaric and our very own. The rich ethnic formation. The richness of the vegetation. The rich ethnic formation. The vegetable richness. Minerals. Cooking. Vatapá. The gold and the dance.

The missiles of elevators, cubes of skyscrapers and the redeeming solar laziness. Praying. Carnaval. The intimate energy. He knew. Hospitality a bit sensual, loving. The nostalgia of the herb brews and the military aviation fields. Pau-brasil.

Naive barbarians picturesque and tender. Newspaper readers. Pau-brasil. The jungle and the school. The National Museum. The cuisine, minerals, dance. The vegetation. Pau-brasil. (Gilberto Teles, *Vanguarda européia e modernismo brasileiro, apresentação e crítica dos principais movimentos vanguardistas, Petrópolis, Vozes, 1972, pp. 203-208.*)

[...]

Mário de Andrade in *Clã do jabuti*, published in 1927 with a compilation of poetry written in 1924, brings together in an even more blatant way symbols and national representations, which are seen as strengthened by the attractive rhythmic sense and vernacular musicality of the verses. In the long and complex poem “Noturno de Belo Horizonte,” written just

after the excursions of “discovery,” the poet constructs a mythic image of Minas Gerais, conceived as a symbolic epitome of the nation. Explored and populated by people from São Paulo, the cosmogonic of the historic space of the legendary explorers, of the struggle against the greed of the foreign invaders, as seen in *O contratador*, this region is far from the coast and incrustated in the wilderness, solidly associated with the rocks, the minerals, the mountains, the elevations, the churches and the towers, which represent at the same time a São Paulo from the perspective of long-ago purity and something more that is no longer São Paulo, but its incorporation and association with the nucleus of the body of the nationality, in the center of interior wilderness, radiating a pure authentic spirit and filtering out interferences and alien contamination. Particularly strong is the culmination of the poem with the liturgical symbol of water falling from the high rocks with its endless mythic reverberation.

[...]

Mas não há nada como histórias para reunir na mesma casa...

Na Arábia por saber contar histórias

Ua mulher se salvou...

A Espanha estilhaçou-se numa poeira de nações americanas

Mas sobre o tronco sonoro da língua do ão Portugal reuniu 22 orquídeas desiguais.

Nós somos na Terra o grande milagre do amor.

[...]

Nós somos na Terra o grande milagre do amor!

E embora tão diversa a nossa vida

Dançamos juntos no carnaval das gentes, Bloco pachola do “Custa mas vai!”

E abre alas que Eu quero passar!

Nós somos os brasileiros auriverdes!

As esmeraldas das araras

Os rubis dos colibris

Os abacaxis as mangas os cajus

Atravessam amorosamente

A fremente celebração do Universal!

[...]

O bloco fantasiado de histórias mineiras

Move-se na avenida de seis renques de árvores...

[...]

É o delírio noturno de Belo Horizonte

[...]

Dorme Belo Horizonte

Seu corpo respira de leve [...]

[...]

O ar da terra elevada

Ar arejado batido nas pedras dos morros

Varado através da água trançada das cachoeiras,

Ar que brota nas fontes com as águas

Por toda parte de Minas Gerais.

(Mário de Andrade, *Poesias completas*, São Paulo, Circulo do Livro, 1976, pp. 162-165.)

The year after Mário de Andrade published *Clã do jabuti*, Oswald de Andrade returned to action with a text that radicalized previous positions, “Manifesto antropófago” (Cannibal’s Manifesto). The subjects and style are similar to those of the first manifesto: what one perceives now, however, is an intensification of a militant attitude, which goes from an axiomatic tone with a decisive attitude to an uncompromising one. Nationalism acquires overtones of xenophobia. “*Tupi or not tupi, that is the question.*” “But those who came were not crossbred. They were fugitives from a civilization we are eating, because we are strong and vindictive like the tortoise.” Moreover, calls for the celebration of instinct, euphoric sensuality and a mythic identity were heightened. “A participative consciousness, a rhythmic religiosity.” “Against all importers of canned consciousness. The palpable existence of life. And the prelogic mentality so Mr. Lévy-Bruhl can study it.” “But we never admit the birth of logic among ourselves.” “We can only attend the prophetic world.” “Caribbean instinct.” “We were never catechized. What we did was Carnival.” “The magic and life.” “Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had already discovered happiness.” “Happiness is proof of the nines.” “In the patriarchy of Pindorama.”

The tone is so obviously and so worryingly Jacobin for it evoked xenophobic

campaigns of political destabilization at the critical beginning of the Republican period, in that delicate moment when the crisis in the coffee economy had just been perceived, prompting the authorities to counterattack by mobilizing writers affiliated with the PRT, a move that touched off an authentic battle of manifestos. At this point, nationalist agitation was so strong, mobilized and inflamed by both sides, that it was no longer a matter of confronting nationalism with cosmopolitanism, as in the period of consolidation of the regime, but of setting off a struggle between a nationalism with an assimilationist bent and another that was uncompromising. The text that most clearly assumes the official current was the manifesto of “verde-amarelismo” or of “Escola da anta” (Tapir School), titled “Nhengaçu verde-amarelo” (1929), behind which were Cassiano Ricardo, Guilherme de Almeida, Menotti del Picchia and Plínio Salgado. The manifesto makes clear the black-or-white views that the nationalist debate had taken by identifying “intolerant” adversaries with the negative model of the *tapuia* Indian who could never be assimilated and representing themselves in the form a friendly figure, open to the crossbreeding and influence of the Tupi. In response, this “tapir” group established the myth of *mestizaje*—the interbreeding that integrates, and whose ideological basis would be found in the works of José Vasconcelos, who had articulated the movement of Mexican muralism and in his vision of a “fifth race” or a “cosmic race” as a fulfillment of the manifest destiny of Latin America. It is only now, strangely, that this race would be exclusively Brazilian, that it would have developed between the basins of the Amazons and the River Plate and that it would achieve universal harmony “through the centripetal force of the Tupi element.” (Teles, *Vanguarda européia e modernismo brasileiro*, op. cit., pp. 233-239.)

*The Brazilian poetry has been left in the original as a reminder of the language that our friend Nicolau Sevcenko taught and appreciated so much. Rest in peace.*

## Transforming Cities through Architecture

A REVIEW BY SERGIO C. MUÑOZ

**Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of New Architecture** by Justin McGuirk (New York: Verso Books, 2014, 288 pages)

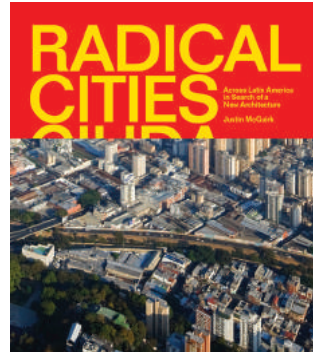
**GROWING UP IN THE MIDST OF THE** Irvine Company's unimaginative southern California, without exposure to anything other than strip malls and suburban tract homes, I was left with a perspective that sees architecture as a foreign concept reserved for big cities and museums. Seeing ugly buildings in a place bereft of architects filled me with a sense of disgust of/for buildings, and I would dream of ways to eliminate concrete from a specific geography back into grasslands.

I continued feeling this way when I repeatedly visited my birthplace in Mexico City and when I traveled to London, Paris and Rome in 1988 as a thirteen-year-old street surfer. I longed to be out of the dust of the Roman Coliseo and the rococo schmaltz of the French Versailles and I begged my parents to let me stay underwater in Elba. They were the first to try to get me to understand all the things that Justin McGuirk tells in *Radical Cities* about architects like Le Corbusier but it passed me by.

Even today, the thought of investing time and interest in established architects like Le Corbusier, or even Gaudí

or Barragán, seems decades beyond what matters to me in an unequal society. This is, however, where *Radical Cities* begins to penetrate. McGuirk poses a circular dilemma: The corruption in the skybox in Latin America is such that it is impossible to maintain an egalitarian society at the street level where humans need housing. Under these corrupt systems, there aren't any architects, or there aren't enough resources for the few architects willing to build affordable housing for these individuals. So the people at the street level begin to create informal and scalable housing projects that then threaten the tranquility of the folks in the skybox.

McGuirk found several instances in Latin America where the circular dilemma was tested with creative thinking and cerebral resistance. The book is structured to simply flirt with the narratives of creativity and resistance and move on to the next instance. The first chapter begins to tell of Milagros Sala and the Túpac Amaru movement in northern Argentina, and the pattern set by McGuirk inspires the reader to imagine what might come next in Venezuela or Brazil or Mexico or Chile— all places suffering from mass inequality and classism but also benefiting from enormous fountains of creativity and its daughter,



critical thinking.

The book gains in interest when the characters are as compelling as their acts of resistance. None is more inspiring than Milagros Sala, but next in line is the former mayor of Bogotá, Antanas Mockus. After the narrative failed to compel me in Chile, Brazil and Venezuela, McGuirk's stop in Colombia brought me back to the pages. The dilemmas of the Colombian people and the solutions posed by Mayor Mockus are legendary. The time spent away from buildings and trams and spent on cultural *ciudadana* and Mockus' "shared vision of the city" allows the reader to apply the principles learned in their own context without needing a degree in architecture or urban planning.

Upon completing the book, I posed a question to the author via email:

"Your book tends to compare and contrast opposites under the premise of: Who benefits? Most thinkers

end up in the grey but the raw numbers always have the bourgeois political class benefiting over the folks on the street. I know that in Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia and México, this is the case. Regardless of any activist architects making a move to attempt to balance the scale. Is this the same in a country like Norway where income equality is less obvious and the GDP PPP seems more balanced?"

I came to this question because early in my Latin American life I questioned why there was so much informality in Mexico. My parents would oftentimes joke that the answer was because there were Mexicans in Mexico. But upon rejection of that sarcastic answer, I would be told that Mexico, or Venezuela for that matter, is not Norway, or Sweden, and you can't try to turn Mexico into Norway no matter how hard you try.

McGuirk wrote me back:

"Well, Norway is a very particular example. It's the last of the extremely wealthy social democracies, with a small population and very limited poverty. It's difficult to compare it to Venezuela, another oil-rich nation but with massive poverty. If I understand your question correctly I think the answer is 'neoliberalism'. Neoliberal politics have been devastating to cities around the world, not

just in Latin America. But the shift in Latin American cities to a laissez-faire, free market urbanism (coupled with mass urban migration) has resulted in the segregation of millions in the slums. I don't think activist architects can affect this situation on their own. But I do think the case studies I document have valuable lessons in terms of how one can integrate and rehabilitate the informal city, and create a more equitable urban life. The key role of the activist architect for me is not just to propose design solutions but to be a conduit connecting government to disenfranchised communities. I don't think urban equity can be achieved solely through bottom-up initiatives or top-down planning. I truly believe that citizens need to be involved and empowered, but their energy needs to be harnessed to government resources and strategic planning. Citizens can build their own housing but they cannot self-organize a transport network or a sanitation system."

As intelligent as McGuirk is in his response, once having read about Milagros Sala and the Túpac Amaru movement in *Radical Cities*, I get the sense that while the formal city structure gets in the way of forward progress, the right approach to self-organization is found in their methods. So, I posed a follow-up question to McGuirk:

"Have there been any efforts to replicate the state within a state strategy of Milagros Sala and the Túpac Amaru movement?"

He replied, "Not that I know of. I mean it's not really a state within a state, it's just that their efforts at self-organization were so ambitious and comprehensive that they ended up providing services that traditionally the state would provide—healthcare, security, employment, charity etc. In a way it's a testament to how disillusioned that community was with the local politics. One has to bear in mind that they also felt disenfranchised for ethnic as well as social reasons—i.e. being both Kolla Indian and poor. The reason it's interesting to me is partly because of the scale of their achievements—community self-organization normally results in smaller initiatives like a community garden, not the creation of a whole fully functioning community. I think this comes down to them having an exceptional and charismatic leader. The other reason why it's interesting is that it avoids property ownership and rising land values generally as a tool of social mobility. Across the world governments have been keen to sell off state-built social housing to give the poor more capital power (to make them better consumers in a sense) but this avoids that, empowering Túpac Amaru members through civic pride, employment, a sense of community etc. I'm not saying it's perfect, but there's a lot to learn from potentially. Should governments give communities more power instead of relying on the private sector to build housing? In my opinion, yes."

There are moments in the book where you think the primary topic is architecture. Then, it moves to city-making. Then, it moves, rightly in my opinion, to the characters creating change within those cities. Whatever interests the reader most is relative, but in terms of format, the book begins with images of Tlatelolco and Buñuel's *Los Olvidados* and ends with an architect named Teddy Cruz in a contract with Antanas Mockus looking out at Tijuana and San Ysidro while housed on the fourth floor of San Diego's city hall. Two completely different visuals.

*Radical Cities* inspired me. Were I an editor at Verso Books, I would have reduced the case studies to the ones that were the most uplifting and detailed them for the calls-to-action of subjugated communities worldwide. But, like one of the characters in the book, I am "addicted to the taste of potential change." Armed with this knowledge, where would I start? McGuirk poses a deep question arising from a character describing the Mexican-American border as the "Political Equator:" "Can the U.S., which has exported a pernicious neoliberal culture to the continent below it, gain something less destructive in return?"

*Sergio C. Muñoz is a Mexican artist working in the surf culture of southern California at Intelatin. His latest project is called Gamma Rae in the Americas. It is crafted for the benefit of DACA Dreamers in the USA. Twitter: @Intelatin*

## For the Love of Lucy

A REVIEW BY PEDRO REINA-PÉREZ

*Doña Lucía: La Biografía no Autorizada* by Alejandra Matus (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones B, 2013, 279 pages)

THE DAY LUCÍA HIRIART RETURNED to her native Chile from Ecuador in 1959 was not a happy one. With five young children in tow, she and her husband Augusto Pinochet had just spent three and a half years on assignment in Quito, while Augusto, a young Army captain, served as an instructor in the newly founded War Academy in that country. The mission was seen as a promotion for the career officer, who was struggling to advance in the ranks while raising a family. His wife's parents had little affection for a person they deemed beneath their daughter. Not only was he eight years her senior but also a man of arms in a society deeply suspicious of the military. Yet the marriage somehow endured. Quito, however, proved disastrous for the young couple. Pinochet pursued an active social life while his wife remained at home with the children. Such was the allure of his new job—and a much appreciated salary in U.S. dollars—that he eventually broke his marital vows and pursued other women until his wife threatened to denounce him before his supe-



riors. Knowing that unmarried or separated men (Chile had no divorce until 2004) had little chance of promotion within the Chilean military, she was able to reign in her husband's philandering, but the marriage had noticeably soured. In every subsequent fight whenever angered, she would unleash her festering resentment for the indignities she had suffered by calling the man who would come to brutally rule Chile by a simple phrase: "milico de mierda."

*Doña Lucía: La Biografía No Autorizada* is Alejandra Matus' effort to show Lucía Hiriart, a controversial yet cultured woman who ruled Chile alongside her husband with scorn for her adversaries, in a new light. Obsessed with virtuosity, piety and good manners, "Lucy" as she was called by friends, was much more instrumental in driving her husband to the edge than previously believed, based on documents and interviews with witnesses and relatives. "I never thought that the plump nice lady of the first days in power would reveal herself to have such a mean character," said a former government official. Some saw her as Pinochet's personal right

wing, even forcing her husband to break with protocol in public events to greet her first as Head of the Feminine Organizations before any other member of the ruling Junta. "This is war," she would declare, "and everything is permitted. Had it not been them, it would have been us." Lucía was especially cruel to those she knew. Anyone who crossed either of them would receive no sympathy.

Matus, a 2010 Nieman Fellow at Harvard, is a well-respected Chilean journalist with many notable books to her credit. Chief among them is *El Libro Negro de la Justicia Chilena* (2009)—banned right after publication—that focused on the shady dealings of the Chilean judiciary. Servando Jordán, the Supreme Court Minister who invoked a state security law to forbid the book from circulation, accused the author of slander and contempt of court. In response Matus sought refuge in the United States where she was granted political asylum. Two years later the Chilean Congress approved a new law on the press in 2011, allowing the author and the book to circulate freely in Chile.

*Doña Lucía* has seven chapters that follow a chronology of the Pinochet-Hiriart marriage and discloses little known details about the couple and their disagreements. Perhaps the most revealing is the intimate tension besieging the underachieving husband and the overambitious wife throughout their lives. She hailed from a prestigious family of lawyers and politicians, was raised in an elite school, the daughter of a

senator, while he was merely the son of a customs officer and a housewife, and had barely managed admission to the Military Academy on his third try. Augusto had married up, was content with earning a salary in uniform, and was well aware that climbing the ranks beyond colonel would be difficult for an infantryman. Lucía, however, wanted more. She had overcome her parents' reservation about her choice of husband but only for the opportunity to achieve glory and fame, and if her husband was slow to pursue the perks of power, she would be right there to whip his insecurities into obedience for the sake of her ambition.

The author depicts Augusto as indecisive but astute in the days leading to the rebellion against President Salvador Allende, unsure of the final outcome but swift to eliminate any opposition to his leadership as events unfolded. From Matus' account, it is Lucía who emerges as the influential partner in defining a new attitude after the military coup of September 11, 1973. Women were destined to heal the nation and assist in its reconstruction, she insisted, and she would lead the charge in that direction by becoming the beacon for morality and discipline. She seemed oblivious to her family's own extravagances. No man or woman in the military or government who abandoned his marital duties—or imperiled those of others—would remain unpunished. For that she needed access to the best intelligence she could get. Everyone would be accountable to her. To make sure that got done and

to prevent other women from approaching her now powerful husband, she forged a close relationship with Colonel Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, the nefarious head of the División de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA), the secret police. Contreras became a powerful ally while she kept the other military wives of the Junta at bay. She was to preside over all of them—as her husband's army branch was to prevail in protocol over all military branches. Knowing full well that a place in doña Lucía's heart (and fears) was the best life insurance for the ambitious spymaster, Contreras encouraged her paranoia with conspiracies large and small that only he could unravel. For his loyal service he was never to lose her trust.

The book reveals in detail how Lucía used the CEMA foundation to expand her reach in public affairs. She had been appointed head of this organization that cared for women and children, but she looked beyond its boundaries to exert more influence in other matters. Rules were modified or eliminated to accommodate her demands for protagonism. She traveled, served her husband's government as an arbiter of good taste and even fantasized of becoming a Chilean Eva Perón. "She was active and efficient," claimed an insider, "but also impulsive and demanding. No one would overshadow her for fear of provoking her wrath." Others disagreed with this assessment stating that Pinochet simply used Lucía to accomplish objectives of his own while leading her to believe that

he was acting at her behest. He was quoted as saying that “one may yield on tactics but never on strategy.”

For historians, the book offers a complementary look at the intimate life of the family who ruled Chile’s dictatorship during its most calamitous period. It gives them and the general readers important insights into the personal tensions that drove Augusto and Lucía as they ascended to power while trying to control a progeny that had ambitions of its own. But their moment of personal glory was not interminable. Although they were able to amass a considerable fortune at the expense of the country, they also endured the humiliation of being arrested while visiting a foreign country, and the humiliation of seeing everything they had built come tumbling down. Lucía survived her husband’s passing in 2006 only to witness her influence and fortune taken away by the government, revealing her own corruption in the process. A sad spectacle a whole country has had to endure in the pursuit of justice.

**Pedro Reina Pérez**, a historian, journalist and blogger, was the 2013-14 DRCLAS Wilbur Marvin Visiting Scholar. He is a professor of Humanities and Cultural Agency and Administration at the University of Puerto Rico. Among his books and edited volumes are *Compañeras la voz levantemos* (2015), *Poeta del Paisaje* (2014) and *La Semilla Que Sembramos* (2003). More at [www.pedroreina.com](http://www.pedroreina.com)

## Empathic Cosmopolitanism

A REVIEW BY SUSAN ANTEBI

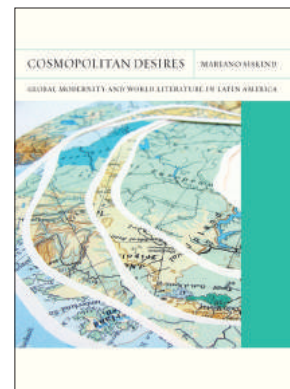
**Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America** by Mariano Siskind (Northwestern University Press, 2014).

IN JANUARY 2015, SHORTLY AFTER terrorist attacks in Paris, the slogan “Je suis Charlie” began to circulate on Twitter and to appear on demonstrators’ signs in Paris and throughout the world. The protests expressed support for the twelve dead at the offices of the satirical newspaper, *Charlie Hebdo*, and often for the four hostages murdered at a kosher supermarket two days later. *Charlie Hebdo* had been explicitly targeted for the magazine’s satirical cartoons featuring drawings of the Prophet Mohammed. The related slogans, “Je suis juif,” and “Je suis Ahmed,” in reference to the supermarket victims and to the name of a police officer killed in the first attack, also appeared. At a moment when reactions to these assaults and their political contexts ranged from horror and sadness to discussions of the issues of freedom of speech and the limits of solidarity, much of the commentary pointed to the risks, ethics and political efficacy of identification with the victims. This was particularly so if one’s own position, sense of identity and viewpoints diverged sharply from those of the victims in question.

Though I do not wish to tease out the full complexity of *Charlie Hebdo*’s political satire in the French and interna-

tional contexts, these debates do suggest a strong divide structuring contemporary possibilities for transnational solidarity and empathy in the face of violence and injustice. Those who refuse to “be” Charlie may fear the pitfalls of so-called group think, or the literal danger of repeated violence. They might reject the specifics of actions and opinions associated—accurately or not—with *Charlie Hebdo*, or find questionable the gesture of symbolically assuming a radically alternate identity through a few quick keystrokes. They might specifically choose to identify as not Charlie in order to stake out an alternate, dissenting and marginalized subjectivity. Those who embrace the “Charlie” identity may do so through a commitment to freedom of speech regardless of the content of enunciation or through a sense of solidarity with the victims that could extend to a universal collective of all potential victims.

Mariano Siskind’s illuminating and rigorous study, *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America*, assumes a special relevance for putting these events in context. Each response may be termed a cosmopolitan gesture, not because it appears in the global space of the Internet, but rather because it necessarily engages with what Siskind, following Hannah Arendt, calls “the world.” This is, for Siskind, “an imaginary,



utopian space of reconciliation and freedom in difference...” (p. 262 n. 7). Those who proclaim themselves as Charlie, or not Charlie, equally express the cosmopolitan desire to participate in a universal discursive sphere, even while negotiating and contesting the inevitable failures and exclusions in this process, whether these are internally or externally imposed.

Siskind tells us that this “world” is also “the imaginary ground where Latin American cosmopolitan writers work through the traumatic aspects of the question of modernity, inscribing their modernist subjectivity in their universality” (p. 10). The recent violent events in Paris and the international responses they continue to elicit may seem far removed from the Latin American literary modernity of Siskind’s highly original analysis. Yet this contemporary context nonetheless highlights the ongoing and far-reaching significance of Siskind’s book and the framework it offers for thinking through the dilemmas



of universalism and cultural particularity, hospitality and exclusion, desire and solidarity, both within and beyond the Latin American literary sphere.

In a daring move that situates his theorization in relation to the classic work of Angel Rama, Siskind describes cosmopolitanism in opposition to transculturation. The former tendency strategically downplays Latin American differences so as to emphasize the universality of literature while the latter emphasizes separate traits so as to produce a resistant, emancipatory cultural politics (pp. 13-14). Yet Siskind's reading is not a rejection of transculturation as such, but its repositioning. By placing cosmopolitanism and transculturation side by side as literary strategies that reveal their respective desires for universalized and particularist subjectivities, the author suggests that both tendencies are part of a broader framework organized by the projection of these desires, and ultimately through which "marginal literatures ... expose the hegemonic making of modernist global mappings" (p. 18). In addition, the analysis questions Rama's celebratory notion of transculturation and subaltern resistance as the opposite of an elitist cosmopolitanism, by positing both transculturation and cosmopolitanism as equally propelled by fantasy and "libidinal force" (p. 14).

If the subaltern Other functions as central to the desire of transculturation and its project of socially transformative alliances, the Other pursued and desired by the Latin American cosmopolitan writers of

Siskind's book is of a different order: intensely personal, grounded in the experience of exclusion, and a "reaching out to the world" (p. 121). As Siskind writes, in reference to José Martí's "Oscar Wilde," "It is an Other whose foreignness stands for the outside exterior of particularistic identity, at a moment when that identity bears the mark of isolation and exclusion from the order of modernity" (p. 123).

In the book's concluding chapter, the Other of cosmopolitan desire acquires further nuance and ethical potency, giving rise to what Siskind refers to as "empathic cosmopolitanism" (pp. 258-259). This reading centers on the travel narratives of Enrique Gómez Carrillo and in particular on the representation of Jews as figures of alterity and suffering. Gómez Carrillo depicts the Jews he encounters as Oriental subjects marked by strangeness and difference, but at other crucial moments as "victims of the Orient ... at once included in and excluded from Western civilization and the Otherized East" (p. 242). The liminal quality of Jewishness here finds an echo in Gómez Carrillo's overall travel narrative, oscillating between Orientalist difference and the cosmopolitan notion that everything is just like Paris, which is in turn more or less like home. Within the contours of this cosmopolitan travel experience and the inevitable tensions of mapping the world as both home and Other, the figure of the Jew inspires a limited form of empathy, "the other side of the Orientalist coin" (p. 259).

Gómez Carrillo maintains

his distance from the suffering Jewish subjects of his narrative, through an empathy that does not lead to ethical agency or self-transformation, but coexists in tension with Orientalist Othering. The chronicler's encounter with Jewishness thus marks the emergence of a desiring cosmopolitan subjectivity. Yet crucially, Gómez Carrillo's perceptions of Jewishness in his travel writing, as Siskind convincingly argues, stem from his direct experience of the Dreyfus Affair and its impact on French cultural politics. Gómez Carrillo's detailed commentary as witness to events pertaining to the Affair from 1894 to 1906 demonstrates his sustained allegiance to the Dreyfusard camp, and his rejection of anti-Semitism as well as the conservative, anti-intellectual tendencies with which the anti-Dreyfus camp came to be associated. The empathic representation of Jewishness thus may be said to provide an avenue for Gómez Carrillo's political and aesthetic self-inscription on the travel maps he narrates.

The admittedly limited gesture of empathic cosmopolitanism, mobilized by figures of Jewish suffering through the travel narrative, thus defines Gómez Carrillo's desired Other as the ambivalent projection of a marginal and universalizing self. As Siskind writes, referring here to Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia," "empathy instrumentalizes the pain of others, in a self-referential process of 'narcissistic identification'" (p. 259). The dizzying scope of cosmopolitan desire as it reaches

towards a global, universal identification would appear to be matched by the terrifying scale of suffering described by Gómez Carrillo in his depiction of emigrating Russian Jews, as cited by Siskind: "a wretched group appears, walking slowly, not making a gesture or pronouncing even half a word, seeming as if they have escaped Dante's hell" (p. 257). Yet again and again, as Siskind's reading suggests, the reaching outward is foreclosed by the self-containment of the desire, just as the horror of witnessed human suffering reverts to disgust with radical Otherness. Siskind's nuanced mapping of Latin American global modernity effectively embraces the inevitable failure of the geo-culturally marginal cosmopolitan subject to fully realize its universalizing desire (p. 21). In doing so, this provocative book emphasizes the productive possibilities of the cosmopolitan failure, but at the same time, I would add, gestures toward the risks inherent in the fantasy of encounter with the world.

*Susan Antebi* is Associate Professor of Spanish at the University of Toronto. A specialist in Mexican literary and cultural studies, she holds a Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures from Harvard University. She is the author of *Carnal Inscriptions: Spanish American Narratives of Corporeal Difference and Disability* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009) and co-editor of *Libre Acceso: Latin American Literature and Film through Disability Studies* (SUNY Press, forthcoming)

# BUILDING BRIDGES

## The Road Towards Universal Coverage in Mexico BY ROCÍO LÓPEZ IÑIGO

**MEXICO HAS TAKEN GIGANTIC** steps towards universal health coverage in the last decade. In 2012, a national program called Popular Insurance came into effect, offering coverage to more than 50 million people previously excluded from the health system. The program, first introduced in 2003, also seeks to prevent people from falling into the extreme poverty caused by repeated medical expenses. Although the results of this program have been positive, many families in the country's rural zones still face deficient primary care without adequate resources and qualified medical personnel.

The design of Mexico's universal coverage often overlooks the situation of the most marginal communities, where many obstacles exist for true access to health care. The transport of resources—healthcare workers, medical equipment, and medicine—to the small communities remains a challenge. Clinics in these rural areas don't have permanent doctors. Most of the time they have only visiting physicians, and these are often recently graduated medical students. According to research by the UNAM

School of Medicine, these residents treat 82% of the primary care clinics administered by the Secretary of Health in rural areas. Some 10 to 15 million Mexicans are attended by these recent graduates who work without supervision or professional support. This translates into bad medical attention for citizens and a disagreeable experience for these young doctors.

In Chiapas, young doctors organized to create *Compañeros en Salud* (CES), an arm of the Harvard-affiliated Partners in Health in Mexico, to coordinate all the health care efforts with the aim of guaranteeing the fundamental human right to quality health care. In 2010 Harvard Medical School Professor Daniel Palazuelos, affiliated with Brigham and Women's Hospital, met with Hugo Flores, a graduate of the Tecnológico de Monterrey and current CES director. Together with Lindsay Palazuelos, a Brown University graduate who is an expert in project development, they designed a model for quality primary health care, based on efficient support for the region's clinics. The project stresses

the training and constant supervision of the residents, who receive the necessary tools and work experience to confront the most complicated cases in their communities. They receive regular visits from supervisors, an adequate supply of medicines and other material and the support of specialists from around the world for complicated cases. Moreover, once a month, the residents attend a course designed to learn about the political, social and historic implications of illness and to deepen their knowledge about the causes of inequity in the administration of health care.

This support to the medical residents translates into better attention to the community, and it also guides them in the navigation of the not always easy health care bureaucracy. CES also invests in programs adapted to the needs of the various communities such as mental health initiatives or the pioneering project of community social workers. These workers are trained in health and accompany people who have chronic diseases during their treatment. They act as a link between the doctor

and patient, guaranteeing effective communication.

CES currently works in eight clinics in Sierra Madre de Chiapas, although its sphere of indirect influence is calculated at some 25,000 people. Its model of strengthening provision of high-quality health and research has made this young, small organization with Harvard roots into a seed for change. Its evidence-based work relies on constant analysis of results, as well as the search for sustainable resources that will guarantee its development over time. *Compañeros en Salud* offers viable alternatives that can help to minimize the differences between public health policy as written on paper and the reality of thousands of Mexicans.

*Rocío López Iñigo is an Erasmus Mundus MA Global Studies candidate from the EMGS Consortium who has lived and worked as a journalist in Argentina and Mexico, experiencing different Latin American realities. She currently lives in Germany and hopes to eventually pursue a Ph.D. in International Relations.*

DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

# VISITING SCHOLARS AND FELLOWS PROGRAM



## THE CENTER

Founded in 1994, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University works to increase knowledge of the cultures, economies, histories, environment, and contemporary affairs of past and present Latin America.

## THE PROGRAM

Each year the Center selects a number of distinguished academics (Visiting Scholars) and professionals (Fellows) who wish to spend one or two semesters at Harvard working on their own research and writing projects. The Center offers nine fellowships that provide support for one semester. Applications from those with their own resources are also welcome.

Visiting Scholars and Fellows are provided shared office space, computers, library privileges, access to University facilities and events, and opportunities to audit classes and attend seminars. The residential fellowships cover round-trip travel expenses, health insurance, and a taxable \$25,000 living stipend while at Harvard. Appointments are typically for one or two semesters. Recipients are expected to be in residence at the University a minimum of twelve weeks during the semester.

**APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>**

## THE APPLICATION

Applications should be submitted electronically to [drc\\_vsf@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:drc_vsf@fas.harvard.edu) or via the online application form. For the form and further details please visit <http://www.drclas.harvard.edu/scholars>.

**DAVID ROCKEFELLER  
CENTER FOR LATIN  
AMERICAN STUDIES**

1730 Cambridge Street  
CGIS, South Building  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: 617-496-1588  
[drc\\_vsf@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:drc_vsf@fas.harvard.edu)

David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**



DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER  
FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

1730 CAMBRIDGE ST., CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOSTON, MA  
PERMIT NO. 1636

## CONTRIBUTORS

**70 Susan Antebi** is Associate Professor of Spanish at the University of Toronto. **52 Artur Henrique Franco Barcelos** teaches archaeology at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande - FURG, Brazil. **46 Lizza Bogado** is a Paraguayan folklore singer who has made more than fifteen records. **40 Damián Cabrera** is a Paraguayan writer. **43 Lia Colombino** is the director of the Museum of Indigenous Art that is part of the CAV/Museo del Barro in Paraguay. **15 Benjamín Fernández Bogado**, Nieman Fellow '00, is a Paraguayan lawyer and journalist. **18 Frederico Freitas** is a Ph.D. candidate in Latin American History at Stanford University. **26 Alfredo Máximo Garay** is a professor in the Urban Planning Department of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). **50 Tamar Herzog** is Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American Affairs and Professor of Spanish and Portuguese History at Harvard University. **56 Ana Carolina Hosne** is the author of *The Jesuit Missions to China and Peru, 1570-1610*. **10 Maria Inês Ladeira** is a member of the Center for Indigenist Work's (Centro de Trabalho Indigenista, CTI) Coordinating Office. **72 Rocío López Iñigo** is an *Erasmus Mundus MA Global Studies* candidate. **33 Bartomeu Meliá, S.J.**, is a Jesuit historian, anthropologist, and linguist who focuses on the Guarani people. **36 Eugenio Monjeau** works at the Centro de Experimentación del Teatro Colón, a concert hall devoted to

Argentine contemporary opera and ballet. **67 Sergio C. Muñoz** is a Mexican artist working in the surf culture of southern California at Intelatin. **68 Pedro Reina Pérez**, a historian, journalist and blogger was the 2013-14 DRCLAS Wilbur Marvin Visiting Scholar. **7 Carlos Reboratti** is an Argentine geographer and the head researcher for CONICET on environmental resources. **61 Milda Rivarola** is a Paraguayan historian and political analyst. **12 Julia Sarreal** is an Assistant Professor at Arizona State University. **2 Graciela Silvestri**, a 2014 Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor at Harvard, is a Professor of Architectural History at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata in Argentina. **2 Jorge Silvetti** is the Nelson Robinson, Jr. Professor of Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. **29 Oscar Thomas** is the executive director at Yacyretá of the Binational Entity of Yacyretá for Argentina. **23 Martin Walter** is a consultant at the Inter-American Development Bank. **58 Guillermo Wilde** teaches at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín and is a senior researcher at CONICET in Argentina.

WITH FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHY by **Facundo de Zuviria**,  
**Marcela Kropf** and **Tetsu Espósito**