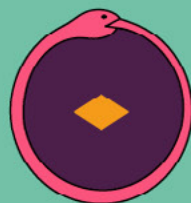
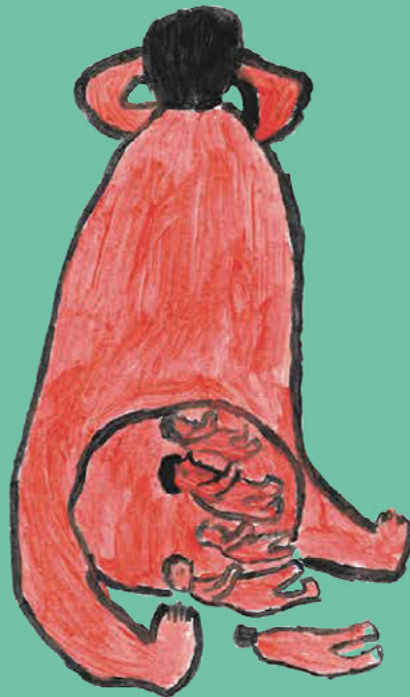
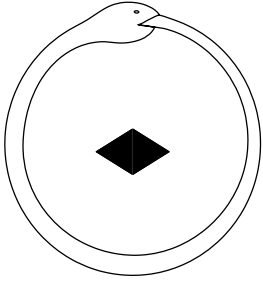


THE WORLD IS BEING
WHELPED ALL THE TIME
Ailton Krenak, Álvaro Tukano,
Daiara Tukano, Francy Baniwa
and Idjahure Kadiwel
Cycle BEFORE, THERE WAS NO WORLD

4/4



notebooks
SELVAGEM



**THE WORLD IS BEING WHELPED
ALL THE TIME**

Ailton Krenak, Álvaro Tukano, Daiara Tukano,
Francy Baniwa and Idjahure Kadiwel

Reading Cycle of the book

Antes o mundo não existia [Before, there was no world] 4/4

The cover is illustrated with a drawing by Tōrāmũ Kēhíri

The following is an edit of the conversation held at the Selvagem reading cycle about the book by Firmiano Lana (*Umusi Pārōkumu*) and Luiz Lana (*Tōrāmũ Kēhíri*), *Antes o mundo não existia* [Before, there was no world], which took place on August 12th, 2020.

IDJAHURE KADIWEL: Good evening. Welcome to our last meeting of this cycle of studies about the book *Antes o mundo não existia*. Our guests tonight are masters Ailton Krenak and Álvaro Tukano. I would like to recall the last meetings, the first one with Jaime Diakara, writer, artist, and anthropologist of the *Desana* people, in which he raised the discussion of narrative or mythology, and the lack of a vocabulary to name this broad set of therapeutic, botanical, and ecological knowledge. Jaime still brought us those interesting notions of Geomythology and Geomedicine. He also brought the idea that these objects that *Yebá Buró*, the ‘Grandmother of the World’, the ‘Grandmother of the Earth’, creates along with her, these objects which appear in this narrative, in this mythology, have a profound symbology and life. His approach was to open the mind, to open paths and not to remain literal to the text. We deepened this dimension of mythical narratives as theory, as epistemology, with Dagoberto Azevedo and João Paulo Barreto, anthropologists of the *Tukano* people who addressed notions present in their collectively authored publication on *Tukano* thought, *Omerõ: constituição e*

*circulação de conhecimentos yepamahsã*¹ [Ómerõ: constitution and circulation of yepamahsã knowledge]. And so we continue to go further with the shock of facing these narratives, these mythologies, as deep transdisciplinary knowledge.

Our transformation canoe went elsewhere when we heard Denilson Baniwa talking about art, about how the visuality present in the book, originally made by Feliciano Lana and illustrated by Luiz Lana in this third edition, is now translated and transformed into lasers in his works, which he projects over the city; about how these visual languages have a thousand ramifications. Francy, my partner in organizing the course, brought us a female counterpoint to this predominance of male narrators that we have come to know, the Indigenous narrators from Rio Negro. She did this based on her master's degree research, in which she was able to listen to her father and develop her perspective from another people, the **Baniwa** people, inhabitant of other rivers, the Içana and Ayari rivers, while the people of the **Tukano** linguistic family are found in the Uaupés and Tiquié.

Our idea was to explore the book through several lenses, as if we were appreciating it from different angles, from different perspectives. Today we are going to produce more connections, without focusing specifically on the script of the wonderful histories present in the book. I indicated, as a complementary reading, *Tembetá* by Ailton and Álvaro, an editorial project I was part of. Talking to Ailton last week about this idea of mythology and narrative, a text that he himself suggested was *As Alianças Afetivas*² [The alliances of affections], which is a conversation, an interview with him and the anthropologist Pedro Cesarino, at the São Paulo Biennial, a few years ago. From Álvaro, I also suggested the book

1. Book by João Paulo Lima Barreto, Dagoberto Lima Azevedo, Gabriel Sodr  Maia, Gilton Mendes dos Santos, Carlos Machado Dias Jr., Ernesto Belo, Jo o Rivelino Rezende and Lorena Fran a, published through a partnership between the N cleo de Estudos Ind genas da Amaz nia Ind gena (NEAI) [Center for Indigenous Studies in the Indigenous Amazon] and Editora da Universidade Federal do Amazonas (EDUA) [Federal University of Amazonas Publishing House] in 2018. Available at: <https://acervo.socioambiental.org/acervo/livros/omero-construcao-e-circulacao-de-conhecimentos-yepamahsa-tukano>.

2. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/37323976/As_alian%C3%A7as_afetivas_entrevista_com_Ailton_Krenak_por_Pedro_Cesarino.

O mundo tukano antes dos brancos [The *tukano* world before the whites], published in 2017 by Editora UnB [Brasília University Publishing House].

It is the end of a cycle, we are tuned in, we will make a Programa de Índio³ [Indian Program], just like the one Ailton and Álvaro inaugurated in 1985. *Antes o mundo não existia* has inaugurated the publication of Brazilian books with Indigenous authorship, and I was thinking: how come there aren't more books like this? This book is a laborious book, it took 12 years to write it. *A queda do céu*⁴ [The falling sky], another fundamental book which has also gained a lot of visibility, took almost 30 years to be produced, a whole deep translational thought permeates this type of knowledge. Having this immersion, these perspectives, bring me enormous joy, but I also think: why aren't there more books like these? Why isn't there more of this type of literature, which has captivated everyone here so much? It is a thought, a provocation. Do you also want to make a comment, Fran, in this welcome to our guests?

FRANCY BANIWA: *Puranga pituna panhã penhê arã*. Good evening, everyone. Welcome, warriors of ours, our *maadzero*⁵. It is a satisfaction and a great joy for me and for all the Selvagem family to welcome you and to finish this cycle of ours, another cycle of studies, in which we are reading a beautiful book, with a lot of knowledge, a beautiful narrative of the *Desana* people, from the Upper Rio Negro. Having your participation today will enrich us with other perspectives in relation to these Indigenous worlds, to these speeches of our grandmothers, great-grandmothers, of our own history.

3. Programa de Índio, an initiative of the Indigenous movement between 1985 and 1990, used radio as an instrument of communication with Indigenous and non-indigenous audiences, in an innovative and systematic way, with creativity and originality, strengthening identity and cultural diversity, politically mobilising the public and the communities, participating in an intense period of political and social transformations in the country. <https://revistas.usp.br/novosolhares/article/view/51452> (T.N.)

4. *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman* is a book organised by French anthropologist Bruce Albert and the Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa. (T.N.)

5. *Maadzero* “means a wise person who knows the *Baniwa* people, a master of songs and dances, a player of musical instruments, an authority of narratives, a healer, a craftsman, in short, someone important in the community and the region.” In: *Umbigo do Mundo*, Francy and Francisco Baniwa, Dantes Editora 2023, page 31. (T.N.)

I think it is our speech, from our conversations — I do not know if it would be cosmology, mythology, narratives, but it is our talking, as the *Desana* people, as the *Baniwa* people, like several other peoples, I think this moment is precisely for us to share these interpretations, the meaning of these talks for us today. So, I guess this ‘there was no world before’ – in fact, the world has always existed: in our eyes, these places of origin have always been part of our world, they have always been present in our experience, in our daily life, in our talking, be it in community, in the village, they have always been part of our world, as human beings. We know that we are human animals, we understand the situations. It is our encounter, with great joy, with much lore to be shared with everyone at this moment. It is a joy to be able to listen to them with their experience, with their incredible background, be it from the Indigenous movement, be it in the academy, or in a conversation within a community, or under a tree, or on the streets, we end up sharing this lore, these speeches, this knowledge. All that remains for us is to sail over these speeches, let ourselves be guided by the transformation canoe once again and end this good conversation with a lot of sharing and interpretation. We welcome you!

AILTON KRENAK: Hooray! How great that we are under this tree, inside this canoe, everywhere. Thank you, Fran, for the wonderful greeting. It is, at the same time, a provocative and welcoming speech for us to be here, in this environment which we are creating with our empathies.

Before starting this ceremony that we are inaugurating here, I was thinking about the state of mind which sweeps me up in these conversations, in these meetings. I was remembering, experiencing in my body the feeling of being there inside the *Memorial dos Povos Indígenas* [Indigenous Peoples’ Memorial], when a few years ago, Álvaro and I, along with some other relatives, launched *Moitará*, a series of meetings in which we wanted to set up this type of conversation. Ernesto Neto, Anna Dantes, these dear ones were already with us there, when we were sketching the scripts, and it makes me very happy to imagine that this moment which we are now sharing is the continuum of that same desire, that same will to convoke these narratives so they could light up stars in the sky, constellations. Exactly because of the plural nature it has, addressing one of

these stars in the constellation becomes a minutiae; go inside that detail, that star, and start exploring its dimensions.

The introduction that dear Idjahure made, convoking recent memories and people, celebrating all this construction, which can sometimes be questioned if it is a myth, if it is a narrative, calling for a cosmovision... These questions will be always hovering, depending on where these conversations take place. But here it remains comfortable as a narrative. When we discuss the logic or the reason of the West, we call it “a Western narrative”. This Western narrative, which brings us all together, has many folks, many peoples, many cultures and what stands out in the light of each one is the narrative. We are living in a time of competing narratives, and this can make the quality of “narrative” something less important or less relevant than a cosmovision or invoking a myth, a narrative of origin. Idjahure mentioned a conversation I had with Pedro Cesarino about the possibility of connecting where we are now to this place from before the world existed. As Fran has touched on this issue, I am not going to miss the opportunity to visit this place, the place where time did not have the counting we do of time. I said that we can call this time “time of myth” and that this time is prior to the anguish of certainty, it is when beings had no anguish about anything and they experienced living uncertainty. If we can experience this contact with a place before the counting of time, we can consider that these worlds that we share now did not exist. And then it is not difficult, there is no contradiction in saying that there was no world before. Because the worlds are our creations. We create worlds, even when we think of the world as this superstructure, the planet. If we thought about synonyms of the world, Earth, beyond other representations of the world, we would be in this construction of the world. We are not an event along the course of the creations of the world, we are active participants of these creations of the world.

When we look at the narrative that comprises several constellations of peoples which today we geographically place there at the Upper Rio Negro, but who have already sailed on other waters, we can convene our friends who are, for example, in the Southeast and say: “Look at Guanabara Bay over there! See the *Lago de Leite* [Milk Lake]”. Perhaps it is this Geography, or this Geology, that our dear Diakara was invoking

when he spoke in a geonarrative, when he spoke about a History of the earth, a History of the earth making itself, a History of construction, both of the geological world, the physical world, as well as the imaginary worlds they build, that create a very beautiful parable which is to perceive ourselves in constant creation.

The events that originated worlds we imagine are not delimited in a timeline, on something that would be the past, but they are here, now. This world we are sharing, it is in creation. The world is creating itself all the time. The world is created every hour. Each time we evoke the world, it enters into a process, goes into labour. It is like the world is being whelped all the time. As long as we are experiencing this memory, as long as they are trying to activate this memory, the world is in creation. The objects that have been referred to as objects which are activated there in the inaugural events of some myth, of some passage, they are still alive and active and functioning. In this sense, the transformation canoe is alive, active, and functioning.

I found it very interesting to refer to Denilson's speech, to when he talks about the laser, because the transfiguration of those objectives that we have configured into other reconfigurations, only confirm this constant, permanent, creation of the world, both of the world that we imagine, the planet Earth, as much as the world that our narratives convoke, convoke as actions, convoke as life-creating activities. We could also think that when we talk about the world, we are talking about something that has a very close relationship with the understanding of life. This is akin to the approach of metamorphoses, which transform, transform, transform... The relations of this incredible movement of life, of creating life, brings us up to date with that instant which, in the narrative, we can indicate as previous to the instant we are living here and now. I am calling it 'living uncertainty'. This experience of 'living uncertainty' is prior to the anguish of counting time, prior to the idea of time. It is not an extravagance to bring a narrative with its inauguration to a time before the world existed, because we are capable, in different parts of the world, of constituting narratives that give us the potency to exist, that give us the potency to exist and have the courage to inhabit the uncertainty. It is not a certificate. Perhaps a little mistake could lead

someone to understand that when they hear the narrative of a myth, they are being put in front of a certification. “Ah, those people have a myth of origin... Ah, those people manage to report a History that can be referenced in Geology, Geography, and in the topographies of the territories from which they emerge. That is why they are able to name mountains, rivers. That is why they are able to identify their kinship relations with non-human beings, because they are making contact with a memory that certifies the antiquity of this narrative”. It would be good to inhabit that place of uncertainty so that this anguish does not create any tension when we have the opportunity to share one of these narratives, precisely because of its plural nature, for its insurgence in the sense of diversity. It convokes constellations. So, as it convokes constellations, it claims no exclusivity.

A remark I have been making regarding the various narratives that I have the grace, the gratitude of being able to experience in my being, in my memory, in my observation, is that none of them claim to be the only one. All are open to what Idjahure called transculturality or transdisciplinarity. That is when you will not ask someone: “Is he a geographer? Is he a physicist? Is he a botanist?” This definition of places from where that vision is being communicated is diluted in a predisposition to listening, in a predisposition to let one more flow of world creation pass through. It adds worlds instead of eroding worlds, instead of draining worlds. Actually, you enter into a world-creating experience, where the worlds are not past, the worlds are here, now, in permanent creation. I have increasingly felt the importance of this welcoming and of this appreciation of narratives as lights that illuminate environments from our own observation as beings who are in the world about all other beings – beyond humans, beyond people, beyond cultural diversity; we manage to access the meaning of what we sometimes talk about, but cannot touch it, which is the cosmos. When we speak of cosmogony, we are not referring to one single narrative conduit, we are imagining all these narratives crossing one another.

The first time I had contact with the idea of a wormhole, a possible connection in the cosmos between one galaxy and another, I immediately understood what was being said, because I had already experienced it

in terms of invoking a possibility of expanding the mind. One may say they have done this in a shamanic journey or in a meditation, because this is possible in different states. It is even possible in the production of a text, in the production of an oeuvre, of an audiovisual piece, of an object, because we are talking about the transcendence of these forms, almost like design, like drawing. The transcendence of these drawings that reach us, to which we manage to make sense of, but which are in an immense transaction within these clusters or complexes that I am calling constellations. We are – when we lean over one of these stars, which is what we are doing now – we are making a choice to look at this star, in its minutia. And it is wonderful to see how this star has been constituted to the point of taking on, in the action of creating the world, the configurations of the various objects that have already been mentioned here. So, we are talking about worlds and tools – I do not like the word tool, because I think it is too limited. But we are thinking about essential gestures for a cosmovision to come to institute worlds, create worlds. This transformation canoe's narrative, which we can relate to many other vessels, with or without materiality, is wonderful because it activates what can be thought of as a core of subjectivity that each one of us carries. Just as each of us has a marrow, each of us has a core of subjectivity which is capable of creating worlds, worlds, worlds, worlds. And awakening this courage and provoking this interest in people is the best thing we can do instead of eroding worlds, eating worlds, which has been a very hard experience for many peoples in different parts of the planet, this experience of erosion of the world. We are living, now, at the beginning of the 21st century, a radical experience of feeling the world falling apart.

I remember once that the little **Tukano**, dear Álvaro Tukano, returned from a visit to the village on Rio Negro. He went there to see his relatives and the first impression he gave me when we spoke — we have communicated remotely, it was not the pandemic time yet, obviously, but we used the phone, and his message was short to tell me the following: “The Earth is rotten”. As Álvaro communicates a lot in code, when he sent this one to me, “the Earth is rotten”, I felt that blow, that pressure, and I started to think, I went to do my studies. Well, what he

felt, the tension he felt, many people in different places on the planet are feeling and can, in some cases, vocalise this feeling. This week's headline is: "An Earthly Paradise Is Being Destroyed by an Oil Spill." A general convocation notice to try to go there and contain that disgrace. Rotten land. In Lebanon, a deposit of toxic material explodes, catches fire, destroys everything. Rotten land. A devastation of worlds that we build, that we want to embrace and that is escaping our embrace.

Creating worlds is urgent. Potentializing narratives that create worlds is an emergency. We need to do this. This is how I embark on the transformation canoe, taking a trip that has always excited me so much, which is the one before we did not have this body. Because when they convoke me to think that there was no world before, I can think back to before we had this body, because it was a fish-people who got into that transformation canoe. Whoever embarked on it did not have a human body, whoever embarked on it had a marvellous memory of the earth in constellation, because it is a memory of the earth who knew about the cosmos. I think it is so wonderful that we can get in touch with the idea of a memory that transcends this anthropomorphic thing that we are made up of. We have called forth this format so much that we ended up looking like everyone else, head, torso and limb. But we have already been others... other existences. It is of these other existences that the transformation canoe speaks. It speaks of other existences. In a time when we are invoking other worlds, we have the fantastic wealth of being able to convoke other existences as well.

I have seen a call from the current generation about re-existing, to resist in resistance or re-existing, living by re-existing, because it brings the complexity of the political conflict and the conflict between the different narratives which are hovering, hovering over our heads and with the power to cross our bodies too. Inhabiting a place prior to this form, prior to the very idea of the world, prior to the configuration of the world as we perceive it, is a transcendent experience, because it puts us in that place which I evoke as the experience of a living uncertainty. It is the living uncertainty.

The transformation canoe has already taken off from the Milk Lake, everyone who were not people yet, at least not human,

anthropomorphic, got on board, and began a journey which transforms the world and also transforms beings, the configuration of beings. This configuration that we have, which is sometimes very comfortable, and everyone feels at ease inside, it is just a shell, a cover. I remember once *Kopenawa Yanomami* said it was an envelope. I thought it was really cool that *Kopenawa Yanomami* said that this body that we rove around is an envelope. When the emission is made by a spirit, this carcass is just an envelope. But prior to calling this an envelope it is necessary to know about some other things. We constitute a humanity that believes they are these carcasses circulating around. To stabilise the mind in this place, thinking that we are these carcasses which circulate around, is a potential disaster. Because a zombie humanity is also made up of carcasses, which walk around, preying on the planet and preying on other beings, a zombie humanity. It would be interesting for us to consider the possibility that in a world with an advanced zombieing movement, which is heading towards a zombie humanity, the native seeds resist. Just as you look for creole seeds, native seeds in an agroforestry fair, which can revitalise the production of edibles, medicine, food, good and healthy things, there are also the original seeds in this vast humanity. It is these original seeds that bring the narrative about the master plants, about all other non-humans which have already proven themselves in other eras, including our masters, teaching us to domesticate the species that could stay close to us in order to help us, teaching us to avoid those that needed to be avoided, and awakening us to a kind of affection with the potency of these worlds in constant creation.

The canoe rises. Inside the canoe, the transformation is an event that brings us closer to this experience of plural humanity which we are part of. The fish-people who entered the canoe went through an experience of active transformation. Active transformation is when the spirit participates in choosing the envelope. The spirit is able to shape the body with which it wants to walk here in the world. I think this is wonderful because it is the making of a person. In rites, in ceremonies where adornments and objects are invoked, they gain meaning and express their own potencies, which are inherent to each one of them: the cigarette, the

stool, the flutes, the logs. Just like in *kuarup*⁶, it is revitalised, revisited, embraced, and then dispatched, meaning a way out of this world, these worlds have entrance doors as well. So, this is a very rich narrative that is capable of accounting for the transformation of those of us who think we are human, and of everything that participates in creation, together, at the same time, with our experience of being Transformers, of being other beings here on earth. We could go through that experience, eclipse our memories, and walk away — but we want to be living bodies in a living earth. And that implies connections, to have living bodies on living earth you must have pores. We must be able to plug ourselves into the pores of this fantastic organism which is the Earth and make the transformation within this flow. And to be able to observe when the Earth is being damaged to the point of rotting in some places. Because while the Earth heals us, we also heal the Earth.

Our *Tikmũñ* relatives, who are also called *Maxakali*, neighbours here of the *Krenaks*, in the recent clarification about bats and the forced approach taken by sanitarians who say that bats brought the pandemic and so on... Our *Maxakali* relatives say: “Ah, but we have a different relationship with the *xũñĩm*, the bats. *Xũñĩm* is the spirit that heals us when we are sick. It heals; it doesn’t make us sick”. So, it is very interesting that these paradigms constitute mentalities where healing and creation beings are stigmatised as threatening species.

In fact, all these beings, all this immense constellation of beings, who travel in the transformation canoe together with what we think we each are, our little constellations, are participating all the time in the creation of life on the planet. The richness of these narratives and the wonder of us being able to transcend them and avoid essentialism... Essentialism would be that single narrative, the one that says: “And God created heaven and earth, and created Joachim and Mary, and dispatched them both on a sidereal journey.” Well, this single narrative has been the cause of much genocide, of much epistemicide and has also configured, in relation to the planet and the world, an ecocide. The

6. *Kuarup* is an Indigenous ritual, performed by the people of the Upper Xingu region to celebrate the memory of the dead and release their souls to the spirit world. (T.N.)

proofs that a single narrative leads us to fall into a trap are announced in several recent speeches. Our dear Chimamanda, who arrived in Brazil through her texts, her literature, and who has already made her presence felt among us, she says: “The risk of a single narrative is too big⁷”. I completely agree with Chimamanda, because she comes from a world where there are so many narratives, which is the African continent, from where so many worlds emerge, that it would be fair to say that these worlds will never end.

It seems that it was attributed to Lévi-Strauss, because I saw a text that accredited this sentence to him, that the world began without human beings, and can just as well continue to exist without humans⁸. So that the quote does not remain loose, outside the transformation canoe, we could understand what he is saying as follows: this world, configured by western thought as a single platform for instituting a single narrative, existed before these humans and when these humans disappear, it will continue to exist. One remark is that some beings in transit in the condition of humans have memories of existences from when they were fish, from when they were birds, from when they were mountains, from when they were crystals, from when they were stars. The last opportunity I had to hear someone talking about being fragments of stars was in the last edition of *Selvagem*, with the audience inside the room and us listening to our dear Emanuele Coccia, in unison with Dorion Sagan; Dorion and Emanuele helped build this wonderful narrative triangle which coincides with the possibility of us being stardust, just like this wonderful planet, this wonderful physical and geophysical world that we experience. So, these narratives, they have an integrity, they are not fable stories.

7. Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s talk in the TED conference series, *The danger of a single story*, October 2009, is available on https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?subtitle=en&lng=pt-br&geo=pt-br.

8. It is, in fact, a recurrent topic in the thought of Claude Lévi Strauss, which first emerges at the end of *Sad Tropics* (1955), also appearing at the end of two of his major works dedicated to Indigenous mythology, *Origin of table manners* (1968) and *The naked man* (1971), as well as, later, in a speech when he received the Catalonia International Award, in 2005, at the age of 96.

That information given by Idjahure, that 40 years ago we had this gift of receiving as text the publication made by Berta Ribeiro and our dear Luiz Lana and Firmiano Lana, this wonderful thing that came to light only 40 years ago, has inhabited another narrative universe, of orality. It inhabited another place, the one of orality, and only became a book when someone was willing to do what Idjahure rightly hailed as a meticulous work of listening and collaborating to bring it from the world of orality into the world of text, to gain this landscape of literary texts. The fact that this is so rare is because these narratives are travelling in other constellations. When someone sitting in the *maloca*⁹ tells this story, this story lights up each pillar of the house, the poles of the house, and the benches and all the objects that are there light up. Everything lights up, because it is a device, just like the laser that can draw a scene in space, this device also turns on lights and activates the vital sense of all the objects that are manipulated, that are gathered, that are called forth to integrate this ritual. This wonder diminishes its intensity when it comes to the text, it is a transition, it is a passage. Just like those fish-bodies who entered the transformation canoe, they turned into people in order to establish sites, each one of them in a place where you can later follow the same path, and look at the marks on the stone slab. Arriving at some places like Iauaretê or São Gabriel da Cachoeira, as in some other locations, I see a slab where the references to this narrative of when the world was changing are marked. These marks are in the mountains, they are in the moors, in the plains, in the mountain ranges, because the memory of these narratives are geological; maybe that is what Jaime Diakara said, they are geological memories. Eduardo Galeano talks about the memories of the fire, but some attentive human beings, human observers, managed to bring to language, to verbalised language, to our grammars, some of these texts which became literature. Others will come. That one was inaugural, and we celebrate it every time we meet, like now, in this cycle of studies where you could look at the star

9. *Maloca* from the Tupi Guarani *moro-oca*=*people's house*; these are very large houses that the Indigenous peoples of the Upper Rio Negro build. They are collective dwellings where several families live together. (T.N.)

from within, there, scrutinising the star from within, guided by these narrators who carried a gift for us.

There are many connections with this fantastic narrative that is now, in some ways, beyond the idea of *tombamento*¹⁰ — that thing that there was in Brazil, a movement to protect [*tombar*] this intangible knowledge, that idea of registering narratives, registering objects. In some cases, grounds were made, it seems that the *Waiãpi* and a few other relatives started registering processes, but did not conclude, because we took our way out. But we are aware of the immense constellation of narratives and the importance they have now and that they will, more and more, reflect this importance in a world where beautiful words are being burned. So, it is a calling for us to enliven these narratives, and share these narratives.

I am totally happy to have been invited by you to give a free speech. I did not stick to the text, to make any comment on the work, because I perceive it as a living narrative that escapes any attempt on my part to contain the incredible movements that this transformation canoe continues to make. Because for me it is not a past event, it is not something that has happened, it is something that is happening and we can convoke this event every time we meet. It reminded me of when we were at the *Moitará* yard, because there we were able to ritualize many of these narratives. And one of the most encouraging experiences I have had was to evoke what we call cosmovisions, when we brought our *Kuna* relatives from Panama to speak, when we brought our *Huni Kuin* relatives to speak, people from various constellations speaking about worlds. And I stayed there, looking at all those worlds, all those possibilities of worlds. So it is a fantastic creation of worlds that should free us from any anxiety, any anguish about the end of the world.

IDJAHURE KADIWEL: I want to invite you to share a bit of your presentation, which never leaves anything to be desired, opening these multiple layers of life, memory... Your speech complements what we have been able to bring to this bonfire of images here. I would like to hand the floor to Álvaro as well. If there was no limit, we could spend the whole night here...

10. *Tombamento* - listed by the national historical heritage agency. (T.N.)

ÁLVARO TUKANO: Good evening, Ailton Krenak and Idjahure. The world existed thanks to these sacred objects, which many anthropologists call handicrafts, an indian¹¹ thing. So, Ailton, I want to congratulate you, thank you for your words that defend what we defend. At the beginning of the Indigenous movement, we did a great job and you were in São Gabriel da Cachoeira several times, at our invitation, as coordinator of the *União das Nações Indígenas (UNI)* [Union of Indigenous Nations]. At those moments we were able to bring great people in leading roles, who knew and who still know these histories of humanity's transformation, in São Gabriel, as a political hub for the lives of Pari Cachoeira, Taracúá or Iauaretê, we convened our brothers from Içana, Lower and Upper Rio Negro to defend these ideas in a practical way, and thus we founded the *Federação das Organizações das Nações Indígenas do Rio Negro (FOIRN)* [Federation of Indigenous Nations Organizations of the Rio Negro], as I brought a copy from the Shuar Center Federation, of Ecuador. Therefore, I want to thank you very much. I also want to thank Idjahure, thank his father, who is one of the best filmmakers, a friend of faith, a great documentarist, may he succeed in recording the ideas of Krenak, my brother Paulinho Paiakan, and many others like Moura Tukano, like Davi Kopenawa, Biraci Yawanawá... So, we formed the *Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Bacia Amazônica* [Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin], the COIAB, founded by my cousin-brother Moura. Today this struggle continues through the *APIB (Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil)* [Brazil's Indigenous Peoples Network]. We are defending here those same ideas which we discussed and defended 40, 60 years ago. I am also very happy to see Idjahure, Daiara and my niece Fran.

I come to speak here as part of this history, which has the same origin. We are *Yepamahsã*. I am *Doethiro*, in honour of *Doethiro* who was the first man of humanity, born in *Wamu Diá*, which is today on the other side of the world. From there we left. After many years, we have come through many years to arrive here to *Pamuri Yukese*, which is the transformation canoe; and our arrival took place in *Diá Ōhpeko*

11. Throughout the text we respect the speakers' usage of the words *índio* [indian] and *indígena* [Indigenous], whenever they use them. (T.N.)

Ditara, which today is the Guanabara Bay. We arrived, we had kahpi¹², Doethiro was very happy. So, for many of you who are used to drinking beer, little liquor, try drinking kahpi, you will be happy. So Doethiro was already taking it when he arrived here, with joy. We were the ones who discovered kahpi. This place is called Diá Ōhpeko Ditara, the Motherly Milk Lake, because when we left Asia, on the other side of the world, from Wamu Diá, we were mammals, fish, animals and when we arrived here at Diá Ōhpeko Ditara, we were fish, people in transformation. So this is very important for us to remember to this day, because we are not talking about a myth. We are talking about what we believe.

We have our beliefs, and we have to do this self-defence so as not to hear a lot of nonsense from preachers, from other missionaries who want to erase our memory. So that is how we built an organisation among Indigenous peoples. I am from the village of Itã Titaha, São Francisco, on the Tiquié river and we used to have big parties with the Desana people of São João, which is Luiz Lana and Firmiano Lana's village, who are my uncles. They are from the Yai Butirã clan, the white jaguar clan. So, we have always had these great experiences, great communication exchanges, having celebrations, narrating all these things, teaching our kids so they do not get lost along the way. I miss these people a lot, as well as our other brothers and sisters from across the Tiquié River. At that time, we were 79 villages, and our unanimous idea was to maintain traditions, because at other places, back then, they no longer wanted to talk about indians, they did not want to be indians anymore. But on the Tiquié River we did talk! So this book, *Antes o mundo não existia* [Before, there was no world], is precisely a response to those times. It was written by Firmiano Lana, who was my uncle, with his son who is my brother-in-law, Luiz Lana, a great educator, and advocate for Indigenous issues. He is in fact still alive there at the Tiquié River. These people, like you, like us, are responsible for balancing planet Earth. Because when we talk about these things, we do ceremonies with the environment to pacify the spirits of the waters, the forests, the mountains. We keep believing in spiritual illnesses, which work for us.

12. Kahpi is the name given by the Yepá Mahsã people to the *ayahuasca* vine, scientifically baptised as *banisteriopsis caapi*. (T.N.)

Doctors who studied at universities no longer believe in our histories, because they are diploma doctors who do not know our histories, they do not know how our world functions. We have several languages, we, the *Yepamahsã* people, the *Umukorimahsã* people, who arrived with this canoe on the river. We went up this whole coast, passed through Manaus and went to Ipanoré, ended up there at the Caruru waterfall, which in *Tukano* is called *Surẽ Poea*, and we navigated downstream. We entered the Papuri river and reached the *Turi Igarapé*¹³, which is a Papuri river tributary, and there is where *Doethiro* was buried, the author of all these things we are addressing.

I am from these people, I am one of these people in a leadership position who today, with Daiara and other friends, are discussing how we are going to talk from now on, to create our world, to create new leaderships going forward, mainly among our children, our grandchildren. Today, Ailton and I, we are grandfathers, I am already a grandfather. And you will one day be grandmothers and grandfathers as well. It is very nice to talk about our culture and speak in our own way, to forget the minister's order, the order of other governments, of their programs, because it is us, Ailton, we are the ones who must carry out these programs, with our sons, with our granddaughters. I would like to congratulate Angela Pappiani who was very supportive in dealing with the most difficult situations, at the most difficult moments, and send my hugs to Maíra, to Inimá, to Daiara, to this generation. What I want to say, Ailton, is that you spoke very well, I want to thank all of you who are here. I am here in Brasília right now, observing the pandemic that is happening. Many people, unfortunately, were taken away, we became orphans, we lost many people in leading roles and we will definitely lose more, but we have to survive precisely to hold the tiller of the transformation canoe, to make another generation of wise people, all of you out there. I want to thank everyone for listening to what I wanted to say.

To talk about this subject, we could speak all night long, one day, two days, three days of celebration or for our entire lifetime, only about the

13. *Igarapé* is an Amazonian watercourse, consisting of a long river branch or channel. They exist in large numbers in the Amazon basin. They are characterised by their shallowness and by running deep into the forest. (T.N.)

transformation canoe. If we did not talk about it for a day or for a lifetime, then it would be something useless. To this day, we address this subject with great pride, because this is who we are, this is what we want to be, this is how we are. Ailton, congratulations. Congratulations to you all.

IDJAHURE KADIWEL: Wonderful, Álvaro. An utter joy to listen to you now. I was remembering when Luiz was here at the book launch, I saw him, I saw both of you talking in the *Tukano* language. It is very curious to be able to review these past encounters through different eyes, after immersing myself in this book. It is great to hear your greeting to our generation, this call indeed. Thank you, Álvaro, for your speech.

FRANCY BANIWA: Wow, so much gratitude for your words, Ailton and Álvaro. During the speeches I started to remember my uncles, especially my father, because what I learned was precisely at that moment, in the early evening, in a conversation circle, after eating a *quinhapira*¹⁴, in a moment of sharing. I was travelling about as if my father were in front of me, talking to me, sharing these talks with me. My father told me this, my late grandfather, my uncle's uncle. This information reaches us and has made us reflect a little today on the orality of passing on this lore to us who are daughters, who are granddaughters. The only word is gratitude for sharing these other worlds' visions, for interpreting this moment we are going through, making possible to hear your speech, the knowledge that you have about us as human beings. Listening to this enriches our perspective of today's world, mainly to us, human beings and this world we are in, because we know that there were worlds, but it was not today's world. The world was different, the transformations that occurred were different, the purpose of these transformations was precisely to think about changing us, human beings, into a thinking human being, but we, unfortunately, we do not do this, we do not protect our environment, we think a lot about the issue of capitalism, about the destruction. The purpose of these speeches, these narratives, this cosmology, this cosmovision, is exactly to mould human beings, to make

14. *Quinhapira* is a word in *Nheengatú* (general language), *quina* means pepper and *pira* (*pirá*) means fish: fish in and with pepper. (T.N.)

them better, in terms of their reasoning, in terms of their habits, of their understanding about worlds, other worlds. I think that listening to Ailton and Álvaro speeches now, we have an idea of what these narratives are, the importance of these narratives in our world, as a human being. I think the important thing this book brought us is precisely reading these speeches from other worlds, from different human beings, non-humans, human people, snake people, which allows us to go tripping through these speeches. This was a unique moment for all participants to travel in this transformation canoe.

Imagine if we could travel in all other people's transformation canoes, imagine the richness, imagine how many concepts, how many new thoughts would emerge thinking about a better world that we could build, always thinking about our planet as a whole, thinking about our rivers, about our forest, thinking about these mountains which are sacred to us, thinking about respect before constructing a building, about asking permission whether or not it can be done, unfortunately, however, we have this other side, with the capitalist outlook, that does not respect these invisible places which are sacred and part of our world. Ailton brought us a summary of what this knowledge is and its importance in our lives. Thank you, Ailton, thank you, Álvaro. For me, as an Indigenous person, coming from a place so far away, coming from a place where the issue of territory, of sacred places is very strong, took me tripping through. It was as if I were listening to a repass, a retelling speech from my father passing on this knowledge. Gratitude. I think we learned a lot today, collectively, we did an *ajuri*¹⁵, a joint effort today, in which we shared our lore with two people who are *maadzero*, who are knowledgeable, who are our top chiefs. Thank you very much for these speeches. Gratitude always.

IDJAHURE KADIWEL: So, you have made everyone emotional here, in addition to Fran's speech we have had many thanks in writing. I really want to take advantage of this virtual presence, these connections and transformations which have brought us here, where each of us is, facing

15. *Ajuri* - the concept of *ajuri* comes from the Amazonian vernacular: "*ajuri*" means "I've come to help" – mutual aid. (T.N.)

each other, in this network. I am really happy. It is a moment we live which cannot be contained, that leaks, this abundance that we interpret through the layers of this kind of knowledge. I really liked Ailton's speech because it had this synoptic ability to look at different angles, various perspectives from this narrative, from the *Desana* mythology.

Anna asked: "Just as the transforming world is always existing, has our world now existed before as well?" I think this provocation that Daiara spoke about on another occasion is very cool, and Ailton also spoke here, about time as "mythical time", the dimension that these narratives open, like windows, as portals to another time that coexists with ours. In fact, I think this is a common aspect of all mythology, narrative, and Indigenous thought – it is as if a glow from a very remote, distant, ancestral star, had a meaning, reached us. *Yebá Buró* is on another level here with us, the Grandmother of the World. And there is so much in this world today, that this ancestral knowledge seems like one of those unusual things, but this is truly ancestral knowledge, perhaps surprising for our modernity, for this world we are living in.

DAIARA TUKANO: So, I wanted to take the opportunity to make a provocation about uncle Luiz's narratives – because it is different how *Desana* tells it and how *Tukano* tells it. I really like it when you talk about *Ye'pá Ũ'ãkihi*, which is the Guide of All Times, which from what I understand from uncle Luiz's narrative, is the great-grandson of time, *Umukosurãpanami* for me. This figure of this "God the Creator", for us, is the Guide of All Times. Where does this translation come from, because *Ye'pá* is the earth, but he is simultaneously time. Where did we get this idea of time linked to creation from?

ÁLVARO TUKANO: I would like to say that we arrived on this transformation canoe, but only the inhabitants who are on Rio Negro. In fact, on the Uaupés river and its tributaries. We do not know about our relatives and brothers-in-law who are the *Baniwa*, our *Yanomami* and *Tariano* relatives either. They did not come from the transformation canoe, so they have another view of the world, but the rest of the people in Rio Negro all came in that canoe. So, the one who came steering was *Ye'pá*

Õãkihi, the Guide of All Times. He is also regarded as the Umukoho Ñeki. Umukoho is time, Ñeki, the one who made the world.

Our college degree was like that, talking about spirits, transforming ourselves into spirits. We continue to believe in the spiritual forces of the environment and the waters. We often talk more to anthropologists, because they love our histories, but we need to talk to our children, so they do not lose these traditions. Our sons and daughters have to learn to handle their spiritual senses and to write well. This is what Ye'pá Õãkihi, Guide of All Times, is. In fact, indian time is not made of 12 months nor 365 days, time is time. I do not know how long it takes us to get there, how long it took us to get here. But we preserve these memories. You are researchers who encourage Indigenous thinkers who cannot write. I am from talking, I am from orality.

AILTON KRENAK: In fact, I was tripping through and very happy with the provocation Daiara made, and with Álvaro, who took us to that place I had referred to, the experience of time prior to the anguish of counting time, to that place of world creation narratives, precisely because there is no anguish. It is the experience Álvaro has just repeated, which is another time, the time where the experience of being is the living uncertainty. It is not wanting to know anything. Uncertainty alive.

When I was once inquired about the reference I had made to the time of myth, someone asked me: “But what is the time of myth?” The time of myth is the time of living uncertainty, experiencing uncertainty. Fish-people do not want to be sure of anything, tree-people do not want to be sure of anything. This mountain which is here beside me does not want to be sure of any time, because it has an eternity. If it is possible to imagine something with this duration, with the duration of the planet, with the duration of the Earth, of this wonderful organism that we call Gaia... We borrowed this term from the Greeks, because it has already been articulated as a theory, it has already been stated as a thesis, as a consistent argument that this organism is alive, has humour, and has a memory. She has a memory outside of time. Time is only counted in the biosphere of this organism Earth, where we share this experience of the world with it. It is only here inside that time is counted, outside of here it is not counted.

I think you have already seen some reference to fictions when a guy takes off in a spaceship here from Earth and goes to Mars or some other planet, and the time he spent there is counted here on Earth, who knows, it was 200 years ago, I have no clue how long it was... And he comes back, and upon his arrival there is no longer that world he had anticipated. Well, of course not, because the world is constantly recreating itself, he left, he came back and there was another world.

That world which did not exist: does it persist now? Of course it does, it is by your side, above you, surrounding you, is traversing you, as if you were surfing on a material wave, a real oceanic wave, and there is water everywhere. This possibility of these worlds coexisting is wonderful, because it sets us free from the anguish of time. I know that we are now living in a period where many people are anxious about time, even those who did not think about it are thinking now: "When will I get out of this confinement?" If you do the true experience of all times passing simultaneously, and you go through this experience, you will come out of this anguish of time. Be a living uncertainty. This is my call: be a living uncertainty. If someone wants to schedule something with you tomorrow, say: "It's likely, it could be, but I'm not sure at all". Because it would be a gesture in advance from us to say something about tomorrow. If we have got the potency to create worlds, then yes.

IDJAHURE KADIWEL: How can the Indigenous thinking, for which orality is fundamental, help us deal with our increasingly inattentive and anxious society, which is marked by the predominance of images in motion? How do we keep the words alive, the star-laden words? A curiosity about this plane of spoken words, which has always been the basis of Indigenous knowledge...

AILTON KRENAK: It seems to me that it is the basis of knowledge for all humans, regardless of Indigenous people. All knowledge, for millions of years, has been cellular, it was in our cells, all, all the knowledge in the world. The great narratives of the creation of the world, from the Vedas, through Gilgamesh and all the other wonderful adventures of world creation, all of them, all of them have always been in our cells,

vocalising, dancing, shouting, drawing, scratching on the stones... And this ancientness, these living words, are what has kept us with the possible fire of memory, of us knowing things about ourselves, not about others, about ourselves. So, this experience is radical, it organically opposes the idea of record. This is what *Kopenawa Yanomami* says: “White people write their ideas on paper, because their thoughts are full of forgetfulness.” This is a wonderful phrase, because it denounces the contrivance of making a record, in memory, so you can discard it. This is what a thinking full of forgetfulness is. It is predisposed to forgetfulness, it is available to forgetfulness. Therefore, one makes notes and leaves them somewhere. On the contrary, orality revives this fire of memory, as an exercise in world creation, it is a certainty of constant recreation, perhaps it is the very idea of metamorphosis. Metamorphosis, in the terms in which it is argued, for example, by our dear Emanuele, in this publication which has already been the subject of one of these meetings¹⁶. I think it is attached to this claim of cellular memory. We transform, but we carry the memory. We were a tree and that is why we can talk to the tree, we meet the tree and know that it has a memory, because we have a shared memory. So these cells of memory, they are in everything.

I once knocked on a table and said: for me, this table is nature, everything is nature. It was an effort to bring concepts closer to people who have a very big limitation, a shallow objectivity, which makes them only see what is image, what can be configured in an obvious way. If it is something that escapes this objective observation, it becomes a vision, an intuition. I know that there are many people who think that orality is fed by intuition, that there is no active intelligence, but an intuition. And they want to ascribe this active intelligence to a knowledge systematic. Back in the 90s, there was a debate in Brazil related to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was how to assign value to that traditional knowledge about the use of, for instance, an active ingredient from a plant, or a spider, or a fungus, or a serpent. How would you value

16. Based on his research into plant intelligence and the perception of life, Italian professor and philosopher Emanuele Coccia took part in the *Selvagem* study cycle in 2019 and published *Metamorphoses* by Dantes publishing house the next year; since then he has been a constant interlocutor of the cycle's activities through talks, consultancies and publications.

this kind of knowledge that some humans have about it, when this can be turned into merchandise, when this can be turned into a vaccine, a medicine, a resource or even an appliance that will become a replicable object, distributed here in this commodity society? Well, these possible places of knowledge coexist, they do not exclude each other. The issue is that part of this knowledge, which is hegemonic, is intended to obfuscate other forms of transmission of this knowledge that I am saying is cellular, which is in everything. If I go to the backyard I pick up a corn cob, I take it off the stalk and see that it is soft, it is good to eat raw, there is no need to cook it, it is good to chew, there is a memory in that corn. It shares this memory with me, but I have to be predisposed. If I am not predisposed to it, I eat corn as if I were eating popcorn or anything else. So it is the contagious experience, predisposed to this contagion, that has to do with orality, with this infinite transmission of formulas that configure worlds, materialities of worlds. We could conclude by saying that everything is alive. So death ain't got nothin'. Everything is alive.

ÁLVARO TUKANO: Orality is very good for us to sail on this transformation canoe, listening to the old men or women tell us about how our world is like, who we are, how our ceremonies work, where a certain disease happened, who invented this disease and how one has invented the cure for this disease. Therefore, this orality is very important. As you were saying about knowing the geography of the ancients, so we talk about the geography of our ancients, we walk around, we observe, we value the people who came in this canoe, for instance, the *Pira-Tapuya* people, for us they are *Waimahsã*, *Wai* is fish, *Mahsã* is people. He was the great shipmaster who brought this boat to us, at the tiller, at the helm, steering the boat. The rowers were the fishes-human-spirit-animals. Then we arrived here with that spiritual strength, and so we still believe that. When we go on a big trip, we do spiritual protections. We were animals, over time we transformed. Jaguars, monkeys, and many other animals existed back then to serve today as spiritual protection animals, to flee from our enemies that we encounter today, human beings or not. When we transform ourselves into the spirit of the snake, no one will touch us. Our way

of understanding the world is very complex, that is why many want to transform us into civilised people, and get mixed up.

The *Yepamahsã* and *Umukomahsã* people, who are the *Desana* and others, we are the result of the sacred flutes' spirits, we are the spirit of the sacred stools, cones and staffs, we are from this world. Thus, this is very difficult to believe for anyone who is not *Tukano*. When we do blessings for our sons, our daughters in rites of initiation, we prepare this spiritual world so that they can develop physically and intellectually to learn these histories, defend the environment, carry out their ceremonies; therefore, orality is important. The way of speaking and telling the history depends on each clan, each father, each moment, there are several moments full of emotions that touch our hearts.

My father is 110 years old today, he is alive, he is a storyteller. He tells me and I must hear him. When I arrive in my community, there in the village, where the Pico da Neblina [Mist Peak] begins, we are at Seis Lagos [Six Lakes] region, in the middle of the forest, we are still hearing these ancient histories that we are talking about here. In other villages, throughout the region, these histories are being repeated by parents. But the State prohibits a lot, everything that the indian knows, the government thinks it is theirs. We are not objects of the State or of anyone else, we do not need little saints, or beads, we want to be heard, we want our sons, our daughters close to us to learn these histories. When we drink *kahpi*, there is a moment which is very important. This message that our parents tell us, at the peak of their *mirações*¹⁷ they are saying that the *kahpi* drink is what transforms man, the intelligence, and our history, so that we understand the importance of man here on Earth, to preserve the environment, which is our family. We sing in the language of our ancestors.

Indigenous languages, customs and traditions must be preserved by all peoples. But we need your support. Without support we lose day after day, with the arrival of cell phones and other information. This hinders our children and ourselves. In this way, the world rots. This movement we are making here is important. We need to exchange

17. *Mirações* are spiritual visions that one has in a state of expanded consciousness with the use of *ayahuasca*. (T.N.)

ideas, emotions, exchange ancient verbs when we carry out ceremonies for the sick to be cured.

FRANCY BANIWA: I want to share bits of my experience about the importance of orality. I think regarding many children and grandchildren, it depends on their personal interest. I have a 16-year-old son who is a musician and my father plays more than ten musical instruments, he is a healer, he is a singer. My son plays guitar, electric guitar, double bass, and his interest is in learning to play the musical instruments of our people. Therefore he often sits with my father who engages in talking about these instruments. Because you do not just pick up a musical instrument and start playing, the music emitted by the instruments is sung. So my father starts teaching him to sing and then passes on this singing to the musical instrument. So all this is an orality that has no explanation, this importance of speech, of my son's dialogue with my father every morning, every end of afternoon, this is something which is very much of my son's interest. Because my father always says, "I can't make you learn something you don't want to. I can't tell you, unless you come and say: 'Grandfather, I want to learn this'. I'm a living library, but if you don't want to learn, I can't fight you."

One day I know that my son will be in college, but he will carry all the knowledge and learning of orality with him, so I think that combining these two knowledges is fundamental in the creation and construction of a person's body and mentality. In November we were in the community and there was a huge cultural event involving the *Baniwa* among other peoples, and it was interesting because he was the first in this whole construction to play *japurutu*¹⁸ with my father. This was very important for my family, and as an example to other young people who do not really show much interest. I remember that we arrived at the last bordering community, Ucuqui Cachoeira [Ucuqui Falls], and this news had gotten there. Moreover my cousins said: "I want to learn how to play [*japurutu*] because 16-year-old Fabrício is learning to play it, and I'm 30, 25, 28 years old, and still don't know". Interest sparked learning.

18. The *japurutu* is a flute used by the people of Rio Negro. It is a flute without holes and its sounds are produced from harmonics. (T.N.)

Orality is quite important in this learning process. Orality, as Álvaro pointed out, is fundamental. It is fundamental because, thinking about these moments of transformation, it is through orality that you will learn to give blessings, it is through talking that you will learn to sing. For us, orality is the basis of everything, it is the basis of our transformation as human beings.

IDJAHURE KADIWEL: How can we, who do not physically experience these ceremonies, who do not have the experience of intimate coexistence with all the beings of the forest, how can we transform, how can we learn and how can we transmit this living narrative? Are these plants, the *kahpi*, important for invoking ancestral memories?

ÁLVARO TUKANO: It is great for us to talk, to insist that we remain different as brotherly peoples, indians. We are equal, but we are different from other Brazilians spread across various federations in the country. We cannot say ‘no’ to anyone who wants to learn about Indigenous matters. As my father used to say: “The only ones who say ‘no’ are those who don’t know”. For those who know, we are here to serve, to talk to young people, men and women. To understand that we are like this, different. What is here is not useful and will not be useful for future generations. As I have already said to Krenak, you cannot spend too much voice talking about regrets. We are failing to have autonomy, people, sons and daughters to learn from us. The strength we have to give to youngsters... young people need love, to hear our histories, to stay with us to do this kind of work which is so important. We could do a live stream on how the Yanomami, Tukano, Baniwa or other ceremonies are, because they are fellow peoples, brother-in-laws, who we respect a lot, traditional, ancient peoples, who know many things, as do the others. I also wanted to hear about women’s resistance in the Northeast, about how they heal, because there the power is matriarchal, they are great *juremeiros* and *juremeiras*¹⁹

19. *Juremeiros* and *juremeiras* are masters who ritually use *jurema* – a drink made from the bark of the *Jurema* tree trunk, endowed with magical or cosmic forces, which produces trance and the incorporation of spirits that heal and advise practitioners, widely used in the rituals among Indigenous people in the Northeast of Brazil. (T.N.)

spiritual leaders. Or down in the Southern region, how the **Kaingang** or **Guarani** are born praying, and die praying. Everyone is afraid of bats, for the **Maxakali** however, bats are saviours. It is a contrast. Yes. But that is how originary peoples are. Many people do not care about indians. They think indians are dying out and have to vanish from the country. Though for many people indian is still the future of humanity and we need to live very well, preserving our knowledge and the environment. What we are saying is from the heart.

Kahpi is the drink that is in our forest. The **kahpi** are several collections, there are twelve species of **kahpi**. **Ipadu**²⁰ is another story, it is coca, always in the Indigenous forest, it is for you not to sleep when at learning ceremonies. We have **mu'ro**, which is tobacco, a big cigar, for smudging²¹, for you to smudge your father or your father to smudge you, or to smudge the youngsters so that no one gets sick. They are all very careful ceremonies, with many rules. So, we are the ones who practise these rules.

When we do a **kahpi** ceremony, we are calling the spirits of the waters, of the forests, of the clouds; it is a grand energy that, as we understand, is how the Creator of the Universe **Umukoho Ñeki** works. Many people do not understand **Umukoho Ñeki** is all this, it is the thought of all these creations which have happened during all transformations so far. That is why we have to be different. For us, our wisdom is not a business, it is not merchandise, like many people want to privatise indians, privatise water. It is not how this works. We work with spiritual things, with ethics, we are not leaders taught to defend an ideology. We are people in leading roles who carry out and learn the practices of ceremonies, learn our songs from our parents, we are chiefs in certain regions, for these moments, in front of our people. We do not learn anything here in the city, we raise flags, we get beaten up. We must stay in the forest, we must play **japurutu**, raise new generations, give life to

20. **Ipadu** is a small tree (*Eythroxylum novogranatense*) from the erythroxylaceae family, with elliptical leaves, axillary flowers and red drupes, very similar to coca, although with a lower concentration of alkaloids; it is cultivated by Indigenous people from the upper Amazon. (T.N.)

21. *Smudging* is a ceremonial practice that holds significant cultural and spiritual importance for Indigenous peoples; tobacco is used to smudge with, once the smoke opens the soul to allow the spirits to bring their healing powers and remove negative energy. (T.N.)

our forests, make good hunters, good *pajés* [shamans]. We will drink *ayahuasca*, take sacred medicine, *ipadu*, coca, this is what gives spiritual sustenance to our leaderships.

As for our children today, many do not want to learn to play, to carry out ceremonies, they are lazy. It started like this, at the beginning of humanity, with lazy men. When a man does not want to do, let's call Daiara, let's call other leaderships. It needs opening up, it used to be just men, no, now we must call this crew. Let's tell the truth. This is the revolution we are making. Making this speech remotely seems like a real dream to me. I hope I have managed to get this message across. We deal with the spirit. White people, in general, deal more with numbers, money. This is just joy. This is good living. I am sending it to you by telepathy.

AILTON KRENAK: I received it by telepathy. It arrived here. How wonderful. I know someone asked us: for those who are living without the possibility of carrying out these ceremonies, of holding such celebrations, of listening to the histories, of living this friction with existence, how do we achieve this subtle contact with these events that we keep announcing of so many worlds? How can we escape from this capsule mentioned by Idjahure, in which modernity has given a kind of conduct to every idea of being who cohabits the planet? The way to escape this prison is to suspend the sky. Suspending the sky high you will have an escape to everywhere, to all transcendent journeys. What modernity has done is convince us of a rationality and an objectivity which are too heavy for us to carry. You need to throw away this burden, and experience what I announced at the beginning of our conversation: living uncertainty. Living uncertainty is an experience of not counting time, of being alive on a living Earth.

ÁLVARO TUKANO: There are many people who do not know Rio de Janeiro. The strength that we still have there in the woods we bring from the Guanabara Bay region, which is *Õhpeko Dítara*. Pedra da Gávea [Gávea Rock] is the sacred temple of shamans, spirits, and thunders. Dedo de Deus [Finger of God] is the house of *mirações*. And the other big snakes inside there are our humanity's transformation canoes. That is how we will keep talking.

Next time, we will hold a meeting in the city of Rio de Janeiro, bringing intellectuals and speakers, proving how our world functions, serving coca, *ayahuasca* and other powerful medicines to heal our daughters, our sons, who need blessings to cure. We lost healers, but we have children and grandchildren, who have these powers from the ancients.

A special hug from the *Yepamahsã* people and all the people who are *ayahuasqueiros*²² and *rapezeiros*²³, and dream of a better world.

AILTON KRENAK: Our family is here mourning a river and when we are silent, he talks to us. There is a flow of water which has become invisible, but it makes noise at the waterfall. If I was to set up a microphone, you would hear *Watu*'s voice. We are watching over *Watu* and we sing for him. *Erehé*. We are singing at the waterfall. Saying "I am here, I am here". We move on. Our families are here, we are at peace. We hear news from other regions in Brazil and our hearts sink. When we honour our grandfather, *Watu*, we are also honouring our relatives, everyone who is with their brothers, their uncles, their grandparents going through these tough times, but we invoke these other worlds to give us strength and remain as living bodies on the living Earth.

IDJAHURE KADIWEL: We are diving in and being grateful. Thank you, Anna, for the responsibility of being here steering this canoe. These conversations since before the world, from before the world... It is all just a steady flow. We continue in terror and wonder, *maloca* of the universe.

FRANCY BANIWA: I take advantage of this timely moment to thank you all. Tripping through these narratives. I feel grateful for this moment, we learn a lot with these exchanges... And I want to share a little about the importance of speech, as women, as Indigenous women, who left our community without speaking Portuguese very well, but we try to learn and share a little of this important knowledge. We are going

22. *Ayahuasqueiros* are the groups of peoples, religions and movements who have consecrated *ayahuasca* as a practice, using it as a tool for healing and study.

23. *Rapezeiros* are the various ethnic groups who use snuff, made up of herbs, tree bark and, essentially, tobacco, as a medicine for healing and purification rituals.

through such difficult times and in this sharing we strengthen ourselves, talking about these bonds, about the importance of these speeches, about our history.

DAIARA TUKANO: Let's get rowing. Rowing. Keep rowing. Breathing and rowing and following the stars. There is nothing more beautiful than seeing the night sky in Rio Negro. And the swallows. Thank you for this opportunity of bringing this fish family together in this canoe, in this colourful canoe.

AILTON KRENAK

Thinker, environmentalist and one of the main voices of Indigenous knowledge. Together with Dantes Editora, he created *Selvagem* – cycle of studies about life. He lives in the Krenak village, on the banks of the Doce River in Minas Gerais. He is the author of the books *Ideas to postpone the end of the world* (Anansi International, 2020), *O amanhã não está à venda* [Tomorrow is not for sale] (Companhia das Letras, 2020), *Life is not useful* (Polity Press, 2023), *Ancestral future* (Polity Press, 2024) and *Um rio um pássaro* [One river one bird] (Dantes Editora, 2023). In 2023 he was elected as a permanent member to the prestigious Academia Brasileira de Letras [Brazilian Society of Literature].

ÁLVARO TUKANO

One of the main names in Indigenous resistance over the last four decades, based on the Upper Rio Negro. He was one of Indigenous Centuries project's creators in Brazil, and the current *Memorial dos Povos Indígenas* [Indigenous Peoples Memorial] director in Brasília.

ANNA DANTES

Her work extends the editing/publishing experience to other formats in addition to books. For ten years, Anna has been carrying out, along with the Huni Kuĩ people in Acre, the project *Una Shubu Hiwea*, *Livro Escola Viva* [Living School Book]. In 2018, she created *Selvagem*.

DAIARA TUKANO

Daiara is the daughter of Álvaro Tukano. She is a visual artist, teacher and activist for Indigenous rights. She is also a communicator and coordinator of Rádio Yandê, the first Indigenous web radio in Brazil. <https://www.daiaratukano.com/>

IDJAHURE KADIWEL

Idjahure Kadiwel is a poet and anthropologist, and also works as an editor, translator, interpreter and screenwriter. Born in Rio de Janeiro, he belongs to the Terena and Kadiwel people, from the Pantanal [Wetlands] of Mato Grosso do Sul. He has a degree in Social Sciences

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FRANCY BANIWA

Francineia Bitencourt Fontes (Francy Baniwa) is an Indigenous woman, anthropologist, photographer and researcher from the **Baniwa** people, *Waliperedakeenai* clan, born in the community of Assunção on the Lower Içana River, in the Upper Rio Negro Indigenous Land, municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazon state. Engaged in organizations and the Indigenous movement of Rio Negro for a decade, she acts, works and researches in the areas of Indigenous ethnology, gender, Indigenous organizations, traditional knowledge, memory, narrative, photography and audiovisual. She graduated with a degree in Sociology (2016) from the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM). She has a master's degree (2019) and a doctorate in Social Anthropology from the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (PPGAS-MN / UFRJ). She is a researcher at the Laboratory of Anthropology of Art, Ritual and Memory (LARMe) and the Center for Symmetrical Anthropology (NAnSi) at UFRJ, and at the Center for Indigenous Amazon Studies (NEAI) at UFAM. She currently coordinates the pioneering ecological project for the production of *Amaronai Itá – Kunhaitá Kitiwara* cloth pads, financed by the Rio Negro Indigenous Fund (FIRN / FOIRN), for the empowerment and menstrual dignity of women in the Upper Rio Negro Indigenous territory.

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More information at selvagemciclo.com.br/en/

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 <https://selvagemciclo.com.br/colabore>

SELVAGEM Notebooks
digital publication by
Dantes Editora
Biosfera, 2023
English translation, 2024

