

THE YE'KWANA COSMOSONICS: A MUSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF A
NORTH-AMAZON PEOPLE.

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Abstract

The Ye'kwana are a Carib people of indigenous speech whose current population is estimated to be around 7,000 people distributed in villages that are located in Venezuela and Brazil. In Brazil, they are a total of around 520 people distributed in three communities located at the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY, in Portuguese), in the state of Roraima. In 1912, the researcher Theodor Koch-Grünberg visited several Ye'kwana villages, when he made ethnographic and phonographic records of inaugural importance to ethnology and comparative musicology. Precisely one hundred years later, I began my field research on the reception of recordings of chants and musical instruments from Koch-Grünberg's collection stored at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv and Museum, as well as on the Ye'kwana sonorities produced nowadays. Understanding hearing as a privileged sense regarding the access to knowledge and using different acoustic codes, the Ye'kwana build their lived world on a relationship with nature that is different from what has been conventionally called "music" in the west. To reflect on the relationships between sounds, cosmology, and society, I use in this dissertation the concept of cosmosonics, that seeks to point to the main elements of the Ye'kwana vocal-sound arts, understood in this work as a "reverse ethnomusicology" of this Carib people.

Phonetic note

According to Meira (2006: 157), there are more than 170 indigenous languages spoken in Brazil by approximately 150.000 people. These languages are quite different from each other, grouped into different language families: four major language groups (Aruaque, Caribbean, Tupi and Jê), several smaller language groups (Chapacura, Guaykuru, Katukina, Maku, Mura, Nambikwara, Cloth, Tukano and Yanomami) and some isolated languages (Urban 1992: 90). The Caribbean family has about forty members distributed in various countries of the Amazon region (Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana), mostly in the North Amazon (Meira 2006: 160).

The language of the Ye'kwana belongs to the Caribbean family. Costa (2013), who conducted linguistic research with the Ye'kwana in Brazil, states that like Venezuela's Ye'kwana dialect studied by Cáceres (2011: 58) the Brazilian dialect features fourteen vowels with seven different vocal tones, with opposition between three points of articulation and three aperture levels, as shown in the table below.

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	Ii [i] [i:]	ööö [ɨ] [ɨ:]	uuu [u] [u:]
Mid	Eee [e] [e:]	äää [ə] [ə:]	ooo [o] [o:]
Open		a aa [a] [a:]	

According to Costa (2013: 35) the consonantal system of Ye'kwana in Brazil presents 14 different phonemes without voicing opposition, as shown in the table below.

Consonants

	Labial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive			t [t]		ch [tʃ]	k [k]	‘ [ʔ]
Nasal	m [m]		n [n]		nh [ɲ]		
Flap			d [ɾ]				
Fricative		f [f]	s [s]	sh [ʃ]			j [h]
Aproxximant	w [w]				y [j]		

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INTRODUCTION

“Translating is to install oneself in a location of misconception and inhabit it.” Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2015: 90)

I

In the novel “The Invention of Morel”, by Argentinean writer Adolfo Bioy Casares (2006), one of the main fiction writers of the 20th century, a fugitive from Venezuelan justice hides in a deserted island in the Pacific where, on a given day, his solitude is disturbed by the arrival of visitors in a ship who disembark and occupy the only facilities of the abandoned island: the museum, the chapel and the swimming pool. In his apocryphal diary, the fugitive describes how he survived changing tides, starvation, muddy water, disease, and, with great effort, remained hidden from the island intruders until he realized that they lived in other dimensions than that of his reality. The island was inhabited by artificial ghosts and Faustine, the beautiful woman who, at the end of the afternoon, gazed at the sea over the cliffs and rocks or sat on the sand and read a book, had been captured by a machine invented by Morel, a kind of multimedia recorder capable of reproducing all the sensory elements of reality. In an excerpt of the novel in which the fugitive cites the inventor’s notes, Morel celebrated the scientific advances that made his work possible and the fact that “there had been a long time since we could state that we no longer feared death regarding the voice”, praising the invention of the gramophone and the superior quality of sound archiving when compared to that of photographs.

The possibility of recording duplicates of reality through machines was one of the main revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries. With these devices, researchers such as Theodor Koch-Grünberg, a famous German Americanist, produced an ethnographic fortune. It was through the possibility of capturing the sounds that Comparative Musicology was born and pioneering musicologists such as Erich von Hornbostel made studies about non-western sound manifestations. With this technological revolution, peoples such as the Ye’kwana, who live in regions of difficult access, and which were little known at the time of Koch-Grünberg, close to several rivers distributed along the Orinoco and Amazon basins

were immortalized in descriptions, photographs and phonograms recorded for posterity by European science.

This dissertation is an ethnography about the singing and playing of the Ye'kwana indigenous people, inhabitants of the northwestern region of the state of Roraima in the Yanomami Indigenous Land on the border with Venezuela. Between 1911 and 1913, the German ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg conducted his renowned research going from Roraima, Brazil, towards the source of the Orinoco river in Venezuela and passed by several Ye'kwana villages performing ethnographic, phonographic and photographic recordings of inaugural importance for the ethnological literature of this and other peoples in the region. In this expedition, he brought along an Edison phonograph, the first apparatus in history able to capture and reproduce sounds in wax cylinders. With this scientific innovation, he was able to realize the first recordings of North-Amazon indigenous chants held at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv (Ziegler 2006b).

Between 2010 and 2011, I was in Berlin for three months and carried out some research at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv and Museum about the collections resulting from Koch-Grünberg's trip to Roraima. My initial goal was to reflect on the scientific relations between Brazil and Germany through the contributions of indigenous ethnology data in the consolidation of German anthropological science and Comparative Musicology in the early 20th century. The descriptions and phonograph recordings resulting from Koch-Grünberg's trip to Roraima supported the article by Erich von Hornbostel on the music of the Macuxi, Taurepang and Ye'kwana indigenous peoples, published as a musical annex to the work "Vom Roroima zum Orinoco" (1923a), which became one of the classical texts of the newly born Comparative Musicology.

In 2011, I traveled to Roraima with the purpose of starting a research with one of the peoples studied by Koch-Grünberg and Hornbostel. In January 2012, I traveled to Fuduwaduinha, in Auaris river in the Yanomami Indigenous Land, where I lived for six months at the Ye'kwana households, sleeping in hammocks, sharing the food, the hours of leisure and the chores, walking in the forest, trying to maintain balance on canoes and learning through daily life about how the Ye'kwana live.

Between the years of 2013 and 2017, I lived in Boa Vista, Roraima, and kept in contact with the Ye'kwana, proceeding with the research but this time not in clay houses, in the calm environment of the village, I was in houses of cement and stone, within the busy environment of the city. I also carried out field research in the months of September 2016,

December and January 2017 in the villages of Kudaatinha and Fuduuwaduinha. In this period, I participated in important collective Ye'kwana rituals and ceremonies, such as the female ritual of menarche (*aji'choto*), the inauguration of the new house (*ättä edemi jödö*), and the inauguration of the new garden (*audaja edemi jödö*).

Arriving at Roraima carrying the phonograms, my goal was to return the phonograph recordings to their original context, as Susanne Ziegler and Lars-Christian Koch (Koch-Grünberg 2006b: 60) pointed to be the current goal of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv. I imagined the natives would be interested in listening to the chants of their ancestors recorded in the phonograms, due to their historical, aesthetic and musical importance. However, for the Ye'kwana, the chant carries a deep cosmopolitical meaning. The voice of the singer is understood as being part of the person, and the machines and recordings (although the young natives are ever closer to these technologies) are still faced with mistrust by some of the wise and old (these technologies may catch, as did Morel, part of the *akaato*, soul or double of the person, and take it away).

Based on the ways the Ye'kwana interpret the recording of the voice of a dead *füwai* (shaman) recorded by the phonograph, I realized the importance of the vocal-sound system in the construction of this society. Through the myths, callings, utterances, speeches, summonings, chants and instruments they build their world, which is experimented in an acoustic relationship with nature that surpasses that which the Western world has conventionalized as “music”. The verbal arts, part of their vocal-instrumental system, point to the intrinsic relationship between sounds and cosmology, “sounds” and “senses”.

Considering the above, I seek to address how the Ye'kwana cosmology called “*watunna*” is articulated with the most different kinds of sounds, especially singing. This mythological corpus is like a network that invisibly connects everything, keeping the “culture in place” (Guss 1990: 1). *Watunna* is expressed in the material culture, verbal arts, chants and in the musicalization of the world, pointing to a philosophy that sees people, things, houses and places as clusters of sound relationships.

In order to reflect on similar questions, Marilia Stein (2009), in her dissertation on the chants of Mbyá-Guarani indigenous children, proposed the concept of cosmosonics. This concept was created by the researcher with the goal of bringing to light the centrality of the sound aspects in the cosmology of this Tupi people¹. This line of work was expanded by

¹ The mbyá-Guarani, an indigenous subgroup of Guarani speech, belongs to the Tupi-Guarani language family, of the Tupi trunk, along with the Kaiová (Päi Tavyterã), the Nhandeva (Chiripá) and the Chiriguano. It is

other seminal studies on indigenous music in the Lowlands of South America, which have addressed the importance of hearing and the centrality of their vocal (and/or instrumental) sound systems, such as those made by Menezes Bastos among the Kamayurá (1999, 2007, 2013), by Seeger among the Suyá (2004), by Jean Beaudet among the Waiãpi (1997), by Montardo among the Guarani (2002), by Piedade among the Wauja (2004), and by Lewy among the Pemón (2011) in Venezuela, among other studies.

Marilia Stein warns about the fact that the construction of a synthetic concept for the relationships between music and cosmology should not lose sight of its social aspect, which would imply a social-cosmos-sonic triad. I use the concept of cosmosonics without the hyphen, as does Merriam for ethnomusicology (1980), to emphasize the indiscernibility of sounds, cosmology and society. For the Ye'kwana, the acoustic codes create the society based on references of the cosmos, and its chants are the same that resonate since the beginning of time, so that the singers, every time they perform their songs, connect to the melodies of the ancestors. This displacement that refers back to the mythical time of the origins and to distant places of the cosmos sets the text of this dissertation in multiple space-times. By thinking about the relationships between *watunna* and the western science, between the sounds that connect the men with Kahuña (primordial heaven), and the historical importance of the phonographs, the lines of this text host the coexistence of a multiplicity of points of view and listening, of places and times, resembling of the intruders and the fugitive-narrator who inhabited the island in the Pacific, in the ingenious invention of Morel.

II

In December 2008, I received the indication from my master's advisor and co-advisor in this dissertation, Prof. Maria Elizabeth Lucas, to pursue a doctorate degree at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, in Germany, through an agreement signed between the Research Support Foundation of Rio Grande do Sul (FAPERGS) and the Brasilien-Zentrum Institute, of Baden Württemberg². My initial motivation for applying to the scholarship was the possibility of studying the scientific exchanges between Brazil and Germany through the

estimated that, of the approximately 34,000 Guarani individuals in Brazil, about 5,000 are of Mbyá ethnicity and live between the South and Southeast of Brazil (Stein 2009).

² This research scholarship, received through the Brasilien-Zentrum, was a result of a donation by Johannes Kärcher to the University of Tübingen and the fact that he wished this scholarship were used to fund a doctoral research on music that involved Brazil and Germany. Without his initial personal motivation, this work would not have been possible.

collections of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, the cradle that originated comparative musicology, ethnomusicology, and the German research made in the Amazon.

The German Americanism is the first phase of modern ethnological studies of the peoples of the Brazilian Amazon, so I also wished to work with the ethnographic collections, which are founding aspects of the modern discipline of anthropology, from the historical and anthropological perspectives. Although the method of producing collections has fallen into disuse, the museums and the collectionism comprised the inaugural phase of anthropology. Despite the historical importance of collectionism, the post-colonial criticism started to understand the museographic heritage as an embarrassing colonial legacy and, in some cases, even a “deformer” of anthropological knowledge (Faria, Miranda e Araújo 2002).

Being aware of the accuracy of part of the post-colonial criticism about the museographic method and the evolutionist assumptions of comparative musicology (Pratt 2010, Clifford 1988, Fischer 2007, Eames 2003, Kraus 2004), my goal was to reflect on that heritage not from the “critical” perspective but from the point of view of the native indigenous people about the European point of view produced by museums and other forms of reality duplication and Other’s images creation. In order to reflect on this turn of perspectives, I intended to consider the contemporary ethnological literature that addresses the contributions of indigenous societies have brought to anthropological theory in general, such as the notion of Amerindian perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 1987, 2002, 2015). This notion proposes a recategorization of the concepts of subject and object by renewing the concept of perspectivism (created by Leibniz and developed by Nietzsche) and proposing an indigenous philosophy according to which the cosmos is composed of infinite beings that have agency and a point of view about the world.

Initially, I did not have a precise notion of the collections of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv and, while performing a first bibliographic analysis, I learned details about the phonogram collections made by Theodor Koch-Grünberg in Roraima. From then, I began to read the literature available on the subject in the library of the University of Tübingen and to plan for field research in the museums that had collections originated in the trip from Roraima to the Orinoco. I communicated with the museums of Munich, Stuttgart, Leipzig, Marburg, and Berlin, and, after one year living in Tübingen, I traveled to Berlin to start the field research in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv and Ethnological Museum.

I intended to survey of the artifacts, instruments and phonograms of the Macuxi, Taurepang and Ye’kwana natives, due to my previous education in history, I was initially

inclined to restrict my research to an archival and bibliographic study of this material. My intention was to analyze the collections of Koch-Grünberg in the German museums, but I ended up focusing only on the Berlin collection that resulted in the article by Erich von Hornbostel.

During my first stay at the museum, I analyzed the catalogs of the objects and I photographed the musical instruments of the indigenous peoples of Roraima collected by Koch-Grünberg. I spent the remaining days of my one-week stay in Berlin in a small room of the Phonogramm-Archiv, listening to cassette tapes containing the recordings captured by Koch-Grünberg's phonograph, and reading materials about his life and collaboration with the archive stored in a collection. This first field research with the files helped me carry out a prior survey about the collections and to prepare myself for a longer return to Berlin.

Months later, I returned to Berlin for a three-month stay as a guest researcher in the Phonogramm-Archiv. At that occasion, I attended the colloquium of doctoral students of Professor Ingrid Kümmels, of the Institute for Latin American Studies of the Free University of Berlin (FU-Berlin) and was a guest researcher for three months at the Ibero-American Institute. In this period, my days were split between the Phonogramm-Archiv and the libraries of the Ibero-American Institute and the Ethnological Museum. At the end of this research stage, I presented the partial data in the colloquium of doctoral students of Prof. Ingrid Kümmels, at the FU-Berlin, and in the seminar of guest researchers of the Ibero-American Institute that took place under the coordination of Dr. Peter Birle.

If the possibility of carrying out fieldwork in the Amazon was remote at the beginning of this research, the very first week of my return to Berlin proved fieldwork would be possible. It was the beginning of the opening activities of the winter semester 2010/2011, when there was a lecture held by the Institute for Latin American Studies (FU-Berlin) titled: "Indigenous Territories in Brazil: The case of Raposa Serra do Sol". Edson Damas was among the professors who would talk. He was the prosecutor of the State of Roraima, and a doctor in Indigenous Law, who participated in the case of the decision of the Supreme Court that was favorable to the indigenous natives in the homologation of the Indigenous Territory Raposa Serra do Sol³. After the end of the lecture, we talked about my research and Edson Damas kindly accepted to receive me in Boa Vista and help in the negotiations for the

3 The Indigenous Territory Raposa Serra do Sol is one of the greatest indigenous territories of the country. The homologation process of the Indigenous Territory Raposa Serra do Sol in contiguous areas lasted more than thirty years. In 2009, the victory in the Brazilian Supreme Court recognized the right of the natives and determined that the farmers and invaders had to leave the region.

fieldwork. This ended up becoming an essential meeting for the construction of this dissertation.

When I returned to Tübingen, I carried in my bag a CD containing copies of all the phonograms recorded by Koch-Grünberg, which were generously made available for use in this work by Susanne Ziegler and Lars-Christian Koch, director of the Phonogramm-Archiv. With the material resulting from this archival research, I began to outline the possibility of a study on the reception of these collections by the Macuxi, Taurepang, or Ye'kwana in Roraima, a decision that was supported with enthusiasm by my advisor, Prof. Manfred Hermann Schmid and by the Brasilien-Zentrum, the institute that financed this research for four years.

In April 2011, I traveled to Boa Vista, capital of Roraima, and on my first day in the city, I met, through Edson Damas, the renowned shaman Davi Kopenawa, known worldwide for his struggle in defending the rights of the Yanomami people and for the recent book about his life published in partnership with the French anthropologist Bruce Albert, which translated to many languages (Kopenawa and Albert 2010, 2015). This first contact with Davi Kopenawa was enlightening because it resulted in a friendship that made my research possible among the Ye'kwana, who lives in the Yanomami indigenous territory.

On the 9th of July 2011, after three months of prior contact with the Ye'kwana, the leaders of this people in the city accepted my research intentions, asking as a counterpart that I helped them at their association and their school. After six months of contact with the Ye'kwana in the city, in January 2012, I started my research in Fuduwaduinha, in the region of Auaris, in the Yanomami territory.

Over the years of research, I met all the villages located in Brazil, as well as most of their permanent and temporary residents, although I developed more familiarity with the residents of Fuduwaduinha⁴. During the process of this research, I had conversations with several people from the Ye'kwana, especially with: Reinaldo and Robélio, teachers at the Apolinário Gimenes School, Elias, singer, and boatman at the health center of Auaris, and Castro, who now holds a Master's degree in geography by the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR). Except for Robélio, who is younger, the others belong to the first educated generation that studied in Boa Vista and are over forty years old. Through the translations made by the teachers (mainly Reinaldo and Robélio), I carried out part of my research with

⁴ I remained for six and a half months in Fuduwaduinha, twenty-two days in Tajädatoinha, twenty days in Waschainha and another fifteen days in Kudaatainha. See chapter 1 for more about the Ye'kwana communities.

three wise men of the older generation: Vicente Castro, regarded by all as the greatest chant owner still alive, Contreras, and Majaanuma. All of them were sages, born in Venezuela, who had recently settled in Fuduwaduinha. Besides them, other important interlocutors in this research were João Koch (a namesake of the famous German traveler), who communicates well in Portuguese, Raimundo, Elias' father, and Joaquim, singer, and indigenous health agent.

Interweaving the field experience with the natives in the city and in the villages, I was able to observe in practice the changes in the ethnological research context one hundred years after Koch-Grünberg. Throughout the 20th century, anthropology and ethnomusicology have undergone intense transformations, not only from the theoretical point of view (with the indigenous people contributing to another anthropology and another musicology that were different from Western ones). There were also transformations from a methodological perspective, since after the insurgency of the organized indigenous movement and the self-determination of these peoples, the field research no longer conformed to the Malinowskian canons based on long stays within the native population's community, and on participant observation as an objective report of native life (Malinowski 2005). These changes in the canons of fieldwork are not because these populations are in danger of extinction, as Malinowski imagined. On the contrary, they happened because the indigenous peoples are more and more the subjects of their own stories and readers of ethnographies produced by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. The indigenous peoples seek, nowadays, to gain control over the ethnographic images produced about them, and the criticism to the legacy of colonialism causes contemporary anthropologists to adopt the methodology of "observant participation", according to which the political demands of the natives should be articulated with the epistemology of the ethnographer (Albert 1997).

This theoretical and methodological realignment that aims at the creation of more symmetrical relationships with the studied populations also applies to ethnomusicology, which uses ethnography as a reference to the research method. Anthropology and ethnomusicology arise at the same time, one influencing the other. Also, over the course of its history, ethnomusicology has been influenced by the same theoretical trends that have shaped anthropology, as we can see in the work of Erich von Hornbostel and in the constitution of comparative musicology (Merriam 1980: 4-5), which is intrinsically connected to collectionism (Eames 2003).

III

Since the first contacts with the American peoples, the Europeans started to collect and describe their “exotic artifacts”, thereby making them known to the western public. Considering that, until the 19th century, the knowledge of non-western music was limited to collectionism, the interest in exotic musical instruments was the possible materialization of the indigenous music and belonged to the “cabinets of curiosities”. Considering that, in the west, the sound is understood as “intangible”, the sound manifestations of non-western peoples only became the target of systematic studies at the end of the 19th century, after the invention of the Edison phonograph (Eames 2003).

Between the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century, several travelers, adventurers, and European researchers went on exploratory trips to South America in order to study the local nature and the material culture of the native peoples, returning with several ethnographic objects. Collectionism aimed to create a classification for the objects of the culture, attributing new meanings to them in a western perspective. To minimize what seemed inevitable, that is, the loss of cultural diversity with the advance of capitalism and civilization expansion, collectionism aimed to record through objects the “evolution of man” (Fischer 2007). The artifacts were interpreted from the evolutionist paradigm. They were regarded as representatives of earlier stages of human culture and came to support the European belief in their cultural superiority. Before capturing their voices and images with recorders and cameras, the West placed the objects of the indigenous natives in the showcases of European museums. This was the scientific tradition according to which Koch-Grünberg became an ethnographer and, based on it and on the German Americanist tradition, he produced the phonographic recordings and ethnographic collections that are addressed in this dissertation.

Comparative musicology has its golden age with the school of Berlin, connected at its origin to the Phonogramm-Archiv and to Carl Stumpf (1841-1936) and Erich Moritz von Hornbostel (1877-1935). Hornbostel was the musicologist who most contributed to the consolidation of the discipline, integrating musicology, anthropology and psychology in his works, and opening up innovative ways through which researchers such as G. Herzog, F. Bose and M. Kolinski would follow by consolidating ethnomusicology in the United States after the Second World War (Aubert 2007, Menezes Bastos 2013). For the purpose of this dissertation, Hornbostel’s work is also important for being the first person to musicologically study the music of the Ye’kwana.

In the 19th century, the field of musical science is born from a rupture with musical history and musical theory, thus creating a new object: the music of the past. Departing from an aesthetics of the present, Karl Franz Friedrich Chrysander (1826-1901) stated that the musical science should analyze and think about the songs according to the spirit of its time (Menezes Bastos 1995). In line with this concept of music of the past, the music of the Other arises. Both are based on the distinction between pure music (western) and functional music (primitive), among others, and on the absence, among primitive peoples, of theories of music (Aubert 2007).

Franz Boas, German anthropologist who was fundamental in the formation of North-American anthropology and ethnomusicology, in his book “Primitive Art” (2010: 1) proposed two principles for the investigation of life manifestations in primitive societies: “the one the fundamental sameness of mental processes in all races and in all cultural forms of the present day, the other, the consideration of every cultural phenomenon as the result of historical happenings. These statements address the core of his critique of evolutionism⁵. Nothing in the so-called primitive societies justifies an European superiority of race over the colonized peoples. For Boas, what distinguished the West from the so-called primitive societies was the greater amount of knowledge about the objective world, historically received throughout the generations. However, Boas warns, that should not be used to hierarchically differentiate us in relation to other peoples, since the logic of science is not the logic of life and “the feelings underlying taboo are always among us” (2010: 2). With this relativist and multiculturalist point of view, Franz Boas guides anthropology to visualize the unity of mental processes in all societies and the importance of the lived world.

A disciple of Franz Boas and Marcel Mauss, the French Claude Lévi-Strauss reflected in several of his works (1970, 2004b, 2011) on the logic of sensory qualities in South American indigenous thinking. The analyses made by Lévi-Strauss about Amerindian myths are essential in thinking about how the mythical thinking is connected to acoustic codes and is also open to transformations and to history. Lévi-Strauss (2004b) reveals in the Amerindian myths what he calls the “economy of the acoustic code” that is connected to gastronomic, social, and cosmological codes, which will be thought of in relation to the modes with which the Ye’kwana perform their instrumental music and their vocal and chant genres.

5 About the critique of evolutionism regarding ethnographic collections, see: Boas (2004).

In the 1950s, Jaap Kunst (1950) proposed the term ethno-musicology for comparative musicology. Years later, Alan P. Merriam (1980) developed the foundations of an anthropological musicology. In “Anthropology of Music”, Merriam addresses the study of music in culture, with an emphasis on anthropology as the basis for the study of culture (the general, its context), and its songs (the particular, its expression). For Merriam, although the musicological techniques have been applied to a large number of songs worldwide with valuable results, the anthropological questions regarding human behavior and ideation together with music were not problematized (1980: viii). Merriam’s work synthesizes the ethnomusicological dilemma, in the connections between anthropology and music. This dilemma, which is not unique to ethnomusicology, articulates the notion of music divided into two plans of analysis: that of the musical sounds, and that of culture and behavior (Menezes Bastos 1995: 10). The first plan requires a musicological analysis, while the second plan must be submitted to anthropological examination, since behavior would determine sounds, which makes ethnomusicology, according to Merriam’s understanding, the study of music in culture (1980).

At the end of the 19th century, Guido Adler (1885: 14) created the first definition of ethnomusicology, proposing as its field of investigation the comparison of tonal production, especially folk chants of different peoples, with ethnographic and classificatory purposes. According to Rafael Menezes Bastos (1995: 14-15), Brazilian ethnomusicologist with decades of research experience with the Kamayurá indigenous people, by using the noun “Ton”, Guido Adler defines as the object of ethnomusicology the continuum of vocal-sound discourses, establishing for comparative musicology a broader object than that which has been effectively consolidated.

For Menezes Bastos (1995: 12), the westerners are also able to operationalize “the interface of music with other systems of sociocultural life”. However, in the context of the musical sciences, this influence would be problematic, sterilized by rules of combination of music with other systems and the other way around. The ethnomusicological dilemma is, therefore, that of reducing sounds (its phonology and grammar) to their context of use and vice-versa. The response throughout the history of ethnomusicology has been sought in the contextual interface, which reveals the “disbelief in the relevance of a plan of content for this language”. This denial of music as semantics ends up restricting it to the plane of pure sensoriality, thus depriving it from its intelligibility (Menezes Bastos 1995: 12-3). As a proposal to abandon the dilemmatic paradigm of anthropology, Menezes Bastos proposes a Musical Semantics that is “based on the relevance and validity of a plane of musical content,

encoded within the plane of expression”. From this perspective, music is social not only in its content, but also in its form (Menezes Bastos 1995: 13).

In an important turn in American ethnomusicology in the 1980s, the American ethnomusicologist Steven Feld (1990) in his ethnomusicological study conducted with the Kaluli, inhabitants of the highlands of the tropical forest in the south of Papua New Guinea, analyzed sounds as a cultural system, focusing on the sound modalities of laments, poetry and chants, using the structural theory of Claude Lévi-Strauss, the interpretivist anthropology of Clifford Geertz, and the communicative anthropology of Dell Hymes, considering these theories as styles of analysis, without constraining the data of the Kaluli to a single analytical framework. Rather, Feld used different theoretical approaches with the aim of better analyzing the ethnographic material. For Feld, the vocal sound modalities of the Kaluli are integrated and reflect the symbolic circle around the myth of a boy who became a bird, and the theme of the myth, the becoming bird, is the metaphorical foundation of the Kaluli aesthetics.

The Kaluli sound expressions carry deep feelings that are their form of intelligibility. Steven Feld followed his intuition that this people might use sounds in place of other sensory systems in a variety of sound expressions and focused his attention to the relationships between ecology, the sounds of nature and those of cultural expression. His main goal was to build a symbolic interpretation that showed how these expressive modalities are culturally constructed through performances and codes that communicate with deep feelings connected to the myths. Another important aspect of his work, which serves as an inspiration to this dissertation (besides the freedom of being able to use different approaches to account for the complexity and richness of the ethnographic material), is the reception of “Sound and Sentiments” among the Kaluli decades after it was written.

In the section entitled “Dialogic editing”, Feld comments on a brief trip he made to the Kaluli territory, years after his study, in which he receives a box with copies of the new edition of his book. The reflections about the negotiations with the Kaluli about what the researcher and the natives said through each other was inspiring to the reflections about the reception of Koch-Grünberg’s phonograms and about my own research relationship with the Ye’kwana.

Another important reference for this work is the concept of musical anthropology by Anthony Seeger (2004). I use the term musical ethnography in the same perspective of the contrast that Seeger addressed between an anthropology of music and a musical

anthropology. The difference between these approaches is one of perspective, since while the former seeks to think of music (and other arts) as “part” of the culture, pointing to issues of contextual order, a musical anthropology seeks to analyze how performances are responsible for the creation of many aspects of social life and culture, studying “social life as performance” (Seeger 2004: xiii).

A musical anthropology aims to analyze the “way music is part of the very construction and interpretation of social and conceptual relationships and processes” (Seeger 2004: xiv). In this regard, Seeger shows progress in relation to Merriam’s approach. Merriam saw the study of ethnomusicology as being that of “music in culture”, music as part of the social life. Seeger, in turn, seeks to “establish aspects of social life as musical and as created and re-created through performance” (Seeger 2004: xiv).

A musical ethnography aims to describe and reflect on sound dimensions not only based on the concepts of western anthropology and ethnomusicology but remaining attentive to the emic categories of the natives. For the Ye’kwana, singing is a creative process of transformation and (re) invention. The questions of why “music” is made in a certain way and in a certain situation, why there is a high appreciation of singing as an element of creation of people, places, and objects, and why there are certain structures of performances that use melodies, timbres and rhythms in a particular way are essential understand “cosmosonics” as the Ye’kwana theory about the sounds and the cosmos, or as reverse ethnomusicology, as a Ye’kwana theory about the symbolic efficacy of sounds in the world.

By privileging the Ye’kwana concepts about their acoustic system instead of structural and formal analyses, I adopt the notion that “music is much more than just the sounds captured on a tape recorder” (Seeger 2004: xiv) and I seek to focus on the acts of speaking and making sounds, on the performances and discourses of the natives. Now, in the beginning of the 21st century, the Ye’kwana do their own research, ethnographies, video and audio recordings with which they create duplications of themselves and of the white people. Because they have the right to exist and maintain their culture in a globalized world, they require their interlocutors and collaborators to establish symmetrical relations that strengthen their process of political autonomization. Considering the above, while this dissertation begins with the pioneering descriptions of Theodor Koch-Grünberg within the context of European imperialism, it ends by inviting the reader to take absolutely seriously the Ye’kwana sound and cosmological thinking, expressed in the mythology of *watunna* and

in the summonings and chants of cosmosonics, the Ye'kwana counterpart to our concepts of history, culture and music.

IV

The Ye'kwana are one of the Carib peoples who migrated through the Amazon rivers located in northern Brazil and southern Venezuela, succeeding the Arawak groups that lived in the region. The ethnographic literature refers to the Ye'kwana using different names, Makiritare, Dekuana, Guaynungomo, Ihuruana, Kunuana and Majonggóng are some of these names, which designate phonetic and regional variations (Coppens 1971).

Arvelo-Jimenez (1974: 15) states that the Ye'kwana territorial expansion started by the mid-18th century. This expansion happened largely due to the wars with some Yanomami subgroups (Waika and Xirixana) who came from Brazil and pushed the Ye'kwana towards the north, just as they had previously displaced Arawak groups. The hostility between the Yanomami and the Ye'kwana lasted for more than a century and, since the last war between them, it turned into concealed opposition. Nowadays, these groups inhabit a vast common territory and the relationship between them is of respectful truce in spite of the reciprocal distrust and criticism⁶.

The initial contact with the Spanish was friendly and, in the year 1759, the Ye'kwana collaborated in the foundation of La Esmeralda community, located at the mouth of the rivers Padamo and Cunucunuma. In this village, built in collaboration with several other indigenous ethnic groups, a missionary center was created under the responsibility of the Franciscan friars, where the natives would be catechized under the protection and domain of the Spanish (Arvelo-Jimenez 1974). Nevertheless, the relationships of the Ye'kwana and the Spanish trembled after the violent colonization policy implemented in the upper Orinoco, which aimed at the construction of nineteen military forts to dominate the region (Coppens 1981). With this invasion policy, the Ye'kwana were submitted to forced labor and knew the missionary ardor of the Franciscan and Capuchin friars who wished to convert them to

⁶ The main Ye'kwana village in Brazil is located in Auaris. Their relationship with the Sanumá is characterized by tensions but also by exchange and reciprocity. Both in Brazil and in Venezuela, most of the Ye'kwana communities are surrounded by Sanumá villages that, in the last century, entered the territory traditionally occupied by the Ye'kwana and permanently settled there. In general, the Sanumá, in exchange for various goods, work together with the Ye'kwana cleaning and felling for gardens, opening paths, collecting materials for the construction of houses, constructing canoes, and loading goods during trips, among other chores. Besides, they are currently sources for the acquisition of game meat and they provide shamanic and funeral services. See chapter 1.

Christianity. In reaction to the hostility of the colonizers, the Ye'kwana organized a response in conjunction with several neighboring tribes and in just one night they destroyed the nineteen forts and drove the Spanish out of the upper Orinoco for the next one hundred and fifty years (Guss 1990: 12). After breaking relations with the Spanish, they began to take trips to the Dutch fort of Kijkoveral, in the mouth of the Essequibo river, marking the beginning of their relations with the Dutch.

A remarkable fact in the collective memory of the Ye'kwana in Brazil is the series of incursions of rubber traffickers who, at the beginning of the 20th century, caused a true genocide with cycles of capturing people as slave workforce. In 1913, Tomás Funes, a rubber merchant, murdered the governor of the province of San Fernando de Atabapo becoming the ruler of the Federal Territory of Amazonas independently from the central government of Caracas (Guss 1990: 10). Besides enslaving the Ye'kwana men, Funes ordered violent attacks that resulted in the murdering and torturing of entire villages. These traumatic events are still quite alive in the memory of the Ye'kwana of Auaris, who commonly associate the white people to the image of Funes, who was responsible for the deaths of at least one thousand Ye'kwana (Guss 1990: 10).

The migration to the north started by the Yanomami expansion caused one Ye'kwana group to abandon the region of the Federal Territory of Amazonas and settle at the margins of the Paragua river, south of the Bolívar state. Another group, however, migrated to the south, towards Brazil and the Uraricoera river. This migration did not happen so much because of external pressures of enemy groups but because of a search for new trade routes. The ceased relations with the Spanish led to a lack of manufactured goods on which the Ye'kwana were already dependent. This fact motivated this group to cross the Pacaraima mountains and settle in Brazil (Guss 1990: 11). The Ye'kwana claim that trade relations with the Macuxi and the conflicts with the Yanomami are two of the main factors that motivated their settling in Brazil.

In 1800, Alexander von Humboldt traveled to the upper Orinoco and mentioned that the Ye'kwana natives lived at the sources of the rivers Caura, Ventuari, Padamo, and Cataniapo. At that time, Esmeralda was in sharp decline and no longer had the constant presence of missionaries, which led Coppens (1981) to infer that the communities located in the meridional region of the Ye'kwana territory were not target of intense evangelization. In the period from 1838 to 1839, the Prussian explorer Robert Schomburgk (1931) found the Ye'kwana along the courses of the rivers Merewari, Ventuari, Cunucunuma and Padamo,

crossing, thus, this group's traditional territory. The traveler noticed their dexterity in producing grinders, baskets and blowguns, and also noticed the pressure exerted by the Yanomami on the Ye'kwana. He observed "mixed" villages, composed of Ye'kwana and Guinau (an Arawak group considered extinct) natives.

In 1912, Koch-Grünberg visited Ye'kwana villages located in the Merewari, Ventuari and Canaracuni rivers, located in Venezuela. In "From Roraima to the Orinoco", he claimed that the groups that lived in the rivers Caura and Merewari were "Ye'kwana", those who lived along the margins of the middle and lower Ventuari river were "Dekuana", those who lived near the rivers Cunucunuma, Padamo and Orinoco were "Kunuana", and those who lived in the mountains from which come the sources of the main tributaries of the Orinoco river were "Ihuruana", close to the center of this people's traditional territory⁷. In addition to creating important descriptions about the habits and culture of the Ye'kwana, Koch-Grünberg described the construction of a roundhouse (*ättä*), collected objects, took several photographs, and created phonograph records.

Two and a half decades later, the French explorer Alain Gheerbrant (1971) sought to reverse the route taken by Koch-Grünberg, a trip that resulted in a quite unorthodox report about the Ye'kwana, called Makiritare in the book. Gheerbrant left Bogotá in September 1948 for an expedition that lasted eight months. His trip resulted in a report on the last three big chiefs of the Ye'kwana, Kalomera, Frenario, and Cejoyuma, and in valuable descriptions about the Ye'kwana music and their resistance to phonograph records. Unfortunately, the video, photograph and phonograph recordings captured by Gheerbrant were lost during his return trip, in the maze-like rapids of Maracá Island.

In the 1950s, more systematic research on the Ye'kwana starts being conducted. In 1952, the French researcher Marc de Civrieux, originally a geologist but with great anthropological curiosity and sensitivity, took part in an expedition to the source of the Orinoco that led to a relationship of decades with the Ye'kwana. Among his many studies in the areas of linguistics, ethnobotany and ethnology, he compiled myths that resulted in the masterful book "*Watunna: An Orinoco Creation Cycle*" (1980), regarded as one of the first American reports about the conquering of Spanish America.

At the end of the 1960s, Nelly Arvelo-Jimenez conducted fieldwork that resulted in her doctoral dissertation on Ye'kwana kinship and politics, defended at Cornell University

⁷ The Ye'kwana that settled on the Brazilian side, descend from the Ihuruana, and Vicente Castro himself, the greatest sage among them, has Ihuruana in his surname.

in 1971 (Arvelo-Jimenez 1974). Her work focuses on how the constitution and destitution of villages are operationalized in a society without centralized coercive power. The anthropologist also wrote about the ritual life, and gave a description of the *ättä*, the roundhouse, and its relationship with cosmology. After her doctorate, Arvelo-Jimenez continued researching the Ye'kwana and writing several articles about them (1991 and 2004).

Also in the 1960s, Walter Coppens, a Belgian anthropologist who was one of the greatest editors and ethnologists of Venezuela (Mansutti 2010), worked with various Ye'kwana groups along parts of the rivers Caura, Erebató and Paragua, focusing on intertribal trade (Coppens 1971) and changes due to non-indigenous influence (1981). Moreover, it is worth mentioning the compilation made on a disk published by the La Salle Natural Sciences Foundation, with "Makiritare Indigenous Music" (1975). Daniel de Barandiarán, a former missionary of the fraternity of Foucault, remained for years in contact with the Ye'kwana and their neighbors, the Sanumá, and wrote several articles about them. About the Ye'kwana, it is worth highlighting his work on shamanism (1962b) and on the roundhouse (1966), in addition to articles about the Ye'kwana language, such as "Datos Lingüísticos de la Lengua Makiritare" (1959), a result of two contacts made by the La Salle Natural Sciences Society with the Ye'kwana of the upper Ventuari river, in the year 1958. In these articles about the Ye'kwana language, Barandiarán signed under the pseudonym Damián de Escoriaza.

Years after having been invited by Marc de Civrieux to translate his book containing the myths of *watunna* (1980), David Guss published part of the results of his research with the Ye'kwana, carried out between 1976 and 1984, in the beautiful book "To Weave and Sing", a work about the Ye'kwana basketry and chants, relating them to the myths and dualisms of the *watunna*. In his book, the author states that the Ye'kwana self-designation refers to their navigational skills, since "ye" means tree, "ku", water, and "ana", people, which, translated, means "people of the canoe" or "people of the water stick" (Guss 1990: 7).

While commenting on the progress of his research, which initially intended to study *watunna*, Guss highlights the difficulties of learning a myth, which was often told in parts, in an open mode of narration, and of the problems with the study of chants, performed in specialized shamanic language. In the very introduction, he comments about the chants and their ability to communicate with the spirits of the invisible world, stating that, because of

that, they “had a resistant intent towards any electronic interference” (Guss 1990: 2), a reflection that will be addressed throughout this dissertation⁸. Realizing the difficulties of the process of learning *watunna*, which should be broad and active, Guss began to learn how to make the male baskets and, from this process, ended up being introduced to the world of *watunna* and the chants, since, according to him, all the paths in the Ye’kwana culture lead to *watunna*. Combining the structuralist tradition with some studies on the anthropology of art and Geertz’s interpretive anthropology (1983), from which he derives his concept of culture as being a way of thinking, David Guss analyzed the dual metaphors present in the symbolism of the baskets, which were projections of more elementary oppositions between chaos and order, visible and invisible, being and non-being (Guss 1990: 4). From the study of the techniques and the patterns of *waja* baskets, the ethnographer realized that each cultural symbol reproduces the dual organization of reality that structures every aspect of society and is an expression of the lessons learned from *watunna*. In addition to his analysis of the baskets, Guss carried out an important analysis of how these dual structures are expressed in the construction of the person (*so’to*), of the houses (*ättä*), and of the gardens (*audaja*).

In the 21st century, Nalua Monterrey, who has maintained contact with the Ye’kwana since 1987, defended a dissertation titled “Power, kinship and society among the Ye’kwana in Caura” (2007) at the Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. Articulating written documents with oral history, a review of the history of the contact with Europeans and its impact among the Ye’kwana, Monterrey aims to study the constitution of decentralized indigenous societies that are typical in the region of the Guyanas, based on the concrete case of the Ye’kwana. For that, she addresses the elements that collaborate with the Ye’kwana social unity, reflecting on how they constitute unity or not, determining the elements that form social cohesion or make it possible (2015: 19).

On the Brazilian side, Alcida Ramos, an anthropologist who conducted her doctoral research about the Sanumá natives (1990)⁹, neighbors of the Ye’kwana in the region of Auaris, has produced a few studies about the relationships between the Ye’kwana and the Sanumá. In the book “Hierarchy and Symbiosis” (1980) Ramos addressed the relations established between the Ye’kwana (who, in the book, were called Maiongong) and their neighbors, the Sanumá. In the first chapter of this book, the anthropologist seeks to analyze

⁸ See, especially, chapter 4.

⁹ Defended in 1971 at the University of Wisconsin.

the mechanisms that maintain the Ye'kwana and the Sanumá groups separated, even while they live in the same territory, and the classification criteria used in the categorization of the children of intertribal relationships. The second chapter, co-authored by Ana Gita de Ramos, analyzes the testimony of the young João Koch, who, when requested by the anthropologist's assistant, granted a few hours of interview in which he narrates his point of view about the relationship of the Ye'kwana with the Sanumá, with the non-indigenous society, with other indigenous groups and with their relatives who live in Venezuela, as well as talks about the Ye'kwana eschatology present in *watunna*. In the third chapter, the author describes a rumor whose outcome will be described years later in a new article called "The Prophecy of a rumor: Killing for gold in the Yanomami territory" (1996). In it, Ramos describes a rumor about the death of Lourenço, leader of the Ye'kwana who lived in the mixed community at the time of his fieldwork, and compares the Ye'kwana with the Sanumá and the miners regarding what would supposedly be their different ways of managing the resources obtained with the illegal mining that happened at the time in the region. As a conclusion, the author attributes to the Ye'kwana an "entrepreneurial rationality".

Years later, Karenina Andrade (2005), a student of Alcida Ramos, defended her dissertation at the University of Brasília (UNB), in which she also addresses the two hypotheses of Ramos about the Ye'kwana, the supposed "entrepreneurial rationality" and the eschatology of the end of their culture. In "Ye'kwana ethics and the spirit of entrepreneurship" (2005), Andrade covers part of the Ye'kwana narratives about the future and the "end of the world", linking it to the process of "becoming white"¹⁰. Her other interest is analyzing the entering of the Ye'kwana in the capitalist society which, according to the intuitions of Ramos, would be something more than simply acquiring goods, making the author, "inspired by the analysis of Max Weber (2004) on the confluence of values between the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism", investigate "the connections between the Ye'kwana ethos and the market logic in which they are inserted" (Andrade 2005: 5).

Besides Ramos and Andrade, Elaine Lauriola (2012) has conducted field research in Auaris in 2000, which resulted in a doctoral dissertation, defended in 2012 at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. Lauriola discusses the relationship between the memory of the sacred chants and the construction of the person, addressing the circulation of the notebooks and the initiation of the singers, and the transformations brought by the passage from orality to the production of a "written literature", and also addressing the relationship

10 Regarding the Ye'kwana view about the future, see chapter 5.

between the memorization of the chants and the eating taboos related to the construction of the body of the chant owners, paying attention to the notion of predation.

Renata Diniz wrote a master's thesis in social anthropology at the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), in which, based on the literature about the Ye'kwana and on a short trip she made up to Auaris to participate in the making of a documentary¹¹, she conducted a structuralist analysis of the *watunna* mythology. In "The twin imagination" (2006), Diniz applies the myth analysis method proposed by Lévi-Strauss (2004, 2004b, 2006, 2011) to the Ye'kwana material, demonstrating how, both in mythology and in person, at home and with kinship, the instability of the dualisms in perpetual unbalance that are present in their cosmology give the Ye'kwana thinking a transformational and open dynamic.

At the moment I finish the writing of this dissertation, Majoí Gongora, an anthropologist of the University of São Paulo (USP), concluded her doctoral dissertation focusing, as Lauriola, on the chant notebooks of the Ye'kwana. The anthropologist seeks to study the chants within their enunciative contexts, articulating them with the notion of person, and thinking about the chants as ways of action and replication. Based on a notion of the instability of the Ye'kwana person and its relationship with the notion of contamination, Gongora describes the processes of transmission and circulation of the chants, and the relationship of the Ye'kwana with the non-indigenous and the transformations resulting from this contact.

The interest of the anthropologists in these notebooks shows the importance of the *a'chudi* and *edemi* within the broader universe that this research addresses: the vocal and instrumental system and the acoustic perception of the Ye'kwana world, translated in terms of a cosmosonics.

V

This dissertation is structured in such a manner that "musical" issues are focused on its central part (chapters 2, 3 and 4), while the first chapter addresses the spiral of time of the Ye'kwana, of the century that separates Koch-Grünberg's trip from my field research, and the final chapter seeks to discuss the native reflection of future and how it is related to the

¹¹ This documentary is called "Tanöökö" and was focused on a celebration of the arrival of the hunters (*tanöökö edemi jödö*). About this ceremony, see chapter 2.

cosmosonics. Throughout this dissertation, I make use of the word music between quotation marks because I believe that this western concept greatly differs from Ye'kwana concepts. The concept of music seeks to freeze sounds in their phonographic or grammatical aspects. On the other hand, the Ye'kwana cosmosonics aims to create a connection between sounds and senses as clusters of relationships among the different life instances of the Ye'kwana.

The first chapter presents the Ye'kwana highlighting their multiple temporalities and forms of relationship with the western culture throughout the 20th century. In this initial chapter, the relationship of Koch-Grünberg with the Amazon, and his importance as a pioneer in studies about the indigenous peoples of the region of Roraima are addressed. Based on the descriptions made by Theodor Koch-Grünberg, I then present the Ye'kwana and their transformations throughout the 20th century: I describe the villages, the subsistence activities and the *watunna* cosmology as a native theory of knowledge, the history of contacts with evangelical and catholic missions, of the schooling and the appearance of chant notebooks as a result of the alphabetization in their native language.

In the second chapter, I address the place of senses in the Amazonian cosmologies, and that of hearing as a privileged sense that grants access to knowledge according to the Ye'kwana thinking. Cosmosonics is presented in this chapter as a synthetic concept for the sound arts, especially the vocal arts. The main Ye'kwana rituals and ceremonies are described, combining the ethnography of performances with the descriptions of cosmology and sounds, I seek to answer a few questions such as, for example, when, where, how, why and for whom certain rites and ceremonies are performed, and what their importance is for both the person and the society.

In chapter three, I analyze the *shiiwokomo* category, which is equivalent to what we call "musical instruments", and I state the importance of sounds in the creation of objects and, inversely, the importance of objects that produce sound. Based on studies of the organology of instruments developed by Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs (1961), and incorporating the new horizons for the classification of these objects proposed by Anthony Seeger (1987), I describe the native ethnotheory of musical instruments from their positions in the acoustic system of the Ye'kwana, adding to their descriptions data on the cosmology, construction, repertoire and performances of some of the instruments.

The fourth chapter addresses the Ye'kwana perspective on the revolution of phonography that allowed comparative musicology to be consolidated as a science of the western musical alterity. The way the Ye'kwana (based on the categories of *watunna* and on

the economy of the acoustic code implied in the cosmosonics) understand the sound recorders and players of the white people indicates distinct theories about memory and records. I also analyze the reception of Koch-Grünberg's centennial phonograms, reinserting them in the genres of the cosmosonics analyzed in chapter 2. Additionally, I analyze an aspect that is rarely addressed on studies made by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists: the ways in which songs and recording equipment of the white people are inserted in the context of indigenous societies, especially among the young ones. The way audiovisual devices are interpreted through the narratives of *watunna* and cosmosonics suggests a perspective that can be regarded as reverse ethnomusicology (Wagner 2016), as will be shown throughout the dissertation.

The final chapter seeks to reflect, based on the Ye'kwana cosmosonics, about the future of the indigenous people, the white people and planet Earth. Based on the principle of taking seriously what the Ye'kwana say about sounds and the world, I present some reflections about the future of the indigenous people and of the white people on Earth. The indiscernibility relationship between chants and nature indicates the preservation of chants as a condition of the permanence of life itself on Earth, which is understood as being fundamented on the sound-musical experience.

1. THE YE'KWANA: A CENTURY OF NARRATIVES

1.1. Koch-Grünberg and the Amazon

Ich betrachte die mir so wohlbekanntesten Bilder vom Hohentwiel und fühle mich um 20 Jahre zurückversetzt, in die Zeit, da ich als lebenslustiger und lebensdurstiger junger Student, begeistert für alles Schöne in der Natur, hinauszog vom alten Tübingen nach den Stätten von Scheffels Ekkehard und stundenlang träumend auf dem Gipfel des gewaltigen Felsblocks lag zwischen Trümmern einstiger Macht und Herrlichkeit. — Lang ist's her! Die unbestimmten Träume des Jünglings sind zur Wirklichkeit geworden. Wenn ich damals in Tübingen, anstatt, wie ich es hätte tun sollen, klassische Philologie zu treiben, die Indianersprachen, die einst Martius sammelte, fein säuberlich, nach Sprachgruppen geordnet, in einzelne Hefte schrieb, so sitze ich jetzt selbst hier mitten unter den Indianern und quäle mich Tag für Tag mit den verzwickten Lauten des Makuschí (Macuxi) und Wapischána (Wapischana). (Koch-Grünberg, 1917: 46).

On May 27th, 1911, Theodor Koch-Grünberg disembarked at the port of Manaus, a Brazilian city erected within the largest rainforest of the world, to start a new scientific expedition that would last two years. Koch-Grünberg had not returned to the port of Manaus since his last exploration trip in the region (1903-1905), occasion in which he visited several communities of the Amazonian northwest region, traveling through poorly known or even unknown regions in the borders with Colombia and Venezuela. He went along the upper Rio Negro and its affluents Içana, Caiary-Uauapés, Curicuriary, Apaporís and Yapurá, and finally returned through the Amazon river until reaching his own country carrying more than thousand pictures of indigenous people (Koch-Grünberg 2005). He had known the indigenous people for many years, since the time he was an assistant photographer in the expedition of Herrmann Meyer at the Upper Xingu river, and he recorded chants of the Kamayurá and Bororo indigenous peoples with an Edison phonograph¹².

In addition to aspirations as a man of science, Koch-Grünberg intended, with his ethnographic descriptions, to deconstruct prejudices and cause an ever growing circle of readers to “know more about these natural peoples who are so poorly understood” (Koch-Grünberg 2005: 8), with his relativist perspective and insatiable ethnographic curiosity, he

¹² These recordings have unfortunately been lost (Kraus 2006: 69).

marked ethnology as one of the great exponents of the German-Americanism of nineteenth-century tradition in the Amazon (Farage and Santilli 2006: 14).

Theodor Koch was born in 1872, in Grünberg. His father was the local Lutheran pastor, Karl Koch, his mother was Bertha. It is believed that, since an early age, he interested in South American indigenous cultures after getting in contact with the travel literature and articles from experts published in the *Globus* journal (Kraus 2006: 14). In 1891, he started his studies in philology, German language and geography at the Universities of Giessen and Tübingen, a time in which ethnology seminars were sporadically held, even though it was still not an institutionalized discipline in universities of the German empire (Kraus 2006: 14)¹³. It was the age of evolutionist theories and Adolf Bastian's influence in the consolidation of anthropology in Germany. His concept of psychic unity of mankind, according to which cultures such as the ones found in the Amazon were important objects of study, depicted indigenous people as "Naturvölker" of museographic and psychologic interest, comparatively analyzing the world's cultural diversity from the paradigm related to the natural sciences (Viveiros de Castro and Carneiro da Cunha, 1993: 11)¹⁴.

The concept of "psychic unity of mankind" and its unfolding into "popular ideas" (Völkergedanken) and "elementary ideas" (Elementargedanken) marked the consolidation of the German ethnology. According to this perspective, different forms of culture would have the same origin, which would confirm a psychic unity common to the entire mankind, exposed in the "elementary ideas". Cultural differentiation would result from complex historical processes that his theory sought to break down by studying the "popular ideas", which would be the internal cultural variations in their different developmental stages (Chevron 2007: 34-5)¹⁵.

13 Near the end of the 19th century, anthropology started to consolidate itself as a discipline among German sciences thanks to Adolf Bastian. First professor of ethnology in the history of the German academy in 1869, he was also the director and founding member of the "Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde", currently the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, which has the world's largest ethnological collection. Moreover, he founded journals in this newborn study area, such as the *Zeitschrift für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (Berlin Association of Anthropology, Ethnology and Ancient History) (Kraus 2006: 14-15).

14 At the end of the 19th century, the newly born sciences of man faced an obstacle: knowing how far cultural changes can be attributed to an evolutionary order and how it can be acknowledged and explained. The relationship between a "common base" and the differences between cultures emerged as a theme to be explored by the newly born anthropology. In general terms, it can be said that the dominant scientific position in the formation period of German ethnology was based on the fact that cultural similarities and differences were to be seen as the result of historical regularities or evolutionary laws. Bastian's attitude regarding the controversy between adaptation and development, evolution and cultural change, was to come up with a synthesis of such terms (Chevron 2007: 32).

15 Bastian thought collectionism was the base to support studies on "popular ideas", the objects of oral traditions, and scientific descriptions of cultures were, then, the basis of the new ethnological science. The pillar of this project was the conception of the museum as a universal archive of mankind. The main purpose

Intellectually influenced by the evolutionism, but driven by a humanist spirit that superseded any other theory¹⁶, Theodor-Koch started, then at the age of 27, his first trip to the Amazon region, joining the expedition to the Upper Xingu led by Herrmann Meyer. Upon returning to Germany, he defended his doctoral dissertation about the Kadiweo (kadiwéu), an indigenous people living in the Brazilian central-west region that years later was visited by the young ethnographer Claude Lévi-Strauss (1996: 143). He started working, invited by Adolf Bastian, as a volunteer at the Königliches Museum, currently the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. Following this partnership, his work as an ethnographer and linguist was connected to museums and to German collectionism.

In 1903, at the age of 31, Theodor Koch embarked on his first expedition as an independent researcher. This exploratory trip was funded by the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde of Berlin and lasted two years, the investigations carried out by the ethnologist began with the communities of Aruaque language. Based at the village of São Felipe, he carried out four field trips of several months to the communities of the upper Rio Negro and its affluents Tiquié, Uaupés, Curicuriari and Içana. Two years later, he finished his trip upon arriving at Manaus after crossing the affluents of the Japurá river. In this trip, the ethnologist made several remarks about the dances and material culture of the Aruaque people, producing an important ethnographic collection that includes dozens of musical instruments (Koch-Grünberg 2005).

Five years after that trip, due to a poor linguistic and ethnological knowledge about the Carib and Aruaque cultures, he picks the region between the Branco and Orinoco rivers, at the border of Brazil and Venezuela, to carry out a new research (Koch-Grünberg 1916, 1917, 1923a, 1923b, 1928). His goal was to continue his linguistic and cultural mapping of the Aruaque communities, which started at Rio Negro, extending it to Carib language groups, which were a majority in the State of Roraima. Still as a professor, he requested and was granted financial support from the Baessler Fund to carry out a new trip to South America.

This expedition began in Manaus from where the ethnologist set on a steamboat from Rio Negro to its affluent Rio Branco. He then crossed the rivers Uraricoera and Tacutu until

of the ethnology that would be consolidated by Bastian was to foster a broad perspective of the overall development of mankind, here and elsewhere, in space and time (Fischer 2007).

¹⁶ Brazilian anthropologists specialized in the region's ethnographic history, Farage and Santilli, mutually perceive in Koch-Grünberg that "a rebellious humanism insists in overflowing – and, why not, betraying – its own theoretical limits (2006: 16)".

finally arriving at the region of São Marcos garden. São Marcos garden belonged to the Brazilian government and was the base from which Koch-Grünberg carried out the first part of his research in the region of savannas¹⁷ and mountains, with the Macuxi, Taurepang and Wapichana peoples. Next, he traveled to Mount Roraima at the border between Brazil, Venezuela and the British Guyana, where he visited Taurepang villages and made a silent film where he records the life of the Taurepang in the Guyana, and immortalizes them in a scene where they dance, adorned and playing instruments, the *parischerá* (or parixara, a dance that is the symbol of the cultural manifestations of the indigenous people from the savannas and mountains) near Mount Roraima. This first part of the trip crossed savannas and mountains, travelling by land and river with the aid of transporters and indigenous guides.

The second part of the trip included crossing the Uraricoera river and venturing inside the forest to the west of Roraima. In his diary, he mentions that Robert Schomburgk found the Majonggóng (Ye'kwana) seventy years before, and, after the explorer's trip, the upper Uraricoera became an unknown region for the scientific world (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 151)¹⁸. The Uraricoera river is not easy to navigate due to its high number of waterfalls and rocks and also due to the Maracá islands entanglement¹⁹. Until the present time, the Ye'kwana are the ones who are most familiar with the region. The Ye'kwana Manduca guided Koch-Grünberg in the crossing of the islands towards the border with Venezuela²⁰.

When the expedition arrived at the entrance of the Auaris river, the Ye'kwana refused to navigate the river, since they feared to encounter the Yanomami groups that lived there at the time²¹. Thus, they followed through an affluent of the Uraricoera river, where they waited

17 This region of Roraima is also known as savannas and mountains.

18 According to the German anthropologist Erwin Frank, who lived for years in Roraima and studied the history of German anthropology in the Amazon, the work published by Richard Schomburgk (1931) on "his trip (alongside his brother) to the inlands of Guyana and beyond [...] greatly influenced the development of the literary genre of the 'scientific travel reports' in Germany and the current ethnic scenario of the region of Roraima and surroundings" (Frank 2007: 101).

19 The Maracá islands (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 178) is located at the middle Uraricoera river in the border between the Amazon rainforest and the savannas stretching throughout Venezuela and the Guyana and is currently a biological reserve protected by the ICMBIo (Chico Mendes Institute).

20 "Mein Plan ist, zunächst die Route Robert Schomburgks zu verfolgen und den Uraricuéra (Uraricoera) möglichst weit aufwärts zu fahren, um über Land zum Merewarí (Merewari), in die Heimat meines Majonggóng, zu gelangen. Bei diesem Stamme wollen wir die Regenzeit verbringen. Dann wollen wir versuchen, über den Oberlauf des Uraricuéra (Uraricoera) und das Paríma (Parima)-Gebirge die Quellen des Orinoco und durch diesen den Casiquiare und damit den Anschluß an das Bekannte zu erreichen. Sollte dies unmöglich sein, so bleibt uns noch übrig, auf irgend einem anderen neuen Weg zum oberen Orinoco durchzudringen. Zurück gehen wir auf keinen Fall". (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 151).

21 The Auaris river belongs to the traditional territory of the Ye'kwana and nowadays three communities are located along this river, and one community along the Uraricoera, where they live near several Sanumá (Yanomami subgroup) villages.

for the arrival of other Ye'kwana to proceed the trip to the Merewari river in Venezuela, entering the basin of the Orinoco river. Koch-Grünberg had to stay longer than he expected among the Ye'kwana, and after that his expedition went down the Ventuari river until the Orinoco river, then continued to São Francisco de Atabapo, going up that river until the Casiquiare canal, from where they navigated to Rio Negro and came back to Brazilian territory. He finished his trip in 1913 at São Felipe, at the Içana river, a location that served as base for his research trip between 1903-1905.

After the expedition to Roraima, he returned to the city of Freiburg where he worked as a professor for two years. After that period, he became director of the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, a position he kept until 1924, year in which he accepted an invitation to be part of the expedition led by Alexander Hamilton Rice in the region of the Guyana and Roraima (Rice 1978). During this expedition, in which the first aerial photographic projections of the region were made, the author contracted malaria and passed away in the city of Vista Alegre, Roraima.

Koch-Grünberg's method consisted in collecting data and objects at the villages he visited and from his assistants during the trip. Carrying an Edison phonograph, a photographic camera and a video camera, he recorded several materials about the indigenous people of the region. Part of this material can be found in the collections of the Berlin and Munich Museums, while his assets are deposited at the Marburg Museum. The letters exchanged between Theodor Koch-Grünberg and Hornbostel about the phonograms are at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, and part of his collection in the Ethnological Museum of this institution can be viewed in the publication "Deutsche am Amazonas" (Staatliche Museen 2005). A selection of the phonograms can be heard in a publication of the Phonogramm-Archiv in bilingual edition, which includes articles from Michael Kraus and Júlio Mendívil (Koch-Grünberg 2006b).

Since it was published, "From Roraima to the Orinoco" has been considered the starting point for all ethnographers working with indigenous cultures in the region of the Guyanas (Guss 1986: 413). Much more than just simple "travel notes" as suggested by the subtitle, the descriptions on the "material and spiritual culture" of the indigenous peoples of Roraima are rich and detailed, with a dense style and a humanist perspective, being a mature work of Koch-Grünberg's (Farage and Santilli 2006: 12). The work represents a stage of transition between travel literature and ethnography in modern standards, since, at the time it was written, the Malinowski method (2005) about fieldwork was not yet consolidated. The

ethnologist followed the methodology of staying for short periods of time with several different groups, a method that was similar to the one adopted by Lévi-Strauss in his expeditions in Brazil years later (Lévi-Strauss 1996).

Figure 1. The sage Vicente Castro comments on excerpts of the book “From Roraima to the Orinoco” (Pablo Albernaz)



Published in Berlin, the research results are distributed into five volumes: the first (Koch-Grünberg 1917) one comprises the field diary of the ethnologist, where we can read a vivid and detailed report on his traveling conditions and on the culture of the indigenous people he visited. The second volume (Koch-Grünberg 1916) is a collection of myths of the Taurepang, Macuxi and Arekuna peoples²², the third (Koch-Grünberg 1923a) one contains his ethnographic descriptions of the cultures of the Taurepang and their neighbors, the Schiriana and Waika (Yanomami groups), as well as the Ye'kwana and the Guinau. The final part was written by the musicologist Erich Hornbostel and describes the phonograms and musical instruments of the Macuxi, Taurepang and Ye'kwana indigenous peoples. The fourth volume (Koch-Grünberg 1928) is dedicated to linguistic records, and the last tome (Koch-Grünberg 1923b) contains hundreds of pictures of indigenous peoples of the many ethnicities found in Roraima. Thanks to his extensive ethnographies about the peoples located in those regions, Koch-Grünberg paved the way for future studies that would soon

22 This tome also has particular importance as it inspired the book “Macunaíma the Hero without character” by Mário de Andrade (Andrade 2001), an iconic representative of the Brazilian literary modernism, and which became one of the works that symbolized the process of constructing a national identity.

appear in the northwestern and northern Amazon (Koch-Grünberg 2006c). In the 1950s, part of the “Vom Roraima zum Orinoco” was translated into Portuguese in an edition published by the “Museu Paulista” (1953) and in the 1970s it was translated into Spanish in a Venezuelan edition including the three first volumes of the work. In 2006, the first volume was finally translated to Portuguese, which allowed the Brazilian public to read the ethnologist’s diary (Koch-Grünberg 2006).

1.2. The Ye’kwana in two slides: 1912 and 2012

Koch-Grünberg was the last naturalist traveler of a nineteenth-century tradition in the Amazon, and, as we have seen, his research method is unique as it does not center on a single thematic focus, having been mostly motivated by the interest in the linguistic mapping of the Carib and Aruaque peoples (Farage and Santilli 2006: 12). Koch-Grünberg had no data on the Ye’kwana population at the time he was in this, then, poorly known region. In 1912, there were five communities near the Merewari river, seven near the Ventuari river, one near Caura and another one near the upper Parú river. The regions of rivers Cunucunuma and Padamo seemed to be more populated, but it was hard to know which were temporary settlements and which were fixed habitations due to the intense territorial mobility of that group (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 322). In Brazil, there was only one community in the Yawaadeejudi (Auaris) river. It was a mixed community with the Maku indigenous people, which today is considered extinct. According to Guss:

By the time of Koch-Grünberg’s arrival in 1912 only one community remained on the east side of the Pacaraima range. (Today the situation is much the same, with the village of Fuduwaruña (Fuduuwaduinha), located in the headwaters of the Uraricoera on the upper Labarejudi, the only Yekuana village left in Brazil.) (Guss 1990: 13).

Currently, the Ye’kwana population is estimated to be nearly 7,000 individuals, distributed in villages located in Brazilian and Venezuelan territories²³. In Venezuela, their traditional territory covers part of the Bolívar State and of the Amazonian Federal Territory. In Brazil, Fuduuwaduinha, Kudaatainha and the small family nuclei called Takunemoinha and Tajädedatoinha are located near the Auaris river, while Waschainha is the only community located near the middle Uraricoera, both rivers are located inside the Yanomami

23 Most of the population lives in Venezuela: 7997 (Instituto Nacional de estadística INE 2001), in Brazil, the Ye’kwana are approximately 593 individuals (Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health SESAI 2015).

Territory. In Venezuela, the Ye'kwana territory has borders to the east with the territory of other Carib cultures, to the south with the Yanomami and to the west with the Piaroa.

In Brazil and Venezuela, the Ye'kwana territory is located in regions of difficult access, near river sources, established in areas where it is possible to keep a constant watch on river and jungle zones considered as areas of spontaneous surveillance and allow the Ye'kwana to have a certain degree of control over the contact with white people and outsiders (Barandiarán 1966, Arvelo-Jimenez 1974). In 1911, all villages had only one roundhouse shared by several families and the number of inhabitants in villages ranged from twenty to sixty people. Nowadays, most Ye'kwana houses have a rectangular shape (*Ku'shamaakadi*) and are only home to the closest family, although Fuduuwaduinha has a big roundhouse (*ättä*)²⁴. Married men usually build their houses next to that of their parents-in-law, following an uxorilocal residential pattern typical of the people from the Guyanas region (Rivière 2001a), which causes the village to be currently made of several family nuclei represented by houses near each other.

Fuduuwaduinha, the main Ye'kwana community in Brazil, was founded in the 1960s by the leader Mötaaku (Nery José Magalhães) at the right margin of the Auaris river, where the region's airstrip is currently located. In 1974 the community moved to the east side of the airstrip and at the end of the 1980s to the left margin of the Auaris river. Between 2009 and 2010, the community moved again to the other side of the river where they remain until present days. Known as the "mother community", Fuduuwaduinha gave birth to the two other Ye'kwana villages currently existing on the Brazilian side.

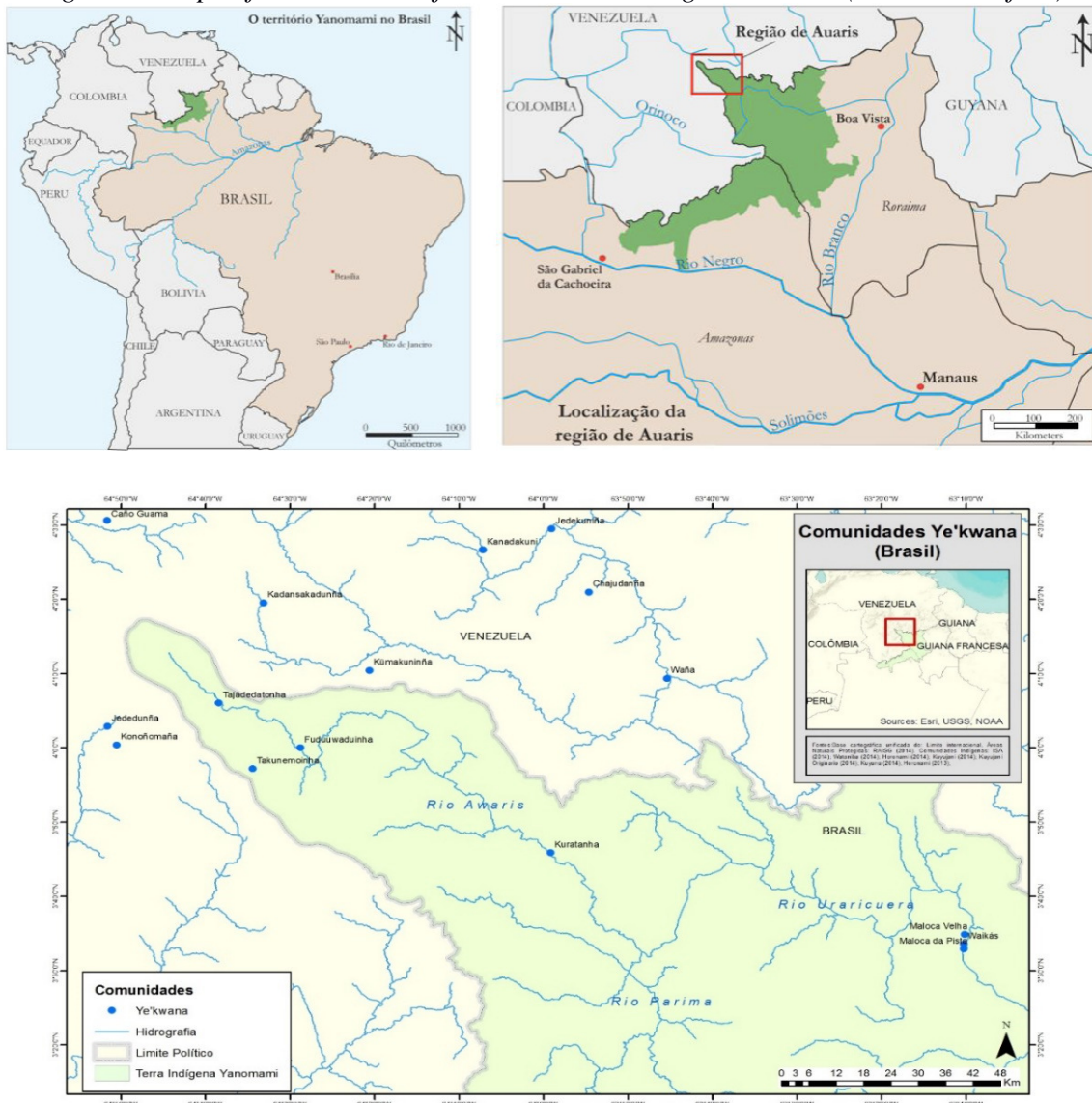
In 1958, the Brazilian Air Force, with the assistance of the Ye'kwana, built an airstrip near the Uraricoera river and in the 1980s some families moved to that location. Waschainha was the name given to the community founded in that region with plenty of hunting and fishing. For many years, the Ye'kwana have used the rivers Yawaadeejudi (Auaris) and Fadiime (Uraricoera) as trading routes, and some of them noticed that living in such a location would allow them a quicker access to Boa Vista. Today, more than 100 Ye'kwana live in the Waschainha community, among them Vicente Castro, the greatest sage with knowledge of chants and stories of *watunna*.

Kudaatainha was founded near the igarapé called Kudaata, where the parents of Mötaaku had lived long ago. Mötaaku wanted to build a community in the region below the

²⁴ See chapter 2.

Tödöomadö waterfall at the Yawaadeejudi (Auaris) river, a location known for its abundant hunting and fishing. Sometime before his death, some of his grandsons traveled to choose the exact location to found the new community. After some years opening gardens, building houses and preparing their arrival, they began, in 2009, to move from Fuduuwaduinha to Kudaatainha.

Figure 2. Maps of the location of the Ye'kwana villages in Brazil (Estevão Benfica)



The villages have ports to access waterways and several paths and tracks inside the forest to access gardens, bathing areas, hunting routes and access to potable water taken from small springs. “Horizon, air, sun, brightness, freedom, peace and harmony” are the criteria established by the Ye'kwana to choose the region to settle (Barandiarán 1966: 7). Around inhabited houses, there are auxiliary houses used to produce food. Such locations and their

surroundings are inhabited by few domestic animals: dogs and hens, curassows, parrots and macaws²⁵. Children also use these places to play when assisting elders in domestic services.

Figure 3. View of the tödöomadö waterfall (Pablo Albernaz)



Far from the village area, most gardens cultivate different types of cassava, peppers, sweet potato, sugar cane, yams, pumpkins, several types of banana, pineapples, calabash, tobacco, peach-palm and heart of palm. There are also fruit trees planted near the village that

25 “Außer den Hunden haben diese Indianer wenige zahme Tiere. In Mauakúnya gab es eine Anzahl Papageien, ein Baumhuhn (Penelope), das später von einem Hund totgebissen wurde, und zwei Trompetervögel (Psophia crepitans) (...) Es sind gesellig lebende Vögel, die im dichten Wald in Scharen von weit über hundert Stück auftreten. In der Gefangenschaft sollen sie sich nicht fortpflanzen” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 343-4).

complement their diet, such as papaya, orange, lemon and star-fruit. Tobacco (*Kawao*) is exclusively used by men, who may also plant them²⁶.

Wild cassava is their main source of food. Tipitis, braided artifacts, are used to remove the poisonous liquid that, after being boiled, for a few hours will be used in pepper production²⁷. After removing the mass, the cassava is prepared to obtain flour, which can be eaten or used in the preparation of the refreshing *wo'kö*, made by adding water. Meals are served around the fire with the people arranged in a circle while the *wo'kö* is always served counterclockwise²⁸. Everyone uses a small calabash bowl and drinks it in a few sips, handing over the recipient to the next person in the circle. During community works, women serve this drink to the participants.

Uu (beijú) is a cassava cookie. After grating the cassava on the grater and removing the mass of the cassava from the *tipiti*, it is then placed on a metal plate where the women, making circular hand movements shape a fine disc, which is put to dry in the sun on the roof of the houses. The *yadaake*, commonly known as *caxiri*, is a fermented cassava-based drink²⁹. To prepare it, many cassava pies are used with the addition of the powder from the plant *Kawiyajo*³⁰, the “mold spirit”, a plant responsible for the fermentation. Then, they are rolled up with banana tree leaves and left to rest on the house floor. They remain like that for several days until fermentation starts, forming a dough that is percolated to get smooth. The *yadaake* used to be served in big calabashes known as *kanawa*, made of heavy wood, which nowadays have been replaced by plastic containers such as buckets and gallons.

26 “Der Tabak der Yekuaná (Ye'kwana) ist ziemlich schwer, besonders eine bestimmte Sorte, die von den Zauberärzten bereitet und geraucht wird. Als Deckblatt dient ein Streifen roten Bastes der *Lecythis ollaria*, bisweilen auch ein Vorblatt des Maiskolbens. Die Yekuana (Ye'kwana) sind starke Raucher. Wenn ein Fremder in eine ihrer Siedlungen kommt, treten die Männer nach der Reihe zu ihm und überreichen ihm eine Zigarre, die sie vorher angeraucht haben, als Willkomm und Friedenszeichen” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 337).

27 “Die Pfefferbrühe wird entweder, wie bei den Taulipáng (Taurepang), mit Manioksaft zusammengekocht und dadurch säuerlich und wohlschmeckender gemacht, oder die frischen Capsicumfrüchte werden eine Zeitlang in Manioksaft gelegt, der dann durch Gärung säuerlich wird und seinen Giftstoff verliert” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 335).

28 “Nach der Mahlzeit reichen die Frauen große Kalabassen mit warmer Stärkebrühe, die aus frischen, in Wasser verrührten Maniokfladen bereitet ist. Die Kalabassen gehen reihum. Dabei wird immer eine bestimmte Ordnung eingehalten” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 353).

29 “...ein dickflüssiges, saures, widerlich schmeckendes, ziemlich berauschendes Getränk von grauer Farbe” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 333).

30 “Durch Zusatz von schmalen, lanzettförmigen Blättern eines Strauches, den sie bei den Siedlungen anpflanzen und *monö-ye* nennen, machen die Indianer das Getränk noch schärfer und berauschender” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 333).

Figure 4. Cassava preparation structure (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 5. Tipitis (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 6. Preparation of game meat (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 7. Smoked meat (Pablo Albernaz)



In 1912, all the tools used by the Ye'kwana were already of European origin (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 333), acquired by means of extensive trading networks in which the Ye'kwana had notable prominence³¹. Currently, some Ye'kwana have jobs as teachers,

31 "Über den ausgedehnten Handel der Yekuaná (Ye'kwana) haben wir bereits mehrfach gesprochen. Er wird begünstigt durch zahlreiche viel betretene Pfade, die kreuz und quer den Wald durchziehen, durch schmale Landbrücken, auf denen man die leichten Kähne von Fluß zu Fluß schaffen kann, und endlich durch die

health agents, etc., or receive from retirement and pension programs, therefore the manufactured articles have become more and more important in the life of the communities. Machetes, knives, fish hooks, tarpaulins, hoes and firearms are basic artifacts in the routine of the villages. Traditional graters were replaced in some houses by engines that mechanically press the cassava. While firearms are used to hunt mid to big-size animals, bird hunting is still done with blowguns made of *Kudaata*, which are still in great demand for commercial trades, as in older days, when graters and blowguns were the main commercial articles of the Ye'kwana³².

Hunting is a task performed by men, who go into the forest, accompanied by their dogs, usually in duos or in the company of their wives. Koch-Grünberg said that the strict gender-oriented division of labor implied in the separation of the way game meat was prepared: women cooked them while men roasted them. Their preferred meat is that of wild boar, which at the time of Koch-Grünberg was an abundant species in the Ye'kwana regions, besides the wild armadillo, appreciated by the Ihuruana (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 335-6). In my fieldwork, I had the chance to enjoy several species hunted by the Ye'kwana, such as *kawadi* (deer), *dukaadi* (peccary), *Wayuni* (tapir), *yadiiwe* (alligator), *yammaadi* (brown curassow), *fawi* (black curassow). On some occasions, hunting is done by few members, in others, there is a collective hunting that ends in the ceremony of the hunters' arrival, *tanöökö edemi jödö*, as will be presented in chapter two.

Meals are done three times a day: in the morning, at noon and in the evening. The food in such meals is usually the same, *uu* (*beijú*), *wo'kö* (*chibé*) and a piece of game meat or fish in pepper broth or grilled, in addition to several kinds of fruit³³. Fuduwaduinha and Tajädatedoinha are located at river sources and, because of that, the variety and size of fish makes them less important in the Ye'kwana diet. However, in Waschainha and Kudaatainha there are bigger fish, such as *aimmäda* (big trahira) and *fakaamö* (jau)³⁴: The use of timbó

unzähligen Wasserläufe. Alle diese Wege sind den Indianern seit uralter Zeit bekannt und werden von ihnen seit vielen Generationen benutzt. Die hauptsächlichsten Handelswaren der Yekuaná (Ye'kwana) sind Reibebretter, Blasrohre und Blasrohrschild, geschmackvoll gewickelte Knäuel feiner Baumwollfäden, Hängematten und Jagdhunde" (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 355).

32 "Die Herstellung des Blasrohrs ist, wie wir gesehen haben, ein Monopol dieser Indianer. In ihren Gebirgen am oberen Merewarí, Ventuarí und Orinoco wächst das Blasrohrschild in großer Menge. Besonders häufig und von guter Beschaffenheit soll es am Berg Mashiádi sein, und die Indianer kommen von weither, um es dort in dicken Bündeln zu holen" (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 338).

33 "Gewöhnlich finden zwei Hauptmahlzeiten am Tage statt, morgens gegen sieben Uhr und abends kurz vor sechs Uhr, bisweilen, wenn genug Wildbret vorhanden ist, auch mittags und selbst mitten in der Nacht" (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 353).

34 "Der Fischfang spielt bei den Abteilungen des Stammes, die an größeren Flüssen, Merewarí, Ventuarí, wohnen, naturgemäß eine wichtigere Rolle als bei den Bewohnern der Gebirge, in deren schmalen Gießbächen nur kleine Fische vorkommen" (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 342).

(poisonous plants used to asphyxiate fish floating on the surface of the water, making them easy to capture) is still an important fishing instrument.

Koch-Grünberg considered a “strange predilection” the act of consuming “maggots” or earthworms during rainy seasons, when game was scarce. One of such species, known as “minhocaçu” (*kudu*), which may grow to two meters in length, and smaller ones, such as the *moto* earthworms are captured on the muddy margins of the rivers during rainy seasons³⁵. The reason given to me for the consumption of these species was their relevance as a protein source, and I tried them myself. This is why, for example, mothers of newborns consume a diet based on these kinds of food, since several types of meat are prohibited in postpartum periods when the children are still bound to the body of their parents.

A fundamental cultivated item in their gardens are the plant species with magical properties. Such plants are called *maada* or *woy* and are one of the few inheritable assets in the Ye’kwana culture, usually by the mothers (Arvelo-Jimenez: 1974: 22). Some of these plants are to be used and treated only by men, others are restricted to women and are planted at the center of the gardens³⁶. They must be cultivated with special care because they have *ekaato* (*akaato* - “soul”) and its handling is very risky, since, if mistreated, they can turn back on their owners, causing diseases and death. Despite those risks, *woy* and *maada* plants, together with chants are considered the most efficient medicines against the action of the forest’s evil spirits.

Anthony Seeger (2004: 34) stated that chants were even more important than plants in the Suyá pharmacology, and the same applies to the Ye’kwana, who, in their chants, name those plant species to obtain through music the same effects attributed to the *maada* and *woy*. All the explanations about these plants, chants and the Ye’kwana ethos are based on Wanadi, creator of the world, and on the words of *watunna*, the wisdom of the ancestors, which are routinely repeated by the Ye’kwana.

1.3. *Watunna*: the Ye’kwana cosmology

In 1912, Theodor Koch-Grünberg observed several aspects of the Ye’kwana way of life and the routine of villages but regretted the limitation of his own remarks on their religious and mythological ideas, as opposed to his experience among the other groups of

35 “In der Regenzeit, wenn das Wildbret mangelt, holen die Weiber diese Würmer in kleinen Tragkörben” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 336).

36 See chapter 2.

Caribs Taurepang and Arecuna, with whom he was able to collect several myths that formed the second volume of “From Roraima to the Orinoco” (Koch-Grünberg 1916). The reasons behind this “failure” in gathering information on such themes would have been the “indolence” of the indigenous people (who failed in the spiritual nature), and the language barriers (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 377). The ethnologist acknowledged that the Ye’kwana language is very hard due to its indistinct pronunciation and lack of bilingual interpreters at the time, that is why he had to study using the Macuxi, mastered by Manduca (married with a woman of this ethnicity), and Portuguese.

Despite of all these difficulties, in his diary and in the volume dedicated to regional cultures, there are remarks on the cosmology “of these indigenous people that, apparently, consider themselves absolutely special”, according to which “the world is a giant globe with nine subdivisions, nine heavens below and above the earth” inhabited by several kinds of beings that “have completely different shapes and habits, with different spirits and gods, lords and judges of the souls of the departed” (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 169). Uanãlí (Wanadi) is the creator of the world, the things and all beings, he “is the proto-father of those indigenous people, some sort of deity who dwells to the East”.

The Ye’kwana cosmology is filled with many evil supernatural beings and only a handful of them are actually good (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 377-8). Despite the lack of good translators, Koch-Grünberg did not hesitate to describe the Ye’kwana cosmology as a passive receptor of the western culture (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 379). Decades after the research of Koch-Grünberg, Marc de Civrieux showed the richness of the *watunna* mythology, which in the words of the mythologist owes nothing to the “most well-known myths that have inspired humanity in Babylon, Egypt, Greece or in the Pre-Columbian Guatemala of the mayas-quichés” (1970: 9). David Guss, in the introduction of the *watunna* works in English, defines *watunna* as “stories of the ancient people”, the celestial ancestors (Civrieux 1980: 12). This mythological tradition known as *watunna* is, according to the ethnographer, passed down from generation to generation through rituals of *ademi*, also called *wänwannä*³⁷.

Anthony Seeger states that, for the Suyá, the narration of stories was an art (2004: 29). Among the Ye’kwana, the good storytellers are the *inchonkomo*, sages that master the chants and summonings that are intrinsically related to the *watunna*. In the house of men (*anaaka/ättä*), during nocturnal meetings, the stories originated from normal talks, triggered

37 About the *ademi*, see chapter 2.

by any fact that referred to mythical events, which would cause someone else to change the speech and start narrating a story of ancient times.

The words of Wanadi describe places and beings, and teach the *so'to* (people) the appropriate words and actions for any event. A minor event or a daily issue requiring a resolution would be enough to cause *watunna* to be summoned as a compass to reflections and actions, a “conjunctural structure” (Sahlins 1990), guiding Ye'kwana actions. As pointed out by Seeger about the narratives of the Suyá (2004: 30-31), among the Ye'kwana these vocal performances also had longer cadences, so that the voice tone and timbre, the changes in rhythm and phonetics (with the use of long glissandos), or changes of intensity in the same vowel gave these narratives characteristics that were different from the common speech. The origin narratives talk about how Wanadi tried to create a good earth but was interrupted by his brother Odosha who, along with him, created the world as it is now: a flawed, degraded earth (*amoije*) disconnected from Kahuña, the primordial heaven. The versions described below are summarized versions of the myths narrating the first two attempts from Wanadi to create the world (Civrieux: 1980).

Seruhe Wanadi

There was Kahuña, the Sky Place. The Kahuhana lived there, just like now. They're good, wise people. And they were in the beginning too. They never died. There was no sickness, no evil, no war. The whole world was Sky. No one worked. No one looked for food. Food was always there, ready. There were no animals, no demons, no clouds, no winds. There was just light. In the highest Sky was Wanadi, just like now. He gave his light to the people, to the *kahuhana*. He lit everything down to the very bottom, down to Nono, the Earth. Because of that light, the people were always happy. They had life. They couldn't die. There was no separation between Sky and Earth. Sky had no door like it does now. There was no night, like now. Wanadi is like a sun that never sets. It was always day. The Earth was like a part of the Sky. The Kahuhana had many houses and villages in Kahuña and they were all filled with light. No one lived on the Earth. There was no one there, nothing, just the Earth and nothing else. The first Wanadi to come was called Seruhe Ianadi, the Wise. When he came, he brought knowledge, tobacco, the maraca, and the *wiriki*. He smoked and he sang and he made the old people. That was a long time before us, the people of today. When that spirit was born, he cut his navel-cord and buried the placenta. He didn't know. Now the worms got into the placenta and they started to eat it. The placenta rotted. As it rotted, it gave birth to a man, a human creature, ugly and evil and all covered with hair like an animal. It was kahu. He has different names. They call him Kahushawa and Odosha too. This man was very evil. He was jealous of Wanadi. He wanted to be master of the Earth. Because of him, we suffer now. There's hunger,

sickness and war. He's the father of all the Odoshankomo. Now, because of him, we die. When that old Wanadi's placenta rotted, Odosha sprang out of the Earth like a spear. He said: "This Earth is mine. Now there's going to be war. I'm going to chase Wanadi out of here. He misled those people who had just been born. He taught them to kill. There was a man fishing. He had lots of fish. Odosha told them: "If you kill him, you'll have lots of fish". They killed him. Odosha was happy. Then the people were turned into animals as punishment. Because of Odosha, Seruhe Ianadi couldn't do anything on Earth. He went back to the Sky and left the old people as animals with Odosha. He didn't leave any of Wanadi's people on the Earth though. That was the end of first people. (Civrieux 1980: 21-22).

Nadeiumadi

Later on, the other Wanadi, the one that never left Kahuña, thought: "I want to know what's happening on Earth. I want good people living down there." So he sent a second Wanadi, a *damodede* called Nadeiumadi. When he came there, he thought: "The people are going to die now because Odosha is here. Because of Odosha they're sick. They're dying. But I'm here now. People are going to be born again soon. Through my power, they're going to live again. Death isn't real. It's one of Odosha's tricks. People are going to live now." The new Wanadi wanted to give a sign, a show of his power. He did it to show us that death isn't real. He sat down. He put his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands. He just sat there in silence, thinking, dreaming, dreaming. He dreamt that a woman was born. It was his mother. She was called Kumariawa. That's the way it happened. That man was thinking and smoking. He was quietly blowing tobacco, dreaming of his mother, Kumariawa. That's the way she was born. He made his own mother. That's the way they tell it. He gave birth to her dreaming, with tobacco smoke, with the song of his maraca, singing and nothing else. Now Kumariawa stood up and Wanadi thought: "You're going to die." So Wanadi dreamed that he killed his mother. (...) And right away she died, when he dreamed her death, playing the maraca and singing (...) The new Wanadi had *Huehanna*. He brought it from Kahuña to make people with. He wanted new people for the Earth. He wanted lots of people. *Huehanna* was like a great ball, huge and hollow, with a thick, heavy shell as hard as stone. It was called *Huehanna*. Inside *Huehanna* you could hear noises, words, songs, laughter, screaming. It was filled with people. You couldn't see them. (...) After he killed Kumariawa, he went hunting. When he left, he said: "I'm going." He called Kudewa and asked him to help bury the woman. It was the first burial. They buried Kumariawa in the ground. "I'm going," he told Kudewa. "I'm going hunting. I'll be back soon. Guard the grave. Kumariawa is going to reappear in this spot. When she comes out, it will be a signal for the people to come out of *Huehanna* and live. Watch my mother's body. Don't let Odosha near it." Now he called his nephew, Iarakaru. "Watch *Huehanna*!" he called out as he left. Wanadi forgot his *chakara*. That's where he kept his power, his tobacco, his cigarettes. He kept the night in the *chakara* too, because at that time, they didn't know about the night. There was only light

on the Earth like in the Heavens. It was all one world, Sky above and daylight here below. When Wanadi got tired, he just opened the chakara and stuck his head inside and slept. Hidden sleep, the night, was in there. That's the way he slept. When he got up he closed the chakara again and shut the night inside. Wanadi had warned Iarakuru: "Never play with the chakara. It's my power! Be careful! Don't open it. If you do, the night will get out." When Wanadi left, Kudewa kept guard over Kumariawa. [...] When the ground began to move, Wanadi was far away. Kudewa saw a hand stick out, Kumariawa's arm. The earth opened. He turned into a parrot and began to shout and scream the warning. When Wanadi heard him, he came running to see what his new mother looked like. He came running to see if the Huehanna had burst. As he ran, night fell. All at once, EVERYTHING went dark. Suddenly, the WHOLE world went out and Wanadi was running through the night. "They opened the chakara," he thought. "Iarakuru did it." And that's just what happened. Iarakuru was too curious. Someone said to him: "Open it! It was Odosha. He didn't see him. He just heard him, like in a dream. "Open it!" Odosha said. "You'll learn the secret." It was as if Iarakuru was dreaming. At first he didn't dare. And then he did it. "What's this secret hidden in Wanadi's chakara?" He thought. "I want to see. I want to smoke and powerful like Wanadi. I want to meet the night." So he opened the chakara to look inside and right away the night out. Sky hid itself. The light went out over the Earth. (...) Odosha sent a hairy dwarf named Ududi to watch the grave. Ududi told him. "She's coming out!" Odosha heard him and knew what to do. He pised in a gourd. He gave it to Makako and sent him to the woman's grave. Makako was like a small lizard. He ran with the gourd full of urine. Kumariawa split the Earth and began to rise. The little lizard threw the gourd. Odosha's urine was like a poison, seething with fire. It covered the woman. It scorched her body. The flesh was roasted. (...) When Wanadi arrived, he found darkness, ashes, bones, cinders, the monkey gone, the parrot silent, the chakara opened. "I can't do anything now," he thought. There's no flesh, no body. She won't come back to life. There Earth isn't mine anymore. The people will all die now. Then he went to find Huehanna. It was still there. Those people were inside there, screaming, shaking with fear. They hadn't been born. They weren't anything yet, like in the beginning. They couldn't be born. When he burned the woman, Odosha went with Makako to open Huehanna, to smash it to pieces, to kill the people about to come out. They found it and started beating it with their clubs, but nothing happened. They couldn't do a thing to it. Huehanna was as hard as a stone with that thick shell. They couldn't break it. They just left it there. (...) It's waiting there, in peace, since the beginning of the world, and it will stay there till the end. When the night came, Wanadi hid Huehanna. The good people inside haven't been born yet. They haven't died either. They're waiting there in Warumahidi for the end of the world, for the death of Odosha (...) Odosha is the ruler of our world, but he's not eternal. He'll die when evil disappears. (...) Wanadi will come looking for Heuhanna. The good, wise people who couldn't be born it the beginning will finally be born. He'll tell his people that the time has come. In the place called Warumaña, they're waiting. I haven't seen it. But that's what it's called. Wanadi left the Earth in darkness. He left it to Odosha and went back to Heaven. He put Kumariawa's skull and bones in a palm basket and

took them with him. He threw his mother's bones into Lake Akuena and the woman came back to life once again. She's still living there in Heaven now. I haven't seen her. But that's what they say (Civrieux 1980: 23-27).

Those myths, marked by poetic density and philosophical complexity, are part of a long narrative that describes the three attempts by Wanadi to create the world as a replica of Kahuña (primordial heaven)³⁸. Following the arrival on earth of Sehure Wanadi, the world started to be created but from its placenta Odosha was born, his brother who corrupted the new people³⁹. The chant and the maracá, the dream and the tobacco are elements used in the creation of the world, while the word of Odosha is the sign of its corruption, causing the world to become flawed, an evil earth, where disease, starvation and slavery reign over health, abundance and light. After the successive attempts to create a world that is a replica of Kahuña, Wanadi left teachings that a *so'to* must know to endure in this flawed earth (they are present in the words of *watunna*), and then he departed to a far heaven in the cosmos.

The sage Majaanuma, chant owner, told me that in the beginning of times the earth did not move, it was fixed and did not spin on its own axis. There was no sun or water, only "mud", "larva". Some time later rocks fell from heaven and gathered at the center of the earth, it was then that Wanasedume (Wanadi) brought from the superior heaven the waters, trees and animals. Kahuña had not yet originated earth separate from itself, the earth was still connected to Kahuña, although it was uninhabited. The rupture between the cosmos and earth starts with the birth of Odosha and the corruption of the creator's placenta.

Wanadi and Odosha, at first glance, seem to represent an extremely antithetical pair similar to our Manichean western vision of "good" and "evil" (or the biblical story of "Cain and Abel"), since the first is good and creator and the second, evil and destroyer. This fact may have caused Koch-Grünberg to attribute to the Ye'kwana cosmology the influence of Christian beliefs. However, similarities and approximations between those twin figures are huge, dismissing this dualism of an extreme opposition scenario. Wanadi creates with Odosha, both are "wise" and "inventors", imposing the dynamics of creation of the world in approaching and distancing movements throughout the whole saga⁴⁰.

38 According to *watunna* we are currently living the third cycle of life in this planet. See chapter 5.

39 The Ye'kwana, as the Piro and several other peoples originating in the Americas, consider the placenta not as part of the "mother", but of the child, and its separation from the fetus is object of intense cosmological reflection. See Gow (1997).

40 This relationship can be seen in another version of this *watunna*, collected by me and shown in chapter 4.

Lévi-Strauss states that indigenous myths of twins of the same gender solve a question that opposes the one of twins of different genders: between twins of different genders that are destined to practice incest, the question is how to produce the duality (of genders and matrimonial alliances) from the unity or ambiguous image of equality, on the other hand, between twins of the same gender, the opposition “loses its absolute character on behalf of a relative inequality” without falling in the duality close to unity or of irreversible character where terms must be widened. The twin aspect of these Amerindian myths is in constant unbalance and has a premise of aversion to symmetry or perfect identity (Lévi-Strauss, 1991b)⁴¹. They present graded solutions to opposing terms that, in the Indo-European mythology, tend to an opposition or balanced identification of terms as in the European mythology and folklore. According to Lévi-Strauss:

What is, effectively, the deep inspiration of these myths? They represent the progressive organization of the world in the form of a series of bipartitions: but, between the resulting parties in each step, there is never a true equality [...] This dynamic unbalance is a condition for the good operation of the system that, without it, would be constantly threatened to fall in a state of inertia. What is implicitly stated by these myths is that the poles between which natural phenomena and social life are structured: heaven and earth, high and low, close and far, indigenous and non-indigenous, co-citizen and foreigner etc. may never be twins. The spirit strives to organize them without managing to establish a parity between them. Because these cascaded differential separations, such as the ones conceived by the mythical thought, that set the machinery of the world in motion” (Lévi-Strauss: 1991b: 90-91).

As well demonstrated by the French anthropologist in this excerpt, the idea (widely spread by acculturation theories and by the common sense) that folks undergoing changes imposed by colonial invasions are incapable of organizing this situation based on autonomous cultural reasonings is erroneous. *Watunna* is an example of how myths are, at their own manner, a way of opening history through the metaphorization of events (Sahlins 2008). This thought is open to processes of historical metaphorization and explanation of the cultural shock imposed by European invasions from the framework of original mythical scenarios (Sahlins 1990, 2008)⁴², which is “essentially transformational” (Lévi-Strauss

41 “This unbalance is not a mere formal property of the mythology [...] Myths think through this unbalance – and what they think is unbalance itself, the ‘disparity’ that shapes the ‘being of the world’ ” (Viveiros de Castro 2008: 21).

42 This thought was defined by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2015: 55) as “theoretical indigenous practice of the intuition that creates the continental mythology, namely, the one that postulates the absolute pre-existence of a literally prehistoric environment”, “which was never present and thus never passed, while the present does not cease to pass”.

2011: 651). As will be further demonstrated throughout this dissertation, this twinning dualism present in *watunna* is further developed in the notion of person, in the aesthetic of chants, and in instrumental music.

1.4. *So'to*, the person

So'to is the native concept of “person”. For the Ye'kwana, the body, as well as other material and immaterial objects, has a dual expression and must be constructed throughout the life by means of several ritual actions that manipulate the invisible. In an important article that represented a breakthrough in Amazonian ethnology studies, Seeger, Da Matta and Viveiros de Castro (1979) addressed the centrality of the body for the Brazilian indigenous societies. In these societies, the construction of the body is object of intense philosophical reflection, and the rich notion of person is presented as an important way of accessing these native cosmologies.

As reminded by the anthropologist Louis Dumont (1987), the western notion of the individual emphasizes the idea of the “interior” and understands it as a moral and rationally autonomous being, prior to society. On the other hand, the body for the indigenous peoples is neither an “infra-sociological” experience nor a pivot of identities, but a matrix of symbols related to the native cosmologies and sociologies that needs to be fabricated, adorned and transformed according to the models found in the mythologies and in the complex rituals that guide social life (Seeger 1979). Thus, the issue of adornment and cares with the body results in constant ritual reflections and actions among the indigenous peoples, and, among the Ye'kwana, *watunna* and the chants are principles of the native modes of constructing the person.

For the Ye'kwana, *akaato* is the equivalent concept to what we call “spirit” or “soul”. But differently from the western Christian metaphysics, for the Ye'kwana people have six doubles or *akaato*. Two of them are vital and are located within the body (eyes and heart), and these are the ones that astrally travel at the night during dreams (thus, they are called *adekaato*). The others are related to the four elements (air, fire, water and earth) and are shadows of doubles responsible for absorbing thoughts and actions. These *akaato* “surround people” and are related, respectively, to the moon, sun, waters and earth (Guss 1990: 42). Robélio, a young Ye'kwana teacher, said that when we see our shadow in the campfire, we see our fire *akaato*, and when we look at our image reflected on the rivers, we are seeing our water *akaato*. The heart *akaato* is translated as “mirror”, reinforcing the image of the *akaato*

as a double, as a native concept for image⁴³. Guss (1990: 42) considers the division of these *akaato* into natural elements as a characterization of the view of human being as cosmos. Throughout the life, the person (*so'to*) must be created and protected with chants, plants, body paints and body adornments.

Koch-Grünberg realized the importance of the *mayuudu* (beads) for the Ye'kwana body adornments⁴⁴. The broad wristbands are made of white bead lines, called *amäkenaawono*, form strips at the wrist so that “it is possible to see the stressed muscles” (Koch-Grünberg, 1923a: 332). *Wo'mo* is the necklace, *sawiiya* are the beads crossing the torso, *wayuudu* is the red cloth men use as a thong, and *femi* is the name given to the headdress or red cloth used on the head. Women always use their *muwaaju*, beaded thongs, and leg beads, of blue and white colors, known as *waiju*. According to *watunna*, Majaanuma, Wanadi's grandfather, made the first decoration adornments on his granddaughter Kumaayudumjano and his grandson Kwamachi, teaching the bead pattern to the Ye'kwana. The beads (*mayuudu*) are the basis of body adornments and *watunna* tells of how in the beginning beads belonged to the Ye'kwana, who lost them to the white people, just to later receive them back from the white people.

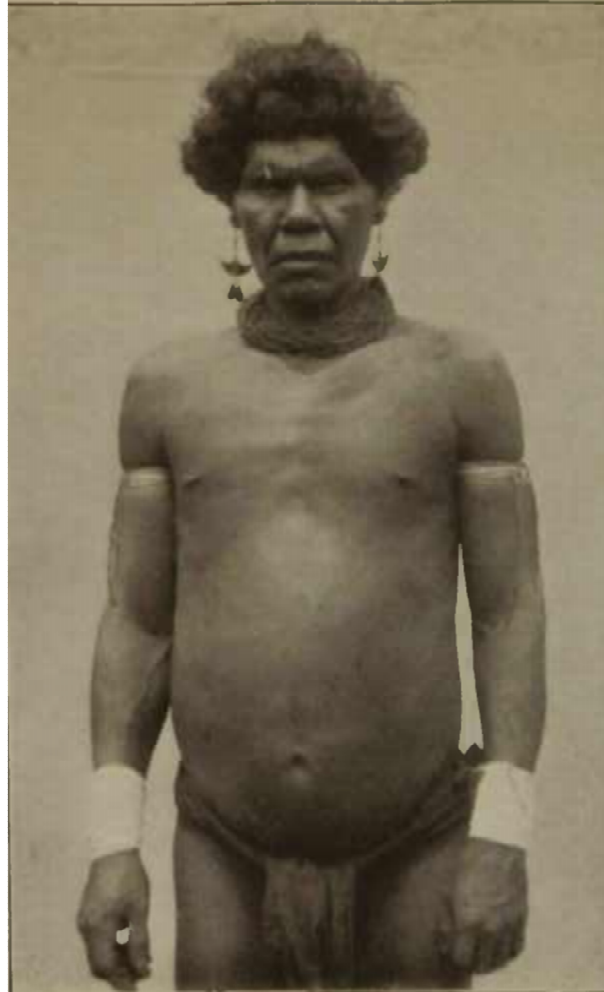
These body adornments demonstrate the concept of men as cosmos. Crossing wrists, arms and neck, collars and wristbands separate the body in two concentric circles, isolating the torso which is separated from limbs and head. The torso (that houses the heart) and the head (that houses the eyes) are dedicated to integrating man into the cosmos (Guss 1990: 62). The teacher Reinaldo said that people “live in constellations, and not only the planets, but we are part of the universe” and that is why the person is sonically constructed, as a replica or duplicate of the cosmos. Body paints are another important way of protecting and constructing the body and the person. The Ye'kwana use three types of paintings and their names correspond to the trees from which they are harvested. *Wishu* is achiote, *da'di* is genipap and *Tununu* is a plant not found in Auaris, which is acquired in trading with relatives from Venezuela⁴⁵.

43 A rich reflection on the concept of image among Amerindian peoples is found in Kopenawa and Albert (2015).

44 “Für alles wollen sie Perlen haben. ‘Mayülu — mayülu’. Das ist ihr drittes Wort. Man könnte nicht genug davon mitnehmen. Ihre Augen glänzen, wenn man ihnen ein Strängchen gibt” (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 283).

45 Not only the body, but the house, the musical instruments and several other objects such as cassava graters, stools, oars or canoes are adorned and painted, thus becoming cultural objects.

Figure 8. Ye'kwana in the upper Ventuari (Koch-Grünberg)



The Ye'kwana botanic knowledge is extremely vast, and several plants are used together with body painting to assist in the protection and construction of the person, thus being considered an important native “technology”, as said by Maurício, a young leader of the Ye'kwana. As already mentioned, the plants *maada* and *woy* are fundamental to cure and protect. Most Ye'kwana carry small calabashes named *etöödätoojo* attached to the bead necklaces or to the waist, with *maada* chanted by a sage within them. They serve to protect their owners, and to drive away enemies and bad weather.

The socialization of men (*yanwa/dhanwa*) and women (*wodi*) are different and impose different modes of constructing the person (Guss 1982). Among the *yanwa*, self-containment is the most praised quality. Avoiding conflicts and respecting the elders are stimulated as factors of group aggregation. Men learn at an early age to respect the decisions of leaders (*ayaajä*) and elders (*inchonkomo*), and to engage in collective works. Men also learn at an early age to cultivate a respectful behavior towards their parents and, when married, to the parents-in-law, whom they must help and be generous with. This moderate and self-contained behavior serves to maintain the man's affinity bonds with his wife's

family, where he is viewed as a foreign member, since men are supposed to live together with their wives' families and parents-in-law⁴⁶. Only during celebrations and after consuming fermented drink (*yadaake*) a more relaxed behavior can be seen, which is allowed because it is inserted in a context of collective and ritual catharsis⁴⁷.

Figure 9. Ye'kwana in Auaris (Pablo Albernaz)



46 This serenity in personal relations was noticed by Koch-Grünberg: “Im allgemeinen ist das Verhältnis zwischen Mann und Frau gut und kameradschaftlich. Mißhandlung der Frau habe ich niemals gesehen” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 354).

47 A more detailed description of these chants will be presented in chapter 2.

Figure 10. Reinaldo Ye'kwana being painted for the tanöökö celebration (Pablo Albernaz)



The *wodhinhamo* (women), however, are not submitted to the same socialization model as that of the *yanwa* (men). While men are travelers and wander through places far from the local group, women are stable figures in the community, being responsible for raising children and caring for the gardens. This establishment can be seen, nowadays, in a greater traditionalism in their clothes and in the construction of the female body, which is still strongly marked by adornments such as beads and body painting. Men travel to the city of Boa Vista to study, although there are some women studying in Boa Vista and acting as

teachers in village schools. However, the permanence of women in the village as “owners” of food and children is continuously emphasized by the Ye’kwana.

Figure 11. Details of female facial paintings (Pablo Albernaz)



The silence and self-containment of men contrast with the high-pitch shouts and frivolous gestures of women and children. According to Guss (1982: 261) the woman starts socializing at the moment she has enough age to distinguish spatial and temporal relations. She will understand since an early age that the *anaaka*, the house of men, is a separated world concentrically surrounded by the female world. She will also notice that in the *anaaka* the women may only enter to serve men or during a celebration. Even now, it is possible to see this space configuration in the *anaaka* during collective meals, in which women and children remain in an external position in relation to the men, who eat together at the central part of the house.

Women rarely speak in the presence of men, especially if there are foreigners among them. Most domestic chores are carried out by women: they are in charge of gathering wood, preparing meals and educating children, although this last task is currently shared with the school. Women take care of planting and harvesting and that is why they are fundamental in the construction of the person, along with the chant owners.

Most of these tasks are learned by the young ones simply by imitation and observation. This “informal education” starts when girls follow their mothers in their tasks. At the age of three, girls are already learning how to handle knives and will soon join in cassava processing tasks. However, the actual production starts years later, some time before

menstruation, when the girl stays in the village to watch over the younger children, while their mothers and sisters go to the gardens. Her task at this time is to take care of the children and manufacture graters, and her actions are restricted to the domestic environment.

Throughout their whole lifetime people are chanted at. After the baby is born, a process of seclusion and interdictions begins aiming to construct the body of the newborn. This process not only includes the child, but also the parents, since the body of the parents is bound to the body of their children even after birth. When children are still very young, the parents can neither eat certain types of food, such as some game species, nor play some musical instruments made of raw materials originating from animals or plants with owner spirits that are too strong.⁴⁸

Teacher Henrique carried out a research for his final course paper to obtain the degree of Inter-cultural Licentiate about the rites of passage among the Ye'kwana, which occur mainly during the first stages of life. As children, all must undergo several rites to construct the person, which involve chants called *a'chudi* that serve to protect and purify people. His study focuses on the following rites of passage: the cares with the first pregnancy, the birth of a baby and the rite of the first bath, the first time the baby leaves the house, the rite of the second bath, the rite of placing the first adornments in children, the rite of seclusion after girls' first menstruation, the ceremony of placing adornments on girls, and the age categories of the Ye'kwana people (Gimenes 2008a). However, gender differences establish different rituals to which boys and girls are submitted throughout their lives.

Young males do not undergo any rite of passage to become adults. However, women must undergo a rite of initiation that marks the passage to a new state of being. The first menstruation, *aji'choto*, requires several rites of purification and transformation of the young woman, which last around one year since the date of the first menstruation.

Henrique Gimenes states that the first menstruation is much respected in the life of the Ye'kwana (2008a: 18). For the teacher, it is very important that the young women respect these taboos related to this stage of life, that they receive all the chants and rituals required to the passage to adulthood, and the men in the community should not speak with the

48 This was how Koch-Grünberg interpreted such interdictions: "Bei der Schwangerschaft der Frau enthält sich der Mann gewisser Wildbretspeisen, um nicht Eigenschaften des betreffenden Tieres auf das Kind zu übertragen. Während unserer Reise auf dem Uraricuéra (Uraricoera) aß mein Yekuanáführer nichts vom Tapirbraten, damit der Sohn, den er erwartete, 'nicht so plump werde wie der Tapir' [...] Auch nach der Geburt sind beide Eltern strengen Speisevorschriften unterworfen. Mein Yekuanáführer aß kein Jacúhuhn (Penelope), 'weil es dem Neugeborenen schaden würde' " (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 362-3). This interdiction results from the importance of the notion of owner in the Indigenous America.

aji'choto and sometimes not even see them. According to the description of Henrique Gimenes, when the girl enters the menarche phase, her mother calls a chanter who performs a ritual with *woy* plants called *akaatonnakaatojo*, *etöödötojo* and *ma'kuadi*, in which he sings citing several types of boa snakes that are called to be as “foundations” to the *aji'choto* to strengthen her body. In this period the young woman remains only inside the house, fasting, not allowed to talk to anyone, only in the presence of elders, who keep “chanting so she can learn the *a'chudi* chant and then become a great chanter in the future” (Gimenes 2008a: 20). During this seclusion phase, the young woman dedicates herself to learning female tasks, makes cassava graters, spins cotton, makes adornments, and learns chants and prayers. This long seclusion period, full of rituals involving specific chants, demonstrates the importance of chants as a way of creating the person, as I observed during my fieldwork and as will be further detailed in the next chapter.

In the last decades, the contact with the world of the white people has become increasingly more intense, causing the Ye'kwana to engage in new ways of constructing the person and other values related to the “body” and the “soul”. The arrival of paper and of the school brought changes to the social construction way of the people and new *habitus* emerged with the western influences. However, I believe the idea of becoming-white is related to the Ye'kwana convention (Wagner 2016) that assumes the relationship with other forms of alterity aiming to acquire certain attributes from the other. The relationship with western knowledge has become more intense with the arrival of the missionaries and, especially, with the beginning of schooling.

1.5. Missions and schooling

According to the narratives of the *inchonkomo*, a long time after creating the world, Wanasedume invented the paper and gave it to the white people. After building the first rectangular house (*ku'shamaakadi*), Wanadi spitted on the central pole (*ñududui*), left his soul singing with his brother-in-law Wanato who accompanied the chant with his *wasaja* rhythm staff. At this location, Sedume performed the first ritual of inauguration of the new home (*ättä edemi jödö*), and then left Ihuruinha, near the Marawaka mountains, in Maawadi Anajaduinha, fleeing from his brother Odosha. Kahushawa heard the chant and thought his brother was inside the house, but Wanadi was already gone. While fleeing from Odosha, Wanadi cooked different types of animals along the way. First, he cooked *Mawaadi* (a type of big *snake*), next, *Facheto* (a type of agouti), and then *Kudidi* (barred catfish). Kahushawa

thought that Wanadi was cooking himself and decided to cut and cook parts of his own body at the locations where Wanadi left the foods.

Then Sedume created a straight river near the Orinoco, called Meniicia Sa'duminhä, and whoever looked upon the horizon would have the impression it reached the sky. In this river Wanadi sowed the plants of the white people, then he continued his trip until reaching the Aatudi river (Orinoco), where he created the Iadanawe (white people) near a giant waterfall, above the Ayacucho port. Upon arriving at Caracas, Wanadi invented the paper and then traveled to Rome with his wife. Wanadi left the paper in Caracas to Odosha who, upon reading, got lazy and gave up searching for Wanadi, who escaped to a distant heaven. That is why reading "makes people sleepy" until today.

Moving on from the mythical recording to the oral narrative, the Ye'kwana from Auaris tell that the great shaman Mötaaku used to say that the evangelicals and the Catholics would arrive among the Ihuruana and invade their whole territory trying to convince them to abandon their beliefs. And by the time the white people arrived definitively with their papers, airplanes and manufactured goods, a new age would begin. The young people would know paper and would open themselves to a new world, then, *watunna*, the *a'chudi* chants and the *ademi* would face the risk of being forgotten⁴⁹. However, Mötaaku stated that if the Ye'kwana remained "strong", they would be able to keep their culture and traditional chants for a long time.

The words of the great shaman became a reality in the 1950s, in Venezuela, and in the 1960s, in Brazil, when the missionaries settled in the Ye'kwana territory. In the 1950s, the New Tribes Mission (NTM), based in the Unites States, started its proselytizing operation in the Federal Territory of Amazonas, in the regions of the rivers Orinoco and Manapiare, while catholic missionaries settled in villages of the Federal Territory of Amazonas and in the Bolívar State (Arvelo Jimenez 1991).

The arrival of missions brought drastic changes to the settling pattern, causing villages that had missions to increase their populational concentration. While Ye'kwana villages had less than 100 individuals before, after the arrival of missions the population reached 400 inhabitants. With missions established in the region, the access to manufactured goods, health care and schooling were the means to attract the Ye'kwana from other villages, causing several changes to the native way of life. Many Ihuruana communities located near

49 I will go back to this subject in chapter 5.

river sources, and until then far from the contact with civilization, moved near missionary bases. Until the present days, the Ihuruana regions are considered the most traditional ones, the “unconquered territory of the Ye’kwana” (Guss 1990: 20).

Catholic missionaries had little interference in the organization of communities and did not demand conversion, they sought to mediate relations between the Ye’kwana and the regional market, with the promise that villages would be similar to small rural properties where they would be able to trade part of their products. With different intentions from the Catholics, the NTM missionaries mainly aimed to convert the indigenous people, forbidding traditional practices such as the consumption of the fermented drink (*yadaake*), tobacco (*kawai*) and polygamy, which in some cases is permitted among the Ye’kwana (Ramos 1980). The evangelical missionaries founded the Acanaña community with the purpose of preparing the Ye’kwana to become missionaries themselves and send them back to villages to preach among their relatives (Guss 1990: 19).

This was seen with disapproval by the elders who criticized the choice of the converted ones to submit to the colonizers. The evangelical missions caused a major division between the groups converted to Christianity and those that kept their traditions, and, while the traditionalists felt intimidated and astounded with the efficiency of the conversion tactics, they also considered themselves superior to those that abandoned their customs, becoming, in the eyes of the traditionalists, “less Ye’kwana” (Arvelo-Jimenez 1974: 18).

Traditionalists had different opinions on the best way to stop the pressure made by the evangelicals. Some believed that the best strategy would be to form an alliance with the Catholics, as they were less undesirable than the fundamentalists of the NTM and as powerful as them. Others distrusted both Catholics and evangelicals, seeing both enterprises as attempts of external intervention, which conflicts with the autonomous ethos of this people. Still, the traditionalists were aware of the pressing need to learn the Spanish language, and that was how schools started to be part of Ye’kwana life, both in Venezuela and Brazil (Arvelo-Jimenez 1974: 19).

In Brazil, missionaries from the Evangelical Mission of the Amazon (MEVA) settled in the Auaris region in the 1960s. According to reports by teacher Reinaldo, some Ye’kwana were working at gardens around Boa Vista and a group left Fuduuwaduinha to meet them in the city. At the Uraricoera river, they met a military and missionary expedition that aimed to get in contact with the Yanomami. At that occasion, the military asked for the assistance of the Ye’kwana to open airstrips in the regions of Palimiú and Surucucu, places occupied until

the present days by both missionaries and military personnel in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory. They met a colonel that was the main encourager of opening the airstrip in Auaris. After the airstrip was opened, the colonel flew over the region of Auaris and the missionaries were able to create a settling nucleus in the area with the promise of providing health care services to the natives.

At that time, the militaries convinced the Ye'kwana that opening the airstrip would be a safer traveling alternative, since the Auaris and Uraricoera rivers are hard to navigate and, once the airstrip was opened, they would be granted seats in flights to Boa Vista. The main problem caused by this expedition was the populational growth in the region, since the presence of the missionaries increased the concentration of Sanumá villages in the region, repeating the phenomenon seen in Venezuela.

I heard many times the elders reflecting on the consequences of opening the airstrip and on how their lives would be today if they had refused to help the militaries. To some, without the airstrip, the relationship with the white people and the Sanumá would have been less intense than it is today. Peri, the oldest elder of Fuduwaduinha, said that, at the time the airstrip was opened, there were few Sanumá natives in the region. Following the arrival of the Missions, they grew closer and his cousin Lourenço married a Sanumá, thus attracting more members of that ethnicity towards the region: “We met with the Sanumá and asked them to keep a certain distance but they refused and told us they wanted to remain close to the missionaries”, Peri said.

In the 1980s the army built a base station in the Auaris region and in the 1990s the 5th Special Border Platoon (5th PEF) was founded as part of the Calha Norte Project⁵⁰, followed by the founding of the stations of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI)⁵¹, an entity supervised by the Brazilian Ministry of Justice in charge of the Brazilian indigenous policy, and of the National Health Foundation (FUNASA), an entity supervised by the Ministry of Health, causing the region to undergo a drastic change with the creation of new dynamics and new agents in the interethnic context.

50 According to the Brazilian Ministry of Defense, the “Calha Norte” program was created in 1985 by the Federal Government intending to “strengthen the national presence in the Amazon” and had “the main goal of maintaining the sovereignty of the Amazon” contributing to foster its organized and sustainable development. However, the program strongly transcends the surveillance aspect. Under the coordination of the Ministry of Defense, and with the intense participation of the Armed Forces, Calha Norte seeks to help in the needs of local communities by carrying out structural works such as the construction of roads, ports, bridges, schools, nurseries, hospitals, potable water wells, and power networks”. (<https://www.defesa.gov.br/programas-sociais/programa-calha-norte>. Accessed on: 08.02.2020).

51 The FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) station was deactivated in 2012.

During the 1960s, the MEVA was the only local source of health access and article trading in the city (Lauriola 2004). At this time, some converted Ye'kwana that lived in Cacuri, near the Ventuari river, departed to Auaris in the attempt to convince the council of elders to move to Venezuela. The missionaries promised that, if they lived close to the catholic missions, they would be able to keep trading, take their children to school and have a hospital without the intervention of the white people. Despite the supposed advantages presented by their converted relatives, the Ye'kwana from Fuduwaduinha decided to remain in Brazil and did not convert to Christianity, remaining faithful to the words of *watunna*.

In the 1960s and 1970s, conferences and meetings were held by the missionaries in Venezuela. The invitation to join such events was made by the converted Ye'kwana themselves, who would visit Auaris speaking about the obligations of God. Also in 1960s, American missionaries created a booklet and translated the new testament to the Ye'kwana language. This relationship with the missionaries allowed the non-converted Ye'kwana to have a basis for a comparison between Christianity and the native cosmology.

Most Ye'kwana living in Brazil had trouble understanding the stories about Jesus, since they provided no explanation about the origin of the world. This absence was a proof of the blatant superiority of the Ye'kwana culture in face of the message of the foreigners that stated that the words of *watunna* were false. Even with the later translation of the old testament to the Ye'kwana, the Ihuruana sages continued to consider the bible an inferior narrative in comparison to the ones of *watunna*, which explain all things a Ye'kwana needs to know in order to live. For these reasons, the Ye'kwana in Brazil denied any attempt of proselytism.

However, the Ye'kwana never refused to meet the missionaries and to hear their words. Reinaldo tells that his father João Koch, his uncle Tomé (Mauricio's father) and Raimundo (Elias' father) visited the Ye'kwana communities in Venezuela, where they witnessed the beginning of the schools in the Ye'kwana villages and decided to build a school in Auaris.

1.6. The school and the knowledge of the white people

Without a specific building or teaching materials and with only some paper and a few pencils given by missionaries who worked with the Sanumá, Tomé decided to teach the young Henrique, Claudio, Ramiro, Aniceto and Jaime, all currently around 40 to 50 years

old. A short time later, Tomé met the group of Brazilians and Venezuelans that integrated the Commission of Limits that sought to set the border markers of both countries. They remained for nearly one year in Auaris and, when they left, Tomé decided to follow them to Caracas, thus interrupting the alphabetization of the young ones. When he returned from the trip, he resumed the alphabetization and the idea of the school. In this new class, the young men Reinaldo, Elias, Raul, Xavier and Marcos began their studies around 1980⁵².

According to Reinaldo Wadeyuna, at this time the school did not interfere in the daily routine of the collective works or in the hunting, fishing and traveling cycles. Tomé hoped that, after the studies, the young ones could find a job as a teacher, nurse or another kind of employee in order to earn enough resources to pay for the goods they might need. Another expectation was learning how to write in their own language in order to record in paper the traditional stories and chants. After the initial alphabetization experiences led by Tomé, the Ye'kwana noticed that they would need a Iadanawe (a white person) to teach them. In the 1980s, they allowed a couple of Canadian missionaries to live in Fuduuwaduinha to teach at the school. The Ye'kwana were still living in a big collective house and held their periodic celebrations with chants, dances and consumption of fermented drinks. The missionaries disapproved of these customs and demanded, as a condition to stay there as teachers, that they converted and abandoned the traditional ceremonies and rites. As the Ye'kwana refused to agree with their demands, the couple of missionaries gave up their attempt to convert them and returned without success to their country.

In 1983, a few young Ye'kwana were alphabetized and knew the basic mathematical operations, but they needed to continue their studies. Raimundo, then, talked to the missionary that lived with the Sanumá and asked him to suggest someone to help them at the school. The American missionary said he knew a missionary who could help them and had experience in alphabetization with the Guarani indigenous people living in Boa Vista.

In the same year, Jandira offered a course to the Ye'kwana. She taught in two shifts. In the morning, to a class with older students: Tomé, Raimundo, Eduardo and Henrique, and in the afternoon, to a class with the teenagers Reinaldo, Raul, Marco, Camilo, Xavier and Elias. Jandira was able to remember that the Ye'kwana quickly learned how to read, write

52 At the end of the 1970s, three Ye'kwana (Marco Antonio, Henrique e Eduardo) studied at the indigenous school of the Surumú river, founded in the 1940s and related to the catholic church with a focus on the education of indigenous people in the plane and mountain regions of Roraima.

and speak Portuguese, to sum, multiply and subtract, and that after this first work she decided she wanted to remain among them⁵³.

Initially, the school worked until the 4th grade, as an annex to a city school. Between 1987 and 1988, some students that finished the 4th grade went to Boa Vista in order to finish their studies. The first ones to travel to the city were Reinaldo, Castro, Henrique, Raul and Elias, who traveled by canoe until the capital of the state, and on their way worked in small-scale mining and gardens located along the Uraricoera river in order to obtain enough money to live in the city. After graduating, they returned to the community and started working as teacher assistants or interns for teacher Jandira, teaching the children how to read and write.

In the 1980s, gold reached a historical peak and the acknowledgment of mineral riches in the Yanomami and Ye'kwana territories triggered a mining invasion and a gold rush of drastic proportions (Kopenawa and Albert 2015: 660). In the 1980s and beginning of 1990s, some Ye'kwana worked in extraction boats and others charged tolls from miners that invaded their territory, with these resources, they bought a house in Boa Vista that served as a support base to the young Ye'kwana that traveled to the city to study⁵⁴.

The first alphabetized generation finished high school in the city or in the Surumú School, where there is a teacher formation course for indigenous students. Afterwards, this generation joined higher education courses of Inter-cultural Licentiate, Indigenous Territorial Management and Indigenous Health Management at the Insikiran Institute of Indigenous Education (UFRR). There are currently eight Ye'kwana with degrees and six undergraduates in the Inter-cultural Licentiate Course, three bachelors and three academics in Indigenous Territorial Management, two students in health management, a master's student in linguistics, a master in social anthropology (National Museum/UFRJ-RJ), and another master in geography (UFRR). Nowadays, the elementary education is virtually universalized among the Ye'kwana and most young members think about graduating and

53 Jandira is the only MEVA missionary still working, by herself, with the community. Since 1983, she has been living with the Ye'kwana, and she currently lives in a wooden house in the Kudaatinha community, where she works as a teacher. Even though she still tries to convert the Ye'kwana and enjoys talking about Jesus, Jandira shows admiration for the Ye'kwana culture and often compares Wanadi and the stories of *watunna* to God and passages of the bible. On the other hand, Jandira does her best to create an ideal of civility among the Ye'kwana, she encourages them to remember important national dates and to learn the national anthem, and seeks to convince them to stop consuming *yadaake* (beer) and *Kawai* (tobacco).

54 In 2011, when I started my fieldwork, the house was still being used to support students and those who came to the city to treat health problems or to deal with bureaucratic issues such as retirements and pensions. Some years later, the building became the headquarters of the Brazilian Ye'kwana People Association (APYB, today called the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume), while the houses (rented or owned) that several Ye'kwana maintain in Boa Vista are used to support relatives in the city.

getting a job so they can help their families buying the goods required by their current way of life.

The first generation of students that traveled to Boa Vista managed to get jobs in the health sector, working as microscopists, and in the education sector, as teachers. Another job possibility was to join the army. However, the military service was temporary, and the Ye'kwana failed to adapt to the hierarchy of the military model, which made this option ever less interesting among them, according to the native logic (Andrade 2005).

However, until today, the Ye'kwana only have the elementary education at their schools, and the young ones still have to go to high school in Boa Vista or Surumú⁵⁵. This exodus of the young community members causes matrimonial problems (as, in general, the men go to city to study, which interferes in matrimonial alliances) and difficulties in the transmission of traditional knowledge. Furthermore, the permanence of the young ones in the city is marked by adaptation and economic difficulties, as we will see in chapter 4.

Nowadays, the school has become the object of critical thinking by the teachers and elders regarding the benefits and problems caused by an education based on western standards. The inter-cultural education policies opened the eyes of the Ye'kwana to the importance of their traditional knowledge, which caused a change in the teaching perspective. If Jandira previously encouraged teaching only by western standards, with the politicization of teachers due to university courses aimed at indigenous people, the Ye'kwana education experienced a major turnaround towards a greater emphasis to traditional knowledge⁵⁶.

55 In 2016, a high school class was created at the Kudaatinha school, although it was an isolated course, since the school is still not regulated to hold high school courses, an issue that is still being discussed by the Ye'kwana.

56 To understand the schooling process and its current centrality in the villages and lives of the Ye'kwana, this process must be seen in the Brazilian context of autochthonous peoples fighting for their rights. In the national political scenario, the differentiated rights of the indigenous peoples were conquered after the constitution of 1988. In the 1980s, the indigenous educational projects in Brazil were mostly financed by international humanitarian organizations or by National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) and intended to integrate the indigenous people into the society around them. After the constitution of 1988, this scenario changed and its provisions regarding education changed the integrationist paradigm in force at the time. Article 210 of the constitution in its section 2, assured to the indigenous people bilingual education: "regular elementary education shall be provided in Portuguese, also guaranteeing to the indigenous communities the use of their mother languages and their own learning processes". This right created the opportunity to implement the educational policies according to new inter-cultural education paradigms. In 1991, indigenous education is no longer under the responsibility of FUNAI and is transferred to the Ministry of Education (MEC). Five years later, the Brazilian Law of Educational Guidelines and Frameworks (in Portuguese, Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação - LDB/1996), in its articles 78 and 79, regulates the "offer of bilingual and inter-cultural education to indigenous people". In the same year, the Apolinário Gimenes State School was acknowledged by the government of the State of Roraima. This fact expanded the possibility of state assistance, the teachers were selected through public exams and started to integrate the staff of the State Education Department.

In 2011, the Ye'kwana started preparations for the Pedagogical Political Project of their schools. This document, recognized by the State Education Department of Roraima in 2016, was created based on "bilingual and differentiated education". If before that the Ye'kwana followed the traditional and integralist school model, with the new pedagogical project they were open to think about integrating traditional knowledge to their regular classes. In 2016, the Ye'kwana started a discussion about the implementation of a differentiated high school education with the support of the Federal University of Roraima. The purpose of this action is to contain the exodus of the young ones to the city soon after high school by creating, at the same time, a teaching model that emphasizes traditional activities in connection with western knowledge, which must be learned from a native perspective.

Along the years of schooling experience, the Ye'kwana mastered writing in their own language and a new memory technology, different from the knowledge of the ancestors orally transmitted from generation to generation. Most mature men and some elders as Vicente Castro know how to read and write in their own language. If, on the one hand, paper is considered a dangerous object that exhales a smell that makes the Ye'kwana lazy and damages their memory, on the other hand, schooling and the use of paper were transformed into a means of safeguarding and recording traditional knowledge. With agency, the Ye'kwana took the first steps towards the creation of a school in their own community and the mastery of an important tool of the white people: writing.

1.7. The chant notebooks

Schooling allowed the alphabetization of the older generation that learned to read in Venezuela and Brazil in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and in Auaris with Jandira in the 1980s. One morning in which Vicente Castro visited my house in Boa Vista accompanied by the teachers Reinaldo and Robélio, the sage, lying on a hammock with his grandsons around him, told us about when and how he learned to read and about his trips when he was younger to the communities formed by the missionaries. According to the stories of the Ye'kwana, Vicente was the first Ye'kwana in Brazil to use notebooks to write down their traditional knowledge, which allows us to think about the history of the chant notebooks through his trajectory.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Vicente Castro (who was born in the region of the Cunucunuma river, grew up in Fuduuwaduinha and currently lives in Waschainha) started

to learn about writing by “walking, traveling”, in his own words. In Brazil, he started to learn during the 1960s, period in which he joined an army colonel named Camarão in the works to open airstrips in Surucucus, Waschinha and in the region of the Parima river, currently in Venezuelan territory. With Camarão, Vicente traveled to Manaus, Belém, Amapá and Suriname in military aircrafts, occasions in which he only learned letters and words in Portuguese. In the 1970s, Vicente traveled to the Fadawainha community and to Acanaña, where he remained for some time learning how to read and write with the evangelical missionaries in the first school founded in a Ye’kwana village. Years later, Vicente visited the community of Santa Maria do Erebató, where he continued learning how to write, while simultaneously studying with the sages (*inchonkomo*) about the ancestral Ye’kwana tradition.

In Brazil, the chant notebooks appeared in the 1990s with Joaquim Ye’kwana. Joaquim is more than sixty years old and works as a translator at the Auaris health center. For two years, Joaquim lived in Venezuela as a chant apprentice to Wanne, known as Anakayyejä (Anakay’s father), a great sage already deceased⁵⁷. In order to learn, he hooked up his hammock next to the sage’s and during the nights Wanne sang every part of a chant twice so Joaquim would write them all down in his notebook⁵⁸. If necessary, the sage would still sing a third time, so he could solve any doubts his apprentice might have⁵⁹. After studying with Wanne, Joaquim went to Boa Vista, where he lived for almost ten years, learning Portuguese. According to what I heard in the field research, before Joaquim, the sages used writing only to take note of some terms and specific names of chants and of *watunna*’s cosmology. Thus, it was Joaquim who innovated the transcription technique writing down chant texts in notebooks.

In retribution for this learning, Joaquim would give Wanne small gifts, following the traditional way of passing knowledge. When he returned to Brazil, Joaquim left his

57 Wanne is the son of Weji’umö, who initiated Apolinário Gimenes, who, in turn, was Vicente Castro’s master. Wanne is also a classificatory brother (parallel cousin) of Maldonado, the first Ye’kwana teacher. He is also the protagonist sage of the documentary “Yo hablo a caracas”, which exposed the criticism of the Ye’kwana against the proselytist actions of the New Tribes Mission.

58 Wanne had no notebooks, and Vicente Castro and Reinaldo stated that Joaquim was the first one to start writing the chants in the notebooks, which seems to confirm that chant notebooks first appeared in Brazil, later spreading to Ye’kwana villages in Venezuela too.

59 After two years studying with Wanne, Joaquim traveled to Boa Vista to learn Portuguese, where he stayed for almost ten years. Joaquim narrates his own learning process: “Wanne was waiting and waiting for me while I was in Boa Vista learning Portuguese. “Where is my student that never arrives? But then he died. It is hard, having to learn Portuguese and also the *a’chudi*. Not to mention having to earn money. After Wanne, there is no other *a’chudi* owner, only Vicente Castro. Contreras is more or less. Wanne was even more knowledgeable than Vicente Castro. Apolinário was like Wanne.”

notebooks stored at the Pedra Branca village when he moved to Boa Vista. During his absence, some of his relatives took his bag and started transcribing the chants to other notebooks. Joaquim did not like the fact his notebooks were being used without his permission, so it was agreed that he would receive some payments to have his notebooks copied and thus he managed to help his relatives to correct transcription errors.

In present days, most adult men have notebooks containing transcriptions of chants. Vicente Castro, considered the last great sage still alive, was alphabetized and often used notebooks to record some of the Ye'kwana knowledge. In his travels, upon arriving at communities as a visitor, Vicente would ask the local sages about the knowledge of *watunna* and of cosmosonics and would use notebooks to make a first record. Once that information was memorized, he dismissed using the paper.

Other two important sages have different relationships with the knowledge of chants. Majaanuma uses chant notebooks during his ritual performances, while Contreras does not know how to write and has no notebooks, he has always learned through memorization, as he likes to emphasize. Elias, another important chant owner, started learning with his grandmother when he was a child and then continued learning from Vicente Castro, always using chant notebooks. According to Vicente Castro and Contreras, a chant performed without the notebook has higher efficacy and establishes a direct connection with thought, voice and Wanadi, since when they sing they connect to the spirits of the deceased shamans, who, according to the stories, “blow” the chants into their ears. On the other hand, Majaanuma and Elias state that the notebooks are fundamental to perform and memorize the chants in this phase in which most Ye'kwana have trouble memorizing due to changes in the construction of the person.

In the past, the Ye'kwana performed several rituals to gain a good memory. One of such practice consisted in blowing into the newborn's ears, naming the mockingbirds *Fiakwa* and *Wishichaimä*, who are capable of reproducing the sounds of many other species⁶⁰. Another way to perform this rite is to kill the bird and use a bone from his body that, mixed with water and specific plants and vines, was used to apply drops into the child's ears during a chant that names special plants to improve memory, while “blowing” into the child's ears. Elias says that, when this ritual is correctly performed, the child learns to speak very soon, and gains a prodigious memory.

60 See chapter 2.

Contreras states that there are some types of charcoal found underground that were used to improve memory. *Watunna* narrates the occurrence of a great flood that covered the land and was followed by a great fire that destroyed nature and the vegetation. Since that time, according to Contreras, there are charcoals hidden a few meters below the earth. They are kinds of vegetable charcoal that are found with clay but do not mix with them. The singer starts a chant stating that, just as charcoal lasts for millennia, he also wants the memory of his chant apprentice to last, and wants him not to forget the knowledge he has learned. After the chant, the charcoal is used in the ear and in the tongue of the student.

Contreras says that these rituals of memory construction have not been performed nowadays. There is a *watunna* episode, narrated by Contreras, that explains the difficulty of the Ye'kwana in memorizing the chants, resulting from the fact they received insufficient *wiriki* stones (shamanic stones) in the beginning of times:

When Wanadi was on earth, he gathered all tribes and said: "I will throw *wiriki* shaman stones to you. Open your mouths and be ready!" When the Ye'kwana opened their mouths, most of the stones hit just below the mouth, at the mark we have above the chin. The Macuxi and the Piaroa opened their mouths wide and managed to swallow more stones. That is why they have good shamans and chanters. We, the Ye'kwana, strive to learn and memorize the chants because we did not eat many *wiriki* stones.

While the Ye'kwana explain by means of *watunna* an original difficulty memorizing chants, the last years of this century converged to the death of the last *füwai* (shamans) and other important *a'chudi edamo* (chant owners). The death of these last *füwai* coincided with the appearance of the chant notebooks, in a process of incorporating the writing technique to record Ye'kwana knowledge. Contreras states that the wisdom of the chants is no longer "pure" as the sages are "becoming paper", "invisible", and paper is associated by native cosmology with impurity and corruption. Contreras' statement suggests the occurrence of an inversion triggered by the death of the sages and the appearance of notebooks: while the *chants* have become *visible* through the notebooks, the *singers* have become *invisible* due to the transcribed chants. In a public speech to his relatives in Kudaatainha, Castro Silva, the first Ye'kwana to receive a Master's degree in Brazil (geography-UFRR), said that the white people already wrote down their history and that it was the time for the Ye'kwana to write their books valuing the perspective of *watunna*. The words of the Ye'kwana from different generations show this transformation in the memory and knowledge transmission regimes.

It is important to emphasize that, among inhabitants of the Lowlands of South America, there are no similar traits to what we could call “proto-writing”, such as the one found in the Highlands of America among the Mesoamerican population, but thanks to the schooling program implemented by policies of contact, the indigenous people have been discovering writing in very different ways (Macedo 2009). Most of these uses are limited to the production of specific teaching materials or to the writing of bureaucratic documents required by the State regarding the needs of schools and of the indigenous political movement.

Besides these uses, we have observed among the Ye’kwana that writing has transformed into a learning, transmission and safeguarding mechanism for the traditional chants. The creation of a literature of their own occurred after schooling in their mother language, however, it was created autonomously, without the support of missionaries or teachers. Even though paper appeared as a memory support material, it does nullify the bond between sage and apprentice. Also, notebooks do not have details on the melodies or chant techniques that, as we are about to see in the next chapter, obey certain execution rules.

Figure 12. The sage Majaanuma teaching chants to women (Pablo Albernaz)



With the end of the last memory sages, the Ye’kwana enter a new age in which recording their knowledge in writing has become fundamental. As already said, most older men have some notebooks with *a’chudi* transcriptions (and thus they are considered “owners” of some chants). However, there is a current need to organize this material so that

this knowledge is not lost forever. The use of writing to preserve the chants is justified by the fact that they are the most efficient weapons in the war against Odosha. The chants, along with blowing, tobacco, herbs and body painting, are ways to protect both the person and the inhabited space.

Figure 13. Ye'kwana Inchonkomo sages (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 14. The sage Majaanuma teaching chants to a teacher (Pablo Albernaz)



2. THE YE'KWANA COSMOSONICS

2.1. The cosmopolitics of senses

When I lived in Fuduuwaduinha, surrounded by the abundant forest, I would walk to the river to fetch water, wash clothes and bathe. Among the plants, the grass, the summer flowers and those that bloom during the torrential rains of winter, I observed the high canopies, the sappy or dry tree trunks, the rocks and ravines whose contours followed the river margins and all that my eyes could see appeared to be of infinite variety. As I approached the herbs, plants, and smaller streams, I watched the movements of little creatures that were indifferent to my presence, and that I had not seen before, even in dreams. To my ears, this infinity of mineral, plant and animal life sounded as an uninterrupted symphony, as if a non-human communication were taking place before my senses, which were so little trained for them, each being pulling out of the world its sounds, cutting through time with their melodies. The wandering birds sang chants that filled the space with their movements, some of them bathing next to the place where a fallen trunk served as a landing ground for the butterflies or the bathers, and where crabs hid among the cracks of the submerged old tree.

Most of the time I was accompanied by a group of children with which the communication, though based on gestures and a few words in their language, flowed like the waters of the De'joko, which throughout the day gain different tones in the conjunction of the sun with the canopy of trees closely surrounding the river banks. While I, who was born in a town in the south of Brazil (in the extreme geographical opposite of the Auaris, thousands of kilometers away from the Amazon) and grew in an apartment, needed to learn about everything about that place, the *mude'kaka* (children) moved by my side with dexterity, lightness and delicacy, ran over the fallen trunk in with the agility of geckos, dived in the river doing somersaults as if they were fish themselves. They disturbed the peace of the crabs, chasing and capturing them to watch them in their hands until one of the kids called the attention of all the others to another animal, another plant, or to the particular beauty of a stone. A simple walk to the river to bathe or play with the Iadanawe (white people) was a school for those children. In tune with that universe of beings, textures, colors, sounds, they learned about everything a person, a Ye'kwana *so'to*, must learn to live in symbiotic relationship with their surrounding environment.

In the book “The Savage Mind” (1970), Lévi-Strauss proposes to overcome the opposition of classical western philosophy between the sensible and the intelligible dimensions. To the author, modern western science had to distinguish these two dimensions in order to establish itself, thus creating a rupture between the secondary order, the sensorial data, and the primary order, not subordinate to the senses, which would be the true reality. Contrary to this modern Cartesian principle, the mind of the so-called “savage” peoples, not obeying this distinction, did not split the world between these two different dimensions. Their way of thinking leads to reflection precisely at the level of the sensible qualities without lacking, however, neither coherence nor logic.

The problem of the author is not the “mind of the savage” but that which would be a universal attribute of the human spirit, the “mind in a savage state”⁶¹. This kind of thinking would be, precisely, the one that does not make the modern split of the world into two distinct realities, that does not cultivate and domesticates the thinking process to expand its results. A mind based on observation of the world, which, in spite of what science could say, has precision and detail, with its particular modes of analysis, comparison, classification. In the “science of the concrete”, the myths and rites have the core value of giving us, in a residual form, ways of observation and reflection that were (and still are being) adapted to findings that result from the “speculative organization and exploration of the sensible world in terms of the sensorial” (Lévi-Strauss 1970: 36). Although limited to other results than those promised by the natural sciences, this science was not less scientific, nor were its results unrealistic. Having been established ten thousand years before, this science of the concrete remains “always the substratum of our civilization” (Lévi-Strauss 1970: 37).

In the “Finale”, the closing volume of the tetralogy of the *Mythologiques*, when rebutting the critics that accused him for his use of logical-mathematical tools for the analysis of the myths, Lévi-Strauss states that cultural relativism would be a childishness, if it was necessary to treat with contempt the scientific knowledge in order to know cultures different from the western one, recognizing the impossibility of determining a philosophical or moral criterion to determine the relative value of the choices that each society made to constitute its life and thought (Lévi-Strauss 2011: 613). Scientific knowledge still remains absolutely superior, despite the greatest and worst damages caused by its application and “though others even more terrible may be foreseen”. However, in order for scientific

61 In the words of anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2015: 74-75), “the profound Lévi-Strauss’s idea of a savage mind should be regarded as projecting an alternative image of thought, much more than another image of the savage”.

knowledge to expand, in spite of the early paths taken, it is necessary that it dares to venture in fields closest to the sensorial, which are unfamiliar, although this novelty is nothing but a rediscovery (Lévi-Strauss 2011: 614)⁶².

Marcel Mauss (2003) observed that the senses (the first instruments of culture) are not universally standardized. In western culture, the senses are understood as something to be transposed in order to achieve knowledge, as well as there seems to be a predominance of seeing (this “superior faculty of senses”) over hearing in the experience of modernity⁶³. Nevertheless, among indigenous peoples such as the Kamayurá, the senses, “in addition to being the entities, of biological constitution, responsible for the perception”, also serve as a foundation for the “cognitive domain, being culturally relativized” (Menezes Bastos 1999: 101).

The importance of seeing among the indigenous peoples has been addressed in several works of ethnological character, such as those by Peter Gow among the Piro of the Peruvian Amazon (1991), by Viveiros de Castro among the Araweté (1986), by Stolze Lima among the Yudjá (2005), by Lagrou among the Kaxinawa (1998), among others. The anthropological theory called “Amerindian Perspectivism”, emphasizes the worldview, since “seeing” (taking a “point of view”) is an attribute, by the shamans, of access to the cosmos and to the depths of the human that are in common with the animal species (Viveiros de Castro 2015). Although thought in an interchangeable relationship with the other senses, sight is the element that is most emphasized by the ethnological literature of the Lowlands of South America. The shamanic visions, dreams, and hallucinogenic experiences point to the importance of sight in these native cosmologies. Seeing is a correlate of knowing (Albert 2000).

However, ethnomusicology has been calling attention to the importance of hearing in the Amerindian world. Several studies carried out in the so-called lowlands of South America are pointing to the importance of sound and hearing in Amerindian societies (Menezes Bastos 1999, Piedade 2004, Montardo 2002, Seeger 2004, Stein 2009). In other

62 “So that the deepening of knowledge walks along with a progressive dilation of the frames previously defined for the traditional scientific knowledge: it rediscovers, incorporates and, in a certain sense, legitimates manners of thinking that it had initially considered irrational and rejected” (Lévi-Strauss 2011: 614). Contemporary science seems to be once again turning to the secondary qualities, the sensorial data, inquiring about “what a smell, or a taste are, about the shape of the flowers and their evolution, about the melodic structure of the song of the birds” (Lévi-Strauss 1990: 160).

63 The philosopher Walter Benjamin argues that Georg Simmel considered as something characteristic of the sociology of the big city the fact that he who sees without hearing becomes much more uneasy than the one who hears without seeing, so that the relationship between the human beings in big cities is characterized by an expressive preponderance of seeing over hearing (Benjamin 2006: 37-8).

ethnographic regions such as the Melanesia, works such as those made by the ethnomusicologist Steven Feld (1990) about the musical aesthetics of the Kaluli point to the centrality of hearing and of the sonic aspects among the groups of indigenous regions around the world.

According to Menezes Bastos, among the Kamayurá, the verbs that indicate the senses that operate in the taxonomies and perceptual axioms denote categories of knowledge (conceptual verbs) that are deeply on acoustics, therefore “of the total number of significant messages received by them from the outside world (‘natural’, ‘human’ or not, and ‘supernatural’), a large percentage is constituted of sound motions” (Menezes Bastos 2012: 102-3).

For the Ye’kwana natives, hearing is the foundation of understanding. *Metai* and *metana* are expressions used by the speakers asking if the audience hears/understands their public speaking (*wäätajä’nä*). There are also many words used to express different types of hearing, such as *etaadö*, for any noise, *netönga*, for sounds of animals and birds, *ne’dowa* for animal noises, *yäätödö* for the sounds of the *shiiwokomo* instruments⁶⁴ and recorders⁶⁵, and *yäätadö* for the sounds of the rain, engines and machines. If the worldview of the Kamayurá is based on the communication between humans and non-humans on a phono-auditory basis, the same is true for the Ye’kwana, who use the acoustic code as the foundation of being in the world.

Among the Kamayurá, the importance of the acoustic codes is made evident in speech, in music and in the “coexistence with the forest,” which “requires an extremely developed auditory acuity, since the monitoring of the actions in this environment is primarily based on sounds” (Menezes Bastos 1999: 103). Among the Ye’kwana, the forest is an important place as a source of livelihood. Its countless trees with tall trunks and thick canopies form a dense cover of leaves that allows only a few rays of sun to reach the ground, poorly illuminating the leaves and bushes, which causes the Ye’kwana, during their walks in the woods, to decode the sounds as a way of connecting with the location, with the senses of hearing and smell being interchangeably used with sight, providing the means to hunt the game or to reach the desired destination. This value attributed to hearing is not limited to subsistence, it is central to the native cosmology.

64 About the *shiiwochomo* instruments, see chapter 3.

65 About the relationship of the Ye’kwana with the recorders, see chapter 4.

In the origin myth of the Ye'kwana Wanadi sang, played the maracá, meditated and smoked to create the first humanity, the ancient people⁶⁶ (Civrieux 1980). One afternoon, me and other Ye'kwana were sitting in the living room of my house in the city of Boa Vista, next to a bookcase decorated at the top with a variety of baskets, *tipitis* (a type of masher made of straw) and sieves when Vicente Castro looked at the artifacts and said that in the beginning of time people were made as the Ye'kwana make their baskets nowadays: designing its form and geometry with thoughts, singing, weaving, and smoking. He kept on saying that, just as in the beginning of time, even today the songs are still resonating, endlessly, in the sky of Kahuña. Considering the *inchonkomo* words, we may raise the hypothesis that the chants and the cosmosonics establish an infinitude of alterity relations, which supplants our western concept of music.

2.2. The Ye'kwana cosmosonics

The chants are our vaccines.

Elias Ye'kwana.

Several anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have been challenging the limits of the use of the western concept of “music” in the analysis of the processes of creation of sounds and meanings in non-western societies. Among the indigenous peoples in Brazil, it makes no sense to think of music as a space of autonomous creation detached from the society, as a separate “sphere”, as it is thought in the modern world. What we understand in the West as “music”, for the Ye'kwana is a broad vocal and instrumental system that binds people, their bodies and souls (or doubles, *akaato*) to the multiple relationships between humans, animals and non-humans that make up the society and the cosmos.

The Brazilian anthropologist Rafael Menezes Bastos (2007) addresses the centrality of music in the rituals of the Low Lands of South America, and, in an effort of comparison of this promising literature, presents some general hypotheses about the main characteristics of Music in the Lowlands of South America that are important for this study. The first of them is the centrality of music in the ritual semiotic chain, the second one, its sequentiality,

66 Montardo (2002) states that music fundamentals the world creation myths of the Guarani indigenous peoples, with rattles being the creators of the world. Stein (2009) also demonstrates how the elements of the origin myth of the Guarani collected by Cadogan (1997: 25) have sonic elements. In the case of the Guarani, both authors describe the sound as being the producer of the mythical images.

the third one, its nucleus-periphery structure, and the fourth, the variation. The first characteristic, centrality, can be observed in ethnographies such as that of Menezes Bastos (2007: 297), who defined the music of the Kamayurá indigenous peoples as the pivot of the triad it forms with the verbal arts (poetics and myths) and plastic-visual arts (graphism, iconography and adornments), and that of David Guss (1990), who demonstrated the centrality of the Ye'kwana chants for the production of baskets and of social life.

The second characteristic, sequentiality, refers to the organization of the rituals and their chaining in the inter-chant plan, since, in the Lowlands of South America, the chants and the instrumental pieces are arranged in sequences, or even sequences of sequences, which are often connected to the time organization of day and night, although there is the possibility that these sequences be ordered according to seasons with the composition of musical calendars (Menezes Bastos 2007: 298). As we shall see, this characteristic is observed in the Ye'kwana cosmosonic rituals, which comprise sequences of sequences of vocal pieces made of repetitions and major or minor differences that correspond to segments of the day.

The third characteristic, “nucleus, periphery,” evokes the Amerindian dualism and its refusal of a perfect identity (Lévi-Strauss 1991b). As will be demonstrated in this dissertation, this characteristic is not strictly musical but corresponds to many other segments of social life, such as chants, instrumental music and dances. The nucleus-periphery relationship corresponds to the chaining of the notions of succession and simultaneity. For the Xingu and also the Ye'kwana peoples, the nucleus is created by a master singer that starts the chant or vignette by him/herself and is followed by helpers who repeat the phrase in heterophony. The master continues the chant and the crossing of voices in succession and simultaneity refers to the dual unbalance of the Amerindian thinking. The fourth and last characteristic would be variation. The musical motifs that are exposed at the beginning of the pieces are reelaborated in processes of micro variations, which happen through procedures of transposition, increase, decrease, etc. (Menezes Bastos 2007: 303).

We see, therefore, that in indigenous societies music is a central element of socialities (Seeger 1987), a place of cosmological expression and relationship with nature and the supernatural. Among the Ye'kwana, music is a founding element of habitable human space, since it is through it that the limits of human society are constructed (by means of a cosmosonic policy). For the Ye'kwana, the cosmos is composed of multiple beings that can enter into a relationship with bodies, objects and places, and the cosmosonics (the

musicalization of the world from the relationship of sounds with nature) is the way of creating the connections (*wadeekui*) with the good beings, and breaking the relationships with the beings of Odosha. Sounds are the foundation of the construction of the body and at the same time the medium through which the Ye'kwana build their human condition.

Anthony Seeger proposes a musical anthropology that differs from the anthropology of music for being a study that understands performances as creators of certain aspects of the social world, rather than being “part” of this “whole”, as would be the case of the approach that sees music as part of culture (Seeger 2004: xiii). In this work, he reminds us that “music” is more than “sounds on a recorder”. Music is the intention of creating differentiated sounds, producing and using instruments that emit musical sounds, it is using the body to produce sounds, emotion in the production, appreciation and execution of the performance, are the sounds themselves, after their production. Music is intent and action, emotion, value, form and structure (Seeger 2004: xiv). Comparing the Suyá chants with those of the Kaluli Melanesians and those of the Greeks, Anthony Seeger states that the Kaluli, by adorning themselves with feathers, sing “just like” birds, in melodies “just like” waterfalls, while for the Suyá “animal songs (...) are entirely different from their calls in the forest” (Seeger 2004: 62-63). For the Ye'kwana, the sounds of birds such as the thrush, the red-throated piping guan, the curassow, the dusky-legged guan, the rooster, and the whistle of a large animal like the tapir, are considered chants, and the musical categories are the metaphorization of reflections made based on categories of the natural world, on the relationship with the animal, plant, mineral, human, non-human, and supernatural alterities. Some ethnomusicological studies, when addressing emic categories and native theories about the production of sounds, were able to study musical creation in relation with the expression of ideas and emotions that are sonic in their form and content (Menezes Bastos 1995), that is because music in the Amerindian contexts is a vital mode of communication and creation of the world.

As the Ye'kwana narrate, since Wanadi went away and gave up on the earth, the world is dominated by negative forces (which exceed in number the positive forces). After having lived on the earth for a long time, fighting against the forces of Odosha, his brother, Wanadileft the earth in the hands of Odosha and departed (Arvelo-Jimenez 1974: 157-158). Since then, life on earth is a constant struggle against the Odoshankomo (beings of Odosha). The chants and modes of structuring the world in acoustic terms, are the optimal means of protection against this evil. In line with the so called native ontologies, cosmosonics is a

concept that seeks to address, among the Ye'kwana, the constitution of the person and of social life in acoustic terms (Stein 2009: 125).

The chant owners, called *a'chudi edajä*, are the ones responsible for the communication with the beings of the invisible world. According to what I heard from the Ye'kwana, Vicente Castro is the last great sage still alive. His prestige is immense, even among the other sages, such as Majaanuma, who has remained throughout the years of this research next to Vicente, studying him, a learning process that began in 2012. Contreras, who also lives in Fuduuwaduinha, is another renowned sage and, as Vicente Castro, he knows the chants and stories of *watunna* “from memory”, without the use of notebooks as a way recording them. Besides them, the *ayaajä* (leader) Davi, Elias, Joaquim, and Romeu who are other ritual specialists, as well as a few others like Claudio and João, have notebooks with some important chants.

The Ye'kwana distinguish the act of singing *a'chudi* and *ademi*, from *wekanta'hnänä*, a word derived from Spanish that denotes singing restricted to the western musical aesthetics. Performing *a'chudi* and *ademi* (*a'chudi* and *ademi tödöödö*) are actions that, as we shall see, involve attributes that are absent in western singing. When the Ye'kwana sing, they imitate/repeat (*chujätöödö*) the greater ones and the ancestors. Imitation is the optimal means of learning and acquiring knowledge ⁶⁷(the elders are the example and their actions are followed) and also one of the basic principles of cosmosonic actions. The dual structure of the chants aims at the repetition (*chujätöödö*) of the stanza sung by the lead singer, and the singers are the repeaters of the words of Wanadi, and therefore they have central importance in the Ye'kwana society.

Among the Suyá, chant owners dream their new repertoires (Seeger 2004), and what distinguishes a Yanomami shaman are his distinct *xapiri* spirits and his exclusive songs, since no *xapori* (shaman) has the same chant as another (Kopenawa and Albert 2015). Among the Ye'kwana, the chants and summonings (*a'chudi*), the chants of the inauguration

67 The Ye'kwana education, as with peoples such as the Yanomami (Totti 2013: 95, Kopenawa and Albert 2015: 270), is based on example and imitation. Koch-Grünberg has observed the model of education transmitted between the indigenous peoples, according to which “the parents provide the good example and, in this respect, they are also the best teachers to an European. It is extremely rare for the indigenous child to be reprimanded with harsh words or even punished by the parents, and, in spite of that, these naked children are, to our standards, ‘well-educated’ – as long as they have little or no contact with our so called civilization” (2006: 64-65). This indigenous pedagogy relates to a “concept of repetition such that the physical, mechanical or bare repetitions (repetition of the Same) would find their reason in the deeper structures of a hidden repetition, in which a ‘differential’ is disguised and shifted” (Deleuze 1988: 8-9). That is, the person (and the difference) is reproduced through repetition, through the observation of the example of the elder, who are coherent in their words and actions.

ceremonies of new houses (*ättä edemi jödö*), of new gardens (*audaja edemi jödö*) and of the arrival of hunters (*tanöökö edemi jödö*) were given to them at the beginning of time by their cultural heroes, without the possibility, in the ideal plan, of the conception of new chants⁶⁸.

2.3. *A'chudi*: silence, word, chant

One morning while we talked in Fuduuwaduinha, Majaanuma told me that there is a waterfall in the Merewari river called Majäishadi and another one in the Ventuari river called Wä'jäsoodö that have huge falls and you can stay on the inside, as in a cave, seeing the water in front of you falling from the heights of the stones down to the river. Listening to the sounds that the waterfalls bring with them, the *a'chudi* remains in the memory of the learner, highlighted the *inchonkomo*. These waterfalls contain the chants of all peoples, including the Iadanawe (white people).

Since the waterfall does not stop and its waters follow their course all the time, they are special places to hear the chants, but in order to hear them one must go there during the night. You must concentrate, listen, and when the waterfall starts singing, you must respond, imitate, because if you only keep listening you will not memorize or learn any chant. Majaanuma said that by using the specific *maada* plants I could listen to the chants sung by these waterfalls. He himself has already been to Wä'jäsoodö and listened to the chants of the *audaja edemi jödö* and other *a'chudi*.

Watunna tells that in the time when animals were people, when there was the felling of trees to create the first big garden⁶⁹, called Fadu waka, Kuyujani⁷⁰ has created this waterfall and let these hidden chants there, so that Odocha would not find them. As it was created during the garden's inauguration celebration, this chant is the one that can be heard more easily, as was the case with Majaanuma. Robélio, however, a teacher and chant learner, pointed out that when you are next to any waterfall, some word, speech or chant can appear and you must be attentive to listen to them.

68 After hearing for years the statement that the Ye'kwana do not create new chants, one afternoon I ended up witnessing at the headquarters of the Ye'kwana association Vicente Castro and Majaanuma composing a "hymn" of the school. Surrounded by teachers and students who were in the city, Majaanuma leafed through his chant notebook while Vicente surely and calmly sang by his side a chant structured according to the traditional *ademi*, with lyrics talking about the relationship between the knowledge of *watunna* and that of the white people, claiming that the school was also a "place" of the Ye'kwana people. However, this joint composition was only possible within the space of innovation enabled by the school, and by following the traditional sound structures.

69 See *audaja edemi jödö*.

70 See *tanöökö edemi jödö*.

According to Majaanuma, Kuyujani was the one who gave the *a'chudi* to the Ye'kwana. The chants are pieces of relatively specialized knowledge learned at a mature age but children observe the older singers regarding their control over the unseen forces that harm people and can manifest, still in their childhood, their vocation to become chant owners (*a'chudi edajä*). The acquisition of the chants requires a long learning process and demands dedication from the learners aspiring to memorize them and their specific terms.

When one is learning how to sing, there are beings that must be named so that the learner has good voice and memory, such as the *shinhaawe* toad, another smaller toad called *wa'wa*, the leafcutter ant that has a house and is called *wadi'chana*, the Yellow-rumped cacique or imitator bird called *fiya'kwa* and thrush bird called *wiishichainhä*. These beings, however, as all others, while being named in the chants have different names. In the *a'chudi* the *shinhaawe* is called *kuwaanaweeyu*, the *wa'wa* is *juwajuwa*, the *wadi'chana* is *edaayani*, the *fiya'kwa* is *kusaakusau*, and the *wiishichainhä* is *tuda'kweeshiyu*⁷¹. After naming these beings in a chant, honey is taken so that the voice remains good. There are plants with the same name *fiya'kwa* that help the neophyte acquire a proper memory for the chants. Majaanuma sang a portion of the *a'chudi* that helps in memorizing the chants and in singing well⁷².

On one occasion, when I began to learn about the chants, I asked Contreras how many *a'chudi* there are. With a calm and confident expression, sitting on his hammock in the courtyard of his house in a location away from the nucleus of the community, Contreras asked me to look around us. We were surrounded by domestic plants and many other kinds of vegetation that got more varied as our eyes gazed towards the inside of the forest. I stood in silence looking around, he resumed and stated that the “*a'chudi* are infinite just like the forest”, countless as its trees, plants and animals. They may last a few minutes or many hours, may be mentally or orally recited, or else sung by the ritual master.

Arvelo-Jimenez (1974: 176-177) states that the rites celebrated by the chant owners (*a'chudi* and *ademi edamo*) are made of the “exorcism” of the magical summoning and the sacred singing, of the appropriate gestures used to scare evil forces and the use of magical

71 The teacher Henrique explains that: “the prayer (*a'chudi*) contains the special names of each of the animals and the names of the animals in *a'chudi* are written in the more detailed version of the Ye'kwana language. The prayer says this prayer because it is too risky to speak ill of the evil spirits when he does not ask for the help of the animals, since he will not have the power to face these spirits and they will overpower the prayer” (Gimenes 2008a: 14).

72 The Ye'kwana say that this chant must be performed right after birth, before the child is even breastfed. The names of the animals that help improve memory are called, plant liquids are dropped in the ears and, thus, the child's hearing is improved.

amulets. These sound rituals vary in content and extent, but their basic action consists in the act of singing and the basic gestures of the performance are based on breathing air out through the mouth over an object or person and the gesture drive evil away, made with the hands holding a ritual protective calabash *etöödätoojö*.

Burping, blowing air out, and the word (either mentalized, spoken or sung) constitute the mode of action, of doing *ya'chumadö*: protecting and making the contaminated (*tönwa'dooto*) clean and purified (*tönwa'dooto 'da*). They are carried out in the presence of few people⁷³, the singer or ritual master is usually called by a family to perform a chant. The action usually takes place in the domestic circle, for few ears, and at any given moment, without mobilizing the other people from the village. With an almost hypnotic rhythm, the *a'chudi* are sung without musical instruments, and may of a responsive type in case someone present wishes to repeat after the main singer. They are structured in parallel to allow the modification of the recited names while retaining the base structure. By reciting a multiplicity of plants, animals, places and ancestral spirits the chants create a connection (*wadeekui*) with the spirits of these beings and produce a kind of rhizomatic multiplicity that is not restricted to any binary or substantialist structure (Deleuze & Guatarri 1995a)⁷⁴.

I have heard a few times that, during the *a'chudi* sessions, the *akaato* (soul or double) of the singer, travels to the sky and, through the chant, connects with the forces and energies of the cosmos. Throughout this research I have watched the Ye'kwana performing *a'chudi* on a few occasions. From the ethnographic description of the *a'chudi* and of the contexts in which they are used, I seek to understand, as suggested by Anthony Seeger (2004), “why” the Ye'kwana sing. Once Elias told me that the *a'chudi* were like vaccines. Seeger said that the best western parallel of the efficacy of the summoning of the Suyá was that of hypodermic injection. Although “infinite as the forest”, there are some *a'chudi* that are popular for being the base for the construction of the person, *so'to*, their well-being, health, and self-care. From this “healing” characteristic of the *a'chudi*, I describe below some of the

73 According to Henrique Gimenes (2008a: 20): “only the *a'chudi* of the second bath and taking the baby out of the house, and of the ritual of taking the menstruated girl out of the house can include the participation of the whole community, and allow hunting, fishing, and the ceremony in which the women take out men's meat parcels”.

74 A rhizomatic multiplicity made not by adding a superior dimension, but by subtracting the unit from the multiplicity (Deleuze & Guatarri 1995a: 13). As presented in the previous chapter, *watunna* generates a kind of rhizomatic multiplicity from which the cosmosonics of the *a'chudi* selects certain attributes of beings and events of the mythical time to be condensed in a *so'to*, and to constitute his personality, strength, health and vitality. The chants, by seeking a relationship with these beings, carry out the creation of the unit from the subtraction of the multiple (of the infinite forms of alterity).

most important among them and three ethnographic occasions in which I witnessed the performance of *a'chudi*.

The importance of *a'chudi* in the life of the Ye'kwana is seen since their birth, marking several moments of coming of age of a *so'to* (Gimenes 2008a). [Wennui](#), or [wannui tödotojo](#), is an *a'chudi* that aims to delay birth, and [wemmoi](#) is a different one that aims to hasten it. Because of their cosmological implications, births are delicate moments. *Watunna*, when explaining about the origin of the world, tells of how Odosha was born out of the rotten placenta of his brother Wanadi. That is why until today the Ye'kwana bury their placenta in a termite mound so that it does not rot and repeat the mistake that made the world deteriorated and evil, or, in the words of Gimenes (2008a: 11), left the “earth sick and betrayed”. Both the *a'chudi* are oral forms of summoning that do not have melodies⁷⁵. The specialist recites several characters with the purpose of carrying out a beneficial action over the patient's body.

When child birth is in progress, the singer performs the *a'chudi* [shiichukä jia'katooyojo](#). Everything around us has an invisible counterpart and there are many evil beings that can get close and cause disease and mental confusion. For the children to grow up healthy, they need to be protected with specific chants. When the baby will be taken out from the house for the first time, family members ask a specialist to sing the *Shiichukä jia Katooyojo*⁷⁶. There are many beings of Odosha and of Wanadi in the house, in the yard and in the forest, so the chant names the evil beings (driving them away) and the good beings (asking for their help), connecting the child to Kahuña. [Tuna yaichumatojo](#) is the *a'chudi* of the first bath, which is sung after the child is born and after he or she is taken out of the house for the first time to be given a new bath⁷⁷.

[Kudiadara enötotojo](#) is an *a'chudi* performed before placing a child on a canoe⁷⁸. In the beginning of time, Wanadi wanted to bring from heaven to Earth pure and good water, but failed in the attempt and spirits of *Wiyu* (the big snake), who live in waterfalls, rivers and

75 The Ye'kwana refer to the melodies as the “path” (*chämadö*) of sounds, or the path of the *a'chudi* (*a'chudi chämadö*).

76 This chant resembles the one performed when the dancers leave the house in the *ademi ceremonies*. See the sub-chapter below.

77 The text of the chant *tuna yaichumatojo* is performed, although with different melody and rhythm, in part of the “[aji'choto I'yätäädö edääjedea](#)” during a child's first bath in their new social condition, in the harvesting of the first cassava crops (*sakuuda I'yätäädä edää aichea*). These names replace the terms related to the child and the parents, and then the cassava assumes the status of a child, requiring the same ritual cares as the child. About this, see *audaja edemi jödö*.

78 The chant *kudiadara enötotojo* is also sung when the fermented drink (*Yadaaaki I'yätääd äedää aichea*) and its yeast (*Ködheedajä I'yätäädä edää aichea*) need to be transported by canoe throughout the river.

creeks, came along with the water. That is why it is necessary that the chants protect the Ye'kwana in their relationship with the waters. "The evil and good Wiyu came along with the water to the Earth. That is why the elders sometimes say we drink water mixed with the urine of the Wiyu", that is what the teacher Henrique Ye'kwana once told me, referring to the impure, contaminated (*tönwa'dooto*) character of Earth's waters.

The singer, in his chant, states that he is not placing the child on the canoe of the jaguar, of the Wiyu snake, but on the hard and pure wood canoe, made with *woy*, on the canoe or under the oar of a good animal such as the giant otter. The chant is structured so that, in one verse, it denies that the child is being placed on an evil canoe, and in the next verse it emphasizes that the child is being placed on a good and healthy canoe. The second part of the chant cites several rivers known by the Ye'kwana, naming their owner spirits and asking for permission to safely cross the place.

Adhaawa yaichummatoojo is sung after the umbilical cord falls. It is the chant made for when the child is painted on the face. This painting has the purpose of scaring Odosha, who therefore is unable to attack the child⁷⁹. When the child is adorned with beads, body paints and with the protective calabash *etöödätojo*, the following chants must be performed: [*shiichukä ömmötotojo*](#) and *mayuudu indhödädö*. After these chants, the child remains in seclusion, without being able to have contact with the floor. After a child turns three or four months old, the mother once again asks someone to perform the *a'chudi mude'käkä Innhö'totojo* so the child may touch the ground and get objects from the ground⁸⁰. *Ommö do* may be sung when the children are a little older and start to get agitated and to interact with things, bringing them intelligence and wisdom (*wejuuma*) since their first years of life.

Everytime a new solid type of food is introduced in a child's diet, it receives an *a'chudi* called [*tänäämö ya'chumadö*](#) (or *shiichu kwä udu ya'chumadö*). The text of this *a'chudi* cites several types of solid food such as bananas, *Uu (beijú)*, yam and meat, and it states that it is purifying the food. It also names stomach disorders such as diarrhea, or mouth disorders such as thrush, requesting that they do not attack the child. It cites many kinds of

79 When the girl is on *aji'choto* (menarche), after one week of seclusion, when the girl leaves the house, the same chant must be sung, and the girl must be painted. The *a'chudi* tells the story of Majaanuma and of how he adorned his grandson Kwamashi with the beads (*wataamuna mayuudui*) that came from the sky. Majaanuma (Wanadi's grandfather) made an *a'chudi* to purify the *mayuudui* that also harm the Ye'kwana if they are not sung.

80 The ritual *Akai* is carried out when the children will place their feet on the ground for the first time and receive their first bead adornments, when they are around 3 to 4 months old. Before that, they remain in their mothers' and sisters' laps, in the hammock or in the walker that the Ye'kwana build and install on the collar beams of the houses, and that suspends them in the air. In Fuduuwaduinha, the chant is performed by several men, such as Elias, Romeu, Davi, Contreras and Claudio.

fires that eliminate blood and salts the preserve meat. It cites clay pots with which the food is cooked, celebrating the victory of culture with the transition from raw to cooked (Lévi-Strauss 2004a).

Then, the chant mentions animals that eat raw food and do not get sick or feel pain in the stomach or diarrhea. According to Elias, “the jaguar does not get sick, it eats and does not need fire. The dog and the harpy eagle eat birds such as the red-throated piping guan and the dusky-legged guan and they do not need to sing over their food. The black vulture has a knife, it comes from the sky and cuts its prey. The black vulture eats rotten food and does not get sick”, so the chant communicates with these animal beings, asking that the children acquire certain characteristics from them, so that they do not get sick with the food.

The birth and the first years are, therefore, moments of seclusion that extend to the child’s parents, who should once again receive some of these chants. Another moment of liminality similar to that of newborns is the girl’s menarche (*aji’choto*). When they menstruate for the first time, they become impure (*tönwa’dooto*) and are submitted to many rituals and *a’chudi*, going through a process of social rebirth that aims to purify them and to change their body condition. Without the intention of making an exhaustive list, I cite the main *a’chudi* related to the creation of the new woman: [*aji’choto ajimatojo*](#) is the chant sung for the girl to seat after menstruating. [*Aji’choto jia’katooyo*](#) is performed so the girl may leave the house. [*Aji’choto shiichukä töjötojo manadeai*](#) is the chant used to bathe the girl with a sieve, [*aji’choto a’dejadö yakadawa*](#), is the chant of compliment to *aji’choto*, when she is grating, during the *aji’chotojha’kadö*. [*Aji’choto chokatojo*](#) is sung when the young woman starts her chores at the gardens. *Aji’choto nököödö yaichummatoojo* purifies the cassava grater when the girl has menstruated and needs to help her mother with the food, *aji’choto Chokwadö* sings to the embellishment of the new woman. This diversity of chants related to the menarche leads to the fact that having girls requires the parents to have more ritual cares than having boys.

Other important *a’chudi* are called *wejuuma*. [*Yejuuma chaajä chokwadö*](#) and [*shaadiyaamö’jödö a’dejaatojo*](#) (*wejuuma*) are sung to bring the soul of a sick person back, to approximate distant couples or to bring back a family member that is gone. The principle that is common to these different situations is the same one: there are links that have been broken and the chant should remake them. In the case of the healing chant ([*Wejuuma 1*](#) and [*Wejuuma 2*](#)), the separation was between the body and the soul, because of the sickness, situation in which the *akaato* of a person is kidnapped and taken away and the chant should

re-establish the connection between them. When someone is very ill, before dying their *akaato* goes away but the body remains on Earth, so the singer who knows this *a'chudi* performs it to bring the person's spirit back to the body. The chant names the bats, spiders, birds, beetles and other animals that have "lines", and can make the connection to bring back the soul of the person (sick, indifferent or lost). The spiders weave their webs and stretch them over long distances, bats fly at night fast and fearless, high, under and above the rivers. Thus, the chant asks the bats to find the spirit of the sick person under the earth, in the near sky, where the moon is (a cannibal entity that can make people sick), or the distant sky, in Kahuña (primordial heaven), and asks the spiders to weave their threads and bring back the soul of// the sick person to his or her body.

Woi tödöönejödö töjöötojo is sung in relationship with the use of the *woy* plant and may even sometimes replace it in the task of killing Odosha spirits and avenging the Ye'kwana. *Konojo umatojo* and *jejänchä umatojo* are vocal sound means of keeping storms and bad weather away, *wännanöpnä umatojo* aims to drive away the evil spirits that attack assuming animal form. When the hunters or travelers arrive from the forest, the *wännanö'nawooto* may be sung to keep away the spirits of Odosha who live in mountains, rocks and lakes, and who may have followed the group to the village. *Awaana yachummatoojo* (*äudaajä dakaadawooto*) is sung when the person is working in the garden, felling trees, and also serves as a protection from the spirits of Odosha that surround the garden locations and may cause some harm.

Munu ajoichojo (*wä'daka'jä ainho*) aims to stop the bleeding or hemorrhage of a sick person⁸¹. *Wä'daka'jä yaichummatoojo* (*sene'da tödöötojo*) aims to decrease the pain of a wound, *Toweeka yeichawä todööjo* cures diarrhea, *äkääyu nheeka'jödö chokwatojojo* (or *Yäätunu'chä'jödö Chokwatojojo*) is sung to cure a person bitten by a snake⁸². *Tänwa'dooto chokwatojojo* (or *äqueejö ajojotojojo*) purifies a person who touches a corpse. A person who touches a corpse gets contaminated and cannot use other people's plates or hammocks, this person must remain isolated and *a'chudi* are performed in order to clean him or her. After a person dies, one of their souls (*akaatojöö*) remains inside the house, because of that, the

81 Joaquim, who is a chant owner and an indigenous health agent, compares this chant with vitamin k, anti-hemorrhagic vaccine that improves blood clotting.

82 Fundamentally, it aims to separate the snake from the person's body. According to *watunna*, women are bitten by "male" snakes, and men are bitten by "female" snakes. Thus, the snakes try make humans become their spouses. Those dead due to snake bites have their bodies cremated so that the snakes do not proliferate. The chant drives the snakes away and aims to separate the sick person's body from the snake's poison and body.

Ye'kwana sing the *a'chudi* [ä'sa'jä sheemeekatoajo](#), which aims to clean the place and send the *akaato* of the deceased family member away.

This brief exposition, which is not supposed to be exhaustive, demonstrates the importance of the *a'chudi* in the life of the Ye'kwana. In general, the *a'chudi* are structured in lists of names that are part of a complex system of metaphors and denominations different from those used in ordinary speech. In these chants, certain predicates of things, spirits, animals, and mythical ancestors are named for the cleansing, health and strengthening of the body, or because these beings, at the time of *watunna*, have overcome the tribulations that the Ye'kwana wish to overcome at the moment. The chants have a sequential structure, repeatability and micro-variations in the naming process, which corroborates with certain characteristics of music in the Lowlands of South America (Menezes Bastos 2007). The act of performing *a'chudi*, their enchanting action, is fundamental in social life.

In May 2014, I witnessed the ritual of the first bathing of a child at Indian Health House (CASAI) in Boa Vista. Vicente Castro was in the city and asked me to take him to that location so he could perform the *a'chudi*, which was carried out in the Ye'kwana patients ward. The location is a spacious rectangular construction, with multiple windows and beams to hang hammocks. There are no beds, and the patients usually stay on site according to their traditional ways. It was a cloudy morning, a few Ye'kwana children were watching cartoons in a small and old TV and women were crafting when Vicente Castro approached the mother and the newborn child, sat on a nearby hammock, and began to prepare the *maada* plants that he calmly placed inside a bucket of water. People did not mind what they saw, Vicente had no eyes on his actions, except for my curiosity, mitigated so as not to disrupt the course of the ritual. It was difficult to notice when the *a'chudi* exactly began. While the sage prepared the plants, he thought about the names of several beings, and then rubbed the plants over the child's and the mother's bodies so he could, then, start a chant that lasted for about one hour.

He performed the *a'chudi* sitting beside the mother's hammock, not very solemnly. Then, with a string of twine tied to one of his fingers and to one of the mother's⁸³, and grabbing a bucket that had water with *maada*, he walked outside the medical ward and sat under the shade of a tree, right beside the building, where he kept singing until he grabbed

83 "When he is done expelling the evil spirits, the singer ties the cotton thread to take the newborn baby to safety [...] for the male child, the singer ties the thread to the *woy* seedling (powerful plant), and for the female child he ties it to the *awaana* seedling (the plant that gives intelligence). The elders say that the singer ties the newborn baby cotton to the plants because the evil spirits are afraid of these plants" (Gimenes 2008a: 13-14).

the calabash and poured water over the child, in a scene that reminds the Christian baptism. Right after that, the woman went to a place that was a little more reserved and bathed herself with the remaining water with plants, with Vicente still singing. The whole process ended without any special procedure and then we started to eat tangerines under the shade, talking about outboard motors used in the canoes.

In Fuduuwaduinha, during the first days of 2017, Majaanuma was called to perform chants so that a newborn child could leave the house for the first time to take the first bath. Robélio and I went to the roundhouse (*ättä*) but Majaanuma had already left. We walked toward the place, among the noises of the trees and birds, I began to hear fragments of a concise remote melody that got closer as we came through the house and got to the courtyard in the back. With a backpack on his back, holding a notebook, wearing the pants of an old purple suit and a blue shirt of the Brazilian team, Majaanuma sang, standing with a straight posture and facing the West, while the mother held the baby on her lap, and the grandmother followed the chant, holding the vessel containing water, plants and the calabash⁸⁴. A few minutes later, Majaanuma stops singing, burps three times and finishes the first *a'chudi*.

He calmly headed towards the shade of the trees that are in the limit between the courtyard and the way to the forest, where the sun that morning created beams of light that passed through the gaps in the canopy of the trees and palm trees that surround the courtyard, making the place remarkably beautiful to sing and bathe the child. A parrot flew past us, settled on the branches of a tree, and watched us with an almost curious expression. Majaanuma sat on a small wooden bench, in front of the water container, flipped through his notebook, blew some air out, burped, and resumed singing the *a'chudi* for the child's first bath. He sang for twenty minutes before pausing and asking the child's grandmother to bring a big sieve. "The sieve is a must", he emphasizes. With a large *waja* (basket) arranged horizontally over the child, he poured out the water with plants that has been sifted so it could touch the baby's body. Although the water in Auaris is very cold, the girl kept a firm and calm expression during most of the bath and only at the end she started to cry, and her mother caressed her. At the end of the *a'chudi*, Majaanuma received a necklace of blue beads from the child's grandmother. When an *a'chudi* is performed, it must be paid for at the time of the chant, or else it does not work. The payment is decided by the person who calls the

84 A scene that resembles the one described by Koch-Grünberg: "Wenige Tage nach der Entbindung badet die Wöchnerin in dem oft sehr kalten Wasser des Gebirgsbaches. Auch das Neugeborene wird von der Großmutter aus einer großen Kalabasse mit demselben kalten Wasser gewaschen, dem, wenn das Kind krank und schwächlich ist, heilkräftige Blätter zugesetzt werden" (Koch-Grünberg 19123a: 362).

singer, and beads are the most common gifts because they “last, they do not spoil,” Robélio explained. We went back inside the house, where the singer was served cooked meat, *uu* (*beijú*) and pepper.

Majaanuma sat next to the child’s mother, and remained in silence, performing the *tänäämö ya’chumadö*. So I asked Robélio why Majaanuma was not singing, and he answered that, most of the times, this *a’chudi* (as some others) is mentally recited, or it is sung only if the one who called the singer asks him to “bring the chant out”. Robelio’s speech confirmed what I had seen in Pedra Branca, when Claudio, his father, while performing the same *a’chudi* held in one of his hands a piece of *uu* (*beijú*) rolled under a piece of meat tied with twine, with the cigarette in the other hand, and kept smoking and once in a while puffing the tobacco smoke over the food with a calm and unswerving facial expression, mentalizing the chant to himself. At the end, Claudio handed the food parcel to the child’s mother, who could then feed her child without problems, and everything went on as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

Seeger (2004) observed in the seventies that the Suyá indigenous people said that with the arrival of traditional medicine they would not perform the chants/summonings so often. I heard the same among the Ye’kwana, but I should point out that the *a’chudi* continue to be practiced in conjunction with western medicine and are still of fundamental importance nowadays.

We can consider the *a’chudi* to be a form of verbal art that surpasses our western categories that separate speaking from singing. In order to understand the way in which the vocal-instrumental system of the Ye’kwana is articulated with other practices, in a large mode of orchestration of the acoustics they comprise, they must be thought in comparison with the *ademi*, the collective cosmosonic ceremonies.

2.4. *Ademi*: cosmosonics and drunkenness

The *ademi* are cosmosonic ceremonies that include the participatory presence of a large audience in the various stages of the ritual process, marked by collective chanting and the consumption of fermented beverages. These ceremonies are long-lasting rituals⁸⁵ that extend over three days and are held on three occasions: at the inauguration of houses (*ättä*

85 Corroborating with the descriptions of other ethnographers that describe the Native American rites as being long lasting, such as the celebration of the jaguatirica carried out by the Kamayurá indigenous peoples, which lasts more than ten days (Menezes Bastos 2013).

edemi jödö), at the opening of new gardens (*äudaja edemi jödö*), and on the arrival of visitors and hunters (*tänöökö edemi jödö*). In 2012 and 2016, I watched parts of the hunters celebration (*tanöökö*), and at the end of 2016 and beginning of 2017, I attended the complete ceremonies of new house and new garden inauguration.

A'chudi is the native concept for a vocal-sound genre that includes the naming of beings and spirits in invocations that can be made in silence, through the spoken word or, as in most cases, through vocal chanting. The *ademi* emphasize collective singing and introduce the musical instruments *shiiwokomo*. In these ceremonies, the chants, the dances and the unrestrained consumption of fermented beverages (*yadaake*) are primary means of connection (*wadeekui*) with the cosmos (Kahuña). So singing, playing, dancing and drinking are actions that repeat the primordial moments narrated in the myths of *watunna*⁸⁶.

In the early twentieth century, Koch-Grünberg (2006) drew attention to the relationships between music and myth, stating that the chants are often sung myths. A few decades later, Claude Lévi-Strauss (2004a) hypothesized that there were reciprocal relations and a profound analogy between myth and music. According to the author, vocal chanting, probably the first form of music, approaches the myth by using articulated language as a framework so that “the respective fields of articulate language, vocal chanting and myth intersect”, and there are frequent cases in which “the myths are actually sung” (Lévi-Strauss 2011: 646). These statements by the German and the French ethnologists lead to the myth-music-rite triad pointed out by the Brazilian ethnomusicologist Rafael Menezes Bastos as being central to the cultures of the Lowlands of South America (2007).

Below, I will describe the three *ademi* ceremonies based on the observations I made throughout my fieldwork. As a complement to the ethnographic observation, I followed the suggestions of Stone and Stone (1981) and conducted “feedback interviews” with the Ye'kwana to try to reconstruct part of the meanings of these rites.

86 The celebrations with consumption of fermented beverages are fundamental in many societies of the Guyanas region and are related to shamanism, since they aim at “leaving oneself in the sense of seeking both the other human and the non-human” (Sztuttman 2003: 2). According to the Brazilian anthropologist Renato Sztuttman “the collective rituals, which in the region are commonly marked by the excessive consumption of fermented beverages – regionally known as *caxiri* – mobilize, through a program that involves dance and music (instrumental or sung), people from diverse backgrounds, whose relationships tend to oscillate between codes of hostility and cordiality. In general, the *caxiri* festivals in the Guyana are responsible for opening up a field of sociability, often reduced in daily life, thus, drinking *caxiri* proves to be a decisive model of sociability and a mark of humanity liable to be shared” (Sztuttman 2003: 30).

2.4.1. *Ättä edemi jödö*: singing the houses

The indigenous peoples of the Guyanas region consider their settlements self-sustainable, politically independent and economically self-sufficient. For the Ye'kwana, the *physical* separation of the village and the house from the outside world is ensured by its *metaphysical* isolation, expressed in the house construction ceremony, the *ättä edemi jödö*. The ethnological literature states that this spatial arrangement associates the interior with safety and familiarity, and the exterior with danger and the unknown, although these oppositions are relative (Rivière 2001a: 37-68).

Koch-Grünberg was the first ethnographer to describe the construction and inauguration ceremony of the Ye'kwana *ättä*. In his reports, he stated that the house is “a true piece of art” (2006: 295), more complex and well-finished than the houses of the Macuxi and Taurepang. His diary and the volume dedicated to the analysis of the cultures in the Roraima region contain the details about the construction of the *ättä*. His notes, however, focus only on the construction technique, not addressing questions about the cosmology implied in the material culture.

Decades later, Barandiarán (1966: 49) and Nelly Arvelo-Jimenez (1974: 156) wrote that the relationship between the understanding of universe and the roundhouse as its visible replica was one of the group's most important beliefs, which is tied to the idea that the world outside the village space is populated with supernatural forces that can turn against people. David Guss (1990: 21) in his approach to the art and chants of the Ye'kwana, influenced by the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss, described the relationship between the house and the cosmology, and pointed to the distinction made between the community and its outer world, which makes the Ye'kwana attribute special attention to the physical and symbolic creation of the house.

When I started my fieldwork with the Ye'kwana in 2012, I heard many times about the intentions of the *ayaajä* (leader) Davi to build a big *ättä* at the center of the village. The problem that prevented them from starting this construction was, according to the leaders, the absence of young people, since most of them were in Boa Vista attending high school and university. What once was only a project discussed at the *anaaka* night meetings became reality in 2016, when the house was built in a process that lasted the whole year and had the help of everyone in the community, including some young people that returned from the city.

In September 2016, I returned to Fuduwaduinha for a stay that coincided with the house roofing phase. During this period, I participated in the house construction activities during the day, and at night I talked with Elias about the chants of *ättä*, using as a study framework the final course paper made by Fernando Gimenes (2009), who made a full transcription of this *ademi*, resulting in a manuscript of more than one hundred pages. Three months later I returned to participate in the *ättä edemi jödö* ceremony, which ended on the last day of 2016, occasion in which I could sing, dance and play with the Ye'kwana, amidst an extensive schedule of ceremonial activities.

The French geologist Marc de Civrieux (1980) lived for decades in contact with Ye'kwana groups in Venezuela and collected a *watunna* that addresses the origin of the *ättä* and how this construction consolidates the separation between heaven and earth. According to the narrative, in the beginning of time, after Odosha created death and night, people lived in darkness, afraid and hidden as animals and it was no longer possible to see the light of Kahuña, the true heaven. Wanadi then blew a *wiriki* stone and gave birth to Ättawanadi, his third double, and sent him to populate the world with wise and good people. Wanadi created the sun (*shii*) to illuminate the earth during the day, and the moon (*nuna*) and the stars (*shidische*), to light the night, and from that moment on the earth started to have its own sky, and people were able to leave their hiding places and learned to make their own homes (Civrieux 1980: 28-31).

I heard from Majaanuma a version of this *watunna* that mentions eight houses built by different characters of the mythology. The first house, called *tuduumashaka*, was built in the *yaamu* region in Venezuela, near the Marawaka mountains. This house was round but had a different roof than that of the traditional *ättä*. The second house, a round *ättä* of conical roof called *Wayanatödö*, was built by *Uduujude* next to the Mount Roraima. *Wanahamjödö*, the third house, was built by Wanadi, *Tukuijödö*, the fourth house, by *Uduujude*. Then, Wanadi built a rectangular house called *Ku'shamaakadi* and an *ättä* called *Kawaijhödö*. He built two houses at the same time to escape from Odosha, while his grandfather Majaanuma built another and named it *muwa'jödö*. Finally, *Iudeeke* built a house called *ättäinha*, and two other houses which he named *waata'jödö*, one of which is near Waschainha, which is currently a conical-shaped mountain range that can be seen from the banks of the Uraricoera river.

These houses, built by several mythical characters at the beginning of time, serve as a model for the construction of the current rectangular (*Ku'shamaakadi*) and round (*ättä*)

houses. Similarly, these characters taught the Ye'kwana the chants of *ättä edemi jödö* that are repeated until today in the house inauguration ceremonies, and therefore the elders always retell these stories. Majaanuma concluded the story mentioning that when Wanadi left he left his spit on the *anaaka*, who continued singing as if it were himself, a strategy used to mislead his brother Odosha. From that escape on, the distinction between heaven and earth was consolidated, leaving the house as the architectural model of the cosmos (Guss 1990, Arvelo-Jimenez 1974).

Figure 15. Drawing of the Tuduumashaka, first house created on earth (Robélio Ye'kwana)



Figure 16. Construction of the ättä, the roundhouse (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 17. Construction of the ättä, the roundhouse (Koch-Grünberg)



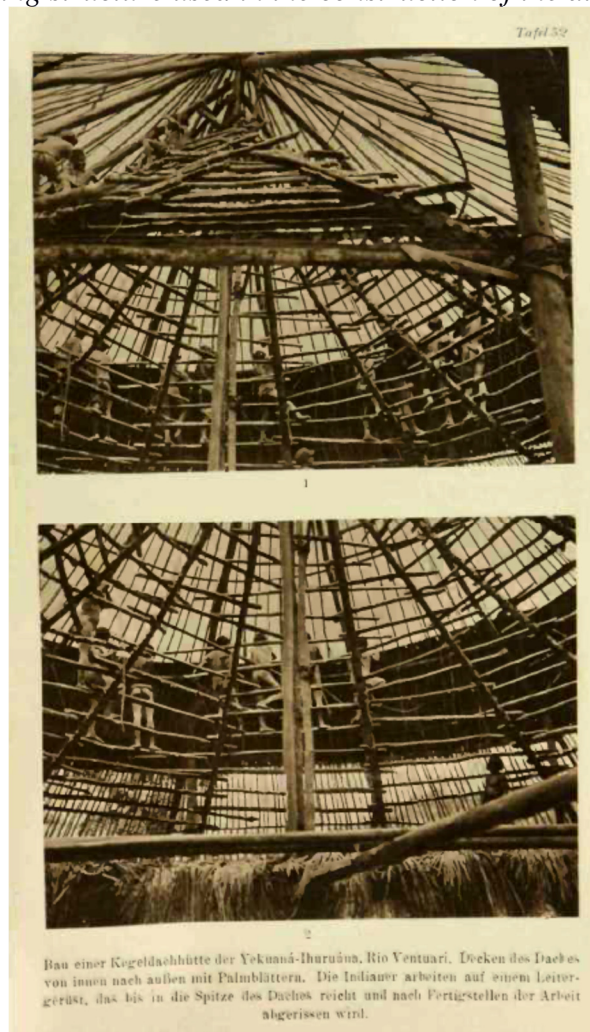
This cosmological and architectural model is expressed in the terminologies referring to the *ättä*. The outer circle (*äsa*), which housed the families and the domestic fire, represents the earth, the central circle (*anaaka*), the place of the ritual life and dormitory of the single men, corresponds to the sea (*dama*), and the central pole (*ñududui*) is the *axis* of the center of the earth and the connection (*wadeekui*) of the house with Kahuña, the center of the cosmos. The four main poles and the *ñududui* are the strongest and are arranged in a circle among other twelve smaller poles (*iadadä*), joined together by several sticks used as beams that serve as a support for the ceiling, which is constructed with many rims and sticks⁸⁷. The cardinal points guide the places in the cosmos inhabited by the spirits, so that the more beneficial spirits live toward the east and, to a lesser extent, to the north. While the beings and spirits of Odosha live to the south and the west. That is why the most important door of the house faces the east. The roof is covered with two different types of straw, reproducing the duality of the internal division of the house.

87 The name of the four poles are: *shii weja'katooko dö'seeno ijoononai*, which is located to the east, *shii womontoko dö'seeno ijoononai*, located to the west, *shii womontojo suda'wäwä*, to the north, and *shii womontojo sudawawä tämudatotodö'sine*, to the south.

Figure 18. Scaffolding structure used in the construction of the ättä (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 19. Scaffolding structure used in the construction of the ättä. (Koch-Grünberg)



The first chant of the house occurs after the covering of the conical roof. The *a'chudi edamo* includes the [tu'de](#) chant (which means enemy), which mentions all the known ethnic groups, sending them away from the *ättä*. The Macuxi, Waiwai, Wapischana, Piaroa, Sanumá, Yanomami, Maku and white people are some of those mentioned in the chant, performed again when the walls are covered with clay. Nevertheless, with the increase of interethnic marriages with the Sanumá, Macuxi, Piaroa, and white people, Vicente Castro and the other sages have avoided naming these ethnic groups, so the chant does not turn against the Ye'kwana, something also noted by Guss (1990).

On December 29, 2016, on a sunny afternoon interspersed with rain showers, the Ye'kwana began the inauguration of their *ättä*. The sages positioned their hammocks and stools near the eastern door, surrounded by men, young people, children, and women, and Majaanuma began to sing the chant called [nonooankomo odoshankomo](#), which aims to drive away the evil spirits that become visible through the countless species of snakes and animals of Odosha that can enter the house. This performance, which lasted exactly eight hours, went on without interruption and began the responsorial style that lasted over three days of chants before the curious and participative audience, which gave special attention to the names mentioned in the lyrics.

I took a stump of wood and sat next to the sages, letting the peace of that soft melody and the sun rays that entered through the cracks of the *ättä* fill my chest. After years of hearing about that important construction, I was there with the sages, learning in practice about the Ye'kwana cosmosonics. Majaanuma, who had forgotten his chant notebook in Waschainha, used as a guide for his performance a copy of Fernando's work, while extra copies served as a basis for other Ye'kwana and made it possible for me to sing along with them. With his glasses raised on his forehead, Majaanuma leafed through the manuscript lying on his hammock, singing the words written on the paper with the authority of the *inchonkomo*. The strong and metallic tone of his voice emphasized the characteristic microtones of the chants that give a special tone to these sound structures of few notes, which always end in descending notes that rest as the sounds of the waters of the waterfalls. "*Tänökone*" means beautiful singing, and Majaanuma's voice is appreciated by all for correctly repeating the sounds that never cease to sound in Kahuña.

Being next to the greatest Ye'kwana sages at the center of the *ättä*, listening to the chants that are the sound counterpart of that masterful architecture, made me feel sheltered by the exotic beauty of that chant, which brought emotions that I had never experienced

before. At the beginning of each stanza, Majaanuma emitted a long *heeeeeeee*, stronger than a sigh that preceded the melody that progressed in wavy variations, ending in a descending tone movement, strongly marked by the singers who repeated the phrases at different times, giving a polyphonic aspect of singular beauty to the chant.

The chant mentions several animals such as the blind snake (*täseenemö*), the coral snake (*widi*), the worms (*shiiyaama*), the geckos (*makaishana*), the centipedes (*kumeejeje* and *köya'köi*), the wasps (*awaakanei*), the beetles (*ätuukwada*), and other beings of Odosha who live near the house, asking to close their paths and prevent their approach. It sends away Odosha birds that have invisible sieves, with which they capture people, and asks for animals like the piranha fish (*Ka'shai*) to cut the wires of the winds, the rains, and the storms. It orders the paths of the reptiles (animals that live on the land) to be closed, it sends away the chants and songs of the Odosha birds (animals that live in the sky), and cuts off the path of the rains and storms, sonically isolating the *ättä* space.

Figure 20. Woman serves yadaake to the young man who plays the drums (Pablo Albermaz)



Figure 21. Chants and dances around the roundhouse (Pablo Albernaz)



It was about 10 p.m. when Majaanuma invited us to leave the house, taking with us the pieces of wood where we were sitting. We left the house through the door that lies to the east, and we went singing toward the front of the west door. We stopped at this place, facing the mountains where the sun sets, and we sang for a few more minutes until we finished the song, throwing our woods away, and blowing to drive all the evil away from the house. This way we finish the first stage of the ceremony, which ended with shouts of satisfaction. We went back inside the house and, before the beginning of the *ättä edemi jödö*, the leader Davi oriented the people who were there and talked about the details of the ceremony:

We are going to get adorned, embellished, you who are young, we will dance well. We are in our community. The women are going to give us *yadaake*, and if someone sleeps or has a fever, we will take care of them. You young people, do not walk by yourselves at night. We are going to play *wasaja* and dance. Do not have sex on these days. Only the day after tomorrow, when the celebration ends, you can resume romantic relationships. We must bring the *yadaake* and put it at the *ñududui* (central pole). Vicente Castro is here with us, he is the wisest among us, I know only a little. Pablo *Adawata*⁸⁸ is also here, he likes our culture and has several *a'chudi* and *ademi* in his computer. And like us, Ye'kwana, he is happy to be here. Let's purify our house, without shouting. Let's imitate our *ademi*. We have to listen to the words of our greater ones.

88 I was nicknamed by the Ye'kwana as "Adawata" (howler monkey), due to the color of my beard.

The words of the sage instructed the others on how to proceed during the three days of the ceremony and emphasized my presence as someone who enjoyed the chants and valued the Ye'kwana cosmsonics. A few minutes later, the chant was resumed and a group of dancers formed a circle and began to dance moving counterclockwise, in a dance step that marks the right foot forward, while the left foot passes behind or in front of the right foot, instigating the movement to the right. The firmness of the slightly flexed legs leads to the leaning of the torso, giving a plastic beauty to the repetitive dance⁸⁹. The first man who danced on the right side held a wooden staff that had on its upper part an enclosed container with the seeds of a plant called *wasaja*⁹⁰, which gives name to this instrument that marks the rhythm of the chant and the steps of the dancers in an uninterrupted way throughout the three days of the *ademi*⁹¹ (*ättä edemi jödö*).

Figure 22. The chants of inauguration of the roundhouse (Pablo Albernaz)



A few hours after the *ademi* began, Jairo, son of the leader (*ayaajä*) Davi, who was playing the *wasaja*, stopped dancing beside me, handed me the instrument and asked me to

89 “Es ist kein eigentlicher Tanz. Die Männer schreiten mit gesenktem Haupt ohne Gleichtritt hintereinander her. Einige haben die Arme über der Brust gekreuzt und halten in der Hand die lange Zigarre, an der sie von Zeit zu Zeit ziehen. Hier und da legt einer die rechte Hand auf die linke Schulter des Vordermannes. Der Vortänzer trägt in der rechten Hand einen Stab, der oben mit Klappern aus Fruchtschalen umwunden ist, und gibt damit den Takt an” (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 307).

90 See chapter 3.

91 “Der alte Herr, der noch dem Namen nach das Oberkommando führt, liegt in seiner Hängematte und singt, während er an einem kleinen Kescher knüpft, den Tanztext vor, jede Strophe zweimal. Die Tänzer sind inzwischen schweigend im großen Mittelraum der Maloka eine Runde gegangen. Nun fallen sie ein und wiederholen zweimal die Strophe. Trotz der einfachen Melodie, die etwas näselnd mit vibrierender Stimme gesungen wird, wirkt das Ganze feierlich, episch, wie ein alter Heldengesang, eine lange Mythe, die der alte Barde vorträgt, und es ist wohl auch nichts anderes. So pflanzen sich diese Mythen und Legenden vom Vater auf den Sohn, von Mund zu Mund fort, die Überlieferung, die mythische Geschichte des Stammes” (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 306-7).

go on with the dance. I began to dance along with them, learning in practice, amid laughter and words of encouragement, to repeat the steps of the dance and beating the *wasaja* against the ground, strongly marking the continuous pulse of the chant. The men place their right hand over the shoulder of their partners of the same gender, and if there is a woman on their side, they dance arm in arm.

Figure 23. Ättä, the roundhouse (Koch-Grünberg)



Figure 24. Women adorned for the ättä inauguration celebration (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 25. Hammocks around the roundhouse (Pablo Albernaz)



The first part of the chant “[*naajänta eduuwa wishomeekaanä*](#)“, which means to sweep the house’s construction site, invites a variety of birds such as swallows and the harpy eagle to sweep with the feathers of their wings. Other animals are called to sift diseases such as malaria, fever, headaches, flu and madness, thus keeping them away from the *ättä*. The beings of Odoša and his *maada* plants are also sent away. At that moment, the consumption of the fermented beverage begins, but still moderately.

At noon of the next day, all the Ye’kwana embellished themselves following the teachings of Wanadi during the first ceremony *ättä edemi jödö*. The men are painted and feathered by their wives, they use their white bracelets *amäkenaawono*, their *wo’mo* and *sawiiya* necklaces, thongs made of red cloth *wayuuku*, and their red cloths in the head *femi*. The sages Vicente Castro and Contreras show their imposing necklaces of wild pig teeth. The women wear their thongs *muwaaju*, their necklaces *wo’mo tökokono* and *wo’mo*, and go to the center of the *anaaka* for the collective dance. With the sound of the *wasaja* and the verses sung by the *a’chudi edamo* and repeated by all, they dance, adorned, in a spectacle of beauty and vitality.

After the embellishment, a part of the chant called “[*needaamuna kaanä*](#)“ begins, when the immoderate consumption of *yadaake* begins. Many women serve *yadaake* to men in the dance line and sitting around the dance, who drink all the liquid from the calabash bowl, sometimes expelling part of the drink or vomiting beside the central pole. After more than 30 hours of ceremony, the *ättä* floor becomes totally muddy, the women keep diligently

serving the men⁹², the dancers maintain the solidity of their steps and the singers remain firm in emitting the notes of the sacred chant. Some excerpts of the chant describe the search for a good place to build the house. Akuena, a lake that lies in the center of Kahuña, where the children of Wanadi go after death, has an island called *antadönkawääne*, in which there are strong woods and pure sands that are requested by the singer for the construction of the *ättä*.

Figure 26. *Ye'kwana Inchonkomo sages (Pablo Albernaz)*



In the morning of the last day, the Ye'kwana closed a small gap on the clay wall that was still open on the right side of the east door and chanted again the *tu'de*. Right after that, they begin the *kudaawake wataajuina* ritual, which follows the same process that occurs in the *aji'choto* during the menarche of the young women. Everyone, myself included, are whipped up with the *kudaawa* plant to drive away bad dreams and bad thoughts. “Drinking makes people say bad things, so the *kudaawake wataajuina* cleans our thinking”, says Joaquim⁹³. We went back into the house and the chants started over until all the *yadaake* was

92 “Die Tänze nehmen ihren Fortgang. Gesoffen wird dabei bis zum Erbrechen. Den Überfluß speien die Tänzer rücksichtslos auf den Boden, der davon ganz schlüpfrig wird, sodaß man beim Tanzen - ich gehe mehrere Runden mit – leicht ausgleiten und zu Fall kommen kann” (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 309).

93 “Am 25. August stattet uns der ‚neue Häuptling‘ wie Manduca seinen Schwiegervater nennt, mit großem Gefolge, 17 Mann, einen Besuch ab. Er will uns mitnehmen zur neuen Maloka, wo heute das letzte Stück Außenwand mit Lehm beworfen werden soll. Ich hatte Manduca gesagt, ich wollte diese Arbeit photographieren [...] Romeo, der uns am nächsten Morgen mit einigen anderen Burschen abholt, erzählt, die Majonggóng hätten trotz meines Wunsches den Bewurf noch in der Nacht fertig gemacht, indem sie den mit trockenem Gras durchkneteten Lehm von innen und außen wider das Lattengitter der Hauswand geworfen und auf beiden Seiten mit der flachen Hand festgedrückt und glatt verstrichen hätten. Dann seien alle Bewohner bis zum kleinsten Kinde von Manducas Schwiegervater ausgepeitscht worden” (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 305-306).

drunk. When the last gallon of *yadaake* has just been served, everyone leaves the *ättä*, blowing and gesturing with their arms toward the west, once again sending all the evil away. This way, amidst the euphoria generated by the chant, the dancing and the consumption of the fermented beverage for three days, the ceremony of inauguration of the house, the *ättä edemi jödö*, ended.

Figure 27. Cleansing ritual with the Kudaawa plant (Koch-Grünberg)



Figure 28. Cleansing ritual with the Kudaawa plant (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 29. Closing of the ättä (Pablo Albernaz)



In general, the ceremony was divided into three different moments: an initial phase that is exclusively vocal and has no consumption of fermented beverages, the beginning of the *ademi*, the stage in which the chant is accompanied by the *wasaja*, and in which *yadaake* is consumed, although maintaining a certain solemnity and sobriety, and not much adornment is used, and a final stage of embellishment and excessive consumption of cassava beer. After many years, the *ättä edemi jödö* was remembered, and a new *ättä*, constructed imitating the houses of the ancestors, became the new center of the ritual life of the Fuduuwaduinha village. If the house is for the men and is the place of their conversations and cosmosonic rites, the center of women's ritual life is the garden. Soon after the celebration of the inauguration of the house, the Ye'kwana began the ceremony for the opening of a new garden, the *äudaja edemi jödö*.

2.4.2. *Audaja edemi jödö*: singing the gardens

David Guss (1990: 33) drew attention to the parallels between the house (*ättä*) and the garden (*audaja or adeja*). According to the author, the concentric organization of the cosmos that serves as the architectural model for the houses, is the same reference model used to design the gardens. The houses and the gardens are the materialization of the different powers of the genders: the *anaaka* as a male space, where the men gather for their

conversations and rituals, and the *audaja* as a female place, where the women deal with the different kinds of food, which “are like human”, and with their power plants *maada* and *woy*.

The gardens are in distant locations in which it is not possible to hear acoustic references of the village. The soundscape of the gardens is made up of the leaves swaying in the wind, the lizards crossing rapidly between the seedlings, the hum of insects and the songs of the birds. For the Suyá (Seeger 2004), the gardens are not places of ceremonial activities, but for the Ye'kwana they are an important ritual place, and it is necessary to perform *a'chudi* inside them in several occasions, as when the first maniva is planted ([audaja ewansokatojo](#)) at the “heart” (*ewansokatojo*) of the garden, as if it were *ñududui* repeating the myth of the tree of life, the first plants are sown in the Marawaka mountains and in mount Roraima. *A'chudi* are also sung in the gardens during the harvesting of the first cassava (*ködheede ajohtotojo*), a chant that starts when the root is harvested at the garden and ends within the domestic space, when it is grated to serve as food. In these *a'chudi*, the different kinds of food are called “children” of the *wodhinhamo* and the activities related to the planting, caring and harvesting of the plants are comparable to the cares taken during pregnancy and with newborn babies.

On several occasions in which I participated in meetings at the school, when the men asked for the opinions of women, they referred to them as being “the most important ones”, because they are the owners of the food, which is fundamental in the constitution of the person. Moreover, when compared to men, the *wodhinhamo* more accurately keep the construction of the body according to tradition⁹⁴. On some occasions I have even heard some *inchonkomo* say that women should not study at school and go to the city since this would weaken the food and harm the Ye'kwana because the food and its ritual counterpart are the foundations of the constitution of the person.

While the forest is wild and dangerous, the gardens are cultivated by the technical activities and rituals (Guss 1990: 33-39) so that, just as the *ättä*, the *audaja* needs to be sung at in order to bring, from Kahuña, the original power of the food. The stories of *watunna* narrate the time in which people ate only clay and there was no vegetation nor cultivated plants on earth, explaining the way the Ye'kwana acquired their food. When they perform

94 Because they remain in the community, women still adorn themselves and take care of their bodies in a traditional way. While the men, since they often travel to Boa Vista, sometimes stop using the adornments, although they do not give up on the protection brought by the body paintings.

the *audaja edemi jödö* ceremony, they retell these stories, and repeat the deeds of the humans who could turn into animals and were able to cut off the tree of life.

The Ye'kwana Martim Albertino Gimenes (2008b) wrote his final course paper at the Insikiran Institute of Indigenous Education (Federal University of Roraima -UFRR) about the history of the tree of life and the first planting that occurred on earth. And days before the *toki edemi jödö* celebration started, Raimundo, Elias' father, visited me at the house I was staying and told me the *watunna* of the origin of the first gardens. According to Raimundo, Wanasedume (Wanadi) created the earth for the Ye'kwana to inhabit. There were no trees in the world and people still did not have gardens. They only ate earth, the same one with which the indigenous peoples make their clay pots. *Iudujumä* was the place in heaven where there was an endless garden, full of cultivated plants. There was a bird, a kind of a hawk, who brought the *uu* (*beijú*) made in heaven for some children, while their parents left to fetch clay to be eaten. The bird instructed the children to eat some and leave the rest for later, but they had never eaten *uu* (*beijú*), only clay, and they thought it was so tasty they ate it all. When their parents arrived, the children told them about the hawk that descended from heaven and brought food. The mother thought of a way of getting the food from heaven and asked her brother *Wayaama*, a coati who was also a man at that time, to fetch food at the heavenly *adeja* (garden).

He did not know how to get to heaven, until a swallow told him the way and took him there. Then, he got to the place where there was a big garden with all kinds of plants and fruits there are. *Udenadiwa* was the owner of the garden. *Wayaama* kept thinking about how to take the food to earth, then, the son of *Udenadiwa*, who was his friend, told him that he only needed one branch of the plant for it to sprout. *Wayaama* broke one branch of cassava and at the same moment a thunder rumbled in heaven and *Udenadiwa* knew of the theft. *Wayaama* changed his name to *Kuchui* and hid the branch beneath his nail. But the owner of the garden captured him and punished him by removing his whole skin. *Iumakawa*, *Kuchui*'s sister found her brother dead and explained that he had stolen her garden because the people on earth were starving. So she convinced *Udenadiwa* to set him free. With the smoke of *kawai* (tobacco), she resurrected her brother. He kept the cassava branch hidden under his nail and planted it in *Dodoima* (Mount Roraima)⁹⁵ and in the Marawaka mountains.

95 About Arekuna and Taurepang mythical versions of the tree of life (or the world) and mount Roraima, see Koch-Grünberg (1916: 33).

Figure 30. Mount Roraima

(http://obviousmag.org/archives/2011/01/monte_roraima_a_maior_montanha_plana_do_mundo.html)



The one in *Dodoima* did not grow much, but the one in Marawaka became a huge tree that went up to the sky. People tried to bring the tree down but it kept standing. A gecko species called *kasuwadaja* went up to heaven and saw there was a stuck branch but the gecko did not have teeth, so it could not cut it off. People would spend the day trying to cut the tree down, when night came, they stopped chopping but in the morning the tree would be intact. Then, a small bird (*manakamenu*) spent day and night chopping and sent *kadio*, a smaller squirrel, to cut off the branch holding the tree in heaven. The bird managed to fell the tree, but, when it was returning, the trunk fell over it and killed it, that is why squirrels eyes protrude outwards. *ma'do*, the jaguar, and *wayuni*, the tapir, had gone out to fetch water at a distant place, but they were deceived as they were given a basket to fetch the water and, as it was full of wholes, the water was leaking all around the basket, thus they did not participate in the harvesting of foods. Because it was jealous, the jaguar said that, from that moment on, they would only eat meat, the tapir heard it wrong and thought they would only eat vegetables. “After the felling of the tree, there was a great celebration and until today the Ye'kwana sing repeating the first garden inauguration celebration”, said Raimundo.

The felling of the tree of life consolidates the rupture, initiated with the house, between earth and the true heaven of Kahuña, and, after the conquering of the cultivated plants, the chants remained as the only connections between these separate planes. Majaanuma, on one afternoon, visited me in the city of Boa Vista and told me about the first ceremony of *audaja edemi jödö*. According to him, Wanato traveled to *Chawayudinña*, a place in heaven where chants can be heard endlessly and the beings are always happy and, from there, he brought a piece of the bark of the tree *momi*. Wanato handed the tree bark to *Yamujukawa* who used it to make a flute (*momi ijijä*) that had such a strong and strident

sound that it could be heard both in the place where the garden was opened and in heaven, in *Chawayudinña*. Since then, the *momi ijijä* is used in the celebration of new gardens and the sages repeat the chants that can be heard in *Chawayudinña*. Wanato created the body paintings and, before entering the celebration place, everyone adorned and embellished their bodies. The instrument players organized themselves in different lines and headed to a community in the *Anaicha* valley, where they held the first celebration for the opening of a new garden. After the embellishment of Wanato, the people assumed their current body form and all those who cut the tree down became animals: *Majadaku* (the jaguar), *Wajuni* (the tapir), *Kadio* (the squirrel), *Nukoyame* (the woodpecker), and all the others.

During my period of fieldwork in 2012, the Ye'kwana did not open any new gardens, they only planted at previously cultivated places, and in these cases, it is not necessary to carry out the full ceremony, only some *a'chudi* are performed before cleaning the cultivated area, planting, and harvesting. On the first days of 2017, they opened a new garden at a new location and carried out the *audaja edemi jödö*, so I was able to participate in the full ceremony and witness the central importance of women and of the *audaja* in the Ye'kwana cosmosonics. This ceremony occurred a few days after the *ättä edemi jödö* and lasted for over seven days.

At four in the morning, I woke up on the hammock with the soft sounds of the notes of the *fanak'wa*, a flute made of snail shells, resounding in front of the *ättä*. It was Jurandir, son of the leader (*ayaajä*), shouting in high pitch and playing the snail shell flute, summoning everyone to begin the ceremonial activities. I quickly got up and headed towards the *ättä*, where I found the sages by the fire, calmly speaking on their hammocks, giving instructions about how the ceremony should occur. As opposed to the *ättä edemi jödö*, for which recordings of all the ceremony were allowed, in this celebration any kind of recording was forbidden, since, according to the sages, this could weaken the food, they stated that this celebration was much more dangerous and important than that of the house inauguration, because it celebrated food, which is the people's source of construction.

Around 7 a.m., a group left to clear the vegetation in a small part of the garden that was left unfinished exactly for this part of the ceremony, and another group, to which I belonged, left to the forest to collect the bark of the *momi*, a tree that grows in regions close to gardens. Jairo, son of Davi, said that the young people nowadays bathe themselves with remainings of *yadaake* on their body and that this action weakens the spirit of the cassava,

which goes to the bottom of the sea. “That is why we conduct the *ademi*, to retrieve the spirit of the cassava. The cassava is just like people”, said the young man⁹⁶.

About one kilometer away from the village, we removed pieces of the tree’s bark and took them to a place where two groups meet to make the instruments. An older man who knows the ceremony well oriented the group of men, composed of adults, young men and children, and each one prepared his own instrument. While we made the *momi ijijä*, some men protected with pieces of leaves the axes and machetes that are carried under the arms during the dance. Teacher Reinaldo brought with him a *wasaja* made by Majaanuma that had seeds tied with strings to the piece of wood⁹⁷.

When we finished making the instruments, we followed in line until we got near the *ättä*. While the men prepared their *momi* flutes, all women were at the *anaaka* placing their food near the central pole. Two women passed by us when we were with the *momi* and turned their face away when warned by the men in the line not to look at the flutes. Davi instructed us to first play the smaller or high-pitched sounds (*she’kato’käyäättödö*) and said that inside the *ättä* the sounds should be “big” or low (*ajo’fäinhäyäättöö*). The sounds of the *momi* resemble those of a trumpet (cornet) but there is no tuning, the most important aspect here is the timbre and intensity of the emitted sounds.

Before we got home, ten women carrying their buckets of *yadaake* offered each of the men one calabash of the beverage. Davi told everyone not to smoke at the dancing line, and Joaquim said that the ceremony of *audaja* is riskier than the house’s and that everyone should respect the sexual abstinence and the recording prohibitions. While the men keep waiting in the line, the women are at the center of the *anaaka* performing an *a’chudi* that resembles the *kädäijjato ewankänäjödö*, a cure chant that asks to bring the body and soul of the *adeja* of Kahuña⁹⁸. The chant names spiders, ducks, herons, alligators and other animals that live in the river and have invisible canoes (seen only by the *füwai* and *a’chudi edamo*) and asks them to bring the health of the *audaja* back on their canoe⁹⁹.

96 “‘Alle Sterne, auch der Mond, sind Leute!’ sagt mein Majonggóng, und der muß es doch wissen”. (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 77), a question that points to the perspectivist qualities of the Amerindian thinking (Viveiros de Castro 1997).

97 It differed from the *wasaja* that are usually used by the Ye’kwana, and which have a weaved container where the seeds grit against each other. See chapter 3.

98 The *a’chudi* is the same one, with variations in its melody and rhythm.

99 Elias said that nowadays people drop into the river fragments of cassavas and the small fish swallow them and take them to the sea, and that is why the *adeja* becomes weak, its roots rot, and the gardens get sick, he said complementing the speech of young Jairo.

We entered the house dancing in circles and playing the *momi ijijä*, guided by the group leader, who plays the *wasaja* together with the *momi*. We were more than fifty men playing the instrument that sounded like a continuous buzz, and inside the enclosed space of the house the pitch got lower and the sound was more intense. As I entered the *ättä* dancing with the man who constantly moved their bodies, and seeing the women crouched at the center of the house facing the central pole, hiding their faces and covering their ears with an expression of visual and auditory fear for the presence of the *momi ijijä* flutes, I felt a strong shiver all through my body, as if I was connecting to *Chawayudinña*, a feeling that lasted through the whole initial phase of the ceremony. Beside the women, tied to the *ñududui*, were their baskets, which contained the seeds and branches of all the plant species cultivated by the Ye'kwana in their gardens.

Vicente Castro remained with a focused and strong expression sitting beside the women while Majaanuma walked around the men showing with strong gestures how the first instrument player should play his *wasaja*, and, with a lit cigarette, he made each of the men in the dancing line inhale once the tobacco offered by him. We danced for half an hour until some women joined the dance while the older women remained around the central pole. After another half hour, the *ademi* starts to be performed, being repeated by all, while the women take the men's machetes and axes and place them around the *ñududui*, along with the cultivated species. At this moment, the sounds of the *momi* stop and the tools used to open the garden are purified (Guss 1990: 34). This is done to repair the damage caused by the tools to the spirits who own the felled plants (Jimenez & Jimenez 2001: 14).

Vicente Castro starts to sing the *ademi* repeated by the older women, sitting next to the food. While in the *ademi* of the *ättä* the singers keep singing for three days next to the east door, the *ademi* of the *audaja* was sung at the center of the *anaaka* and only at the end of the ceremony Vicente headed toward the east door, where he sang until leaving the house. At the beginning of the chant, the women take their empty baskets and dance with them on their backs. At this moment, the lyrics of the chant state that there is no food, that the women must take big cassavas, and that Wanato and Wanadi danced without stopping and, thus, they should repeat the dance. "*Tänädawakö*" means take your basket, a word that is repeated many times throughout the chant. During the first day of the celebration, there is a relationship of sequentiality (Menezes Bastos 2007) in which the responsive chant is alternated with the sounds of the *momi ijijä* flute. The chants make the connection (*wadeekui*) and the sounds of the flutes "wake up the people that live in Kahuña". At a certain moment in the dance, Majaanuma instructs everyone to change the steps, and not to

let the left foot cross behind but only in front of the right foot, thus causing the group to move counterclockwise. When the circle changed the direction of the dance, it went back to the standard dancing style (*toki edemi jödö*).

In the morning of the second day, all the people leave the house and sing facing the west and sending all the evil away from the community. The chant performance is the same as that of the *ättä edemi jödö*. At the end of the chant, we throw the wood sticks that we held in our hands, blowing and making gestures to send evil away. Following the sequence of the *ademi* the chant goes on accompanied by *wasaja*, and the Ye'kwana keep dancing and drinking around the *anaaka*. On the last day, when the *yadaake* is over, the women go back to the center of the *anaaka*, crouched, with their heads facing downwards so they cannot see the men, who dance with the *wasaja* until they leave the house singing. The chant lyrics say things such as “the bees are taking the nectar of the flower planted by *Yaakama*, who made the garden and planted the cassava”, and states that the snake “Kawadatu is curling at the center of the garden”, or even that the dancers are leaving “through the line of *awaana*”, a plant of power used in the body paintings created by Wanato. When we were outside the house, Vicente sang that he cannot go to the Marawaka mountains and Mount Roraima because he danced too much, until losing his nail, causing everyone who heard and repeated to laugh.

At the end of the chant performed by Vicente Castro, we gave the *momi ijijä* flutes back to the forest. The women remain dancing and in control of the *anaaka*, until they leave through the west door. This time, men and women cannot see each other at the end of the ceremony. If women and men look at each other, the spirit of *adeja*, which is at the center of the *anaaka*, goes away. Days later, accompanied by singers, the women took the cassavas and plants that were taken from the central pole and planted them in their gardens.

After the end of the *audaja edemi jödö*, the women prepare more *yadaake* at the center of the roundhouse, when they put under the *uu* (*beijú*) disks the powder called *kawijho*, used to create the foam of the fermented beverage and to call the “mold spirit” (*kawijho tödödö*). On the day after, the palm leaves were opened and taken from the place where the beverage was (*yadaake a'dukwaado*) and another day was necessary for the fermentation (*yadaake che'kadö*). After the preparation of this *yadaake* for the exclusive consumption of women, a *wodhinhamo wänwadö* celebration was started, in which they danced and drank in the *ättä* for two days, taking the role of the men during the cosmo-sonic celebrations.

Just as in the house the central sphere (*anaaka*) is the place for male ritual activities, in the *audaja* the *maada* and *woy* (symbols of female ritual power) are planted at the center of the garden with the food plants around them, creating a concentric concept similar to that of the houses (Guss 1990: 34). The sacred plants considered the parents of the cassavas and their presence at the center of the gardens is necessary for the growth of the food. However, the use of these plants is not restricted to the cares with the garden. They are important for different reasons, and they are the expression of the knowledge and ritual independence of the women (Guss 1990: 33-34). The *audaja edemi jödö* shows the victory of culture over nature, and, according to David Guss (1990: 33), the garden is the inverted image of the house, representing the female power, a hypothesis that is confirmed in this ethnography. The chants of the *audaja* cite several characters of Mount Roraima, of the Marawaka mountains, and of hundreds of places known by the Ye'kwana and their respective owner spirits. These locations are part of the traditional Ye'kwana territory, given to them by their cultural hero Kuyujani, to whom the Ye'kwana reserve an *ademi* in which they celebrate his long trip and the acquisition of his civilization arts.

2.4.3. *Tanöökö edemi jödö*: the arrival of the hunters

At the final moments of the *audaja edemi jödö*, the men danced occupying a half-circle of the inner part of the house (west, south, east) clockwise toward the inner part of the *ättä*, and in the opposite direction towards the external yard. Sitting on a white plastic chair, Vicente Castro sang a passage from the *ademi* that said that the “*tanöökö* were returning”, and was repeated by the singers sitting around him on small wooden stools. The chant, at that time, referred to the exit of men dancing and playing *wasaja*, carrying their *momi ijijä* that could no longer make any sound. This dance, which happened with the group approaching the door of the house and then going back inside, lasted one hour and forty-five minutes, until they definitively came out to the external yard. Robélio, who was by my side, explained the chant verse saying that “*tanöökö*” is any group that is in celebration.

The Ye'kwana are in *tanöökö* when they are visited by relatives from other villages or after the arrival of the hunters. In friendly situations, the native ethics assumes that outsiders, who sailed and walked for days in the woods, are supposed to hunt and fish on their way and bring these provisions, while the local village is supposed to offer fermented drink that will be served by women when they celebrate the reunion of the two groups.

The *tanöökö edemi jödö*, translated by the Ye'kwana as “the celebration of the arrival of the hunters”, is an opening ceremony of the *socius* that continues the narrative about the acquisition of cooking and culture. While the ceremony of the house aims to create a livable and purified place with the chants, followed only by the *wasaja*, the *tanöökö* and the *audaja edemi jödö*, they reflect on food production and the alliance relationships, giving greater emphasis to instrumental sounds.

According to *watunna*, Kuyujani has determined the Ye'kwana territory and performed the first *tanöökö* celebration. I heard about Kuyujani on many occasions. In one of them, in May 2012, I watched parts of the *tanöökö* when I remained for twenty days in Waschainha on the occasion of the meeting of the Ye'kwana association, in September 2016, a group had left to collect straw for the roof of the roundhouse and carried out a great hunt, leading to one day and a half of *tanöökö*. Also, in December 2016, a group of Ye'kwana returned from Boa Vista by canoe and reached Fuduuwaduinha before the beginning of the celebration of the *ättä edemi jödö*, and they were received according to the traditional reception of hunters and travelers.

In 2012, I witnessed an event that showed the importance of cosmosonics as a repetition of *watunna* times. While a group of people danced and drank to the sounds of the *wasaja* (rhythm staff), the pair of *te'keya* (a sort of clarinet), the *samjuda* (drums), and *fanak'wa* (a flute of snail shell), Vicente Castro approached the central pole of the house, stopped beside the *yadaake* container, and told, with a firm and serious expression, how Kuyujani performed the first celebration of the arrival of the hunters at the end of his trip around the Ye'kwana territory. The group that was dancing stopped around the sage and listened attentively to his words.

According to *inchonkomo* and the narrative collected by Jimenez and Jimenez (2001), Sedume Wanadi gave the light and the care of the earth to the sun (*shii*) and sent Kuyujani to choose a place for the Ye'kwana to live and distribute the different peoples on earth. Kuyujani called this place *Kamünñawana nonoi*, the land of the sun, and distributed the enemy peoples and the other peoples through out other regions of the world.

Kuyujani left from *Ye'kwana jödö* and traveled surrounding the Ye'kwana territory until reaching the heights of Mount *Anaicha* hill, which has a huge cave within it that seems like another world. When they were in this place, a great flood that filled the earth started, so Kuyujani and his trip companions sought shelter inside this cave. The earth was all flooded and only the top of the mount remained above the water. With the flood, the old

humanity was over and, when the land was dry, everyone left this mount and Kuyujani resumed his trip until he reached Mount Ye'kwana jödö, where he had started the trip. The waterfall just below the Auaris river was the southernmost point established by Kuyujani as the territory for the Ye'kwana people.

While Kuyujani traveled, Wanato prepared for the opening of the new garden, waiting for the traveling group as the chief does during the celebrations of the arrival of hunters. The return of Kuyujani was followed by a great celebration with the presence of all the peoples. This was the first *tanöökö*, at the time humans and animals lived together and spoke the same and only tongue. Kuyujani and Wanato taught the Ye'kwana how to celebrate the *tanöökö*, to use the “*inajá*”¹⁰⁰ straw to make the *wasaiá'do*, to prepare the body paintings and the adornments such as the necklaces of jawbone teeth, they taught the reasons and ways of weaving baskets. He planted the plants used to make the musical instruments and taught the Ye'kwana how to play the *wasaja*, *te'keya*, the *samjuda*, the *fanak'wa*, and the *codedo*, an instrument made of the red-footed tortoise's shell. Föcheteewedu came from heaven with the *ademi* chants, and the people heard them and memorized them as if they were recorders.

Fakwawa, Kuyujani's sister, owned the *kanawa*, a container used to store the *yadaake*. But when the beverage was going to be served to all, a stone of *wiriki* fell from heaven inside the *kanawa*. This stone was placed by Odocha, who wanted to disturb the actions of Kuyujani, and the people, after drinking, started to speak in different languages and to hear different chants and songs. After the return of *Kuyujani*, the people who followed him in his trip went back inside mount Ye'kwana jödö. This new people of Wanadi is in this mount waiting for this world to end and for Kuyujani to return to create a new humanity.

Figure 31. *Kanawa*, *yadaake* recipient (Koch-Grünberg)

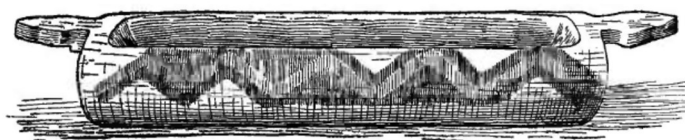


Abb. 18. Kaschiritrog, Yekuaná (1/90 n. Gr.)

The story of Kuyujani tells about the achievement of a Ye'kwana morality that is different from that of other peoples in the planet. Kuyujani is the one responsible for the

100 *Maximiliana regia*. Lévi-Strauss (2012: 38) reminds us that, in Melanesia, the symbolism of a change of state is attributed to the plant fiber. Among the Macuxi, the Taurepang, the Wapischana, and the Ye'kwana, the *inajá* fiber straw is a fundamental element of rituals related to hunting.

distribution of the peoples on earth, giving the Ye'kwana their traditional territory (*Kamünñawana nonoi*). Majaanuma said that the first construction of the house was before the acquisition of gardens, when food and chants were still brought from heaven. While Kuyujani traveled, as the hunters do nowadays, *Wanato* stayed in Ye'kwana jödö guiding the feminine production of the *yadaake*, as a good chief must do on the occasion of collective celebrations. Only after *Wanato* organized the celebration of the *audaja* and Kuyujani celebrated the first *tanöökö*, the food started to be cultivated and the Ye'kwana received their *a'chudi*, *ademi* and musical instruments *shiiwokomo*. Everything takes place as if the *tanöökö* ceremony created a social meaning to the beverages and meat (plant and animal worlds) linked to the human universe of trades - as noted by the Brazilian anthropologist Teixeira-Pinto (1996), about another Carib people called Arara -, articulating the acoustic codes of summonings, chants and instrumental sounds with the gastronomic codes present in the narratives of *watunna* that talk about the acquisition of cooking and cultural goods.

In 2012, during the meeting of the Ye'kwana Association (Wanasedume) in Waschainha, there were several performances of the [*tanöökö edei jödö*](#) celebration. As we arrived at the Waschainha community, we were received by two Ye'kwana who were waiting for us at the dirt road next to the health center, about one kilometer away from the community. They asked us to wait in line, with our right hand over each other's shoulders, waiting for the arrival of the group that would join us to go to the village. Children brought a pair of *te'keya*, aerophone instruments made of bamboo in which a reed is inserted and that emit low buzzing sounds¹⁰¹, and two young ones who arrived with me started to play the instruments. We heard the distant beating of the drums and the high-pitched shouts that announced the approximation of the host group. The hosts approached our group, some of them playing *samjuda* drums, others holding packs of leaves or oars, walking in a pace driven by the rhythms of the sounds of their voices and instruments, they passed by us in line playing their musical instruments, forming a semicircle just after that. A boy followed the group playing an old can and imitating with it the sound of the drums.

In a circular movement, the two groups became one and we followed towards the big house. A young man was leading the line holding with the clarinet with his left hand and the *wasaja* staff with the right one, which marked the pulse of the movement that varied from dancing to walking. He was followed by another one that accompanied him with the right hand over his shoulder and the left hand with the *te'keya*. I and the others followed behind

101 See chapter 3.

this dance chain. Beside the semicircle, without synchronization, the drum players, the young men with oars and the men with packs of leaves danced and shouted around us, softly hitting the leaves over our bodies. Women and children observed the dance and the music but they still did not join the circle of dancers.

As we entered the big house, the shouts and dances were intensified and those who were inside the house joined the group. Two women joined the men with the pair of *te'keya* and interlaced their right arm with the left arm of the instrument players, making the dance steps, while other women offered *yadaake* to the guests. Right after that, the dance step changed and the bodies turned ahead in a semicircle and followed the walk in normal pace but always marked by the rhythm of the sound of the instruments. A young man took the *fanak'wa* and started to play along with the drums. Some Ye'kwana remained sitting around the center of the dance while children took some more cans to try to imitate the sound of the drums, which caused the percussive beats to produce a tone of a higher pitch. The meeting lasted for many days and, every time new guests arrived, the same reception ritual was carried out, repeating the *tanöökö* way of receiving foreigners.

At the end of the meeting, the Ye'kwana resumed the *tanöökö* celebration, dancing the same way and sometimes singing fragments of the *ademi* related to the moment of ending the ceremony, called *wasaiado*, in which the dancers adorn themselves with leaves of inajá straw that are only discarded at the end of the celebration, as with the *momi* trumpets during the *audaja*. On the days following the meeting, while we waited among the torrential rains of the Amazonian winter for the weather to clear so that the planes could land and take us back, Majaanuma, whom I met on this occasion, was teaching the young men that danced with the *wasaja* while he sang parts of the *ademi* of *tanöökö*, and others consulted their chant notebooks.

In September 2016, I arrived from Kudaatoinha at Fuduuwaduinha on the same day as a group of men that had gone to some Venezuelan mountains to collect straw to cover the *ättä*. After the arrival of the hunters with the packages called *maji*, which contained fish and game meat, a celebration was carried out at the *anaaka* of the old house of men. In the beginning of the night, there were only some children playing *samjuda*, *te'keya* and *wasaja*. Then the older men arrived and Contreras started a long chant that lasted almost all through the night. While some remained on their hammocks, hung around the house, the others were sitting at the meeting table and the dancers moved in a circle counterclockwise with steps marked by the beat of the *wasaja* on the floor. The chant called *washejä* describes the hunt

that was carried out, changing in the structure of the lyrics the names of the hunted animals. Only the *wasaja* accompanied the chant and the dance steps while the people drank *yadaake* and repeated the melodies sung by Contreras. In one part of the chant, Contreras sang some verses that can be translated as follows:

I hunted a *tapir*¹⁰²,
Soon I searched for palm trees
To wrap the meat,
I was searching and found it,
I returned with the straw,
I wrapped the meat, tied it
And put it on the fire”.

In this chant (*maji edemi jödö*), it was also possible to see a relationship of sequentiality (Menezes Bastos 2007) between the vocal section and the section in which instrumental sounds predominate, as occurred on the same day of the *audaja* ceremony, when the Ye’kwana sang and played their *momi ijijä*. Every half hour, or a little more, Contreras would stop the chant and the Ye’kwana would resume the dance with the *shiiwokomo*¹⁰³ musical instruments so they could later go back to the chant. On the following morning, the community gathered at the central part of the *ättä* that was still under construction to carry out the collective meal and, during the removal of the package (*maji*), Contreras, next to the central pole (*ñududui*), performed an *a’chudi* to throw away the straw that wrapped the meat, asking to purify these raw materials and asking that they grow in the forest. Beside him, there were other singers who attentively observed the singing of the *a’chudi edajä*, repeating its sentences at the end of each stanza. After the meal, a group began to dance around the house in construction and then went on towards the east until reaching the exit from the community.

On December 26th, 2016, right after the end of the meeting to discuss the high school in Fuduuwaduinha, we headed to the margin of the Auaris river, where we welcomed, in the *tanöökö edemi jödö*, way a group that returned from Boa Vista by canoe.

The group of locals headed towards the edge of the river playing *samjuda* and *fanak’wa*, and emitting high-pitch sounds, between chanting and shouting, thus motivating those who were there. The women walked quickly beside the men, holding pans full of *yadaake* with which they had to serve both groups. At the margin of the river, the hosts meet

102 The name mentioned varies throughout the repetition of the segment according to the animals that were hunted.

103 The *shiiwochomo* instruments will be described in chapter 3.

the guests who wait in line, with naked chests and covered in white clay. Two men played the pair of *te'keya*, while others danced moving the oars or the leaf packs upwards in vertical movements.

After the meeting at the margin of the river, the groups join and go on towards the village. Just before we arrived, a line of women waited for us to serve the *yadaake* that was, as usual, partly drunk and partly spit out as if being vomited. After drinking, everyone went on towards the center of the village to the sounds of high-pitched shouts and musical instruments. In front of the house, the women suddenly start to “fight” the men to take the *maji* packs containing the game meat from them. The men resist for some time until they are beaten by the strength of many *wodhinhamo* together¹⁰⁴. In addition to this simulation of conflict to obtain the meat pack, guests and hosts engage in a power struggle by means of physical fights in which they seek to grapple with their opponents trying to bring them down with their backs to the floor. Just as the dispute for the *maji* dramatizes the conflict between men (game meat providers) and women (owners of the fermented drinks), the physical fight between hosts and guests is the dramatization of a conflict, not a violent battle, although there may occur some minor injuries. On this occasion, the visiting group was the winner of the dispute, which ended in shouts that reinforced the show of strength and virility, and, after the challenge, the two groups joined to dance and drink until the morning of the following day ([töwäättändaamo 1](#)).

At night, there was a welcoming dance called *töwäättändaamo* ([töwäättändaamo2](#) and [töwäättändaamo 3](#)), in which the *shiiwokomo* instruments of the *tanöökö* celebration are played. The dancers moved in a circle, sideways, with their bodies facing the *anaaka*, until the main player, who plays the *te'keya* with his left arm and the *wasaja* with the right arm, in a swift plastic movement bent his body, raising the *te'keya*, faced ahead walking until he resumed, a few meters later, the previous dancing mode. To teach the younger ones, Majaanuma danced with the *te'keya* and the *wasaja*, and with dexterity and accuracy, he showed vitality while dancing as Kuyujani and Wanato at the ancestral times.

104 “Plötzlich erschallen vom Walde her laute Juchzer. Ein Schuß fällt. Hunde bellen. Alles eilt ins Freie. Es sind Jäger und Fischer, die mit Beute heimkehren. Und nun ein hübsches Spiel: In vollem Lauf kommen die jungen Männer daher, im Gesicht und am Körper mit weißen Horizontalstrichen bemalt, weiße Flaumfedern des Mutum in den durchbohrten Ohrläppchen. In der hochehobenen Rechten schwingen sie ein Stück Liane, an dem zwischen Blättern Bündel kleiner Fische hängen. Die jungen Frauen und Mädchen springen hinter ihnen her und suchen ihnen die Beute zu entreißen. So geht die wilde Jagd bis in das Haus hinein. Triumphierend ziehen die Frauen ab, um die Fischchen für sich und die Kinder zuzubereiten” (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 308).

Figure 32. Physical fighting (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 33. Physical fighting (Koch-Grünberg)



Estival (1991) describes the rite of hunters of the Arara, a Carib people as the Ye'kwana, dividing it into three moments: the period of hunting and waiting for hunters, the arrival of the hunters, first without the hunted meat and with fight simulations, and, finally, the departure of the hunters and the collective meal and playing of the transversal flute *tereret* (including the arrival of the hunted meat and the celebration until morning). Entering and exiting the village are, among the Arara, critical and musically “disorderly” moments, in which music marks a state of animality related to the uncertain status of the hunters going back to the forest.

Figure 34. Dances and instrumental pieces of the *tanöökö* (Pablo Albernaz)



The *tanöökö* is structured in a similar way, *wasaiá'do* and *maji* are the moments of the *ademi* in which the chants performed with the *wasaja* predominate. *te'keya jákä wänwannä* is the phase in which the pair of *te'keya*, the *samjuda* drums, the shouts and noises of the dancers predominate. Although the *tanöökö* has a structure that is similar to that of the *ademi* of the *ättä* and of the *audaja*, it introduces the instruments *samjuda*, *te'keya* and *fanak'wa*, resulting in apparent sound disorder to our western ears, since the instruments are played amidst the high-pitch and melodic shouts of the dancers who move towards the hunters associating them with animal species. The alternation between a moment of melodic chants of expressive softness, and another moment of tumult and vocal-instrumental performances in which shouts predominate over words and the timbres of the instruments over melodies aims to serve as an outlet to the human process of *becoming-animal*, seeking to provide a cosmosonic answer to the problem of disjunction between heaven and earth.

At the end of the *tanöökö ademi* ceremony, the Ye'kwana dance with the inajá straw (*wasaiá'do*). As with the *audaja edemi jödö* ceremony in which the men prepare the *momi ijijä* flutes that are discarded at the end of the ceremony, during the *tanöökö* the *wasaiá'do* skirts are made in the beginning of the ceremony and burnt at the end. The final chant, called *wasaiá'do yakuadö*, purifies the straw skirts that will be burnt at the end of the celebration. This stage focuses on driving away the spirits of *Odosha* that may have approached during the hunting or fishing out of jealousy because the Ye'kwana were using these straws.

I understand that the *tanöökö* provides a sonic resolution to the relationship between agriculture, hunting, and death, since every act of eating is a relationship of predation, referring to an acoustic isomorphism in which careful cooking correlates with accurate language and bad cooking with roughhouse (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 302). The chant, in the *ademi* of the arrival of hunters, is an acoustic behavior halfway between the silence and the noise¹⁰⁵. In the myths from the region of the Guyanas analyzed by Lévi-Strauss, noise corresponds to an abuse of the cooked food exactly because it is an abuse of articulated language (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 303), so that “the true role of noise is not so much driving the captor away (the monster that devours the celestial body or the intending abuser) but rather symbolically filling the void created by the catchment” (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 337). I believe that these observations by Lévi-Strauss have several approximations to the mythical-ritual system of the Ye’kwana, clarifying the way by which the stories of *watunna* articulate with the cosmosonics.

The *tanöökö*, therefore, exposes a complex network of meanings in which the acoustic and auditory codes connect to the gastronomic code, and where the disjunction between heaven and earth, ended by Kuyujani, establishes tensions between chant and tumult, reciprocity and conflict, communication and unintelligibility, pointing to the constitution of the Ye’kwana morality and to the opening of the *socius*, emphasizing the relationships of alterity with the domains of the human and the inhuman.

105 Reinaldo, in his translations of the words of Contreras about the *tanöökö*, referred to the instrumental moment as “noise”, “shouting” which, throughout the three days, is alternated with the *ademi* chants, the most important part of the ceremony.

3. SHIIWOKOMO: SONIC OBJECTS

3.1. The sounds and the objects

This chapter addresses the *shiiwo* (*shiiwokomo* pl.) instrumental cosmosonics, a category that includes the objects that produce sounds and that are used in different contexts, from ritual to daily life. Among the Ye'kwana, all the created objects were purified with specific chants, sonically acquiring their *personitude*. The same happens with the *shiiwokomo* objects, and their raw materials, manufacturing, shapes, timbres, playing and repertoires connect to *watunna* and to the economy of the acoustic code expressed in the cosmosonics.

This agency of the objects is a characteristic present in many indigenous societies. In her doctorate dissertation, the ethnomusicologist Deise Montardo (2002: 168) states that the musical instruments of the Guarani-Kaiowá indigenous people are considered living beings that “require a context for their effective use and an adequate treatment so they can show their qualities”. In a recent book originally published in French, Viveiros de Castro (2015: 53) also called attention to this double status of the objects in the Amerindian universe: “the artifacts have this interestingly ambiguous ontology: they are things or objects but they necessarily point to a person or subject, since they are like frozen actions, material incarnations of a non-material intent”.

Among the Ye'kwana, producing baskets, artifacts or musical instruments requires the handling of materials that are found in nature so that they become part of the culture (Guss 1990). This process of creation aims to make objects part of daily life, domesticating their raw materials by means of small rituals similar to those that construct the people, and differentiating the objects created by the hands of the Ye'kwana from those that are foreign to them, created by other indigenous peoples or by the white people.

David Guss, who carried out his ethnography in the 1970s among the Ye'kwana in Venezuela, differentiated two groups of *a'chudi*: those destined to food, which would be transformations of the *a'chudi* of the first meat (*tänäämö ya'chumadö*) that summon the same types of spirits and powers, with the names mentioned in the chant being slightly changed according to each particular food species, and another group of chants called *tingkui ya'chumadö*, which aim to purify created objects and are sung before using any article made by the Ye'kwana. Guss stated that the purification of the baskets and objects related to the

production of food was fundamental so that their use did not cause diseases or even death (Guss 1990). Even in the Ye'kwana vocabulary, objects are separated into two different classes: *tödöemä* is the word used to designate the artifacts made by the Ye'kwana and which, for that reason, have “human intent”, and *mösooma* is used for the objects acquired through trade and that do not have agency as the *tödöemä* objects.

Figure 35. Woman weaving a sling to carry children (Koch-Grünberg)



Figure 36. Preparation of the muwaaaju thong (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 37. Preparation of a basket (Pablo Albernaz)



Guss says that the transformation of any raw material, such as a tree used to make drums or an animal killed and converted into food, must be followed by a spiritual transformation that aims to make a symbolic realignment with the human world in which it is integrated (Guss 1990: 95). During my period of fieldwork, I did not witness the Ye'kwana

performing chants to purify objects of daily use. However, I have seen ritual procedures during the manufacturing of the *shiiwokomo* instruments. They will be described in this chapter. This humanization of the artifacts relates to the belief found in *watunna* that everything on earth is either *amoije* or *tönwa'dooto* (poisoned, contaminated). As presented before, although Wanadi tried to create a copy of the celestial world in this world, his brother Odosha subverted every act of the original demiurge, unmaking his actions and making the earth an imperfect place. After many attempts, Wanadi went away and left the earth in the hands of Odosha and his auxiliary beings (Odoshankomo) but not before leaving the chants, plants and body paintings to the Ye'kwana as means of protection against the attacks of these nefarious beings. As will be presented in this chapter, the raw materials used to make the *shiiwokomo* are the property of owner spirits that refer to different “risk zones” and require different means of ritual handling involving plants, paintings and chants. Before describing the *shiiwokomo* instruments it is worth first situating musical instruments in the Amazon in the context of studies on instrument organology, outlined by the classic study by Sachs and Hornbostel (1961).

3.2. Musical instruments in the Amazon

The classic studies about the musical instruments of the indigenous peoples, as a rule, emphasized the classification of these artifacts according to the western organology highlighting their importance in these societies due to the fact that they embody powers of spirits, divine entities, people or groups (Seeger 1987: 174). In the Amazon, the musical instruments are made with limited resources taken from the forest. Even so, the indigenous peoples manage to produce a broad range of sounds with these artifacts, and the choice for these materials is the base for theories regarding their manipulation and their cosmopolitical effect. These questions are not addressed by the classic western organology, which is centered around the typological aspects of the instruments, although it has been used as a source for important studies about the musical instruments in the region, such as those by Menezes Bastos (1997) and Montardo (2002), among other studies.

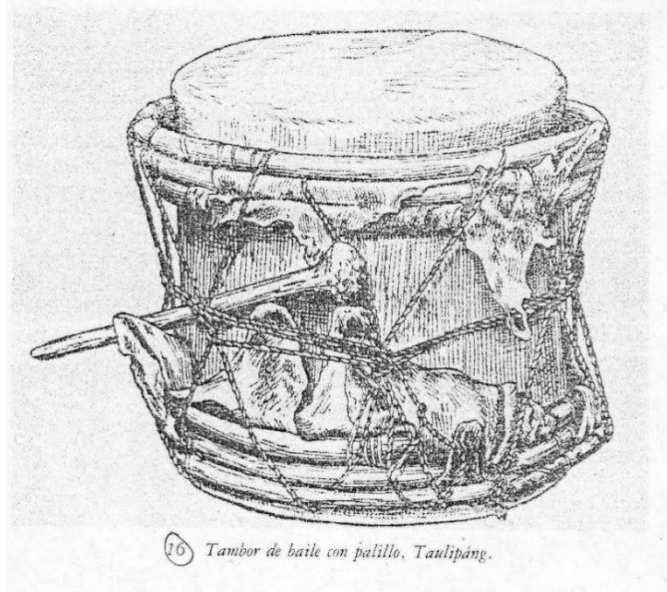
Among the classic studies based on instrument organology, the one by Helza Camêu (1977: 191) stands out as it was an important milestone in the study of Brazilian indigenous music. For this researcher, the musical instruments repeat the impressions that vocal music generates, and the diversity of the materials used, the shape given to the pieces, and the way of using them also causes instrumental music to be very different from group to group.

Câmeu also states that, in the Brazilian indigenous music, percussion and wind instruments have greater relevance, and that throughout five centuries few changes would be found in the indigenous musical instruments, since “until the present days, we find the same canes, thin or thick, and the same types of rattles, trumpets, horns and staffs, made with the same equivalent materials” (Camêu 1977: 192).

A few years later, Elizabeth Travassos (1987) organized a glossary of indigenous musical instruments presenting a summary of different objects highlighting a variety of globular and tubular rattles, flutes with or without windways and holes, pan flutes, nose flutes, and drums made of ceramics, wood, skin and also hollow ones. The author is based on the organological definitions of the instruments, the way they are played, and resorts to the examples of the use of the artifacts by indigenous peoples described in the studies by researchers such as Isikowitz (1935), Camêu (1977,1979), Ortiz (1952) and Sachs (1947), among others.

It is important to remember that, among the indigenous peoples, the body is highly valued as a resounding instrument through dance moves that use different types of rattles and foot stomping. This use of the body as a device capable of emitting and receiving sound waves points to the importance of the cosmosonic construction of the person as a cluster of sound relationships. If the first instrument is the voice, the body is the main producer of vocal-percussive sounds.

Figure 38. Drawing of a dance drum (Koch-Grünberg)



Drums and aerophones are among the main musical instruments found within indigenous communities in the Amazon. Drums are used by the indigenous at least since the

conquer (Camêu 1977: 218) and aerophones relate to the importance of shamanism, blowing and tobacco smoke as manifestations that bring visibility to the invisible dimension of reality. That is why wind instruments are the sound objects most commonly found among the indigenous peoples of the Amazon (Beaudet 1997).

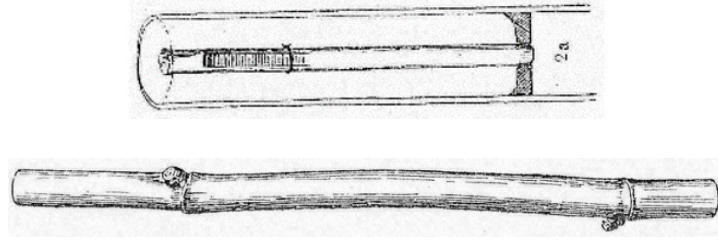
Erich von Hornbostel (1923) doubted the pre-Colombian origin of the clarinets and drums, an opinion that was shared by Izikowitz (1935), grounded on the absence of archaeological evidences that backed up this hypothesis. Decades later, Jean Beaudet (1997) will oppose this idea stating that the absence of such archaeological evidences stems from the fact that most of the instruments are made of perishable bamboos that have a short lifespan. In the last decades, ethnomusicology has shown the importance of clarinets in the Andes and Jean Michel Beaudet, in his ethnography about the Wayãpi, says that it is already possible to support the American origin of the *tule* type “clarinets” (Beaudet 1997)¹⁰⁶. Without any intent of discussing “origins”, I refer to this author here only to illustrate some of the debates about the sonic artifacts in this region, as well as to emphasize the importance of these instruments for the indigenous peoples.

Jean Michel Beaudet (1997) tries to build a map of the diffusion of aeroponic music in the Amazon and, although he follows the classifications of Izikowitz (1935), he points to the risks of reducing organological richness and diversity too fixed to typologies. He classifies clarinets into two types: the short ones with bells, which were said to be of the “chaco type” by Izikowitz, they measure no more than 40 centimeters, with a bell of calabash or horn, and with a reed that is fixed inside the musician’s mouth. Evidence for the incidence of these instruments was found in southwestern Amazon and the region encompassing Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil (Beaudet 1997: 58).

The second type of clarinet, which in most of the incidence region is called *turê* or *tule*, is long and usually made of bamboos, measuring up to two meters in length. The reed is fixed in the mouthpiece inside the instrument, and this type of clarinet is the most widely spread in the region, although this distribution is not homogeneous. Beaudet suggests there is a diffusion of these instruments along an axis from south to north. According to the author, the Ye’kwana are one of the many people that have clarinets of the *tule* type, which are, therefore, the pairs of *te’keya* (Beaudet 1997: 58).

106 See also Menezes Bastos (1999).

Figure 39. Drawing of the *te'keya* and the reed at the internal part (Koch-Grünberg)



A third type are the clarinets that are also of the *turê* type, but with multiple bamboo reeds that are also fixed in the mouthpiece, found only among the Aparai and the Wayãpi. The ethnomusicologist also states that the three types of clarinets do not have holes for playing (Beudet 1997: 58-60).

For Izikowitz (1935), the geographical distribution of this instrument was restricted, since at the time of his work only ten kinds of references to these instruments were known. At the period Beudet (1997) wrote his study, there were more than 40 references, their incidence was seen in the extreme south of Brazil, in the three basins of Amazon tributary rivers, and continually along the Amazon river's left margin from the east of the Guianas to the Orinoco.

The oral accounts of the Wayãpi about the acquisition of the instrumental repertoires suggest that they have known these clarinets at least since the 18th century due to migrations they made towards the North. The Wayãpi's own oral tradition suggests that these instruments have been played at least since the beginning of the 18th century in a contiguous area that extended from the lower Xingu to the Guyana coast (Beudet 1997). Among the Ye'kwana the accounts I got about the pairs of *te'keya* belong to the *watunna* narratives that describe the long trip of Kuyujani and the circumstances in which they received this instrument and its repertoire. While Beudet found among the Wayãpi historical references about the instruments, among the Ye'kwana I only got recordings of what we are used to call myths. The *tule* clarinets of the Wayãpi, although they are played in group, are similar to the *te'keya*, which was pointed out by Hornbostel in his classic study about the Ye'kwana music, in which he classified the *te'keya* an aerophone of the *turê* type, "exactly the same instrument (*turê*) is used in celebrations and to announce the enemy is near" (Hornbostel 1923: 405). The pair of *te'keya* are the main sonic instruments, considered by the Ye'kwana as the "most popular" instruments, which I have witnessed being played by several mature and young men.

Among the membranophones, the double skin drum is the most recurrent instrument among the indigenous peoples in the Amazon. Izikowitz (1935: 165) has pointed out a scarce occurrence of drums in South America, which led the author to state that they must have been mostly copies of military drums due to their names derived from Spanish and Portuguese, such as “tambor” and “tamborino”. However, there would be possible exceptions such as among the Toba, Bororo, Chiriguano and Mataco indigenous groups, which would use for the drums the same name used for the pestle, or for putting skin on these artifacts (Izikowitz 1935: 167-168).

During my research in the collection of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, I made an inventory of the musical instruments collected by Koch-Grünberg and that were analyzed by Erich von Hornbostel in his article “Musik der Makuschi, Taulipang und Yekuana” (1923). When I started my fieldwork, I based the research on the photographic recordings of these instruments and on the phonograms, attempting to take them back to their context of origin one century after they had been analyzed according to western organology. I found a great part of these objects still being manufactured by the Ye’kwana, and I sought to emphasize the ethnotheory of this people about the musical instruments and their alternative classifications in relation to western organology.

As it is widely known, the first model for the classification of musical instruments was developed by Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel (1961), based on the way the instruments emit their different sounds. This organology of the instruments is connected to the desire for universalization of the newborn areas of science of music and anthropology in the west, as can be seen in the example of Curt Sachs, who aimed to produce a universal atlas of music and musical instruments in his work called “The Universal History of Musical Instruments” (1947). A few years later, Balfour (1929) and Norlind (1932) presented suggestions to the model by Sachs and Hornbostel (Seeger 1987: 174), just as Jaap Kunst criticized this model in his book *Ethnomusicology* (1950). Throughout the 20th century, the ways of classifying musical instruments started to have a “typological-functional and stylistic” focus, and, with the new audiovisual technologies, new horizons opened up for the classification of the musical instruments that may incorporate, besides the materiality of the object, the image in motion and the immateriality of sound (Seeger 1987).

3.3. *Shiiwokomo*: sonic objects

During my fieldwork, I have noticed that the words “music” and “musical instruments” were only used by the Ye’kwana for the non-indigenous sound expressions. When they referred to their own musical culture, they used concepts of their own language, such as *a’chudi* and *ademi* for the chants, and *shiiwokomo* for musical instruments, thus adding complexity to the fluency of an exact translation of these cosmosonic actions to western words. *Shiiwo* is the word used to refer to the trachea (air passageway that also supports the vibration of the vocal folds), and its derivative *shiiwokomo* was translated by my interlocutors as “sounds of the others”. This word is used, for example, to refer to the sounds of the collared peccaries (*dukaadi shiiwokomo*), and, in the case of the instruments, *shiiwokomo* is used as a specific term for the Ye’kwana sonic objects.

The Brazilian ethnologist Carlos Fausto (2008) states that the notion of “owner” or “master” in the Amazon may be deemed as important as the relationship of affinity, and it is, therefore, a key concept in the understanding of societies and cosmologies in this region¹⁰⁷. Seeger (1981: 182), in his ethnography about the Suyá, says that most things have owners-controllers: villages, ceremonies, chants, houses, gardens, goods, pets and so on. “The importance of *kande* is quite diffuse”. Based on this assumption, Seeger states that *kande* is the Suyá concept of power. “*Edamo*” is translated by the Ye’kwana as “owner” and the notions of *a’chudi* and *ademi edamo* are translated as “owners of *a’chudi* and *ademi*”. In his article about the notion of mastery in the Amazon, the Brazilian anthropologist Carlos Fausto uses the ethnography of Guss about the Ye’kwana to think about this notion:

Even the production of certain artifacts represents some danger, since it requires, as suggests Guss, a “transfer of ownership” (1990: 61), which the author conceptualizes as a “conversion of wild objects into domestic objects” (1990: 95). Therefore, for Yekuana men to cut the canes they use to make their famous bicolor plate-like baskets, they must ask a shaman to negotiate with Yododai – the master who plants the canes and carefully guards them. After the permission is granted, a series of rules must be respected during the cutting and manufacturing of the baskets, a time during which a graphical pattern related to Odosha, prototypical figure of predation, will emerge (1990: 106-7,130-132). The conversion-domestication Guss talks about is, thus, also the manufacturing of an artifact-jaguar. (Fausto 2008: 340).

107 Descola, another important Americanist ethnologist, states that this notion of owner must be one of the reasons for the small occurrence of domestic animals in the Amazon. As they already have their owners, it does not make sense, according to the indigenous logic, to domesticate animals for consumption (2006).

Castro Costa highlights the importance of the notion of owner (*edajä*) for the Ye'kwana, who believe “that everything has its owner in the face of the earth and, thus, if people use something without its owner’s permission, something bad may happen in the community” (Costa 2014: 21). Due to the notion of owner and the risks, taboos and rituals related to it, the construction of the *shiiwo* instruments requires ritual actions to collect the specific materials that will be used as raw materials, that is why their manufacturing is in itself a cosmosonic action. The *shiiwo* are made of many materials found in nature, each of them connected to different risk categories in their use that correspond to different cosmopolitical relationships with the spirits who own these raw materials.

The concept of owner (*edajä*) also guides the way the *shiiwokomo* are played, and the places and occasions in which their use is allowed. Some instruments may be used in the domestic environment, others accompany the collective celebrations. Each of these performances involves different people and the audiences vary according to the situation, the same way the sounds produce different effects on those who hear them. Moreover, disrespecting the construction rituals and the taboos related to these instruments, such as the parents’ seclusion during the postpartum period, may cause many harms to the instrument players.

The *shiiwo* instruments were analyzed in the classic article by Erich von Hornbostel published in the third volume of “Vom Roroima zum Orinoco” (Koch-Grünberg 1923a), in which the musicologist analyzes the Macuxi, Taurepang and Ye'kwana musical instruments based on his organological classification system (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961). Decades later, the anthropologist Walter Coppens edited the CD “Music of the Venezuelan Yekuana Indians” (1975) with recordings of chants and instrumental pieces, and containing a catalog with organological information, materials obtained in his ethnographic research with this Carib people. This material has fifteen tracks and the last one is exactly a phonographic recording of Theodor Koch-Grünberg’s collection, made available by the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv for the publication¹⁰⁸. The importance of this publication is in its diversity, since the recordings cover many genders of Ye'kwana chants and instrumental pieces.

108 In the folder containing materials about Koch-Grünberg in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, I found documents about the negotiation to include one of Koch-Grünberg’s phonograms in the CD organized by Coppens. Among them, there was a letter from Koch-Grünberg’s family authorizing the use of phonograms in the Venezuelan publication.

If the classic system of instruments organology does not answer the questions of who plays, when, where, how and why, Seeger (1987) points out that Izikowitz addressed the topic calling attention to the importance of overcoming the technical aspects and finding the origins and functions of the musical instruments, connecting them to the native myths and theories about them. For the author, the core of the issue is in two basic questions: how these instruments are produced and played, and why this is done one way and not another. It was thinking about these questions that I tried to carry out an ethnography of the manufacturing process of the *te'keya* clarinets and of the *fiichu* flute. I attempt to understand the instruments based on their “webs of signification” – following Seeger’s suggestion when evoking Clifford Geertz’s metaphor (1983) – relating them to the aspects of social organization and the transformation processes of these societies¹⁰⁹ based on the Ye’kwana ethnotheory. Therefore, following the order of importance of the instruments within the cosmo-sonic practices, I believe it is possible to better analyze the meanings of the musical instruments in the Ye’kwana conception, instead of decontextualizing them and framing them within a western terminology of instrument organology.

In this section, I chose some musical instruments of Koch-Grünberg’s collection from the Ethnological Museum, and those I found one century later among the Ye’kwana. The kinds of materials, the reason for their uses, the places where they are played, the moments in which they are played, the audience involved in the performance, the effect certain sounds seek to cause on listeners, and the myths of origin are issues that suggest new ways of thinking about the musical instruments and classifying them in the context of the Lowlands of South America (Seeger 1987). These objects are not isolated, distinct, decontextualized artifacts, they are an integral part of the native cosmology.

3.3.1. *Madaaka, wasaja, samjuda, te'keya*

Madaaka

The maracá is a percussive idiophone of globular rattle type (Hornbostel and Sachs, 1961). The instrument is made of a circular calabash within which *wiriki* stones (shamanic

109 For Geertz, the ethnography and the “Thick description” of a culture aim to interpret the cultural phenomena as a web of meanings: “The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning” (Geertz 1973: 311).

stones) or seeds are inserted, and a wooden handle goes through it. As there are no shamans anymore, I did not witness the use of this instrument in any context. However, that did not stop the Ye'kwana from referring many times to the *madaaka* and their carriers, the *fiiwai*, and, as we saw in the origin myth, it was with the sounds and the vibration caused by the friction of the *madaaka* stones, together with the chants and the tobacco smoke, that the cosmosonic creation of the world took place¹¹⁰. Montardo (2002: 170), in his study about the Guarani music and shamanism, analyzed the categories of the maracá indicating its importance in the creation of the world and the agency of this object that is considered to be “as a child”. For the Guarani, the maracá is like a “smiling face” and people’s heads are a kind of maracá, while, for the Ye'kwana, people also have *wiriki* stones in their heads, especially the shamans and the chant owners, showing in both cases a connection between the body of the maracá and the head of humans.

Figure 40. Macuxi Maracá from Koch-Grünberg’s collection (Pablo Albernaz)



This musical instrument was described by Hans Staden (1988: 173). In the accounts of the German adventurer, published for the first time in Marburg, we find one of the first narratives about the maracá:

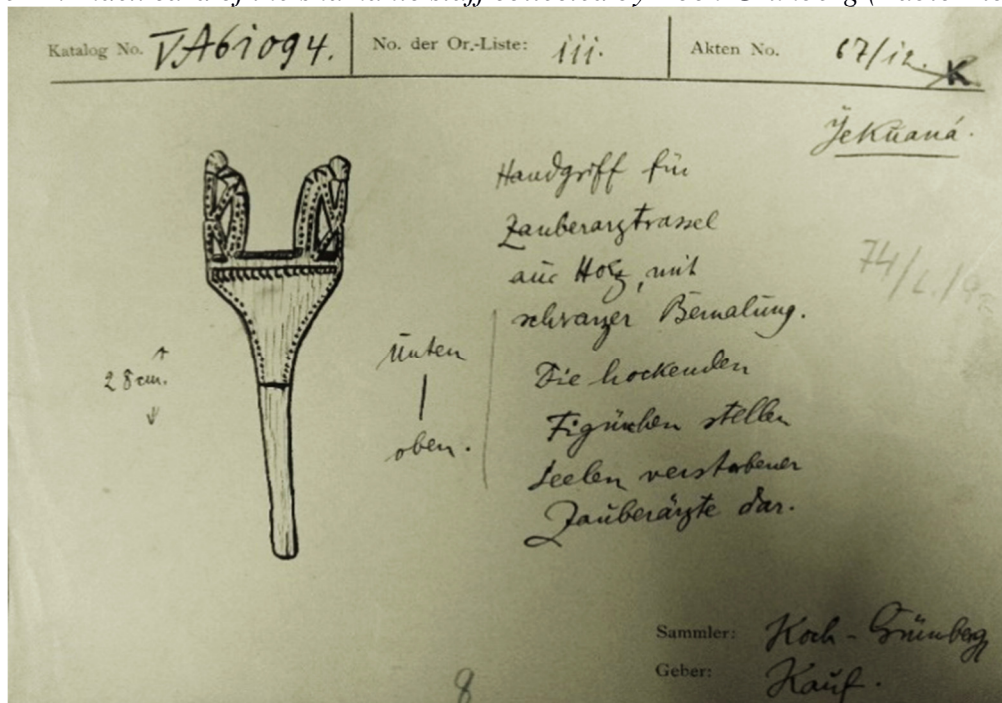
The savages believe in a thing that grows like a pumpkin. It is as big as half pint bowl and hollow on the inside. They stick a short handle through it, slice part of it open as a mouth and insert small stones in it, so that it rattles. They shake it while they sing and dance. They call it maracá. Each of the men has his own, particularly.

According to western organology, in idiophones the substances that are part of the instrument itself, due to its solidity and elasticity, produce sounds without the need for stretched membranes or strings (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961: 14), in idiophones the sounds are produced through the vibration of their own bodies and the movements of the maracá result in different sound nuances, the *fiiwai*'s rattle is the primary substance that makes the

¹¹⁰Many myths of the region of the Guianas indicate a connection between tobacco smoke and the rattle (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 419).

cosmos vibrate through sounds. According to the indigenous thought, the maracá is the instrument that best synthesizes the notion of music as the oscillation between sounds and noises. According to *watunna*, the oscillation of the waves of this instrument and of the voice of Wanadi, through the propagation, irradiation and frequency of their movements inscribed in their wave forms, created the mass and the energy of the world. The sounds are made of waves, bodies vibrate and this vibration is propagated in the atmosphere in wave form, so that the sound wave is an oscillating and recurrent signal (Wisnik 1989: 17-19). For the Ye'kwana, this vibrational field is the source of shamanic experiences and the foundation of the relationship of people (*so'to*) with the cosmos through certain somatic and psychic pulse patterns in relation to the durations established by the sounds of the *madaaka*.

Figure 41. Index card of the shamanic staff collected by Koch-Grünberg (Pablo Albernaz)



The *madaaka* is not produced anymore due to the current inexistence of the *fiiwai*, who are the only ones who can handle this object of power, although in the past there were male and some female shamans. The *madaaka*, however, remains alive in the imagination of the Ye'kwana as an element of construction of the world.

In the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, I was able to see many Macuxi and Taurepang maracás, but I only found the handle of a Ye'kwana maracá that stands out for its shape of two shamans. Koch-Grünberg made descriptions about the Ye'kwana *madaaka*:

Wie ein Überlebsel aus alter, besserer Zeit mutet der Griff einer Zauberrassel an, den ich bei den sonst rohen Ihuruána (Ihuruana) erhielt. Die beiden Figürchen stellen "Leute, die über unserem Himmel wohnen",

dar. In ihrer strengen Stilisierung, dem Ernst, der sich in den harmonischen Linien der hockenden Körper ausdrückt, gehört diese Schnitzerei zu den besten künstlerischen. Erzeugnissen eines Naturvolkes (Koch-Grünberg, 1923a: 349).

Noch wichtiger und untrennbar vom Zauberarzt der Yekuana ist die Rassel, maraká. In ihr steckt seine Kraft. Ohne sie vermag er nichts. In einem Körbchen mit Stülpedeckel, das auch Bergkristalle und andere kleine Zaubergeräte enthält, nimmt er die Rassel auf allen seinen Reisen mit, um sie jederzeit zur Hand zu haben. Sie besteht aus einem ausgehöhlten Kürbis, der Steinchen zum Rasseln enthält. Den Griff bildet das untere Ende des Stabes aus leichtem Holz, der durch die Kürbisrassel gesteckt ist. Er trägt, wie schon kurz erwähnt wurde, breit ausgeschnitzt zwei mit hochgezogenen Knien hockende, voneinander abgekehrte menschliche Figuren, die den Kopf in die Hände stützen, während die Ellbogen auf den Knien ruhen. Sie sollen Fhewaínýmü darstellen, "Zauberarztleute, die über unserem Himmel wohnen" (Koch-Grünberg, 1923a: 381-2).

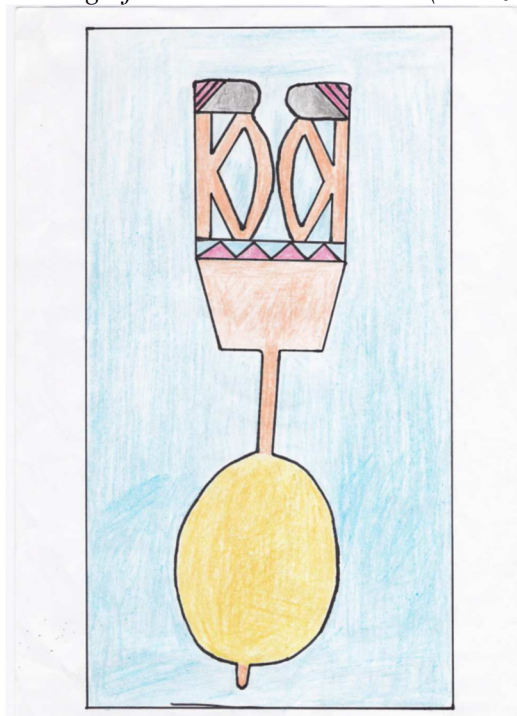
The shamans are ambassadors between different worlds. A description made by Koch-Grünberg about the shamanic performances provides an indication of the importance of the *madaaka* for the *füwai*:

Der Zauberer sitzt am Mittelpfosten des Hauses, mit dem Rücken den Feuern zugewendet. Zunächst singt er unter beständigem Rasseln mit näseler, von häufigem Stocken unterbrochener Stimme den Zaubergesang, der alle diese Beschwörungen einleitet. Der Gesang zerfällt in einzelne Strophen oder Teile, die von kurzen Pausen unterbrochen sind (Koch-Grünberg, 1923a: 382).

Plötzlich hört der Gesang auf. Langsam erhebt sich der Zauberer, hält die Rassel hoch empor und läßt sie leise verklingen. Dazu pfeift er in lockenden Tönen, die immer leiser werden und sich scheinbar in der Ferne verlieren. Stille. — Der Schatten des Zauberers ist in die Höhe gestiegen und ruft einen Gefährten aus der Geisterwelt, der an seiner Statt mit größerer Macht die Beschwörung fortsetzt. — Auf einmal hört man wieder lockendes Pfeifen, das anscheinend aus weiter Ferne immer näher kommt. Zugleich ertönt leises Rasseln, das immer stärker wird. Der Geist naht. Der Zauberer setzt sich wieder auf seinen Schemel. Er ist ein anderer geworden (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 383).

Der Zauberarzt bebläst ihn von Zeit zu Zeit mit Tabakrauch und rülpst und spukt danach, als wäre ihm etwas in die Kehle geraten. Dann pustet er Tabakrauch [...] über den eigenen Körper. Zum Schluß erhebt er sich wie vorher und läßt die Rassel verklingen. Der fremde Geist hat den menschlichen Körper verlassen. Langsam setzt sich der Zauberer nieder und spricht nach einer kurzen Weile mit seiner gewöhnlichen Stimme. Sein Schatten ist zurückgekehrt. Die Zeremonie ist beendet. (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 384).

Figure 42. Drawing of the Ye'kwana maracá (Diniz 2006)



Through Koch-Grünberg's accounts, we know that the shamans used this instrument at the center of the (*anaaka*), and in their ecstasies they are able to see and hear invisible beings of the cosmos, interceding so that the beings that caused diseases would give sick people's souls back. The *madaaka*'s handle makes visible the relationship of this object with shamanism, expressing, through its aesthetic beauty, the dual powers of the cosmos. The two shamans with their backs turned to each other show the way Wanadi, singing, playing and smoking, created humanity.

Wasaja

The wasaja is a rattle-stick or a rhythm staff with a wooden body that emits sounds due to the friction of stones and seeds of a plant with the same name, of the family of the apocynaceae, either placed inside a weaved, enclosed and oval container or tied with strings to the stick, which is struck against the ground thus making sounds, belonging, just as the *madaaka*, to the category of idiophones (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961).

The Ye'kwana in Auaris state that the basket made as an external container for the seeds of *wasaja* was a recent invention created by the leader (*ayaajä*) Davi with the purpose of preventing the seeds from detaching from the staff due to the friction resulting from the shock of the wood against the ground, making the instrument similar to the one found among the Warrau (Wilbert 1956). This change in the construction of the instrument made it even

more similar to the *madaaka*. Claude Lévi-Strauss (2004b) called attention to the typological ambiguity of jingle rattles in the organology of instruments:

The South American organology includes a musical instrument whose position is equally ambiguous, the jingle rattles, tied to the legs of the dancers or to a staff struck against the ground. Made with small round fruits or animal hooves tied with a string, making sounds when they are struck against each other, the jingle rattles are, from the typological perspective, neighbors of the rattles, whose sound results of the shock, inside the calabash, of the seeds or small stones against the instrument's walls. Nevertheless, from the functional perspective, the jingle rattles are more similar to the drum, since their shaking (which is also less controlled than that of the rattle controlled by the hand, for example) indirectly results from a beat (of the leg or of the staff).

The *wasaja* is similar to the *madaaka* from an organology perspective, but its function is to provide rhythm to the chants and dances, while the *madaaka* was an instrument played by the shamans during private rituals. The *wasaja* is present at all *ademi* ceremonies: at the celebration for the inauguration of the houses, it is the only instrument used, at the ceremony of inauguration of new gardens, it is accompanied by the *moni* flutes on the first day, and only at the arrival of the hunters, it is used together with many other instruments, such as the pair of *te'keya* and the *samjuda* drums. Also, the most solemn and important parts of the *ademi* are those in which one hears the voice of the singer, the *wasaja* and the marked steps of the dancers. Therefore, it is possible to prove the cosmosonic continuity between the *fiiwai* (shaman) and the *a'chudi edajä* (chant owners) from a cosmosonic perspective, just as there is a relationship of organology contiguity between the *madaaka* and the *wasaja*.

Figure 43. Details of the *wasaja* (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 44. Performance with the *wasaja* (Pablo Albernaz)



During the ceremony of inauguration of the house, I played the *wasaja* repeating the gestures of Kuyujani and Wanato. The instrument is played with the right hand, marking the rhythm and leading the group of dancers, also, during the *tanöökö*, the instrument player plays the *wasaja* with the right hand and the *te'keya* with the left hand. The repetition of the strokes together with the chanting, the dance and the consumption of fermented beverage makes the one who plays the *wasaja* repeat the gestures of the ancestors through the reproduction of the sounds and dances performed in the beginning of times. During the ceremony of inauguration of the house, I noticed at times the women playing this instrument when the men, tired, lied on their hammocks and asked someone to play the instrument and lead the dance. This instrument is played withing the house and in its surroundings only during the *ademi* celebrations, when it is used as an accompaniment for the long chants that are performed during the collective ceremonies.

Samjuda

In membranophones, the sounds are produced from the reverberation of a stretched membrane, a classification that includes the double skin drums found among the Ye'kwana and called samjuda. At the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, I only found one wooden double skin drum attributed by Koch-Grünberg to the Monoikó, which would be “a Macuxi subgroup”, and attributed to the Taurepang by Erich von Hornbostel (1923: 407). In the case

of the Ye'kwana, the *samjuda* drums are very important at the *tanöökö* celebrations, and they are, according to the German musicologist, bigger than the drums of the peoples from Eastern Roraima (1917: 401).

Figure 45. Monoikó/Macuxi drum (Pablo Albernaz)



The *samjuda* drums are made from a piece of wood, it is got by cutting down a tree and later rotting its trunk with water, then, the piece of the trunk is emptied so that it is hollow and has a cylindrical shape. The drum is usually made with the same wood (*iadija*) used in the construction of canoes. The instrument is covered with double animal skin, usually from the *kawadi* (deer), the *dukaadi* (peccary), the *adawata* (howler monkey), or the *akuudi* (agouti). Some animals may not have their skin removed to be played on the drum, such as the collared peccary (*dukaadi*) that have an owner spirit that is too powerful. This relationship of the instrument with the respective animal's skin causes the drum to be used according to the characteristics and temperaments of the animal. Reinaldo Ye'kwana explains this issue as follows:

You have to use the instrument the way the animal live its daily life. The *samjuda*, depending on the animal's leather, if it is the *Adawata*, for example, you have to wake up very early, play it and beat it at the time the howler monkey wakes up. So you have to wake up very early to play it, between three and four in the morning.

The drum, therefore, acquires some characteristics of the animal sacrificed to produce the sounds. Reinaldo's words show a relationship between sound and sacrifice, which points to cosmosonic conceptions, since "the animal is sacrificed so that the instrument is produced, just as the noise is sacrificed so it can be converted into sounds, so the sound may occur (the sacrificial violence is the violence channeled to the production of a symbolic order that sublimates it)" (Wisnik 1989: 35). The immolated animal grants its attributes to the instrument, just as the noise is sacrificed in favor of sound order, although the noise is always

on the edge of invading the cosmosonics and creating disorder and chaos, as was shown regarding the celebrations and rituals related to the hunts.

Figure 46. Ethnographer playing the samjuda drum (Castro Ye'kwana)



The materials are fixed on the drum's wooden body with several vines and sticks. The Ye'kwana play the *samjuda* with only one drumstick and its function is to set the pace of the dances related to the celebration of the arrival of the hunters and to cheer community works. When they are not used, they are usually stored fixed to the central pole of the house or on some other location where it is above the ground. The drums are sung at, painted and anointed with sacred plants that aim to protect the instrument, which then starts to be “as a child” and cannot be left outside the house, on the yard or in the forest. Among all the *shiiwo*, the *samjuda* is the instrument with the greatest *personitude*, and which requires more care in its handling and storage due to the use of animal skin in its construction.

In 2012, when I went to Watoriki, a village in which the shaman Davi Kopenawa lives, to participate in the meeting to celebrate the 20 years of the homologation of the Yanomami territory, some Ye'kwana were there, among them the sages Vicente Castro and Contreras. When we returned from the meeting to the Ye'kwana community of Auaris, Contreras told me about the origin of the *samjuda* drums:

The *samjuda* also had an owner. Once he came here to the sacred Ye'kwana territory, he was like a person and the people saw that

instrument and thought “let’s built a drum like this one”. Then, the Ye’kwana imitated... As we do nowadays with the non-indigenous culture. The Ye’kwana thought “what a good instrument this is!”. Then they learned to play it and we do so until the present days. The place of origin of these drums is near the region of Demini, where the Yanomami live today.

Contreras’ version is a little different from the one collected by Guss (1990: 94-95):

Before, when they didn’t have it, the drum was a different shape. It was pointed and could run right through a person like a sword. The people didn’t know what Samjuda was then. They said, “They have it over there. Let’s go see”.

So they went to the village where they had the drum. And they asked to see it. And the chief said, “OK”. But first, he told them to line up in a long row, like this (indicating single file formation).

Then he went in and got it and came up to the first one, like this. And he stuck it right in, himself. Not thrown, himself! And he ran it through all of them, the whole row. And he killed them all.

Later on, other Yekuana stole that drum. I don’t know how. They stole it. That was a long time ago.

Figure 47. Samjuda drum (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 48. Details of the *samjuda* drum (Pablo Albernaz)



In both versions, the drum is the instrument acquired by the Ye'kwana through the relationship with the previous instrument owner. The *samjuda*, an object resulting from the relationship with different owners (the owner of the drum and the owner of the animal skin), is only played by men, I witnessed its use in many occasions during the community works and collective celebrations. I did not notice any specific worries with the tuning of the drum, which has a varying range of timbres depending on the instrument. Its timbre, in general, is low and strident, and the sounds are always made in the same continuous rhythm, thus setting the rhythm for the dances and the different kinds of vocal emissions present at the *tanöökö* celebration.

In Waschainha, during the celebrations of the Ye'kwana association's meeting, after being adorned and painted by the women for the celebration of the arrival of Kuyujani and the embellishment of Wanato, I was invited to play the drum during the dances carried out within the house of the men, accompanied by the pair of *te'keya*, the *wasaja* and the group of dancers. Years later, in Kudaatainha, I saw a *samjuda* drum that was not made with animal skin, but with industrialized drum skin. The purpose of changing the skin was to escape the taboos related to playing this instrument, which was prohibited to fathers with young children due to the power of the spirits that owned the drums and the animals that, sacrificed, serve as skin to the instrument (Fausto 2008).

Figure 49. *Samjuda* drum crafted with industrial skin (Pablo Albernaz)



The *samjuda* drums are played by the men inside the houses, at the village yard, and in the gardens on the occasion of community work. The drum is not supposed to be played in the forest, a space that contrasts with the domestic space, unless it is near the community. The Mawadi, powerful owners of the *samjuda*, are part of the audience that hears the drums resounding, that is why they need to be painted with *maada* to protect the instrument from the attack of evil spirits. The drum with industrialized skin that I saw in Kudaatainha was not painted possibly due to the innovation in its manufacturing.

Te'keya

The *te'keya* is a wind instrument with mouthpiece, made of a thick bamboo of the plant *bambusa vulgaris*, called *wanna*, which serves as a cylindrical tube that is open at both ends with a hole carved on the upper end of the instrument (first node of the bamboo) at about 20 to 30 centimeters from the mouth extremity, where a piece of green cane with a slightly smaller diameter than the body serves as reed, called *suduchi*. This valve, closed at the inferior extremity and open at the upper part, extends to the bamboo's mouth. Its vibration is responsible for the production of sound in the instrument, which serves as a sound box. It is the most important *shiiwo* object among the Ye'kwana, always played during community works, leisure times and *ademi* ceremonies.

Differently from the Wayãpi, who have *tule* orchestras made of many instruments, the Ye'kwana *te'keya* are always played in a pair, and they are of different sizes, the bigger one is called *etötojö* (player) and the smaller one is called *ekötojo* (imitator)¹¹¹ ([te'keya sounds](#)). However, the Ye'kwana say that this instrument does not “repeat”, but both produce together one single melody connected to a textual message, as if the instrument “spoke” a few sentences related to the topic, besides some phonemes that do not have a translation.

Excerpts of the field diary and of the volume dedicated to the ethnographic data in “Vom Roroima zum Orinoco” address the use of these instruments:

In der Nacht haben sie auf zwei Heulinstrumenten geblasen, die jetzt auf einem Gerüst unter einer der Baracken liegen. Es sind etwa 1 m lange, sehr dicke Bambusrohre, die vom Merewarí stammen. Oben ist eine Huppe aus dünnem Rohr eingefügt, die, wenn man das Instrument fest wider den Mund preßt und kräftig hineinbläst, den unheimlichen Ton hervorbringt. Durch stärkeres oder schwächeres Blasen kann man den Ton, der an das Heulen eines wilden Tieres erinnert, beliebig verändern (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 310).

In the 1940s, the French explorer Gheerbrant (1971: 167) tried to remake Koch-Grünberg's travel route and described in his field diary the performance of the *te'keya*, calling them by the name of their raw material, uana (*wanna*):

The bamboo uanas guided us and a staff adorned with deer hoofs, which the chief of the line struck against the ground, set the rhythm of the steps. All the naked heels rhythmically moved up and down, while the tiny hooves hit each other at the end of the staff. The earth sounded plump, the uanas snorted and grunted as the original wild boar whose voice they wished to resurrect, and the monkey-skin drum, which was also part of the dance, did not echo (Gheerbrant 1971: 167).

Many times I heard in Fuduwaduinha, Waschainha and Kudaatoinha the low and reverberating sounds of the pair of *te'keya* during the *tanöökö* celebrations, when I followed collective works in the gardens and house renovations, or in prosaic moments of distraction. On the way to the work locations, it was common for the men to take their loudspeakers with them in their backpacks in addition to the pair of *te'keya* under their arms, showing a certain similarity of the occasions in which the *te'keya* may be played and “songs” may be heard.

111 The words *etötojö* and *ekötojo* are also used to refer to the chants, but in this case the “leader” sings and the choir repeats the same stanza, while in the case of the *te'keya* they form the same verse as a group. Coppens defined the pair of *te'keya* as “male” and “female”, repeating a pattern recognized in the *tules* of the Waiãpi (Beaudet 1997) and of the Arara (Estival 1991).

In November 2012, we carried out an expedition to collect material and manufacture pairs of *te'keya* led by Luiz Manuel Contreras and Luiz, instrument player from Adajamenha, in Venezuela. We were a group of seven people following the pair of experts to learn how to collect the bamboos in the forest and how to manufacture the pair of *te'keya*. There are wild bamboo canebrakes found in the forest and highly dangerous, and the “cultivated” ones, used for the creation of these instruments and to make the *waja* sieves. Contreras states that the *wanna* that came from heaven with Kuyujani is different from the bamboos we see in the forest. The latter came along with the Mawadi and came from the underworld¹¹². The manufacturing of the *te'keya*, thus, requires ritual knowledge, since the Mawadi are the actual owners of the *wanna* bamboos, which are the raw material of the instrument. According to Contreras:

The Mawadi came along with the *wanna*, this is something very serious and, thus, they must be respected. There are bamboos like these through the forest, and they were made by nature. Sometime later, a long time ago, the shamans asked permission to take one seedling, not to cause us harm. This is what we are planting until the present days. The bamboos found in nature are very dangerous. You should not touch those plants, not even in the “young ones”. The Mawadi are spirits that live in the forest, in the plants, in the underworld. When you are close to dying you will be able to see them. They appear as birds and whistle, but they are actually like us and they are invisible. The Mawadi are the owners of these plants. And where there are bamboos, there are Mawadi. They are the actual owners of these species¹¹³.

Kuyujani was the first one to play the *te'keya*. He was the one who brought it from heaven. In the past, it was dangerous to handle bamboo. Only after he gave us Ye'kwana the bamboo, and Sätänha planted the first ones, we started to manufacture and play our *te'keya*. At that time each people received their beverage, the Ye'kwana received the *yadaake*, the Macuxi, the sweet potato *caxiri*, the white people, sugar cane (*cachaça*), and the Sanumá, banana porridge. They all danced together and then they started to separate.

The place where we went to search for the bamboos is less than an hour away from Fuduuwaduinha going toward the source of the De'joko river, an igarapé that marks the southwestern limit of the village. Located within the closed forest, the canebrake has

112 Lévi-Strauss (1986: 31) notices in several myths the relationships of opposition between the bamboos and the vines or cotton strings, used by the Ye'kwana at the end of the house *ademi* rituals. The vine used to make the whip serves as an ancient connector between the heavenly and earthly planes, while the bamboo, raw material for the *te'keya*, performs the passage between the earthly and underground worlds.

113 During the meeting for the celebration of 20 years since the Homologation of the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, held at the Watoriki community, the Ye'kwana noticed many bamboos in “wild state”. “These are untouchable”, they Ye'kwana said, at the same time they pointed to the pair of *te'keya* they brought with them to perform a cultural demonstration for the other people present during the days of meeting. The *te'keya* was the only instrument taken by them to the meeting.

hundreds of bamboos several meters high that greatly reduce visibility in the circular area where the species were planted.

As we arrived, Contreras untied from his neck the pack of *maada* plants he brought strapped to a string and rubbed it on the bamboo in vertical movements while he performed an *a'chudi* to purify the bamboo. The bamboo removed was about 5 meters high, and we used two parts of it to build the instruments. The length of the bamboos was measured with the forearm: the biggest one measured three forearms plus the fingers of one hand closed together, and the smallest one measured a few centimeters less. The pair of clarinets does not need to be made from the same piece, they may be made from different bamboos. That is why we still cut two bamboos off so we had material to make three pairs of the instrument.

Despite being apparently simple, the procedure of collecting the bamboos has imminent risks, even with cultivated plants, since “when the seedling is planted, as it grows, the spirit starts coming to it, the spirit who owns the plant, and if you are not careful it can get you sick”. With that in mind, Contreras states that, even though there is a certain level of domestication, the Mawadi remain the “owners” of these plant species, although Kuyujani has taught the arts of its domestication.

Figure 50. Collection of wanna bamboo (Pablo Albernaz)



On the following day, sitting on the hammock tied to the trees in front of his house, Contreras started to make the pair of *te'keya*. In order to prepare the *wanna*, the bamboo must be removed and placed next to the fireplace and then placed to dry under the sun

because “the sun helps to choose the right bamboo for the instrument”. That is why many bamboos must be cut off, since some of them might get flat or cracked. After that, the bamboos are placed next to the fire and then under the sun once again. It is a slow process until the material is ready for the construction of the instrument. Contreras started by cutting off the edges of the bamboo and measuring the correct distance between its ends and nodes. The upper part, which later houses the reed, was measured with one forearm.

Then, we collected the *suduchi*, a plant that has no restrictions for collection and is used to manufacture the internal reed. After making a small longitudinal opening on the *suduchi*, which vibrates to produce the sound, the reed is placed in a hole made at the bamboo’s upper node. After tuning the pair of *te’keya* ([construionof te’keya 1](#) and [construion of te’keya 2](#)), Contreras and Luiz played 53 instrumental songs out of the approximately one hundred of those known by Contreras. At the beginning of each song, the players talked and sang the paths (*chämädö*) of the themes.

Figure 51. The sequence of photos of the construction of the te’keya (Pablo Albernaz)





More than half of the themes were about different animal species, mostly birds, fish, reptiles, insects and hunting, which define, according to their characteristics, the dance modes that should accompany the musical pieces. Other pieces were about women, showing that these themes address on one side the human/animal relationships and, on another side, the men/women relationships, as can be seen in the summary description of the themes related to the *tanöökö* celebration, a moment in which the pair of *te'keya* has greater cosmo-sonic relevance.

Figure 52. Recording of the te'keya pieces (Jairo Ye'kwana)



The two clarinets, each playing a note at a time alternately, play a text, lyrics that are sung by the pair of *te'keya*¹¹⁴. The alternation serves as prosody to a subliminal text, such as in the case of the piece “Muwajuu” (thongs):

Muwajuu Waademä (dö) (Muwajuu swinging)
Muwajuu Waademä
Waademä
Näkännä Kännäjäjä
Näkännä Kännäjäjä
Muwajuu nnä kännänä Kännäjäjä
Muwajuu nnä kännänä Kännäjäjä
Waadema dema nä kännäjäjä.

Also, in the case of the piece about the peccary:

Duukwadi Töwä näkännäjäjä. (*Kill the peccary*)
Duukwadi Töwä näkännäjäjä. (*Kill the peccary*)
Töwääjene Töwäwätökä töwä. (*Hit it true*)
Näkännäjäjä (*Kill*)
Duukwadi Töwä näkännäjäjä. (2 X)
Duukwadi Töwääjene Töwäwätökä töwä (2X)
Näkännäjäjä.
Näkännäjäjä e töwä töwä.
Näkännäjäjä

As mentioned before, the *te'keya* are the most commonly played instrument among the Ye'kwana. It is played by the men who mostly know how to play at least a few pieces, and the initiation to the instrument depends only on personal interest. They are usually played outside the house, except during the drinking moments related to the *tanöökö*, when they are played inside, they are not played inside the gardens either, only on the way to work locations and when moving along tracks known by the Ye'kwana. Playing the instrument is also forbidden when there is a seriously sick person in the village. According to Contreras:

When celebrating the *tanöökö*, you play on the way, during the hunt. Nowadays we have the radio, we know when the hunters will arrive, but it was not like this in the past. You had to go to their location to talk to them, to know when they would arrive. So you would also play during that route. In the house, with your family, it is not good. In the house. It is better, you know, in the yard. The best option would be in the big house. Public, right? It can also be played at the communal house, in the center of it, when there is no one seriously sick in the house. But nowadays, “music” is what is mostly played. Headphones, recorders, sound, MP3,

114 Something similar was seen regarding the drums among the Boro and the Okaina: “The performers do not seem to use a code, rather, they try to represent the sound of words with the help of the drums and the natives always told me they made the words on the drum (Whiffen 1915: 216-253 apud Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 311).

speakers too loud. It is easy, just set up and play. *Wanna* is oral, it is difficult, if you get tired, stop playing, who plays?

One of the things the Ye'kwana highlighted during the performance of the *te'keya* songs was that they had specific moments of the day and night to be played, similarly to the Suyá who “marked these gradual changes of day and year with musical events of distinct types, presented by distinct performers with distinctive types” (Seeger 2004: 70). One example of that is the piece *shiike'teye*, performed at noon when the sun is at the center of the sky and the piece *Ködha'köi*, performed around 7 p.m. accompanied by dances imitating the moves of a centipede, in addition to the pieces performed late at night, such as *Ywi* and *Kawadi*, whose themes are two different deer species.

Even with the rules and cares in the maintenance and handling of the pair of *te'keya*, the “Mawadi get jealous” when the Ye'kwana are playing this instrument, given that these spirits are part of the audience listening to the sounds of the *te'keya*. The Mawadi also dance and play the *te'keya*, and during the *tanöökö* the Ye'kwana perform an *a'chudi* asking for permission to play the instruments. The singer states that the instruments are real, that he is listening to their sounds and he asks permission to their owners so they can be played. Thus, explains Contreras:

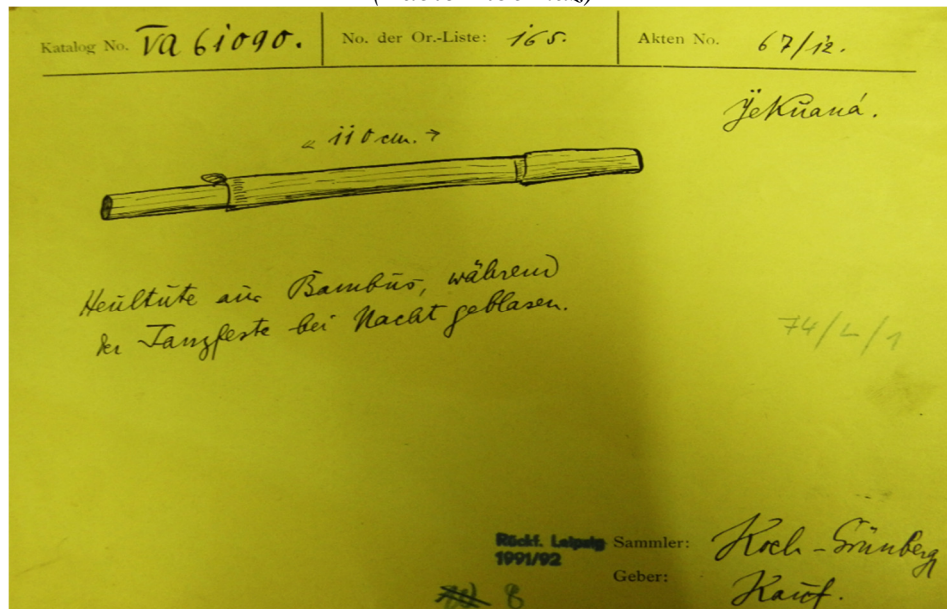
Because the Mawadi also dance. The bamboos were created for them, more for them. Kuyujani was the one who gave them the gift. Then, he asked, ordered to purify them for us. The Mawadi always dance, play *wanna*. But they are invisible to us. Only the shamans can see them. As they also play, they get jealous when we use them. That is why the ritual must be performed as soon as possible.

In 2016, in Kudaatáinha, I saw a pair of *te'keya* made of PVC pipes and with reeds made of *sudui'chö*. As with the *samjuda*, the *te'keya* may not be played by men that have small children, since this may cause harm to the children, who are still bound to their parents during their first phase of life. That is why the Ye'kwana manufactured this instrument with industrialized raw material. Although they are played by men, in some villages on the Venezuelan side, there are women who play this instrument. According to Contreras, the *te'keya* is used for “entertainment, to feel the rhythm of the song”, and to announce the arrival of guests during the *tanöökö* celebrations.

Figure 53. Pair of te'keya (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 54. Index card of a Ye'kwana musical instrument collected by Koch-Grünberg (Pablo Albernaz)



3.3.2. Füchu, fanak'wa, Kawadi ejö

Füchu

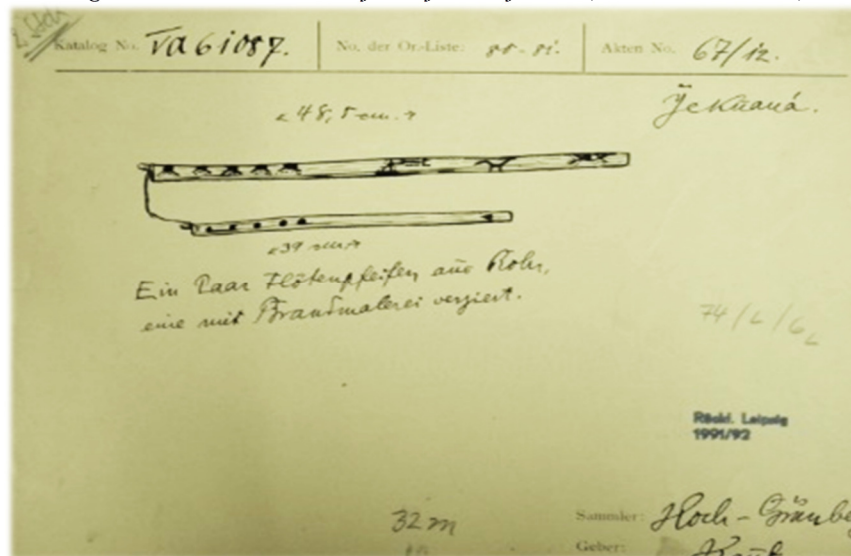
It is a cylindrical flute, made of a sturdy wood called *kudaata* or made of a more fragile bamboo called *dudua*. The flute has an airway and is played by inserting the mouthpiece between the lips. The instrument has a triangular hole a few centimeters below the mouthpiece. At the lower level of the flute's hole, there is an inner wall of beeswax, or dry petroleum, with a narrow slit in its upper part through which the air passes. The air blown against the edge of the triangle produces the sound, and the lower part of the instrument has

five finger holes and a hole on its back, in front of the first one. The fifth hole at the bottom is used only as an air exit.

Figure 55. *Fiichu* flutes collected by Koch-Grünberg (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 56. Index card of the *fiichu* flutes (Pablo Albernaz)



Koch-Grünberg (1917, 1923a) described several occasions of use of this instrument: men lying on their hammocks played flutes, sometimes disturbing the night sleep, at other times along some shamanic ritual which they were not paying attention to, these are some of the scenarios described by the German ethnologist. Coppens (1975) states that this instrument is played in moments of leisure and I heard from the sages that this flute is played mainly in the domestic space, inside the house. When I first arrived at Fuduwaduinha, a flute was passed from hand to hand among the men during the meetings at the school and in the men's house (*anaaka*). Some were playing, others made a circle around to hear, but that did not involve everyone and most of them were following their duties, not caring about the melodies resounding throughout the room. In a conversation by his hammock, in front of his house, Contreras explained to me several aspects of the *fiichu* flutes:

The *fiichu* flute has a sound for the arrival, played when one is arriving at the meeting house. Then there is a sound to tie the hammock, a sound when is time to ask for food. Thus, when they hear the sound, the women bring the food. This is how the Ye'kwana did in the past when they arrived at a community. The flute is played to cheer the house up, and the sound is like a dialogue, a narrative. The *fiichu* has nothing to do with rituals. It is only for the sound of it... sometimes we imitate the sound of the parrot on the flute. The flutes are played for the Ye'kwana themselves to listen.

In Fuduwaduinha, in 2012, there was only one *fiichu* flute. The first time I heard the flute was when Contreras played some songs with the name of different birds to an audience made of parents, teachers, students, and guests in the inner and central yard of the school ([fiichu sounds 1](#)). A few days later, Romeo allowed me to record him playing some of the songs ([fiichu sounds 2](#)). A few months later, in Waschainha, Vicente Castro made some flutes and I was able to record some of the songs played by the sage ([fiichu sounds 3](#)).

In one of our conversations, Luiz Contreras told a *watunna* story about the origin of the *fiichu* flutes. The version told by him does not have major changes compared to Civrieux's version (1980: 81-93), but adds some data about the material used for the flutes. The description below is a summary of the two versions:

The origin of the *fiichu* flutes:

Kasenadu, the master of lightning and thunders, had a sister who had two children. He did not want his sister to meddle with his cassava plantation, but she did not obey and often did it in his absence. Once, as punishment, Kasenadu took his two nephews for a hunt on the Antawari mountain, and when they were far away he killed his nephews with a lightning, and quartered them like animals, taking their hearts out and leaving them on the top of a large tree called Kudihuha, at the sources of Cañowiwe. The hearts turned into two huge birds, and the tree turned into a very high mountain, called Kudihuha. Kasenadu fled in fear and when he returned home he told his sister about the birds. The sister decided to raise them. She went to the mountain to look for them, but she was devoured. The lightnings of Kasenadu were powerless against the birds that had an iron armor. The men tried to kill them with bows and arrows, but they could not. Until a sage named Kudene, who looked like a water snake, cooked a poison and gave it to the trumpeter rooster that went to Kudihuha, discovered the weakness of the Dinoshi, returned and told everyone. The people prepared an arrow with the first timbó, and the rooster returned with them to the location. The birds were shot with the arrows and began to scream in pain and fly in circles, and the *kudaata* came out of their feathers and bones. The first feathers fell on the Merewari, then on the Antawari and the Dinoshi fell dead on the Marawaka. The bones and feathers of the Dinoshi only fell in Ye'kwana territory, that is why Tahashisho is the mountain of the blowgun (zarabatana) and Kahuakadi is their owner. "When we are going to ask for blowguns, we do not eat nor do we touch

our women. We plant stakes in the ground, as an offering to kahuakadi and we do not take more than four, not to bother its owner". It was Kuyujani who asked for the Dinoshi birds to leave this material in the Ye'kwana territory.

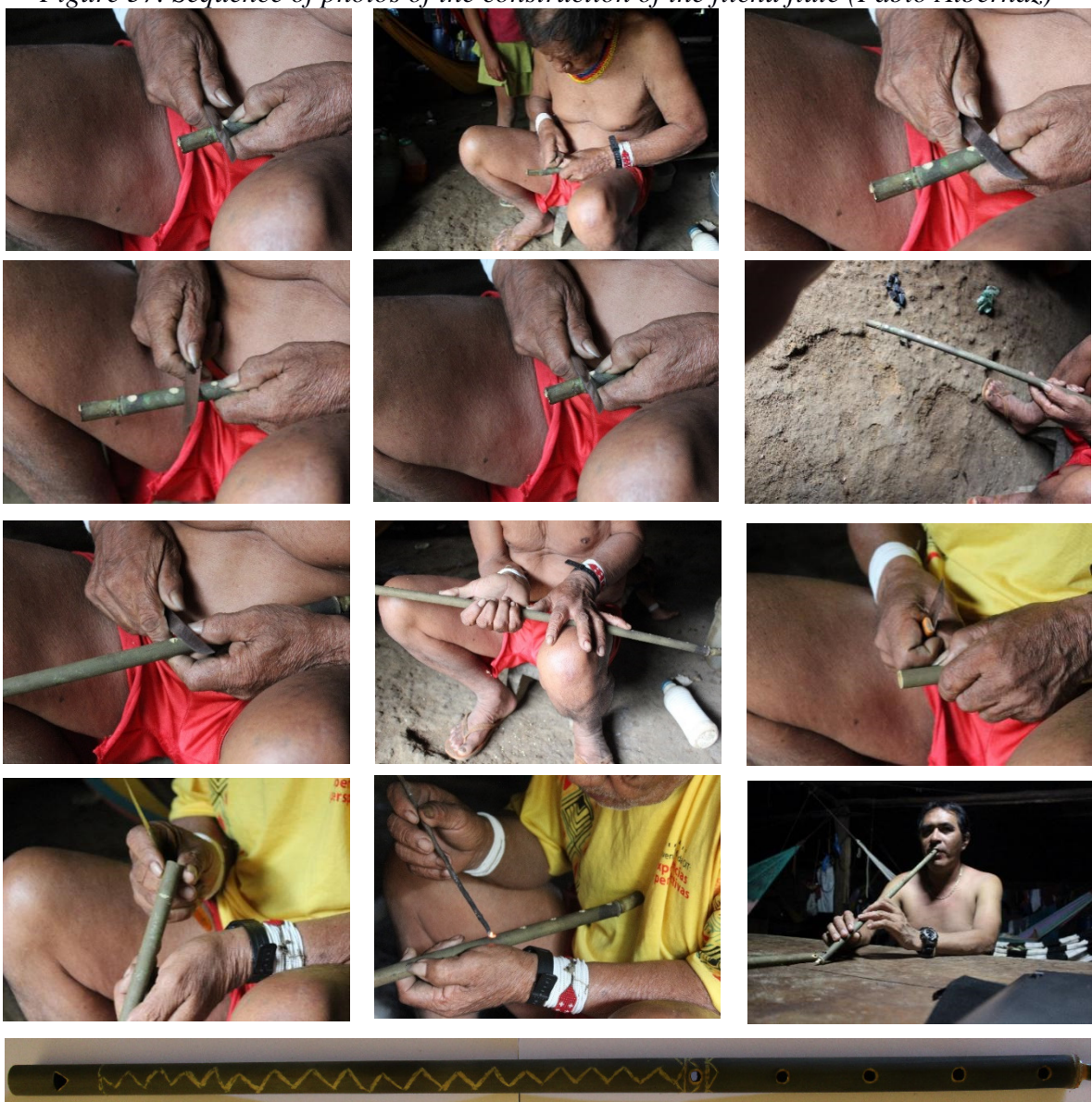
According to the *watunna* narrative, the *Kudaata* also has an owner spirit. But the relationship with this owner is different from the one established with the Mawadi, masters of the *wanna*. The withdrawal of *kudaata* does not present the same risk as the *te'keya*, but, on the other hand, this species is not domesticable as the *wanna*. Through the Dinoshi, the Ye'kwana obtained this bamboo species. Although their spirit is not present in the matter originated from their mortal remains, this does not exempt the Ye'kwana from following some rules when they collect *kudaata*. The wood taken from the plain is then replaced by *kudaata* and, when returning to the village, one should not put the wood inside the house, but rather leave the canes at a certain location in the woods and on the following day put them to dry under the sun for about two days. After that, the flutes' manufacturing process begins. Despite the lower risk compared to the *wanna*, after building the instrument, one should not touch his penis for about a week "otherwise, it can become withered and bent."

Before traveling to the place where the *kudaata* is collected, the Ye'kwana choose some woods and when the sage reaches the top of the mountain he makes an *a'chudi* in which he states that he is bringing wood in exchange for *kudaata*, asking the spirit that owns the place to grant the best of them. The current owner of the *kudaata* is a *ma'do*, jaguar-spirit (not Kasenadu) and if you do not respect the rules to approach the place, the sky darkens and you can hear his roar in a thunderstorm. Koch-Grünberg described the collection of *Kudaata*, which can also be used to produce blowguns, as follows: „Auf dem Pauá, einem etwa 1500 m hohen Sandsteinblock, auf dem der Merewarí entspringt, soll viel Blasrohrschilf wachsen, aber, „wenn die Leute hingehen, um es zu holen, und in die Nähe kommen, wird die Gegend ganz finster, und sie müssen sterben““. (Koch-Grünberg 1923a: 380). Besides flutes and blowguns, the *kudaata* is used to make a small cane that accompanies the sounds of the *Kawadi Iju'jä* (flute of the deer's head), and to cut the baby's umbilical cord. As the material is strong, this instrument can last for decades if kept in a dry place.

The *fiichu* flutes can also be made from another material called *dudua*. This small bamboo is found in regions inhabited by the Mawadi, who are considered their owners. When I was in Waschainha, Vicente Castro collected several *dudua* canes to make some flutes. One day after the material was collected, Vicente began producing the flutes to an interested audience of teachers.

The instrument manufacturing process took about an hour. The piece of cane measures about 40 centimeters from the bottom hole to its nose. Vicente measured the distance from the mouth to the nose, and the distances between the flute holes with his closed index finger. The distance from the first finger hole to the nose of the flute, measures two palms, and the distance from the nose to the mouth of the instrument is about two centimeters. Then, a sharp burning object is used to drill the holes. After opening the holes, Vicente placed the reed between the nose and the body of the flute, which is usually made of beeswax, but, as there was one at that moment, dried petroleum was used instead. Finally, the instrument is adorned.

Figure 57. Sequence of photos of the construction of the fiichu flute (Pablo Albernaz)



The body of the instrument was painted with figures of the *kushishi* and Kawadatu snakes, spirits that own the gardens¹¹⁵. The flute that was in Fuduuwaduinha had no paintings and I noticed that the ones at the Ethnological Museum were adorned with pictures of the frog *ke'kwe*, the snake Kawadatu, the sun *shii*, and also with a path of the star, called *shidi'chä emadö*.

The *fiichu* repertoire does not have a specific time to be played. It is played in recreational occasions, in hours of rest on the hammock and in domestic environments. The flute is not related to any ritual nor does it accompany chants or orchestral pieces.

During the small concert held next to the domestic fire area after manufacturing the instrument, Vicente performed the “*Wädi'nawa etöödö*” played to announce the arrival, as a visitor, at a village. The second piece (“*Katada tödöotojo*”) tells the women to bring food (*katada*) to the visitor, who plays it after tying his own hammock to the house beams. The third piece called “*waacukua Necuato*” is a seductive message addressed to the sister-in-law, brother's wife, a piece that is similar to the one played by Contreras and translated as “cry of a woman in love”, which addresses the sadness of women when men leave on their trips. Besides these, Vicente, Romeu and Contreras played pieces related to the chants of the birds: *Kuda Dashi*, a kind of thrush, *Kakauwä*, “laughing parrot”, *Yudumä*, the chant of the duck, and *Fudede*, the chant of the woodpecker.

In this small sample, we heard melodies that aim to reproduce in the *fiichu* the bird songs, suggesting communication between humans and birds, the melodies imitate the singing of the birds as if the *fiichu edaja* could, with it, *become*-bird, imitating the sounds of these animal species. Other pieces have a communicative function and announce the arrival of visitors, request food, or suggest romance with women¹¹⁶. The Ye'kwana claim that the *fiichu* repertoire is reduced compared to that of the pair of *te'keya*. However, this instrument, due to its melodic features, seems to have a greater communicative function.

The Kaluli of Papua New Guinea associate their chants to the bird songs. The sounds of the birds are their chants and there is a *becoming*-bird that articulates the expressions of feelings into sound forms (Feld 1990). As we have seen, among the Ye'kwana there is also

115 This same drawing is painted with *maada* on the central pole of the houses, on the *samjuda* drums and on the fermented drink troughs.

116 In these terms, the flutes can be compared to the whistled language, present among the Bororo, who according to the Salesians, would have two main functions: “to ensure the communication between interlocutors who are too distant to maintain a normal dialog, or to eliminate indiscreet third parties, who understand the Bororo language, but were not instructed in the arcana of the whistled language (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 303).

a symbolic association between sounds and birds. The Ye'kwana claim that learning to play the *fiichu* requires one to go to the forest and learn to hear the bird songs. They also tell that in the beginning of time “the birds were the men”, Wanadi means “woodpecker”, and his brother-in-law Wanato, the first to adorn himself as a man, was also a bird.

The *fiichu* is the *shiiwokomo* instrument with greater melodic potential and is, therefore, associated with communicative language. Among the Tukano natives, to play the flute means “to cry”, “to complain through the instrument (Levi-Strauss 2004b: 305), and among the Waiwai, a Carib people that has many cultural similarities to the Ye'kwana, the melodies played on the flute were used to describe different situations. According to Lévi-Strauss:

In the language of the Kalina of the Guyana, one makes “the trumpet shout” but “grants the word” to the flute: “When playing the flute or another musical instrument that produces multiple sounds, it is said /eruto/, to seek the language, the word, for something... The same word /eti/ designates the name of a person, the specific sound of an animal, and the call of the flute or of the drum [...] An Arekuna myth calls “flute” the distinctive sound of each animal species (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 305).

Why do the Ye'kwana play the *fiichu*? To cheer up, to entertain, and to communicate with birds and people. Unlike the pair of *te'keya*, this is not a ritual instrument, and its audience does not include spirits, but people and birds. The flutes are played to the Ye'kwana themselves, and seldom have an audience organized around the instrument.

The *fiichu* flute is comparable to the chants as it is connected to the domestic space. Its performances are more intimate, as with the *a'chudi*. The *fiichu* flutes have this character of communication between men and birds, and between men and women in a seductive language. This instrument, by cosmologically reestablishing the human-animal relationship, acts as a vehicle of mythical sound messages. Besides that, everything happens as if the most “nuclear” part of society was composed by a kind of musical setting that privileges the melody (the chants and the flutes) to the detriment of the timbre and intensity, present in the pair of *te'keya* and in the *samjuda* drums (Beuadet: 1997).

Fanak'wa

The *fanak'wa* is a trumpet made of sea snail shell, with a hole drilled in the end that serves as a mouthpiece, where beeswax is inserted. Through the vibration of the lips when blowing air in, it emits strong and penetrating sounds. This instrument was classified by Hornbostel as an aerophone of the type signal “horn”:

Koch-Grünberg sah eines bei den Yekuaná (Ye'kwana) die es, wie die „Zivilisierten“ auf dem Orinoco, von denen sie es vermutlich haben, auf der Bootfahrt benützen. Es ist wahrscheinlich eine *Strombus*-Art wie sie schon die vorkolumbischen Peruaner bliesen, aber mit seitenständigem Blasloch, während Amerika vor den Eroberungszügen nur Trompeten mit endständigem Blasloch kannte (Hornbostel 1923: 402).

In his analysis of the instrument, Hornbostel mentions a Taurepang myth that would be similar to those of the Tupi-Guarani and other North and Central American myths, in which Piai'má, a great wizard representing the darkness, is killed by a shell trumpet and three sounds of the instrument announce the victory of the returning one. The shell trumpet was, therefore, “in that place and everywhere”, an instrument that announces death and victory. Hornbostel (1923: 402) still states that Koch-Grünberg saw one of these instruments among the Ye'kwana, similar to that of the “civilized” people of the Orinoco from whom they must have obtained the instrument, and it was probably a kind of *strombus*, which was used by the pre-Columbian Peruvians.

Figure 58. *Fanak'wa* photos (Pablo Albernaz)





The *fanak'wa* is played inside the house or in the village space, and, when a group arrives from a hunt or trip, it can be used to emit signals to warn the hosts about the group's arrival and to show that the visitors are friendly. On several occasions, I heard the *fanak'wa* being played in the mornings, summoning men and women for the collective work. Other occasions in which the *fanak'wa* can be heard are the *tanöökö* celebrations. Its different notes and the texture of its velvety timbre make the *fanak'wa* a pleasing instrument to the ears ([fanak'wa sounds 1](#) and [fanak'wa sounds 2](#)).

On the occasions in which this instrument is played in groups, its execution seems random, giving the performance a chaotic aspect that contrasts with the synchrony of the dancers' steps and the rhythm of the *samjuda* and *wasaja*. This relationship between order and disorder, as if the “harmony” should be broken in favor of a certain “chaos”, can be understood as the cosmosonic representation of the passage from nature to culture, or of the temporary regression from the latter to the former through a kind of acoustic coding (Lévi-Strauss 1991a: 57-58).

Despite the difficulty of getting those shells, which are found in the ocean miles away from the villages, this instrument holds an important place in the cosmology and daily life of the Ye'kwana, and I noticed the presence of this instrument in all the communities. The *watunna* about the origin of the *fanak'wa* is part of the “Kuyujani time”, when *Iudeeke* and his brother met *A'jicha*, the first white man:

The origin of the *fanak'wa*:

The owner of the *fanak'wa* was a species of big snake, Wiyu, that traveled at the bottom of the sea. Before the waterfalls appeared, in each place where they would form there was a Wiyu, as today the high waterfalls

prevent the passage of fish, causing each part of the river to have different kinds of fish, each region of the rivers have spirits of different big Wiyu snakes. The men were navigating across the rivers and they found the *fanak'wa*. Then they put it inside the canoe, and it immediately turned into Wiyu. Then they thought that it was a snake and that whoever played it turned into *fanak'wa*. This happened in Kuyujani's time.

The goal of Kuyujani was good, but it was always "ruined" by Odosha. Kuyujani wanted to multiply the population so he asked the ancestor of *Wyö'dö*, a capybara of great wisdom, to keep a stone of *Wiriki* called *aköjö'a* (which is a kind of tree nowadays), while he would create other human beings. But *Wyö'dö* kept the stone of *Wiriki* and the *fanak'wa* in her genitalia. An otter that was in the Caura, traveled to the Orinoco, found the capybara and said: "I came to ask you for the *aköjö'a*". *Wyö'dö* opened her legs and said: "Feel free, go into my vagina". So she had sex with the otter (giant otter). It was Kuyujani who sent the otter to ask the capybara for the *aköjö'to*, but if the otter had used the hand, it would have gotten this *wiriki* stone and would have increased the population. If it had followed the guidelines of Kuyujani, the population on earth would multiply. And that is why the capybara's vagina is dark (Contreras).

This *watunna* associates the *fanak'wa* to the cycle of the cultural hero Kuyujani, like the other musical instruments. It belonged to a type of Wiyu, who was its owner before the men found it at the bottom of the waters. In the time of Kuyujani, the *fanak'wa* turned into Wiyu and its origin is connected to an ideal of population growth, but Odosha ruined it.

According to *watunna*, the *fanak'wa* was given to the Ye'kwana after forbidden sexual intercourse¹¹⁷. These sexual connotations are present in the myths of flute origins and recall the complex *jurupari*, found among several indigenous peoples in the Amazon and Melanesia, in which seeing the flutes is forbidden to women (Piedade 1999, Menezes Bastos and Piedade 1999). Among the Ye'kwana there is no complex of sacred flutes, women can see the instruments (though I have never seen a woman handling them), and only the *momi* flutes, played during the celebrations of the inauguration of gardens, cannot be seen by women, who can only hear them during the rites.

Contreras said that this *shiiwo* can be played any time of the day, because when someone thinks of the *fanak'wa*, they must immediately sound the instrument:

When you think of *fanak'wa*, you should not avoid playing. You should consult the sages and make sound with the *fanak'wa*. When the dawn comes, when the rooster crows, you wake up and come play. This is a form of care. The *fanak'wa* is also played when one arrives in a community. The *fanak'wa* has no repertoire, it makes always the same sound.

117 According to Reinaldo, when the foreskin of a man's penis is too long, he cannot play the instrument.

To play the *fanak'wa* is, therefore, a healthy action of care, although the flute previously belonged to a Wiyu snake.

Kawadi'ejä

Kawadi'ejä is a flute made from the deer's femur, without an airway and without an air inflow channel, with three longitudinal holes in its lower half and one on the upper half, through which it is played. Its lower end is sealed with wax of stingless bees called *mashäewete*, which serves to propagate the sound. During the period of my fieldwork, I noticed this flute in all the Ye'kwana communities, and I noticed that some young people seemed interested in learning to play the *kawadi'ejä*.

Vicente is one of the few people who play and know the repertoire of this instrument. I listened to the Ye'kwana master playing the flute, but unfortunately, I did not make any recordings. Even so, Vicente cited three instrumental pieces performed on the flute: one of them is played during lunch time, the others are performed upon arrival and departure from a community. This information confirms the classification of this instrument as a signaling instrument. It is performed domestically and, according to what I heard during the fieldwork, there is no repertoire related to the hours of the day and this instrument is always played solo.

Figure 59. Young Ye'kwana learning to play the kawadi'ejä (Pablo Albernaz)



Figure 60. *kawadi'ejä* flute made by Vicente Castro (Pablo Albernaz)



On one occasion when we were talking in my house in Boa Vista, the sage Vicente Castro told me the *watunna* about the origin of the *kawadi'ejä*:

At the time of Kuyujani, Majaanuma brought the deer bone flute. Majaanuma had a grandson named Kwamachi, who was a boy that grew up very fast, since he was a child in one day and the next he became a strong and handsome man. In celebration of his growth, he won a *kawadi'ejä* from his grandfather Majaanuma. These flutes appeared around the same time that the Ye'kwana received the beads (*mainhudu*) and that the embellishment of the Kwamachi occurred.

The *kawadi'ejä* is, thus, part of the Kuyujani cycle and the myths about body adornments. This demonstrates the relationship between instrumental music and the arts of civilization, since both were given to the Ye'kwana in the phase of constitution of a morality that is different from that of other peoples, resulting from the constitution of a diversity of peoples inhabiting the earth.

Figure 61. Construction of the *kawadi'ejä* flute (Pablo Albernaz)

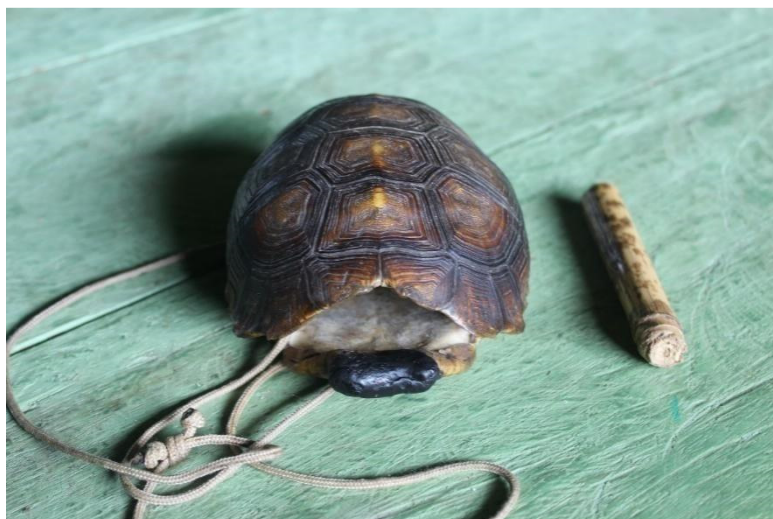
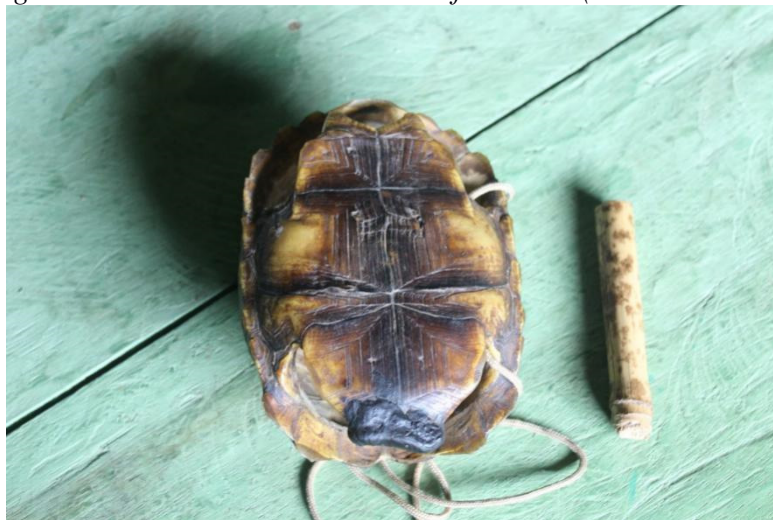


3.3.3. *Codedo, kawadi Iju'jä, momi ijijä*

Codedo

In 2016, Vicente Castro arrived in Kudaatainha with two instruments that I still had not seen among them. One of them is called *codedo* and is performed with the accompaniment of a whistle made with a small piece of *kudaata*. The *codedo* is an idiophone made from a turtle (jabuti) shell, which has its end coated with wax. The name of the instrument suggests the sounds it emits from the contraction of the lower part of the hand over the shell resin. When I first saw the instrument, Majaanuma played the *codedo* accompanied by Vicente Castro, who played on the *kudaata* whistle a rhythmic sound that gave cadence to the sounds of the *codedo*. It is performed only by men, usually before arriving to visit a community, or in moments of rest or celebration, as occurred at the meeting in Kudaatainha, where it was played during the breaks between the discussions.

Figure 62. Kodedo and the whistle of kudaata (Pablo Albernaz)



Kawadi Iju'jä

Another aerophone performed by Vicente Castro in Kudaatainha was the *Kawadi Iju'jä*, a flute made of the deer's head, performed by him, soon after he played the *codedo*, for an attentive audience of young people, teachers and women. The sage made a small solo concert but, according to him, this instrument is played in *duo*, as the *te'keya*, with the artifacts made with the heads of two deer of different sizes, resulting in a bigger and a smaller flute. The *Kawadi Iju'jä*, as well as the *te'keya*, are played during the dances, which are performed in straight-line movements, back and forth, as opposed to the *ademi* dances, which are performed in circles.

Figure 63. Vicente Castro prepares to play the *kawadi Iju'jä* (Pablo Albernaz)



Momi iji'jä

The *momi* trumpet is an aerophone made from the bark of a tree of same name, which is spirally wound, giving it its conical shape. It is tied at its end, where it is blown, and it is open at the other end. It is manufactured and played only during the celebrations for the inauguration of gardens. Like the other *shiiwokomo* instruments, the *momi* are played only by men, but it is different from the others because it is the only instrument that women cannot see, only hear, during the ritual of the *audaja edemi jödö*.

Figure 64. Material used in the momi flutes (Pablo Albernaz)



According to the data presented, the instruments performed with the dances are the pair of *te'keya*, the *wasaja*, the *samjuda*, the *kawadi Iju'jä*, the *fanak'wa* and the *momi*. Some of these instruments can be played without the dances, except for the *momi* trumpets, which are only used during the celebrations for the new gardens, and the *wasaja*, which are played during the *ademi*. The *fiichu* flutes, on the other hand, are played solo and without dances. Throughout the research I was able to witness young people from the new generations playing the *te'keya*, the *samjuda*, the *wasaja* and the *fanak'wa*, which shows the vitality of the native sound manifestations. The invasion of the Iadanawe (white people) music was incorporated into the Ye'kwana sound system in a contiguous relationship with the *shiiwokomo* instruments and the *tanöökö* celebration.

After this brief presentation, it is possible to create a summary table of these sonic objects in order to understand them within their contexts of use, and then analyze the economy of the acoustic code implied in the Ye'kwana cosmosonics.

Figure 65. Shiiwokomo instruments (Pablo Albernaz)



3.4. Table summarizing the *shiiwokomo*¹¹⁸

	Who plays it?	Where is it played?	When is it played?	What is played?	How is it played?	Why is it played?	Who is it played for?
<i>Madaaka</i>	The ancient <i>Füwai</i> (male and female shamans)	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>) and in domestic spaces.	It was played mainly at night, during the shamanic healing sessions.	Shamanic and healing chants.	Sitting on a shamanic bench, rhythmically moving the rattle with one hand and holding the tobacco in the other.	Because the <i>madaaka</i> is an instrument of communication with the ancestral spirits, beings and places in the cosmos (Kahuña). Because it is the instrument used to call the shaman's auxiliary spirit during a healing ritual. To intercede with the beings that cause diseases so that they give back the souls of the diseased ones.	For an audience restricted to the diseased one and close relatives. For an audience of non-humans comprising the shaman's auxiliary spirit and the beings named in the chant.
<i>Wasaja</i>	Mainly men. May eventually be played by youngsters and women.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>) and in domestic spaces.	During the ceremonies of inauguration of the houses (<i>ättä edemi jödö</i>), and gardens (<i>audaja edemi jödö</i>), and during the celebrations of the arrival of the hunters (<i>tänöökö edemi jödö</i>).	Chants and instrumental pieces of the <i>ademi</i> .	Striking the staff against the ground, causing friction to the <i>wasaja</i> seeds and setting the rhythm of the dances.	To set the rhythm of the chants and dances of the <i>ademi</i> ceremonies and to connect the Ye'kwana to the primordial heaven (Kahuña).	For the people present at the celebration, for the ancestral spirits, and for the beings that inhabit the cosmos (Kahuña).

118 Besides the objects listed in the table, I found two other musical instruments in the technical reserve of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin: *suduchu*, a pan flute with five pipes made with small bamboos cut in different sizes to produce different tones, and *se'sedo*, a transversal flute made with only one hole, which is not played by the Ye'kwana in Brazil anymore.

	Who plays it?	Where is it played?	When is it played?	What is played?	How is it played?	Why is it played?	Who is it played for?
Samjuda	Men and young men. The instrument is forbidden to men with newborn children.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>). In the vicinity of the village.	During the celebrations of the arrival of the hunters (<i>tänöökö edemi jödö</i>). During the collective works.	Percussed calls. Setting the rhythm, with the <i>wasaja</i> , during the <i>te'keya</i> dances.	With a drumstick. It may be played alone and sitting, or dancing and jumping during the celebrations. While the drummer plays, he emits high-pitched vocal sounds.	To cheer up work activities. To set the rhythm of dances. To connect the Ye'kwana with the underworld of the Mawadi.	For the people present at the work activities and celebrations. For the Mawadi and some animal species.
Te'keya	Men and young men. The instrument is forbidden to men with newborn children.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>). In the vicinity of the village.	During the celebrations of the arrival of the hunters (<i>tänöökö edemi jödö</i>). During the collective works.	Instrumental pieces that address different animals, women, female adornments, blowgun darts, baskets, fermented drink and a distant sun.	Always in pair, accompanied or not by the <i>wasaja</i> and <i>samjuda</i> .	To cheer up the collective work activities. To set the rhythm of the dances for the arrival of the hunters. To connect the Ye'kwana with the underworld of the Mawadi.	For the people present at the work activities and celebrations. For the Mawadi and some animal species.
Füchu	Men and young men.	In the domestic space of the house (<i>äsa</i>), at the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>).	On recreative and rest occasions. It is not related to any kind of ritual.	Instrumental pieces that mimic birds, announce the arrival at a village and seduce a woman.	Solo.	For communication between men and birds, and between men and women in a seductive language. For Fun.	For the Ye'kwana themselves.
Fana'kwa	Men and young men.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>). In the vicinity of the village.	Early in the morning. Durante the performances of <i>te'keya</i> , <i>wasaja</i> and <i>samjuda</i> . When one thinks about the instrument.	Sounds of "signals".	Solo or accompanied by the a <i>te'keya</i> , <i>wasaja</i> and <i>samjuda</i> .	To announce the arrival of travelers. To wake the workers up during the community activities.	For the Ye'kwana themselves.

	Who plays it?	Where is it played?	When is it played?	What is played?	How is it played?	Why is it played?	Who is it played for?
<i>Kawadi'ejä</i>	Men and young men.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>). In the vicinity of the village.	During lunchtime, at the arrival and departure from a community.	Musical pieces related to a certain moment of the day or during the arrival or departure from a community.	Solo.	For communication, and imitation of animal sounds.	For the Ye'kwana themselves.
<i>Codedo</i>	Men and young men.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>).	Before arriving at a community. In moments of rest or confraternization.	Does not perform "musical pieces", only sets the rhythm.	Accompanied by a whistle made with a small piece of <i>Kudaata</i>	For fun.	For the Ye'kwana themselves.
<i>Kawadi Iju'jä</i>	Men and young men.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>).	In moments of rest or confraternization, during collective dances.	Sounds of "signals".	In "duo", two flutes made of different skulls.	For Fun.	
<i>Momi iji'jä</i>	Men and young men.	At the center of the house or at the house of men (<i>anaaka</i>). In the vicinity of the village. In the gardens (<i>audaja</i>).	During the <i>ademi</i> of the inauguration of gardens (<i>ättä edemi jödö</i>)	Sounds of "signals".	Along with the other men of the village, considering that women are forbidden to see the flutes.	To announce the arrival of the men at the <i>anaaka</i> , during the ritual of inauguration of the new gardens (<i>audaja edemi jödö</i>). To wake up the beings that live in the garden at the center of the cosmos (<i>Kahuña</i>). To cheer up the spirit of the maniva.	For the Ye'kwana themselves. The men may see and hear them, the women may only hear them.

3.5. Economy of the acoustic code

After the presentation of the Ye'kwana vocal-sound system throughout chapters 2 and 3, we can now address the hypothesis of an economy of the acoustic code present in the vocal-verbal and instrumental arts of this Carib people. As seen throughout this chapter, the meanings of the materials used to make the *shiiwokomo* instruments are integrated to the ontological meaning of domestication of nature and of the rites that serve to incorporate exogenous and wild elements within the culture (Guss 1990). Seeger (1987) points out that the materials used in the production of the instruments have a relationship with aspects of cosmology, so the description of the instruments must take into account not only morphological aspects, but also the manufacturing techniques, suggestions that I have sought to follow throughout this chapter.

The purpose of this chapter was to elucidate some aspects about the productions and performances of the *shiiwokomo* nowadays and remember how these instruments were made a hundred years ago, when Koch-Grünberg collected them and sent them to the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. My interest in the subject has created suitable opportunities for knowledge exchange between the generations at moments such as those described in this chapter, and even nowadays, the Ye'kwana and I are planning to make a trip to the Marawaka mountains to collect the *kudaata* cane and manufacture *fiichu* flutes and other musical instruments, so the data presented here should be further explored in future research.

Like the Suyá (Seeger 2004: 63), the Ye'kwana mitigate in their rites the distinctions between men and animals, and just like the Arara, some of their instrumental pieces are “to and from” the animals (Estival 1991, Teixeira-Pinto 1996). As we have seen, different animal species are the theme of many of the instrumental pieces (they seek to reproduce their timbres, “songs”, movements), and they reflect on the universe of hunting and predation, other pieces allude to gender relations and point to marriage alliance relationships¹¹⁹.

The Ye'kwana have instruments that are used as signal emitters, others that are played only at moments of leisure, there are also others that are important ways of creating ritual sounds, such as the shamanic *madaaka* and the *wasaja* (precisely those that serve as accompaniment to the chants) that seek to vertically connect the Ye'kwana with Kahuña,

119 Although, among the Arara and Ye'kwana, women are not forbidden to see the flutes (except for the *momi*), there is a relationship between the genders when it comes to the sphere of exchange that the hunting ritual dramatizes: while the men are in charge of the meat and music, the women are involved in the production of fermented beverages.

acting as the center pole (*ñududui*) of the house. But if the *wasaja* is the instrument that accompanies the chants in all the *ademi*, and the *momí* is used only in the garden *ademi*, on the celebration of hunters' arrival we observe the presence of several types of *shiiwo* objects, reaching a type of orchestration that, as we shall see, resonates with some ancient European rites, such as that of the instruments of darkness (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 379). Before making this comparison and proceeding to the analysis of the acoustic code present in the Ye'kwana cosmonsics, it is worth to briefly reflect on the definition given by Contreras about the *ademi* in general, but particularly about the *tanöökö* and the *audaja edemi jödö*:

Our *ademi*, which are the most popular genres, have a connection with Wanadi. The adornments that we use in our bodies, all this has to do with the *ademi*. You purify and allows the use. If you do not do this you will be seeking trouble. If you bring the leaves of inajá without performing the rituals, without “purifying” them, you will be calling Mawadi. Because there are rules to put it inside the house, where there is collective dance. This is why we chant. On the hunters' arrival, we first play the *wanna*. Then you surround, surround, dance in circles around the house and enter through the east door. Then the singer begins to chant and to perform *ya'chumadö* (*a'chudi*) and sing the *ademi*. What begins with the hunt, continues with the singer, who tells everyone to listen well to his chant. It is not *samjuda* all the time, *te'keya* all the time. *Tänöökö* is not like that. *Ademi* with singing and *wasaja* is the most important thing, and at other times we have the *shiiwokomo* instruments. There is also the purification of the meat packages, called *maji*. Then, we play the *samjuda* and the *te'keya*, until dawn. In the morning it ends and, then, we have collective food.

During the *audaja edemi jödö* you arrive with the *shiiwo*, made from the bark of the *momí* tree. This instrument is made to cheer up our “children”, our maniva. This bark is also dangerous to handle, but not as much as the Inajá leaves. It was Kuyujani who invented our *shiiwo*, *wanna* and *samjuda*. The instrument made from the bark of the *momí* wood is older, and came to earth along with the Maniva. This has nothing to do with *wanna*, it is just singing and *shiiwo* to connect in heaven, for him to hear. It is like ringing the school bell for the students. *Ättä edemi jödö* is the same thing, the explanation on how Wanadi built things, requests for authorization/purification of the wood, vegetation and leaves of the houses, permission to inhabit the place. It is a long story.

According to the sage, the *ademi* genres are the most popular among the Ye'kwana and relate directly to the adornments, the construction of the person and the ritual restrictions. By pointing out the preponderance in the *ademi* of the chants in relation to the ritual moments in which the *shiiwo* instruments predominate, and by demonstrating the importance of the a'chudi chants in the purification of the natural raw materials that have powerful owner spirits, Contreras distinguishes the moments in which we hear the *te'keya*

and *samjuda* as different parts of the *ademi* that do not relate directly with the connection (*wadeekui*) with Wanadi¹²⁰. While commenting on the ceremony of *audaja edemi jödö*, Contreras distinguishes the *momi iji'jä* from the other *shiiwokomo* instruments: made to cheer up the spirit of the maniva, the *momi* lends itself to a connection (*wadeekui*) between the men, the gardens, the owner spirit and its celestial manivas. By stating that this instrument is older than the others, Contreras compares it to the “school bells”. This comparison between the *momi* flutes (also the shamanic *madaaka* and the *wasaja*) to the school (and church) bells suggests a similar comparison to the one outlined below, based on the suggestions made by Lévi-Strauss.

As everything in the Ye'kwana thought is based on its relational dimension (see, for example, the concept of *wadeekui*, wires, lines, webs that link the beings in native cosmology), these instruments and other genres of the Ye'kwana vocal-sound art lead to semantics that must be considered in different genres in an integrated way. Therefore, to support the analysis of the *shiiwokomo* instruments, I turn to the reflections of Lévi-Strauss about Amerindian thought and the background notion present in the *Mythologiques* (2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2011) about the commutability between acoustic, gastronomic, sociological and cosmological codes, which elucidate important aspects about the *shiiwo* instruments and the different forms of communication organized by the Ye'kwana cosmosonics. Although it is a subject rarely addressed in the ethnological discussions about the classic tetralogy of the *Mythologiques*¹²¹, I believe that it anticipates part of the reflections developed by Anthony Seeger (2004) on the verbal arts of the Suyá, as well as it clarifies various aspects of the Ye'kwana vocal-sound cosmology. The approaches of Lévi-Strauss and Seeger show, in the indigenous thought, several modulations in what could be divided into sounds, speech and chanting, pointing to a complex system of acoustic categories that surpass the western dichotomies that distinguish between speech and chanting. Before dealing with the economy of the acoustic code, some brief considerations must be made about the first two volumes of the tetralogy *Mythologiques* by Lévi-Strauss.

In the first volume of the *Mythologiques* entitled “The raw and the cooked”, Lévi-Strauss addresses the South American myths about the origin of the cuisine, initiating his

120 When, at the beginning of my fieldwork, the Ye'kwana explained their restrictions regarding audiovisual recordings (theme which I will discuss in the following chapter), they claimed that the *shiiwokomo* instruments would not have the same restrictions as the chants, since they do not connect their sounds to Wanadi with the same force, fact which is explained in the words of Contreras transcribed above.

121 Most approaches focus on the relationship between “music and myth” proposed in the opening of the *Mythologiques* program, which was discussed by several authors, among them, Menezes Bastos (2005).

analysis by myths of indigenous populations located in central and southern Brazil and some neighboring regions, such as the Chaco, to the southwest, and the Amazon basin, to the north. The myths analyzed refer directly or indirectly to the subject of obtaining fire and cuisine, and correspond to the reflection of the passage from nature to culture.

In the second volume of the work, “From honey to ashes”(Lévi-Strauss 2004b), the French anthropologist proceeds toward the myths of tropical America that refer to the origin of game animals, which, in turn, are linked to the myths of origin of home fire, since they evoke the environment, while the others evoke the raw material of the culinary activity. The myths of the origin of meat address the problem of the relationships between allies and the origin of cultural assets, the myths related to tobacco and honey are also connected to cuisine, tobacco is beyond it (for being exposed to the sun and then burned for consumption), and honey before it (for being a product found in a ready state in nature). Lévi-Strauss analyzes the myths about the origin of honey in the regions of Chaco and southern Brazil, and points to the fact that in the region of the Guyanas these myths are absent, and in their place there are the myths about the fermented beverages, while the myths on the origin of tobacco evoke mainly its use as a narcotic in the shamanic actions (Lévi-Strauss 1991: 54-58).

By analyzing a set of myths that address the acquisition of cultivated plants and the emergence of constellations, Lévi-Strauss outlines a “general economy of the acoustic code” (2004b: 307) that has important resonances with the vocal-sound and instrumental system of the Ye’kwana. The cosmosonics can be defined as an acoustic system that relates directly to the gastronomic, social and cosmological orders, and defines the ways in which the Ye’kwana relate to the multiple forms of alterity that exist.

Lévi-Strauss seeks to draft an approximate sketch of an acoustic scheme present in the myths, through which he separates the material into three different levels that I will present below in its main aspects, linking them to the senses given by the Ye’kwana to the vocal and instrumental sounds. On the first level, there are various types of calls: named, whistled and percussed calls. On the second level, there are the linguistic behaviors: the whistled language, the polite words, and the offensive words. Finally, on the third level, there are the musical instruments connected to chanting, “either because they chant themselves or because they accompany the chanting, which is opposed to spoken discourse, just as the latter is opposed to the system of signs. These instruments are the flute, the rattle and the drum (also the jingle rattles)” (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 308).

Reinforcing the provisional character of his scheme, Lévi-Strauss points out that, on one plane, the rattle and the drum appear in correlation and in opposition to the flute, and, on another plane, the whistled language presents itself in a diametrical position in relation to confused language (infra-language unable to guarantee communication), at the same time that this place is at an equal distance from polite language and offensive language. The epithet would be at a lower level, between the named call and the percussed call. The rattles (such as the *wasaja*) have an ambiguity that places them close to the confused language, and they are important as emitters of ambiguous senses, sometimes encoded as chanted words, other times as percussed calls with their sound importance in the accompaniment of flutes and drums in dances and ritual narratives. We have seen in the presentation of the instruments that this ambiguity of the rattles (*wasaja*) seems to contemplate both its uses: as a rhythmic basis for the mythical word sung in the *ademi*, and as percussed calls, with the drum and the pair of *te'keya*, in collective dances for the arrival of hunters.

Below I present the reproduction of the structure of the acoustic code, outlined based on the South American myths, proposed by Lévi-Strauss in *Mythologiques*.

Figure 66. Structure of the acoustic code in “From honey to ashes” (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 308)

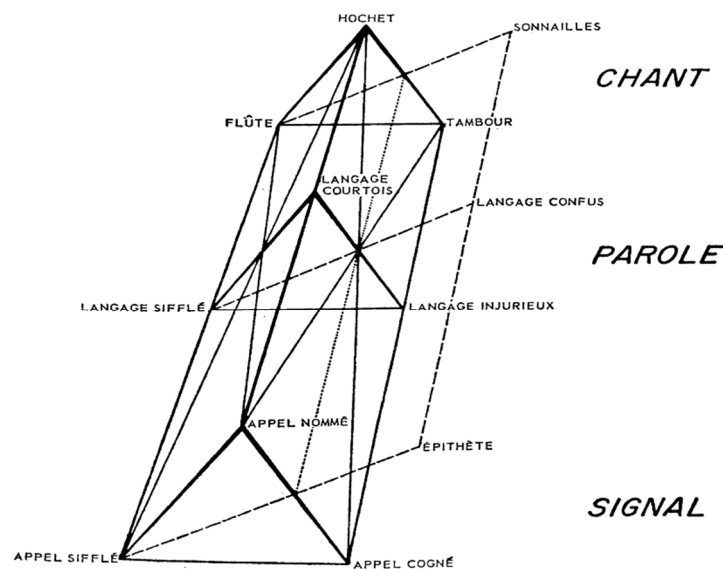


Fig. 15. — Structure du code acoustique.

It can be seen in the figure that this three-level scheme proposed by the French anthropologist has a network of transverse relationships in its edges. The first level of transversal connections in the model approaches in “order of ascending intensity, the percussed call, the offensive language, the sound of the drum, which are the types of acoustic conduct that objectively present the clearest affinity with the category of noise”, although

the drum is the most linguistic element in the series (2004b: 311). This edge seems to refer to the specific moments of the *tanöökö* dances that refer to the hunts and fermented beverages. As described before, the sounds operated by the instrumental part of the hunters' arrival aim to create a noisy atmosphere or "noise orchestration". When the men begin to play the *wasaja*, the *te'keya*, the *samjuda* and the *fanak'wa* together, they begin to shout evoking the animal beings and all the sound atmosphere seeks to flirt with the "category of noise".

The second level is specifically musical and articulates the "whistled signal, the whistled language and the sound of the flute", which uses tonality allowing the "passage from the monotonous whistle to the modulated whistle, and, then, to whistled melody" (2004b: 311). The Ye'kwana claim that Odosha approaches humans through a whistled call, which shows the importance of this acoustic code in this people's cosmology. We have seen that the *füchu*, *Fanak'wa* and *Kawadi'ejä* aerophone instruments have communicative functions that resemble the signs or the whistled language, so that these instruments speak through men, imitate the birds' chanting, or emit messages of various types.

On the third level, the conducts are fundamentally linguistic: the "named call" would be the opposite way to the whistled and percussed calls, the "polite language" would be the most linguistic of the language forms, and the rattle would be the instrument of clearest linguistic function, since it is a "god reduced to its head", emitting a language composed of "micro-noise". The named call can be associated with the naming processes of various beings that are performed by the *a'chudi* and the *ademi*, and the *madaaka* (and the rattles, in a certain way) are divine messages to men¹²².

Continuing the analysis of the acoustic codes, these three levels have oblique relationships, the first one, corresponding to the tetrahedron with the tip turned towards the top, comprises the percussed, whistled and spoken calls, plus the rattle. The percussed call is recommended in order to bring a natural being closer, and the rattle, to summon supernatural beings. As presented before, the drums are used for men to announce their arrivals at locations, and to communicate and encourage collective work, while the *füwai*, with its *madaaka* and the singer accompanied by the *wasaja*, are sonically linked to the supernatural beings of Kahuña. Among the southern Guarani, the command staff serves to gather men (which is also the social function of the wooden drum in the north Amazon), the

122 Among the southern Guarani, the command staff serves to gather men (which is also the social function of the wooden drum in the north Amazon), the rattle serves to make the gods come near men, and the rhythm staff, to elevate men closer to the gods (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 363).

rattle serves to make the gods come near men, and the rhythm staff, to elevate men closer to the gods (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 363). The *wasaja* is a mixture of jingle rattle and rhythm staff, since it is with the beat of the stick on the ground that the jingle rattles are submitted to friction inside the recipient and cause the sounds, gathering men around it, connecting them with Wanadi. The other tetrahedron group is composed of the musical instruments (drum, rattle, flute), and also the named calls. For Lévi-Strauss (2004b), his model shows that music is the metaphorical transposition of the word, something that we observe in the *shiiwokomo* instruments and in the vocal-sound conceptions embedded within the Ye'kwana cosmosonics.

By expanding his analysis about the role and the position of the honey mythology in tropical America, Lévi-Strauss observed an acoustic use that was “inexplicable at first sight” for the indigenous musical instruments, which offered from the “organological and symbolic point of view, the equivalent of what are considered the instruments of darkness in the European translation” (2004b: 385). These instruments, used in the pre-Easter period, precisely between the Thursday and the Saturday during the Holy Week, pose various problems, such as the reason for the silence of the bells and their temporary replacement by these noise sources, in the last days of the lent season before Easter. Lévi-Strauss states that the instruments of darkness that replace the bells, although they perform different functions, blend in practice and serve to make noise inside or outside the church, “to summon the faithful in the absence of the bells, to accompany the children when they go out to ask for cakes. According to certain testimonies, the instruments of darkness would also serve to recall the prodigies and the terrible noises that marked the death of Christ” (2004b: 380).

In France, the devices of darkness comprised objects of common use: one would beat on cauldrons or metal pots, or strike wooden clogs against the floor, one would beat wooden trunks, sticks with split ends or stick bundles on the ground and on various objects, there would also be clapping and, finally, musical instruments of many types: of solid and resonating bodies, those made of wood (knocker, rattle, whip, plank hammered by a device, metal sieve, bells, rattles), those made with membranes (friction rotating drum), or air instruments (mouth and water whistles, horns, conches, trumpets, oboe) (2004b: 380).

One can compare the instruments of darkness, and their use alternating with the presence of bells and silence, with the symbolic-sonorous organization of the Ye'kwana rituals and cosmosonics. All this “noisy” atmosphere is present in the celebrations for the arrival of hunters (*tanöökö*), moments in which the percussed call, the offensive and/or

confusing language, the jingle rattles, the flutes, and the drums create an acoustic perception that approximates tumult. This atmosphere is also present in the celebrations of the *audaja*, when the *momi* trumpets resound loudly (without defined tones, each one emitting its own sound at different pitches) during the first day of the ceremony, with women being initially forbidden to see them, and thus connecting through the intense timbre of the instrument, the men to the celestial *audaja* and to the cosmos. In both *ademi* we observe a sequential relationship between the moments in which the timbres of the instruments predominate (flirting with the category of noise) and others in which the chanting (the nomination of beings, animals, places and ancestors) and the *wasaja* create modes of connection with Wanadi and Kahuña, chanting and instrumental accompaniment have their own linguistic functions.

And not only that: in both traditions we see an intrinsic relationship between acoustics and cooking. According to Lévi-Strauss (2004b), the kitchen as a mediation between heaven and earth (with fire as a mediator), life and death, nature and culture, requires silence as an acoustic reference. Considering that the myths studied by Lévi-Strauss narrate periods of scarcity or abundance of food (such as the *watunna* stories that tell about the time when men ate clay and narrate how the Ye'kwana have acquired their food), these stories attributed great importance to instruments like ratchets and drums.

Therefore, to a seasonal codification corresponds another of acoustic character (Lévi-Strauss, 2004b: 387). This double codification can be observed in the celebrations for the inauguration of gardens and for the arrival of hunters. The *tanöökö* celebrations can be held both in the season of rains and in the dry season, without a specific period, while those for the inauguration of gardens usually occur from August to November, precisely during the dry season, showing the relationship between the seasonal cycles and the mythical-ritual system of the Ye'kwana. In the same way that there was, in Europe, a “contrast between the days on which people eat a lot and the period of lent” (Lévi-Strauss, 2004b: 388), when the instruments of darkness replace the bells, as the instruments in the *tanöökö* and *momi iji'jä* in the *audaja* sequentially replace the chanting and the *wasaja*. The shamanic *madaaka* and *wasaja* can be compared to the bells which, according to the European beliefs and representations, are conceived as beings with agency, who have voices, feelings and actions, suitable for baptism. Besides that, the bells play cosmic and meteorological roles, since “by

vibrating, they turn away storms, dissipate the clouds and the frost, destroy evil” (2004b: 379)¹²³.

Thus, if among the Ye’kwana the *madaaka* and the *wasaja* act as mediators between heaven and earth, in the European tradition we have the bell as an equivalent instrument, since the “rattle plays, in relation to the instruments of darkness, a similar role to that of the bells in the European tradition, where they are instruments of mediation”. This analogy, made by the first missionaries is resumed by Lévi-Strauss, who states that the rattle and tobacco perform conjunction and disjunction through the attendance of the auxiliary spirits (of the shamans) and the expelling of evil spirits, just as there is “opposition between the bells and the instruments of darkness, which respectively symbolize the paroxysm of abundance and scarcity” (Lévi-Strauss 2004b: 435-6).

If the mixed Amerindians show a “logic of sensible qualities” set in motion from categories such as raw and cooked, fresh and rotten, wet and dry, by engaging the Guyanese material, Lévi-Strauss finds other terms that are opposite and in pairs, whose nature refers less to the logic of qualities than to that of forms, the main ones are full and empty, recipient and content, internal and external, included and excluded. In both cases, the myths establish correspondences between various codes, and the musical instruments are privileged objects to think about the switching between these logics, because sensible representations, such as those of the calabash and the trunk, have different practical functions: the calabash may be an instrument of sacred music, if performed in conjunction with tobacco, or a profane kitchen utensil, a recipient in which the natives consume their food. The hollow tree as a drum is a musical instrument used to summon people (having a social function), as it can also serve as a recipient for honey (belonging to nature), or for fermented beverage (immersed in the culture) (2004b: 435-436).

Analyzing in the myths the ways they transmit messages through various codes such as the culinary, sociological, cosmological, and acoustic codes, Lévi-Strauss points to the superior operational value of the latter, which provides a common language through which the other codes can be translated (2004b: 443). Following this premise that the acoustic code serves as a translation to the others, it is worth noting that the dialectic of full/empty present in the logic of myths clarifies important aspects of the physiology and organology of the *shiiwokomo* instruments. As we have seen in the case of the *madaaka* and *samjuda*, this

123 As described before, the Ye’kwana have small calabashes used as recipients for *maada* herbs that are used to keep storms and bad weather away. These calabashes are, regarding their structure, similar to the *madaaka*, which are also made of calabashes but of larger sizes.

full/empty dialectic is also found in the *fiichu*, *te'keya*, *fanak'wa* and *kawadi'ejä*, *Kawadi Iju'jä* instruments, made of hollow cane, bamboo, conch, bone and skulls through which the air passes to produce the sounds. The *momi iji'jä* trumpet, in turn, resembles the drum, since both are made of the external part of a tree, the first results in a “aerophone” and the second, in a membranophone. Therefore, organology and ethnotheory meet the mythical thinking of the South American peoples, revealing, moreover, echoes in western thought that point to the need of thinking symmetrically (Latour 1991, Viveiros de Castro, 2015) the vocal-sound achievements of the west and those of the peoples called “primitive”, such as the Ye'kwana, studied a hundred years ago by Koch-Grünberg and Erich von Hornbostel (1923).

Noises, signals, words, vocal and instrumental sounds are the basis for the Ye'kwana cosmosonics. Despite the transformations that have occurred over the last century, the thought of this people has remained faithful to the logic embedded in the sound cosmology of *watunna*. However, with the advancement of contact with the world of the white people, the Ye'kwana have come to know new forms of cognition, sounds, recording, and memory. This relationship with the knowledge of the white people goes back to Koch-Grünberg's journey, and has become more intense in the last decades, with the Ye'kwana conducting their own research and mastering more and more the codes of the non-indigenous society.

The Ye'kwana, through their relationship with me and with my research interest, along the lines of a “reverse anthropology” (Wagner 2016), made me an ally in their search for knowing aspects of western science, especially those I brought with me from Germany about German ethnology, Koch-Grünberg's trip, the emergence of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv and the science of western music. As they accessed through me a little bit of this knowledge, the Ye'kwana told me how *watunna* explains the science of the white people and how cosmosonics differs from western musical knowledge.

4. WATUNNA AND PHONOGRAPHY

4.1. The Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv: crossed perspectives

As soon as I arrived in Roraima, in order to present my research goals to the natives I had to explain the meaning of the invention of Edison's phonograph to the west, and the creation of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv and its collections with recordings of music from peoples from all over the world. The older Ye'kwana were curious about the reasons why the white people keep the voices of their singers on CD's, tapes, discs or phonograms. Likewise, I was curious about how the recordings collected by Theodor Koch-Grünberg would be seen (and especially heard), about how the Ye'kwana themselves would receive the ideas, words, images and sounds of their ancestors created by the emerging German anthropology and comparative musicology. With these questions in mind, I sought to study these historical materials proposing a change of perspective in which the position of the natives would be that of subject and not only object, and thus demonstrating the reverse-anthropology (Wagner 2016) or reverse-ethnomusicology expressed in the Ye'kwana thought.

I will briefly describe below the history of the constitution of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, as I used to describe to the Ye'kwana when addressing the reception of the centennial phonograms of Koch-Grünberg. These sound recordings were analyzed based on the native theory about phonography that points to the cosmopolitical efficacy of the act of "singing" and to an "art of memory" distinct from the western perspective. However, it is necessary to briefly reflect about the phonographic archive and the consolidation of ethnomusicology as a science of musical alterity, as well as the importance of the Ye'kwana collection in the context of the consolidation of the ethnomusicological discipline, before addressing the native perspective on these technologies that are related to the sound arts of the west.

Rafael Menezes Bastos (1995: 18) reminds us that phonography has placed within the reach of comparative musicology not only a new technical instrument, capable of making reliable transcriptions and analyses of songs, but it also enabled, for the first time, the realization of an archetypical idea of the west, which is explicit in the project of conserving sound by freezing it. However, the phonograph never entered the field of historical musicology, which when studying the music of the past counted on musical scores to

materialize and freeze sounds. In western thought, phonography was part of an attempt to suppress distance and convert it into proximity, which turned the phonograph into the origin of ethnomusicology and the study of the songs of *Others* (Menezes Bastos 1995: 18-19).

In 1877, Thomas Edison invented a device capable of recording and reproducing sounds using wax cylinders, he called it phonograph. This invention enabled, for the first time, the recording and reproduction of acoustic phenomena, representing a true “Copernican revolution” to the musical studies (Eames 2003). If the musical studies were previously directed to western music with the materiality of musical scores, the phonograph made it possible to reconstruct the different non-western sound manifestations in evolutionary narratives, opening to science the possibility of shifting from sight to hearing, and sounds started being submitted to scientific studies in “positive” frameworks (Eames 2003: 299). The creation of the Vienna and Berlin Phonogramm Archives in 1899 and 1900 respectively, are the milestones of the institutionalization of comparative musicology (which would later become ethnomusicology) since it was in those institutions that the organization of collections of phonographic recordings began, and these recordings became the basis for the analyses of the emerging comparative musicology (Menezes Bastos 1995).

In 1900, when a group of Thai musicians visited Berlin, Carl Stumpf (1848-1936), director of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Berlin, began his first collection of phonograms originating a series of other recordings that became the basis for the studies of the emerging comparative musicology (Pinto 1983, Ziegler 2006, Mendívil 2006). The Phonogramm-Archiv started to encourage researchers and travelers to take a phonograph with them in order to make sound recordings in loco and increase the collection to be analyzed by the musical scientists, who needed this material to carry out their research. These recordings were made by various anthropologists and travelers on expeditions around the world, and that turned the phonographic archive into one of the main institutions of comparative musicology.

In the early twentieth century, the emerging comparative musicology was conceived as an exact science that was part of the human sciences along with philosophy, aesthetics and especially history, since it was this science that legitimated in the realm of the “purest” science (music) the superiority of the western civilization over the others (Menezes Bastos 1995 and 2013). The western belief in the march within a progressive and homogeneous time, the development of the concept of a chronological history and the notion of civilizational evolution caused musicology to seek to explain its science based on history by

imagining non-western peoples as representatives of earlier stages of European culture itself, since, according to the ethnological evolutionism in practice at the time, “the western civilization appears as the most advanced expression of the evolution of human societies, and primitives groups are ‘survivors’ of the earlier stages” (Lévi-Strauss 2012: 20).

Carl Stumpf’s formation not only influenced psychology but also of the theories of Darwin and Spencer found in several passages of his book “The Origins of Music” (2012). In this work, Stumpf seeks to extend the scope of musicology, which until then was restricted to the analysis of instruments and scales, to the question of the origins of human musical manifestation. Another influence that has marked the thought of the founder of the Phonogramm-Archiv was the Vienna School of Ethnology and its theory of cultural circles (Kulturkreis), in which they addressed the different cultures grouped concentrically in different axes of cultural evolution, in which the society of the observer was seen as the center of a more developed culture (Pinto 1983: 79). The “project of the archive was to transcultural study the human mental processes involved in music, with a specific interest in melodic and organological analysis” (Menezes Bastos 2013: 43)

With the phonograph, the interest of musicologists becomes directed not only to the tunings of non-European musical instruments, but to the transcriptions of the wax cylinder recordings. In 1909, Otto Abraham and E. M. von Hornbostel published an important study entitled “Suggested Methods for the Transcription of Exotic Music” (1994). At that time, it was believed that the phonograph would enable the creation of a database of world music that would constitute a general configuration of the different musical genres of the world. In this context, comparative musicology had a doubly perennial task: to register the music (intangible and, therefore, fleeting) of the peoples who were in the process of disappearing in face of colonial violence (Eames 2003).

The technological revolution of phonography and its material fixation of sounds allowed the music of the “primitive” peoples to be conceived as “work” since the wax cylinders made it possible to register them for posterity and analyze them as object of scientific study in the way of western music. In this initial phase, these studies were of a formalist character and were made through a comparison between the songs of different non-western peoples (Menezes Bastos 2013 and Pinto 1983). With the phonograph, the musicologists began to focus not only on the tunings of non-European musical instruments, but on the transcriptions of the wax cylinder recordings (Pinto 1983: 77).

Erich von Hornbostel, Carl Stumpf's former student, is the one who replaces him in the direction of the archive, and with the creation of an extensive collaborative network of researchers in several continents, the new director expanded the archive's collection so that in a few years it became the largest collection of sound expressions in the world. Hornbostel intended to study non-western sound manifestations from the point of view of psychology, imagining for this a method of analyzing the mental processes involved in sonic activity and demonstrating it in the analysis of melodies (pitch systems) and musical instruments (tuning, scales etc.). He produced some of the first studies in comparative musicology based on materials from South America that resulted from the partnership with Theodor Koch-Grünberg, who, in his trips to the northwest amazon (2005) and Roraima (1916, 1917, 1923a), sent collections of musical instruments and phonograms to the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv (Pinto 1983).

Koch-Grünberg's collection, the most important one regarding indigenous music in Brazil, is divided into two collections. The collection I contains the recordings made in the region of Surumú, in Koimélemong, made in the year 1911. It includes the Macuxi, Taurepang and Ye'kwana phonograms in 50 cylinders that were analyzed by Hornbostel (1923). The Collection II comprises the recordings he made in the region of São Felipe, between the Desana and Tukano. In this collection, there are 36 cylinders of wax with chants and instrumental pieces of "Yapurutu"¹²⁴ flutes. This material was analyzed by Hornbostel (1923) and Bose (1972), but an interesting part of these materials (the Venezuelan popular songs) have not been explored by the first authors of comparative musicology.

Koch-Grünberg's phonograms were analyzed by Hornbostel (1923), Bose (1972) and Camêu (1977) as if they were objective data of the music of the peoples. However, the phonograms in this collection are mainly recordings of the practices and methods of ethnology and comparative musicology (Mendivil 2006: 81). Although the phonograph revolutionized the knowledge about the "sounds of others", its technical capability was limited to a few minutes and to the recording of a few voices. As already said, the indigenous musical rituals are long lasting, such as the Ye'kwana *ademi*, last more than three days, or

124 The importance of the Koch-Grünberg's collection can be seen in the publication, on CD, of part of the phonograms, which were heard in a publication for the first time. Susanne Ziegler states that: "There are numerous written publications about the cylinder collections of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, in which the recordings appear in the form of transcriptions in musical scores. This series is the first time they are heard themselves. A complete publication of all cylinders is not possible for technical reasons, since many of the recordings are irreversibly lost due to being worn, moldy, broken, destroyed or missing. Therefore, for the publication of this collection, a particular author was chosen for each CD, favoring the historical importance and technical quality of the cylinders" (Ziegler 2006b: 62).

the Kamayurá celebration of the ocelot, which can last eleven days (Menezes Bastos 2013). Koch-Grünberg's recordings are only small excerpts of the chants, performed in front of the phonogram decontextualized from dances and other ritual elements, since this was the only way to have better quality in the recordings.

Figure 67. Edison-Home-Phonograph (Ziegler 2006a: 394)



Despite these technical limitations, the importance of these recordings from the point of view of comparative musicology is undeniable. Before Koch-Grünberg, little was known about the groups that inhabited the northern Amazon, and there were no recordings of their sonorities, so his collection has made it possible for chants and cultures of indigenous peoples of Roraima to be known by the emergent musicological science. Hornbostel thought the phonographic recordings were of impeccable technical quality and received with enthusiasm the recordings made by Koch-Grünberg (Koch-Grünberg 2006b).

In his article on the Macuxi, Taurepang and Ye'kwana music, Hornbostel (1923: 397-442) transcribed several chants. This task, according to the musicologist, was extremely hard because some parts, especially the Ye'kwana chants and the shamanic chants of all tribes, offered great difficulties, especially regarding the rhythm, forcing the musicologist to work for several days to compose a short line of notes "in which the great effort is invisible" (Kraus 2006: 25). Without the use of phonographic recordings, these elements would not be susceptible to musicological analysis (Pinto 1983: 86).

The first phase of the Comparative Musicology ends with the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv moving to the Ethnological Museum of Berlin in 1934. With Hornbostel's death in 1935 in England and the rise of Nazism, the German enterprise of studying non-western societies began a sharp decline. After the end of "Gesellschaft für Vergleichende Musikwissenschaft", most of the researchers of Comparative Musicology migrated to the United States, where, under influence of Boas, they founded the "American Society for Comparative Musicology", abolished in 1939. Unlike the Comparative Musicology, which had its origin linked to psychology, in the United States it was mainly related to ethnology (Menezes Bastos 1995).

It is important to point out that the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv was an institution that was part of the expansionist policy of the German empire. However, with the advancement of ethnological research about the constitution of scales and acoustic intervals in non-western songs, and with the criticism of the colonial scenario and the scientific production made in this context, the archive began to be a place of world music memory and to encourage the return of these recordings to their contexts of origin (Koch and Ziegler 2006: 60), an aim that was the starting point for this dissertation. If today we are looking at indigenous knowledge not only as "object", the phonograms of the Berlin Archive enable the analysis of centennial collections and thus the recalling of a given knowledge, also, in some cases, it even enables their reintegration into the dynamics of culture.

When they heard about the history of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, the Ye'kwana saw in the goals of the archive an inversion in relation to the action that took place at the time of *tanöökö*: if during the first celebration for the arrival of hunters, a *wiriki* stone thrown by Odocha into the fermented drink troughs created the diversity of the chants, languages and music, and dispersed the peoples toward their respective territories, the Phonogramm-Archiv ended up gathering all this diversity in its collections, which led the Ye'kwana to think about the origin of phonography based on the categories of *watunna* and the cosmosonics.

4.2. *Watunna* and phonography

One night, in the *anaaka*, the men were discussing about how would be the seclusion period that would start after the death of João Alexandre, an important *inchonkomo* who was Vicente Castro's brother. For the Ye'kwana, every death is a defeat to Odocha, an act of predation, and the closest relatives are at risk during the time following the death of a

relative, which requires a series of rituals to “avenge” the death and lead the *akaato* (life image or double) of the deceased one in finding its path to Wanadi’s heaven¹²⁵. According to the wisdom of the elders, one must be careful after a death in the community, remain silent, stay close to the village, and only go to the margin of the river in the company of another person. Nowadays, however, with the greater access to electronic equipment, the young ones sometimes disrespect the silence and seclusion of this period of grief.

That is why, in that rainy afternoon of deep sadness for the second death in less than five days, the elders were talking to the young ones about how they should behave in the four days following the deaths, merging two periods of seclusion. The tone of the talks was serious and pessimistic. All who spoke mentioned the end of the sages, of the chants and plants that protect the Ye’kwana in these occasions. Contreras started talking about the “technological revolution” that is taking place in the Ye’kwana communities and about the imminent risks of using these machines. The songs (“merengues” in mp3 acquired from relatives in Venezuela) are occupying a place previously reserved to the *shiiwokomo* instruments. This is seen with some discomfort by the oldest members of the community, although the use of recorders with songs is not prohibited by the leaders (except in specific ritual situations). Contreras asked the young ones if they knew the spirits who owned the loudspeakers they carried in the village, stating that they should know the *edajä* of these objects, and making it clear that he, as a sage, did not own chants to purify these machines. Days later I asked Contreras who were the owners of the machines of the white people. In response, he told me the following *watunna*.

The origin of the electronic machines and phonography.

Wanadi lived in Ihuruinha and he was the one who invented the electronic machines of the white people. The true Wanadi in heaven had no navel, but he sent his double to earth and this double had a navel. So the other Wanadi asked: “Do you have a navel? Do you have your placenta? Then take it out and leave it on an anthill (*kämätödö*) and do not come back to

125 Rivière states that, in the region of the Guyanas, death is related to “mystical attacks, witchcraft, soul theft and similar things, always originating from the exterior” (2001b: 40). David Guss says that, for the Ye’kwana, death is an illusion. The non-being does not exist, what exists (or coexists) is the world of the invisible double (1990: 119). Since death is an attack of Odosha, one must prevent new attacks and take revenge with *woy* plants. When a Ye’kwana dies, it is always necessary to take revenge. The plants called *woy* are used for that. These plants are placed over the dead body before it is buried. It is as if *woy* were the Ye’kwana counter-offensive against Odosha. A Ye’kwana said that “*watunna* says that when someone dies the evil spirits rejoice. The say: ‘good, we killed one of them, let’s get another one’”. The greatest target of a new possible attack is the family of the dead person. That is why, during the period of grief, *woy* leaves are placed on the ground, at the door, and inside the houses, as was also done in my room after the two deaths that occurred during my field word in December 2012. Since these plants are very powerful and necessary for protection and ritual revenge, people need to be very careful handling them.

check it out”. Ättawanadi took his placenta, but did not respect all those words. He got curious to see, look again, and so he found a person, a *so'to* born of the placenta. From this day on the word *so'to* was created, exactly at that moment and place. Then, he named him “Odosha”. We also refer to Odosha as “Kahushawa” when we do not want him to know we are talking about him. After he was born, he started to follow Wanadi in his hunts and visits to the forest. As the Sanumá do with us nowadays.

Wanadi had a couple of children. He would go out to hunt and leave them at home. Odosha kept “tempting” Wanadi’s children to lead them to the wrong path. One day, when Wanadi was out hunting, Odosha arrived at the door and said: “open it, it is Wanadi, your father”. Then he thought “have sex”. That spoiled both of them. That is when the first sex occurred. At that time Wanadi lived with his brother-in-law Wanato. They would wake up in the middle of the night and talk about their dreams. Wanato would ask “what did you dream of?” “I dreamed that I killed a wild boar and a deer”. “I dreamed I was hunting”. Odosha would hear at the other side and would say “No, your dream does not mean that you will hunt, but that your mother will die”. That is why, when we dream, its meaning is the opposite. If Odosha had not spoken, the dreams would be equal to reality. As Wanadi’s knowledge increased, Odosha got wiser and managed to surpass his knowledge to spoil the world. Then Wanadi hung Odosha on a tree with nails and stones and ran away. It did not work, though, since he managed to escape and kept chasing Wanadi. Nowadays the white people call him Jesus. But to us this is Odosha. He came here, years after the creation of the world, to deceive people. To try to deceive in another way, with papers and with the bible¹²⁶.

Wanadi made walls to try to hide his speech. He wanted to talk to his brother-in-law preventing Odosha to hear. This happened in Caranacuni, an affluent of the Merewari. *There Odosha invented a radio just like the radiophony we have nowadays. Odosha is very smart, he is the inversion of Wanadi and has surpassed Wanadi’s thought. He created this object to listen to Wanadi’s speech and distort his actions, and he chased Wanadi, who would run away and in doing so kept creating the world [...] In Aatudi there is a huge waterfall where Wanadi got in and disappeared. This waterfall lies a little above Puerto Ayacucho. The old historians say that Wanadi entered in this cave and left at another place called Angosturanha (Ciudad Bolívar). And in this place Wanadi left these electronic instruments, these inventions that the white people have nowadays. In this place Wanadi disappeared and nobody knows where we went, and this place he left many things, paper was one of them, so men can keep inventing machines. So nowadays the white people, who are Odosha, are trying to find other places, other worlds, create means of transportation, airplanes, engines. Wanadi was the one who left this wise people on earth to start the scientific community. Wanadi left this people to spend its time inventing. From then on, men became mad, started to invent, created objects that fly, move along the river, through the forest. That was how their thought grew. Nowadays, Odosha does not live here anymore either. Only his evil spirit. He also lives in another world. In another planet. Heaven’s foot (Kodijenha).*

126 In the version found in Civrieux, Jesus is not Odosha, but Wanadi (1980).

If Wanadi had not left the seeds of the machines and electronics on earth, Odosha would have easily found him. If they were close, the world would not stand it. Wanadi left these objects so that Odosha would not be angry forever. That is why he left these seeds, so that Odosha would not continue to only destroy, but would discover, study, invent.... Nowadays, our children and grandchildren or even I, arriving at the city, can see how beautiful and fantastic it is. Wonderful! Well-done, organized, with televisions, means of communication, cell phones, cars, people walking with shoes, elegant. These are the seeds of Wanadi. If we keep using these things, as white people, we will also be dying. If we become like the white people, “sophisticated”, we will lose ourselves. That is why Wanadi did not plant these things here in Ihuruinha but did it farther, away from us. He preferred to let this for the descendants of Kahu, of Wiyu, of Wiyu’s grandfather, Ewamakadu. Everything there is on earth (gold, diamond, precious metals) came from heaven. As they arrived on earth, Wiyu became their owner. These minerals came to hold planet earth. They came from heaven precisely to take care of the planet so that earthquakes and storms did not happen. Wiyu was responsible for taking care of this gold and diamond. These minerals were not in the hands of the Ye’kwana or the white people. They are Wiyu’s. These technologies the white people invent are made with these minerals.

This narrative is a variation of the world origin myth. Contreras begins the *watunna* by telling about the cosmic battle fought between Wanadi and his brother Odosha, born from his rotten placenta. Odosha is the evil twin that tries to corrupt and confound Wanadi’s children by undoing his creative actions. In his persecution to Wanadi, Odosha tries to get ever closer to his twin. But if he managed to do it, “the world would be able to bear it”, since there must be a good distance between them. This image of the twins in a perpetual unbalance (Lévi-Strauss 1991b) causes the cosmology to be open to events, among them the relationship with white people, who occupy in the myths the position of beings corrupted by Odosha, although they are Wanadi’s children.

The recorders (*adiiyada wätödö*) and technologies of the white people are devices created by Wanadi to distract and drive Odosha away from the Ye’kwana. However, Odosha keeps wishing to terminate Wanadi’s children and that is why he sent Ewamakadu to take music to the Ye’kwana with the purpose of weakening them. According to the elders, listening to music and using loudspeakers (and perfumes) turns the young ones into easy prey to the spirits of Wiyu that surround the domestic space of the village. The taste of young people for merengue is explained by the fact that this is the musical genre of the land of Ewamakadu, in the region of Merewari, Venezuela. Although many Ye’kwana usually go to Boa Vista, merengue is the genre preferred by the young ones. Among the young indigenous

people of other ethnicities who study in Boa Vista, “forró”¹²⁷ is the predominant genre but among the Ye’kwana, even being exposed to other kinds of music in the city, merengue is still their favorite rhythm.

The pair of *te’keya* and the *samjuda*, if played at an inadequate location or moment, can attract the Mawadi, cannibal spirits that inhabit mountains and caves, the loudspeakers and the music brought by Ewamakadu attract the spirits of Wiyu, a cannibal ancestral that inhabits the waters. Both beings (Mawadi and Wiyu), if attracted by the sounds, may take over the *akaato* (soul or double) of the person, causing several diseases.

Figure 68. At the house of men, a drum and a loudspeaker (Daniel Bampi Rosar)



The recorders and music of the white people are interpreted from the perspective of the acoustic code (Lévi-Strauss 2004b), so that the loudspeakers, in the Ye’kwana mindset, are close to the drums, the pair of *te’keya*, and the *tanöökö* celebrations. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the arrangement of the big house, a location of meetings and celebrations in Kudaatainha in which there are two places above the lateral poles that keep, on one side, a drum and, on the other, a loudspeaker. Another fact that confirms this interpretation happened during the closing night of the Ye’kwana meeting in Waschainha in 2012, in which the *tanöökö* with its *shiiwokomo* instruments went on until 3 a.m., being then replaced by merengue on the loudspeakers until morning. On several occasions, I noticed during the community works some Ye’kwana carrying loudspeakers and also the pairs of *te’keya*, which were played (sometimes simultaneously) during the activities.

¹²⁷ Forró is a typical musical rhythm of this region of Brazil that includes subgenres such as “baiao”, “xaxado”, “xote”, and “quadrilha”, popularized in Brazil and abroad through the figure of the singer and songwriter Luiz Gonzaga.

This logic of the acoustic codes and their relationships with the culinary code places the *shiiwo* of the Mawadi (*samjuda* and *te'keya*) and the songs of the white people on the same sound universe of openness to sociability known in drinking celebrations that mark the cycles of abundance. On the other side, these sounds imply different kinds of memory that are continuously contrasted by the Ye'kwana. The forms of knowledge and recordings have differences that are constantly submitted to philosophical reflections regarding the misunderstandings (Viveiros de Castro 2015) created by the contrast between the power of exteriority that the phonographic recordings and the forms of written recording have, and the power of the alterity established by the Ye'kwana orality and cosmosonics.

When I met the Ye'kwana and proposed this research based on the phonographic recordings, I heard that “the recordings weaken the sages”. This would happen in a particular way with the voice captured by the recorder, not with the *shiiwokomo*. Some people said that the sage whose voice is stored in the recorders may lose his memory or die due to the capturing of his voice by the machines and that the recording could reduce ritual efficacy. These were recurring statements when I started my contact with the Ye'kwana, although these forms of recording were already starting to be used by them, and although at the final stage of fieldwork I had received permission to record and use audiovisual recordings as part of the final material of this dissertation.

David Guss (1986) addressed the Ye'kwana resistance to the use of audiovisual recordings relating it to the difficulties Koch-Grünberg faced while carrying out his research. When we read Koch-Grünberg's field diary, it is impossible not to notice that his relationship with this people was permeated with hostilities. This can be noticed by his profound bad mood in relation to them, besides the difficulties described by him in finding good translators for his work. Koch-Grünberg in several parts of his work uses derogatory expressions to refer to the Ye'kwana, contrasting with his descriptions of other Carib peoples (Macuxi and Taurepang) with whom he had intense contact during his trip. In his field diary he refers to they Ye'kwana as arrogant, ill-tempered, rude, dirty, pugnacious and dishonest (Koch-Grünberg 2006). This led David Guss (1986: 415) to state that Koch-Grünberg's anger derived from the fact that the Ye'kwana refused to be submitted to the condition of research objects to a guest that was not even invited: “They could not be bought by gifts or awed by unknown technology. In short, they refused to be “primitive” or “simple,” and in this refusal turned the tables around. Koch-Grünberg suddenly found himself in the uncomfortable position of being watched and studied” (1986: 415).

Here David Guss understands the relationship of the Ye'kwana with Koch-Grünberg under the perspective of a “reverse anthropology” proposed by Roy Wagner (2016). The “metaphorization” of the foreigner to the Ye'kwana ideology itself is visible in their relationship with white people, their papers and their technology¹²⁸. The restriction regarding the recording of chants is due to the fact they are considered to be the most powerful protection against the diseases brought by the encounter with non-human beings outside the village. These “arts of manipulating the supernatural” are heavily protected and recording or transcribing these chants would be, according to Guss (1986: 415), a kind of “death”. The sage may lose his memory or may even die because his voice was captured by the machines, and the recording even cancels the efficacy of the ritual.

As described before, Odosha always tries to “listen” to Wanadi, “record” his words and thoughts so he can later change and undo his dreams and actions. This saga of the cultural hero of the Ye'kwana seems to symbolize not only the resistance to orality, as Guss suggested, but also to the objects and machines of the white people that double people by capturing parts of them and disseminating them on external supports, such as paper or CDs. Besides, the machines cannot connect to Kahuña, as Contreras explained:

The white people's music does not establish any connection to Wanadi, such as the *ademi* and *a'chudi*, such as the instrumental music. You are only moving your flesh, your arm, your foot. Now our music has a connection to Wanadi, since when we imitate the sound of some animal, for example, this musical piece has a connection to Wanadi. Not the white people. Now *ademi*, *a'chudi*, *wanna*, *fiichu* to me is something alive, you are thinking and connecting to *watunna*. Now you put on a disc, a tape, that is fake. This voice that leaves the recorder, we do not know if the person is already dead, and it keeps playing. Now when I am performing the song, I am alive, I am performing, I am connecting to Wanadi. Merengue is nonsense, mess, disease. (Contreras)

David Guss (1986: 423) describes in his article a version that is similar to the *watunna* narrated by Contreras, and states that the technologies are not enough to stop Odosha in his persecution to Wanadi. This causes him to create a house at the foot of heaven, called Kaju Awadina (as I heard, Kodijenha). When entering through it, Odosha imagines he is in a house made of pure light, made of *wiriki*, but it is actually an illusion, since the house is a replica

128 According to Guss (1986: 415), “In the case of the Yekuana, this ‘reverse anthropology’ has served to reaffirm not only their ideology through the successful incorporation of the foreign into it, but also the tradition of orality that has permitted this incorporation to occur”.

of heaven. Odosha remains, then, lord of this world, stuck at heaven's foot, searching for Wanadi, but without finding him.

Unable to stop Odosha, despite the repeated messages left on his inventions, Wanadi creates the closest replica of Heaven possible. Like its fourth house in which the Lake of Immortality, Akuena, is located, this fourth and final stop of Wanadi's is given an aura of magic and preciousness. But this aura is an illusion and the magic quartz crystals with which it is said to be constructed only glass and mirror. Like the world of most material objects, it is one without content or inner strength. It is the ultimate world of surface, "shiny and brilliant," in which the image of Odosha is reflected wherever he looks. Not merely on the surfaces either, for in his desperation to stop Odosha, Wanadi "put people there to keep Odosha away from him." He created the demons, the Odoshankomo. Finally, Odosha believes he is in Heaven and has found Wanadi. But he is only in the "Foot of Heaven," at the extreme edge of the universe and the furthest end of materialism. Although he believes he has entered into a world of pure light, the "glitter" he sees reflected everywhere is only an illusion. As every Yekuana knows, Kahu Awadiia is a land of darkness and decay. (Idem: 422).

While we talked about the topic of machines and recordings, Vicente Castro said that the loudspeakers and the microphone used during some meetings would not cause problems, but the recordings leave him tired and sleepy because when he sings Wanadi looks at him, and if someone records his voice, Wanadi gets sad. Nevertheless, Vicente Castro allowed himself to be recorded during the *ättä edemi jödö* and other *inchonkomo* have different opinions about this topic. As will be described below, Contreras and Mäjäänmä do not oppose to recordings, as long as they are "well kept", so that the chants are not trivialized. The fact that the young members of the community entered the university also caused the "cultural revitalization projects" and the "self-research", along with the increasing access to electronic devices that record and playback sounds and videos, to bring new horizons of recording and memory to the Ye'kwana. Castro, for example, has just completed his master's in geography and considers it important from a political perspective to give visibility to the Ye'kwana culture among the white people, just as nowadays most chant learners use devices to record the chants studied together with other specialists. Contreras warns about the risks, but points to the possibility of a political use of these technologies:

Now I will talk about these machines. When you die, your voice remains forever, your body stays on the ground. From generation to generation, the Ye'kwana people has always memorized. The machine – technology – takes the knowledge of the indigenous people, it captures our soul and that is why it weakens us. But you white people who defend the indigenous cause make me very happy! I do not have machines to record.

You white people have machines. You have to listen to our words, our voice, because we are originally from this place. You who fight for the indigenous cause should carry our words, disseminate them throughout the world. There is no point storing it, our voice needs to be disseminated (Contreras).

The objections regarding the recordings surround the refusal of letting part of the person - voice, images, body adornments - taken by foreigners who will keep it in a distant museum or archive, or will deliver the voices and recordings to their professors after returning to their home cities, leaving behind the relationship with their native hosts. These forms of resistance are very remarkable when the researcher has not already moved “from the position of improvised ambassador of a threatening universe to the role of a benevolent translator, capable of hearing in it its alterity and eventually enabling alliances” (Kopenawa e Albert 2015: 521).

Koch-Grünberg stayed for few months with the Ye'kwana, which prevented him from building more solid relationships with his informants. One hundred years later, when I started my research, I needed many months of approximations until I was allowed to go to Auaris and begin my process of learning about cosmosonics and *watunna*. After spending years in Boa Vista acting as a professor at UFRR and a collaborator in the Ye'kwana demands in the city, I was able to be “domesticated” by them so I could be considered a political mediator in the “world of the Iadanawe (white people)”.

Nowadays there is, among the Ye'kwana, a multiplicity of perspectives about the best of way making a synthesis (which is well known in the Amerindian thought to be always imperfect) between the cosmosonics, its ways of memorization, and the technologies of the white people. Equally, each of the Ye'kwana sages has his own ideas about Koch-Grünberg's phonograms, which revealed a plurality of perspectives regarding the meanings of this phonographic legacy.

4.3. The reception of the phonograms

As I described before, I traveled to Roraima thinking about how the natives would react to receiving the chants of their ancestors that were kept in a distant archive. I thought that some of the chants might have even been forgotten, and that these phonographic recordings might serve as a research source for the Ye'kwana themselves. From the native perspective, receiving a white person coming from Germany with the voices of their deceased ancestors recorded onto a CD was not an easy task. A few years passed since the

beginning of the relationship filled with distrust regarding the reason for my interest in the chants and with recording prohibitions until the development of a relationship in which I was allowed to record the cosmosonics in a “dissertation”.

Remaining all these years in Boa Vista has made it possible for me to follow the nuances of the native reflections about the musical recordings of the white people and the access to new technologies. I was able to follow the formation of a few Ye’kwana who participated in video editing workshops and the acquisition of modern cell phones with cameras and recorders that are now used in the city and villages. These innovations invite the Ye’kwana to reflect ever more about how *watunna* explains these objects and how they can be used in order to create a favorable situation instead of harming the young ones and the traditional wisdom.

Throughout this field research, I conducted a few auditions of the phonograms in the presence of the *a’chudi edamo*. The first occasion was in the presence of the sage Contreras and the elder Peri in Fuduuwaduinha. The second time was when the *inchonkomo* Vicente Castro visited me in Boa Vista. On two other occasions I played the phonograms in Fuduuwaduinha, one of them in the presence of the leader (*ayaajä*) Davi and Elias, both chant owners, and the last time with the sage Majaanuma, who was born in Venezuela and was on the Brazilian side studying with Vicente Castro and Joaquim, an indigenous health agent who was the first one to have notebooks with the transcription of chants.

As described before, Koch-Grünberg (2006) classified the chants into three genres: healing, celebration, and work chants. Before beginning the auditions, I would explain this classification he made and would tell them how I had obtained the phonograms that were kept in an archive along with thousands of other sound recordings from all around the world. I would explain how the cylinders worked, the technical limitations of the phonograms, which could only record a few minutes of sounds, and the fact that, despite these limitations, the recordings of the Ye’kwana chants were considered very good at that time.

What follows is a reclassification of the chants according to the comments made by the sages Vicente, Contreras, Majaanuma, Elias, Joaquim, Davi and Peri. The comments of the Ye’kwana sought to specify to which type of repertoire the chants belonged and, later, to refer to mythical-ritual matters and some aspects about the chant lyrics. Furthermore, they commented on Manduca’s accent and stated that he was not from the Ihuruana region as they were, except for Contreras. This proposal of learning the perspective of the Ye’kwana, nowadays, about chants recorded over one hundred years ago through the methods of what

was then comparative musicology enables a reverse perspective in which the people who were treated as “objects” by colonial science take the position of objectifying the western processes of knowledge production.

Steven Feld (1990) highlights that in the last decades ethnographers have been reading, writing and reflecting about policies of representation, translation, reflexivity, experience, dialog and ethnographic writing, and that these reflections are thought based on the relationships between knowledge, authority, power and representation. Therefore, a less conventional way of expanding a text is to reflect on how its original subjects (in this case, the natives) displaced some of their meanings so as to defy the author’s ethnographic authority (Clifford 1983). For Feld, these negotiations about what the natives and the ethnographers said, the juxtaposition of these voices, gives a dialogic dimension to ethnography and also elucidates questions about rights, authority and the power of controlling voices (the power to define which voices will speak, when, how much, in what order, etc.). The goal of that is to let the voices of the natives pronounce new words among the other readers, critics and commentators of the ethnographic work.

“Vom Roroima zum Orinoco” (1917) was studied by many generations of researchers since its date publishing one century ago. But the phonograms until then had not yet undergone the scrutiny of the Ye’kwana themselves in Brazil. This dynamic of multiple textualities suggested by Steven Feld allows the thinking of contradictions and coherences in the work of representation of the Ye’kwana before the white people, done by Koch-Grünberg, other ethnographers, and also by me in this work. The next paragraphs seek to condensate the original classifications given by Koch-Grünberg along with the native explanations about these phonograms. These recordings were obtained to be used in this work when I conducted my field research in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, and the following footnotes correspond to the original cataloging of phonograms. Some phonograms remain unpublished, while others were published by the Ethnological Museum of Berlin in the CD “Theodor Koch-Grünberg: Walzenaufnahmen aus Brasilien 1911-1913” (2006b).

The phonogram “[Waixama](#)”¹²⁹ was classified as “dancing chant” by Koch-Grünberg. This fragment of a chant is part of the *tanöökö edemi jödö* ceremony. According to Davi and Elias, it is sung at the moment the Ye’kwana adorn themselves with the leaves of inajá, in the *wasaia’do edemi jödö*, and the chant addresses these adornments and the meat

129 VII_W_2787_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEEN_31_Neue.

obtained by the hunters. Another phonogram¹³⁰ contains the same chant and the title is written with a different spelling, “Uaixama”. It is also part of the *tanöökö* and it is sung right after the arrival of the hunters.

One morning in Waschainha, Martim, a teacher and chanting apprentice, sat on a chair near his relatives who were lying on their hammocks and sang a chant of this same ademi, with the same familiar melody that quickly reminded me of the phonograms. I was very happy with that because I noticed right at the beginning of my fieldwork the vitality of the Ye’kwana sounds captured by Koch-Grünberg’s phonograph. In 2017, in an afternoon of rest and interval between the different *ademi* ceremonies described in chapter 2, Majaanuma, with his eyes closed and a grave contemplative expression, listened to the recordings made by Koch-Grünberg with the Edison phonograph and, soon after, with precision and a specific voice placement, he sang the same chant *Waichama*.

The excerpt called “Diuai”¹³¹, considered a “dancing chant”, also happens during the *tanöökö* in a part of the dance called “*Dukaadi Ichudu*”. The chant refers to the collared peccaries (*dukaadi*), a game animal that, in the indigenous mindset, occupies the best position among all. The chant was immediately recognized by the listeners as being *wasaiado ademi jödö*, a part of the *tanöökö* ceremony.

“Kasihanu”¹³² was classified by Koch-Grünberg as a “dancing chant” and named by the Ye’kwana as *kanawa edemi jödö*. It is a chant performed during the preparation of the recipient *kanawa* and is directed at the maniva, asking the owner spirit of the heavenly *adeja* (garden) for authorization to use it. The chant describes how Kuyujani built the first fermented drink trough and warns the maniva that the utensil is beautiful, adorned and ready for it to rest. Vicente sang a part of this purification *ya’chumadö* that names many types of specific animals: “*ma’do* (jaguar) is a powerful animal, so the chant asks it to arrive first and lick the trough. Then come the smaller animals, such as the ants, to purify the object. The singer says ‘you, trough, are being bitten by the ants, by their saliva’. The animals clean the trough with their saliva and bite, purifying it so it can be used”, says the *inchonkomo* Vicente Castro.

Contreras says that there is a ritual to ask for permission to collect wood, and that only a few people are chosen to go to the right place and collect it. The wood needs to be

130 VII_W_2792_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEEN_36_Neue.

131 VII_W_2788_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEEN_32_Neue.

132 VII_W_2790_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEEN_34_Neue.

brought on the same day and cannot be cut and left in the forest, a similar procedure to that of building the *samjuda* and the *te'keya*. Upon arriving at the village, the recipient must be made and the celebration begins on the following day. Joaquim reminded me that in the past women would sing this chant during the cleaning of the gardens. Nowadays, the Ye'kwana are not making this utensil anymore, it has been replaced by pans and plastic gallons bought in the city. However, when he heard this chant, the sage Vicente Castro, who knows how to build the *kanawa*, got excited about resuming this currently dormant tradition.

The phonogram “[Keedena](#)”¹³³, or *Ködönä* according to the Ihuruana spelling, was described as the “*chant for women to give men caxiri*”. Contreras was happy to hear this phonogram and said that when the Ye'kwana sing on earth they are connecting with Kahuña and Wanadi is hearing them. The sage reminded me that the spirits of the old *füwai* are constantly singing these chants in Kahuña, and when the singer is on earth performing the same chant, he connects to Kahuña and experiences the sounds as he himself were in heaven. This chant is directed at Kawadatu, the snake that guards the manivas and is drawn on the central pole of the houses, on the *fiichu* flutes and on the *yadaake* recipients (*kanawa*). It is a benign snake that lives in the gardens. Its spirit is like that of a human being, but it is invisible to common people. The chant mentions *kasuedeke*, a special calabash used to drink the *yadaake* during the *tanöökö* that is all closed except for one hole used to drink the beverage. Performed at the end of the adornment of the trough made of a carved tree, the chant transforms and purifies the utensil by evoking the contact with Kawadatu and its purpose is to make the ancestral spirits of nature and of the maniva happy: “it is a chant of embellishment because the trough is special, not any one at any time can make it”, said the sage Vicente Castro.

The phonogram called “[hedeha](#)”¹³⁴ was also considered a “dancing chant” and is performed after the opening of the garden. According to Davi, the chant mentions characters of Kahuña and narrates how they came to earth and created the connection (*wadeekui*) with the superior heaven. The chant mentions the sun *shii*, owner of the *wiriki*, and asks it to send shamanic stones to the dancers. The chant states that *shii* is sending *wiriki* so that the people who are dancing at the yard be strong and healthy, and the dances and the singing aim to cheer the owner of the *adeja*, who is happy with the performances of the Ye'kwana.

133 VII_W_2789_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEEN_33_Neue.

134 VII_W_2791_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEEN_35_Neue.

The phonogram “[Kauaraxtu](#)”¹³⁵, or “a serpent with a colorful pattern”, is part of the *ättä edemi jödö*. The chant performed at the end of the construction of the house cites the snake Kawadatu, the guardian of the maniva who made the circle that lies at the center of the round or rectangular house. The chant asks Kawadatu to circle the *ñududui*, the central pole, and to make the house “healthy”, asks it to represent heaven and to keep the inhabitants safe. The chant takes the perspective of Kawadatu and is sung in first person. *Weetajayanä* is part of the *ättä edemi jödö* in which this segment is sung. Majaanuma said that the chant cites beings that make the house healthy. “I will step on this house with Kawadatu’s foot, with the *wiriki*, with the capibara’s foot”, says the chant, citing the animal feared by Odosha, “to step on the house and leave Odosha in fear”, concluded Majaanuma.

“[Azimane](#)”¹³⁶ is part of the *ättä edemi jödö*. For the Ye’kwana in Auaris the name of the chant is *Nashishimanä* and it is also sung after the construction of the house. “*Nashishimanä* aims to let the house well-made, clean, without evil, so that the relatives remain healthy inside the house”, said Contreras. “The chant is like a vaccine against Odosha”, added Vicente Castro. The text cites plants that are forest medicines and are used to keep people healthy. *Nashishimanä*, according to the sages, means to purify, to protect.

Another phonogram¹³⁷ is part of the ending of the [tanöökö edemi jödö](#) and cites, several times, the [samaaye](#), a part of the hunters celebration that talks about Tawono, the sacred place where the rivers and waterfalls end. It is sung at midnight and cites Wiyu spirits that live where the rivers meet and under the waterfalls, and aims to calm them or drive them away.

“[Shaman Chant during a night healing II](#)”¹³⁸, and “[Shaman Chant during a night healing III](#)”¹³⁹, are exclusive performances of the shamans. According to Majaanuma, the characteristic singing of the *a’chudi edamo* is called *ya’chumadö*, but the *füwai* had a specific way of singing called *wädenhakaana*. These chants are not performed anymore because there are no Ye’kwana shamans anymore. However, many words cited in this shamanic chant are also summoned by the *a’chudi edamo*, such as the *wiriki* stones, the lake Akuena, the center of the cosmos, called Kahuña, and the *kaji* plant, a hallucinogen that is widely used in the Amazonian shamanism, popularly known as ayahuasca. Majaanuma

135 VII_W_2803_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_KOCH_BRASILIEIEN_I_47_Neue.

136 VII_W_2804_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_KOCH_BRASILIEIEN_I_48_Neue.

137 VII_W_2805_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_KOCH_BRASILIEIEN_I_49_Neue.

138 VII_W_2829_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEIEN_20_Neue.

139 VII_W_2830_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEIEN_21_Neue.

reminded us that he heard some old shamans singing this chant, and said that the Caura shamans sang the same way Manduca does.

There is yet another phonogram¹⁴⁰ containing [shamanic chants](#). According to the sages, when the *fiiwai* sings it is arriving in heaven, even if the body is on earth, and in heaven there are many spirits who ask what he wants to do there. He dreams so he can see his auxiliary spirit who talks to the people through his body. In heaven there are many *fiiwai* who came down to earth through live shamans and people could talk to him and ask for protection, health, strength during child labor, etc. “The chant narrates how the *fiiwai* lived on earth, and how he, after dying, went away to live in heaven. Then the living shaman brings back the shaman that has already died”, said Vicente.

According to the comments made by the Ye’kwana sages, it is possible to specify the genres of the Ye’kwana cosmosonics to which Koch-Grünberg’s centennial phonograms belong: several chants are part of the *tanöökö edemi jödö*, other chants are fragments of the *audaja edemi jödö* and of the *ättä edemi jödö*, and three of them are shamanic chants that are not performed anymore. Based on the comments of the *inchonkomo* it is possible to see the richness of the diversity of Koch-Grünberg’s phonograms, which include all the cosmosonic genres, except for the *a’chudi*. The comment made by Majaanuma about the difference in the performances of the *a’chudi edamo* (*ya’chumadö*) and of the *fiiwai* (*wädenhakaana*) explains the absence of *a’chudi* in Koch-Grünberg’s sample: Manduca was not an *a’chudi edamo* (*a’chudi* owner), since, as highlighted by Arvelo-Jimenez (1974), the *a’chudi edamo* and the *fiiwai*, although they manipulated the same kind of power, had different roles in the Ye’kwana ritual universe.

Currently, only the shamanic chants are not performed by the Ye’kwana anymore. The other ones are performed and recognized by the chant specialists, proving the vitality of the cosmosonics even after the intensification of the contact with the western world, which brought important changes to this people’s way of life.

Contreras made the following comment after listening to the recordings:

These recordings of Koch-Grünberg were not made with very “pure” Ye’kwana people. He surrounded the areas of the river sources but he did not go to the center, the most authentic Ye’kwana region. This happened because they did not want to give him these recordings. Currently, nowadays, we are like *defeated*. Now that we entered the phase of schooling, we have easier access to these technologies. But that is ok...

140 VII_W_2831_Koch_Gruenberg_Brasilien_I_K_GR_BRASILIEEN_22_Neue.

Even Peri does not oppose and accepts the video recordings. But there are a few people who are more traditional and still want to forbid the recordings.

But these old recordings, I thought they were very important for the sages, who are knowledgeable, because they complement our knowledge, they serve as “reminders”. Now, these recordings are not for everyone, they aren’t. If they go to everyone, they also “weaken”. Because not every Ye’kwana is a singer, *a’chudi* owner. This is a specialized knowledge. The chant specialists, sages, storytellers, shamans are one or two per community. For example, I will always be a specialist, in chants, who says prayers, purifies, prepares medicines for the diseased. To me, these chants serve as “reminders”. They are not meant to be played anywhere, walking around, with headphones.

The sages Contreras and Vicente Castro heard the chants with attention but they did not show interest in the phonograms as an instrument of cultural retrieval or valuation. For these sages, it is important to take care not to trivialize this knowledge with its indiscriminate reproduction. Vicente Castro emphasized that it was important that the chants be learned, but that this process goes through the relationship with the sage that teaches, since this sage is intrinsically connected to his apprentice. Also, Contreras used to say that there are few chant owners in each community, that is why these chants are not meant for a massive phonographic reproduction, as the white people do with their songs.

Majaanuma’s opinion was symmetrically inverse. He heard the chants with a grave expression, some times he rested his head on his arms crossed on the table, others he closed his eyes, lit his *kawai* (cigarette) and breathed the smoke deeply in, focusing on the words and notes reproduced by the phonograms. At the end of our audition, I said that maybe Manduca could not imagine that, one hundred years later, a Iadanawe and a Ye’kwana would gather, listening to his voice reproduced in the phonograms. I then asked him what he thought about the fact his voice could be heard one hundred years from now by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. This is what he answered:

The older people did not understand, they thought this was like giving the chants to the Iadanawe. Even nowadays some *inchonkomo* (elders) say that recordings are forbidden but I answer that our chants have already been recorded before and they are even in Germany! So it is important to record so that we can defend our culture and our territory. And also because the young people nowadays are not interested. So we must keep our knowledge recorded for future generations. It will work, that is my thought, we have to record, only the beginning of each chant, to leave them to posterity. I am not criticizing the ancestors, but I think that Manduca lied a little, mixed things up, not to give everything to this white person that recorded him. I am not lying because I want to give my voice and my singing to my grandchildren.

For Majaanuma, the recordings and the written knowledge must be used by the Ye'kwana, because it has been a long time, since Koch-Grünberg, the chants are recorded, even though Manduca “tried to mix things up a little” aiming to confound the German researcher. The phonographic recordings and the knowledge of writing enter the space of political construction and affirmation of the Ye'kwana before the surrounding society and, mainly, become a way of storing the chants and traditional knowledge in order to preserve them for future generations.

As a conclusion to our conversation that lasted the whole afternoon after a morning in which he performed several *a'chudi* chants for a newborn child, Majaanuma said he has long been searching for an Iadanawe (white person) who could help him to record his chants and organize his notebooks. He then asked me to help him in this task of passing his knowledge to his grandchildren, and said that we should start already on the day after our conversation. This resulted in the twenty-four *a'chudi* recordings that can be heard in the audiovisual material of this dissertation.

These different modes of reception of the phonograms show the modulations present in the opinions of the sages regarding the technologies of the white people. Vicente Castro, the last great sage “by memory”, makes objections regarding the use of devices to record the chants, but he used paper throughout his learning processes and he does not ostensibly oppose to the Iadanawe music heard by the young ones. Majaanuma, in turn, although he is open to the recording of traditional chants and is a “notebook sage”, is very critical of listening to the music of the white people, which the Ye'kwana call the sounds of the great Wiyu snake (Wiyu *shiiwoi*).

4.4. Wiyu *shiiwoi*: the music of the white people

An aspect that is poorly addressed about the collections of Theodor Koch-Grünberg are his phonograms containing “Volkslieder”, popular songs recorded by him in Venezuela, in the final period of his trip, when he was already in possession of a new phonograph, sent from Germany by Hornbostel. The collection with chants in Spanish was not studied by the German musicologist, however, the existence of the phonograms shows the importance of popular music in the universe surrounding the indigenous peoples already a hundred years ago.

When I was in Pedra Branca, a remote area on the border between Brazil and Venezuela, in a family nucleus composed of three houses and about ten permanent

inhabitants, I found in the small house of radio, among the chant notebooks of João Koch, vinyl recordings of a very famous Brazilian popular singer in the 1970s and 1980s. There was not a record player in the small house of clay and thatched roof, but the vinyls were stored for a long time in the same plastic bag with the chant notebooks, inside an old leather briefcase to protect them from the humidity of the forest. These stored discs indicate that the generation of João Koch, who is now in his sixties, already appreciated the music of the Iadanawe.

During my fieldwork, I played these phonograms a few times in the presence of the Ye'kwana. One of these occasions was during the APYB (today, called the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume) meeting in Waschainha, when they had just held a celebration in which the *shiiwokomo* instruments and the traditional dances were enjoyed until 3 a.m., and after that time the merengue dances, a Venezuelan rhythm, started. When they heard the phonograms, some of the Ye'kwana laughed a lot, very surprised, claiming they did not imagine that the merengue songs were so old. In a cosmological explanation, Reinaldo said that those phonograms were the “parents of the merengues”, the original sounds of that genre so appreciated by the Ye'kwana many years ago.

Paulo “*Adawata*”, João Koch's son-in-law, confirmed this hypothesis by telling me that decades ago he acquired a record player and several vinyl recordings with the salary received from a job he did for the Mineral Research Commission (CPRM), a federal agency that analyzed the geological potential of the Auaris region. Paulo said that the old vinyls were “the size of a *uu* (*beijú*) disk”, and that it was listening to the sound of the record player that he learned to dance “lambada”, a popular genre in Brazil in the early 1990s. Paulo also said that merengue existed before he was born, because at the time of his father there was already “music” in the communities. These fieldwork situations show that “music” (word used only to refer to western sonorities) has an important place in the daily life of Ye'kwana villages, and I was able to witness countless occasions in which young people gathered to listen to these songs on their record players.

Currently, the teachers have prepared political speeches defending the preservation of the traditional culture, sometimes attributing a negative connotation to “music”, one of cultural loss and devaluation of the Ye'kwana instrumental manifestations. However, this traditionalist speech does not prevent the practice of introducing new musical genres in the sound universe of the Ye'kwana, who continue enjoying white people's music as background sounds for collective work and leisure time. To understand the use that the

Ye'kwana make of these foreign musical genres, it is useful to draw a comparison with the Macuxi, a Caribbean people who live in the eastern region of Roraima and who relates in an original way with the musical genres of the white people as a form of inter-ethnic politics.

In 1911, Theodor Koch-Grünberg mentioned in his field diary the invasion of lands of the Federal Territory (indigenous areas) led by gardeners in eastern Roraima who introduced extensive cattle raising in the savannas. Because of this model of economy and occupation of the territory groups of immigrants from the northeast came to work at the gardens of the region, where they kept in close contact with the indigenous peoples of the eastern ethnic groups, especially the Macuxi. The cultural exchanges between natives and northeastern Brazilians have made forró the most popular music genre among the peoples who inhabit the fields and mountains of Roraima.

As soon as I arrived in Boa Vista, I heard from a professor of the Federal University of Roraima that “indigenous music nowadays is only ‘caxiri na cuia’ and ‘forró da maloca’” (Brito 2016), implying that there might be no “traditional music” anymore. Although the statement is not true, the reference to the importance of indigenous forró to the peoples of eastern Roraima is correct.

The professor was referring to the Macuxi band called “Caxiri na cuia”, created by the Macuxi indigenous at the time of the legal fight for the homologation of the Indigenous Territory Raposa Serra do Sol. This band protagonized an innovative use of forró as a way of political fight by launching the album “Caxiri na Cuia”. The tracks on this album addressed environmental and political themes and addressed, from the Macuxi perspective (a people that was expropriated by the invasion of their territory by gardens), the conflicts to reclaim the lands. One of these songs asked the president of Brazil at the time, Luiz Antônio Inácio Lula da Silva, to homologate the Indigenous Territory Raposa Serra do Sol, which eventually happened in 2009. The songs that compose this album can be considered “songs of protest” and point to an original appropriation of foreign sound expressions and the creation of lyrics with political connotations. One hundred years after the constitution of comparative musicology, the areas of ethnomusicology and anthropology are better prepared to think about cultural changes, leaving aside the ethnocentric notion of acculturation.

The reflections of the ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl (2006) about the negativity of the notion of cultural change for comparative musicology and ethnomusicology in the twentieth century seem to explain the little interest given to the incorporations of foreign genres by the native populations. According to Nettl, in the beginning comparative

musicology saw cultural change as acculturation, which explains Koch-Grünberg and Hornbostel's disregard for the songs of Hallelujah¹⁴¹, collected among the Taurepang and seen as a symbol of "cultural degeneration", and the lack of interest in popular Venezuelan chants. According to this paradigm, the researcher aimed to preserve the musical manifestations of the studied people, as if their traditions were static and persisted in a non-historical time.

Erich von Hornbostel (1905) aimed to define the musicology field of studies as circumscribed to the musical manifestations that, threatened by the strength of new colonizing trends and fashionable music, would be in danger of losing cultural identity. It was necessary for the musical scientist (at least those linked to the theoretical tradition that was in practice until the 1950s) to preserve the original musical traditions of non-western peoples, so they would not be lost amid the new music trends, aiming to find some of the universals of the so-called primitive music. But Nettl (2006) notes that, on the other hand, historical musicology was the one that focused on cultural changes, perceived as innovations within a model that allowed one to think of change only in terms of a single evolutionary line.

After the 1950s, there is an inversion of these paradigms: while music historians seek to find stability standards, despite remaining concerned with changes, the studies of ethnomusicology increasingly focus on cultural transformations. Although ethnomusicology seeks tools to understand the ways in which musical traditions change over time and space, the negative view that sees change as a form of loss still remained, according to Nettl (2006). Only among music historians, the changes (connected to styles) started to be seen as positive.

Allan Merriam (1977) called attention to a distinction between internal cultural changes and the changes caused in situations of colonial contact. The anthropological studies in the 1970s on inter-ethnic relationships and the ethnomusicological studies about cultural change focused on contact relationships. In the 1980s, new works on cultural change appeared, although until that decade little progress has been made regarding studies about change from a holistic perspective. This progress could be seen, however, in what can be called musical ethnography: in the approaches that aimed to adopt a holistic perspective (of description and analysis) of music in all its aspects in a given society.

141 Lewy (2011) conducted an ethnography among the Pemon in Venezuela, with whom he studied the hallelujah.

Nettl's suggestions (2006) show the need of questioning the native concepts of musical change and the ways in which different societies deal with internal cultural changes. These assumptions gain strength in the context of the Lowlands of South America, where the notions of transformation are fundamental to those societies that emphasize alterity and consider the openness to the other as a *modus operandi* of sociality (Viveiros de Castro 2015).

At the end of 2016, I was able to observe how the transformations caused by the music of the Iadanawe are incorporated by the Ye'kwana from their traditional social, cosmological and acoustic structures. Around 2 p.m. on December 31, 2016, the celebration of the inauguration of the house (*ättä edemi jödö*) was completed, and then the young people began to listen to music on their loudspeakers and to decorate the old house of men for the New Year celebration. The decoration of the place was made of neon lights that formed hearts and colored lines, balloons, loudspeakers on a tall structure, resembling a DJ nightclub, and trophies won by the young people in soccer tournaments. The entrance door, where a young man was checking who was coming in and out, was surrounded by red light flashers that made the location of the celebration stand out from far away.

At night, I went to the place to join the celebration and I found the old men's house completely crowded, with the central part filled with dancers, while, around the central circle, there were dozens of hammocks where the women and children watched the excitement of the young people, with the same spatial distribution that was previously used for the ceremony of inauguration of the house. Just as in the ceremony of the *ättä edemi jödö*, the women walked around the dancers, holding in one hand the pot containing *yadaake* and with the other offering men a gourd of the drink. ("[*The music of the white people I*](#) and [*The music of the white people II*](#)").

Even after three days of dancing at the *ättä* inauguration, people kept dancing and drinking nonstop, only changing the steps of the dance, which now was in pairs and no longer in circles. The DJs repeated the same songs many times (merengue and forró), and the long duration of the celebration kept the traditional standard, transposed to this new type of celebration, which lasted until the afternoon of the first day of 2017. This example is important to show how these musical changes were incorporated by the Ye'kwana from the native logic, showing that this desire to be the other (and dance like the Iadanawe), is updated according to the traditional terms themselves. Despite this importance of the Iadanawe music in the Ye'kwana daily life, there is an important difference between the Ye'kwana and the

Macuxi: while the Macuxi have several bands of forró with song writers and instrument players, the Ye'kwana only listen and dance to the Iadanawe songs, they do not sing or play musical instruments, nor do they connect these songs to their political activities.

Anthony Seeger, speaking about the ways in which the Suyá create time through sound, states that when there were no ceremonies the men “liked to turn on their radios at high volume from about 4: 30 a.m. to about 6: 00, perhaps substituting one form of music for another, observing the correct hour, and playing for the entire community to hear”. (2004: 71). It seems to me that the Ye'kwana also reserve a specific place in their daily lives for the foreign songs, a place that is considered in continuity with the touches of *te'keya*, *samjuda* and the dances of the *tanöökö*. These foreign musical genres have been part of the Ye'kwana life at least since João Koch's generation, and several times I witnessed both genres being enjoyed on the same night.

The example of the Macuxi, with the use of the musical genres of the colonizer as an instrument of fight and resistance, and that of the Ye'kwana who incorporate the white people's music within their traditional ritual structure, point to the need of seriously considering the premise that these changes are a result of these people's agency in an inventive and active way. And also that cultural changes are transformations rather than acculturation or loss. Among the Ye'kwana, this process of transformation and innovative use of the Iadanawe arts happens not only in the incorporation of their musical genres but also in the use of their technologies.

4.5. The youth, the city and the audiovisual recordings

In 2012, during my field research, the Venezuelan and Caribbean songs and rhythms were common soundscapes along with the sounds of nature and of the *shiiwokomo* instruments. These songs, which they generically call “merengue”, are played in cell phones and portable sound devices that the young people use on their walks throughout the village or after some collective work when they gather to drink *yadaake* and dance in couples, imitating the city balls.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Ye'kwana purchased a house in Boa Vista with money collected through tolls charged from the miners that crossed the region of Auaris in search of gold. The purpose of the leaders in purchasing this house was to have a lodging place for the young people who were going to Boa Vista to study at the elementary school, and also to have a support place for the Ye'kwana passing through the city. In 2012, with

the reactivation of APYB (the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume), this house became the headquarters of the association of the Ye'kwana people, since several Ye'kwana people have recently started to acquire houses in the city to serve as support points for the young Ye'kwana and their networks of relatives.

For the Ye'kwana in Brazil, Boa Vista is the place where the relationships with the world of the white people are concentrated. In this city, the Ye'kwana buy manufactured goods for their own consumption and to trade with their relatives on the Venezuelan side. Boa Vista is where the retired people and the pensioners go to withdraw their money, the teachers and health agents communicate with the public agents of the Education and Indigenous Health departments, and it is the place of schooling for the young Ye'kwana that leave the villages to study at the elementary and higher education.

Living with the Ye'kwana, I visited these city houses on several occasions. In these situations of fieldwork, I could see the relevance of their listening to merengues as ambient sound within the houses when the men, women and young ones were lying on their hammocks resting or involved in some daily chore. Likewise, I could also notice the importance, also in the city, of the *a'chudi chants*. When a sage is visiting Boa Vista, he is requested by his relatives to perform rituals of protection/construction of the person, mainly those related to newborn children.

This information is relevant because it shows the centrality of musical sounds in the daily life of the Ye'kwana, whether these sounds are native sound signs or originate in the inter-ethnic context of the relationship with the non-indigenous society. Therefore, the relationship between village and city should be thought dynamically, since the relationships between the acoustic codes of both places are articulated (within specific limits, exploring their *becoming* and potentiality) according to the contexts and the characteristic performances of each of these genres.

The migratory movement in search of education has created a new relationship between the village and the city. Parents and the community participate decisively in the formation process of the young people as they consider this formation necessary to ensure their basic rights to education, health and development projects in the communities, as well as financial autonomy for those working and earning salaries. Going to the city is not thought as an individual action, but as part of a collective project connected to family relationships and their rules of reciprocity, causing these young people's ties not to be broken while they

are living in the city¹⁴², as they earn salaries, they must help their close relatives, and, as they acquire knowledge, they must convert it into action that targets the common good.

According to Vale and Rangel (2008), most ethnological studies among the indigenous populations did result in specific studies about the youth, since this is not an internal social category to these societies. In most of these societies, the passage from childhood to adult life coincides with the wedding and the beginning of the productive and reproductive responsibilities. However, in the current context in which the young people attend school in the villages (then they go to the city to become teachers, health agents, land managers, act in the indigenous movement, and manage projects to the community), the category of “young person” has been gaining a specific role, being related to the relationship with the city and the world of the white people.

Since the first contacts to negotiate consent for this research, I noticed the issue of the young ones and their stay in the city. The *inchonkomo* talked with regret about the emptying of the village, which, without the young people, gets silent and sad, since they are the ones responsible for the laughter’s and day-to-day fun¹⁴³. And in return for my permission to work, they asked for my help in the demands related to the association and the schools, and asked me to help them in the challenges of the relationship with the city and with the knowledge of the white people.

In 2011, I was already in Boa Vista when the APYB (the Ye’kwana Association Wanasedume) reactivation meeting was held in Fuduuwaduinha with the topic: “Policy for the Ye’kwana Youth: how will the future of the young Ye`kwana in the city be?”. I did not take part in the meeting, in which the debates concentrated on the problem of young people remaining in the city and the commitment to passing on the traditional knowledge, but, right in my first contacts with the Ye’kwana, it was clear that the teachers and leaders were worried about this.

According to the reports of the Ye’kwana about the history of schooling, the first generation that went to school to study had very clear objectives of acquiring knowledge to seek improvements for their relatives and their community. However, according to some

142 It is worth noting that the Ye’kwana have an *a’ chudi*, called *wejuuma* that is used precisely to bring back a relative that went away and did not come back.

143 Gow states that, among the Piro, “the main responsibility of laughter relies with the adolescents. The elders lament the absence of the young ones when they are away, at school, saying: “the village is so sad now, there are only old people like us, people who do not want to do anything, who are not willing to have fun” (1997: 50).

teachers, currently, a few young people have been deviating from this initial project and, seduced by the city appeals, they have been little aware of their responsibilities as mediators between the community and the surrounding society, a fact that was also pointed out by Andrade (2005).

Right after the meeting, I began the relationship of collaboration and research with the Ye'kwana and I engaged the task of helping the APYB (the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume) and supporting the schools, beginning my fieldwork in the city of Boa Vista. The acceptance of my research was a slow process and, before returning to Auaris for a second phase of fieldwork, I remained involved with their demands in the city, as an advisor-researcher. The main demand was to help Castro, president of the APYB (the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume), with tasks in the association.

Aiming to debate the problems faced by the young people in the city, I suggested to Castro that the APYB (the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume) organized a meeting with the young people, which happened in 2012 at the Insikiran Institute of Indigenous Education (Federal University of Roraima -UFRR). The purpose of the 1st Meeting of Young Ye'kwana was to debate the problems of the young people in the city and to think about ways of supporting schooling based on affirmative actions. Castro invited the Ye'kwana who were in the city and, with transport made available by the Hutukara Yanomami Association, I was the driver who took the participants to UFRR. Coincidentally, Vicente Castro was visiting the city and agreed to speak to the young people on the occasion of the event. This would be my first encounter with the greatest Ye'kwana sage alive, and I had great expectations regarding this moment.

Figure 69. Meeting of the Young Ye'kwana at UFRR (Castro Ye'kwana)



The participants were sitting along the room with their chairs arranged in a rectangular shape and facing the center of the room. On the front table, we installed a projector with which I wished to present the Ye'kwana collections of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin at the end of the meeting, also, since Castro wished to record in audio and video the first meeting in the city organized by the APYB (the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume), I put my digital recorder on the table, and placed the camera on this base facing the table at the center of the room.

Castro began the meeting talking about the importance of the young people debating in the Ye'kwana language the problems regarding schooling in the city, collectively thinking of solutions. He commented on the difficulties the young people go through in the city, with lack of money, little knowledge of the Portuguese language, and the absence of spaces to live their cultural practices. Then, Reinaldo, who at the occasion was the principal of the Apolinário Gimenes school, asked for the opportunity and spoke about the efforts of the first generation of teachers who came from Auaris to Boa Vista by canoe and had to work on the gardens, being submitted to abuse and exploitation, until they were able to study in the city the elementary and higher education, obtained an Indigenous Intercultural Licentiate degree at the Insikiran Institute, and came back to their original communities to teach their relatives what they had learned. For Reinaldo and the other teachers, the creation of a differentiated curriculum that values the knowledge of the Ye'kwana and "self-research" would be the solution to the problem of young people coming to the city ever earlier to study.

At the end of the speeches of the president of APYB (the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume) and the principal of the school, Vicente Castro sat at the table and calmly began his speech. A cap on his head hid the calm and steady expression of the sage who, with the microphone in his hand, talked to the young people with firmness and softness. My digital recorder and the video recorder were in front of him, since Castro had asked me to record this first meeting of sages for the archive of the APYB (the Ye'kwana Association Wanasedume). These objects motivated Vicente Castro to talk about the recorders of the white people from the perspective of *watunna* categories:

What is the purpose of this meeting? Some do not believe it, but filming, taking pictures and recording the voice are actions that damage our culture. Ordered by Kahushawa (Odosha), the Wiyu snakes Deekammä and Nayawamjeku invented the recorders and the photographic camera. Nowadays, we are using these Wiyu objects and that is why we are getting sick so often. We are not following *watunna*. In the past, it was forbidden

to talk to *aji'choto* girls¹⁴⁴ and to *munu'jano* women¹⁴⁵, but nowadays you young people have been talking to them. This is also one of the reasons why we are getting sick. Wiyu is liking it, it is getting near us because we are using his things and talking to *aji'choto* and *munu'jano* women! Nowadays we do not seek the *manhadu*¹⁴⁶ because we are afraid that you will dive in and not come back to the surface since our culture is not respected anymore.

You young people must study well! Nowadays we do not get near the intelligence of Fadenaadiyu (Apolinário Gimenes) and in Venezuela there are no *inchonkomo* anymore. So the Ye'kwana culture is ending, our way of life is transforming.

You students need to find or choose a white person to be our ally, to stay with us and help us. We Ye'kwana still need help from the white people and you young people need to study to help your parents, your community, and to protect our land.

Many things nowadays prevent you from becoming sages and truly intelligent: you keep going after women since early, using cell phones, watching TV, listening to recorders. The best thing is to study without these objects, which weaken the thought! And those young ones who cannot study in the city must return to the community, because there it is also necessary to daily study our way of life: weaving, making houses, gardening, hunting, etc. These are my words to you.

The cameras and recorders are understood by Vicente Castro as devices capable of “stealing” people’s *akaato*, capturing their image or voice. In our society, these machines used to capture and record duplicate reality and immerse us “in a sea of audio-visual signs that represent to us the confirmation of the reality of things” so that “we increasingly tend to mistake an event for its symbolic enunciation” (Machado 2001), while for the Ye'kwana the image or sound that is captured by the camera is a multiplication that assumes the capturing of a part of the self that is taken to another dimension of reality, thus weakening the person¹⁴⁷.

Since this was our first encounter, the words of the great sage about the recorders seemed to be disapproving of my condition of researcher, an emissary among them of the “people of the machines”, a situation that caused me to feel uncomfortable at a moment after the sage’s speech. A few days later I met with Vicente Castro again at the small house that Reinaldo had rented in the city. At this meeting, the elderly sage asked me many questions

144 Girls in a period of seclusion after the first menstruation. See chapter 1.

145 Women during the menstruation period.

146 They are algae found on rocks at the bottom of the rivers.

147 The recorder may even show the lying side of the political words of the white people: Chief Juruna, the only Brazilian indigenous person to be elected a federal congressman, would “walk along the ministerial corridors with his portable recorder on him, recording all the official speeches. This overt action was a way of saying government men are liars, thus their irritation with the presence of the chief at the official ceremonies, with his inconvenient recorder exposing the demagoguery of the speakers. Certainly, this use of the portable recorder was never predicted by its inventors” (Machado 2001: 241).

about my intentions, whether I was not a white person in search of gold, and whether, in fact, I would dedicate myself to being an ally of the Ye'kwana in the world of the white people. After talking about my intentions of collaborative research and of remaining in Boa Vista for a while helping the Ye'kwana in the demands of the city, we started talking about the destination of the recording we had made during the meeting of the young people. Vicente said that words in the paper are less dangerous than those in the recorder, and we decided then that a young person would listen to the recordings of his speech during the meeting and transcribe it to paper. The excerpt transcribed above is, thus, a summary of the speech given by Vicente Castro to the young people, translated by Castro Ye'kwana.

Vicente Castro said that the machines that record the voices and images were made by beings of Odosha engaged in the fight against the Ye'kwana. Therefore, the use of these objects of the white people and the non-compliance to the interdictions of the culture are bringing the spirits Odosha closer and weakening the memory of the young people. Chasing after women and listening to music in headphones and loudspeakers get in the way of the young people's search for the knowledge of the Ye'kwana and of the world of the white people.

The mistake of having recorded the speech of the elderly sage right at our first meeting caused him to publicly address the *watunna* stories regarding the machines and recorders. It also caused Vicente to talk about the ethnographic relationship and the way the indigenous people understand, from their own perspective, their relationship with the white people who offer to help them as mediators in their own demands. Bruce Albert, in the postface of "The falling sky", where he addresses his relationship with Davi and the construction of the book, he mentions the "truchement" (intermediaries) – young people left at the Tupinambá villages and other indigenous groups who were allied to the French to learn the language and be intermediaries, as people who were close to him (Kopenawa and Albert 2015: 522). In similar terms, Vicente Castro mentioned the political importance of the Ye'kwana having white people as allies, to help them in their relationship with the non-indigenous society.

The city and the school have definitively entered the Ye'kwana life. The young people need to study both "cultures", and the construction of the person started to become "dual"¹⁴⁸. Nowadays in the city of Boa Vista, there are Ye'kwana people who are studying at regular high school and specific higher education, elementary education is already

148 See chapter 5.

universal in the village, so all children, since they are seven years old, are submitted to the socialization proposed by the school model.

This proximity causes subversions that are explained in the cosmological plan. Finding the “good distance is the dilemma experienced by the young ones in the city, divided between two regimes of knowledge that value opposite questions. While the cosmosonics prioritizes the construction of the body and the creation of bonds with multiple beings in the cosmos, composing the person as a cluster of relationships, the western education focuses on the “spirit”, and conceives the self as a morally autonomous sphere (Dumont 1987). These different regimes of knowledge lead to different kinds of memory and recording.

The arrival of writing and phonology, the changes to the constitution of the person and the cares with the body, the decreased faculties of memory and the need for chant notebooks, the recorders of the young people, the intensification of the contact with the white people in the city of Auaris, all of these transformations are understood based on an ethics that is political, aesthetic and acoustic, and that presents itself as a reverse theory to that which the west conceived as musical science and as anthropology.

4.6. Reverse ethnomusicology: sounds as an expression of nature

The concept of cosmosonics (Stein 2009) aims to translate the eminently relational character of the native theory about sounds and to reflect on the multiple agencies of sonification of the world created by the Ye'kwana. To engage in such an exercise of *equivocation* – translation that emphasizes the contrasts before the potential similarities (Viveiros de Castro 2015) – I sought, throughout this dissertation, to think about the differences between the Ye'kwana sound and ethnographic material and that which western tradition understands as “music” and “anthropology”. Stein (2009: 128), while addressing the Mbyá cosmo-sonics, suggested the existence of a “sound perspectivism” as an expression of the plurality of hearing forms among the Guarani, in dialogue with the perspectivist theory developed by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, which construes the world as being “inhabited by different species of subjects or people, human or non-human, who apprehend it according to different points of view”, and extends the human condition to many animal species that have the status of subjects and beings capable of intentionality (Viveiros de Castro 2002: 347).

The places of the forest have their “owners” and inhabitants who are vital powers that interfere in the life of people and society (Fausto 2008). These places and beings compose “a polyphony of sounds of different natures – human, instrumental, environmental,

plant, animal, divine – (that) express themselves, dialog and communicate” (Stein 2009: 129), so the imagery of the forest has its double in the “soundscapes” from which the Ye’kwana get their acoustic references to think about their world.

The sounds of the forest and of the animals, the sounds of the waterfalls, the bird songs, the crying and shouts of babies and children, the high-pitched nasal tones of women’s voices, the men’s soft speech, the summonings that are named, sung, percussed, the *shiiwokomo* instruments, the public speeches, the *a’chudi*, the *ademi*, all of these are pertinent aspects to the sonic organization of the world and which are semantically organized into communication structures that aim to guide the act of being in the world. This sound coding, ritually expressed as musical codes, articulates with the performances and the poetics of the chants and myths.

Stein, while analyzing the words of a Mbyá native who stated that “nature is an expression of music” and that “culture lives through songs”, points out that these statements indicate a relationship of indiscernibility between nature and culture. Quite different from the European contractually philosophers who thought humanity and the domain of culture and politics represented a progressive distancing from nature (Latour 1991), for the Mbyá and for the Ye’kwana, nature has an expressive agency and is understood as an active part of the cosmos. Furthermore, the author says that, for the Mbyá-Guarani, sounds have a sacred aspect that is materialized in the reproduction of the divine categories in earthly life, and that they have a prophylactic character of healing and health. Nature as an expression of music would, thus, be a sound counterpart of the many natures that comprise the cosmos as an expression of the sacred, since, as the author reminds us, the Mbyá share the same soundscape with beings of different bodily registers (Stein 2009: 129).

In his ethnography about the Kaluli, Feld (1990) analyzes sounds as a system of symbols that are codes of sound communication that enable the understanding of the *ethos* and way of life of this people that lives in a moist tropical forest in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. The hypothesis proposed by Feld was that the Kaluli, as inhabitants of the forest, should use sound at the expense of other sensory systems¹⁴⁹, since, in the forest, there are multiple sound expressions and there would be a close relationship between ecology, natural world sounds and sounds of cultural expression.

149 This hypothesis is supported, as shown before in this thesis, by Lévi-Strauss’s argument that in Amerindian myths the acoustic codes are more important than culinary, sociological and cosmological codes (2004b).

Feld discovered amongst the Kaluli a pattern that connects human and animal sounds to feelings, to the social ethos and to emotions, so that the expressive modalities of lament, poetics and singing in musical and textual structures reflect the symbolic circle of an important Kaluli myth that speaks about the “boy who became a muni bird”. Therefore, for the Kaluli “the bird categories reflect the human categories” (1990: 219).

For the Ye’kwana, many human categories come from the birds, and the very origin of humanity comes from this becoming-bird that is seen in the origin of the culture and of sounds. Wanadi, the creator of *nono* (earth), besides having his human shape was also a woodpecker, and his brother-in-law Wanato, who gifted the Ye’kwana with his adornments, was a beautiful bird with feathers that resemble a rainbow and he also transformed into human form. Semenias was the bird who stole the cassava branch from the heavenly *audaja* and planted it on mount Roraima and, later, on the Marawaka mountains. The birds are also models of sound learning, since the bird *fiya’kwa*, who is capable of mimicking the sounds of different animals, is the reference for the acquisition of a good memory, giving name to a plant that is used to help in memorization, and is named in an *a’chudi* sung to help in the process of learning chants. The chant of the *ättä edemi jödö* ceremony names several hawks asking them to use their wings to sweep (*whiishomeekaanä*) and clean the location of the house, and it repeats the first celebration of the new house, held by Wanato. Several *shiiwokomo* instrumental compositions have the songs of different bird species as their themes. As a demonstration of this relationship between men and birds, Vicente Castro stated that us humans also “have wings, as birds do” and that certain *a’chudi* chants (*wejuuma*) name plants that are used to prevent the wings of the young Ye’kwana from growing so much they abandon the villages to go away and live on different lands.

Feld found out that the categories used by the Kaluli to express their ways of singing relate to the terminology used for waterfalls, water sounds and water movements, since the Kaluli language not only mediates mental constructs through the relationships between sounds and words, but also relates, through polysemy, the semantic fields of sounds and of water that share the denotative and connotative aspects of both spheres within a complex system of metaphors. This musical theory of the Kaluli is evidenced in words as a metaphorical expression that can be related to the physical metaphors of oscillation that use terms such as “waves”, “wave equation”, “wavelength”, etc. For the Kaluli, these are sound metaphors before being physical ones, in similar terms to those of the Ye’kwana.

Likewise, for the Ye'kwana, chants are fluid and intangible as the "waters". Just like *dama*, the sea, chants connect earth to kahuña, clean and purify as the water of Akuena, the primordial lake. A good singer must have the softness of water streams and his voice must purify the object of his singing, the descending notes sound like the waters that fall from the sources of Ihuruana, and the melodies should have the softness of rapids, cleaning, by being heard, the many parts of the person, his/her *akaato* and the inhabited places. As mentioned before, Majaanuma explained that there is a waterfall where those who want to learn how to sing should go at night and hear the chants it emits. By hearing the sounds of the waters at night, the Ye'kwana learn how to memorize their chants.

The sun (*shii*) is the most important element in nature for the Ye'kwana. They hang their hammocks and direct the main doors in their houses towards the east. Everyday Wanadi asks the sun if there is *uu* (*beijú*) drying on the land of the Ye'kwana and the sun answers affirmatively, proving his people is still on the land. The sun is the life energy that lights the "straight path" (*äämaa ashichaato*), and the sage Vicente Castro often warns his children, grandchildren and nephews to remain attentive to the path of sunlight (*shii wadeekui*) and to the line of wadhe (*wadeekui*) that leads to Kahuña, so they may be healthy and find plenitude in life. The wind (*fejeichö eetö*) is invisible just like the chants and it gives life and joy to men, taking care of the land, since earth's force (*nono adoniyö*) is its vitality (*täjädinhedu*). Also, earth's health is connected, as we shall see in the last chapter, to the permanence and vitality of the chants, indicating a relationship of indiscernibility between the cosmosonics of chants and the vitality of the earthly environment (*chuuta*).

As these examples show, it is based on these categories of nature that the Ye'kwana think about sounds and the world, and base their acoustic cosmology. If, for the Kaluli, sound is a natural substance while lyrics are a created substance (1994), for the Ye'kwana, the lyrics and the chants were given by their cultural heroes who were simultaneously humans, animals and super-humans. If, for the Ye'kwana, music is connected to nature, the music of the white people distances itself from nature for being artificial, noisy and machine-like. While the *shiiwokomo* are almost "people", the instruments of the white people are impersonal machines that have no chants to humanize them, they are voices produced by machines invented by Yawemjaku Waichö and have the ambivalence of having been created to harm the Ye'kwana, although nowadays they are being used with an opposite effect: to record the memory of the chants and to communicate the knowledge of the sages to the young people. Even so, there is still a perception that recorders (*ajoichojo*) may "grab" (*ajäi*),

“capture” the person’s *akaato* and, thus, take part of it away, therefore, the Ye’kwana are still careful about who will make the recordings.

Phonography has revolutionized the forms of sound memory in the west. One century later, the Ye’kwana are still going through a revolution like the one brought by the Edison phonograph to comparative musicology in the beginning of the 20th century. If, in 2011, the sages still resisted recordings, nowadays not only the young but some of the old Ye’kwana have recorders and smartphones that are used as sound and audiovisual recorders that are enabling an innovative relationship with cosmosonics.

For a long time, the general assumption of ethnomusicology was that indigenous peoples did not have a “theory of music”, since only the west could have created an actual theory of sounds. The ethnomusicologist Nettl (1956: 45) stated that musical scales did not exist in the “primitive mind” and that it was the role of ethnomusicologists to deduct them in their studies. Steven Feld counters this position stating that where there is music there is always an underlying theory to its production and meaning”. In the case of the Ye’kwana, the cosmosonics point to a native theory of music according to which innovation/creation (Wagner 2016: 41)¹⁵⁰ is fundamental. Even though the chants are understood as cultural assets received when the world was being created, thus there are no new chants being created, the vocal-sound performances aim to innovate over someone, create and transform whatever was toxic and contaminated into something clean and purified.

I believe the Ye’kwana cosmosonics is a native reflection about sounds and their efficacy, which is equivalent to what is understood by “musical theory” in the west. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the musical coding and the styles of the performances during the *a’chudi* sessions and *ademi* ceremonies articulate acoustic and poetic ideals with social goals, aiming to produce people, objects and places. The analysis of the Ye’kwana musical system suggested an approach to the native theory of music as a cognitive, conceptual and social material, which I tried to consider as a deductive ideal about sounds. Likewise, I believe that the native conceptions about the recorders and phonographic recordings of the white people are thought, by them, based on these native acoustic codings.

150 Explaining his concept of innovation, Wagner uses a musical comparison: “My use of the term ‘invention’ here is, I think much more traditional than contemporary ‘bolt-from-the-blue’ stereotypes of luck caveman and accidental discoveries. Like invention in music, it refers to a positive and expected component of human life” (Wagner 2016: 41-42).

This “reverse ethnomusicology” reflects a philosophy that assumes very different bases from those of western philosophy. It reveals a kind of humanism according to which hell is not the *others*, as Sartre (2006) understood, but the *self*. For the Ye’kwana, people are “unstable”, fragile, that is why they are musically constructed and protected through relationships with multiple forms of alterity. This philosophy is grounded on the opening to the other (Lévi-Strauss 1991b) and sees white people as object of intense thought. The way the west understands nature as a separate domain and the consequences of forgetting about its common kinship to the natives are used as basis for an indigenous eschatology that sees in white people’s way of life adverse effects, not only to the modes of social existence of the natives, but also to the white people and to the very permanence on earth.

Sounds, as aesthetically coded expressiveness, relate to the world of nature and the beings of Wanadi. By seriously considering the Ye’kwana discourse about sounds and their meanings, we come across a reflection about the future of earth. As will be discussed in the final chapter, the changes in the Ye’kwana way of life are related to the changes in the sound patterns of the world, which compromise the cosmosonic balance and threaten earth to enter a true collapse that will result in the fall of the sky and the later reconstruction of the terrestrial platform.

5. COSMOSONICS AND THE WORLD TO COME

5.1. Cosmosonics and the fall of the sky

In this last chapter, I will address the relationship between cosmosonics and the Ye'kwana eschatology. According to *watunna*, we are living in the third cycle of life on earth. Wanadi tried three times to make the world a mirror or perfect replica of Kahuña, the true heaven, but Odosha managed to ruin his plans creating differences between heaven and earth, and making the world a “spoiled” place, where there are wars, diseases and death. As we can see in the origin narratives, during the first attempt of replication of heaven on earth, the difference between the virtual regime of the cosmos and the current earth is given by the difference between life and death. On the second attempt, there is a distinction between day and night, and on the third, the separation between heaven and earth is consolidated and Wanadi creates a new heaven, leaving the Ye'kwana with the house as a memory of the original cosmos. Before leaving, however, Wanadi left the promise that in the future there would be a new destruction of the terrestrial platform, which would be soon rebuilt and inhabited by a new people of Wanadi.

Before going to fieldwork, I had read the dissertation written by Andrade (2005), titled “The Ye'kwana ethics and the Spirit of Entrepreneurship” (2005). In this work, the first doctoral dissertation about the Ye'kwana defended in Brazil, Andrade relates the prophetic eschatology of *watunna* with a desire of the Ye'kwana to “become white”, through the “conscious” and “planned” acquisition of their knowledge and technologies, in order to get ready for life in the next world cycle, a period in which the Ye'kwana will be the real owners of the earth. When I first went to Auaris, in the first few days of my stay there was a workshop held by an indigenist of the “Instituto Socioambiental” (Social and Environmental Institute-ISA) and, as a leader, Davi made his initial speech in the central area of the school building. This was one of the first public speeches (*wäätajä'nä*) that I heard in Fuduuwaduinha and his speech had the prophetic tone that related the school to the theme of the end of times:

The ancients knew, the ancestral shamans knew that we were going to get the paper. We are blending with the white people, that is why we are here now. I think that we are living the other world. Some people say, “let's forget our culture, let's go to the world of the white people”. In the past we were afraid of them, now we are not, so we are blending. We cannot escape. We are already blending. They are everywhere, we cannot get

away from them, we can only blend. They are taking our blood and giving us medicines. The medicines they bring do not work, they make us a little better, but then the disease returns. In the past, the shaman healed forever. We are now “inside”, blending, as our shamans said. We are going to finish it... in the past, the ancients waged war against white people and the Sanumá. Not today. [...] Simeón Jimenez married an anthropologist (Neli Arvelo-Jimenez), he blended. And only us, the elders, know the history and the traditional chants. Today we do not have stories to tell you anymore. The shamans in the past used to say that we were going to lose our stories. The white people, as Koch-Grünberg, come here to take photos and then make money. We still have stories to tell them, just as they have stories to tell us. So let’s tell them our stories but let’s ask them to tell their stories to us, about how they originated. First the chants will disappear, then the stories, so we will blend with the white people... if we continue to send our children to the city, the village is going to end. The elders will die and the village will be empty.

The prophecy about the end times articulates, in this speech of the chief, with the arrival of paper. The impossibility of retreating in the relationship with the white people, the blending with other peoples, and the forgetting of the culture, leave the Ye’kwana living “in another world”, since the stories and chants are being forgotten, although the chief reckons that the elders still have chants and stories to teach to younger people and also to the white people, as long as they also share their stories with them.

Among the elders, Davi and João Koch are the ones who most frequently speak publicly about the visions of the shamans, who long ago predicted the arrival of the white people. Once João said that, in the past, on a night many shamans performed a ritual, they had visions about the future:

The shamans said that the white people would come flying through the sky in large machines. The *fūwai* foresaw the arrival of the white people and made shamanism to try to drive them away. No one knew about airplanes. A few years later the white people arrived in their airplanes, flying over our villages. The shamans predicted that we would blend with other peoples, marry the Sanumá and the white people, and this way we will end. So the elders told us the words of the ancient shamans. When I was a child, I did not know about the existence of these machines and now I am seeing all those objects. I am seeing what the shamans said would happen before my eyes. Nowadays, the Ye’kwana use chainsaws, some worked on gold mines with gold mining machines, the shamans saw it all! It is very sad... this will end our food, our gardens, and then we are going to feed on the white people’s food.

João spoke with desolation about the words of ancient shamans who predicted the arrival of the white people with their machines. According to him, the prophecy began to

happen in Venezuela, when the young people began to go to the city and did not want to come back. The arrival of the school and the paper made changes in the regimes of socialization and construction of the person, which is, according to the Ye'kwana, the aspect responsible for the loss of the memory of chants.

In the last decades, the Ye'kwana witnessed the death of their last *fiiwai* and the consolidation of schools in the villages, simultaneously, there was an outbreak of suicides among young people, usually by hanging or ingesting timbó (plant used as a poison for fishing). The arrival of paper and the intensification of the contact with the white people and their institutions are indicated as causes for the weakening of the bodies and the mind of the young people. The first case of suicide occurred in 1988, followed by several others over the following years¹⁵¹. My first stay in Auaris coincided with the suicide of a young girl in Kudaatainha, and in the following years there were several other deaths for the same reason¹⁵². In a conversation held in Fuduuwaduinha in 2016, Tomé, founder of the school, spoke to me about his concern for the future of schooling and related these changes to the problem of youth suicides:

There is the beginning of Ye'kwana schooling. And what now? How is it going to be? I think that it is getting complicated, worse. I do not know why... this education, everyone talks about education, that you must educate, but the Ye'kwana do not understand what education is, what education is for? It is to educate, to become good, when you study you will be good. But the Ye'kwana are not understanding, so I think it is getting complicated. Because we study, the Ye'kwana study, the teacher explains everything at school for boys and girls. And what is happening in the community now? I am concerned about everything, in general... why are we dying? Men do not die, children and teenagers die. I don't know why. We are here, we are still alive. Davi, Tomé and I, that is how it should be, one must die old. Young is not the age to die. I've been thinking about this, these people who are dying for nothing.

We know the story, I know *watunna* more or less. Vicente Castro knows even more. Vicente used to talk to the elders, and he learned. That is why we know more or less the history of our culture. How we originated.

151 Suicide among young indigenous people is not a problem restricted to the Ye'kwana. The rate of suicides among indigenous youth is higher than the suicide rate of the Brazilian population in general. According to data from the "Map of violence" (2014), between 2002 and 2012 the northern region of Brazil had a worrying increase of 77.7% in the suicide rate in Amazonas, Roraima, Acre and Tocantins, which doubled their cases. In 2012, Roraima led the suicide rate among the young population, with 12.9 cases registered per 100 thousand inhabitants. The states of Mato Grosso do Sul and Amazonas concentrated 81% of the national total of indigenous suicides between 2002 and 2012, and last year a threat of collective suicide among the Guarani-Kaiowá was widely reported in the Brazilian press and abroad, even leading campaigns in defense of this people in Germany.

152 Suicide, however, does not seem to be a new problem among the Ye'kwana. According to Arvelo-Jimenez (2004), the Ye'kwana oral history says that, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, many Ye'kwana preferred to commit suicide instead of being caught by the hordes of slavers that captured them to work on rubber tree plantations.

Because Wanadi talked about this, about what is happening now. In the past there was no fight, we did not speak ill of others. Now there are the Sanumá, the white people nearby. Because we are different. Different culture, the white people and the indigenous. Wanadi said that this would happen. In the beginning everything would go well, and then over time the world would get complicated. That is why we are thinking, we who are still alive, Davi, Raimundo, Peri and I, “oh, that’s right, Wanadi said that, that is why we are living these days now. That is why the young people are dying. There were stories, it would be just like that. Because the young people do not think anything, do not feel anything, and that is why they are dying. Us, old men, are afraid of dying. But the young people do not think, do not feel anything, that is why they want to die. There is Kahushawa (Odosha), who was born from Wanadi. They are brothers, both of them are the same. Which is the strongest? Powerful? They are the same age, the same thing. So the story goes that Kahushawa did not want to be alone, suffering here on this earth. That is why he is killing people, to bring to him, so he will not be alone, suffering. We are trying to orient our grandchildren. If you die for nothing, you will stay with Kahushawa, if you die old, sick, you will stay next to Wanadi. But the young people do not think anything. Just like the white people, who do not believe in god. That is why they always drink. That is how they forget Wanadi. The same thing now with the Ye’kwana. They just want to drink and do not know anything about Wanadi. Vicente Castro also orient the young people, saying that if they die they will stay with Kahushawa.

For Tomé, the evil events experienced nowadays by the Ye’kwana were predicted by Wanadi and are a result of the battle between the twin creators of the world. According to the leadership, the present days are the fulfillment of the prophecy or promise, which also predicted the suicide of young people who have forgotten how to hear the words of their superiors, the teachers and the elders. The young people do not “believe” in the words of *watunna* anymore and that is why they are now “dying for nothing”. Lauriola (2004 and 2006) and Andrade (2005 and 2011) briefly addressed the suicides among the Ye’kwana. Aligned with the Ye’kwana’s own speech, Lauriola argues that suicides were a result of the shamanic war, a diagnosis made by a shaman from Venezuela contacted by the Ye’kwana through the radio on the occasion of the first deaths in Auaris. Andrade (2011), oriented to the subject of the prophecy and the Ye’kwana eschatology, focused on the native speech that the deaths of young people are associated with the intensification of contact with the white people, changes in body care, disrespect for food taboos and the use of white people artifacts, such as perfumes that exhale aromas that attract the predator spirits of the forest. Andrade (2011) points out that between 2005 and 2011 there were seven deaths by suicide among the Ye’kwana, and nine other suicide attempts between 2005 and 2006, endorsing the severity of the problem. Highlighting that the most vulnerable age group is that of young people

between 14 and 25 years old, the anthropologist says that most of the suicide attempts occur during the celebrations and rituals that involve the ingestion of fermented drink. During my fieldwork I felt the tension of witnessing celebration moments that posed the risk of suicide attempts, and I heard from the Ye'kwana explanations for the suicides that corroborate the arguments of the authors. During the celebrations that I attended at the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017, there were several strategies for the surveillance of young people during their drunkenness, such as the presence of Ye'kwana men guarding each of the doors of the roundhouse, taking care that no young person left unattended.

Watunna's prophecy connects the arrival of paper to the suicides of young people and also to the death of the last chant owners. The most serious moment in which I listened to the prophetic word was precisely after the death of João Alexandre, an elder sage who was 81 years old, Vicente Castro's brother and Cecita's uncle, who died a few days after his niece's death. These deaths in sequence were interpreted at the time as another chapter of the prophecy that predicted the end of the sages and the chants. At that time Robélio told me that his mother was worried that the end of the *woy*¹⁵³ plants, and the loss of chants and plants were seen as two faces of the same problem: the "end times" issue.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned this moment and the mood of dismay, sadness, and pessimism in the meeting that took place in the men's house after the death of a chant owner. Rui, Ye'kwana responsible for organizing the community work, talked about the end of the chants and about the proximity of Odosha:

When an *a'chudi* is finished, Odosha will approach. Odosha is happy. The sages are ending. The world will end. Let's take care of ourselves. Take care of your children and kids. We are getting *tökaatonhe* (bewitched). Do not let your children alone. We are getting sad. This is happening here. We were 4 days in mourning. It was passing and it happened again. The two deaths were in the same family. That is why we are feeling. It was far now, in another community, but in our family. It was our grandfather, brother-in-law, uncle, relative. That is why we will be another 4 days mourning. *We are becoming slaves of Odosha*. Do not walk by yourselves in the woods. Do not go far by canoe. We are loose, without "grandfather". *We are not interviewing our elders, our sages*. I am not a sage, but I know a little. *I don't know stories, like the elders, but I listened to them*. We have to respect. *Watunna* says that when someone dies, Odosha is near, wanting to kill more. That is why we will remain without drinks, shouting,

153 With two consecutive deaths, Robélio's mother-in-law used most of the leaves she had, even placing two of them in my room to protect me from the attacks of Odosha.

soccer and loud sounds. We did not throw away the *yadaake*¹⁵⁴. Let's leave it covered¹⁵⁵. This is not food. It is not supposed to be drunk every day. *Watunna* says that we cannot drink it every day. It is different from *wo'kö* (*chibé*). João Alexandre was a sage. Different from us. Cecita said that we are getting weak, without *woy*. *Listen to me. We cannot forget our culture. We are afraid of turning into white people or Xirixana (Yanomami)*. Our culture is still alive in our minds. But our children are weak due to the lack of *a'chudi* and *watunna*.

As can be seen in this speech, the *a'chudi* and *ademi* are the condition to drive Odosha away, so when the chants and the *inchonkomo* sages are over, the world as a whole will end, since the cosmosonics is the main weapon of the Ye'kwana to fight the evils that exist on earth. For Rui, the Ye'kwana are becoming “slaves of Odosha” because men of his generation and also young people are not “interviewing” the *inchonkomo* to learn about *watunna* and the chants, warning about the urgency of intensifying this learning before the last sages die. The problem of cultural loss is also linked to the blending with the white people and the Sanumá, due to the proximity in daily life and matrimonial alliances. Rui recognizes that the Ye'kwana culture is still alive, but he states that the children are weak, due to the lack of *a'chudi*.

For the Ye'kwana, death is contagious, and the relatives are connected by deep ties that cause Odosha to also attack them, a fact that, according to the Ye'kwana, occurred in the case of the deaths of Cecita and João Alexandre. João Alexandre was Vicente's brother, which caused the Ye'kwana to fear that his death would weaken the last great sage still alive. Even with some sages by memory still alive and with the use of chant notebooks and recorders, the Ye'kwana feel they are losing control of the transmission process of the *a'chudi* and *ademi*. The public speeches during the meetings at the school and the men's house generally show a feeling of difficulty in managing this new way of life pressed between two distinct regimes of knowledge and memory.

The men who are now in their sixties, such as Tomé, Raimundo, and João Koch, also say that they did not dedicate themselves enough to learning the chants with their parents and grandparents. This generation that pioneered regarding the school was the one that faced the irreversibility of the contact with the city and the white people. In the same meeting that

154 On the occasion of the death of Neri, old *ayaajä* (leader), the entire *yadaake* paste was thrown away “because he was the owner of the *yadaake*”, Maurício told me. This means that he was the “singer” at the time of the preparation.

155 In these moments of “mourning” and “vengeance”, Odosha may attack by contaminating the food and the *yadaake*. That is why all the food must be stored with their lids on.

took place after the death of João Alexandre, João Koch brought up this issue and the importance of the chants for the Ye'kwana life:

When I was a young, I was not interested in *a'chudi* either. This house where we are was chanted. Did you listen? Did you learn? *We are becoming different from our ancestors. Watunna said that the sages would end.* I am witnessing this. There is no sage here. I did not interview my grandfather. I think it started like this. For me. I was afraid to interview my grandfather. In the past, we used to mourn when our ancestors died. But at that time there were more *a'chudi* that named *maada*. I listened to them but it was like a bath, it dried fast in my memory. I talked with Tomás, my uncle, we have to use *käämasono'ka* (*woy*). Do the bath. We are sad. A sage died. I thought on the hammock, "*watunna* is over". I thought, "Odosha is looking at me, I am alone". When I was a child, our elders forbade us to hear the noise of airplanes, machines. My father used to say, "do not smell, do not look, do not listen".

The tone of these narratives described above has a latent pessimism. The "difference in relation to their ancestors" places the problem of the transformation of the construction of the Ye'kwana person, which currently is a process of creating dual people (Kelly 2008). This process intensified during the generation of João Koch, Tomé and Raimundo, who opened the doors of the community to schooling in response to the need of taking the "point of view", the perspective of the white people (Viveiros de Castro 2002).

However, the twin character of *watunna* causes the prophecy to come true everyday in the dynamic movement of proximity and distance in relation to the western world, thinking about the dynamics of the relationship of the Wanadi/Odosha pair, as can be clearly noticed in Tomé's words, wondering about which of the two brothers would be the "strongest". There is no synthesis based on balance or rest (Lévi-Strauss 1991b), so the Ye'kwana are always modulating their discourse and elaborating new disjunctive¹⁵⁶ syntheses about the relationship with the world of the white people and their technologies.

Davi currently holds the position of chief and is also the one who, in his public speeches, addresses with more emphasis the theme of the end of culture and blending, but on the other hand, he owns many chants stored in his notebooks. By stating that Davi is a researcher of *a'chudi* and *ademi*, João said that he puts a lot of effort to transcribe and study the chants, and that I should tell him to "put all these songs on the computer, it is better to

156 A concept of delezian vocabulary, disjunctive synthesis is understood as the conciliation of the disjunction of different terms as part of the relationship itself. By prioritizing the "indiscernibility of the heterogeneous prior to the conciliation of opposites, the disjunctive synthesis makes the disjunction the very nature of the relationship" (Viveiros de Castro 2007: 12).

store them”, said João Koch. Besides them, Raimundo, Elias’s father, has notebooks with stories of *watunna* and keeps with him many photographic and historical recordings about the Ye’kwana. We see that the same people responsible for the opening of the Ye’kwana society to the world of white people are those who dedicate themselves to register the traditional knowledge in writing: if, on the one hand, the speeches of João and Davi say that there is “no possible return”, on the other hand, they strive to keep the chants still stored, even though in written form.

Vicente Castro disagrees with this negative conception of the Ye’kwana eschatology. I heard the sage say that the pessimism in the interpretation of the prophecy on the part of some of his relatives is due precisely to the fact that the earth is contaminated (*nonodö amoije*). Commenting on the project of creating a high school curriculum that prioritizes Ye’kwana knowledge, Vicente Castro explained that the earth is spoiled, bad, imperfect, so some would be thinking that the new school focused on traditional knowledge will go wrong, but he is still alive and knows “almost everything” so that way of the school would not be “spoiled”. Vicente then offered to teach the youth and all the other public speeches by Vicente Castro that I witnessed were propositional and sought to orient the young people to find the right way (*äämaa ashichaato*). On another occasion, Vicente narrated an excerpt of *watunna* that addresses this question of the end of this cycle and of the new beginning:

Watunna says that when the Ye’kwana are gone, there will be another people called *wadumamoi*. If there is any Ye’kwana left they will come back to live with the people who are in the *wadumamoi*. You should take care of the earth, the forest, the environment, because otherwise everything will end. Within our soul there are several *akaato* (doubles, souls), there is an *akaato* that goes to the mountains, an *akaato* that goes in the water, and an *akaato* that will rise above in the sky. This is true, we are in our homes, in our land, and this land is for us. The water, the rivers are for us. The white people are coming to finish destroying it, to kill the forest, dry the rivers. So we are talking in order to protect our land. There is the owner of the water, he is Wiyu, he is invisible, we cannot see him. The same thing goes for our *adeja*, *maniva*, when we are over, then it will also disappear. Mount Roraima, the Madaaka mountains, will disappear. The Iadanawe are continually growing in population, then they will suffer very much, something will happen. But not us. They will suffer more. Wanadi is watching, looking at us here. The Christians said the same thing, we have a story of how the world will end. The Christians said that the world was going to end in the year 2000 and that whoever was a believer would rise with Christ. But we already passed the year 2000 and this has not happened. The Ye’kwana story is not like this. I answered that myself, you are lying, I also have stories. We are still growing and the story says that, when we are near the end of the world, a child will be born

already old and it will take the pepper with a stick when it is still very small. This is how it is, the end of the world is still far.

In personal communications, Davi Kopenawa Yanomami – author of “The fall of the sky” (Kopenawa and Albert 2015) – told me that, according to the Yanomami mindset, the end of the world will not occur now, but many years ahead, when “we are not here to see it anymore”. The sage Majaanuma told me that when the end of the world is near, the days will be very short, with only one hour: “we are still normal, quiet, the plants are still alive. That is what my grandfather taught me, he told me. “We are still far from the end of the world”, said the sage. However, for centuries the indigenous peoples have experienced the apocalypse in the successive cycles of colonial violence imposed over the centuries and that last until the present day. Currently, the increasing proximity to the white people (who surround them “like a large snake”) and the awareness by the leaders of the fact that the white people’s way of life damages many forms of life on earth and earth itself as a living organism guide the discourses toward the topics of eschatology.

Isabelle Stengers, in an essay titled “In Catastrophic times” (2015) seeks to “name Gaia and characterize the disasters that are being announced as intrusion”, a term used by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in the early 1970s aiming to reflecting on “the dense set of relations that scientific disciplines were in the habit of dealing with separately – living things, oceans, the atmosphere, climate, more or less fertile soils” (Stengers 2015: 44). The term Gaia aims to think of the earth as a “being” which not only has a history, but also its own activities regime resulting from multiple and entangled ways through which the processes that constitute it are articulated to one another. This way, Gaia, instead of being a “good mother”, provider of our needs and whose health we should take care, is to science nowadays, after the concentration of “greenhouse gases”, a being that scientists are just beginning to identify (Stengers 2015: 44-45).

By addressing the theme of the end of the world based on what they call “Mythchomology”, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and the philosopher Deborah Danowski (2014) propose the notion of “Anthropocene” (popularized in the scientific context by the work of the chemist Crutzen and the biologist Stoermer 2000) as operational value in the reflection about the recent period of the planet, in which human activities began to generate a global impact and change the geological landscape of the earth. In this moment of history, it is necessary to articulate the scientific knowledge that points to the exhaustion of the world

model proposed by the western adventure and the indigenous eschatologies about the end of the world:

The “end of the world” is one of those famous problems about which Kant said that reason cannot solve, neither can it be exempted from presenting an opinion. This is done necessarily in the form of mythical fables or, as is commonly said nowadays, “narratives” that guide us and motivate us. The semiotic regime of the myth, indifferent to the empirical truth or falsehood of its contents, always happens when the relationship between humans and their general conditions of existence become a problem for reason. Also, if all mythology could be described as a scheme of transcendental conditions in empirical terms (as a validating back projection of certain sufficient reasons imagined (“narrativized”) as efficient causes), then the current impasse becomes much more tragic, or ironic, as we are able to see this problem of Reason getting the approval of Understanding. This is essentially a metaphysical problem, the end of the world, formulated in the strict terms of these supremely empirical sciences, which are climatology, geophysics, oceanography, biochemistry and ecology. Perhaps, as Lévi-Strauss has repeatedly noted, science, which began to separate itself from myth about three thousand years ago, will eventually find it again, at the end of one of those double twists that intertwine analytic reason with dialectic reason, the anagrammatic combinatorics of the signifier with the historical vicissitudes of meaning (2014: 17).

In this dissertation I formulate the end of the world in ethnomusicological terms: the cosmosonics as an expression of nature has its sonorous dimension with eschatology. For the Ye’kwana, the earth “sings” and, therefore, it is necessary that the sounds of nature (also the *a’chudi* and *ademi*) remain resonating in the world. The earth and human beings are consubstantial and relate to each other through multiple acoustic codes. Viveiros de Castro and Danowski (2014: 101-2) state that the existence of the world without humanity is inconceivable in indigenous cosmologies, turning to anthropomorphism rather than anthropocentrism, as the western thought did:

The prophecy of the fall of the sky, developed with exceptional eloquence in Kopenawa’s testimony, is a recurring theme in several Amerindian eschatologies. Usually, these landslides, which may be associated with the layered cosmographies, with multiple “heavens” and “earths” stacked on each other, are periodic phenomena, part of large cycles of destruction and re-creation of humanity and the world [...] What seems to be a constant in the indigenous mythologies of the end of the world is the unthinkability of a world without people, without a humanity, however different from ours it may be — in general, indeed, the successive humanities of each cosmic age are completely unrelated among themselves, they are like distinct species. The destruction of the world is the destruction of humanity and vice-versa, the re-creation of the world is the re-creation of some form of life, that is, of experience and perspective, and as we have

seen, the form of all life is “human”. The idea of an ultimate destruction of the world and of life is also rare, if there is one, in these cosmologies. Humanity is *consubstantial* to the world or, better saying, objectively “*co-relational*” with the world, relational as the world.

For the Ye’kwana, the way the white people destroy the earth will cause the world (connected to the other heavens that sustain themselves from pillars that go from earth to Kahuña) to collapse and Wanadi to send fire and water to clean the earth and make it new. However, this eschatological elaboration is not lived in a fatalistic way, as Andrade (2005) described. I suggest that the eschatological dimension of cosmology should be understood under the perspective of the dualism in perpetual imbalance and of openness (Lévi-Strauss 1991b), which makes the conceptions about the future to be continuously redefined in their daily contact with the exterior, in cosmology as praxis. The intrinsic relationship between humanity and the world unfolds, among the Ye’kwana, in the consubstantial relationship of the earth with the musical sounds. In order to understand how the eschatological discourse articulates with the importance of cosmosonics, it is necessary to deepen the reflections about the future of the Ye’kwana and their chants.

5.2. Oratory, chants, and the future of the Ye’kwana

Five years after the APYB (the Ye’kwana Association Wanasedume) meeting that addressed the topic of youth (and coincided with my arrival at Boa Vista), the discussion about young people and schooling was resumed in the workshops of an extension project at UFRR, in which I participated. Creating a high school in the communities has been seen by sages, leaders and teachers as the solution to prevent the young people from going to the city, and the project carried out as part of the extension actions of the Federal University of Roraima aims to assist in the creation of a high school curriculum that values traditional knowledge and simultaneously teaches young people the western knowledge.

The first meeting occurred in August, 2016, in Kudaatainha, and the second one in December of the same year in Fuduuwaduinha. In the first meeting, the Ye’kwana had a long discussion about the history of schooling and its effects on traditional customs, and the speeches were mainly focused on the need to preserve the *a’chudi*, *ademi* and *watunna*. In the second meeting, the *inchonkomo* sages indicated possible ways to the future school and to the traditional content that will be taught in high school.

The meetings began, unfolded and ended amidst chants and instrumental songs, such as the *wayaa'da*, which is part of the *tanöökö*, indicating the importance of cosmsonics as a link between people. The public speeches (*wäätajä'nä*), the mythical narratives (*watunna*), and the chants (*a'chudi* and *ademi*) were continuously articulated and, among the Ye'kwana (as well as among the Suyá), these connections between genres show “how the separation of speech and music distorts both of them” (Seeger 2004: 51). While addressing the relationship between the different genres of speech, Anthony Seeger calls attention to the importance of the spoken word and the speeches of the chiefs:

Kinship ties and exchange relationships provide the underpinnings of political leadership among the Suyá (discussed in Seeger 1981: 181-206). In terms of public accepted leadership behavior, however, speech is the primary activity [...] Given the importance of the ears, hearing, and morality and of the mouth, speaking and masculinity, it is easier to appreciate the importance of instruction, oratory, invocation, and song (Seeger 2004: 80).

Among the Ye'kwana, the public speech is generally restricted to elder men, but in meetings in which the subject is the school, the young people and the women are also invited to participate. When the *inchonkomo* sages ask to speak in the context of the school discussions, the speeches intertwine with the mythical narratives, favoring an integrated understanding of these genres. When dealing with the different forms of discourse among the Suyá, Seeger distinguishes oratory as public speeches made by elder men, which occurred at the center of the village early in the morning, from mythical narratives:

Although speeches often began and ended with a conventional discussion of the importance of listening to and following the oratory of the adult men, the content of “slow speech” and other forms of public oratory was not as fixed as in myths. Oratory could introduce topics of personal importance or public current events. While myths often recounted how society became the way it is now, oratory was used by those adult men who were permitted to perform it to legitimize particular positions through appeal to Suyá traditions and the way the “fathers, mothers, mothers” brother, grandfathers, name givers’ and other relatives were supposed to have behaved (2004: 39).

For the Ye'kwana, the oratories are currently restricted to: the speeches during the nights at the men's house (*anaaka*), occasions of celebrations and ceremonies, or the meetings that have recently been held in an inter-ethnic context, involving themes such as health and education. In the past, there were ceremonial dialogues called *wädatana* that occurred during the arrival of visitors but are no longer practiced. As with the Suyá, the

mythical narratives also have a more fixed structure than the oratory. Also, an important feature they have is musicality, which, along with the gestures and onomatopoeias, is part of the narrator's performance. Another important feature, also noted by Seeger, is the long glissandos, or variable pitches on a single vowel, used there to indicate emphasis, being a long passage of time (2004), this is also important in the narrative performances of *watunna*.

I have chosen a few emblematic speeches that were given in the meetings about the high school because they are quite revealing of the centrality of *watunna* in the Ye'kwana political discourse. The narratives of two sages and two teachers show their perspectives on the importance of keeping the cosmosonic knowledge as a way of securing a future not only for the Ye'kwana, but for the planet, relating the school problem to the theme of the spoiled land:

Vicente Castro (sage and chant owner): Good morning! How are you? Can you hear me well? Good, I'll speak too. I will give guidance. A proposal of how the future will be. But I will not tell you only once, I have to tell many times, so that you will understand. If I only tell you once, you will forget it. It is important to have dialogue about what we are discussing now. We are discussing about school, so things will be better for the future. For our children and grandchildren. When you think about marriage you will have work, because your child will be born. Before you marry you must know how things will be in the future. Now you young people should not even think of getting married. In our culture there is a lot to learn before, *a'chudi*, so you can take care of your children. When I thought about learning *a'chudi*, I asked the elders. Now I am a sage. Wanadi created the planet Earth first, without any human being. Wanadi was looking here, and *when he saw the uu (beijús) drying on the top of the houses, he realized that his grandchildren Ye'kwana were already on earth. When he does not see beijú drying anymore he will think that there are no Ye'kwana anymore and will end the Earth.* Today he is looking from above and says that there are still Ye'kwana people, and this is what holds the time. [...]

There are large populations of Fañuru (white people), but one day they will also end. Because, after that, there will be another world, a new world. *The elders tell that in the new world we, the Ye'kwana, will be its true owners.* Those who live within the Waduuma'moi will be the real owners of this new world, as nowadays white people are dominating the earth. This is the knowledge of the Ye'kwana people. That is what we have to teach our children and grandchildren. We should not teach only in Portuguese, we must teach them in parallel. I know a little, I heard the speech of the ancestors. I am the only one now that tells these stories. My friends do not tell them as I do. That was how our ancestors lived, when they met the historians, they exchanged ideas. Be watchful, you should think about this. Think, we have Akuena (sacred lake, at the center of the cosmos) we know, we named it. Akuena makes us healthy. It heals everything. *The word, itself, heals. Our plants also heal.* This is how the elders used to tell, that paper would appear in the future. We have to be

watchful. You, women, owners of plants and food, should ask the owners of *a'chudi*, to memorize, register, so we do not let our knowledge be lost. *We have to seek our health in the plants. If we lose our chants to call health, we will lose ourselves.* This is what I say to you, women. The same I say to the men [...] If you register on paper, you should be careful. It is better to memorize. *If you write, it may get wet, lost, be eaten by termites. So the best thing is to keep it in the head. The same with this recorder that is in front of me. It can get damaged, lost, broken.* So it does not help either. This was what I wanted to say. Have you heard/understood?

Vicente Castro (sage and chant owner): My grandchildren, we are gathered here, I think it is working. No one is saying the opposite (*wätäkkwäjä'nä*)¹⁵⁷. I think it is working here, because we are not disagreeing [...]. You cannot say that you will not succeed, otherwise you will actually not. Our planet is spoiled, our land is bad. The forests were born and are spoiled. Afterwards, the fish that live in the river, in the sea, are also spoiled. If it were not spoiled, this land would be good to live in. *Our earth is spoiled, bad, imperfect. That is why we are like this, thinking that it will go wrong, it will not come out right.* But I am here, and I know almost everything. There is no one to spoil. I learned *watunna*, I was close to the sages, Peri saw me talking and learning with the elders. I was as the young people are now, they learn fast to handle the machines, cell phones. I also learned fast the stories of the *inchonkomo* (sages). Sometimes there were trips, on the way, in the rivers, and I wondered what were the stories of the places we were. That is how I listened, I asked in the camps at night, during the trips, every night I persisted and that is how I was the only one that learned. Only I was interested in learning. It is like today, most young people are not interested, but there are some that are paying attention, some women too. That is it. Then the land was damaged when the mountains appeared. [...] *If the land were not spoiled, the rivers would be straight, they would be parallel and in opposite directions to each other. After that I just said, the forests were damaged. There are good stones, within the forest, they can heal those who are spoiled. The stones asked the trees if they were really going to die. But they replied that when they die they will multiply. We see this today, when we clear the forest, burn the gardens, and the forest is born again. When we make the gardens, we see the bush being born. So women do the work of weeding, weeding the gardens, and so we, men, we open the garden and the woman clean it. And the tree asked the stone: "Are you going to die?" It replied: "No, I am going to stay, I am not going to die, even falling in water, I do not rot, I do not burn. But we, humans, are fragile and we die easy.* Then other problems appeared. *Fäshi, perfume, came from the sky to spoil the human beings.* You bring the perfumes of the city, the women smell it and then they get sick. This is very dangerous. Now I see women painting their lips, wearing perfume. So we have to talk to our grandchildren, our children, to stop this. It is through this that the suicides and the bad thinking begin. Its owner keeps telling the spirit of the *fäshi* to corrupt the thoughts of the young people. [...] This is how we get lost, we are taking *the wrong path (ääma koneda)*, losing the thought, the intelligence. *This is how the confusion (wätäkkwäjä'nä) is created. [...] When the forest spoiled,*

157 Unclear conversation. Verbal disagreement.

wataki, a tree, endured, it did not die and turned into medicine. We are using it nowadays. It is our medicine. When we perform a'chudi, we name it, for healing. Akuena has an owner called Weeyuiweyimhä. We call him to heal. That is all I wanted to comment. (applause).

Majaanuma (sage and chant owner): My children, my grandchildren, this is not the first time. We are talking about the same subject. When Sedume appeared, the earth got spoiled. *Kahushawa became a so'to, but he wanted to be the chief, the owner of the earth. That is why we are like this. Because he was as smart as Sedume.* This is how Kahushawa thought, I will replace Wanadi, I will become the owner of this land, he thought he was as smart as Wanadi. In their time, it was only mud where we are standing. The whole earth was still in heaven. Adetaku was the name of the earth. Kahu, then, also created his land. *Kahushawa created to ruin our land, that is why we remain spoiled.*

Sedume brought wiriki, the precious stones, to heal the earth that was spoiled. Then they thought to bring water from heaven. There was no water here, nor rivers. Then they brought the blowgun, and brought water in the Marawaka mountains. The waters came along with their owners, the big Wiyu snakes. Then the big snakes stayed in the hills, as owners of the waters, at the water sources. Then another Wiyu appeared, and today we are sick through them. That is how Sedume and Kahu¹⁵⁸ competed against each other and created their helpers. Sedume created more, Kahu created less, that is why we are living here, but the spirits, the descendants of Kahu, are watching us, trying to end us. The salt they left in the sea, this is also for us, *when we perform a'chudi we must name it too, as medicine.* Sedume Wanadi *left several owners on earth.* This is how the *inchonkomo* lived, that is our wisdom. *Watunna, that is how our ancestors lived, this is our power, our history.* This is our conversation, now we have Wanadi, our god, and we have *watunna*, our stories. *Watunna* says that when the world ends, something will happen, the day will be very short, only an hour. We are still normal, quiet, the plants are still alive. That is what my grandfather taught me, he told me. *We are still far from the end of the world.* Now we are living, we suffered in the time of Funes, the white people killed indeed. *Now we are suffering through paper, a stealth, slow attack.* At the time of Funes, the white people were very violent. At the time of Funes, we left our traditional medicines, we abandoned our plants, and the white people brought medicines [...] Now our children know almost nothing, they do not know how to find medicines in the forest. In the past we used to teach our children and grandchildren about the medicines. We need to know what we have in the woods, in the forest. *Every vine has a history, has an a'chudi to know how it originated.* There are specific remedies in the forest, we need to know so we can help our children, our grandchildren, to prolong our lives, our survival. [...]

Kahushawa is watching us, but we will organize our word, our thought, and we will see how we are going to start. That is it. So let's unify our thinking with joy and intelligence, with wiriki, through the sunlight, where it is bright, through Wanasedume. But here we have our friends¹⁵⁹ here,

158Wanadi and Odosha.

159 Majaanuma was referring to my presence and that of Daniel Bampi Rosar, also professor at the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR) and coordinator of the university extension project, which aims to implement

whom we see, we are together, thinking, same idea, their thought is the same. Wanadi is only one, the same as sunlight. Where is there another light? It is the same. The same goes for our earth (nono), the same goes for the river, the water we drink. It comes from heaven, it is not from here. So let's turn now, seek our way, because our intelligence has been impaired by Kahushawa, even so let's search for our straight path. This is our story, our word. The same goes for the fūwai who lived here on this earth. The same goes for the ademi, the one who owns a'chudi to heal the sick person. Because the creator of the world is looking at us here. He is within us, accompanying us. He is looking at us here, he is listening, because he made our word, it was them (the Wanadi doubles) who placed our eyes with which we see, this is wiriki (akaato wiriki), it is not stone, it is actual wiriki. Our ears, he made them. So he is listening to our intelligence (sejje). That is what I wanted to tell you, children, youth, and to you too Daniel, Pablo, I'm speaking in front of you with joy, not with sadness. This is a good thing, this is what I wanted to tell you. So. Let's now talk about what we are going to start. Where from? Then we are going to create the lines to connect us: shiiwadeekwe wadhe (sun line). That is where the fūwai brought good things through, to heal people, it was through this way that the a'chudi came, and that is where Wanadi brought and resurrected his mother through.

Raul (teacher): Now I'm going to present my point of view. We were the first students, me, Castro, Reinaldo, Camilo... our father, our elders, did not study. I thought about studying and knowing. The teachers could not explain about the problems of studying. Tomé started teaching at the school. Tomé started the classes and soon afterwards he left [...] Then, the teacher Jandira arrived. She came to visit the community. My grandparents decided that she would live here and teach. Jandira gave us a test to measure our knowledge of writing and mathematics. The leaders asked Jandira to stay here and teach the youth. She chose the smartest students, that was in 1983. She visited the community in 1981 and in 1983 she settled in the community. So began our relationship with paper. [...] This is how the young people started to leave to the city, and the difficulties of living and resources started. At that time there were not many people earning salaries. Nowadays, we have more and more people earning salaries. Today there are many Ye'kwana people living and studying in the city. Now I'm thinking, what are we going to do? We are encouraging students to go out and study in the city, and the communities are becoming empty. In the past only the men left, but now the women are also leaving to the city. How can I, the teacher, do nothing about my culture? I do not have the habit of teaching dances, *a'chudi*, etc. *I keep thinking, who am I?* How are we going to make our school, our study? So now my vision got broader. Sometimes I think about abandoning the school and keep only listening to the elders. *What are we going to be interested in: the a'chudi or just the white people's knowledge?* So I think that arts and a'chudi should be taught in school. Now is the time to unite our idea. If you are braiding something and then paper to write appears, we leave our art to do the paper tasks. We have to decide what we will

the Ye'kwana high school. We were the only non-Ye'kwana participating in the meetings of the high school project.

choose. We got the teaching degree and we do not see a good result for the community as a whole, we do not see it strengthening our culture. We who completed our higher studies keep hiding, we do not show what we studied to the community. This is very difficult for us, we do not hold meetings, debates, about these studies. *That is why in the next generation we will be almost without a'chudi.* So we want to reflect a little to stop the cultural loss. We are seeing what is happening. The teachers are doing this. The children of teachers have these videos, cell phones, that is the wrong way. The young people bring things from the city that harm the community. I sometimes advise my students. This is my speech, we are bringing the wrong things to our community ourselves. That is what I think, even we, teachers, are teaching wrong, encouraging young people to go to the city. That is my thought.

Reinaldo (Teacher): Nowadays we have a health center, a road, piped water. We have to remain like this, we are not going back, take energy off. *This thing what the white people want, to create books, they want us to go back to the culture because they know that we are suffering and we need to improve our education [...]* As Vicente thought, one day Apolinário will pass away, then I will have to study, to write this knowledge. That is how he studied *a'chudi, watunna. Most of us know how to write, why don't we write a'chudi, watunna? We have to write and also to practice.* We must learn *a'chudi* by memory. First we write down on paper, then we memorize.

As we have seen in the *watunna* narratives described throughout this dissertation, the creation of the terrestrial platform was disturbed by Odosha/Kahushawa, Wanadi's twin. Regarded as the greatest sage still alive, Vicente, in his words, gives a tone of guidance to the younger. Addressing the future, Vicente recalls the eschatology that affirms that, with the end of this terrestrial cycle, when there is no more *uu (beijús)* drying on top of the houses, the sky will fall and there will be a reconstruction of the terrestrial platform. Then, the new inhabitants of the regenerated earth will come out of the Waduuma'moi mountains. One of the important aspects of the sage's speech regarded the healing power of the word, which, just as the plants and the chants, are the foundation of the Ye'kwana health. The words of the *inchonkomo* value the knowledge stored in the "memory", because the paper and electronic gadgets are easily spoiled, just as the earth is spoiled. That is why men are not like the vegetables that regenerate, and the minerals that are incorruptible, but they are fragile, and when they use perfume, they lose their wisdom even more, generating confused thought. Odosha ruined the forest, still some plants remain, such as the *wataki* tree, which became medicine. The relationship between plants, words and chants is remarkable in the words of the sage, showing the musical face of nature (Stein 2009).

Majaanuma, another important sage, spoke about the formation of the earth, the disputes between the twins Wanadi and Odosha, and the importance of shamanic stones as a curative element, something remarkable among the indigenous peoples of the Guianas (Viveiros de Castro 2006: 333). The crystals, plants, words, and chants are the instruments of power of the Ye'kwana and with these weapons, they fight against Odosha. Majaanuma states that, although we are still far from the end of the world, the Ye'kwana are suffering with a slow attack through paper, so it is necessary to organize words and thoughts to create the connection (*wadeekui*), to unify the thought with the *wiriki* crystals and through sunlight (*shii*). Both the words of Vicente Castro and Majaanuma explain the new challenges brought by schooling to the twins' cosmology of *watunna*. Majaanuma says that the intelligence (*sejje*) of the Ye'kwana was harmed by Odosha, but that everyone should try to find the straight path (*äämaa ashichaato*). Despite the earth being spoiled, the Ye'kwana received from Wanadi *wiriki* stones, through the eyes and ears, that serve as a connection with Kahuña. The creator is looking at the Ye'kwana, and is also within them, as a breath of creation, through the senses of sight and hearing. The *a'chudi* chants and the *ademi* are also a means of connection with the cosmos and Wanadi, and this is the type of connection that the school should help to establish, as *shiiwadeekwe wadhe* (line of sun). Just as the ancient *fiwai* who, through this relationship with the universe of Kahuña, "brought good things to heal the people", through the way of the *a'chudi*, repeating Wanadi when, at the beginning of the world, he caused his mother to be born again.

Teacher Raul, one of the pioneers in the process of opening up to the knowledge of white people, addressed in his speech the limitations of the teachers in explaining the challenges that the incorporation of these new knowledge systems would bring to the lives of young people and the communities. After briefly describing the history of schooling and of the first students who became teachers and took up new prestige and leadership positions within the village, Raul, who was one of the first Ye'kwana to experience this construction of a dual *habitus*, confesses that he often wonders about his identity, because, being a teacher, he does not teach chants and *watunna* stories to his students. But he and the other teachers of his generation recognize the need of finding a way to teach this knowledge within the school context. Until then, the native assessment is that schooling did not bring good results to the communities other than the creation of waged jobs and the increase of resources and goods that enter the community. The reflection about school and the future helps to stop the loss of cosmosonic knowledge so the next generation will not be without *a'chudi*.

As we can see in Reinaldo's speech, the process of intensification of relations with the white people is, in the eyes of everyone, impossible to return from. There is no "way back". In 2012, when I lived in Fuduwaduinha, there was no electricity, as in the other communities, although the project of a hydroelectric plant made by the army supplied power in the region for a few months in the beginning of the 21st century, only until a failure caused the hydroelectric to be deactivated. In 2016, with the purchase of a generator engine and the granting of a hundred liters of fuel per month from the Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health (SESAI), most Fuduwaduinha houses have power from 07: 00 p.m. to 10: 00 p.m., or even more, in case the men's meeting in the *anaaka* lasts longer. Thus, the Ye'kwana seem to try to create a kind of relationship with the outside in which they seek to have access to the goods and knowledge of the white people, while trying, at the same time, to get rid of the harmful effects of this relationship. Reinaldo, teacher and important mediator of the Ye'kwana with the world of white people, points to the path of the projects of rescuing and recording the cultural tradition as a way of resisting the invasion of goods and techniques of the white people. Thus, the relationship with paper and writing must be converted into a strategy for the protection of chants, as a support for learning until the learners are able – through the blows of the master of chants in the apprentice, of the use of *maada* plants and specific chants, to incorporate the knowledge related to the relationship with the various beings that inhabit the different platforms of the cosmos. Thus, as Majaanuma explained, the singer acquires the ability to use his *wiriki* of sight and hearing and his intelligence (*sejje*) to create a connection (*wadeekui*) with the universe of Wanadi. The paper, in spite of its deleterious effect, can be used as a material support to such knowledge until it can become, as doubles, part of the person.

The school proposed by the sages should be based on the construction of *wadeekui* (links, connections with the cosmos). Throughout the night before the end of discussions about the school, the sages debated about what would be the best name for this foreign institution. The next morning, Vicente called Joaquim, Lourenço, Davi, Majaanuma, Contreras, Romeu, and Elias upfront and publicly stated that they were also sages and those who were present could consult with them whenever they needed to. Then, the group discussed a lot about the *shii wadeekui* (the line of the sun), about *Wadhe wadeekui edaademaaku* (the connection of the spirit of Wadhe). Some have also spoken about the wind that belongs to Wadhe (*fejeichö eetö*). And, finally, the *inchonkomo* chose some possible names, to be debated by all, for the school:

Edaademaaku Sejeedö ai wä'sejje'tätooyo: we will study through the intelligence of the Wadhemaaku line.

Edaademaaku Widiikiyö ai wä'sejje'tätooyo. We will study through the Wadhe line until the intelligence of *wiriki*.

Shinnhakuuwaweeyu Sejeedö ai wä'sejje'tätooyo. We will study through the intelligence of the sun's line.

Shinnhakuuwaweeyu Widiikiyö ai wä'sejje'tätooyo. We will study through the intelligence of the *wiriki* stone and the sun's line.

The last name was chosen because it represents the kind of school that the high school should be, this name expresses the fundamental importance of creating (*wadeekui*) links, paths, connections with the infinite forms of alterity, including the white people and their knowledge, but always based on the words of *watunna* and the cosmosonics, primordial modes of relation with the infinite forms of alterity existing in the world, expressed through the shamanic intelligence of *wiriki*, present in the person. Finally, everyone sang and danced together an *ademi* ([final song](#)).

Over the days of discussion about the school, the Ye'kwana have constantly compared the knowledge of the white people to the *a'chudi*, the *ademi* and *watunna*. If school nowadays is essential to introduce young people to the non-indigenous way of socialization, the chants are the means through which the Ye'kwana build their world. Vicente Castro states that this earth is contaminated (*amoije*) because there are two types of *wiriki* mixed in it: *töweinhewaana*, the bad *wiriki*, and *wäsemaadö*, the good *wiriki*, coming from the sun, and which is "kept within the earth". That is why the chants are essential to protect the Ye'kwana from the attack of evil beings. The singer's voice has the good *wiriki*, able to prepare the body, to trigger the forces of alterities needed for the construction of the person. The relational aspect of the Ye'kwana cosmology points to a notion of person as a cluster of relationships expressed through spoken word (the oratories and narratives of *watunna*) and cosmosonics.

The cosmosonics is the means through which the Ye'kwana create *wadeekui* with the multiple forms of alterity present in the cosmos. The *ademi* and *a'chudi* point to a kind of generalized humanism, as proposed by Lévi-Strauss (2012), that refuses the separation between man and nature, on which the modern world and its concept of humanism are based. According to Lévi-Strauss (2012: 33-36):

During three centuries, the humanistic thinking has nurtured and inspired the reflection and action of the western man. And today we find that it has been powerless to prevent the massacres on a planetary scale that have been the world wars, the misery and malnutrition that chronically punish

a large part of the inhabited earth, air and water pollution, the plundering of natural resources and beauties. [...] The societies studied by anthropologists teach lessons even more worthy of being heard, as, by all kinds of rules – which, as I said earlier, we would be wrong to consider mere superstitions, they managed to establish a balance between the man and the natural environment that we no longer know how to guarantee”.

For the Ye’kwana, the way of delaying the imminent fall of the sky lies in the act of singing, establishing a cosmopolitics and a cosmosonics that reconnects the “man” with his becomings, the others of the cosmos... The humility that these people should inspire in us is that of a politics that reintegrates men into the cosmos in a kind of multi-naturalist cosmic politics based on the “demanding exercise of precaution”, something quite different from the multiculturalism of public policy as a compliant practice of tolerance (Viveiros de Castro 2015: 50).

The humanism of the Ye’kwana cosmosonics “appeals to the reconciliation of man and nature into a generalized humanism” (Lévi-Strauss 2012: 33), which is based on the premise that humanity is an attribute not exclusive to man, but distributed among the various beings of the cosmos. The preservation of the Ye’kwana chants is, therefore, the condition of maintaining the earth, since as long as the Ye’kwana are singing in their houses, gardens and patios, and as long as Wanadi knows through the sun that there are still *uu* (*beijús*) *s* drying on the roofs, the sky will still remain above our heads, and nature will still continue to express itself in all its beauty and sound in resonance with the cosmos (Kahuña).

Figure 70. Beijús drying under the sun on the roof (Pablo Albernaz)



CONCLUSION

*Music lives within me, and I hear myself through it.
Myth and music arise,
thus, as orchestra conductors
whose listeners are the silent performers.*

Claude Lévi-Strauss (2004a: 37).

The goal pursued throughout the pages of this dissertation was to translate in terms of a cosmsonics the reverse ethnomusicology of the Ye'kwana natives. The anthropologist Roy Wagner (2016: 114) created the concept of reverse anthropology as a symmetrical mode of literalization of the “metaphors of modern industrial civilization from the standpoint of tribal society”, which, on the other hand, should be understood as a pragmatic genre of anthropology, and the latter, in turn, becomes the interpretative counterpart of anthropology itself. Following the suggestions of Roy Wagner, I sought in this dissertation to think of the relationship between music and nature as a way of creating “quality of life”, and to think of the cosmsonics as an interpretative correspondence of our science of music.

“Cosmosonics” is understood as a way of *becoming* similar to what the philosopher Gilles Deleuze understands as *becoming-animal*, *becoming-plant*, *becoming-imperceptible* (1995a). What the chants and the verbal arts of the cosmsonics operate are transformations in which *becoming-other* is the basis for the constitution of the self, these becomings are linked to each other weaving particular and always unfinished lines that point to an instability of the bodies and the person. By naming an intensive multiplicity of plants, animals, places and ancestral spirits, the chants create a connection (*wadeekui*) with the spirits of these beings, enter in process of *becoming* with them, and produce a kind of rhizomatic multiplicity that cannot be reduced to any binary or substantialist scheme.

In the first chapter, I sought to overlay different Ye'kwana temporalities so as to introduce the reader to the universe of this Carib people and to the reflections of its first ethnographer, Theodor Koch-Grünberg. During the period of one hundred years that separates Koch-Grünberg's journey from my ethnography, the Ye'kwana have undergone many changes that were described in that chapter, the main ones were the introduction of school in the everyday life of the young people and of the villages, and the emergence of the chant notebooks in the process of musical knowledge transmission.

On the second chapter, I addressed the Ye'kwana sound system, presented in this theses under the concept of cosmosonics. The importance of sensory qualities and of hearing to the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of South America was emphasized as a contrast to our western category of music, showing how the *a'chudi* and the *ademi* articulate along a continuum in which silence, speech, chants and instrumental sounds are fundamental in the construction of meaning and of the lived world.

In the third chapter, I sought to deepen the relationships between the cosmosonics and the economy of the acoustic code that seems to guide the different vocal-sound genres. By trying to propose an organology of the instruments based on the Ye'kwana ethnotheory, we arrived at the approximations suggested by Lévi-Strauss between South American organology and an ancient European tradition of the instruments of darkness. It was possible to see how the *watunna* narratives about the acquisition of the house, the garden, hunting, fermented drink and cultural assets seek to respond to the passage from nature to culture and are given, in the ritual plane, analogies in function of a system of acoustic references, proposing an isomorphism of the categories of taste and hearing.

In the fourth chapter, I analyzed the songs and the machines and recorders of the white people from the perspective of *watunna* and cosmosonics. Based on this economy of the acoustic code (Lévi-Strauss 2004b), the Ye'kwana reflect about the sounds of the white people, which are introduced into native life in the space of the celebrations for the arrival of the hunters, moments of opening of the socius and of relationship with the "outside". The technical devices of the white people are understood as machines of reach and retention, which can capture the *akaato* (*double*) of the person, causing disease. Paradoxically, the reflections about the future raise the question of the current importance of the acquisition of the memory techniques and artifacts of the white people, and insert the theme of Koch-Grünberg's phonograms into a complex context of reception and increasingly pressing need to retain and store the Ye'kwana cosmosonics in terms of the capturing machines of the white people, in addition to the traditional ways of knowledge and memory of the chants. The three central chapters of this dissertation indicated an intrinsic relationship between music and nature, which was addressed at the end of chapter four as a "sound perspectivism" that enables a musical understanding of the Ye'kwana way of life and of the relationship between the different beings that inhabit the world and the cosmos.

In the final chapter, I thought about the Ye'kwana prophecy and its reflections about the future of Earth and the cosmosonics as a fundamental ritual practice in healing and

protection. *Watunna* narratives relate the arrival of the white people with their technology and institutions to the end of the *fiuwai* (shamans), of the *a'chudi* and of the current cosmic cycle of the planet, understood as a contaminated place (*nonodö amoije*). If nature is a cosmosonic expression, its destruction compromises the efficacy of chants and the survival of life on earth, so preserving the chants is a way of caring for the environment.

If the chants, as becomings, are lines of life, disease is a rupture in this process, it is the creation of lines of death, of capturing ties with the beings of Odosha. The chants are like vaccines, as Elias told me, and, along with food, they are the transporters of good health, as *pharmakon*, manipulation of dangerous things that require an art of dosage, as suggested the chemist and philosopher Isabelle Stengers (2008). The cosmosonics, as practice of health or "*pharmakon*", is the invention of lines of life, vital relationships with the multiple beings of the cosmos, fighting against contamination (*Tönwa'dooto*) and diseases (*Sene*).

The texts recited in the *a'chudi* and *ademi* also represent a *becoming*-other of the language, a syntactic creation that names the animals, spirits and beings of the cosmos with specific terms that are unknown by the uninitiated. The chants are overtaken by the delirium of creating and changing the world, which causes the sounds and words to overflow with their original meanings. The words, chants, blowings and burps are vehicles of this different syntax of the world, transformed by the action of the singers who repeat the words of the ancestors, creating a continuity between yesterday, today and tomorrow. Just as the *pharmakós* or sacrificial victim was of ambivalent value to the Greek, since it was the poison and the medicine, the sounds produce order and disorder among the Ye'kwana, establishing a relationship with nature that is musically inscribed in the body of men (Wisnik 1989: 34).

One of the goals of this dissertation was to problematize the categories of *ademi* and *a'chudi* as collective and private chants (Guss 1990, Arvelo-Jimenez 1974). Although the Ye'kwana themselves make a distinction between *a'chudi* and *ademi*, the chants are linked to each other and, in both genres, the manipulated power and the logic are the same: creating a neighboring zone with the positive non-human in order to establish ties of reciprocity and cut off the lines of the predator beings, turning the person into a cluster of relationships. Seeger (2004) stated that the summonings of the Suyá sought to create a state of controlled animality and, as Gilles Deleuze (1995b: 172) stated, the *becoming* consists in finding this neighboring zone in which it is not possible to clearly distinguish the self and the other, since the becoming of the chants aims to establish itself in "between".

One hundred years after the famous trip made by Koch-Grünberg, the Ye'kwana are still performing their cosmosonic rituals. Except for the shamanic chants, all the rituals described by Theodor Koch-Grünberg are still practiced nowadays and, although the Ye'kwana have often stated their concern with the transmission of this knowledge to future generations – they were stated in the context of the discussions about the creation of a different high school, the young people are still living their culture despite the intensification of the contact with the city and the phonographic revolution.

The choice of leaving Berlin to Auaris aiming to build an ethnographic relationship with the Ye'kwana initially based on the work “From Roraima to the Orinoco” proved to be a convenient way of thinking memory and history as privileged places of “making the culture visible” (Wagner 2016). This art of memory was operated through the triangular dialog of: the reading by the Ye'kwana of the ethnographic data and research methods of Koch-Grünberg, my ethnographic questions, and the result of this intersection in the memories of the elders and other Ye'kwana, with whom I have been interacting since 2011.

If, as Roy Wagner (2016: 62-63) reminds us, “better an honest mistake than a false conviviality”, I believe the co-laboration created through this work and through my involvement in an ethnographic and political pact created the cultural shock that made it possible to visualize/hear at least some elements of the Ye'kwana ways of life (*praxis*) by means of the alliances sustained around a common interest that was not the same interest (Cadena 2011). Through this double movement of transformation and cultural invention, which caused simultaneous and diverse effects on the ethnographer and on the Ye'kwana, I believe it was possible to build a multi-located dialog: from Roraima to the Orinoco, from Berlin to Auaris.

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