
A place to find oneself. Displacements and rituals among Guarani people from northern Paraguayan Chaco

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SUMMARY

As analyzed in recent ethnological literature, the Chaco war (Bolivia / Paraguay 1932-1935) was the trigger for a series of spatial displacements that reconfigured the region's ethnic map. This article initially refers to the displacements that took the Guarani and Isoseño from Bolivia to the Paraguayan northern Chaco and describes, next, the formation of the five Guarani communities that currently exist in the area. Therefore, it addresses some aspects of the Paraguayan Guarani sociality through reflection on the place of ritual in their history and social life. Through an analysis that interprets the rite - and, with it, indigenous art practices - in its performativity, it is argued that the ritual operates here as a fundamental device to transform the Chaco space into a Guarani place.

KEY WORDS

Ritual, Place, Guarani, Isoseño, Chaco.

A Place to Find Oneself.

Displacements and Rituals among Guarani People from Paraguayan Chaco

ABSTRACT As already established in ethnological literature, Chaco War (Bolivia/Paraguay 1932-1935) launched a range of spatial displacements that reshaped the local ethnic map. This paper sketches out the displacements that took the Guarani and Isoseño people from Bolivia to Northern Paraguayan Chaco, and then describes the establishment of five communities in the area. Secondly, it refers to Guarani sociality by examining the role of ritual in their history and social life. Through a performative approach to ritual and indigenous art practices, the paper argues that in this context, ritual acts as a powerful means to build Chacoan space as a Guarani place.

KEYWORDS
Ritual, Place, Guarani, Isoseño, Chaco.

introduction

When a chané or chiriguano tells a story he often starts as follows: 'A long time ago there was a great feast'. When talking about something that happened, a relative's illness or similar subjects, he says: 'It was before or after that great feast'. It is also in these festivals where one hears and sees what still remains from the ancient culture of these Indians. The most beautiful vessels appear, you can see antique dresses and bead jewels are taken from the pots where they keep their treasures.

Erland Nordenskiöld, *La vida de los indios*, 1912

In *La vida de los indios*, the Swedish ethnologist Erland Nordenskiöld describes his trips through the Chaco with his wife, in 1908 and 1909. Always inspired by the possibility of comparison, the explorer draws in the work a contrast between the way of life of the peoples of the eastern Chaco (*Mataco-wichi*, *Ashlulay-nivaklé*, *Choroti* or *Chorote*) and the western Chaco (*Chiriguano* and *Chané*). The book mentions different aspects of the lives of these societies: it describes their homes, food, the division of labor between men and women, religion and their tales. The *Chiriguano* and *Chané* parties deserved a separate chapter: "It is curious the great importance carnival has today as an indigenous feast", stresses the author - and the phrase remains valid 100 years later, since the Guaraní carnival or *arete guasu* celebrated by Guaraní and *Chané* from western Chaco is still their favorite party.

The literature dealing with *arete guasu* always reveals a certain admiration, more positive, or less, as the case may be. Franciscans Santiago Romano and Herman Cattunar, for example, who worked in the Bolivian Chaco in the early years of the twentieth century, saw the *arete guasu* as the main obstacle to Catholic missionary work. For them, the festivity was a "disgusting public display of despondency"². More recent descriptions still reveal some perplexity in the face of the *arete*: "Whoever wants to find in the *chiriguano Arete Guasu* a testimony of pure guaraní essences will be disappointed, if not directly scandalized" (Escobar, 2012: 287).

Since the literature dealing with the *arete* is more than a century old today, it is not surprising that it is diverse. However, and following the theoretical changes in the human sciences of the last decades, recent interpretations increasingly emphasize the productive side of the party: the creativity expressed by the ritual, the solidarity it promotes and the identity it helps to preserve. There have been significant changes both in the approaches for the study of the feast and in the festivity itself; the only thing that doesn't seem to have changed is the Guaraní and Chané passion for their ritual.

The *arete guasu* is a festival celebrated annually in Chané and Guaraní communities from northern Argentina, guaraní and Ioseño communities from southeastern Bolivia, and western Guaraní or *Guarayo* communities from the Paraguayan Chaco. Despite ethnic, dialectal and national differences among

¹ Throughout the text the term Guaraní is spelled in normal letters because it is the Portuguese form. The other ethnonyms are written in italics because the spelling is in other languages.

² In the words of Walter Sánchez: "Time of exacerbated senses, of ritual drunkenness and cathartic dance. That's why P. Romano and Cattunar (1916: 12) found in "this disgusting fanfare of public insanity... the biggest obstacle that meets the Catholic missionary, to achieve their intention of converting them and reducing them." (1998: 230).

these communities, the *arete* is as a complex of shared knowledge³, allowing us to imagine such groups in relation, even though they cannot be described as a cohesive totality.

This article examines the importance of ritual in the history of the Guaraní and Isoseño displaced from Bolivia to Paraguay after the Chaco War (1932-1935). These displacements widened the spatial reach of knowledge and practices associated with the *arete guasu*, taking it from the Andean Pedemonte to the Paraguayan boreal Chaco. The ritual is celebrated annually in the five communities that the Guaraní formed in the area. It should be noted that the five Guaraní communities referred to in the article are not formally a political unit, nor do they have instances of political decision that actually aggregate them⁴. The trajectories of its members, however, are often drawn as a succession of displacements between such communities, which contribute to build relations between them. The *arete* time (and the term *arete* can be translated as “true time”) is a time when such displacements between communities intensify - and it is the moment when the Guaraní's place in the Paraguayan boreal Chaco gains visibility.

Returning to a classic theme in anthropology, this article describes some aspects of the sociality of the Paraguayan Guaraní people examining the place of ritual in their history and social life. In this way, I wish to add to ethnological studies on the region with an analysis that interprets the ritual - and, with it, indigenous art practices - in its performativity. Part of recent anthropology has already emphasized the centrality of rituals in politics and interethnic diplomacy among indigenous peoples in western Paraguay⁵. In this context - and from a perspective that considers rituals as socially productive events - this article presents considerations about the centrality of the *arete* in the life of the communities and creating a guaraní place and time.⁶

DISPLACEMENTS AND COMMUNITIES

When studying the literature that describes the processes that led to the location of the Western Guaraní or *Guarayo* communities that today live in the Northern Paraguayan Chaco⁷, we come across a history of successive displacements that were documented, going back in time, until the 16th century⁸. In this story, you can see different strategies to create their place - a place where to “find themselves” in different points of space. “Hallarse” is a term used in the Spanish language of Paraguay and it means being at ease, feeling good, comfortable. But “hallar” also means finding: a place, an object, the others or yourself. With this term, my Guaraní interlocutors often referred to the fact of adapting or getting used to a new place after a displacement.

Among the strategies that the Guaraní developed to “find themselves” in their

3] I follow Menezes Bastos (1999) when he treats ritual knowledge as a lingua franca that can encompass ethnic and linguistic differences. The notion of lingua franca certainly adopts metaphorical contours, because in the author's proposal the ritual is configured as an intersemiotic chain between different languages (myth, dance, music and visual elements, such as body painting, clothes, masks).

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5] Valentina Bonifácio and Rodrigo Villagra Carrón (2016), for example, compare the ways of doing politics among the Maskoy, Sanapaná and Enxet peoples showing the centrality of shamanic practices as a means to direct the actions of others. The authors suggest the hypothesis that the absence of practices and ways of doing politics of the kind fostered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), based on forms of representation that do not coincide with the modes of leadership and decision-making existing among indigenous people, is related to the centrality of collective ceremonies for the constitution of the political community.

6] This text results from the project “Arte e sociabilidades indígenas no Chaco ocidental”, CNPq Processo: 443340/2015-3, Chamada CNPq/ MCTI Nº 25/2015 Ciências Humanas, Sociais e Sociais Aplicadas e Instituto Nacional de Ciência e Tecnologia Brasil Plural, INCT-IBP, CNPq.

new places are the repetition of place names to refer to points that - precisely by repeating a name - are connected. In the northwest of Chaco it is possible to go from Macharetí, in Bolivia, to Macharety, in Paraguay, as well as from Karaparí, in Bolivia, to Caraparí, in Argentina. Of course, the practice is not exclusive to the Guaraní, but is also registered among the *Chané* or *Isoseño*. In *Etno-historia del Iso*, Isabelle Combès (2005) describes several stories of conflicts and fissions that resulted in displacements and, with them, in the emergence of new communities and places that shared their toponyms in the Bolivian Iso.

Among the stories narrated by the author, I will describe the one about *Kaa Poti* (bush flower), Iso's first known female captain. Knowing the "secrets" of the war, *Kaa Poti* won several battles, leading her people in a series of displacements that, in the middle of the 16th century, would take them in a southwest direction, towards Iso. As they progressed, Kaa Poti and his people replicated the names of the places previously founded upstream, coming from the east. What initially determined them to leave their previous place was the need to flee the karai (non-indigenous), but on the way they would also face other enemies: first Jërërë, a two-headed snake, and then the warlike ava. When they finally arrived at Iso, there "they founded a first community on the edge of the river [Parapetí] and called it *ivã osĩrĩrĩ* in the memory of the place where they lived up the river; the name has changed, with the years, to the current Ibasiriri. [...] Later, a new Urundeiti and a new Samouti were founded [again replicating the toponyms of previously founded communities], and the communities multiplied as the *isoseños* multiplied" (Combès, 2005: 79).

If the history of the *Isoseño* and the Guaraní from the Andean Pedemonte is a history of wars, divisions and displacements⁹, it is also a history marked by the desire to recreate known places in other points of space.

The displacements currently recorded in the memories of the Guaraní from the Paraguayan northern Chaco do not, therefore, represent a break with a past of fissions and new locations. Though my interlocutors' reports on the history of their families may not be accurate in relation to dates, they always refer to the Chaco war - between Bolivia and Paraguay, from 1932 to 1935 - as the temporal starting point that brought their parents or grandparents to Paraguay. The phrase "they came from Bolivia; they came with the war" summarizes the understanding of most of them. The war, in these narratives, is less a historical date than a memory that transforms the Chacoan space into the place it is today.

Some of them mentioned having heard from their grandparents that even before the war they worked for the army to open paths, without knowing for certain what their purpose was. Therefore, "war" is a term used to refer to a process of displacement and ethnic reconfiguration that begins before the war conflict itself and continues after it. The war meant a process of profound reconfiguration of the indigenous space: it accelerated the displacement of families, boosted miscegenations, redefined territorialities and

7] The Paraguayan census (Censo Nacional para Pueblos Indígenas, 2012), shows that the Guaraní Occidental live in Boquerón and San Pedro departments, with a population of 3.587.

8] Combès (2005); Bossert (2008).

9] Susnik (1968); Combès (2005); Saignes (2007).

ethnonyms. The war also designates the process of colonization of the Chaco by non-indigenous people - colonists, religious, military - and the reconfiguration of the 20th century indigenous world¹¹. The large contingents that, with the war, left Bolivia towards the east would gather Ava-Guaraní¹², Chané-Isoseño¹³ and Ñandeva¹⁴ families (all of them have Guaraní languages, although with dialect differences between them) in the forts and missions where they shared the space with Nivaklé, Manjui (both having Mataco languages) and Enhlet (speaking Maskoy).

Groups of families who, after the war, came with Paraguayan troops to Guachalla (now Pedro P. Peña) later moved to Puerto Casado, on the banks of the Paraguay River, with the aim of working in the tannin factory there¹⁵. The curious thing is that, when telling the story of their families and communities, the Guaraní invariably refer to the celebration of *arete guasu*. In the words with which Pascual Toro, Guaraní from Santa Teresita, tells the story of his family, the *arete* appears as the first thing to be done when arriving at a place. Son of the leader and flute player Gabino Toro, he says that his parents came from Macharetí and arrived in Puerto Casado in 1936. In 1937 they asked for authorization and held the most important celebration for them: the *arete guasu*¹⁶.

In the following years, more Guaraní arrived to work in Puerto Casado from Guachalla (Pedro P. Peña), but also from Fortín Camacho (now Mariscal Estigarribia). As in Pedro P. Peña, in Mariscal Estigarribia, there was also a group of houses of Isoseño and Guaraní families, who lived close to the cattle slaughterhouse in the military fort. The place became known as Campamento or Matarife.

In the memories of some elders interviewed by Valentina Bonifacio (2017) in Puerto Casado, the *arete guasu* was also mentioned in conversations about the Guaraní people that used to live there. Crecencio Cáceres, current leader of Yvopeyrenda, is eloquent in relation to the importance of the *arete* in the memory of his parents. Crecencio's parents came from Macharetí with the war and went to work in Puerto Casado:

In the years 40 [possibly with respect to the civil war of the 47], the military took some Guaraní families to Puerto Casado. They organized an *arete* to celebrate the arrival at the village. They **found themselves** in Puerto Casado. [...] For three years, they celebrated the *arete guasu*, but when the possibility of having land in the central Chaco arose, many of them left because they didn't want to work for other people and wanted to be independent. All the leaders and organizers of the ceremonies left Casado, and those who stayed did not have enough strength. They stopped doing the *arete guasu*. (Bonifacio, 2017: 56)¹⁷

10| Capdevila, Combès and Richard (2008).

11| Capdevila (2010).

12| The Guaraní of Bolivia are one of the five ethnic groups that speak the Guaraní language in that country (Sirionó, Yuquí, Guarayo, Guarasug'we and Guaraní). In the past, ethnology referred to them as Chiriguano. They currently live in three southeastern Bolivian states. They are divided into three subgroups: Ava, Isoseño and Simba. In the Paraguayan Chaco, on the other hand, live families whose memory is related to the first two of these subgroups, although for the other ethnic groups in the region, including the Ñandeva, they are all Guaraní.

13| Descendants of families from the Parapetí River area, in Bolivia, and also Guaraní speakers.

14| "Ñandeva" is an ethnic group different from the Guaraní Nhandeva who inhabit the southern Brazil. The Ñandeva do Chaco speak Guaraní but, culturally, they are close to other Chaco groups. In Bolivia and Argentina, they are known as Tapiete. (See Gonzalez, 2000; Combès, 2008; Hirsch, 2019). The Paraguayan Chaco Guaraní often refer disparagingly to the Ñandeva as Guasurangüe, a small common deer in the forests of the region, or as Ñanagua, "from the bush". As much as the ethnic difference between them is not irrelevant, there are marriages between Guaraní and Ñandeva. In any case, the Guaraní understand the relationship with their neighbors Ñandeva in hierarchical terms and generally older people do not welcome this kind of union.

15| For a history of the tannin factory that belonged to Carlos Casado and gave its name to Puerto Casado, on the Paraguay River, see Bonifacio (2017).

16| The ethnographic video "Pascual Toro, flautero" (Domínguez, 2019) brings an audiovisual record of this narrative.

17| The highlight is mine.

As in other cases, the *arete* appears here as a signal of the Guaraní presence. It points out that the Guaraní are installing their temporality in the points of space where they settle. Its lack or decay can be interpreted, on the other hand, as the abandonment of a place or the characterization of a place that is no longer constituted as Guaraní.

Among the Guaraní who currently inhabit the Paraguayan northern Chaco, Macharetí appears in almost all accounts as the place of origin in Bolivia, although not everyone lived in the mission founded by the Franciscan priests in 1869¹⁸. “From the Macharetí area” is the expression used to designate the eastern area of Chiriguania, since the different reports also mention more specific places of origin: Bella Vista, Caipependi, Santa Rosa, Guacaya and Chimbe. However, in the area of Mariscal Estigarribia, some of my interlocutors recognize themselves as Ioseño, although they use the Guaraní or Guarayo ethnonym.

In his testimony, Antônio Pintos, a descendant of Ioseños who currently lives in Mariscal Estigarribia, says his grandfather, Rafael Romero, together with other men forced by the army to leave their lands in Bolivia, was first taken to Oruro (in the area of the current border post Infante Rivarola). From there, “taking advantage of the knowledge of the indigenous people to move in the bush and identify the sources of water”, they were used as guides by the military and accompanied the advances of Paraguayan troops to the Parapetí River, fighting the Bolivians.

After the war, part of these groups settled in Guachalla (currently Pedro. P. Peña), where the oblate priests founded the Inmaculada Concepción mission in 1941¹⁹. Others settled near Fortín Toledo and some in Fortín Camacho, later called Lopez de Filippi and today Mariscal Estigarribia, military base of the III Corps of the Paraguayan Army. There, groups from Ioseño, Guaraní, Ñandeva and Nivaklé would live for approximately three decades, devoting themselves to agriculture, hunting and raising chickens, goats and cows, in addition to working for the military in the pottery, milk production, slaughter of livestock, carpentry and construction. After a few years in the Campamento de Matarife, as the surroundings of the cattle slaughterhouse that existed in the military fort became known, some Guaraní, Nivaklé and Ñandeva families moved to the lands of the Mission Santa Teresita, founded in 1941 also by priests oblates²⁰. Marriages among the Guaraní who live in San Agustín (Pedro P. Peña), Santa Teresita and Mariscal Estigarribia are very common since then until the present.

In the 1970s, work began for the construction of an airstrip at the military base of Mariscal Estigarribia and the indigenous people who still lived there were forced to abandon their houses and plantations. Some went to Santa Teresita, others to Filadelfia, capital of the Fernheim Mennonite colony²¹. However, as some indigenous people had joined the army, especially in the band of musicians, or worked for the military, a group of families stayed living in the army base entrance,

18] The Franciscan College of Tarija served in Chaco since the 18th century, founding its first mission in 1767. In the second half of the 19th century, the missions came to be conceived by the Bolivian government as a privileged means of advancing in indigenous territories and colonization. (Combès, 2017: 40-41).

19] The Guaraní who currently live in Pedro P. Peña, on the banks of the Pilcomayo River, are divided in four communities: San Agustín, María Auxiliadora, Cristo Rey and Laguna.

20] For a history of the Catholic missions of the oblate priests of María Inmaculada in the Paraguayan Chaco, see Stahl (2007) (2003).

21] Filadelfia is 450 kilometers from Asunción and is the capital of Fernheim, one of the main Mennonite colonies in the Paraguayan Chaco. On the history of the Mennonites in the region, see Stahl (2007) and Ratzlaff (2009). In Grünberg and Grünberg (1974), the reader finds a critique analysis of Mennonite and Guaraní relations. On the emergence of the Santa Teresita mission see Grünberg and Grünberg (1974); Siffredi and Santini

in the place now known as the urban area of Mariscal Estigarribia.

Thus, four different Guaraní nuclei were consolidated: Pedro P. Peña, Santa Teresita, Mariscal Estigarribia and Yvopeyrenda, in Filadelfia²². In part, this arrangement corresponded to ethnic differences (between Guaraní and *Isoseño*), religious (between Catholics and non-Catholics) and places of origin (different Bolivian locations), which led them to establish different alliances - with the military, with the Mennonites and with the Catholic Church, through the Pilcomayo Apostolic Vicariate.

There is consensus in the literature regarding indigenous displacements from Bolivia to Paraguay as a result of the Chaco War²³ that there were at least two large groups and two different routes: ONE from Macharetí, in Bolivia, and the other from Isono. Bolivian Macharetí, geographically, is found in the heart of the Chiriguano's historical territory. Isono is the main enclave of the Chané population in Bolivia (Combès, 2005). Although war, displacement and new settlements may have brought them together, their differences do not seem to have been fully diluted.

As Antônio Pintos, who lived until 1974 in the area known as Matarife, in Fortín Camacho, reports that his family, who was from Isono, occupied a different area from the Guaraní homes that ended up moving to Santa Teresita. Some of the current residents of Santa Teresita with whom I spoke confirm this fact. When I asked Antônio Pintos the reason why his family did not settle in Santa Teresita when they were forced to abandon their houses and plantations in the military area, he explained:

"It is said that there is a difference, you see, most people in Teresita is not from Isono. They come from another community in Bolivia where they used to live. That's why we are different. [...] According to my grandfather and my father, my stepfather also, they are from the West of Bolivia. They are the western guarani because they came from the west. I dont know exactly where from. Surely from Macharetí or elsewhere. And we are from Isono. There are small differences between us: our customs, the language, they are not the same as in Teresita. A small difference..." (Antônio Pintos, Mariscal Estigarribia, November 2018)²⁴.

The difference between them is recognized, although differently valued. On the one hand, one hears, as in the statement above, that it is a small difference, restricted to the way of speaking and some customs. Others confess to having heard their Guaraní relatives from Santa Teresita refer to the families of Mariscal Estigarribia as "tapii"²⁵. In any case, the difference exists and both the process of self-recognition as an indigenous community and that of access to legal ownership of the lands where they live have been different in both cases.

In the 2000s, the nucleus of families that is recognized as descendant of Isoseño was registered in INDI²⁶ as "Comunidad Indígena Guarayo de Mariscal Estigarribia" and in the document in which the local administration registers them they appear as

22 There is a lot of literature on the emergence of the Santa Teresita mission: Grünberg and Grünberg (1974); Siffredi and Santini (1993); Toro (2000); Fritz (2003); Zindler (2006). Kathleen Lowrey (2011), in turn, refers fundamentally to the Guaraní community that exists in Philadelphia. Paola Canova (2019) analyzes the particular organization of the Guaraní Urbano de Mariscal Estigarribia community.

23 On the indigenous people in the Chaco War see the book *Mala Guerra*, edited by Nicolas Richard (2008). Grünberg and Grünberg (1974: 14) refer to two different movements from Bolivia to Paraguay, one played mainly by the Guaraní in the Macharetí area, the other by non-Christian Isoseños. In turn, Fritz (2003) presents reports that show a variety of different paths for displacement from Isono and from the Macharetí area (Bolivia) to the current Paraguayan boreal Chaco as a result of the Chaco war.

24 See the ethnographic video "Antonio Pintos, historia familiar" (Domínguez, 2018a) for an audiovisual record of this narrative. In turn, the video "El lugar de nuestros abuelos" (Domínguez, 2018b) records a description of the layout of the Isoseño and Guaraní houses and plantations on the site that they were forced to abandon after the construction of the landing track in the military base.

25 The term *tapii* is generally translated as "servant" or "slave"; it is said that it was used formerly by the *ava* to refer to the *chané*. It has, of course, a derogatory connotation. See Combès and Villar (2007).

26 Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena - National Register of Indigenous Communities.

“Pueblo Guaraní de Mariscal Estigarribia”. Different from what happens in Santa Teresita - where the land is the collective possession of the community and where, in addition to the plots where the houses are located, there are lands available for agriculture, animal husbandry and hunting - in the urban area of Mariscal Estigarribia each family has the individual right to occupy their plot, without the right to use other land for agriculture or livestock.

Yvopeyrenda is also a community formed in the urban environment, close to the productive enterprises in which the Guaraní work. What started as a temporary flow of people moving to work with the Fernheim Mennonites has resulted in the second largest Guaraní community in the Paraguayan Chaco. Indigenous communities living in Filadelfia, capital of the Fernheim colony, also do not have access to land suitable for agriculture. According to Crecencio Cáceres, in the 1960s the Guaraní of Pedro P. Peña moved to work temporarily in Fernheim, in the same way that some went to work in Argentina. At that time, the indigenous people lived in the pottery shed where some worked. Others were employed by the Mennonites in agricultural or construction tasks.

After two decades in this situation, the indigenous people managed to obtain plots to build their houses, distributed in neighborhoods that bring together different ethnic groups (*Nivaklé*, Guaraní, *Ñandeva*, *Ayoreo*, *Enhlet*). Each community is considered a "working class neighborhood" that provides the necessary workforce for the productive activities managed by the Mennonites. In these activities, people of different ethnicities can, depending on the case, work side by side. This explains why the Chaco indigenous people understand and speak more than one language: many Guaraní speak Nivaklé, in addition to mastering the three or four Guaraní language variants used locally (the Guaraní language of the *Guarayo* - which has two variants if you consider the difference between *ava* and *isoseño* -, *ñandeva* Guaraní and Paraguayan Guaraní). Although Spanish is the most widely spoken non-indigenous language, there are Guaraní who also understand and / or speak German from the Mennonites, as well as Portuguese due to the massive presence of Brazilians working on the cattle farms in the region.

Crecencio Cáceres, leader of Yvopeyrenda, was born in Puerto Casado in 1963, at the time when his father, Celso Tarí Cáceres, worked there. At the age of six he went to live with an aunt in Fernheim, but he also lived for a while in Mariscal Estigarribia. He remembers the time when they lived "mixed and huddled with *nivaklé* and *enhlet*". Only in 2002 did the neighborhoods gain the current format.

Yvopeyrenda houses only Guaraní families, the Nivaklé have their own neighborhood half a kilometer away and the Enhlet, two kilometers away. This spatial disposition is related to the process of political organization and conquest of rights that gained strength with the fall of the Stroessner dictatorship: it was in 1989 that the Guaraní de Yvopeyrenda established their own community organization, acquiring greater negotiating power with the Mennonites, in whose lands they live under "accommodato" regime.

According to Crecencio, since then there has also been a process of “recovery of their culture”. Strictly speaking, the Guarani were never converted to the Mennonite Christianity, as they were “already Catholics”²⁷ before working or living with them. In any case, they never stopped celebrating the *arete guasu*, although for many years it was a minor festivity. When he speaks of “recovering their culture”, Crecencio alludes, among other things, to the achievement of bilingual school education and the creation of their own schools in the communities, with indigenous teachers. But he also alludes to the fact that the Guarani's main ritual “came out of hiding” and ceased to suffer the censorship that was targeted for decades by the Mennonites. In the process, it gained much larger dimensions, in addition to becoming the most legitimate way to “show their culture” to other indigenous and non-indigenous people living in this part of the Chaco.

In the 1980s, the Guarani people from Filadelfia baptized their community with the name Yvopeyrenda (the place of the carob tree), where 287 families²⁸ currently live. In 1983, a group of 50 families from Yvopeyrenda moved to Laguna Negra, in the west, where they founded the new Macharety. In both cases, the Guarani live in fractions of Mennonite lands and in close contact with neighborhoods of other ethnicities (Ñandeva, Nivaklé, Ayoreo, Enhlet). In all communities - Santa Teresita, Mariscal Estigarribia, Yvopeyrenda, Macharety and Pedro P. Peña²⁹ - the lands where the Guarani live are multi-ethnic, although each ethnic group occupies a specific area.

As demonstrated, the war and the displacements led the Guarani to a scenario of conviviality and closeness with several Chacoan indigenous societies. Also, the Paraguayan Guarani from the northern Chaco have always been in close relationship with the military of the forts established along the border between Bolivia and Paraguay. With them also came the oblate missionaries, who settled there, and the nuns who worked in the region with a prominent role both in the attention to indigenous health and in school instruction. No less striking was, and still is, the relationship with the Mennonites, in their role of bosses, Christian evangelizers, educators and responsible for various development projects that seek to promote their entrepreneurial spirit among Chacoan indigenous people³⁰.

Migrations, different alliances and the formation of new communities have reconfigured the local ethnic map. In the process, the Guarani learned to inhabit a new environmental and social landscape. Tensions often led them to split up and found new communities; some have changed their ethnonym to talk about themselves - from *isoseño* to *guarayo* or from *guarayo* to western guarani or *ava*. However, all these changes, despite their deepness, did not affect the continuity of *arete guasu* —on the contrary. Because in some cases the repetition of toponyms worked as a way to recreate known places, another constant is the fact that their favorite rite accompanied the Chané and Guarani families wherever they settled.

27] In Chaco, a very curious situation occurs: when an indigenous person says that he is a Catholic, he affirms at the same time that he is not of evangelical religion. Being Catholic, for indigenous people in Chaco, is not to submit to the restrictions imposed by evangelical churches on traditional practices such as shamanic healing, participation in traditional rituals such as *arete guasu*, smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol, etc. In the local scenario, “Being catholic” is almost synonymous to live the indigenous way.
]According to information from the community leader in November 2018.

28] There is one more Guarayo or Guarani nucleus in Palomita, in the department of San Pedro. This community falls outside the scope of this work, whose ethnographic field was the Guarani communities of the northern Chaco, located in the Department of Boquerón, Paraguay.

29] See the ASCIM website (Asociación de Servicios de Cooperación Indígena Menonita) (<https://www.ascim.org/index.php/es/>) for more information on the values and mission of the organization. See also Stahl (1974; 2007).

THE PLACE OF THE ARETE

It is the custom of chiriguanos to pass between the months of May to August immersed in these bacchanal festivals, visiting all the communities of their region and even fleeing from it to celebrate these feasts that in their language are called arete.

Doroteo Giannecchini, Natural history, ethnography, geography, linguistics of the Bolivian Chaco, 1898

The arete guasu is an invitation rite that has been much discussed in the writings of the Franciscans who have been missioning to the region since the 18th century. The feast is associated with the time of the corn harvest with which chicha (fermented drink) is prepared. As Walter Sánchez (1998) describes, in the past the arete was a reciprocal system of invitations and banquets between different mburuvicha (chiefs) that included food, singing, dancing, and where the main element was chicha. These intercommunal invitations were concentrated in the months of May to August, between the corn harvest and the preparation for the next planting. Apparently, the arete came to be temporarily associated with carnival with the installation of the Christian calendar that accompanied the action of Franciscan missionaries in southeastern Bolivia (Sánchez, 1998). In 1912, Father Bernardino de Nino records a description of the arete, where the rite is already associated with carnival. De Nino mentions that the karai (white, non-indigenous) also participated in the local Chiriguano feast, and that the rite's acoustic environment was characterized by the sound of a bamboo flute accompanied by several drums. In turn, the priest refers to "games" - like the fight that takes place between a bull and a jaguar (or tiger, as it is locally called) - that are still key in the outcome of the ritual drama everywhere.

Based on the available literature and on participation in different feasts, it can be said that the various performances of the rite - in Bolivia, Argentina or Paraguay - have the same general script. In the three countries the same musical genre is played, though each community and even each flute player may have particular styles and repertoires. The instruments are also the same - a flute (temimbí or pinguyo) and several drums (angúa and angúa guasu)-, as well as the sequence of musical themes that guide the structure of the rite. The dance is always circular, in circles formed by men and women, and the pace is the same, although there are differences in the arrangement of the dancers' circles, in front of or around the musicians.³¹ Another constant trait is the appearance of the *kuchi-kuchi* (pigs) in the final stages of the rite: young people with bodies covered in clay that muddy the feast's participants. In many cases there will also be a ritual battle between the *aña-aña* (masked men representing the souls of the dead) and the bulls, and finally the fight between the bull and the jaguar, a scene whose outcome in Paraguay is starred by the

31 | The tempo of the music played in different communities is quite different, being slower at the feasts in Paraguay and Bolivia than in Argentina. Naturally, where the progress of music is faster, the pace of the dance is also faster, adjusting to the tempo of the sounds.

kereimba (warrior) who, with a bow and arrow, always ends up winning the jaguar. Leaders give speeches both at the beginning and at the end of the feast. At the opening they thank those present and wish everyone a good party; at the end, people from the community who died that year are remembered and honored, the leader thanks the visits, and expresses his hope that they will be all together again next year. The *arete guasu* is invariably an itinerant party - the group moves to dance for a few hours in certain houses or in other significant points of the communities - and its closure has the outline of farewells for the *agüeros*, the *aña-aña*, death and the dead, evoked during the party through some form of masking.

In Santa Teresita, officially, the areteguasu starts on the morning of Carnival Sunday, but in fact it starts well before. The *atiku* - which is a kind of "heating" - starts in the first weeks of January. It is, in principle, a period of preparation, although in it, of course, the feast is already happening. It is during this period that the necessary arrangements are made for the smooth running of the festivity, including the definition of the houses that will be visited during the *arete guasu*. The owners of the houses get in touch with the leaders responsible for organizing the party and make the invitation. In the *arete guasu*, these houses must offer chicha (fermented corn drink) and food for the musicians. In Macharety (Laguna Negra, Paraguay) they also start playing, dancing and drinking before the carnival period. Asked about the fact, the residents explain that it was the catholic priests who determined that the party should start on the Sunday of Carnival, after Mass - they, however, do as they used to.

As the residents of Santa Teresita comment, when the priests and nuns still lived there, the arrangement was for the Guaraní to go to Mass on Sunday morning and only after that to celebrate the carnival. On Saturday afternoon, therefore, the cross of leaves and flowers that will head the procession of the arete during the next three days is prepared; circles of dancers join the process to the sound of the flute and drums. And on Sunday morning the *agüeros* or *aña-aña* (masked) appear coming from the bush and carrying the cross, to join the procession that, after crossing in front of the Catholic church, proceeds to the first house where they will dance for a few hours. Thus, officially, the party is adjusted to the three-day period between Sunday and Carnival Tuesday, when the *arete* is closed in front of the cemetery.

32| This description is based on the observations made in the Santa Teresita arete between 2016 and 2019, for it was in this community that I was able to participate and observe the party in a more prolonged and systematic way. Eventually, I point out contrasts with the festivities of other communities in which I participated in that same period (in the Chané communities of Argentina since 2014, in Aguayrenda in Bolivia in 2015, and in the five communities of the Paraguayan Chaco between 2016 and 2019). In each of the communities commented on in the article, the general script of the rite is the same.

33| "Paí" is the term that the Guaraní of western Paraguay use to refer to Catholic priests.

In Yvopeyrenda, the procession begins on Sunday morning, at the cemetery, and it ends there after three days of dancing. It is worth mentioning that among the Paraguayan western Guaraní, it is common to hear that the carnival or *arete guasu*, as well as the masked ones, come from the *matyvirocho*, an expression that they translate as “a distant place”, where the dead live. The exegeses of the term point to a temporal dimension in its meaning, in addition to the spatial one, because in that distant place, which is the abode of the dead, time is different and they live in a permanent *arete*; the music doesn't stop there³⁴. The determination of the Catholic church of the place where the rite should begin and the cemetery as the place where the dead should go when it ends is evident. In the cemetery people usually throw away the masks or clothes they wore during the feast,



stripping off objects associated with death. At this point there is a variation in relation to the rite of the *Chané* communities in Argentina, where the *arete* is closed in a river or stream of water. Depending on the volume of the stream, people have bath and break or throw away objects used during the *arete guasu*, explaining that the waters take away diseases that the dead - or the presence of death during the rite - carry with them. This occurs both in the *Chané* community on the Itiyuro River, which was not a mission in the past, and in Tuyunti, a Catholic mission under the responsibility of Franciscan priests between the 40s and 90s of the 20th century. In these locations the *arete* is closed in turns along successive Sundays of February and March, thus allowing people in each community — Tuyunti, Iquira, Capiazuti and Campo Durán - to participate in the parties of other communities where they usually have relatives. As in Giannecchini's description of the *Chiriguano*, among the Guaraní of western Paraguay and among the *Chané* of Argentina, it is also common to spend the weeks of the *arete* visiting different communities of the region.

Figures 1 and 2
Cross made of leaves and flowers. Agüeros carrying the cross. Santa Teresita, Paraguay. February 2019. Photos by the author.

34 | Among the *Chané* of Argentina I heard about *ivoka*, evoking a similar notion. For an analysis of the semantic contours of the term *ivoka*, as used by the *Chané* of Argentina, I refer to Villar and Bossert (2014). In its turn, Sánchez (1998: 224-225) takes up the words of Giannecchini, Romano and Cattunar (1916), who wrote about the *Chiriguano* of Bolivia, showing that they use the term *ivoka* to refer to the place of the dead. In the same work, he presents a testimony collected in San Jorge de Ipaty (Bolivia) in 1996, where his interlocutor uses the term *Matimoroso* to refer to the place where his grandparents come from, the masked (ibidem, 1998: 235). Everything indicates that the two terms - *ivoka* and *matyvirocho* - have similar meanings.

In Santa Teresita, however, the Catholic Church encouraged the celebration for they recognized that it was of the Guaraní's high esteem. As Father Miguel Fritz mentions (1995:56), for both oblate priests and nuns responsible for the mission, the continuity of the ritual could bring the long-awaited "unity" - and its respective "identity" - to the community. With or without unity, the truth is that the rite not only continues to be celebrated as it multiplies in different places.

As a matter of fact, the church's permission to carry out the arete guasu in Santa Teresita only started in the 1980s, when theological reorientations brought about changes in the attitude of the priests who were missioning in the region. What is known is that during periods when the context for the celebration of the party was hostile in the localities where they lived, the Guaraní moved to other communities during the time of arete guasu. As Antônio Pintos reports, when they were still living in Campamento, there was a large patio, with carob trees, where they danced to the sound of flutes and drums. When they settled in the urban area - where they could not make their feast- they joined the arete in Muñeca, a nucleus of houses that existed approximately 13 kilometers from Mariscal Estigarribia and 10 kilometers from Santa Teresita. The inhabitants of Teresita also remember that they used to go to Muñeca's arete when the Santa Teresita mission still prohibited the ritual.

Following the process of rights conquer over the past three decades, the Guaraní have seen their feast grow and multiply. Currently, the arete guasu is celebrated in Santa Teresita and in Pedro P. Peña, in Yvopeyrenda, in Macharety and in the urban area of Mariscal Estigarribia. However, in many cases, families move to celebrate the rite in a different community from the one in which they live, visiting relatives who live there.

The multiplication of communities, feasts and, with them, the sources of prestige resulting from organizing the arete or acting as host of the festivity, seems to be related to a kind of dispersion of political power - which is always divided between various leaders and families in the communities. This is a characteristic feature of the arete if we consult the anthropological literature on this part of the Chaco. In her 1968 work, Branislava Susnik also interpreted the arete in relation to the struggle for the cacical and group prestige obtained by the practice of the invitation. Such disputes, of course, can lead to fissions that resonate in the arete itself. But this, far from showing a disruptive trend, reflects the continuity of old social logics that the arete helps to reproduce.

35 | See Stahl (2007: 187-190) for a description of the changes that came with the "Nueva Pastoral Indígena" in the missionary work of oblate priests among Chacoan indigenous people since the 1980s. Miguel Fritz, describing the history of Catholic missions in the region, mentions the resistance of the priests who considered the arete a festival of evil: "The first missionaries tried to stop the feast from happening. Resulting impossible during the arete they used to take the children for a ride in a truck" (Fritz, 1995: 56).

In their study in the 1970s, the Grünbergs were sensitive to this. They describe in detail the dynamics of decision-making processes among the Western Guaraní of the Paraguayan Chaco to show that, in the absence of unanimity regarding a decision, it was common for fissions to occur without this implying the dissolution of these societies or their culture. (Grünberg and Grünberg, 1974: 100-101). In fact, displacements, constant tensions and successive fissions don't threaten the *arete's* continuity. On the contrary: it seems that it reproduces itself from fragmentation:

Each community that subdivides gives rise to two feasts. People insist on celebrating the *arete guasu* in each community founded after a fission, in its new place.

The duplication of the ritual, in fact, can happen in the same community, not necessarily being the result of a spatial fission. As communities grow, internal divisions or distances can cause more than one *arete* to be organized in the same location, as in Santa Teresita or Macharety. In addition to the size of the community, another factor that may contribute to the fact is the existence of several prominent families in the same location. It is from such families, considered “traditional *arete guasu* families”, that community leaders come. Being a traditional family of the *arete* means, among other things, to be able to host the feast at the family house. The Guaraní usually refer to such families with the term “clan”³⁶. At the feast it is possible that the masked ones who wear the skins of certain animals are identified by the participants as belonging to some of these clans. When these conditions are added to the tensions generated in the political-spiritual dimension -and here these spheres are inextricably linked - the internal divisions can lead to the organization of two simultaneous feasts. Each *arete guasu* will, in this case, be organized by a family or group of families, with visits only to the houses of each faction's allies. Although people are sometimes afraid of the tensions inherent of divided communities, they do not appear to be new. Such tensions are worrisome and are often the subject of conversations during the organization period and during the party, as they can cause conflicts. The ideal, repeated in the speeches, is that there was a single rite and a united community - and that ideal is probably so repeated because the reality is, and always has been, another.

In 2015, some years after the formalization of the Guaraní urban community of Mariscal Estigarribia, some families decided to organize their own *arete guasu*. As noted by Paola Canova (2019), the initiative to organize an *arete* in the place of residence of the urban Guaraní community came together with other social achievements “and as a way to extend this recognition in the cultural sphere” (ibidem, 2019: 132). In fact, formalizing the organization of such families - which led to their registration as an indigenous community with INDI - also resulted in the organization of an *arete guasu* in Mariscal Estigarribia, the place of their community³⁷. This does not mean that these people have only just begun to celebrate the *arete*; they have always done so, visiting relatives from other communities. The oldest ones remember the *arete guasu* at the time they lived in Campamento, in Matarife. After leaving the area, many participated in Muñeca's *arete* and, later, in Santa Teresita. The novelty is that now, and like other Guaraní communities, they host a feast in their own place and receive visits from relatives from other communities.

36] The meaning of the term “clan”, as used locally, seems to allude the relatively hierarchical character of the Chiriguano political organization. These families of chiefs, called clans here, evoke the aristocratic houses identified by Combès and Villar when analyzing the Chané and Chiriguano social organization (Villar, 2013; Combès and Villar, 2004)

37] See the ethnographic video “Comunidad Guaraní Urbano de Mariscal Estigarribia” (Domínguez, 2018c) for a description of the feast and the history of the community through the statements of Ana Flores, Juliana Toro de Flores, Brígida Saldivar and Nydia Morejuan.

When we talk about this idea with the community leaders it is evident that this doesn't mean a separation from the other Guaraní communities of the area but *aa* means to be like them. The expression "we are all one big family" - to allude to the relationships that exist between the communities of Mariscal Estigarribia, Santa Teresita, Yvopeyrenda, Macharety and Pedro P. Peña - is frequent in their speeches and highlights the fact that, despite living in different locations, celebrating their own feast and despite the event the probable differences between the leaders, they remain connected and are part of something bigger that encompasses such distances.

However, we do not want to give the impression that we are facing an instrumental performance or an objectified version of traditional culture. As pointed out, the *arete* is related to the distribution of prestige among the different families, with the value implied in the act of visiting other communities and receiving visitors, and with the possibility of renewing the bond with living relatives, also paying homage to the dead. The *arete* operates, among the Guaraní, as an effective and aesthetically powerful instance to show other ethnic groups nearby who they are. Organizing and acting as hosts in the *arete guasu*, the Guaraní reaffirm their hierarchical position in the context of relations with other indigenous people. Many *Ñandeva* from nearby neighborhoods, but also *Nivaklé*, *Manjui* and *Paraguayans*, have fun at the Guaraní party. The *arete*, however, always happens in the place that identifies them; it is they, as hosts, who receive and let others participate. Although everyone dances together, musical instruments are played exclusively by Guaraní men. Exceptionally, it is possible to "let" some *Ñandeva* play a drum on the percussion set, but the flute, which is a solo instrument and musically conducts the ritual sequence, is always played by a Guaraní³⁸.

Perhaps that is why - and despite a long history of displacement that took the Guaraní and *Isoseño* to different points in the Chaco space, placing them in the most varied interethnic situations - the *arete* continues to be fundamental in the way they create and recreate their place and time at different points in space. It is key, in turn, in updating kinship relationships and even in the administration of power and prestige among families - that is, in politics. The *arete* is an itinerant festival and its journey through houses and places activates vital political ties in the communities. Its power is also revealed in the ability to activate memories and affections that weave a temporal relationship with the past. In part this is done through speeches that remind and honor some members of the community who have died.

As already established in the *arete* literature, the theme of the ritual is the dead and death³⁹. Several techniques are used to develop an aesthetic that evokes this theme, ritual masks being key in this process. Villar and Bossert (2014) analyze the relationship between masks and the dead in the *chané arete* of northern Argentina, showing that, much more than a relationship of incorporation or representation, masks are employed here to evoke the idea of death as well as that of the finitude of life.

38| On the centrality of music in the organization of the *arete*, see Domínguez (2016; 2018).

39| Fritz (1995); Toro (2000); Zindler (2006); Escobar (2012); Villar e Bossert (2014).

Despite the distances between the arete of the Argentine chané and that of the Guaraní from western Paraguay, the evocation of death is also dominant here.

In the *arete* ritual masking explores different techniques and materials to aesthetically evoke death. The samou⁴⁰ masks, examined by Villar and Bossert (2014), are of the *aña-hãti* kind. This type of mask is also present in the Guaraní *arete* of western Paraguay, although in a much smaller number than those made with animal skins, the *apyte puku*, the *güira pepo* or the plastic masks.

In different locations, one or another type of mask may predominate. These formal differences do not reflect ethnic differences between *Isoseño*, Guaraní and *Chané*. They seem to respond more to the differentiated availability of certain materials for manufacture, to the knowledge of different techniques for making one or another type of mask, and to the preferences of the different age groups that mask themselves.

I would like to draw your attention to a type of mask common in the *arete* of the Guaraní communities of Paraguay that does not appear at the feasts in Bolivia or Argentina. These are masks made with skins or pieces of animals, composing a hybrid body, in an arrangement that is never the same. They are called *agüeros*, meaning grandparents. Some also call them *aña*, which means soul, specifically the soul of the dead. In fact, when asked about the subject, the people who participate in the ritwe answer that the *agüeros* are dead ancestors who come from the *matyvirocho* each year to celebrate with the living. Many animals, even disfigured, appear in the *arete*: wild pig, jaguar, puma, deer, nhandu, snake, white or black heron, sheep, goats and tatú lend their skin, face, paws, claws, teeth and feathers to the *agüero*. They are always species hunted or raised in the region, whose skins or pieces are treated and carefully kept throughout the year for *arete guasu*.

40 | The chané of Argentina refer to the same tree as yuchán. The scientific name is *Chorisia insignis*.



Figure 3
Agüero made with deer face and hawk feathers, and *güira pepo* made of *samou* wood and black heron feathers. Santa Teresita, Paraguay. February 2019. Photo by the author.

When analyzing the form of these compositions, it is seen that the junction of pieces of different animals is the means of figuring a different, multispecific body and, at the same time, a hybrid of life and death. *Agüeros* are realistic compositions (in the sense that they are figurative and not abstract) and hybrids that, like other types of chimeras, indicate transformation⁴¹. Formally what we have is a specific combination of animal and human. This hybrid body also has a social condition, because whoever is part of the community knows that this animal-human is associated with a particular family - and so do the other animal-human dancing in the ritual arena. *Agüeros*, images that suggest the possible transformation of the human into an animal and the animal into a human, do their part, I believe, in evoking the idea of death. Note that, in the cosmology of these Guaraní groups, the human person can, after death, become an animal. Through the *agüeros* and the singular forms of these masks, the idea of death is materialized in the ritual. If, as mentioned above, among the Guaraní it is common to hear that the masked ones come from *matyvirocho*, the distant place-time where the dead live, it is also true that this is made possible by celebrating the *arete guasu*. As long as the rite is celebrated, no matter the point of space where this happens, the reflection about the place of death and the dead among the living is recreated.



Figure 4
Agüero made with deer face and nhandu feathers. Santa Teresita, Paraguay. February 2019. Photo by the author.



Figure 5
Agüero made with deer face and nhandu feathers. Santa Teresita, Paraguay. February 2019. Photo by the author.



Figure 6
Agüero made with an armadillo face, sheep and snake skin, and nhandu feathers. Santa Teresita, Paraguay. February 2017. Photo by the author.

41 | Severi (2014) e Lagrou (2014).

Rituals and place

In this essay described the history of a celebration of the Northern Paraguayan Chaco, describing the displacements that took the feast to the points of the Chacoan space where it happens today. The proposed focus was to think about the ritual's performativity, asking what happens - socially and historically - when the ritual happens. We think that this description can contribute to anthropological and historical knowledge about the peoples of the northwestern Chaco by offering some clues as to why - despite the impositions and censures that the Guaraní and *Isoseño* had to face - they insist on celebrating their favorite feast. It was argued that, among other processes, the ritual helps to build a place where to “*hallarse*” or find themselves, recreating old forms of sociality over time and space.

The theoretical option for talking about place - and not about territory or identity - responds to the intention of thinking about the communities that celebrate the *arete guasu* in relation, without ignoring the fact that they are not configured as a cohesive totality. “Place” is understood here as a lived space⁴². As described, the *arete* intensifies the spatial circulation of people from different communities, renewing the relations between them. The *arete* also marks the relations that the Guaraní establish with their neighbors of other ethnicities. The aesthetics of the *arete*, in turn, refers to the relationships with the different animal species that inhabit the Chaco landscape. In addition, it creates its own historical time characterized by the temporality of the ritual. In this way, the *arete* characterizes a way of inhabiting the Chaco space that transforms it into a Guaraní place.

Since the 1980s, anthropology has discussed the notion of place making based on analysis of processes that often involve movements and displacements. Thus, in the reflection on territories and indigeneity, perspectives were broadened beyond visions that privilege the rooted permanence in the same point of space.

In Brazilian anthropology, the debate, which in English dealt with the processes of place making or construction of place, was translated to deal with territories and territorialities⁴³. This allowed, among other things, to expand the concept of indigenous territory which, in older versions, was still intertwined with the idea of autochthony. In turn, through the concept of territoriality, greater attention was paid to the ways in which indigenous societies experienced the processes of territorial imposition. Under such bias, this essay sought to demonstrate how the displacements driven by the Chaco War resulted in specific territorializations and in conditions in which any cultural continuities seemed impossible.

But these processes also reveal the ability of indigenous people to create their places in different space points where they were forced to live. The option to think in terms of place, rather than territoriality, responds to the intention of considering the different layers of experience to which the notion of lived space refers.

42] The concept of place as a practiced or lived space is inspired by authors such as Michel de Certeau (2009) and Tim Ingold (2011). In spite of the distances between them, I follow the proposal, common in both, to examine creative processes and different practices that transform the abstract space into a practiced, inhabited, lived place.

43] Vieira et. al (2015).

The place that the Guaraní create through the arete is not just related to the fact that they live on a particular soil, but to aspects of their sociality and cosmology. The preceding paragraphs showed that living in a place where the arete guasu is celebrated is also a specific way of inhabiting time and space, of meeting others and of themselves - a way, in short, of “hallarse”.

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