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Kaingang Symbolic Constructions

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In this work we present aesthetical reflections about the pattern in *Kaingang* plaitwork, once they produce codes and express their cultural identity, permeated through symbols. The symbolic language that is present in the indigene populations. The symbolic language of the indigene populations has its place at oral report, the visual space and the graphic representation as well as in the dramatic power of their myths and beliefs. Nowadays, in the southern part of Brazil, among the indigene ethnic groups, the *Kaingang* is the most populous one. Their plait works are relevant references to their visibility. They are present and persist in the basketry, in their weapons and some other objects that are part of a visual representation system originated from a traditional and specific cultural structure. The plait works show graphisms, a symbolic reading and are associated to the *Kaingang* dual perception which emphasizes and synthesizes their social organization, based in the two halves: *kamé* and *kainrú-kré*. Their graphic representations always carry a message to be decoded in a visual and mental way. Their graphic and mental symbols underline the ideal of harmony and complementarity between the two halves. The plait works are visible marks of this interchange, unknown by society but, truly felt by the *Kaingang*. The visualization of this indigene basketry leads us to the round shape and, these objects are full of meaning. The circle represents the sun and the moon what contemplate the myth of the origin of the two halves in the *Kaingang* culture. The construction of these image objects make it possible for some formal analysis, considering the interior and exterior spaces and their symbology. The dualist conception of ideally search for symmetry in opposite relations reflects in the aesthetic and, consequently, in the visual representation system once the graphisms – “marks” – approximate and antagonize the opposite. It is consensus among the authors that the philosophy of establishing relations between the opposite is one of the most remarkable expressions in the *Kaingang* thinking.

The *Kaingang* and their plaitwork

Nowadays, among all the Indian ethnic groups, the *Kaingang* is the most populous one in the meridional Brazil. According to FUNAI (Indian National Foundation) 2006 official data, there are about 29,000 individuals, that can be find in Indian territories and at some encampments in the states of Rio Grande do Sul¹, Santa Catarina, Paraná and São Paulo.

The preferred natural environment of these people are the woods with pine trees and the fields at the higher lands of the south Brazil plateau not too far from rivers and brooks. According to Becker², they are part of the wide linguistic stem *Jê*, but they can be known by the names of *Guayaná*, *Coroado*, *Bugre*, *Botocudo*, *Kokleng*, *Bate*, *Chova*, *Pinaré*, *Kaigua*, *Aweikoma*, among many others.

The *Kaingang* social organization, according to anthropologists, is characterized by the existence of two exogamic halves, patrilinear, complementary and asymmetric called: *kamé* and *kainrú-kré* (Silva³). In the Indian communities' hierarchy, the leadership is held by the *Cacique*, who is the major authority inside his physical space limits for both familiar aspect and shared decisions.

The *Kaingang* were practitioners of shamanism and their traditional shaman was the *kujã*, who had its power related to his capacity to communicate with the *iangrê* spirits (creatures from the woods): the one and only social character to establish the intermediation between worlds conceived differently but not radically separated. Today, this tradition is being damaged by the religious diversity present at the *Kaingang* reservations and the *kujã* coexist together with other interveners (Crépeau⁴).

At the present time, these people are organized and fight for more space and participation in the national society and to keep their oral, written and visual traditions through plait objects, graphisms, etc. to keep their ethnic culture.

Their artifact, of a predominantly textile character, uses natural fiber extract from their reservations to make basketry, bolters, hats and some other products made only in some Indian settlements. Their workmanship is a tradition from centuries and it is also their survival source. When seen in their motion they seem like clipping from a view, the scene of a movie. Their plaitwork constitute a visual reference that is identified especially in their basketry. They are visible marks of their culture.

The making of their artifact involves the family in the picking of the bamboo and liana, in the transportation from the woods and plains to the settlement, in the material preparation, tinting and plait. The raw material picking is done by the men who cut the liana in the woods and bring them rolled up and they are stored it in this way. The bamboos are transported in large packs, they can be shaven or not and are used in the form of stripes. The children, even the younger ones, learn the art of plaiting the bamboo and go with their father, mother or brothers to sell their production to the white population in near by communities, cities or districts. This everyday life, in all aspects, is permeated of symbolic references that persist along the times.

In Zattera's⁵ definition

"The plaitwork – dispose in plait.

It is the plait of three or more fibers passing them alternately the right or left fiber over the middle one. The plait can be made with three to seventeen or more stalks or sticks. The most common in our State are the ones made with leather, corn husk, wheat and butia palm tree straw bat, we can also find some made from gravatá (bromeliaceas) fiber, palms, tiririca (*Cyperus rotundus*), rice straw, banana tree and grass."

The plaitwork is still in use by the *Kaingang*, valorizing the cultural marks that identify them as an ethnic group and, to Gorini e Veiga⁶,

"The natural fiber plait technique is very similar to the base of formal weaving in textile or web. It is the bottom warping and fence web. The same happens with the plating of horizontal and vertical fibers that by the development of simple or elaborated plait techniques make it possible to produce basketry, hampers, bolters, straw rugs, among others."

According to the *Kaingang* testimony, during the experience of the authors' of this work among the indians, it could be verified that the vegetal raw material has its time for

picking, its preparation and its own technique of modeling or plaiting. The main raw materials are the lianas and bamboos. The *Kaingang* use different types of bamboo: taquara-mansa (*Merostachys filgueirasii*), taquara-lisa (*Merostachys petiolatae*) and thorny taquara braba (*Guadua trinii*). Among the lianas they use: cipó imbé (*Philodendron bipinnatifidum*), cipó São João (*Pyrostegia venusta*) and cipó amarelo (*Heteropterys aceroides*). In making the plaitwork they also use some different raw materials like: liana bark; bamboo strips; palm tree strips; bamboo and liana strips. The fiber drying must be observed once green fiber will interfere in the making and finishing of the artifact.

The plaiting are examples that persist. That's why the *Kaingang* basketry is the most popular and visible object of this ethnic group. Another very important and significant object is the bolter that besides contributing to grain selection and food preparation was used as a sacred object and was part of their rituals.

The myth of creation – myth of the sun and myth of the moon

The *Kaingang* have their social organization inserted by myths: the myth of the sun, myth of the moon and the deluge myth. The myths are forms of a popular culture but, they are also, much more than that, they are what people have in common. According to Campbell⁷, "myths are stories from our search of truth, of sense, of signification, along the time... are metaphors of human been spiritual potentialities and, the powers that animate our life animate the world's life"

In all these people, Geertz⁸ considers that myths, vehicles, shapes and symbolic objects are encircled with an aura of deep moral integrity. Everywhere, the sacred has, in itself, a sense of intrinsic obligation: it not only encourages the acceptance but also demands for it, both intellectually and emotionally.

To understand the cultural manifestations of a social group, its relation with arts and its artifact, it is necessary to search the roots, the construction way and even symbolic systems deconstruction.

The *Kaingang* social organization believes and respects its mythical origin, which according to Crépeau⁹, it is characterized by duality: the existence of idealistic conceived halves: *kamé* and *kainrú-kré*, having between them an asymmetric and complementary relation. The *kamé* half is considered the first because it has more "power" than the *kainrú-kré* half.

To Langer¹⁰

"The myth begins in fantasy, that may remain tacit for a long time: because fantasy primary form is an entirely subjective phenomena and specific to dreams... and it tends to become systematized because it presents, no matter how metaphorically, a frame from the world, an intro-sight of life in general... the myth material is, in reality, only a familiar symbolism of the dream-image and fantasy".

The *Kaingang* are fully in accordance that *kamé* is the beginning, the first. The *Kaingang* myths understand that the *kamé* half is, sociologically, the origin of the *kainrú-kré* half. Among Crépeau investigations, some relate the myth of the sun and the moon with the myth of the halves' origin. This origin myth inserts the *Kaingang* social division: the sun is *kamé* and the moon is *kainrú-kré*. According to the myth, the origin of the moon,

associated to the *kainrú-kré*, tells that, at the beginning of time, there were two suns *kamé*, so that one lost its initial light intensity to become the star of the night.

To Campbell¹¹, mythology suggests that there is a singularity in relation to which the duality plays a role of shadows game. We have the basic mythological motive that in its origin everything was one and then, there was a separation of heavens and earth, male and female, sun and moon, and so on.

The *Kaingang* myth also leans on a distinction and an asymmetry that allows the engendering of utile contrasts in function of variable and mutable contexts, contrasts that are built from very simple principles: the identical and the different, the single and the multiple, the center and the surrounding, the masculine and the feminine. The philosophy of establishing relations, ideally harmonic between the opposite is one of the most remarkable expressions in the *Kaingang* thinking.

The mythic thinking, for Lévi-Strauss¹², always proceeds from the consciousness of the oppositions to its resolution. The purpose of the myth is to give a logical model capable of overcoming the contradiction.

This statement elucidates one of the principles that ground the *Kaingang* culture, the complementary feature between the *kamé* and *kainrú-kré* halves: opposite sides, distinct sides with specific characteristics, bipolar that develop a relation of friendship, cooperation, integration and symmetry. In the sense of complementarily one half could only exist in opposition to the other, that is, if it is opposing the other half.

To some other authors, including Barthes¹³ in his book *Mythologies*, "the myths are forms of culture but, they are more than that (...) they are a communication system, a message, a way of signification, a shape. The myth is not defined by the object of its message but, by the way it articulates the message"

In this way, the cited author uses, in the study of myths, the following concepts: the significant becomes the shape; the meaning is the concept and the sign, signification. The signification is the myth itself, the linking of shape and concept in cultural sign.

In this view, we can say that the *Kaingang* myth reflects images full of symbols, shapes that are used as information vehicles to their community. In this way, we can define as significant – the myth of the sun and the myth of the moon and, as meaning the creation of the two halves that resulted in the signification: *kamé* and *kainrú-kré*, sign of the two exogamic halves.

Shape, symbol and meaning

Each culture has its own aesthetics. Emotions are stimulated not only by shape but also, by intimate associations between shape and individual imagination. When the shapes demonstrate a meaning, it is because they refer to past experiences, they work as symbols, a new element to appreciation (Dias¹⁴).

To look to Indian objects is to look to surprising and mysterious things. Velthen¹⁵, in his article at the Brazil 500 Discovery Anniversary Catalog, emphasizes that the look should go beyond the apparent surface and dive in deeper structures because; it is in these domains that the objects are more instigating and challenging. There are many ways of looking. The aesthetic shapes mean, universally, much more than they can represent. A

shape will only make sense if it is incorporated in a value and meaning system that integrates it in wider cultural processes.

To Focillon¹⁶, the shape has a meaning that belongs entirely to it, a particular value. It has a signification and receives meanings. Its fundamental content is a formal content and, from the very moment that it emerges, it can be read in different ways depending on its cultural context.

To look to the *Kaingang* textile constructions is to go beyond its structure; it is to stumble upon its meaning. They induce to the knowledge about this culture, its contexts: an interpretation not limited to the concrete and objective shapes but, to the entire set of lived experiences. These constructions reveal dimensions of a mythic and metaphysic universe. "More that simply refraining itself from expressing the object, the man, emotionally, it would "intensify" him through the symbol". (Cassirer apud Langer¹⁷).

In this perspective, the plait artifacts portray symbolic images of their dual conception of the cosmos. The shapes and their meanings mix together in order to put the senses at an alert state. To Dias¹⁸, the understanding of this view depends on the observing of semiotic conventions. Different representation systems have different potentials to encode meanings and interpretation conditions. Besides the iconography, we must consider the symbolic values aggregated to the materials (in its picking and preparation), in the techniques used, in the structure and shapes, in the use and narratives told about each artifact. To the author mentioned above, besides the cultural variety, the interpretation and value of each object will also change inside each culture due to many context factors.

In a different way, the object produces some level of unlikeness in the access of its interpretation, accessible only to a few people. To the *Kaingang*, their plaitwork are visual identities recognized by them, that entails marks and so constituting in a visual code. These codes are not recognized by all individuals. The figures, that is, the graphic symbols transmit a presentational language but, are not seen as the real meaning of the mental representations and the communication language that presents the dualism in the plaiting as meaning.

"The indian arts are a means to the storage and transmission of information, configuring an highly visual text, that is characterized by being shared once the aesthetic elements have a sense and a logical that is understood by the artist and by the group to which he belongs to".¹⁹

To the *Kaingang*, the dualism is demonstrated in many aspects of the ritual and social life, in their plait artifacts, in the graphisms, in the naming of the animals and plants, etc. and, considering some as pertaining to one or to the other exogamic half. It is in the plait objects, in their textile construction that the views of their origin is constantly and consistently and also unconsciously present, by the faithful record, reproduction of a tradition of shapes and graphisms.

The use and reproduction of symbols by the *Kaingang* in their plaitwork are explained in studies of men symbolic activities. Several researchers like: Howard Gardner, Ernest Cassirer, Susanne Langer, Saussure and other masters have analyzed and defined the symbol in relation to the artistic production.

To Cassirer²⁰, men are a symbolic animal. He takes, as his initial point, the analyses of human mental structure and says that this structure would be defined by its tendency to express itself by the use of symbols. Thus, Cassirer defines the symbolic shapes, in which

the human discourse happens and, they would be basically divided into three: the language, the myth and the knowledge. He considers the art as a particular modality of symbolization in which besides refraining him from expressing the object, the men would emotionally intensify it through the symbol.

Next, Langer²¹ sustain that "the human being has a basic and intense necessity to symbolize, to invent meaning and to invest the world with senses". One of the human characteristics is to search for meaning and to transform the experience in new meanings. The langerian thought clashes Cassirer principle, to whom any form of civilization express, symbolically, the human thinking activity, in a comparing way in the ambit of ideas or other civilization forms. An artistic symbol that is present in indian artifacts. A symbol of the artistic producing

"it can be the product of the human ability or something seen in nature as a "meaningful shape – it has more than a discursive or presentable meaning: its own shape, as a sensorial phenomena, has what I have called "implicit" meaning like the ritual and the myth but, in a more general species".²²

The "implicit" meaning in what is relative to the *Kaingang* from RS (BR) is, perhaps the most important because it reveals the myth of the sun and the myth of the moon, that is, the duality in human species that is also demonstrated in the shamanist rituals and in their everyday life.

Every relation we have with the world is processed by signs. Today's world is full of symbols which multiply in the world. A sign is something that represents another thing. The sign means something but, when it becomes into shape, it inspires meaning: it builds a completely new meaning giving the shape a new life through associations.

Time takes charge of anchoring the history of a people into a sign and to engrave as a symbol that people's memory. In the *Kaingang* culture, the plaitwork with its graphisms are sign of an indigene community and also, symbols of their identity.

Visibility of textile constructions

Theoretical studies about the indigene art demonstrate that they have a visual representation system compared to a cultural code proper of their ethnic group. This code is revealed by the plait type and motive, adornment and rituals. From the theoretical studies and from the bibliographic references, ethnographic living experiences are articulated, searching for a careful look to the graphic system and at the symbolic representations of the living context of the indigenes at their communities.

The *Kaingang* plait the bearer and, in it they will define the communication code by means of specific symbols from their own language. Aesthetically, when we observe the artistic expressions from the *Kaingang* indigenes (RS – Brazil), in their plait, fabrics, weapons, and tools, the result shows visible marks of their graphisms that are identified by the urban, regional and state society.

The *Kaingang* textile constructions, in this work, represented by the basketry, constitute visual and image full references of these people. Their plait structure is symbology intermixed and expresses their formal repertory. Everything that is aesthetically relevant in an object is visible in its shape: in the materials, in its structure, in its plait, in the graphisms, in its colors, in its overall configuration. Shape is the visible configuration of content.

The aesthetic analyses of the *Kaingang* symbolic constructions can be performed from an analysis of their visual writing style, with its meanings and shapes. Although, the symbology determines the *Kaingang* basketry shape with its plait and graphisms, it allows two visual-aesthetic readings that however connected the symbolic and the forma with a decorative meaning. According to Arnheim²³, to make an extrinsic analysis we can separate the shape configuration and its meaning. In this case, the graphisms communicate an order that is, at the same time, symbolic and decorative.

In this way, we approach some aspects that are the base line to these visual-aesthetic readings. In the symbolic reading of the textile constructions, the object morphology, the plait and, consequently the graphisms are the significant, holders of the meanings and of the *Kaingang* fundamental thinking principles. The recognition of the symbols plaited by this people leads to their visual and mythic universe: they really feel this representation that is absolutely unknown by society. On the other hand, the decorative language is also felt by the *Kaingang*, it is the sole reading that is decoded by society in general.

To a better understanding of this symbolic universe, the analysis of the plait constructions lays on Silva²⁴ theses, that has an expressive anthropological founding about the *Kaingang* graphisms,

According to this author, the *Kaingang* visual representation system identifies and emphasizes the belonging of its members to each of the *kamé* and *kainrú-kré* halves. The plait can be found in different objects; they integrate this visual representation system and present two levels of visualization: the morphological and the graphical.

- Morphological level – emphasizes the opposition and the complementarily among any shape long/tall/open and any shape round/short/close originated in nature or from the cultural universe;
- Graphical level – stand out the opposition and complementarily between any graphisms or mark round/close and any graphisms or mark long/open originated in nature or from the cultural universe.

The basketry is the most suggestive visual expression of *Kaingang* visibility. Therefore, the basket is the focus of this analysis. According to the author mentioned above, the basket bases correspond to technical procedures of its plaiting: plait basket base open (*kamé*) (figure 1) and plait basket base closed (*kainrú-kré*) (figure 2) that clashes a “contrasting and opposing bipolarization of the two types of plait techniques”²⁵. The basket bases do not depend on the raw material used: liana or bamboo.



Figure 1. Example of plait basket base open (*kamé*)



Figure 2. Example of plait basket base closed (*kainrú-kré*)

These bases define the structure, the morphology of the baskets (*kre*) and their plaiting. According to Silva²⁶, the morphological typology of the tipologia *Kaingang* baskets, can be summarized into three types:

- Long or tall basket - *kr téi (kamé)* (figure 3)
- Round or short basket - *kre ror (kainrú-kré)* (figure 4)
- Square basket *kre kōpó* - it can be long (*kre kōpó téi*) or short (*kre kōpó ror*) (figures 5 and 6)



Figure 3. Example of a long basket (*kre téi*) *kamé*



Figure 4. Example of a short basket (*kre ror*) *kainrí-kre*



Figure 5. Example of a long square basket (*kre kōpó téi*) *kamé*



Figure 6. Example of a short square basket (*kre kōpó ror*) *Kainrú-kré*

The *téi* term identifies *kamé* and *ror* identifies *kainrú-kré* and they visually express the cosmological duality. In this morphological statement, the duality is present but, it also refers to both axles of the *Kaingang* material culture, because there are long and round objects that are common to both halves: *krá* = pestle arm and *ngret* = bolter.

Concerning to the morphology shown in the baskets, one can observe that besides the asymmetric and contrasting short/long shapes, the round shape is present in both situations. This analysis continues for the functional typology when referring to the cargo baskets.

According to the researchers, the basketry independently of the conformation in its initial base (open/close), its plait technique (open/close), its functionality and material used, it is predominantly round. Visually they are round structures. The emphasis in this shape takes us back to the myth of the origin, the myth of the sun and the myth of the moon and to the myth of the creation: the same shape that transmute in two images that symbolize two concepts, the two *Kaingang* cosmic halves.

The basketry construction, made possible from this two base types that determine the plait technique (*wōfy*), can print on the basket graphisms: open *téi* (*kamé*) or closed *ror* (*kairu*), independently of the raw material used and the different colors on it. The plait technique can leave marks *téi* or *ror*, in its plaitwork, emphasized by colored graphisms. In this case, the graphical representation are the lines that appear in the basket surface due to the plaitwork, leaving the record of its "mark" that lead to a concept of well defined images as a concrete symbol.

Because of that, the *Kaingang*, in what it refers to the plaiting (*wōgyf*) and graphisms (*kong-gār*), limit, direct and point to the cosmological differentiated opposition *kamé/kainrú-kré*. In the *Kaingang* plaiting and geometrical graphisms, thought as open or closed (figures 7 and 8 respectively), or like any shape uniquely linked to the division of exogamic patrilinear halves.



Figure 7. Example of a basket with open plait (*kauã*), *kamé*



Figure 8. Example of a basket with closed plait (*kuty*), *Kainru- kré*

In relation to the technique in making the plaitwork and its complexity, according to the in loco research, the *Kaingang* classify them as simple, double or triple. This process is related to the raw material used because, when they use bamboo, the textile possibilities are wider. The more texture the plait has, the more complex is its construction.

The plaiting generate graphisms that leave open (*téi*) (figure9) or closed (*ror*) (figure10) marks (*ra*). While analyzing the plaiting and the graphisms, in some baskets and bolters at *Kaingang*, communities we verified that the indigenes have another understanding. To them, “woof” (plaited surfaces) and “drawings” (colored graphisms). In any way, the meaning of plaiting/woof and its graphisms/drawings are in accordance with Silva, regarding its familiar belonging.

According to the cited author²⁷, “the native classification of the geometrical graphisms lies on the opposite pairs trace/point, long/round, open/closed that correspond to the cosmological opposition *kamé/kainrú*”(figures 9 and 10).



Figure 9. Example of a open graphism – *ra téi (kamé)*



Figure 10. Example of a closed graphism – *ra ror (kainrú-kré)*

Some baskets present the two graphisms, the open and the closed one corresponding to the *kamé* half and to the *kainrú-kré* half - “mixed marks” (figure11). According to information retrieved at the indigene communities, the fusion of the marks on the objects means a relation of union (husband and wife), an alliance between individuals from two opposite halves or, the domain of a half upon the other. The predominance of one or other mark determines the ownership of the object. Each mark symbolizes the unity and, at the same time, the diversity in the *Kaingang* culture.



Figure 11. Example of a basket with open and closed graphisms (*ra iãnhιά*) *kamé* and *kainru- kré* marks

The visual representations stand to our eyes as memorized images or figures. In the symbolic shapes of their plaitwork and graphisms, the *Kaingang* present images that are symmetrically repeated, with a lot of sensitivity in its distribution along the object, what expresses the harmony and intuition of a cosmic equilibrium. The inner space is valorized and presents a harmonic relation with the external, structural shape of the object. Bachelard²⁸ emphasizes “The interior and the exterior are both intimate”.

This “artistic making” that is part of the everyday and survival life fulfill the requirements of information and identification, taking the role of mediator between the individual and his cosmos. The objects with their graphic patterns act as plaited images that provide their ethnic affirmation. By the presupposed that the plaitwork carry cosmological concepts related to a particular mythical repertory, we can accept that the graphic expression is presented in an organized and coherent shape within the idea that has created it.

In a formal analysis, independently of its implicit meanings, unknown by society in general, the decorative sense is present. The senses overlay can lead to some confusion. Nevertheless, depending on who is looking to its context, it will always have a dominating sense.

In human history, the decorative sense is a clearly taken attitude. A shape is considered decorative when it ornaments another thing, when it embellishes the other. Like the symbolic language, the decorative is deep and innate to mankind. We have a natural necessity for decoration. According to Basiaco²⁹, the primitive man already decorated his home and his belongings. He run away from emptiness with decoration and satisfied a deep psychological necessity. To this specific author, the decorative attitude is in the origins of the artistic making and, there are certain decorative signs that associated meaning to them and, objectively understandable, became, then, symbolic shapes.

In this aspect, the *Kaingang* plait constructions express a decorative language that present an intimate relation of an idea that has its origin in their myths and in the materials possibilities. The visual means used to symbolize can be shared with the decoration because they use common characteristics and, in these objects, the visual elements are

coincident: the geometry, the shape represented here by the line, the rhythm and the color (figure12)



Figure 12. Example of a characteristic plaitwork with their graphisms

The linear shape is established by the plaiting, generating geometrical graphisms that when colored become visible at the surface, in a repetitive way, giving the rhythm to the pattern – mark chosen according to the tradition and the meaning in it.

The material used in constructing the objects, the bamboo fiber and liana fiber, contribute for its visual appreciation, for its direct relation to nature, by the textures exploited in the material rustic or better finished in the plaiting technique.

The color, in the textile constructions, is established by the plaiting of two or more fibers, by the fiber itself in different directions (inside and outside surface of the bamboo) and by the colors that produce different visual codes. In relation to the colors, the use of industrialized pigments is frequent due to the difficulty to get natural pigments from the nature, the facility of its preparation and, most of all, their “taste” for strong and vibrating colors. As far as the use of colors, the baskets show the contrast between colors of different temperatures and between light and dark colors, in a way that it integrates and emphasizes the opposites. The natural color of the fibers is harmonized and interlaced with the vibrating colors of pigments, which provide a gradual shift of chromatic value with more or less tint intensity (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Plaitwork with two natural colors and two artificial colors

The visual transmutation of the myth, considering different artifacts, could not be representative of the mythological referential or the exogamic duality. Nevertheless, in direct contact with the indigene communities, we can verify that the *kamé* and *kainrú-kré* halves are, in general respected. In some communities, it is consciously and in others even unconsciously.

In a superficial way, one can see the decoration of the symbolic constructions in the *Kaingang* work but, the sign value with their symbols being transmitted by the way the lianas and bamboos are interlaced, does not result from multiple intelligences work. The individuals, subject of this research demonstrate spatial, plastic, linguistic and pictorial intelligences and, have relevant cultural and social characteristics proper of a group with unchangeable truths. These truths can be spiritual, from their beliefs, their myths, result from the traditions of their ancestors that happen in they daily life and are transmitted to the objects decoration.

Thus, we agree with Velthen¹, when she defines that the indigene decoration communicate an other order, at the same time representative and conceptual, which effectively contributes to the understanding of the interleaving between the aesthetic and others thinking domain.

In the *Kaingang* symbolic constructions, the basketry with its graphic plaits represents forms that dialogue, expressing the relation of complementarily between the exogamic *kamé* and *kainru-kré* halves. The internal space is valorized by the colored "drawings" and demonstrates a harmonic relation with the external structural shape of the object. The complete integration of its elements is harmonically organized as to constitute an entirety.

The relation between long and round, trace and point and, closed and opened emphasize the duality and the qualities that complete each other. The language itself brings the dialectic of open and close. "By the sense it closes and by the poetic expressions it opens" and, in this way we can conclude that "men is a half-open being"².

¹ The abbreviation "RS" will be used to refer this state in the sequence of this document.

² BECKER, Ítala Irene Basile. **O Índio *Kaingang* no Rio Grande do Sul**. Pesquisas, série Antropologia, n.29. São Leopoldo:Ed. Unisinos, 1976, p.331.

³ SILVA, Sérgio Baptista. **Etnoarqueologia dos grafismos *Kaingang*: um modelo para a compreensão das sociedades Proto-Je meridionais**. São Paulo, PPGAS/USP, Tese de Doutorado, 2001. <http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8134/tde-17122001-005542/>

⁴ CRÉPEAU, Robert R.. **A prática do xamanismo entre os *Kaingang* do Brasil Meridional: uma breve comparação com o xamanismo Bororo**. Horizontes Antropológicos, Porto Alegre, ano 8, n.18, dezembro de 2002, , p.113-129

⁵ ZATTERA, Vera Stedile. **Arte Têxtil no Rio Grande do Sul**. Porto Alegre: Ed. São Miguel,1988.

⁶ GORINI, Berenice e VEIGA, Semiramis G. **Memória trançada**: Litoral de Santa Catarina. Florianópolis: Edeme, 2001, p. 11.

⁷ CAMPBELL, Joseph. **O poder do mito**.São Paulo: Palas Athena, 1990.

⁸ GEERTZ, Clifford. **A Interpretação das culturas**. Rio de Janeiro: LTC-Livros Técnicos e Científicos Editora S.A., 1989.

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