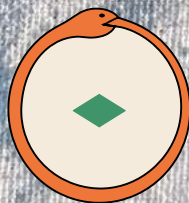
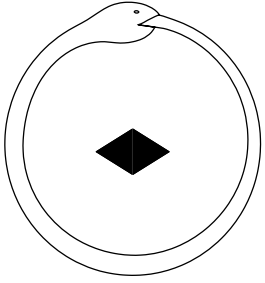


ON LAND WITHOUT EVIL, ON
DEPRESSION, DREAMS AND BEES

Carlos Papá, Cristine Takuá
and Ivanildes Kerexu



notebooks
SELVAGEM



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This notebook is the transcription of excerpts from the class “FRUITS OF NHE’ĒRÿ; TEMBI’U PORÁ • TEMBI’U VAIKUE Good food | Bad food”, with Carlos Papá and Ivanildes Kerexu, in the in-person cycle AYVU PARÁ¹, which took place on May 31st, 2023 at the Museu das Culturas Indígenas [Museum of Indigenous Cultures], in São Paulo. The cover of this notebook is a cutting of the work produced during the cycle by the artists Alexandre Wera, Maria Djera, Marcinho Xunu, Wera Juninho, Rafael Kaje, Kauê Karai and Bruno Djeguaka.

DEPRESSION

IVANILDES KEREXU: Elders always say that, in addition to eating healthy food, we need *mbaraete*, which means strengthening the spirit. I think this is missing. Our spirit also needs to be strengthened. This is a debate that we are taking to the villages. I work as a coordinator of my region at the Fórum das Comunidades Tradicionais [Traditional Communities Forum], and we are discussing projects there to see how we will work with the issue of depression. We don’t want to leave our young people to the *Juruás* [non-indigenous person, literally, ‘bearded’] to do as they see fit, which is sending them to a psychologist. Where we live, we are working on this. We, as leaders, don’t have time at home. We are always having debates, meetings... We sideline our families to fight for rights, for the villages’ collectivity. This really makes me think.

1. From the in-person cycle emerged the [online cycle](#) AYVU PARÁ — speech drawings — consisting of 13 film classes, led by Carlos Papá and guests, about the meanings of several words in the Guarani language. To find out more, besides access to PDF notebooks and other materials that complement the classes, visit the [cycle page](#) on the Selvagem website.

CARLOS PAPÁ: Depression is when we try to find out who we are. Who am I? My name is Carlos, I am Papá, but what am I really like? I don't feel myself, who I am. When we go to the house of prayers, the spiritual leader says: "Oh, your name is such and such, you came from such a place, this place is where you belonged and you took care of this place. You have come guided from there and that's why you're here." You definitely remember something about that place. To remember that place you need concentration. When you get up and walk along the path and feel what is called "*Nhemopyambú nhendurã rupi nhemopyrõ*", which means "tread and feel the sound of your own feet."

Then the noise of your feet and your walking will produce a sound, will narrate your steps. Each place will make a different sound: there are places where you will sound, where you will hear crickets, will hear birds, hear wind, rivers, you will see people, will see animals, see things, flowers, scents, smells, things like that... In this place you will make a sound. When your foot is here, the sound is different. If I tread, the sound is different. This sound keeps making combinations of the spaces and places in the environment where you are, so you can find your own self... and listen. From there you will feel your steps as they are, it's not just walking for the sake of walking, but walking in direct connection with *Nhe'ẽrỹ. Nhe'ẽrỹ*, where the spirits bathe: it is not just walking in order to walk; you have to walk concentrating, feeling, listening to your steps, your body and, at the same time, the smell and the wind.

This is the real cure. There is no use for a doctor, there is no use for a healer, no. It is you. You being in this state of concentration to feel yourself, to feel ourselves and bring out what is hidden there. When we bring up this question, when we attract this form of depression, it is because we have a certain limit, and we don't know where this limit came from. To heal, you have to be in the woods. You have to tread on leaves, in the water, feel... Get practising, start unloading... You'll notice, you won't need to take medicine.

Today there is also a concern about so much technology that provides a lot of information and we don't feel it anymore. Do you want to know the colour of this thread or the colour of the jaguar? You no longer make a drawing and say "oh, I think it's like this", no. You go di-

rectly to your cell phone and search for “what is that colour like?”, “oh, I think it’s like that”, it is all ready-made, all ready. There’s no time for you to think, there’s no time to fire your imagination, so it leaves you a bit stuck and dependent on it. Imprisoned, but you don’t know in what. So the way out is to bring that connection back from the dark, which is trapped there, bring it back and feel it again. From the moment you discover who you are, you will be much happier, you will accept yourself: “oh, that’s just how I am, I really am a bit clumsy, but that’s who I am and I’m very happy!” So this is the cure.

DREAMS

CRISTINE TAKUÁ: I wanted to talk about food, because a thought came to me. There are several forms of food. There is food that feeds our body. I jest that food feeds our belly. But there is another kind of food, which is the food of the spirit. I have insisted a lot on saying that our soul becomes anaemic if we stop dreaming. So, if you spend many, many nights without dreaming, it creates a kind of anaemia. If you eat a few vitamins, your blood becomes weak, you get a weak body. If you dream little or don’t dream at all, or never remember what you’ve dreamt, your spirit will get anaemic.

I have started to reflect on and relate to depression as a kind of anaemia of the spirit. Because people are very fast-paced, and this little thing here (*shows her cell phone*) leaves us immersed in a universe of information that, after sunset, at times we don’t even stop to breathe. We don’t stop to feel the weather, the wind, feel the messages that are this food for our spirit. When I see many young people with depression, or sad, or arriving at the extreme point of suicide – something very sad –, I see a deep anemia of the soul. We need to feed our spirit, feed our soul and dream more.

Dreams direct us and put us towards understanding; just like when you eat barbados gooseberry [*Pereskia aculeata*], when you eat potent and strong kinds of food and become strong and healthy to do things.

When we dream a lot, we receive guidance that nourishes our spirit. Reflect on these many forms of food and on how sometimes we are apparently strong, but in reality very weakened, anaemic. What I'm saying may even be a little metaphorical, but it is in the sense of understanding the dimension of these many kinds of food that permeate our existence.

KEREXU: Dreams are very important for our journey and for our daily lives too. Dreaming comes in two forms: there are dreams that are spiritual, a good dream, showing the way, and there are also dreams that can divert you from the path. So there are two kinds of dreams that we need to pay attention to. That's why it's very important, when we dream, to tell an older person in the village: "I dreamt like that, what does it mean?" Sometimes in the dream it seems as if it is real, but it can be a detour from the right path. That is why we wake up and need to tell somebody so they can decode the dream.

And, in my opinion, there is the dream of wanting something. I dreamt and thought, when I saw those *xeramõi kuery*, *xejarýi kuery*, the elders, I used to say: "When I grow up I will be like that *xeramõi* [elder] over there, like that person there". We need to have this dream, we need to be inspired in order not to get lost. I think that what today's young people need is this: to be inspired by seeing the elders who are there.

I was always inspired by my grandfather. I saw him, an age-old man, giving advice... The advice he gave was really cool. I saw his children around him, all grown up, and I said to myself: "I'm going to be like him, I'm going to give everybody advice". Today I always say that our dream is to give strength to face these difficult moments we are suffering, that we are going through. Today I have this vision that we need dreams, they are necessary.

When we want something, we need to focus on making this dream come true within our dream. We even have several songs that came through these dreams – sometimes to strengthen a person who is sick, or also to strengthen something that we would like to happen, then it comes through the dream. There are also several dream forms that come to strengthen the chants. The chants in the house of prayers usu-

ally come through dreams, through the shamans, through the religious people who are there.

PAPÁ: While dreaming, the person has to be whole. When we bring a cure or look for something, we close our eyes. When we are going to pray, for example, we close our eyes. Or you are thinking about something very deep, you close your eyes. Why do we close our eyes? Because we are looking for a cure.

This way of healing and at the same time of being, of feeding the spirit, is when you realise that, while walking, the sun is with you. You walk and the shadow comes behind. Depending on from where the sun shines, the shadow will follow you. When you realise that it is the night, that it is the dark that lulls you, you have to give yourself completely, because before we are born, we are in our mother's womb and we don't see anything, we don't know what is happening when we are in the mother's womb. But we know our mother's voice, our father's voice, — someone's voice out there, but we don't see. Still, we are fine, are safe, and warm. After we are born and grow up, we forget our inner darkness, we forget that the darkness is the mother, that the darkness is there all the time. When you are walking, the shadow accompanies you. It's your mother, always with you. So, when you go to bed, the dark lulls you.

You have worked all day and go to rest, so you close your eyes... The dark is with you, it is inside you, again, to lull you. We need to understand that the dark is with us all the time, so that we can rest, to feed our spirit. That's why we have to bring our self back, the self that is inside the dark, and have an integration of understanding that the dark is a very deep being, that we need to pay attention in order to dream, which is from where the darkness, the mother starts to say things: "Oh, that's it, this is going to happen...". Or, at times, there are moments when you are not well and that is why confusing things come up. You have to take your time and come up with answers again for yourself, unconsciously: "What did I do? What is happening?". And then the dark will give you information, the dark will tell you to walk, because wherever you walk the shadow is with you; the shadow is the

dark. That's why we have to have this freedom to surrender and integrate when we're in bed. Forget your cell phone, forget your book, forget everything. "Oh, I want to sleep... And you, lull me so I can rest, bring me the good things." Do this test and the dark will really lull you and you will be happy.

BEES

KEREXU: We don't have bees, but they are very important, especially the jataí [*Tetragonisca angustula*], which is part of the indigenous *Guarani* religion. Jataí wax is very important to make the small candle that we light in the house of prayers. At the time of baptism we use it a lot, at the time of baptism of the corn, at the baptism of water, at the baptism of *ka'a* – which is yerba mate – , and also at the baptism of the children. At these moments, we oftentimes use small candles made with jataí wax. We also paint our face and parts of the joints, our legs, our ankles, so that young people are protected from evil spirits that could disrupt their lives. Because we believe that, when you are young, your spirit is weak, and that is why you need to have this protection, you have to do all this painting so that the young person's life is protected from these spirits. That's why we think about keeping these bees, but today it's very difficult to find them in the forest. In *Tupi Guarani* their name is *yata' i*, and the wax is *araity*.

PAPÁ: The meliponary is extremely important for the preservation of the stingless native bees. In our village we have encouraged young people to care for, as well as talk to and interact with bees. There we don't only have jataí, and my son Bruno Djeguaká, a young *Guarani*, is the one who coordinates the meliponary.

BRUNO DJEGUAKÁ: My name is Bruno Djeguaká, and I take care of the bees. There are jataí [*Tetragonisca angustula*], mandaçaia [*Melipona quadrifasciata*], uruçú [*Melipona scutellaris*] and mandaguari [*Scaptotrigo-*

na postica]. And I am learning from them too. You can make syrup with honey, you can make a lot of things... and I am learning.

PAPÁ: I encourage young people to get to know this side, to learn with animals and insects. Through this, *Nhe'ẽrỹ* grows stronger. This is a way that the Living School brings, teaches, or rather, provides support for. I think “teach” is an ugly word, it seems that nobody knows anything. I work to provide support so that young people are more interested, this way valuing their own journey, and through this valuing and getting to know themselves, it is that they begin to understand the steps of their own life.

At the Living School that Cris and I coordinate², we always do the activity of walking in the forest, of planting; we also talk about the importance of smelling, so that young people perceive scents, and recognize which smell it is – that is the teaching, it is not forcing young people to know this, but to have the sensitivity to, little by little, get to know this side, that living is good.

LAND WITHOUT EVIL

PAPÁ: We have a cosmology, from our thinking, of the “land without evil”; just that “land without evil” is but a way that was found, a name created to give an idea of this place. When we say *nhamoatyro nhande reté imarãe'y aguã py*, it means transforming oneself, transforming the body for immortality. When people came to *Nhe'ẽrỹ* to find the promised place, from the movement that exists in this specific place, the person who prays, the conductor – who is a spiritualized person – and the group that came together and is being prepared, will find spiritual enlightenments that will transform them into beings who will find immortality. We believe that we came into the world with our bodies, but we also have the ability to return with our bodies and souls without dying. The challenge of coming into the world is to teach people that

2. [Mbya Arandu Porã](#), in the Ribeirão Rio Silveira Indigenous Lands, Bertioga – São Paulo.

it is not necessary to die in order to find heavenly life, the promised life, the peaceful life. You don't need to meet death to become immortal. This is very clear in our cosmology, in our thinking, that's why it is called *Yvy marã eỹ* [The perfect world]. This "land without evil" is just an invention, it's an idea, perhaps created only to give an idea more or less what it would be. This land is not exactly a place, but it is transforming oneself for a life of immortality, finding this world of immortality, that is indeed a form of "land without evil".

In order to be in connection and accept who you are, the great sages talk about discovering the feeling of your steps, of your walking, of what is important. For the *Guarani Mbya*, this is when the person walks very slowly, without making noise, and steps firmly to hear the sound and feel it, so that the body is flexible. It's not just walking, but being in connection with everything. There is the big tree, the midsized and then the small one, and even the smallest, even a tiny grain of something is blooming there. If you analyse it, there is a flower. And we, without realising it, pass right by, we don't notice it, but it's nice to feel part of everything, to walk firmly and in connection, to try to see and remember where you've been. This brings a certain strength, it brings this net, like the web of energies that feeds our walking, our breathing, because our pores capture information and energy. This is why walking is important; and feel, not just walk, you also have to feel the sound. The day you walk in the square, somewhere, listen to the sound: "*pá, pá, pá*"; if you step on a trunk it will produce another sound: "*tom, tom, tom, tchi, tchi, tchi*"; on stones there is another sound: "*rop, rop, rop, chi, chi, chi*"; your walk will produce sound... And it feeds you, it seems like it doesn't matter, but it's important to hear the sound. That sound feeds the battery of life.

CARLOS PAPÁ

Carlos Papá is an indigenous leader and filmmaker of the *Guarani Mbya* people. He has worked for more than 20 years with audiovisual productions, with the aim of strengthening and valuing the *Guarani Mbya* culture by producing documentaries, films and cultural workshops for young people. He is a coordinator of the Living School *Mbya Arandu Porã Guarani* Culture Point. He also is a spiritual leader in his community. He lives in the village of Rio Silveira, São Paulo, where he takes part in collective decisions and is engaged in helping his community to find ways to live better. He also is a counsellor at the Instituto Maracá and a representative of the north coast of the state of São Paulo in the *Yvy Rupa Guarani* Commission (CGY).

CRISTINE TAKUÁ

Cristine Takuá is a philosopher, educator and artisan, graduated in Philosophy from UNESP. She was a teacher for twelve years at the *Txeru Ba'e Kuai'* Indigenous Public School. She has participated in *Selvagem* since 2019 and currently coordinates the dialogue with the four Living Schools, indigenous projects to strengthen and transmit traditional knowledge. She is a representative of the NEI (Indigenous Education Centre) at the Department of Education of São Paulo and a founding member of FAPISP (Forum for the Articulation of Indigenous Teachers of the State of São Paulo). She is the director of the Instituto Maracá, which does the shared management of the Museum of Indigenous Cultures in São Paulo. She was a coordinator of the *Yvy Rupa Guarani* Commission from 2016 to 2019. She lives in the Rio Silveira Indigenous Lands, located in the municipalities of Bertiooga and São Sebastião.

IVANILDES KEREXU

Ivanildes Kerexu is a resident of the Boa Vista Indigenous Lands, Rio Bonito village. Kerexu has been fighting for many years to defend her territory and strengthen the culture of her *Guarani Mbya* people. She is a great defender of women's rights and has sought to offer younger people guidance with the good and beautiful words.

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More information at selvagemciclo.com.br

All Selvagem activities and materials are shared free of charge. For those who wish to give something back, we invite you to financially support the Living Schools, a network of 5 educational centres for the transmission of indigenous culture and knowledge. Find out more at: selvagemciclo.com.br/colabore

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