

Existence as Resistance (Seminar)

an Indigenous perspective from Brazil

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Talk given to the Radical Anthropology Group at Daryll Forde Seminar Room, Anthropology Building, 14 Taviton Street, London WC1H 0BW on 23 April 2019.

What is the indigenous situation in Brazil today? Brazil is a country with a great diversity of peoples and cultures, guardians of ancestral knowledge, who today wish to share some of their wisdom and visions of the world.

In dialogue with Extinction Rebellion activists, tonight's speaker will survey the current indigenous panorama to build alliances to shift the actual dominant paradigm, and to encourage the creation of strategies that can contribute to the protection of mother nature, cultural diversity and human rights across this vast region.

Daiara Tukano, of the Tukano indigenous nation of the Upper Rio Negro, is an indigenous activist and artist.

With a Masters Degree in human rights at the University of Brasilia, she is a researcher on the right to memory and truth of indigenous peoples.

She is an independent communicator and coordinator of Radio Yandê, the first indigenous web-radio in Brazil at www.radioyande.com.

She is one of the first women of her people to be initiated into the traditional spirituality of the Tukano nation, studying the sacred medicines with her father in ceremony.

<http://www.radioyande.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnBnmpbf41k>

Daiara: Thank you so much. Nice to see you again.

My name is Ayara Tukano. I am from the Tukano Nation. We are a Brazilian indigenous nation. It's not only Brazilian. We live actually in the borders between Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela.

So that's it, like right in the center of the Amazon, in the upper Black River and I will show you later and I'm here to talk a little bit about our context, our fight, and what is happening today in Brazil.

I'm going to speak, I'm going to try to speak, to do this presentation really shorter, because I'm really interested in talking and having a good conversation.

I am really curious about how are you dealing with this radical anthropology, and as well with Extinction Rebellion.

I'm here with Jaider, that is one of our greatest indigenous artists in Brazil and we came here looking for bridges, for windows and for doors, to share a little bit about the indigenous cosmo-visions, how do we relate to reality and we were received by Guillaume, that is one of our supporters here and that works with connecting many social movements together and we were talking about civil disobedience.

Yeah, that's how you say it in English and I was talking with him.

Okay, civil disobedience for indigenous peoples.

We were already born outsiders. We were already born rebels. It's like a sentence. We are indigenous. We are not recognized by any nation and we are not recognized by history.

So what about epistemological disobedience? Is it possible to think otherwise than the Greeks or, ? So it has been a really interesting opportunity coming to Europe and meeting lots of movements and peoples that are interested and that are doing it, even if they don't have the consciousness that they are doing it all the time.

But it's happening, and that's really important for us at this moment.

So let's begin. Okay, that indigenous peoples are not a race, right? Because in Brazil, they are not sure of that.

In Brazil, they think to be indigenous is like to have a blood drop.

in the United States as well.

It's like a race thing.

But no, indigenous nations, we are ancient civilizations that still resist until today, and we are everywhere in the world.

So we are all colors as well, and you can go in further and the history, as, it tells in a very sophisticated way about genocide.

They even call it genocide.

They even call it invasion.

They say it is a discovery.

It was a discovery.

Someone was lost.

They were looking for the Indians and they still call us Indians today and I don't know if there is somebody from India here in this room.

Hello.

But we are really far away and they were lost and we find them on the beaches.

There is a poet, a Brazilian poet, that says it was a really rainy day when the Portuguese arrived.

because it was rainy and cold, so they saw the indigenous naked and they dressed up.

They dressed us.

But if it was a sunny day, we would undress the Portuguese and there were kind of two discoveries of Brazil.

The first one, and that was Ayilton Kranac, says Ayilton Kranac is one of the most important indigenous thinkers in Brazil today.

He's a philosopher, he's an historian.

He says that there were two discoveries of Brazil.

The first one was that time when Portuguese arrived and they thought they had discovered something and they created Brazil over our heads and the second moment was when indigenous nations After having like some centuries of dizziness.

Dizziness? Dizziness.

Dizziness.

We realized that Brazil was already there and that it had no place for us.

That those nations that were created up on our territories had no place for indigenous nations.

So we had to resist and our better way to resist is just exist as we are.

So for the Brazilian indigenous nations, here are some data.

We are, you can read it.

I'm not good with numbers in English.

We are less than a million people that are recognized as indigenous, but we are more than 300 nations and we speak almost 300 living languages, indigenous languages and worldwide, we are more than 5,000 nations.

That is 5% of the world's population and if you go to the next, here is a map of Brazil.

is an estimative of Brazil before colonization.

These are the linguistic branches.

So for my territory, I am Tucano, and my grandfather lives here and of course, it was all occupied and if you go, well, today, this is indigenous lands in Brazil.

These are the indigenous territories that were recognized.

It took a little time.

The first one that was recognized was the Shingu Indigenous Park.

For the anthropologists, you may know a little bit of this story about the Villas Boas brothers that made this first one and after, After the constitutional movement in 88, we managed to build a whole chapter on indigenous rights and we began the recognition of the other territories.

So my territory is there.

We call it the head of the dog and well, You, so, indigenous territories nowadays in Brazil represent 13% of the whole national territory, and we are recognized as less than a million.

So, the actual president says there is too many lands for too few people, and that land is unproductive, and it should be explored.

They doesn't care if those lands are actually the lands that are protecting what is left of the Amazon forest and what is left of biodiversity.

Because if you go and see where are the indigenous territories all over the world, we have in our territories 82% of the whole globe biodiversity.

Okay, so indigenous territories protect life and not only life, they protect different cultures.

Cultural diversity is really important to keep this life growing.

But if you go and see where is the indigenous population in Brazil, it's quite a bit different.

Go back.

These are the territories that are recognized and go further.

This is indigenous population.

Let's see it again.

The territories and the population.

So we still are everywhere.

We are in the cities, we are the countries, we are in the middle of the forest.

Yes, there are many, a few, indigenous nations that are on voluntary isolation.

Yeah, voluntary isolation.

60.

Sixty indigenous nations that are isolated until today, but the greatest population, the biggest one, is the Tikuna Nation in the Amazon, and the second biggest...

the Guarani Kiowa.

I don't know if you have heard of the Guarani Kiowa situation.

The Guarani Kiowa, they live like here in the Mato Grosso do Sul state, and they face a real violence situation caused by agribusiness.

We call it the indigenous Gaza line.

It's really, it's really violent and the third biggest indigenous nation is down south Brazil, in Rio Grande do Sul state, is the Kaingang Nation.

Now you go back, you go back, you see the Guarani Kiowa Nation don't have any land as it is recognized, the Kaingang Nation neither.

Neither are the other Guaranese in Sao Paulo, Minas Gerais, neither are the Tupi, different indigenous nations in the Northeast, but they are there.

Go further, they are there, and you go further again.

Violence is everywhere.

This is the map.

off a violence observatory of the one human rights institution in Brazil, because we have lost our Ministry of Human Rights this year, so it was official.

But the president, like, he wanted to eradicate the whole institutional Sides that were supposed to defend or to talk about human rights, and this is a map of murders of indigenous leaders in the last 10 years.

It is only indigenous leaders, okay? So you go back, here is the indigenous population, you go back, here are the indigenous territories, and you show me again the violence against indigenous nations.

This violence is most of the time caused because of land issues.

Agribusiness, the advance of the agribusiness borders, they are entering the indigenous territories, mining issues, they want to explore the gold and other substances in the floor because in Brazil the indigenous territories do not belong to indigenous nations.

They are not private propriety.

They are the propriety of the nation.

That means that these territories, you can go back to the indigenous territories, these territories are for the use of indigenous nation.

Yeah, the exclusive use of fruit of indigenous nation while we are still living as indigenous and underneath it belongs to the state.

So the gold, the diamonds, everything can be explored by the state, and they always face this kind of trouble with indigenous and human and environmental, environmental, I can't say that word, it's complicated for me.

Nature rights, okay, because we don't allow them.

So If you can go to the violence, they kill us, and they kill us in many ways, and those ways are not even new, because when I say here is like Gaza, we are facing for 500 years a biological war, a chemical war.

violent physical war.

These are people that are dying by poisoning and malnutrition.

How do you say it? Malnutrition.

Malnutrition and all kind of aggressions for the traffic and everything.

You can go further, please.

So, this is really basic because it is what can we learn? I was thinking about changing this because each day that I go further, I believe, what can we learn? I don't know what we have really to share as indigenous, that is just only What we have learned is that system of consummation, that economical system, that political system, and the laws doesn't work.

They still don't work for us.

That is the only thing we have to share, actually.

OK, sorry.

Your system doesn't work for us and you can go back.

Yeah.

This poll about the history issue.

Here is in Portuguese, but I believe you can recognize it.

OK, I just finished a master's on human rights at the University of Brasilia and If you read Portuguese, I can share it with you, because it's really, it's not a human rights, it's not anthropology, but it was really radical for the human rights and this is a comparison about history.

In the United States, these are some wars that marked the annihilation of the most of the indigenous population.

They are mostly from the 19th century, is the march to the West and in Brazil, that is not taught at the universities, that is not taught at school, that is not taught anywhere.

These are some cases of wars that also killed the indigenous population beginning in the 1500s, but until today.

Until today and this is really interesting for historians.

If someone that is interested in doing this research, please tell me.

Because it's really, really complicated and actually, you have the documents.

You don't have the numbers because nobody cares how many indigenous died.

But you still have the names of the places and every name of the places in Brazil is indigenous.

So you can go further.

That thought was to say that the indigenous resistance was all the time.

We resisted since 1500, all the time, in an organized way of resistance, working together, joining peoples to resist together against invasion.

Invasion and we still do it today.

But, of course, as a social movement, as a national movement, we began working together during the 80s.

It was like the end of the dictatorship times and we work, actually not we, my father's generation, went for building a little space in the constitution and other laws, international laws, declarations for indigenous nations.

You know, okay.

International laws and to do this game on how to protect indigenous and all the everything that is related to indigenous.

So we are still in this fight, and you can go further and we are using every kind of technology we can to say it and repeat it and repeat it over and over that where you have indigenous nations, you have forests, you have life, you have biodiversity, you have cultural diversity, and we need to protect it.

Okay, we, indigenous peoples inhabit 60% of the planet reserved areas.

That is, that is really important for all of us.

Climate change is real.

We need to protect what is left.

We need to work together on reforestation, okay, but we cannot lose what we have.

Okay, go for that, please.

So, and what is, why is it protected? Why is there life in indigenous territories? Because of how we think, because of how we relate to the world.

It's because of our cultures, of our spiritualities.

We still sing and pray and salute and ask permission to nature and to the forest.

We still work really, really hard to respect the nature cyclists.

Of course, it's not the reality for every one of us because many of us have lost the forest, okay? We have all kinds of wait a minute, sorry.

we are in the cities, we are everywhere, okay? But, and that is something, it's really a long discussion about how we used to be an indigenous in the city and how we used to be an indigenous in the forest and that is very discussed and very used against us.

But what we really want is to have all that land back and preserved land.

shared this land in other ways, okay? And we have science.

We are complex civilizations and that is not often understood.

Because we live in this culture that is esteemed by colonization and when I say colonization, it's all about power and private propriety and profits.

It's PPP.

Power, propriety, and profit.

It's selfishness.

It doesn't share anything with anyone.

The energy doesn't circulate.

It blocks the cycle of everything.

It's not only the nature cycle.

It's the social cycle that we are supposed to build together as humans with nature and as a part of nature.

So that's why it's really important to respect and protect what is left of this spirituality and also open the space to this spirituality to flow and maybe connect and think about epistemological disobedience together.

That's a funny word.

I took two years to learn how to say epistemology and it's a Greek word, but it's fun to use it.

OK.

So as for example, you can— as for example, for us in Brazil, we say .

We are all related.

Because family for us is not only like our father and our mother and sisters and brothers.

Family is the whole community.

When we meet somebody that is from another indigenous nation, we salute him and say, hey, cousin, how are you doing? Because we know we are facing the same, the same struggle.

Because we know we share so many similar views.

So we are all related and that's why we share and we live together and we won't let somebody of our family go hungry or sick alone.

That is really essential for our nations.

So when we say we are fighting for our family and we love our family, our family is not only humankind.

We are the sons of the rivers and the mountains and the forest.

We are related to nature.

That's the kind of epistemological disobedience I am inviting you to do.

You can go further.

So what are the challenges we are facing today? I don't know if you have seen this man before.

This is the chief Haoni from the Kayapo people.

He is really important in our political story.

He is one of our greatest chiefs.

Today, he is like 89 years old, and he is still fighting.

This photo was during the World Cup that happened in Brazil, and we had many protests and it was like the beginning, the announcement of a coup d'etat.

I don't know how you say it in English.

Coup d'etat.

that is working today.

But the challenges indigenous nations face all over the world are really similar.

Okay? It's the same situation, for example, in Canada, United States, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, in Africa, in Asia as well, and even in Europe.

Those that has left the Sami people also face territorial issues and cultural issues with this whole system.

So it's important to support indigenous people all over the world.

In the case of Brazil, for my human rights research.

I made it's all in Portuguese, sorry.

But we can talk about violences.

We have some regulatory reports, human rights reports that are really important, that are from the CIMI.

The Indigenous Council, Missionary Indigenous Council.

That is like, it's not an ONG, but it's part of the Catholic Church, and they were really, really strategical all the time and they work on human rights reports, and they are one of my references, and they talk about the violence against the material patrimony and the indigenous territories.

OK, what kind of violence? This is a photo of a Crenac person at the borders of the Rio Doce, the Sweet River, that was killed three years ago when we have the break of a dam that polluted the whole river until the sea and killed the whole ecosystem, and it was their grandfather.

The Krenak are grandchildren of the Watu, that is the Sweet River, and it was a beautiful river.

That is one kind of example, but we have fires, vandalism, hobo, the thieves.

Deforestation, illegal hunting, illegal fishing.

Mining.

Illegal mining, okay.

Wood traffic, animal traffic, the invasion of the territory by drug traffic, pollution of the waters.

Sewage.

Yeah, the sewage of hydracal resources.

Yeah, water resources and everything, and you go to the next and you have the violence against, that is not on the CMIS, okay? That is mine, because no one considers, even in the human rights reports, and even in the anthropological reports, it's really rare to consider, the violence against immaterial patrimony and the indigenous cultures.

I'm talking about violence against immaterial patrimony because it is supposed to be defended in national and international treaties.

But you have no observatory for that.

You have no references.

You have no major.

to understand what is happening and what is happening.

Is the negation of the indigenous identity, is cultural appropriation, is the appropriation of intellectual property, is the non-authorized use of the images, of the names, of the knowledge of indigenous nation, is the...

The value of indigenous culture, of indigenous history, the invisibilization and stereotyping of indigenous in the whole world education is not only in the Brazilian education because at school, for those that are teachers at school, we still teach children about the discovery of the Americas.

They still do it and it's still on TV and movies and books, and it's like folklorical. But the folklore is not indigenous.

The folklore is colonialism.

Okay, you can go further and then you have the violence against the physical, the individuals.

What are indigenous peoples, indigenous persons facing? Well, murder, homicide, death threats, sequester, kidnapping, torture, power abuse, racism, rape, obstetric violence, false sterilization without acknowledge, slave work, people traffic, extortion, intimidation, verbal aggression, All kinds of crimes, because we live in a very racist culture against those that were supposed to be colonized, and we are still not, we are still not.

You can go into the next one and then finally, finally the last one, you have the violence against indigenous peoples caused by the omission of the state.

Is it right? Yes.

Okay, we are Brazilians, we have nationalities.

You know, at the beginning, the crowns and the empires used to recognize indigenous nations as nations, even in the paper.

Today in Brazil, it's not considerable.

No, it's like inconceivable.

Yeah.

It's inconceivable.

It's inconceivable for the government to talk about indigenous peoples as nations because they say, oh, they are against Brazil's nation.

They treat us as terrorists.

It's true and it was not just this government right now.

The others before us, well, there is not much difference for us.

Today is maybe a little big, a little bit more official.

Official, but violence and racism was all the time there, and you are able to see the omission of the state when we have plenty of laws, and Brazil has the most perfect constitution about indigenous rights in the world.

Okay, they tell it all the time at the UN, they say, Now we have so many rights, we are perfect, and they are like very proud of it, but they never respect their own laws, and they want to change them, and now they want to rip them.

because we build those walls and they are supposed to respect, but they don't respect them when they don't do nothing about suicide, alcoholism, drug traffic, the sexual violence and the sexual diseases that are really in contaminated mood.

Yeah, it's really spreading.

They don't do nothing about drinkable water or safety or the educational system. They never have neither the money, neither the human resources to apply the law. That is omission and that's a crime.

Okay, so Please support indigenous nations.

Okay, I love this photo because, okay, it's more focused on the police here.

But here in the front, there are two friends of mine.

This one is the Hunikun chief, Huninawa, and he's holding the Kangang chief from the south of Brazil.

These are the two chiefs, two indigenous chiefs that are from nations that are completely different, that live in very, really different situations, and they are close, close friends.

So, what I have learned with indigenous movement is that it is possible to ally and to work within cultural diversity.

We are the proof of that.

We are the proof.

We are, in Brazil, we are more than 300 different civilizations and we can work together.

Why can't we work together with the European civilization as well? And the others and the others.

It is possible.

It is humanly possible.

So how about valuing indigenous cultures? and get rid of those stereotypes that we is it you? No.

Get rid of those stereotypes.

You know, I used to be a teacher, an art teacher, in public school in Brazil and every time I arrived in a new school, my pupils were like, woo, woo, woo, woo, to me.

Because they have learned on TV and these things that Indians do that and they used to ask me, hey, we call our teachers this like auntie.

Hey, auntie, are you from India? And then, no, no, I'm not.

But I am indigenous.

I am indigenous.

Do what about indigenous peoples? It's important to recognize that we are really, really diverse and another thing is please value our economy.

We live because there are hundreds, millions of millions, yeah, millions of indigenous women that are working really, really hard with very little stuff like this kind of..

I bring my drawings, for example.

It's all for selling.

But that's how we support the most part of our families, is the women working together and please go and listen to indigenous music, know a little more about what is contemporary and indigenous, between indigenous nations.

I am the coordinator of an indigenous radio.

It is the first web indigenous radio in Brazil.

That is called Radio Yande Radio.

It's on [www..radioyande.com](http://www.radioyande.com) with a Y and then you can listen to a lot of indigenous music.

Traditional music from the elders and contemporary music, indigenous rap, indigenous everything, and also indigenous news.

We are our news portal and so that is another invitation and another thing that is really important, and we have worked a lot with Jider during this tour, is know a little more about indigenous contemporary art.

Because You know, what is interesting about this weird history on epistemological disobedience is that I took two years to learn how to say epistemology and paradigma.

These are weird Greek words and I had a degree, an art degree.

I wasn't a lawyer and I was doing human rights.

So I need to learn a lot of Greek and Latin words.

But if we are really willing to change the paradigma, if you are really willing to connect to other cultures, maybe we can silence ourselves a little bit and get a little bit rid of those words to reconsider them.

We can connect through other languages.

We can connect through visual language.

This is Jaider's.

Here's our indigenous Picasso in Brazil right now.

This is mine.

We can connect to a language that doesn't use those paradigms, those definitions, those Greek, European, white, male, classist, racist, homophobic, misogynist kind of thinking.

We want to change that paradigm.

We have enough of oppression.

We are all oppressed by that.

It's not only indigenous, The women, the men, the children, the elders, nature is oppressed by that kind of thinking and maybe we can silence ourselves and as Jaider was saying the other day, reconsider some words.

What is richness to you? What is justice for you? What is power for you? If we can really reconsider it, then we will be doing this epistemological disobedience, adapting, assuming another posture to the word.

That's why indigenous nations are spreading and walking the whole globe to share other visions and we are sharing it on internet and everywhere.

OK, so you can go and look in YouTube for indigenous YouTubers from the whole globe.

Here is a Brazilian one that is my friend.

He's really, really smart and you can go and look for the APIP, that is the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil.

It is our major representative institution for the indigenous movement.

Here is my radio.

But you have also other sites for communication as Media India, Visibilidas Indigena, and indigenous films that you can reach as well.

Go and take a little time to listen to these people, and not only Brazilian people.

There are a lot of Canadian indigenous YouTubers, North American indigenous YouTubers, from Australia, New Zealand, from everywhere, from Africa as well.

They are very, very, very organized, and we are really, really diverse.

But even like that, we are facing the same challenges, and we agreed in lots of things.

Tomorrow is a really important day.

Tomorrow, we are gathering in Brasilia, that is Brazil's capital, more than four, thousand indigenous leaders from the whole territory, from the whole country, to gather ourselves and go speak to the institutions of the state, to the National Congress, the Supreme Court, to the President, to the ministries, about how it's really important, and they have to respect indigenous rights, They have to respect indigenous territories, and we won't allow them to exploit our territories and we won't allow them to reap everything that we have built together in democracy.

So tomorrow is a real special moment and I've come here, we have come here to share about this reality.

This is called the Free Land Camp.

Okay, Acampamento Terra Libri, free land camp.

It's between the 24th and 26th April in Brasilia and last week, the president already saw, said that the militaries will be waiting for us.

So if you go to the Facebook of Radio Yande, you will find some videos.

that we made together.

There is this video in English, but it's also in Spanish and French and Portuguese, and I'd love if you can share it, because at this moment, at this particular moment, these two, these three days and further, we need to give visibility to indigenous movements in Brazil.

The laws that are protecting indigenous territories and what is left in the Amazonian biodiversity, the waters, the forests, depend on the fight on indigenous peoples, because there is nobody else that is fighting with their bodies with our blood for that.

That's why we say indigenous blood in the veins, in the veins, the fight for the land.

The land is our mother, and we must protect it.

I forgot this is, I was there that day. It was last year Freeland Camp and this is a shaman from Munduruku nation.

Our elders say that the most powerful weapon we have is our spirituality.

So you have hundreds of elderly that go like that and face that kind of guys, just with this. This means a lot for us.

I would like very much to share this kind of a prayer. I know in Europe you have many, many, many situations with this kind of religion, but spirituality for us is not religion at all.

Spirituality is how we relate to the world. So it's not about being a religious institution.

I'd like to thank you very much and thank the Great Spirit for this opportunity, for all this way to Europe and this is one of the last spots, is England. Then I'm going back. Tomorrow I won't be at the Freeland camp and that is really hurting me because I know my brothers and my sisters will be facing the police and I've always been there.

It's the first time I'm not there and it's how many years you've been there? The last five years I've been there, every day and it's so beautiful to see there together, walking and marching and I'm really used to these pepper sprays and bombs in the face. I'm really used to that. But I made this choice to try to talk to different people and reach for support.

This camp also needs very little fuel and structure to receive these 4,000 leaders. They need like to buy chicken and rice and to make tents with plastic. They don't have any, even the money for that. So we are also doing the campaign for funding the resources to do this freeland camp. It happens every year.

I'd like to do these thanks in the way my father taught me.

To invite you to, I don't know if I, I believe I took too much longer.

Is it okay? Because we are not English, we are Brazilians and indigenous time, there's no time for us.

There's no time and I'll explain you why.

Because at the beginning, when there was no time, When time wasn't born, it came into the nothing like the first thought.

This was like a blow, like a wind, and the first light and that's what we call the great grandfather of the universe, the first thought and his first thought was creation.

So he turned into the great-grandmother of the universe.

For us, the great spirit is masculine and feminine, and this represents the whole universe, the maraca.

The goad represents the womb of the mother. It is the sacred world of the waters that is full of seeds and every one of us was born into the sacred womb, the world of the waters of their mother.

And the stick is the axis of the word, is the support of the great father that is bringing fertility into the womb of the mother.

So this sound for us is the sound of the forest and if you close your eyes, if you close your eyes, this is the first sound every one of us was able to hear when we were in our mother's womb.

Kapinema piyakawa.

Kapinema piyakawa.
Kapinema piyakawa.
Neyohohaya.
Neyohohaya.
Neyohohoaya.
Yokone ma piyakawa.
Yokone ma piyakawa.
Yokone ma piyakawa.
ne-yo waya.
ne-yo waya.
Komari du baya.
Mari kayo wa.
Yo ko ri.

Thank you so much.

The Ted K Archive

Daiara Tukano
Existence as Resistance (Seminar)
an Indigenous perspective from Brazil
23 April 2019

<<https://vimeo.com/332291159>> & <www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnBnmpbf41k>

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