

**THE INDIGENOUS REVOLUTION IN THE AMERICAS:
Perceptions obtained among the Laklãnõ indigenous people
A REVOLUÇÃO INDÍGENA NAS AMÉRICAS: Percepções obtidas
com o povo Laklãnõ**

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RESUMO: O artigo apresenta uma faceta pouco explorada do ativismo indígena no Brasil: O material empírico é baseado em pesquisas realizadas com o povo Laklãnõ desde 2016 e que têm sido discutidas em diferentes espaços. O foco é demonstrar como esses indígenas são protagonistas de um processo revolucionário sem precedentes – e fora de uma orientação ocidental-europeia. Este processo revolucionário articula-se numa rede maior com outros povos indígenas da América que realizam outras frentes antissistema, não necessariamente estando em contato entre si, ou mesmo sabendo das ações que estão a ser realizadas. Discuto especificamente as ações práticas do povo Laklãnõ que potencializam os resultados deste processo revolucionário. O artigo sugere uma articulação destas e de outras frentes de atuação como constituintes de um fenômeno maior para o desenvolvimento de um modelo particular de contra-colonialismo indígena com foco orientado na salvaguarda de uma espécie vegetal em extremo risco de extinção e que tem sido sagrada para esse povo há milhares de anos através da apropriação e ressignificação de uma série de dispositivos que são identificados pelos indígenas como <<armas (de colonização e destruição) dos brancos.

Palavras-chave: Laklãnõ; Revolução indígena; Movimentos indígenas.

Abstract: The paper presents a little-explored facet of indigenous activism in Brazil: The empirical material is based on research that has been carried out with the Laklãnõ people since 2016 and which has been discussed in different spaces. The focus is to demonstrate how these indigenous are protagonists of an unprecedented revolutionary process - and outside of a Western-European orientation. This revolutionary process is articulated in a larger network with other indigenous peoples in America who carry out other anti- system fronts, not necessarily being in contact with each other, or even knowing of the actions being carried out. I specifically discuss the practical actions of the Laklãnõ people that enhance the results of this revolutionary process. The paper suggests an articulation of these and other fronts of action as constituents of a greater engine for the development of a particular model of indigenous counter-colonialism with a focus oriented on safeguarding a plant species (Zág - Araucaria) at extreme risk of extinction and which has been sacred to this people for thousands of years through the appropriation and re-signification of a series of devices that are identified by the natives as <<weapons (of colonization and destruction) of the whites.

Keywords: Laklãnõ; Indigenous revolution; Indigenous movements

INTRODUCTION

This research begins to reveal itself several years ago, with seeds that were being planted and that only now can begin to germinate and reveal themselves. Before trying to

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enter the forest of meanings that was planted by the Laklãnõ people as they constituted the paths by which we understand their revolutionary processes will emerge, it is worth recovering some of these seeds. This introduction aims to assist with this approach. Initially, a visit is recommended to review the literature - if we want to call it that - on the diversity of ethnonyms that are imposed, as well as the one later assumed by the Laklãnõ people (Virgílio, 2023b).

This action is taken to establish the limits of the territorial occupation ranges of ancestral and traditional uses in the consultations for the bibliography and documentation that have been produced in recent centuries by different authors, languages and disciplines. The reviews on the establishment of the traditional occupation territory of the Laklãnõ people allow us to expose part of the violences that has been repeatedly produced and reproduced by the State and its institutions, as well as by the general public and scientists, against this population over the past centuries (Virgílio, 2022, 2023a & 2024b). The main forms of violence are obviously restrictions on movement and access to traditional territories, as well as massive and physical extermination of the indigenous population residing there. Knowing the spaces where these indigenous people circulate and reside makes it possible to identify more particular and recent forms of violence, which develop in contexts that are touted with positivist assumptions about civilization and mainly education (Virgílio, 2018). These efforts promote attempts to exterminate traditional knowledge and diverse cultural practices, replacing them with practices that are alien to the Laklãnõ context.

In the analysis of these efforts, it becomes clear that indigenous people do not play the role of mere passive participants (Virgílio, 2020a & 2023c). It is when we can understand how the civilizing mechanisms used against indigenous people are appropriated and transformed by them, reaching their limit of recent development when indigenous people begin to occupy - and build new - spaces for the formation of intellectuals, as well as places and moments for writing and recording their history, language, culture, memories, and knowledge. This development focuses on exposing the articulations of indigenous social mobilization and organization forces, which are discussed in dialogue with indigenous authors, speeches, and references (Virgílio, 2024a). A native epistemology, or if you will, multiple indigenous philosophies, is evidenced to allow for a particular entry point to

understand ritualistic and political episodes - if such contexts can be separated (Virgílio, 2024c).

The proposal for an indigenous revolution, which is the subject of this essay, understands that it is not - and cannot be - sustained by any Western values, and any analogies or comparisons would reduce both its value and the ability to approach understanding - even if understanding is unattainable - as well as measuring its impact. Therefore, it is considered incomprehensible and unidentifiable, but also uncontrollable, unstoppable, and impossible to predict its scope and final outcomes. It is also far beyond anything like a 'jaboticaba revolution', or *à brasileira* (Brazilian-style) revolution, castrated from the start.² It is a process that will only be understood - and perhaps identified - after its conclusion. But a fair comparison is possible, as it is exactly what Hobbes, back then, defines as the *right to seek, find, and preserve objects of satisfaction*, which to the Laklãnõ specifically concerns the highlands, nature, and araucarias (Virgílio, 2024b). In this sense, indigenous struggle can and should be understood as a continuous attempt to maintain possession or access to objects of satisfaction. And where the Brazilian state recurrently appears as the main antagonist in this effort by preventing access and possession of these objects of satisfaction (Virgílio, 2022).

² The two reviewers who evaluate the first version of this paper questioned the absence of definitions or even the simple appearance of terms such as utopian, dystopian and counter-colonialism in the body of the text. It is important to keep in mind that an effectively dystopian and revolutionary scenario will hardly invest energy or time to discuss the current context and how it distances itself from it. As explained later in this paper, the indigenous action movement is more concerned with projecting its own ways of being, existing and thinking, rather than responding to non-indigenous existences, thoughts and feelings. Reproducing this more imposing and less explanatory perspective, the intention here is not to invest long theoretical discussions, but rather to describe the process itself. This ethnographic presentation model is explored and encouraged by other authors, such as Bruno Latour (2005:22-33,247-248). See also Virgílio (2020b:49-56). For similar reasons, not wanting to explain what must be discovered by the reader on their own, in addition to avoiding subsequent and attacks publicizing the practice of bropropriating against myself, there is no incentive to re-explain the theories of indigenous authors. They are clear. The discovery lies precisely in the discovery effort that is stated at the end of the article. Another situation that caused discomfort in the two reviewers refers to the absence of the afro-Brazilian intellectual Nego Bispo. As developed elsewhere (see my PhD thesis), there are epistemological, ethical, ontological, philosophical and priority differences that hinder dialogue and relationships for a collective construction of social movements between indigenous peoples and black peoples in Brazil. It is not my proposal to criticize these thinkers and their movements - exclusively due to their incompatibility with indigenous thinkers -, but this criticism will be necessary if the citation of these authors keep being forced by anonymous reviewers. See also Virgílio (2024c:235 - see note 9).

1 - THE LAKLÃNÕ

The purpose of the paper is to present a little-explored facet of indigenous activism in Brazil. The empirical material is based on research that has been carried out with the Laklãnõ people since 2016 and which has been discussed in different spaces. The focus is to demonstrate how these indigenous are protagonists of an unprecedented revolutionary process - and outside of a Western-European orientation. This revolutionary process is articulated in a larger network with other indigenous peoples in America who carry out other anti-system fronts, not necessarily being in contact with each other, or even knowing of the actions being carried out. I discuss the practical actions of the Laklãnõ people that enhance the results of this revolutionary process. In other materials, some elements of the revolutionary process moved by the Laklãnõ have already been explored.

One of the basic characteristics of this indigenous people is the ability to reframe state structures, as the public schools, the basic health units and the official indigenous bureau (FUNAI), even taking ownership and controlling its functions (Virgílio, 2024c). In moments of crisis, as the last pandemic, the actions can be so extreme they just ignore the State institutions and their slowly bureaucracy to reorganize itself to solve the issue - even without funds - moving to occupy the vacuum of actions led by the State official departments (Virgílio, 2020a). The first movement happens when the indigenous claim all the job positions in the public offices, since the cleaners, janitors and drivers until the teachers and even the direction of the school. Usually, this job positions are occupied after an open recruiting process, but in the Laklãnõ Indigenous Land these positions are occupied only when the community *accept* the name to the position. One of the effects is there is none non-indigenous in these positions.

The situation evolves when the Laklãnõ started to request direct access to universities to receive academic diplomas (nurse, dentistry, medical doctors, teachers, etc.). The situation is so drastic there is degrees in Brazil where 100% of the students are indigenous from one, two or three peoples. Right now, the movement has been improved, and even private universities offers the degrees, being paid by the state to open exclusive classes to

the Laklãnõ people.³ If in the 1930's the schools and the basic health units are built inside the indigenous land to remove the indigenous language, to include the protestant religion, to change the diet, to turn indigenous in horticulturists, and to forbidden then to use traditional medicines, in the XXI century these spaces becoming the ones where each one of these cultural values are spread.

Not only the pedagogic and health positions are occupied by the Laklãnõ people in the universities. The indigenous also moves to learn how to use technological devices, learning how to explore the internet and their social networks, the media and even the cinema. Beyond it, the Laklãnõ moves to engineering and other hi-tech degrees, to discuss what can be done about the *Barragem Norte* after fifty years without any type of preventive maintenance.⁴ In the visual arts the most representative situation is the rescue of the author's position on the representation of the people's ethnic identity and the development of a new use and a new ethical orientation for the visual display devices designed by the colonizer to exotically exploit others (Virgílio, 2023c). Former paintings, photographs, documentaries and other visual campaigns moved against the Laklãnõ people are totally replaced by autochthonous productions where the indigenous are represented far-away of being miserable, savage or legally incapable.

After only five years of the building of the *Barragem Norte* the main structure was occupied, a new village was created around the dam and all the controls were totally destroyed, turning impossible to the State recover the control of the structure. Since 1978 there was none successful movement to try to recover access to the dam by the State. All them were blocked.⁵ Furthermore, the protagonism of the Laklãnõ people can be observed in a current movement where both the Brazilian Supreme Court (STF, Judiciary branch) and the national congress (including the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate,

³ In the State of Santa Catarina (Brazil), for example, there are undergraduate courses for the Laklãnõ people at FURB, for the Kanhgág people at UNOCHAPECÓ and for the Mbyá people at UNIVALI, in addition to the undergraduate course at UFSC with the three indigenous peoples, and with a permanent university professor who also is an indigenous Kanhgág. All of these four undergraduate courses are designed to train indigenous people as basic education teachers.

⁴ Barragem Norte is the largest water dam in Brazil and it was build inside the Laklãnõ Indigenous Land in 1970's.

⁵ After the submission of this article and during the process of revising this text, the first attempt to breach the dam took place, with the support of the elite unit of the military police and with several indigenous victims. The episode was identified as abusive and illegal. A summarized version in the English language can be found in Irshad (2023), and a updated version in the Portuguese language is available in Portuguese in Mayer & Catie (2023).

Legislative branch), as well as the newly established Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (led by an indigenous person, Executive branch), are discussing the so-called “*Tese do marco temporal*” (temporal landmark thesis) regarding a process that, starting from a situation that affects the Laklãnõ Indigenous Land since 1926, will serve as a reference for decisions involving requests for the revision of demarcation of hundreds of indigenous lands throughout the country (Virgílio, 2024b:280-283 - see note 23). I discuss in my doctoral thesis an articulation of these and other fronts of action as constituents of a greater engine for the development of a particular model of indigenous counter-colonialism resistance with a focus oriented on safeguarding a plant species (*Araucaria angustifolia*) at extreme risk of extinction and which has been sacred to this people for thousands of years through the appropriation and re-signification of a series of devices that are pejoratively identified by the natives as “weapons (of colonization and destruction) of the whites” (Virgílio, 2024c:237-238). Other indigenous initiatives can be found in Virgílio (2024a).

2 - ZÁG⁶

While the primitive genus of Araucarias dates back to the Triassic period of the Mesozoic era, approximately 250 million years ago, the approximately thirty species known today in the southern region of Brazil and its surroundings are much more recent, established during the last glacial era, between 100,000 and 12,000 years ago (Etchevarne, 2000; Koch & Corrêa, 2002; Baumgarten, 2009). As extensively discussed in Virgílio (2023a), the ancestors of the Laklãnõ people were responsible for bringing the Araucarias to the southern region of Brazil approximately two thousand years ago. Kern (1998:64) highlights that “*we cannot ignore that **the boundaries of forests have advanced and retreated due to climate changes and transformations of paleolandscapes***”.⁷ Bauermann & Behling (2009), for example, state that *Araucaria* was abundant between 42,000 and 18,000 years ago, but due to climate changes, it disappeared from the highlands and became limited to the lower parts in the valleys. Approximately eleven thousand years

⁶ *Zág* is the word used by the Laklãnõ people to refer to the *Araucaria angustifolia* species.

⁷ All highlights in quotations and all translations to English are made by the author.

ago, temperatures started rising again, and *Araucaria* timidly expanded due to the action of rivers and winds.

According to the same authors, it is only between 4300 and one thousand years ago that there was a significant expansion of the *Araucaria* Forest, which we understand to be anthropogenic in nature, as it accompanies not only the development of the ancestors of the Laklãnõ people but also occurs in the same locations and periods. In the last 500 years, *Araucaria* effectively returned to occupy the higher parts of the mountains in Southern Brazil. It is precisely during this period that we perceive the effective and more permanent occupation of the Laklãnõ people in the highlands of the Serra Geral do Mar (see Virgílio, 2023a & 2024b). In the same vein is the perception of Bitencourt & Krauspenhar (2009:111):

If we compare the peaks in number of non-calibrated periods of pit houses with the expansion of *Araucaria angustifolia* during the Holocene, **the peak of expansion can be observed as being strongly concentrated after the beginning of the occupation of the highlands**, during the late Holocene period [...]. **This may suggest that *Araucaria* expansion can also be due to the management strategies achieved by these peoples.** This hypothesis is corroborated by botanical data at two main points: competition and dispersal.

Schmitz (2016) also states that it was the ancestors of the Laklãnõ people who took the *Araucarias* to the highlands of the southern region of Brazil between the 6th and 17th centuries. Although European invaders reached the coast of the southern region of Brazil in the early 16th century, it was only in the late 18th century that their descendants managed to surpass the geographical limits of the Serra Geral do Mar, where the *Araucaria* forests and the ancestral territory of the Laklãnõ people are located. The contact occurred during the opening of the royal road for drovers' passage (*Estrada das tropas*). Shortly thereafter, between the 1830s and 1910, the entire mountainous region and its surroundings, which the Laklãnõ people had occupied for over a thousand years, were invaded, exploited, destroyed, and distributed for the establishment of colonies by European immigrants, intensifying the indigenous genocide in the process.

The delay partly occurs due to the need to open a path and the impossibility of crossing the Serra Geral do Mar. This route starts from Vacaria, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, to send cattle production to Sorocaba, in the state of São Paulo. Directly crossing the mountain range is not possible, and there is already functional transportation by sea on the

eastern side. The proposal is to advance through the interior and colonize the west. While transporting animals and hides, these advancing fronts systematically destroy the flora (mainly Araucaria) they also attempt to exterminate the native inhabitants (Laklãnõ). The route being opened since 1728 encounters challenges between 1766 and 1777 precisely in the interval between the fields of Lages and the current municipality of Rio Negro, on the northwest slope of the Serra Geral do Mar, where a certain Aboriginal population resides. The indications that contact with the invading society were disturbing the Laklãnõ people are described by various authors, such Wachowicz (1969:478):

While we did not start clearing the forest, the Laklãnõ did not bother us, but when we began to feel it, they started disturbing us, whistling, and hitting trees with sticks, without allowing themselves to be seen.

This sentiment is echoed by Selau (2006:129-130):

Upon realizing that with each season larger portions of the forest were being cleared, and consequently, larger parts of the territory historically occupied by the Laklãnõ were being taken over by immigrants, the Laklãnõ people began to react to their presence, seeking to regain the areas they had before the arrival of the immigrants to ensure the preservation of the resources necessary for the group's maintenance. It is not surprising, therefore, that **one of the strategies of the Laklãnõ people** to drive the rival group away from the territory **was related to attacking them precisely when the settlers were cutting down trees** to expand cultivation areas or seeking utilization.

Koch (2002:90) further supports this by stating,

In other words, even with the new road, the Portuguese colonization was tearing through and taking vast stretches of *sertanejo* lands and extensive portions of the Kaingang and Laklãnõ territory. It was only natural for the *sertanejos* to unite. **It was natural for the Indians, driven away, to occasionally 'attack the road workers, preferably the vanguards that were clearing the forest'.**

Dall'Alba (1973:292) adds,

Upon the arrival of the first settlers in this region [Rio Fortuna], **when they began clearing the land, the indigenous people expressed their opposition** through signals against the same. [...] Gradually, the indigenous people started pursuing them.

In the early 20th century, the situation caused by territorial invasions that promoted the felling of Araucarias was accompanied by the operation of large sawmills and timber companies aiming to reach the domestic and international markets. Sawmills and timber companies spread throughout the Araucaria Forest region, initially opening railways and later utilizing transportation with the first trucks. The most extreme case is that of the American company *Lumber and Colonization* (Medeiros *et al.*, 2004), which, in addition to being responsible for the construction of railroads, promoted the felling of millions of Araucarias and, in an agreement with the military government, also inherited dozens of kilometres of land on both sides of the entire railway route. The episodes involving Lumber ended up fuelling the Contested War (*Guerra do Contestado*).

The export first reaches the largest states of the country, extends to neighbouring countries, and according to Baumgarten (2009), by 1940, the state of Santa Catarina, based on a culture of exploiting a single plant species, becomes the largest exporter of wood in Brazil, responsible for over 50% of the national capacity. In that period, the author reports 600 sawmills just in Santa Catarina state, which together produce nearly 8 million dozen wood planks per year. In 1948, another 2,300 sawmills join the initial 600, with the vast majority (over 80%) exclusively involved in logging, cutting, and processing Araucaria trees. The remaining 20% are mixed sawmills, combining the cutting of Araucaria with other trees in the region (Junior & Larocca, 2009). Due to the increasing number of sawmills, national production reaches the mark of 3.6 billion cubic meters of Araucaria wood per year. Between 1915 and 1960, over 11 million tons of Araucaria were exported to more than twenty countries (Junior & Larocca, 2009). In an interview, Prochnow (2004) states that at the peak of tree felling, around three hundred and fifty trucks loaded with native wood were leaving the Laklãnõ Indigenous Land *every morning*.

As the destruction of Araucaria progresses and large areas become increasingly devoid of vegetation, in the south of Brazil between 1960 and 1970, at the beginning of the dictatorship, space starts to open up for cattle farming as well as the cultivation of crops such as corn, beans, wheat, coffee, and other crops in the original Araucaria Forest areas. After another ten years, the sawmills threaten to close operations (Medeiros *et al.*, 2004), but they initiate destruction in other areas of the country, mainly in the Amazon Forest. In the 1980s, the surrounding society added other elements to its environmental destruction movement,

such as the introduction of eucalyptus, the expansion of soybean plantations, and the proliferation of more areas designated for cattle farming. In some locations, spaces were also constructed for the installation of water containment dams (as the *Barragem Norte* in the Laklãnõ Indigenous Land) and hydroelectric power plants. What interests us are the indigenous efforts that arise and conclude with the execution of a project that was conceived in 2018 and carried out in 2019. Towards the end of 2018, I met some Laklãnõ who informed me that they had a problem to solve. In their words: "*We discovered that the **Zág (Araucaria) is going to disappear, as it is at extreme risk of extinction. We need to save our sacred tree.***" The project had a continuity planned in 2020 and executed in 2021. Due to the pandemic, it was replaced by another initiative (see Virgílio, 2020a) until 2022.

The indigenous people recognize the tree in a TV program and are alarmed by the presented catastrophe. After discussing it several times, it is identified and revealed that there are funds for the preservation of endangered species that can be accessed and used to try to eliminate the ongoing risk or at least delay the species' extinction. Applications were submitted in 2018, 2020, and 2022 to a specific fund for species conservation. In these years, the innovative nature of indigenous leadership in project execution is recognized - and starting from the second application, the previous results are also acknowledged, with funding values continuously increasing.⁸ The procedure is basically as follows: Since the end of March, targeted invitations have been sent to people who want to participate in an immersion in indigenous culture. The invitation includes participation in pine nut harvesting, Araucaria seedling production, visits to indigenous villages, and the possibility of participating in traditional rituals.

People are awakened with music, breakfast, and an early morning bonfire, during sunrise. After breakfast, volunteers engage in various tasks. Some set up minimal necessary structures, others prepare the soil when needed, and others take turns in transportation,

⁸ The recognition happens by many other ways after the conclusion of the projects, like being officially supported by Alok (<https://institutoalok.org/preservacao-das-araucarias/>), winning the Equator Prize from United Nations in 2023 (<https://news.un.org/pt/story/2023/08/1818882>), being invited to speak freely in the opening ceremony of the COP 28 in Dubai (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJxb2roqZDY>), or even being the protagonists of the special edition of Sunday program on the largest open TV channel in Brazil (<https://globoplay.globo.com/v/11261412/>). There is other four big recognitions informed to myself will happens in the next years, but I was asked to not nominate them in this paper.

sorting and preparing materials such as pine nuts, bags, tools, fires, water, and soil. Throughout the morning, people are encouraged to engage in tasks that suit them best. Men often voluntarily undertake the heavier tasks, such as clearing the ground, transporting soil, and opening planting beds. Women, as a rule, divide their responsibilities among taking care of children and food preparation. There is no great pressure to continue working for hours on end without interruptions, and some individuals who exceed their physical capabilities are often invited to take a break, enjoy the scenery, or have something to eat. What happens is that the effect of some traditional medicines provides participants with an extra dose of energy, motivation, and physical disposition. People who clearly cannot endure long hours of work on the land in other contexts only take a break after being encouraged or urged by one of the organizers to rest. Some individuals accustomed to hard labour on the land readily claim that they have never produced so much in such a short amount of time. Physical limitations, especially fatigue (as well as thirst and hunger), are completely reduced and, in some cases, even eliminated.

Throughout the entire morning, fruits, water, and, most importantly, indigenous medicines are made available to all interested participants. The types of medicines vary over time and availability. Simultaneously, while some people are able to work and produce under significantly more favourable conditions - from a quantitative and productive capitalist perspective - after consuming one or more of these medicines, others may become either sleepy or distracted. Although it is understandable that a substantial number of participants arrive with clear and undisguised interest in the forest medicines, not all people partake in them. There are several individuals who volunteer for several days without showing any interest in accessing the indigenous medicines. During all events, it is observed that individuals voluntarily abstain from having lunch, while others delay their meals spontaneously. These individuals, along with others, continue their seedling preparation work while the rest of the group eats. In general, people understand that the time for seedling preparation is limited, that there is a lot of work to be done, and that a healthy rotation between workers and those who are idle is beneficial. This hierarchical production model is significantly different from what Marx understands as alienated labour and what Foucault presents as abstract work. It is a reconfiguration of control mechanisms, or in other words, a particular form of pacification of non-indigenous people carried out by indigenous

individuals, utilizing them as manual labour for purposes that can hardly be directed towards surplus value production or something distant from those who produce it.

The effects produced by the consecration of these medicines go beyond the extra dose of energy for activities. Participants often comment on the fetishization of what constitutes a good and comfortable life, measured by satisfaction and well-being. It becomes revealing to these individuals what is truly important, typically understood as what is basic, essential, and necessary. In essence: a bonfire, healthy food, water, and air, a pleasant and tranquil environment, good company, and a clear common purpose. This perception reveals an interest in reconnecting ideologically and cosmologically with an ancient past, where the economy of abundance prevails over scarcity. It is also noticeable that by eradicating tradition and ancestral practices, this abundance is lost, replaced by the imposition of a scarcity logic. While the discourse and practices do not explicitly mention capitalism, they indirectly refer to elements such as the city and urban life, often using adjectives to describe the madness of society and even reference to Babylon. The next section of this article seeks to explore indigenous perceptions of what they know about the surrounding society, notably represented by the Brazilian state. And about the possibilities of overthrowing this system.

3 - BRAZIL: An anti-revolutionary golem brought to life by Western powers

Krenak (2020) synthesizes the inability to think (and act) in a revolution in the Western model, due to the intrinsic syntropy character of Western - and Enlightenment - thought.

From my readings of some Western thinkers' production, I critically understand that **they are circling around the same question: the limits of the freedom that the Western world grants to peoples.** The events of History prove this.

In ZAD (2019) an insurrectional situation arises, which may help us understand a raw and more primitive version of the trigger for a revolutionary process, with some possibility of developing outside or independently of Western logic:

Here, we refer to an “insurrectional situation” as **a situation in which there is a vacancy of power in a specific place and time.** [...] The revolutionary imagination that inhabits us is rather that of **a multiplicity of riots, blockades, and occupations.** [...] But if we do not want these

potential insurrections to continue to “strangle themselves at the riot stage”, if we desire them to give birth to a revolutionary moment, **it is necessary to begin prefiguring locally the world that we want to see arise.** [...] **The revolution is a surprise;** it never unfolds as expected.

Not far off is Max Gluckman's perception in the late 1930s, perfectly synthesized by Granjo (2017:152 - see note 62):

[...] In this way, [Gluckman] did not **view conflict as** the pathology of an organ of the social body that had ceased to perform its function harmoniously [...], but rather as **a normal phenomenon** inherent to social differentiation, **which constituted the main instrument of change in societies.**

The power vacuum, in the specific context of the Laklãnõ, but with few adaptations for the other indigenous peoples in the Americas, can be interpreted as the inability to guarantee legally and administratively full access to the territory that is guaranteed to them by the constitution itself, and by all previous, as well as the most evolved international law. With the widespread dissatisfaction of indigenous peoples, the spark on the gunpowder is lit. The suggested “*multiplicity of riots, blockades, and occupations*” still carries strong elements of the logic of capitalist society, as it limits itself, at most, to reducing its ability to operate fully, and does not go much beyond the resistance described by Scott (1985) in his work or in rarer cases of the anarchist dynamics of so-called direct action. What happens at the basis of what I understand could generate the so-called indigenous revolution are a series of other actions, more practical than direct, and more focused on what it wants as its result than on *preventing the aggressor's outcome*. Instead of cutting down thousands of eucalyptus trees, planting thousands of araucaria seedlings could be considered. The planting of tens of thousands of araucaria seedlings is just one example, which I had the privilege of witnessing.

Other indigenous peoples are currently using drones to contain the advance of forest fires (Dantas, 2020; Ennes & Chaves, 2021; Toledo, 2023), decolonizing - and healing - the minds of outsiders with the use of forest medicines (Langdon & Rose, 2012; Lopes, 2017; Meneses, 2018), implementing new models of basic school education (EIEBVP, 2018), reconfiguring the notion of church within indigenous communities (Wright, 1999 & 2004; Wiik, 2004; Bousquet & Crépeau, 2012), recovering the native flora or fauna of their surroundings (Pinto, 2020), recording the language of their people (Gakran, 2005 & 2015),

rewriting the written history of their ancestors (Kopenawa & Albert, 2013; Cipriano, 2014; Emílio, 2015; Amantino, 2020; Ingaclã, 2020; Pate, 2020; Reis, 2021), among hundreds of other possible articulations. All of these actions are aimed not only at interrupting a harmful and non-indigenous initiative, but mainly at meeting indigenous demands - which are often generated by external interferences. Esbell (2020:38) summarizes the situation in the appropriation of rights:

This is a good **practical example of how to play with the invader's weapons against themselves**. We seek in the law **solutions for our case** [*Raposa Serra do Sol*]. We sensitize the high court to decide for the legality of our struggle. **We do not retaliate violence**. No invader's life has been taken by our hand. **We seek to put at our service the same organizations that previously weakened us**, such as the Catholic Church, for example.

It is necessary to be careful not to make a reductionist reading and equate these two interests. An effectively emancipatory and liberating revolutionary process cannot be guided by the other, either by the damage it causes (trying to interrupt it) or by absorbing or correcting part of its socio-economic-political structure. It is necessary to start from within one's own *ethos* and identify from there the most pressing and emerging needs. These articulations act as a network, without a central controlling body - as some socialist theory would demand - but instead rely on and depend on a common cultural foundation, the one that values the economy of abundance over the economy of scarcity, the same one that preserves the environment in order to be able to “*reach out and pick a cashew*” (Munduruku, 2012:202-203). Munduruku (2012:221) goes so far as to describe this common cultural background as the indigenous movement itself:

We cannot, however, disregard that **this gestation was part of a collective effort** and did not arise from the personal enlightenment of some individual with special powers. The indigenous movement **is the result of the concrete resistance action of people who, without knowing each other, left traces of solidarity**. They were people who lived in different times, but **their resistance allowed new generations to survive and act incisively within Brazilian society**.

Esbell (2020:40) explains how communication with the common cultural background occurs:

The ways in which non-Western populations communicate among themselves and with the cosmos offer a vast bibliographical reference of how to achieve autonomy, but they are not described or stored in books or other physical archives. [...] Some rely on empirical knowledge, practical tradition as a school of life, constant maintenance of an essentially oral transmission of evolution, and the ability to communicate directly with the elementals of nature that end up being part of their populations. Our people still know how to negotiate with the “supernatural”, and this close relationship makes territories a possible single field.

And the result of this can be at best sketched, but I agree with ZAD (2019) that it will be a surprise, because there is nothing like it in the history of humanity. We have no record of it being necessary to interrupt something as devastating as capitalist society before. And that is why the indigenous revolution cannot be like the one advocated by Marxists, whether based and oriented towards proletarians or peasants, it is a model of third-party exploitation that does not exist in indigenous thought - just like these subjects, proletarians and peasants - and as such, the response has to be different. Proletarians and peasants are being exploited, indigenous people undergo a very distinct process, they are forbidden from continuing to live. The former (peasants and proletarians) are conceived within structures and reproducing completely alienated ways of thinking. The latter (indigenous people) are conceived within structures and ways of thinking that are independent of the alien and capitalist notion. The formers are prevented from leaving this logic, the latter are forcibly brought into it. They are not coincident movements; they cannot be represented by the same struggle. It is a revolution that does not use or depend on the idea of forming a vanguard, for example. Nor does it depend on the formal union of workers, but only on the fact that the parties share common fears - and not necessarily deprivations, contacts, or exploitations.

There is no positive interest or value in Marxism or even the notion of communism, except in specific indigenous that have already been co-opted. The proletarians will strive, at most, to reduce the exploitation they suffer, while the indigenous resist in order to be able to live again. It is not the same starting point, and there is no way it can be the same endpoint. Expecting the indigenous revolution to be based on a foreign model (Marxist and Western) is to ignore the perceptions and realities of the indigenous people themselves. And worse, to believe that indigenous people will be just another force (as proletarians and peasants are seen - and as the bourgeoisie are in the reading of certain authors - perhaps even the religious in the future reading of other authors... - I would add the military in all

these readings still...) in the pre-constructed revolutionary organization movement - within the rules of Capital - is to believe that they are mere pawns in a chess game where the vanguard of the party moves all the pieces. The same vanguard that will betray its own at the first opportunity by prostituting itself for a position in the next government. Brazil is a colonial project that “succeeded” (Virgílio, 2020b:74), because it is always important to remember that State agents are, first and foremost - i.e., above all - actors who exist to be **against indigenous people**. It is very difficult for a nation project that is idealized with purposes, interests and completely anti-indigenous orientations to have any of its official bodies acting in favour of indigenous people, because the primitive nature of this nation model depends on the extermination of native peoples, the expropriation of their goods and territories, and the replacement of all their practices by others.

There is nothing useful for indigenous peoples that can come from the servants and executors of these agencies, even if we turn our analysis to university professors, FUNAI technicians, military men, or the judiciary, legislative, and executive branches. All these people, no matter how much they may try to circumvent or deny it, are born, live, reproduce, and they **depend** on the structure of oppression, exploitation, and plunder that has been perfected for over five hundred years. In its over five hundred years of failure, Brazil has never had a revolution. Not even one according to the crude European-Western-Modern models. It is necessary to defend full autonomy. And this autonomy will not be sustained if the model of revolutionary organization is built with imported models from overseas. The primary difficulty in establishing a revolution on national soil may be due to its own ontology and the responses that society uses to hinder and prevent its full development. Like the indigenous people who for almost five hundred years were considered completely incapable and recurrently treated as children, a revolution that arises from there tends to be interpreted as childish. It will be seen as disorganized, unproductive, and messy. A Brazilian-style revolution does not have an instruction manual. It is a path that is still being opened, and we do not even know if the trail is in the most suitable direction (or at the appropriate speed). Inevitably, responsible adults (i.e., the State, using its institutions and agents) will (try to) control children. But children - as a rule - are not children forever. When the indigenous revolution reaches puberty, we will see the son preventing the drunken father from beating the mother when he comes home.

The other characteristic - both of the revolution due to its incompatibility with the status quo and of the allegory that has been imposed on and against indigenous peoples for centuries - is its savagery. And again, the antagonists, here still represented by the State, its institutions and agents, will (attempt to) domesticate the beast to make it a mere pet - or even worse: a watchdog. The attacks against the projected childishness and savagery are promoted by a process that is better known as the civilizing process, but that is also referred to as the colonizing process. They are actually intermediate manifestations of close movements that aim at only one final result: ethnocide. Whether it is colonization that fights the curiosity of childhood or civilization that eliminates the freedom of savagery, the paternalistic values that the state imposes on the relationship are easily identifiable. Krenak (2018:31) points to a quite accurate perception regarding this paternalism:

This way of thinking **assumes a paternalistic view that freezes our personalities in time**. While non-indigenous Brazilians would be kind enough **to watch over us until we become adults**, we would forever be seen as idiots, manipulated by these “friends”, sometimes helped by them, but other times exploited by them. **It is this kind of hypocrisy that has characterized** the history of Brazil and **the relationship between Brazilian society** with the traditional populations, **with this people known as Indians**.

Yawanawá (2019:90) is another indigenous thinker who criticizes the excess of paternalism:

Afterwards, I had to redirect **a system that was built on state paternalism, which the Brazilian government created against indigenous peoples**. [...] It's like **when a child is crying**, you give them a pacifier and put it in their mouth, and that's it, problem solved. But sometimes, the child didn't want the pacifier.

And not far away is the discourse of Tukano (2019:79), when he emphasizes that “*This excessive tutelage has made things very difficult for us. **We do not need government assistance and such things**. This is excessive propaganda; it does not serve us*”. Yawanawá (2019:100-101) explains that in order to exit the system, the changes need to be radical and extreme. A simple reform is not possible. It is necessary to completely tear it down.

Politics, the concept that man created for himself, had no way out. **To get out of it, we will have to pay a very high price.** [...] It has to be a high price. **To bring down a sambaúba tree, it's not with a little knife.⁹ It has to be an axe or a chainsaw. Big things.** Big problems are solved with big solutions. And **that's what the world will experience.** Is experiencing.

According to Esbell (2019:159), this change depends solely on nature, as “*knowing that tomorrow these two cultures will inevitably be together, both the indigenous and the non-indigenous [...], only nature can give a positive answer.*” Krenak (2019:76-77) argues that it is not possible to talk about saving humanity, saving the world, without considering the efforts and diversity of indigenous traditions:

As indigenous nations are important because they have their own languages, their own traditions that do not destroy human beings. On the contrary, **they qualify and dignify the knowledge of these peoples to defend human rights.** [...] How many times have indigenous peoples put humanity at risk? Never. On the contrary, **we are saving a lot of things.**

The speech of Ailton Krenak is in line with the main discourse of the shamanic manifesto of Kopenawa, when he states (Kopenawa & Albert, 2013:12,313-314):

I would like white people to stop thinking that our forest is dead and placed here without reason. [...] **Maybe they will want to defend it with us?** [...] For if this forest is entirely devastated, no other forest will ever be born. [...] It is thanks to his law [Omama's law] that **we do not mistreat the forest the way the white people do.**¹⁰ We know very well that without trees, nothing will grow on its hardened and blazing ground. Then what would we eat? Who will feed us if we do not have gardens or game? **Certainly not the white people, who are so greedy that they would let us die of hunger. We must defend our forest** to be able to eat manioc and plantain bananas when our stomach is empty, to be able to smoke monkeys and tapirs when we are hungry for meat. We must also protect its watercourses to be able to drink and fish.

In attempting to expose the work and efforts of the Laklãnõ people with the Zág, I hope to have demonstrated how these actions are not isolated, but constitute an indigenous front that is fully articulated with other uprisings, such as the one identified among the Yanomami by Kopenawa. These uprisings need to be not only recognized and encouraged, but perhaps even discovered. And they all revolve around and engage in dialogue with the

⁹ Refers to the *Ceiba pentandra*, a tree of colossal dimensions that easily surpasses fifty meters in height.

¹⁰ Omama refers to one of the two brothers in the founding myth of the Yanomami people. Most indigenous peoples in South America have two brothers in at least one version of their founding myths.

most basic notions of environmental protection and a less cretinous relationship with what we call nature (or the planet). The next item seeks to show some necessary steps for a discovery that needs to be made even before the search for the discovery of these uprisings. Above all, it is urgent to discover Brazil. A Brazil that was so cowardly covered by invaders five centuries ago and that since then has had more and more woollen threads being woven into the initial blanket.

4 - DISCOVERY OF BRAZIL

The idea that the so-called “discovery” of Brazil (or the Americas) is actually a “cover-up” is not new. Dussel's work (1995), published exactly five hundred years after the foreign invasion of these lands, is well known. However, a year before that, a Spanish Jesuit (Meliá, 1991) questions whether the more appropriate term should be “to cover” instead of “to discover”. It is not the intention to re-discuss what these authors have presented. The proposal here is different. In fact, it is necessary - and urgent - to discover Brazil. That is what this is about. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the intention is to give some continuity - if possible - to part of these provocations. If Greek thought is incorporated and reused from the 12th century by humanists and by Thomas Aquinas, perhaps suggesting knowledge in order to propose the incorporation and reuse of Amerindian thought is not something so absurd - or sterile. It was not until the 10th century that a movement of rediscovery of Greek philosophers began, based on documents that were then guarded by the Caliphate of Cordoba. This was almost five centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire. Now, five centuries have passed since the invasion. I believe it is time for the rediscovery of indigenous epistemologies, which have been unknown and inaccessible since 1500.

The attempt to learn depends on dialogue, otherwise we are doomed to fall at some point into the worst possible outcome of a double misunderstanding. The perception of the full overcoming of this double misunderstanding (in a positive way for both parties) can be identified as the “*sharing of a common framework of references and concepts*”, as well described by Granjo (2004:206-207). Even though current attempts at discovery may be understood as the first or the main ones, it is safe to consider them as late developments of previous attempts at contact - and perhaps understanding - made against various indigenous peoples for five hundred years. A first large group of these initiatives can be

included in what refers to the colonizing - or civilizing - processes. A second group presents characteristics of what we scientifically call revolutionary - or decolonizing - processes.

The sets of processes are not distant from each other, neither temporally nor spatially, but we cannot consider them as strict continuities or developments completely related to each other. When we reach some *hermeneutic evolution* in the future, perhaps we can refer to them as *movements*, or even mention them as *evolutions*. Although very little is interpreted in this line of reasoning, it is important to remember what the first crime committed against the indigenous peoples residing in Latin America was. It is the *Treaty of Tordesillas* (1494). This attack is the starting point of a series of actions that will materialize with a sequence of invasions throughout the American continent. Throughout the invasions, continuous assaults on land, water, fauna and flora, and everything else that stands in the way of the murderers carrying the sacred crosses illuminated by the fire of hell are committed.

To carry out the theft of land, true massacres and mass murders are promoted, as well as the expulsion of residents, with heavy use of military, armament and imperialist apparatus. The result is a manufactured perception of demographic void combined with real depopulation, as well as survivors with shaken notions of identity and reduced self-esteem. The other front of colonization arises in models of subordinate coexistence. They can both present themselves close to the well-known slavery, as in more refined proposals. Slavery is common against more marginalized peoples, survivors with reduced populations, and those who are expelled from their own lands. Another recurring tactic is the co-optation of leaders in groups with larger populations and when there is some sort of quasi-militarized force (i.e., an army of warriors, even if only armed with sticks, ropes, paints, poisons, and stones). The co-optations frequently encourage the promotion of interracial marriages.

The subordinate coexistence generates some additional effects in the long term, such as the criminalization of practices and identities, promoting intense cultural loss, as well as fostering internal conflicts that can accelerate depopulation or the generation of new hegemonic actors. Another effect felt in the long term is the dependence on those with whom they have come to coexist, which develops especially after the exploitation of natural resources and indigenous labour by the invading group, as well as the restrictions on cultural practices that are prohibited or prevented due to lack of access to goods or land. In the very

long term, we have ethnocidal acts completely materialized through population absorption and social disorganization, facilitated by mediators and conciliators, with strong use of the legal apparatus imposed by the invader as the sole or dominant legal system. Both the processes of invasion and co-optation, as well as subordinated coexistence, may allow for some contact and, in an extreme interpretation, even attempts to know (i.e., discover) this other referred to as indigenous. These processes often involve large exploitation apparatuses that generate or promote structures of inequality and exploitative logics of cultural exchange, as well as encourage hierarchies that oscillate between the imposition of legal guardianship and the creation of dependent relationships that require total assistance.

This problematic relationship only begins to be broken when there are emancipatory movements arising from the aspirations of the indigenous peoples themselves, when they begin to also understand the enemy actors and institutions and mainly how they operate. In order to move towards full emancipation, in addition to identifying non-indigenous actors and their institutions (such as churches, schools, companies and industries based on the exploitation of natural resources, and especially the State that seeks to control them), it is also necessary to recognize their instruments (such as educational and legal structures), sometimes even absorbing and redefining them. In a more advanced phase, it is necessary to identify any co-opted indigenous people (notably among peoples with older contacts with the non-indigenous and with a large presence of mixed-race descendants), as well as encourage non-indigenous people to also act against other non-indigenous people.

This search for a more autonomous and articulated formation and organization is what will allow a resistance that promotes physical survival par excellence. Once physical survival is guaranteed, we can begin to talk about the consequence of preserving indigenous episteme and culture, promoting an effective path that culminates in a revolutionary process, which among the many possibilities of development is the one that interests us most: a sincere exchange of knowledge - in a horizontal, transparent, and honest way between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. This is the Brazil that has not yet been discovered. It is important to highlight that the articulations of the Laklãnõ have produced significant legal changes in the Brazilian legal system in the last hundred years, which have affected all other indigenous peoples. The results of some of these movements are quite illustrative:

1) *Creation of the SPI*. The current FUNAI was created under the name of *Serviço de Proteção ao Índio* (Indian Protection Service) to resolve a diplomatic incident involving the Laklãnõ people in the early 20th century (see Frič, 2023). After more than one hundred years, this foundation remains the only communication bridge with the State for hundreds of indigenous peoples.

2) *Legal dispute over the temporal landmark*. The legal dispute involving the temporal landmark thesis emerges within the territory of the Laklãnõ people and proves to have a general impact on all more than three hundred indigenous peoples in the country (and over eight hundred indigenous lands) and with the possibility of reaching third populations such as quilombola's populations (see Virgílio, 2022).

3) *Construction of the grammar of their own language*. The Laklãnõ people were the first to have the grammar of their language, previously only spoken, produced by a member of their own community. This was the result of the individual work of Nanblá Gakran over a period of just six years (see Gakran, 2005 and 2015).

4) *Removal of the Indigenous legal tutor*. In the 1950s, representatives of the Laklãnõ people went to the country's capital demanding the removal of their representative tutor. The precedent was followed by other indigenous peoples before the dictatorship was established. The accumulation of complaints led to two investigations in the national congress that resulted in the extinction of SPI and the creation of FUNAI, the writing of the Figueiredo's report, the Brazilian Statute of Indian (1973), and the end of indigenous tutelage.

5) *Creation of IBAMA*. Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) originally emerged as the National Institute of Pine (INP), an organization focused solely on combating the extinction of Araucaria. Later, it expanded to become the Brazilian Institute of Forest Development (IBDF), taking on the task of protecting the entire national flora. And more recently, in 1989, it became known as IBAMA, encompassing responsibilities for fauna, water, air, and soil.

If the Brazilian judiciary and legislative does not settle the issue of the temporal landmark in a favourable way - it seems to me - that the next movement will be a territorial separation with evident political autonomy - which will immediately impact a foreign intervention in another geographic space: the Brazilian Amazon. It is needless to say that

the type of territorial separation and, above all, political autonomy that should emerge in the Amazon is not even close to anything we know, be it in ex-colonies, autonomous territories, small kingdoms, or international areas. The national judiciary and legislative branches have not understood the gravity of the situation and still follows lobbyists of vile character.

Although with limitations, the lack of state commitment to the situation is completely resolved with the organization and articulation of indigenous peoples. This set of episodes should serve as a warning to the state, as this intentional inaction is a basic prerequisite for the installation of a substitute order, be it national and private, foreign, or most likely: internal, native, and completely managed by indigenous peoples. This occupation by indigenous peoples of the gaps left by the State can have much more drastic results with regard to land demarcation, especially regarding the disrespect for traditional indigenous occupation territories. If the State, notably represented by the judiciary, and now also the legislative, intends not to succumb to a Land Uprising, it is urgent to realize that this Land Uprising, if its demands are not met, must escalate to a Land Revolt, culminating in an effective *Revolution for the Land* (I would say *Revolution of the Earth*).¹¹ If it's not clear: *The Revolution for the Land* is the *Indigenous Revolution* in the title of this essay.

¹¹ I refer to it as the *Revolution of the Earth* due to the obvious future effects on climate change and the enormous possibility of expansion for indigenous peoples from other countries and continents.

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