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Singing with things in ethnographic museum's archives: the reunification of material/immaterial units as part of an engaged ethnomusicology

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## **Singing with things in ethnographic museum's archives: the reunification of material/immaterial units as part of an engaged ethnomusicology**

Matthias Lewy

**Abstract:** This article shows in a first step how the separation of ontological units of material and immaterial entities were destroyed by the colonial collection practice. Therefore, the idea of an “collective” (Descola 2013) as a notion extension of culture is used, including ontologically relevant human and nonhuman interactions. In a second step, recent projects are presented showing what collective thinking means when dealing with interactions between “cultures of origin” and European ethnographic museums. Furthermore, results from my long-term project realized with the AreTauKa Pemón indigenous people (Venezuela/Brazil/Guyana) and the ongoing cooperation with the “sharing knowledge” project of the Ethnographic Museum Berlin Dahlem are discussed, aiming to reveal ideas and strategies to reunite relevant entities of sound and physical objects as ontological units

**Keywords:** Indigenous Music. Material/Immaterial Culture. Museum. Engaged Ethnomusicology.

### **Cantando com coisas em arquivos de museus etnográficos: a reunificação de unidades materiais/imateriais como parte de uma etnomusicologia engajada**

**Resumo:** Este artigo mostra, em um primeiro momento, como a separação de unidades ontológicas de entidades materiais e imateriais foi destruída pela prática da coleta colonial. Portanto, a ideia de um “coletivo” (Descola, Latour) como uma noção de extensão da cultura é usada, incluindo interações humanas e não humanas ontologicamente relevantes. Em um segundo momento foram apresentados projetos recentes mostrando o que significa pensamento coletivo em cooperações entre a chamada “cultura de origem” e os museus etnográficos europeus. Além disso, são discutidos os resultados do meu projeto de longa duração realizado com o povo indígena Pemón AreTauKa (Venezuela / Brasil / Guiana) e a cooperação contínua com o projeto “compartilhar saberes” do Museu Etnográfico Berlin Dahlem, com o objetivo de revelar ideias e estratégias para reunir entidades relevantes de objetos sonoros e físicos às suas unidades ontológicas.

**Palavras-chave:** Música Indígena. Cultura material/imaterial. Museu. Etnomusicologia Engajada.

### **Cantando con cosas en archivos de museos etnográficos: la reunificación de unidades materiales / inmateriales como parte de una etnomusicología comprometida**

**Resumen:** Este artículo muestra, en un primer momento, cómo la separación de unidades ontológicas de entidades materiales e inmateriales fue destruida por la práctica de la colecta colonial. Por lo tanto, la idea de un “colectivo” (Descola, Latour) como una noción de extensión de la cultura es usada, incluyendo interacciones humanas y no humanas ontológicamente relevantes. En un segundo momento, se presentaron proyectos recientes mostrando lo que significa pensamiento colectivo en cooperaciones entre la llamada “cultura de origen” y los museos etnográficos europeos. Además, los resultados de mi proyecto a largo plazo realizado con el pueblo indígena AreTauKa Pemón (Venezuela / Brasil / Guyana) y la cooperación continua con el proyecto “compartir conocimientos” del Museo Etnográfico Berlin Dahlem serán considerados, con el objetivo de revelar ideas y estrategias para reunir entidades relevantes de objetos sonoros y físicos a sus unidades ontológicas.

**Palabras-clave:** Música Indígena. Cultura material/inmaterial. Museo. Etnomusicología Engajada.

## Introduction - The Purification of Ethnographica

The classical archives of European ethnographic museums have grown historically. It can be stated that theoretical preconceptions about the world led human beings as “Western scientists” create categories and perspectives about human beings, their objects and their ideas. The most common categories of classifications of objects are typologies defined by geographical zones, created *ethnies* (Said 1978), the names of collectors, or the object's functions (arrows, bows, musical recordings, etc.).

These classifications ignore ontological units of cultural and collectively relevant entities. Such entities can be understood and translated in a Western way as all taxonomically and axiomatically (Menezes Bastos 1999) relevant things that have agency (Gell 1998), including material and immaterial objects. The term “collective” refers to Philippe Descola's (2013) concept of including all human and nonhuman entities. Thus, the term is more part of Amerindian ontologies than of Western thinking, in which “culture” is primarily a notion of the human's world while “nature” is the area of nonhuman beings.

European ethnographic museum's archives are in a dilemma as their stored objects reflect “human cultures”, but, due to a “modern” point of view, these objects are parts of a culturalized “nature”. Here, the term ‘culturalized’ means the process of transforming “natural” entities (bamboo, palm leaves, palm fruits, cotton) into cultural objects as they are proceeded by human

hands. Such transformed “natural” objects are understood as representations of one or more cultural groups or communities. Thus, the Western idea was – and still is – to possess such cultural representations aiming to create general or multi-perspective concepts of culture by comparison (intra-, inter-, trans-cultural or cross cultural). However, the accumulation of objects as “cultural representations” contradicts the idea of a controlled transformation or production of hybrids in most indigenous ontologies. The term “hybrid” refers here to the idea of transforming an entity, creating a new or other form of its body and giving space to other interiorities (e.g. souls or spirits) as well. In Pemón ontology for example, a bamboo plant which is transformed into a bamboo dance stick will have another body form. This bamboo dance stick gives space to another soul than its own one as well. For instance, the *piasán* (shaman) transports the *yekatón* (soul) of a human being after liberating this soul from bad spirits inside of the bamboo dance stick. Other productions of hybrids will be discussed more detailed below.

The history of archiving in European ethnographic museums can be described as it bests with the concept of Bruno Latour (1993: 10), who defines an ontological basis in concern of the relations between nonhuman and human beings and the sets of practices of the “modern” people, saying that while the first set is “translation” creating “mixtures between entirely new types of beings, hybrids of nature and culture”, the second one is “purification”. This purification is characterized by the mentioned ontological zones: “that of human beings on the one hand; that of nonhumans on the other” (ibid.). Furthermore he considered a

“Great divide” theory between the “modern” and the “premodern” when writing:

*What link is there between the work of translation or mediation and that of purification? This is the question on which I should like to shed light. My hypothesis - which remains too crude - is that the second has made the first possible: the more we forbid ourselves to conceive of hybrids, the more possible their interbreeding becomes - such is the paradox of the moderns, which the exceptional situation in which we find ourselves today allows us finally to grasp. The second question has to do with premoderns, with the other types of culture. My hypothesis - once again too simple - is that by devoting themselves to conceiving of hybrids, the other cultures have excluded their proliferation. (Latour 1993: 12)*

When adapting Latour's paradox of the “modern” to the Ethnographic museum's world than it can be stated that the immense collection of hybrids of other types of “cultures” and their collective entities provokes conflicts of interests in museum's practice. The separation of Latour's “human” and “nonhuman” entities by purification means the separation of the human or humanized (Lambos in Lewy 2017a) soul from its body, which is the “physical object” in a museum's archive. To be fair, this non-reflected indigenous ontological bias allows no other option to relativists or “modern anthropologists”. From their perspective, there was and there is no certain interiority of an object as it is mainly perceived as an “indigenous belief” that has to be “respected” in a relativist perspective. Anyway, relativism in that sense opens the way for several ontologically motivated practices. These are shown by means of actual projects encompassing the interaction between indigenous specialists and ethnographic museums in Europe.

The material/immaterial dichotomy has to be considered, when dealing with sound and music as entities in relation to other entities. In Western thinking sound in general is categorized as an immaterial entity in sense of non-physical objects. In opposite to that ontocentric category I would like to present three different qualities of indigenous alternatives. First, sound itself is seen as material like Menezes Bastos states:

*This position has acquired a particular relevance in so far as my main object of investigation has been the acoustic-musical universe, seen as ‘intangible’ and even ‘immaterial’ in the West, in sharp contrast to the ideas of Amerindian peoples, for whom sound is as material as stones are for us. (Menezes Bastos 2013: 292)*

A second alternative refers to Tomlinson's metonymical concept, revealing the Aztec's thinking about sound, when noting: “It is not a question of songs being like flowers but simply of songs being flowers” (Tomlinson 2007: 75).

The first and second categories will not be discussed here since the focus is on the third category. It emphasizes on the mereological meaning of sound embedded in its material/immaterial ontological unit in indigenous thinking. The initial point is the purified “state of the art”, with other words, due to the actual situation, entities have to be reconsidered, re-contextualized and finally reunited into their ontological units. This reunification is realized by indigenous specialists by song and dance performance.

## The ontological unit

But what is this ontological unit that was purified? I suggest that in the moment of generating trans-specific interactions between several entities of the collective, alliances of particular entities are necessary. "Purification" means that the systematic disarrangement of ontological network interactions is produced by "collecting and classifying things", like: feathers to feathers, arrows to arrows, musical instruments to musical instruments, etc.

Otherwise, museum's policy and worldviews have changed over the last decade. In a recent article published by the indigenous Mitú Gaudencio Moreno Muñoz and María Morera Muñoz together with the museum's curator Richard Haas, the authors report on a workshop held in the Ethnographic Museum Berlin/Dahlem in 2014. The indigenous specialists selected several objects with "particular importance" during the workshop. These objects were presented at the conference later (Haas, Muñoz & Muñoz 2018: 140). When looking at the objects and the reasons for their mentioned "particular importance" the ontological unit becomes visible and hearable. The selected objects were: *bastón* (stick), *tabaquera* (tabaco folk), *pedra de cuarzo* (quartz stone), *corona del danzador* (dance crown) and a *maracá del payé* (shaman rattle).

The authors refer to a myth explaining the reasons for this selection. Anyway, it can be observed that musical instruments like the rattle as well as so called "non-musical" objects as the *tabaquera*, the quartz stone and the dance crown were chosen by the indigenous specialists. In relation to the

selection of the quartz stone the authors note:

*A very special object is the quartz stone. During the workshop the discussion was held, if it is allowed to work with this piece, since quartz stones are considered as living objects. Diana Guzmán explained in the workshop that the payé speaks directly with the owners of the stones. That is why quartz is sacred. The stone has energy with which he heals. But it can also cause bad things. All stones are sacred because they have life. The sacred can not be touched because it can produce disease. That is why only the payé can use them as Orlando Villegas commented. He [the payé] is constantly talking to the stones and he gives them tobacco. He permanently dialogues with the spirit (Haas, Muñoz & Muñoz 2018: 143).<sup>1</sup>*

Furthermore, the authors explain that they asked the quartz stone for permission to be presented to the audience of the conference. But before Gaudencio and Maria start to give any explanations about the stone they performed a song, which is part of a satiric Kotiria dance (Haas, Muñoz & Muñoz 2018: 143).

In a related video, a television team filmed parts of the workshop and a similar interaction can be observed. Gaudencio

<sup>1</sup> Un objeto muy especial es la piedra de cuarzo. Durante el taller se había establecido la discusión, si estaba permitido trabajar con esta pieza, ya que las piedras de cuarzo se consideran como objetos vivos. El payé, como Diana Guzmán explicaba en el taller, habla directamente con los dueños de las piedras. Por eso el cuarzo es sagrado. La piedra tiene energía y através de ella se cura. Pero también se puede causar mal con ella. Todas las piedras son sagradas porque tienen vida. Lo sagrado no se puede tocar porque puede producir enfermedad. Por eso, como comentaba Orlando Villegas, únicamente el payé las puede usar. Él permanentemente está conversando con las piedras y les echa tabaco. Dialoga permanentemente con el espíritu.

shows a mask in a showcase saying "... it is a butterfly, Kuwai sings it<sup>2</sup>". After telling to the camera that a gourd as musical instrument is missing, he starts to sing again.

This first example shows that indigenous specialists often start to sing and to do performances in ethnographic archives, aiming to interact with the object itself to reunite the ontological unit of the collective. The following examples bases on my own research with AreTauKa<sup>3</sup> Pemón specialists from the border region between Venezuela, Brazil and Germany.

## The sharing knowledge project

The "sharing knowledge" project is headed by Andrea Scholz and funded by the Volkswagen Stiftung (Volkswagen Foundation) and the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation in Germany). The main instrument is a data base which is located in the world wide web. Here, indigenous people as well as selected academics can see and leave comments to pictures and documentations of objects stored in the museum. A registration is necessary and an administrator decides who can participate<sup>4</sup>.

2 [...este es Mariposa, eso lo canta Kuwai]. Kuwai is mythical figure mainly known among Arawak groups. He is related to sound interaction in trans-specific communications (Wright 2017). This video is available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYJJWcBIOLQ>>, time 21:23 until 21:28, accessed 8 December, 2018

3 AreTauKa refers to the three groups: Arekuna, Taupépán and Kamarakto. They live in the border region between Northern Brazil (Roraima federal state), Venezuela (Gran Sabana, Canaima National Park) and Guiana. The designation was recently changed from "Pemón" to "Aretauka" by the indigenous people. "Pemón" means "human being". The term was introduced by the catholic missionaries.

The concept bases on the idea to supplement data to existing museum's collections by indigenous people. Furthermore, indigenous people can receive an overview of things which are stored in the archive. The inputs of object data are realized by researchers and indigenous people, who can upload relevant new data and comments.

The ethnologist Andrea Scholz began her work of cooperation with the Universidad de los Indígenas de Caura in Venezuela. There, young indigenous students of the Yekuana and AreTauKa Pemón groups do research about their traditions and indigenous knowledge. Therefore, they study the literature about their culture. They do field research in their communities, mainly with older specialists. The University of Caura has a computer room, but technical and financial problems make work almost impossible. The political situation in Venezuela as well as the poorly functioning Internet are other obstacles. So the Indigenous students have to take care of their livelihood or have already left the country<sup>5</sup>.

In the beginning of 2018, I started to be part of the "sharing knowledge" platform. I work with indigenous specialists in the region around Santa Elena in the south of Venezuela for more than 15 years. Thus, I tried to advertise the platform between my indigenous neighbors, but only a few have a computer, laptop or tablet.

In this respect, most interactions takes place in my house in Santa Elena. My longtime teachers come in and together we look at the

4 Available at <<https://hldwtp.schedar.uberspace.de/>>, accessed December 5, 2018.

5 Personal Communication with Andrea Scholz in 2018.

objects or hear the recently uploaded wax cylinders of Koch-Grünberg, which we have been working on for years (Lewy 2017a).

One of my teachers is Balbina Lambós. She is a Kamarakota from Kamarata. Her mother was Arekuna and she was Capitána in the indigenous community of Canaima which is located in the Gran Sabana in Venezuela. Balbina has a very special interest in the AreTauKa traditions and knowledge. Together we try to find adequate forms to transmit that knowledge inside and outside the indigenous communities. It must be considered that indigenous traditional knowledge is mainly sacred knowledge in particular when dealing with sound (Lewy 2017a).

Several problems and doubts appeared when starting to work with the platform. The missing of physical objects and the work with photos and fragmented information on catalogue sheets leads to a field of perspectives and associations.

Part of the project was an invitation to Berlin in October 2018. Balbina and I traveled from Venezuela and Brazil to Germany to participate in a conference and to work in the archive with the objects. These work helped to understand the mentioned doubts and problems up to a certain level. It needs to be underlined that the most important point for Balbina was the possibility to interact with the objects. Thus, Balbina focussed namely on dance and singing performances in the museum's archive.

### **Kamayin, Waronká or both?**

Before addressing Balbina's interaction with the physical object, an example about the difficulties when working with a data bank in

the field is discussed. The separation of ontological units produces ambivalences and difficulties. As an example let's use the object number VA 60904 (fig. 1, 2). In the data bank it is titled "Trompeta de madera-Pemón" (wooden trumpet-Pemón).

On the head part of figure 2 the catalogue number is noted on the left side as well as the information that the object consists of two pieces (2 Stck.). On the right side the numbers 67/12 refer to the year the object was acquired by the museum (1912). Above the object drawing the length of 106 cm is noted. The object drawing includes the human figure and the cotton threads. Under that drawing a description in German can be found, saying: "tube made of wood with raw, reddish brown livery, Ambauva<sup>6</sup> dance tube, front top part in form of a human figure, painted red and with cotton threads... [unreadable]"<sup>7</sup>

On the right side the file number can be found (German: Akten No.). Below that, the name of the ethnical group "Makuxí" is crossed out, only "Taulipáng" was left. Furthermore, the date 1st of September 2014 was written as well as a note in Spanish language: "U.IV. Estudiante Pemón" (Indigenous University Venezuela, Pemón Student). Under that note it can be transcribed: "Pemón, Arekuna, waronka=bambú. Tukuipok manunon datai tetunpasen." The text is translated into Spanish: "Se utiliza en el momento del baile Tuküik" (It is used at the moment of *Tuküik* dance)". Other notes on the sheets are the name of the collector Koch-Grünberg and the process of acquisition (German: Geber),

6 (Cecropia sp.)

7 Röhre aus Holz mit roher, rotbrauner Bemalung, Ambauva-Tanztute, vorn Aufsatz in Form einer Menschenfigur, rot bemalt und mit Gehänge aus Baumwoll[troddeIn?].... [unlesbar].

saying that it was bought (German: Kauf). There is a short description in German from 1995 referring to the fact that the object is badly damaged followed by unreadable

information. Finally, there is the information on the left side: "Material Tokorodek Chipödek".

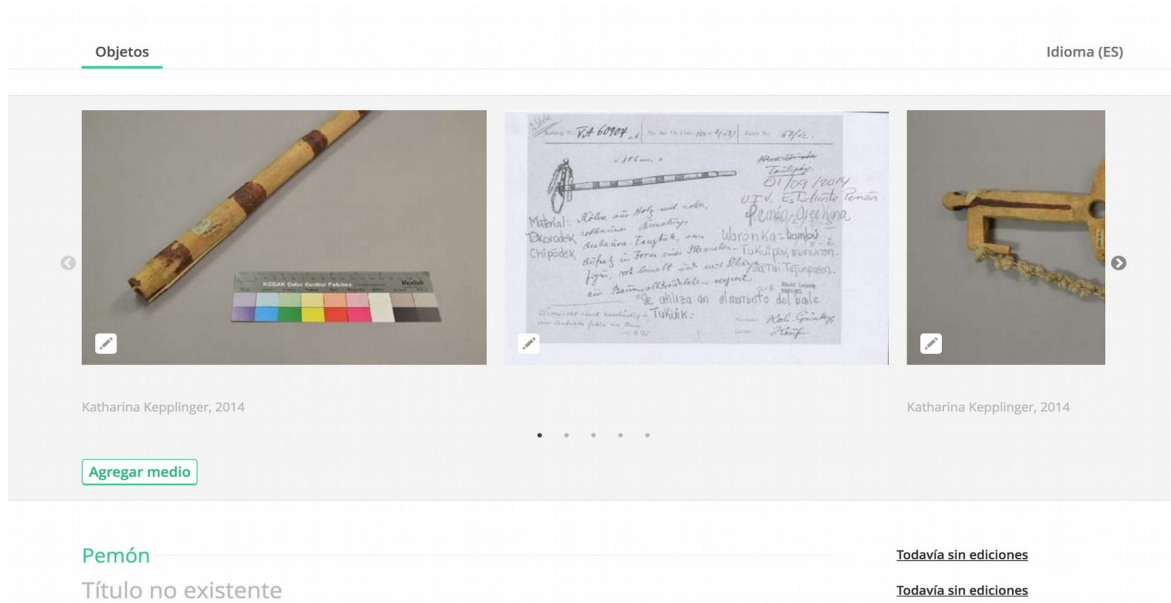


Figure 1: Kamadén, VA 60904, Ethnologisches Museum Dahlem, Sammlung Koch-Grünberg

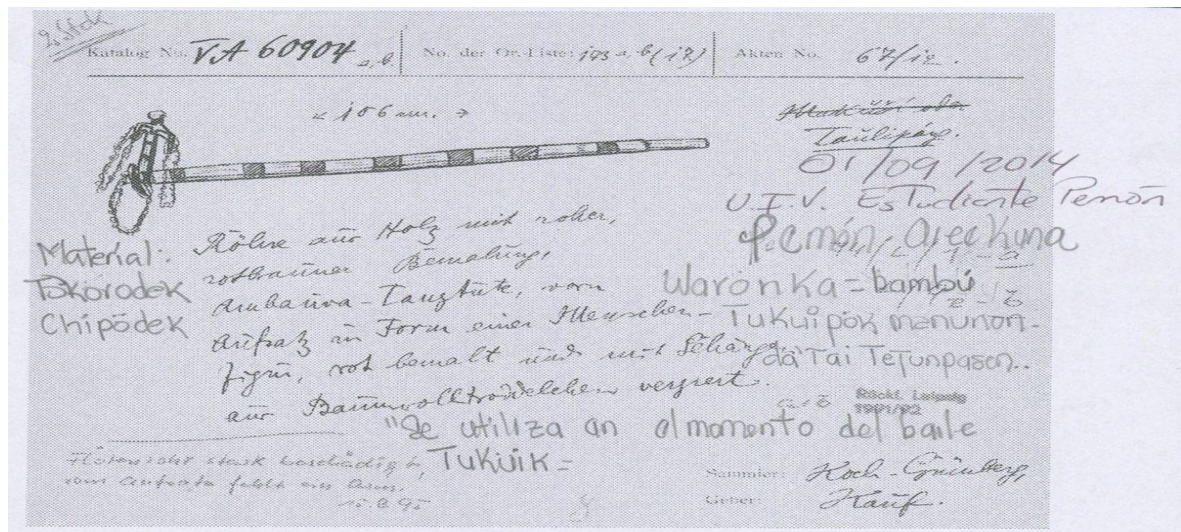


Figure 2: Catalogue Sheet



After talking to Andrea Scholz it can be stated that an Arekuna Pemon student of the UIV has written on the sheet at the 1st of September in 2014. His name is Wilmer Sucre. He is 27 years old and from the community Kavanayén (about 130 km from my place of residence). During his visit to the museum in 2014 he wrote on the catalogue sheet. It is the reason why Makuxí is crossed out and the instrument is now only a "Pemón-Taurepán (Taulipáng) *waronká* (dance stick)". He wrote in Pemón language as well as in Spanish that it was used at the moment of the *tukúik* dance performance.

When analyzing the photos and the catalogue sheet with Balbina the contradiction was immediately apparent. She confirmed the former designation of "trumpet". It is known that a *warónka* is a dance stick. Balbina refers to a 75-year-old singer named Juan Sucre from Kavanayén who sung us his songs and showed us his dance stick during our visits (2006, 2010, 2015). It is the community of the young student as well. The last name refers to the family affiliation, as the missionaries in the 1940s and 1950s named the indigenous families with these Spanish surnames. So it can be assumed that Wilmer is a grandson of Juan. Juan Sucre's *warónka* (dance stick) has

no top part. But the object in figure 1 has the human figure made from wood on top. This ornament proves that it was not used as a dance stick but as a trumpet. Therefore, Balbina decides that the collector Theodor Koch-Grünberg was right when saying that the instrument is a *kamayín* (trumpet). It needs to be mentioned that Balbina had only the photos of the data bank for her analysis.

When working a few month later in the archive we were able to understand what maybe has happened to Wilmer. The sticks are stored separated from the top part human figure. Thus, he may only have seen the tube. This tubes are similar. In figure 3 (middle/right) Balbina plays a *waronká* (dance stick) from the Koch-Grünberg collection (VA 61019). In the center of the tube a *kewei* (rattle) is fixed. It is quite usual to denominate the whole instrument pars pro toto as *kewei*. The *waronká* (dance stick) is played during the *parishara* dance as well as the *kamayín* (trumpet). Normally, the *kamayín* (trumpet) is shorter as the *warunká* (dance stick) and has a smaller diameter. However, Balbina explained that the dance stick *waronká* can be also used as *kamayín* (trumpet), in particular when the dancers have no *kamayín* (Fig 3, right).



Figure 3: left, *Kamayín* player in Koimélemong, Koch-Grünberg 1911; middle/left, *Kamayín* Raimundo Pérez; middle/right, Balbina plays *waronká*; right, Balbina Lambos playing the *waronká* as *kamayín*

It needs to be underlined that this kind of bamboo tubes are used for both sound practices by today's specialists like Juan Sucre. When we visited the archive, Balbina played the *waronká* with *kewei* (rattle) from the Koch-Grünberg collection. She also demonstrated how the dance stick was used as a *kamayín* (trumpet) as well (fig. 3, right).

In Kavanayén, I took a picture of a *kamayín* in 2005 (figure 3, middle/left). It was owned by Raimundo Pérez and I have no information if he still owns it. It can be assumed that Wilmer have never seen a *kamayín* as it is not used anymore.

A second critical point is Wilmer's notice on the catalogue sheet that it was played during the *tukúik* performance<sup>8</sup>. Both instruments (*waronká* and *kamayín*) are used in the *parishara* dance. The *tukúik* is accompanied by the *sanpura*. It is a small drum, which is taken under the left arm and played with a mallet. Another musical instruments is an aerophone named *rue rue*. It consists of two not bounded small bambú sticks with different length played like a panflute.

The dance stick *waronká* is also used in the *marik* (Kamarakoto) or *murúa* (Taurepán) dances. This performances are more sacred as they reflect the interaction with the spirits of the table mountains.

However, neither the *waronká* (dance stick) nor the *kamayín* (trumpet) is used in the *tukúik* dance. But *parishara* and *tukúik* were danced at the same time. Both dances were performed at the opening of a festivity. The guests performed *tukúik* and the hostage danced the *parishara*, as it is documented in a film made by Theodor Koch-Grünberg. It can be assumed that a *waronká* player

appeared next to a *tukúik* dancer due to the diachronic performance.

The mentioned ambivalence shows, on one hand, that the work with the database in the field, without the object, reveals another perspective to the physical object as the work with the physical object in the archive. Balbina was convinced that the given information by Wilmer was wrong, because all information in the data bank refer clearly to the *kamayín* (trumpet). Her further investigations in the archive opened the distinct forms of interpretation and associations as part of the ontological unit in which the object is embedded. Furthermore, the contradictory statements show that indigenous groups should not be read as a homogenously thinking entity, culture or community, but rather as a conglomerate of individual statements that multiply the databases and the connected association fields through personal experiences.

This particular *kamayín* (trumpet) was part of the *parishara* dance song network which was primarily a ritual for attracting animals like tapirs or peccaries. All material and immaterial objects and/or entities have to be considered inside such ontological network (fig. 4). The dance dress with the name "maripada" is part of that *parishara* dance song network as well. It is also a musical instrument. The sound aesthetic of that musical instrument is based on the idea that the palm leaves beat against each other generating the wished sound. This sound mimics the striking of the blades of savanna grass, as it is produced during the movement of the animals, such as the tapir or the peccaries. It should be used exclusively the maripa palm (*Maximiliana maripa*), since the leaves of this palm have the appropriate hardness (Lewy 2012). This performance of

8 Wilmer wrote "Tukúik" (see fig. 2).

an extended memory of the dance dress as instrument or sound source was explained by Balbina. While explaining in the archive she used the mentioned dance stick *waronká* (fig. 3 middle/right) as well as she was singing and moving her body to show how the palm leaves beat against each other.

This simulation of the sound landscape from the perspective of the peccaries is enhanced by the *kamayin* (trumpet) which mimics the grunts of peccaries. The song itself comes from the mythical world, and was handed down by the pigs to the people in order to interact with them (Koch-Grünberg 1916, Lewy 2016). It is the maintenance of a relationship within the human and nonhuman collective.

A further important sound producer is the *kewei* (rattle). It consists of animal hooves and fruits serving for attracting the animals by its special unique sound. This specific sound is generated by the hooves and fruits when beating against each other. The *kewei* is fixed on the *waronká* beating the ground. The preferred sound of the dance stick with rattle is generated only when beating on soil as it resembles the locomotion of a peccary herd. Balbina remembers me that we once realized a video about the importance to beat the *kewei* and the *waronká* to the ground instead on a cement floor. It is precisely this unite of "rattle-stick-soil" that produces the desired sound fulfilling the ontological unit of the trans-specific interaction.

The *parishara* dance song network can be revealed in its historical dimension (figure 4) starting only from one instrument and its stored extended memories on the catalogue sheet in the data bank. One of the most important entity here are the *parishara* songs itself. Koch-Grünberg recorded several

*parishara* dance songs during the ceremony he filmed. His wax cylinders are stored in the same museum but in another department (Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv). Balbina explains that all songs and objects are related to each other as they are parts of *parishara*. Thus, *parishara* is not only a dance or a festival as it is an interaction of all entities (spirits, animals) of the collective. Singing and dancing helped her not only to demonstrate the use of the objects but to activate her body memory and to start in interaction with the objects. Body, dance movement and the material objects like instruments and dance clothes resonate as an ontological unit of memory through performance. The performance in the museum's archive establishes trans-specific interactions and therefore, it guarantees the balance between the entities of the collective (humans and nonhumans).

Finally, the performances of singing and dancing by indigenous visitors in archives aims to embed things back into their networks to restore the ontological balances. Here, polyvariants of information and associations are placed next to one another, since ambiguities in the respective networks do not necessarily have to contradict one another, even if this is not always immediately comprehensible at the first time.

### **Pakara**

The question of why indigenous visitors sing when confronting with objects in museum's archive refer to a second point. It can be assumed that the indigenous specialists Gaudencio and Maria did not sing primarily to activate their memories. They were asking for a permission to show the quartz stone to an audience (Haas, Muñoz & Muñoz 2018:

143). When taking this trans-specific communication (Halbmayer 2010) as a certainty, then, it needs to be asked further how this trans-specific communication

works. The answer can not be given here as it is the world of Gaudencio and Maria. But the question serves to describe a similar situation in our archive's work.

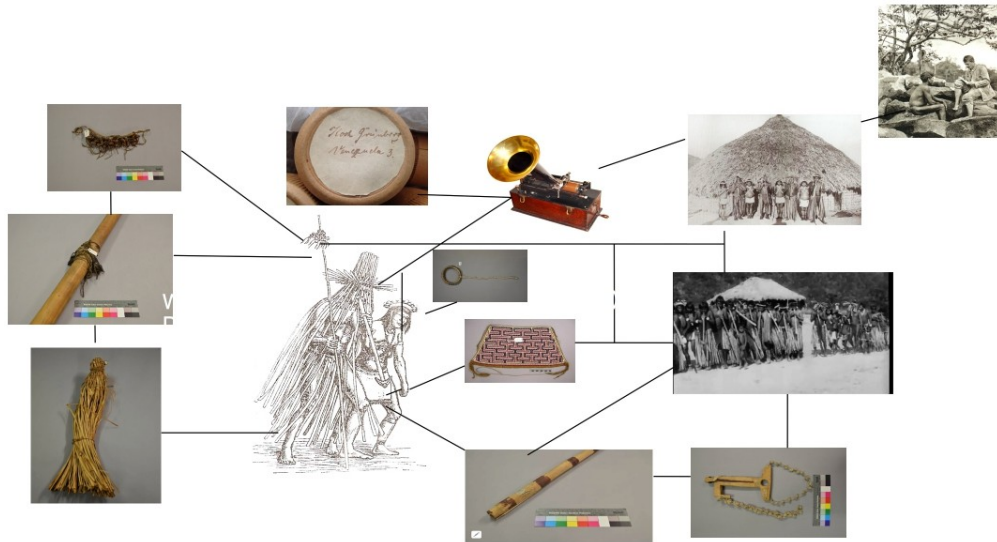


Figure 4: Historical Network of Parishara Dance

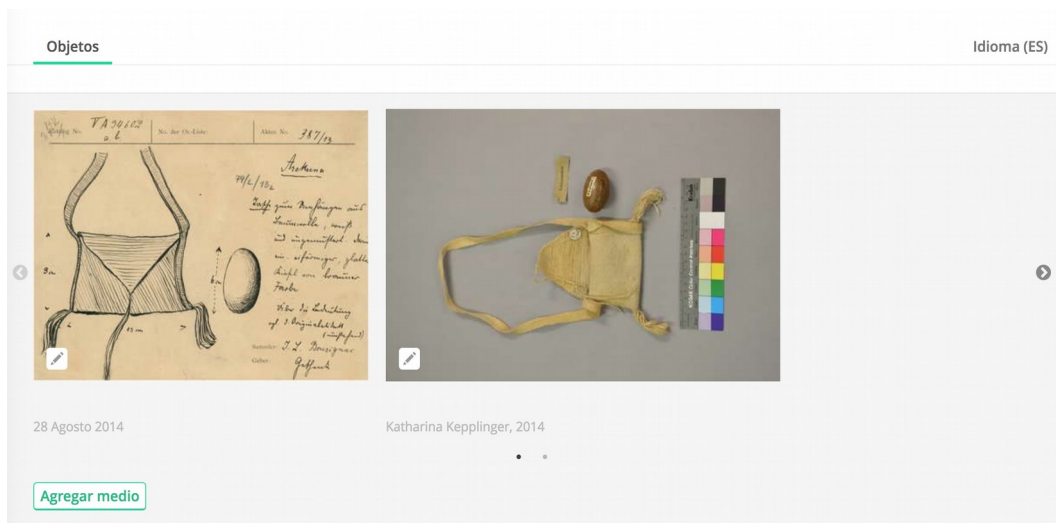


Figure 5: Pakara picture in data bank "Sharing knowledge",

Balbina was shocked when seeing a picture of a textile bag with a stone (VA34602, fig. 5) in the data bank. She realized that the object is a *pakara* explaining that every *piasán* (shaman) has one and its content is absolutely sacred. The stone must not be seen by human beings because it can be used for healing as well as for bad things. The object in fig. 5 was collected by "I.L. Boussignac". The only information about that name is, that he compiled a Arekuna word list and that he had contact with Theodor Preuss in Berlin<sup>9</sup>.

Balbina explains the danger of the bag and the stone in her speech at the conference in the museum a month later. In a special ritual, Elton, the Taurepán specialist from Brazil, and Balbina, decided to lock the box in which several bags and stones are kept for future generations. The bags and the stones will continue in the archive, but they will not appear in any exposition.

The main part of the ritual to lock the things was singing. Therefore, Balbina chose a very special song from the Kamarakto/Arekuna amanawui genre. She recorded this song in Kamarata with Usankoro in the 1990's. Usankoro was the last famous *piasán pachi* (female shaman) in the Aretauka territory. Balbina learned the song, aiming to perform and to transmit it for future generations. We discussed *amanawui* dance songs often over the last years (Lewy 2017b). It is a quite ambiguous genre as it refers to the context of love songs as well as it is also the name for Kanaima (bad shamans) songs. The lyrics are not completely translated here due to ethical reasons. But it can be said that they refer to good in the intention of Balbina's performance.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication with Michael Kraus 2018.

She cried while and after singing, saying that she sung the song as a farewell. She also explained later that she talked to the stone. She told him<sup>10</sup> that he was used for good but as well for bad things. In the future he will rest in the museum's archive and he will be there only for good things.

It needs to be mentioned that this kind of stone were always used to demonstrate the power of its owner. The stone is the house of the spirits. It can also be used by *piasán* (shamans) to keep a *yekaton* (soul) of a sick person. These topics will not be discussed in further details. The important point here is that singing as performance helped to communicate with the stone. The stone's interiority is humanlike (soul). This interiority of the stone has the same apperception capacities as humans. Thus, singing attracts the attention of listening by the stone as a nonhuman entity with that humanlike interiority. When following this thinking it can be expected that the stone can hear the song as well as he knows that the message refers to him (the stone). Every entity has its special song. For example, in this Amanawui song, the word *tapon* in line 2 means "base of something".

1. Wakü pününkaiya
2. Tapon pününkaiya
3. Kuyai kuyai wesepününka<sup>11</sup>

The stone is the base for the souls or spirits which should have to be used for good (*wakü*) things in the future.

<sup>10</sup> Balbina uses the term "él" in Spanish, (he) when talking about the bag's stone.

<sup>11</sup> Amanawui song, performed by Balbina Lambos in October 2018 at the Ethnographic Museum Berlin Dahlem (Archive).

## Conclusion

When answering the question why indigenous specialists sing and dance in ethnographic museums archive two significant reasons can be revealed. First, the reunification of material/immaterial things to its ontological unit makes the singing and dancing performance necessary. Indigenous specialists quickly notice the separation of their object networks. Often musical instruments or specific ritual utensils are stored in separated places in the museum. It leads to confusion and displeasure as well as the desire to restore this separation. This kinds of interaction are described more detailed in the mentioned article by Haas, Muñoz & Muñoz (2018). The experiences in the collaboration with Balbina shows that the presented objects are an initial point for associations and references. This references activate the memory of the body as well as the sound memory. Songs were generated and reconsidered by moving the body. Furthermore, knowledge is revealed by songs. This knowledge shows the connection between the mythical world and the songs as well as the embedded objects. All involved entities (objects, myths, songs, dances, etc.) generate the ontological unit which needs to be restored when taking indigenous certainty about their cosmological and epistemological thinking as serious.

Second, the mentioned ontological unit base on trans-specific communication between the entities of a collective. This entities are not only humans and/or animate beings. As seen above, trans-specific communication is also established in interaction with stones. In the discussed examples this trans-specific interaction was realized by Gaudencio, Maria and Balbina by means of singing. While in a

first place Gaudencio and Maria asked for permission to show the quartz stone to a broader audience, Balbina explained to the stone that he will not be exhibited to any people anymore. The final intention is the opposite to the first one, but the important point is that all indigenous specialist sung with and to objects.

Finally, it needs to be underlined that more projects and cooperation are necessary in the future to restore ontological units in the archives and to maintain a constant trans-specific communication between the things and the humans they belong to. When reflecting the methods, it can be stated that virtual data bank work is different to archive work. A great advantage is that a multitude of indigenous specialists can be asked when working with the data bank in the field. This is an important point not only for collecting data but to reflected on ethical behavior about the use of that data. This interaction is missing when research is done in an archive. Otherwise, the access to the physical object serves for researching about the process of reunification of ontological units by several performances.

On the one hand, data banks as a kind of "living archive" means a huge step connecting the worlds by new forms of collaborative research, moving the 'analog' field into the virtual place. Complex positions and views emerge challenging the traditional way of separation by purification. On the other hand, classic "anthropologists and researchers" are acting now as moderator, not without being able to continue to generate his own derivations and questions. For this purpose, further formats have to be developed for the future, both virtually as real, interacting with each other in the archive and in the field.

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