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Indigenous drawings as "cultural fossil guides"

An archaeological comparative study on the evolution of the human mind

Diego A. Ballestero
Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Argentina)
dballestero@gmx.com

Short abstract

I examine a study on Argentinean indigenous drawings conducted by the German anthropologist Robert Lehmann-Nitsche in 1906 and his intention to collaborate with German anthropological research aiming to construct a global comparative cartography of the evolution of the human mind.

Long abstract

In the second half of the 19th century, scholars from different disciplines studied non-European people's culture as a means to understand the origin and evolution of Western civilization and postulated the psychic unity of mankind. This approach of cultural universalism and unilineal evolutionism echoed an older model based on the analogy between the growth of the individual and the development of mankind whereby the ontogeny of the individual organism recapitulates the phylogeny of the whole series.

The drawings, regarded as "cultural fossil guides" that embody and indicate the mental shift of an epoch, offered the scholars an empirical and material means to carry out their research related to comparative psychology, ethnographic parallels and history of art. Consequently, since 1880 mostly German scholars began to collect and compare drawings from European children and non-European peoples for their research aiming to construct a global comparative cartography of the evolution of human mind.

I examine the research conducted by the German anthropologist Robert Lehmann-Nitsche (1872-1938) who, in 1898, collected drawings made by a group of indigenous people from Southern Argentina. Based on this particular case I aim to investigate how instruments and methodological approaches were employed to transform the drawings into study objects of cultural history. Furthermore I examine strategies put into practice to acquire the drawings, the different actors who developed this research in Argentina towards the end of the 19th century as well as the influence of the theoretical frameworks developed in Germany (Ehrenreich; Grosse; Götze; Hamy; Koch-Grünberg; Levinstein; Sully i.a.)

Introduction

On October 16, 1898 the *National Exhibition of the Industry* was inaugurated in Buenos Aires (Argentina). Local newspapers and magazines stimulated the visit to the exposition, highlighting the different exhibits, the approach to 'science' and the wonders of nature and technology[1] (FIG 1). But all this paled in comparison to the exhibition of two indigenous families of Tierra del Fuego brought by the Governor of that territory, Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Godoy (1858-1899) and the government commissioner Atanasio Navarro (FIG 2). The families were composed of two couples (the men 18 and 22 years old and the women 20 and 16 years old) and two children (8 years and 6 months). Newspapers pointed out that the families transported all the materials that allowed them to "bring to the exposition all the wild and picturesque life of the territory's edge […]" (*La Nación* 11/03/1898:5).

The two families were temporarily housed in a summer theatre. The promotion of local newspapers and the free entrances offered by the principal railway companies facilitated and increased public presence[2] (*La Prensa* 10/14/1898). The indigenous exhibition was so successful that the organizers had to install a fence in order to control the high numbers of visitors[3]. This fence, however, was opened for those interested in taking measurements and scientifically observing the indigenous people, such as Robert Lehmann-Nitsche. He was born on 9 November, 1872 in the Prussian province of Posen. In the *Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität* in Munich he obtained his two doctorates, the first in Philosophy in 1894 and the second in Medicine in 1897. On July10, 1897 he arrived in Argentina to assume the Curator's position of the *Museo de La Plata's* Anthropology Department (Ballestero 2013; Farro 2009; García S. 2010; Podgorny 2009)

Lehmann-Nitsche's objective was to complement the descriptions and pre-existing information on the indigenous people from Southern Argentina, as well as join the international debate on the "primitive" groups, having on the one hand connections with European scholars and, on the other hand, a large amount of "study material". Lehmann-Nitsche's work included measurements, photographs and the collection of drawings made by the indigenous people. His objective was to broadly approach and understand a study object that, as he pointed out, was becoming extinct: "our South American tribes are destined to disappear, so we need to take urgent action and save what still exists." (Lehmann-Nitsche 1898: 124). In a context

[1] They promoted, among other things: graphic art, textile and yarn; ship models of the *Argentinean Naval Center*; a hot-air balloon; the exhibition of the telectrófono -the telephone developed by the Italian inventor Antonio Meucci (1808-1889)-; publications of the *Argentinean Scientific Society* and the *Corrientes Provincial Museum*; a collection of minerals and chemical products. *La Prensa* 11/07/1898.

[2] At the same time the local newspaper guided the indigenous observation providing descriptive, historical and "scientific" information. These indications, which were intended to "educate" the public's gaze and drew the readers' attention to the remarkable contrasts that had to be taken into account when they observed the "primitive" representatives of humanity, as for example their language, dress and face decoration. Ballestero 2013.

[3] As indicated by Lehmann-Nitsche "le public se précipita pour contempler ce spectacle exotique pour la capitale de l'Argentine, et jouit d´un tableau vivant, qui rappelait les temps préhistoriques.". Lehmann-Nitsche 1904: 264.

where the "extinction" of peoples, languages, animals and objects that for centuries had remained "immutable" seemed inevitable, the record of these future living remnants of the past became an imperative.

The need to complement biological studies with another research that could penetrate indigenous peoples' psyche was emphasized since the second half of the 19th century by scholars such as the German philosopher Moritz Lazarus (1824-1903) and the German philologist Hermann Steinthal (1823-1899). In this way scholars could have a multiple register of indigenous' temporal otherness and a more rigorous and effective control over the results. Simultaneously, the collection of drawings provided another advantage: this could be done by individuals with little or no academic/formal training in anthropological observation such as occasional travellers, missionaries, military and civilian personnel etc., whom, subsequently, could send them to the different museums and institutes.

The collection of drawings by Lehmann-Nitsche was the result of an occasional situation, and not part of a systematic research program, something that can be partly explained by the *National Exhibition of the Industry* investors' commercial interest. In this sense Lehmann-Nitsche decided to collect as many information as possible, leaving their analysis and interpretation for later. He waited 9 years to publish the results of his research, a delay explained by his lack of knowledge to analyze the information collected, the social and academic constraints imposed by the local context and Lehmann-Nitsches' personal and professional aspirations.

In 1907, the year in which Lehmann-Nitsche published the results of his research on indigenous drawings, other German research results on indigenous' and children's drawings, referred to by him, had been published. In Argentina, the drawings collected in 1894 by the Argentinean Juan Ambrosetti (1865-1917) among the Cainguá people, constituted almost the only research on Argentinean indigenous peoples' drawings beside Lehmann-Nitsche[4]. There is evidence of recommendations that scholars as the German physician Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929), the German philologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1872-1924) and the German physician Georg Buschan (1863-1942) made to Lehmann-Nitsche through private correspondence[5]. From all those sources Lehmann-Nitsche was able to develop strategies and analytical devices to achieve his objective.

[4] Lehmann-Nitsche remarked "Desde Misiones hasta Tierra del Fuego, falta completamente material; pero en esta última parte del continente americano todavía disponemos de las colecciones necesarias". As most of the "anthropological fieldwork" between the end of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century, the success of Ambrosetti's research depended to a large part on the assistance of local people and the "negotiations" between the scholars and their "key informants". Part of the drawings were gathered in the Brazilian Military Colony Y-guazú, where Ambrosetti was assisted by the Colony' director, Lieutenant Edmundo Barros, in order to obtain drawings from a 10-year-old Cainguá. On another occasion, Ambrosetti offered food, cookies and cigars to his informants with the purpose of obtaining drawings. He specified "En Tacuru-Pacá aproveche de otro indio recién llegado, llamado Pedro para hacerlo dibujar. Habiéndole dado antes que comer y convidado con un cigarro, Pedro se mostró muy expansivo, y tomando el lápiz, como el anterior, empezó a dibujar con firmeza […]". Ambrosetti 1894: 678; Lehmann-Nitsche 1909:120.

[5] This correspondence is deposited in the Lehmann-Nitsche' Legacy of the Berlin's *Ibero-American Institute.*

Drawings and phylogenetic past

Around 1800 the confluence of particular technological, material and social phenomena in specific historical contexts contributed to the increase of children's drawing and its transformation into quotidian objects. Technological innovations such as the machine-based papermaking and the introduction of impure wood-pulp fibers as a substitute for rags enabled the cheap mass production of paper. Changes in industry and market structure allowed the German entrepreneur Johann Faber (1817-1896) the monopolization of the pencil-making industry which spread the use of his pencils among different social classes and professions in Europe. Finally the opening and flourishing of galleries and public art museums endowed paintings and drawings with a different position in the public sphere, changing the relationship between cultural producers and their audiences[6] (Appadurai 1986; Lamberg et.all. 2012; Petroski 2010; Roche 1997; Seigel 2012).

The cultural salience described above made the drawings quotidian objects and gave them visibility, but specific cultural circumstances and epistemological discourses configured a broader field of material scientific culture and practice where techniques of scientific inquiry, epistemic values and inscription devices made them study objects of cultural history that could be observed, stabilized, collected, transported, compared, archived and, constituted at least for a time, an ontological entity (Daston 1999; Daston and Galison 2010; Rheinberger 1999).

As Daston and Galison have noted, the concept of objective knowledge is related to the "epistemic virtues" associated with each particular era[7] (Daston and Galison 2010:40). After the publication of *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833) by the Scottish lawyer Charles Lyell (1797-1875), the concepts of "deep time" and "archive of nature" questioned the biblical chronological narrative of human and cultural history[8] (Gould 1988; Rudwick 1992, 2014). The dominance of these concepts increased after the publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin (1809-1882). By the second half of the 19th century, they were two important discursive devices that offered conditions of objectivity to understand the evolution and development of mankind. They operated across diverse disciplinary fields and their epistemic value enabled further theoretical, technical, material and experimental developments (Canguilhem 1977; Daston 1989; Foucault 1971; Latour 1999; Rheinberger 2010).

Research carried out by Germans and French physicians, among others, offered a new biological view of nature were the uniformity and unity of its laws displayed a single developmental tendency and a single

[6] These spaces combined the traditional motive of displaying the virtues of an individual patron with the 18th century enthusiasm for enlightening the public. For a comprehensive list of galleries and art museums see Charles (2013).

[7] As they noted epistemic virtues are "norms that are internalized and enforced by appeal to ethical values, as well as to pragmatic efficacy in securing knowledge […]". Daston and Galison 2010:40.

[8] According to Lyell the methods of historians offer "a more profound insight into human nature, by instituting a comparison between the present and former states of society" Lyell 1998:1.

sequence of forms[9]. In 1866 the German physician Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) affirmed "The ontogeny is the shortest and fastest path of the phylogeny […] In the course of individual development inherited characters appear […]" (Haeckel 1866: 300. Free translation by the author)[10]. This development, as Étienne Serres stated in 1860, was both physical and intellectual. As the English Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) noted "The intellectual traits of the uncivilized, thus made especially difficult to change, may now be recapitulated while observing that they are traits recurring in the children of the civilized" (Spencer 1874:89).

The observation of the present in order to understand the past was a deep epistemic shift which, in the specific case of the disciplines dedicated to the study of man, enabled scholars to reconsider the origin and the evolutionary history of mankind. By the second half of the 19th century, most scholars agreed that on a basic level humanity could be divided into two major categories: "natural peoples" and "cultural peoples". The latter had a recorded past that could be inquired through the methods of history and philology. The former were peoples supposedly lacking history and separated from narratives of Western civilization, which implied more proximity with nature.

The "archive" provided by nature promised to reach deeper in time than traditional written documents and offered a most objective source since the written word was susceptible to subjectivity and modification (Gould 1988; Rudwick 1992, 2014). Instead of studying "subjective" historical narratives to understand the evolution and development of mankind –especially within European societies– scholars proposed to study "natural peoples" in order to reveal human nature in a direct and "objective" way and to observe the past and to expand the history beyond the biblical time frame. (Fabian 1983; Kohl 1981; Schiffauer 1997; Schüttpelz 2005).

Since the second half of the 19th century, the European colonialist expansion intensified dramatically the global networks of imperialism. This cultural, economic, and political process enabled the proximity between European and non-European actors, expedited the "fieldwork" experience and provided infrastructure, conditions and objects for the scholars' experiences (Headrick 1981; MacKenzie 1986; Penny 2002; Said 1993; Zimmerman 2001). Simultaneously, the onslaught of European expansion and the passage of time served as arguments to study the "natural peoples" before they disappear[11].

In 1882 the Italian art historian Corrado Ricci (1858-1934) "discovered" a series of drawings and inscriptions in Bologna's Meloncello arch, which he divided into an upper part with "brutal and obscene

[9] Especially the German physicians Johann Meckel (1781-1833), Carl von Kielmeyer (1765-1844), Johann von Autenrieth (1772-1835), Lorenz Oken (1779-1851) and the French physician Étienne Serres (1786-1868).

[10] The concept of ontogenetic recapitulation was not new. In 1844 the Scottish publisher Robert Chambers (1802-1871) wrote "[…] the varieties of his race are represented in the progressive development of an individual of the highest, before we see the adult Caucasian, the highest point yet attained in the animal scale" (Chambers 1844:199).

[11] The English zoologist Alfred Haddon (1855-1940) noted that "[...] an infinitude has been irrevocably lost, a very great deal is now rapidly disappearing; thanks to colonization, trade, and missionary enterprise [...] The most interesting materials for study are becoming lost to us, not only by their disappearance, but by the apathy of those who should delight in recording them before they have become lost to sight and memory". Haddon 1898: XXIII.

epigrams" and a lower part with "the innocent art of the little ones" (Ricci 1887:4). These inscriptions led him to the study of children's art. In order to assemble a wide sample of "specimen", Ricci began to collect drawings from primary schools, obtaining approximately 1.250. Those were the core of his book *L'arte dei bambini*, one of the first publications regarding the analysis of children's drawing (Ricci 1887). Since the end of the 18th century European scholars from diverse disciplines conceived the childhood as a separate stage of life from the adult world (Ariès 1960). In this sense, the drawings were a veritable visual language to access, observe and study this inaccessible and pre-lingual stage.

For scholars dedicated to the study of "natural peoples" the epistemic value of the drawings as an inscription device was not only its capacity to "access" childhood, but also to access the isolated and timeless space where "natural peoples" existed, a vanishing point that defies the normal flow of time. As a result, scholars began gathering and comparing their drawings in order to reconstruct the history of those peoples without recorded history.

Recollecting drawings in "Terra incognita"

In 1887 the German geographer Richard Andree (1835-1912) wrote a brief article where he compared indigenous drawings from Australia, Africa, eastern Siberia and the Pacific Ocean. Highlighting the relatively good artistic level that cultural undeveloped groups could have[12], Andree remarked certain elements common to all of them: simple and wavy lines, geometrical figures, dots, unconnected human body parts and representations of plants and animals. According to Andree, all these elements were the same used by children and European prehistoric groups[13] (FIG 3). The repetition of these elements were for him an important material evidence that supported the hypothesis of the unity of the human mind, defended at the time by the director of Berlin's *Museum für Völkerkunde*, the German physician Adolf Bastian (1826-1905)[14]. At the same time, the repetition of these elements confirmed the ontogenetic recapitulation of the human mind, suggesting the possibility to observe this process on the basis of a comparison between drawings from European children and non-European peoples.

Bastian was convinced of the uniformity of human nature, both mental and physical[15]. Affirming that mankind's physical unity had already been anthropologically established, he focused on finding the psychic unity of thought, because for him mankind's history was the history of the human mind. The way of

[12] Andree pointed out "So here we can see, like elsewhere, that seemingly undeveloped people could have great graphic talent". Andree 1887:99. (Free translation by the author).

[13] According to Andree "To understand this phenomenon, we only need remember that our children, when they try to draw for the first time they draw animals and humans, and the live or moving animals draws their attention. We can also observe these characteristics and behavior among the primitive and natural peoples". Ibidem. (Free translation by the author).

[14] Andree pointed out "I want to reiterate that, the repetition and continuation of existing drawings or petroglyphs allow us to propose the existence of mental laws that can be observed around the world". Ibídem: 102 (Free translation by the author).

[15] According to Bastian "Properly speaking, the mind and the body are one, and together make man. This unity of mind and matter, created anew each moment, is the essence of the nature of man". Excerpted and translated in Koepping 1983:179.

studying it was not through subjective written sources, but examining and comparing material culture from the perspective of geography and history, which he believed would reveal that "[…] *the same number of psychological elements (like cell of a plant) is circulating in regular and uniform rotation in the heads of all people, and that this is so for all times and places!*" (Excerpted and translated in Koepping 1983:180. Bastian's emphasis).

According to Andree the drawings collected in 1878 by the French physician Jules Crevaux (1847-1882) and in 1884 by von den Steinen constituted almost the only research on South American indigenous peoples' drawings[16]. In both cases the collection of drawings seems the result of an occasional situation, where the indigenous themselves "spontaneously" wanted to draw and obtain useful objects in return, and not part of a systematic research program[17]. Regarding this, Andree recommended further research on the drawings of "natural peoples" (Crevaux 1880; Von den Steinen 1886).

In 1887 an article published anonymously in *Science* indicated that indigenous drawings could be used as a "pictographic language", pointing out that their study was a remarkable example of "The application of the inductive method to the study of mental facts" (Anonymus 1887:232). Defining this approach as "anthropological psychology"[18], the unknown author remarked that its objective was to "coordinate the various works of mental evolution, to arrange them in some serial order" (Ibídem).

After 1887, German scholars began to collect and send South American's indigenous drawings to Germany, particularly to Berlin[19]. The collection of drawings allowed scholars in Berlin to raise a global comparative cartography of the evolution of the human mind. This "atlas" reflected and shaped the discipline's research objects: The collective repository of images arranged and reconfigured contributions of scholars distributed over time and space. As an inscription device the "atlas" standardized and regularized the observation, visualization and interpretation process for scholars, eliminating personal idiosyncrasies. In this sense, Bastian advocated to assemble an "index, or statistic, of ideas" which showed this immutable "psychological arithmetic"[20] (Daston and Galison 2010; Rheinberger 2010).

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[16] Crevaux, on his expedition to South America, stopped in the Wayãpi village (French Guiana). There he asked his wayãpi guide to draw with a piece of charcoal in his notebook. After that, another indigenous person asked Crevaux for pencils and began to drawn pictures of animals and "devils" of the country, showing artistic skills that contradicted their image of "ignorants des beaux-arts […]". On his first expedition to the Brazilian Xingú River, von den Steinen had a similar experience. On the river's bank one of the Suyá asked him for paper and pencil and drew traditional designs. Seeing this, von den Steinen's cousin, the German painter Wilhelm (1859-1934), passed his sketchbook to the indigenous person, who covered the pages with decorative designs. Crevaux 1880:77; Von den Steinen 1886.

[17] Karl von den Steinen specified "But when we were still talking, came a group of seven people. They also wanted to draw! They wanted to receive a knife in exchange!" Von den Steinen 1886: 215. (Free translation by the author).

[18] According to the unknown author the founder pillars were Adolf Bastian, Edward Tylor, Moritz Lazarus, Hermann Steinthal and the English banker John Lubbock (1834-1913).

[19] Between 1889 and 1914 a federal law required all objects acquired and/or collected in Germany's overseas colonies by Germans travelling or living abroad had to be offered first to Berlin's *Museum für Völkerkunde*, which monopolized the cycles of accumulation and became a center of calculation. Latour 1987; Penny 2002; Zimmerman 2001.

[20] Bastian affirmed "There are surprising analogies in mythological thoughts and world views amid both the fetishism of the savage and the aesthetics of the civilized, and in metaphysical ideas, in abstract philosophies and the mystical raptures of

In 1887, von den Steinen undertook a second expedition to the Brazilian Xingú River[21]. Carrying out a more systematic research he obtained drawings of animals and portraits of the expedition members made by the Bakairi, Nahuqa, Apiaká and Bororo. According to von den Steinen drawings had a communicative function among "natural peoples" rather than artistic or decorative goals, allowing scholars to avoid the constraints imposed by the different mother tongues [22] (FIG 4). Von den Steinen compared the drawings that he had collected to those analysed in 1887 by Ricci, founding impressive resemblances between them: he identified the preference of drawing animals rather than plants, incomplete geometric forms, humans drawn from the front and animals in profile as well drawings of normally invisible parts and human attributes that were highly stylized (FIG 5a and 5b). These resemblances, according to von den Steinen, must be understood in terms of the communicational function of the drawing and its capacity to make spaces accessible beyond language or time[23].

In the late 19th century von den Steinen's work had a profound influence on the study of children's and indigenous people's drawings[24]. In 1905, Theodor Koch-Grünberg, who worked as research assistant for von den Steinen between 1900 and 1903, published the indigenous drawings that he collected during two expeditions, the first in 1900 to the Brazilian Xingú River and the second between 1903 and 1905 in the north-west of Amazonia. He collected his drawings of animals, plants, plans of houses, maps, astronomical charts and portraits in "controlled" situations, providing the indigenous people with pencils, sketchbooks and asking them for drawings (FIG 6a and 6b).

As Bastian and the German philosopher Ernst Grosse (1862-1927), Koch-Grünberg believed that only Ethnology could provide the scientific methods to compare large amounts of data in order to demonstrate common features. In this sense, he compared his drawings with the decorations, ornaments and representational art from the most diverse areas of the world studied by Grosse and the children's drawings collected by the German psychologist Siegfried Levinstein (1876-?). Koch-Grünberg, as Von den Steinen and Andree, remarked that the drawings were a result of the desire for representation and communication rather than for aesthetic satisfaction and that they represented the intellectual characteristics of the indigenous people. Finally, Koch-Grünberg mentioned the importance of this approach in art-historical

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believers: *in all these, after removing the flesh of local and temporal variations in language and idiom, we encounter the same small number of psychological kernels*". Excerpted and translated in Koepping 1983:180. Bastian's emphasis.

[21] This expedition, like the first, was integrated into Berlin's *Museum für Völkerkunde* research interests and especially influenced by Bastian's desire to conduct systematic studies in previously little-known or entirely unknown places. Hermannstädter 1996; Kraus 2004; Schaden 1990.

[22] Von den Steinen remarked "How can we be clear when the people don't understand our language? So they drew in the sand [...] Drawings are like words, a form of communication. They complete the gesture and the sign language". Von den Steinen 1894:243-246. (Free translation by the author).

[23] Ricci specified "The child describes the man and things instead of rendering them artistically. They try to reproduce him in his literal completeness, and not according to the visual impression. They make, in short, just such a description in drawing as they would make in words". Ricci 1887:11. (Free translation by the author).

[24] By the end of the 19th century other European scholars published works on "primitive art", especially from Africa and Australia. For a compressive list see Basu 2011.

studies in order to make visible the basic elements of the human mind and to establish the origin of art in the forest (Koch-Grünberg 1905).

By the early 20th century the German physician Paul Ehrenreich (1855-1914), who took part in the second expedition to the Brazilian Xingú River, resumed the ethnographic studies carried out in South America. Remarking the importance of the indigenous people as an important study object which allowed to bridge the gap between modern and prehistoric times, he called attention to the need to increase the study of language, mythology and indigenous drawings in order to complement the study of physical characteristics and capitalize the ethnographic potential of the "Terra incognita"[25] (Ehrenreich 1904:74).

Indigenous drawings and "archaeological procedure"

In 1898 the German pedagogue Carl Götze (1865-1947) organized the first public exhibition of children's drawings in the *Hamburger Kunsthalle.* In order to understand the origin and the evolution of mankind's graphic expression, Götze and the director of the museum, the German art historian Alfred Lichtwark (1852-1914), arranged children's drawings from German and non-German kindergartens and schools, non-European drawings and archaeological objects from Hamburg's *Museum für Völkerkunde.* The same year, Götze published the outcome of the exhibition, which included a comprehensive study made by different scholars that attended the exposition, together with an extensive recount of pedagogical, psychological and "anthropological" studies on the analysis of drawings. Götze's publication was one of Lehmann-Nitsche's main reference for questions related to techniques and collection instruments and places where to realize fieldwork[26] (Beuvier 2009; Götze 1898; Witmann 2013).

Between June and October 1907 Lehmann-Nitsche gave two public lectures on "Primitive Drawings"[27] in order to show the "[…] analogy between children's drawings and those made by South America's primitive inhabitants […]" (*La Nación* 07/17/1907), and ultimately study "[…] the development of artistic ideas and *psychological concepts in general* […]" (Lehmann-Nitsche 1909:111, emphasis added). To achieve this, he compared the indigenous drawings collected in 1898 and 50 drawings by children aged 3

[25] In 1905 the German lawyer Max Schmidt (1874-1950); who between 1899 and 1900 worked as "volunteer" at Berlin's *Museum für Völkerkunde*, especially in the South American ethnology section directed by Von Steinen; published portraits drawn by the Bakairi when he was on his Xingu expedition in 1900. One year later Georg Buschan, in a German newspaper special issue on the beginning of art, discussed the principal ideas of Andree, Von den Steinen, Koch-Grünberg and Levinstein on the indigenous drawings and their comparison to drawings from European children. Buschan 1906; Schmidt 1905.

[26] Those referred by Lehmann-Nitsche were: the American historian Earl Barnes (1861-1935), the American philosopher Herman Lukens (1865-1949), the English psychologist James Sully (1842-1923), the English lithographer and Art pedagogue Ebenezer Cooke (1837-1913) and the French psychologist Bernard Perez (1836-1903), Levinstein, Ricci, Götze and Von den Steinen. In the print version of the exhibition's outcome Götze mentioned too the English writer John Ruskin (1819-1900), the English Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), the American philosopher James Baldwin (1861-1934), the American psychologist Granville Hall (1846-1924), the French Jacques Passy (1864-1898), the German writer Georg Hirth (1841-1916), the German Art historian Johann von Lange (1855-1921), the German Art historian Abraham Warburg (1866-1929) and Lichtwark. Götze 1898.

[27] The first one was part of the *Universidad Nacional de La Plata* extension's program, a series of Sunday's lectures on science, art and literature. The second one was part of a series of lectures on "scientific issues" organized by the *Deutsche Wissenschaftlichen Verein.* Ballestero 2013; *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung* 10/16/1907, 10/19/1907

to 6 years of La Plata city. As the scholars mentioned by Götze, Lehmann-Nitsche used his social status as scholar and university professor to obtain the childrens' drawings from local bourgeois families and primary schools, two "spaces" that had no problems acquiring drawing material[28].

The public lectures, widely publicized in the local press, have a large attendance. Lehmann-Nitsche used maps and plates to "illustrate" his presentation. Maps showed the location of the "fueguinos" and the indigenous people studied by von den Steinen, Koch-Grünberg and Ambrosetti. The plates reproduced the indigenous peoples' and children's drawings. These visual devices were used to "prove the truth" of Lehmann-Nitsche's arguments and to make his deductions more "accessible and understandable"[29]. This "laboratory practice" transformed an invisible study object as the indigenous mind […] into visually examined, coded, measured, graphically, and publicly presented data" and allowed its comparative study (Lynch 1988:204).

Lehmann-Nitsche's visualization practices were properly defined by the local press as part of an "archaeological procedure" (*Caras y Caretas*, 07/13/1907:25). Probably because the author of the article author was Lehmann-Nitsche himself, the precision of the term "archaeological procedure" summarized the theoretical and technical devices employed to transform drawings into study objects of cultural history. Since the early 19th century scholars working on geological theories questioned the biblical chronological narrative of human and cultural history. Nature and earth had their own history long before the earliest human records and could be systematically reconstructed only from a detailed study of surviving evidence: fossils, a category which included a larger and diverse group of objects or materials usually found below the earth's surface.

By the 1860s, a wide range of disciplines transposed that insight from geology to the study of man, marking the beginning of prehistoric archaeology. Stratigraphy became a central topic of most kinds of publications and these, like in the early geological publications of the early 19th century, insisted that only fossil evidence were criteria to correlate sequences from different regions and the key to reconstruct their evolutionary history (Rudwick 2008, 2014). These disciplines shared an emphasis on the material evidence, collection, comparative study of "specimens" and analytical classification. Bastian, as other scholars, affirmed that material culture elements of contemporary peoples and the material traces of earlier peoples were fundamental to understand the evolution and development of mankind in a direct and "objective" way.

[28] The families were connected to important political and economic sectors of society. The names and ages of the children who drew: Lola Monteagudo (3), Hayde and Rosa Bizozero (5), Josefina Borceri (5) and Juana Cortelezzi (5). Lehmann-Nitsche 1909.
[29] The local press detailed "[…] El doctor Lehmann-Nitsche […] probó su aserto exhibiendo a la concurrencia mapas y dibujos, obra de los indios y de algunos niños de las escuelas de esta ciudad". Another article pointed out "Para hacer más comprensivas sus deducciones para la numerosa concurrencia que había acudido a escucharlo, el conferenciante [In reference to Lehmann-Nitsche] se sirvió de 8 grandes planchas, que reproducían unos cincuenta dibujos, hechos por niños platenses de 3 a 6 años de edad, y por indios del Sur del Brasil, de las orillas del Alto Paraná y de Tierra del Fuego". *La Nación* 07/17/1907; La *Prensa* 07/17/1907.

According to the English scholar Edward Tylor (1832-1917) the fragmentary objects from earlier stages of civilization were "facts to be worked as mines of historic knowledge" (Tylor 1871:71)[30]. Throughout the second half of the 19th century the bodies and the material products –such as the drawings– of the "natural peoples" were "mines". Just as the detached fragmentary elements from various strata used to reconstruct a stratigraphic sequence, they offered the scholars a singular, fragmented, and isolated element that seemed to contain in themselves the whole history of mankind.

Prehistoric archaeology proposed a new relationship between materiality and history. Rooted in the traditions of Romanticism and Antiquarianism, the "archaeological record" was conceptualized as fragmentary and untimeliness. The archaeological "fragments" had an important epistemic virtue: their non-contemporariness. They were contemporary and at the same time from the past. In comparison with the "subjective" historical narratives based on written sources they offered the scholars a material, and supposedly, objective and independent evidence to reconstruct the former whole (Lucas 2005; 2012; Rheinberger 2010).

According to the German historian Karl Lamprecht (1856-1915), images embody the intellectual shift of an epoch. In this sense, indigenous people's drawings were fragmentary material evidence that allowed the visualization, representation, study and store of "intellectual traits" (Coopmans et. all. 2014; Lamprecht 1882). As the German physiologist Max Verworn (1863-1921) noted in 1907: "The artistic product is a medium used by the people to express feelings, ideas and toughts"[31] (Verworn 1917:5. Free translation by the author).

The introduction of "archaeological" analytical and discursive devices to the study of psychological phenomena resulted in the emphasis on visualization practices. These devices allowed Lehmann-Nitsche to "transcribe" the subjective and abstract concepts of the immediate experience to a material element. He was able to isolate and identify on his study object "universal" characteristics which facilitated their comparison, just as the geological and/or paleontological fossil guides allowed scholars to reconstruct the past of the earth's history from its fragmentary traces in the present and assign the fossils to a particular period of time (Rudwick 2014).

According to the local press, Lehmann-Nitsche's "archaeological procedure" enabled scholars to establish a "law of similarity" between drawings from children and the indigenous people (*La Prensa* 17/071907). The characteristics they shared were: the use of simple lines and contours and the preference to draw animals and humans rather than plants. Humans were drawn from the front and with highly stylized

[30] A few years later the English banker Edward Clodd (1840-1930) noted that the geological and/or archaeological approach in order to study the cultural and material elements of a particular group […] show what crude philosophy, science, and theology are crystallized or fossilized within them". Clodd 1884:290.

[31] This statement was part of the *Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte's* inaugural conference and resumed the research on the relationships which were seem between the drawings of children and "primitive" peoples, conducted by Verworn since 1906. He collected drawings of children aged 6 to 14.

attributes (for example those related to gender). Animals were drawn in profile (the so called "bird's-eye view"). The convergence on incomplete and almost geometric forms. The absence of proportionality, details and perspective. Finally, drawings without "topographical" relations (misplaced human or animal body parts) and reproduction of normally invisible parts (for example genitals or organs of the body). (FIG 7a, 7b and 8).

Following Levinstein's evolutionary stages on children's drawings, Lehmann-Nitsche assigned children's and indigenous people drawings to the first one: the symbolic stage[32]. This stage was nearest to nature and without historical or cultural influences. As Sully, who worked on African, Australian and foremost Native American art objects in his analysis of children's drawings, affirmed "[…] the lowest races of mankind stand in close proximity to the animal world. The same is true for the infants of civilized races"[33] (Sully 1896:5). In this sense, as Bastian insisted, the study of the most isolated and simple societies was the key to understand the historical development of mankind and construct putative hierarchies (Fiedermutz-Laun 1970).

Going back to the *National Exhibition of the Industry's* example we find that after weeks of been exhibited, the indigenous group of Tierra del Fuego would be no longer "attractive" to Buenos Aires public. The exhibition committee authorized Lieutenant Colonel Godoy to provide the indigenous sheep and cows for a total of 300 pesos for their journey back to Tierra del Fuego. The newspaper *La Nación* added that this supply may not be enough because "the Indians are able to eat all that in four days"[34]. Between 1915 and 1927, Lehmann-Nitsche published the results of his research on indigenous people from southern Argentina. The delay in the publication is partly explained by the structural, economic and institutional limitation of the Argentinean scientific context. As Lehmann-Nitsche explained, the publication of isolated results was not relevant, however, as he confessed in letters to members of his family, the important aspect was to contribute to the international discussions with data collected in the field, something that almost no European scholar could do because of the high cost of the journey. According to Lehmann-Nitsche, this was the way to accumulate sufficient academic prestige in order to return to Germany to obtain a place in the scientific or academic field.

[32] In his doctoral thesis Levinstein worked on the cultural, historical and ethnographic parallels with the art of children. Following Lamprecht's theory of cultural stages, Levinstein proposed three evolutionary stages in children's drawing: symbolic, ornamental and typical. In its introduction he expressed "The development of the race is reflected in the development of the child. May the following pages convince those who retain any doubts" Levinstein 1905:1 (Free translation by the author).
[33] Sully worked especially with the English Lieutenant-General Augustus Pitt Rivers' (1827-1900) archaeological collection.
[34] La Nación, 18.12.1898, p.4.

Final Remarks

In 1568 the Italian painter Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) published the second edition of his book *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori.* This work presumably introduced one of the most influential explanatory schemes of the origin of art, based in the anthology between the growth of the individual child and the development of mankind. Introducing the concept of "Renaissance art" Vasari mirrored and embodied his advent in the artistic activity of a child named Giotto di Bondone (1267?-1337) (Lorini 2015; Vasari 2015). Subsequently, and following the approaches of other Italian writers on art such as Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455) or Federico Zuccaro (1542-1609) and their Renaissance concept of "disegno", drawings acquired a privileged status as the shared foundation of the fine arts, separating artists from the sphere of craftsmanship and becoming a distinctive element of the European upper class culture. In this context drawing constituted a cultural technique where mastery was de rigueur for members of both the nobility and bourgeoisie (Didi-Huberman 2002, 2008).

Throughout the 18th century travel experience, and in particular overseas, legitimized drawing in an increasingly specialized system of art and science. Drawing was an important system of visual inscription for observing, documenting, fixing and preserving objects and information from remote places to the starting point of the journey (Latour 1986, 2013; Coopmans et.all 2014). Over the course of the 19th century, however, drawing lost its importance due in part to the increasing practicability of photographic image processes, encouraged by scholars (Blunck 2010; Kemp 2011; Vaget 1971). Nevertheless, in the second half of the 19th century technical and discursive instruments were employed to transform the drawings into study objects of cultural history. In part this was the result of an epistemological rupture at the very core of various disciplines devoted to the study of man and related to the forth Kantian question about what is man and how he could be defined (Bachelard 1938; Canguilhem 1977; Foucault 1969; Gros 1995).

By the 1860s Bastian, having influence over important calculation centers, began his large empirical project. In order to obtain materials from an array of rapidly vanishing "natural peoples" in Africa, Australia and South America, he established extensive international networks of collection, collaboration and exchange (Latour 1987; Penny 2002; Zimmerman 2001). Converging in Berlin, those elements were articulated and stabilized in a graphical language that allowed its visualization and comparative study. The abstraction of study objects in graphics or numbers transcended the boundaries of the local languages and allowed its storage and transport in a most efficient and economical way.

The importance of this approach for the study of psychological phenomena was emphasized across diverse disciplinary fields devoted to the study of man. Reviewing the work of the German physician Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), Sully stated that in order to transform the psychological phenomena into a scientific conception it was "[…] necessary to regard mental phenomena as the obverse of material

processes" (Sully 1876: 22). In the case of Von den Steinen, Koch-Grünberg, or Lehmann-Nitsche this obverse was the drawing.

The material collection practices and the technologies used by Lehmann-Nitsche favored the drawings' spatial displacement from the industrial exposition and the primary schools of La Plata city in order to be isolated and stabilized within an epistemological discourse. Inscripted, materialized, stored and encoded on the homogenous timeless space of the sketchbook's page, the immaterial indigenous people's mentality obtained a new "visibility" as study objects of cultural history and could be transported to Europe without changing their characteristics and once there archived, compared and integrated into the pre-existent cartographies. This also created a malleable, static and durable "virtual" past to which scholars would be able to have access over and over again from the comfort of the present. Circulating in diverse disciplinary fields, these drawings entered into dialog with other objects of knowledge and contributed to the construction of a global comparative cartography of the evolution of the human mind.

In 1894 Ernst Grosse affirmed "The beginnings of art are, where culture begins" (Grosse 1894:31. Free translation by the author). Taking this sentence very literally, German scholars looked for the beginning of art, and therefore culture, among children and the "primitive" indigenous people. Living in a fragmentary and discontinuous temporal dimension, separate from the "normative" flow of time and isolated from the contemporary world, they offered a window to observe and study not only the beginning of art, but also the long and complex sequence of human history and human species itself.

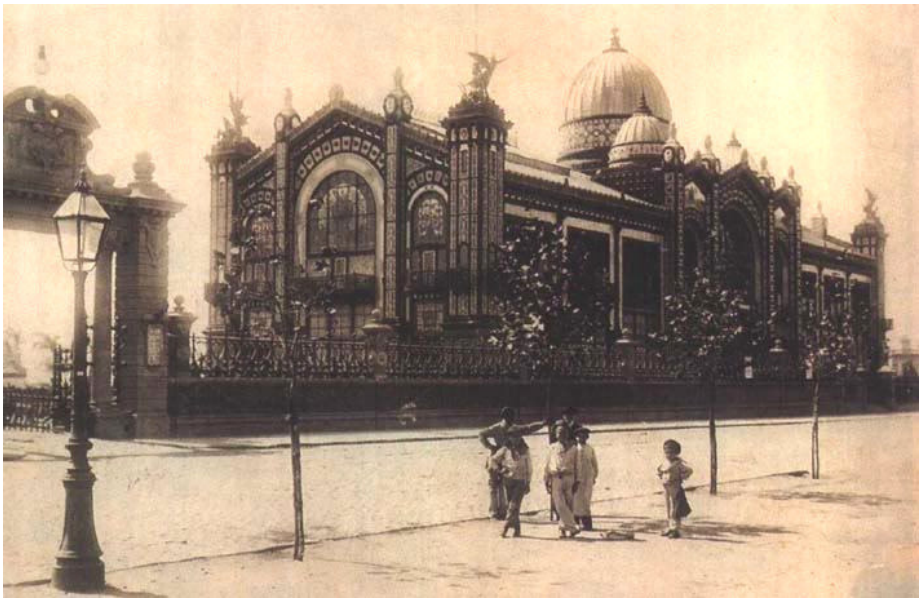

Figure 1: National Exhibition of the Industry
Source: *Caras y Caretas* 1898

Figure 2: Indigenous families of Tierra del Fuego
Source: *Caras y Caretas* 1898

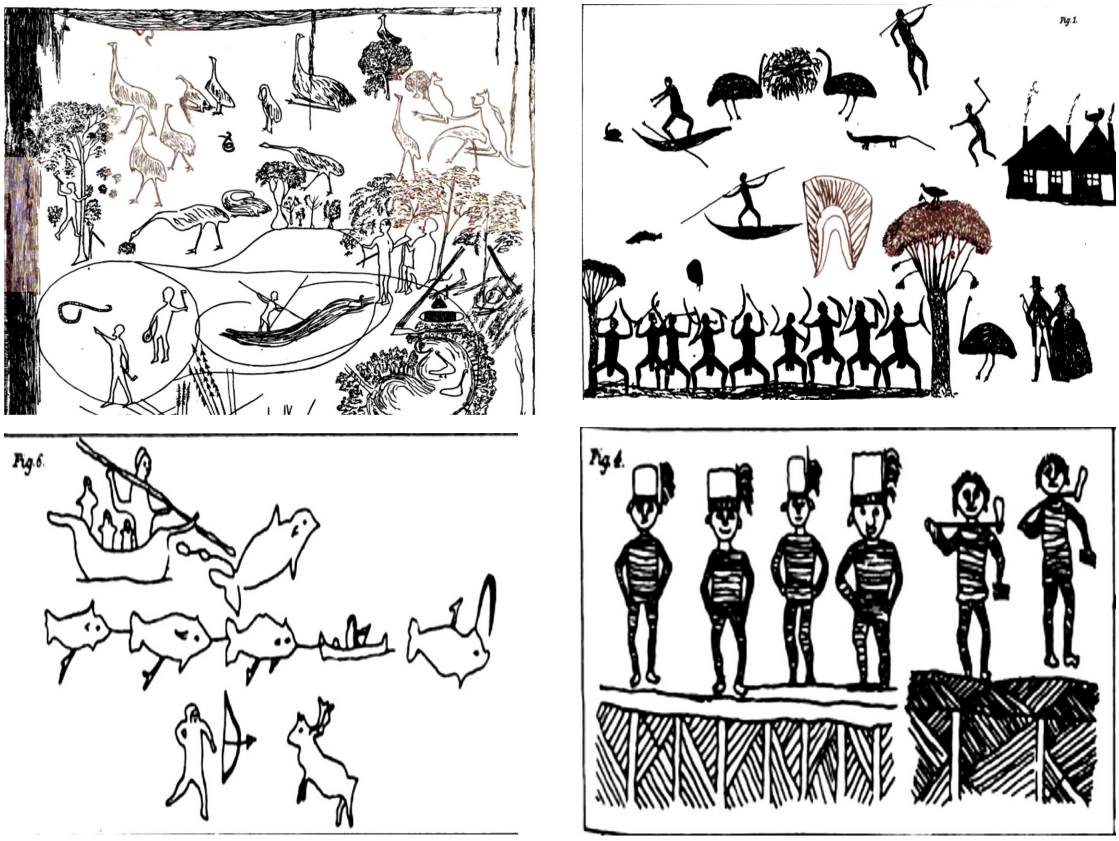

Figure 3: Indigenous drawings from Australia, Africa, eastern Siberia and the Pacific Ocean
Source: Andree 1887

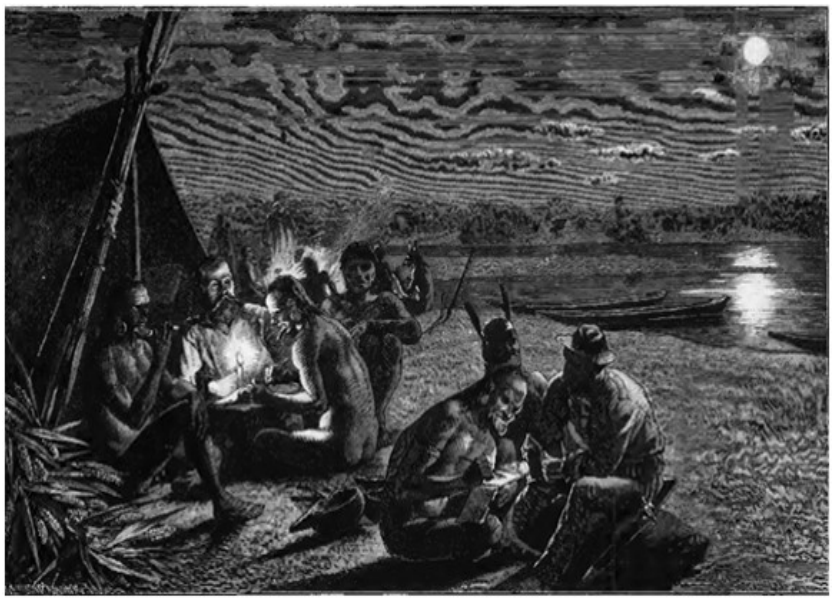

Figure 4: Suyá indigenous drawing
Source: Von den Steinen 1886

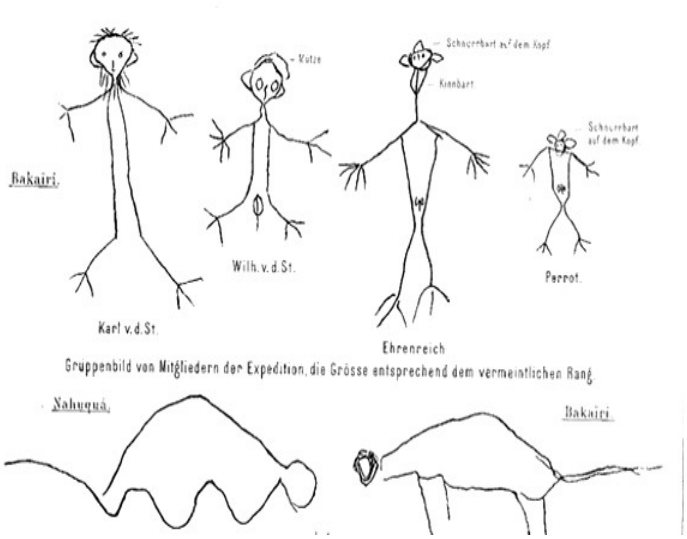

Figure 5a: Portraits from German scholars and animals (by Bakairi and Nahuqa)
Source: Von den Steinen 1886

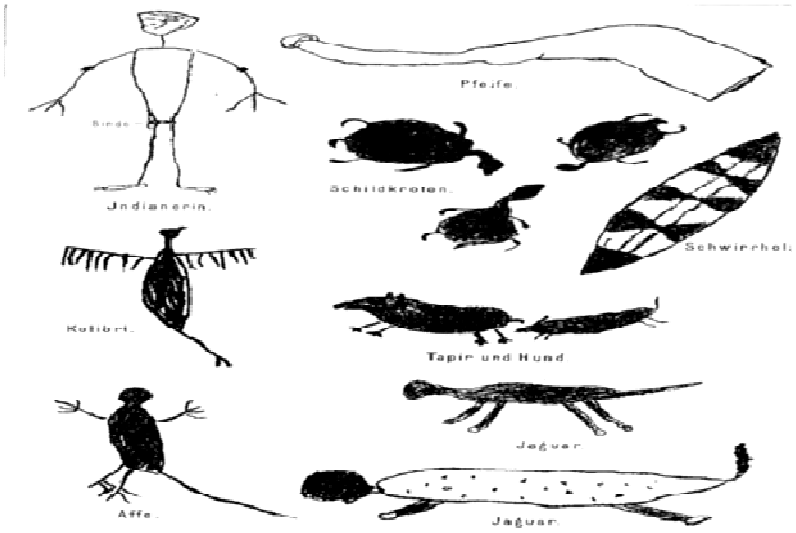

Figure 5b: Self-portrait and animals (by Bororo)
Source: Von den Steinen 1886

Figure 6a: Portrait of Koch-Grünberg (by a Tukáno)
Source: Koch-Grünberg 1905

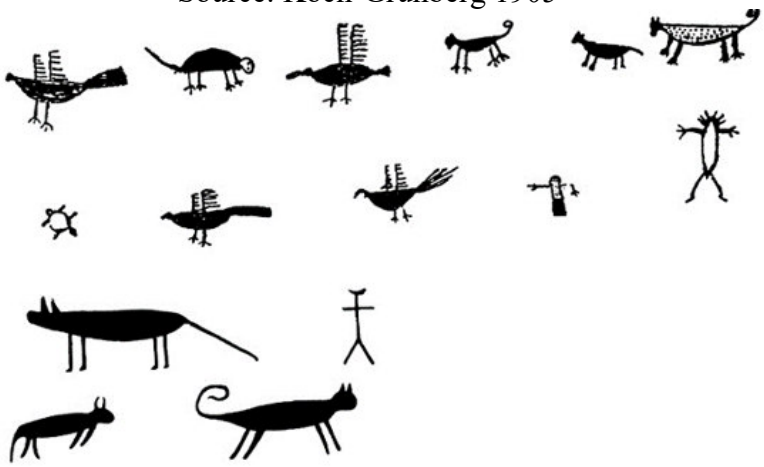

Figure 6b: Birds and Tigers (by Siusi)
Source: Koch-Grünberg 1905

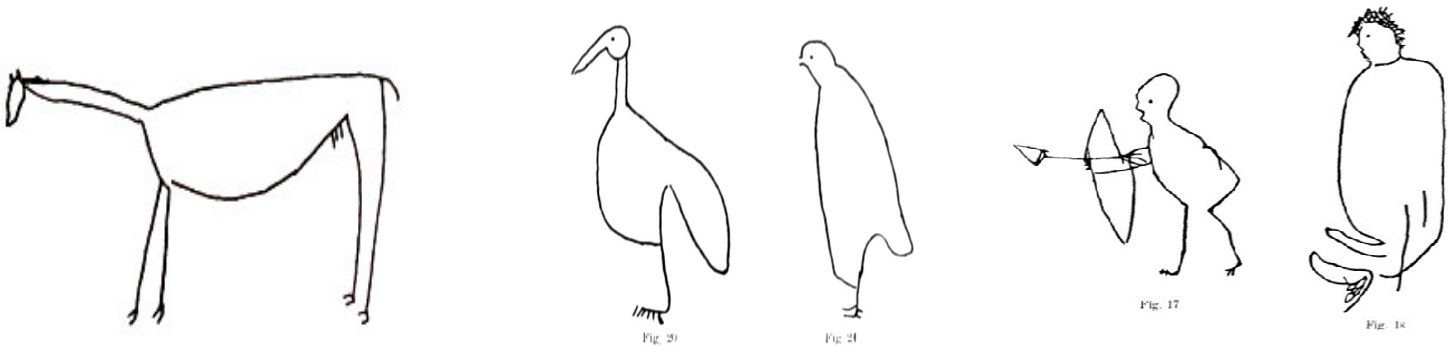

Figure 7a: Animals and humans. Simple lines and contours (By Selk'nam)
Source: Lehmann-Nitsche 1909

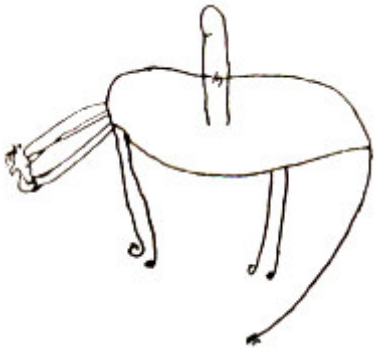

Figure 7b: Horse and Rider. Reproduction of normally invisible parts (By Selk'nam)
Source: Lehmann-Nitsche 1909

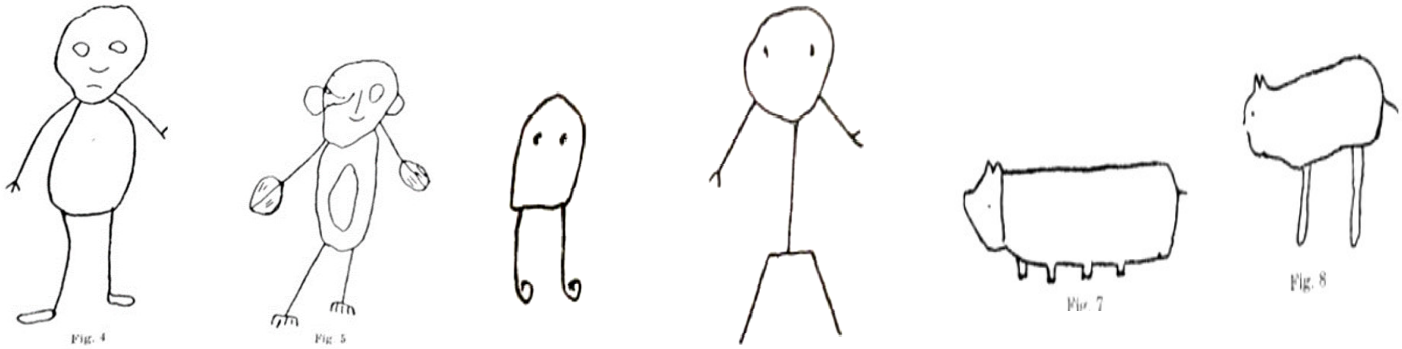

Figure 8: Animals and humans. Simple lines and contours (Children from La Plata city)
Source: Lehmann-Nitsche 1909

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