

An Invitation to Travel in an Interethnic Arena: Listening Carefully to Amerindian Leaders' Speeches

Rafaela Waddington Achatz¹ ·
Danilo Silva Guimarães¹

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Abstract In this article, we identify usual difficulties faced by Brazilian psychologists when dealing with Amerindian Peoples, concerning the systematic violence experienced by those Peoples, who have been suffering and fighting against a process of genocide and ethnocide. To identify those difficulties, we analysed speeches of Amerindian leaders of the State of São Paulo - Guarani Mbya, Pankararu, Xavante, Baniwa, Tupi - Guarani, Terena, Kaingang and Krenak - which were addressed to psychologists. Those speeches were delivered in events promoted by CRP-SP in 2010 and in the 2nd and 3rd Forums "The Amerindian presence in São Paulo" at the Institute of Psychology (USP), in 2014. From the analysis, we make a distinction between the notions of meeting and dialogical encounter, considering that: 1. not every meeting is an encounter, in the dialogical sense, because the meeting can happen in a way that one of the interlocutors is objectified by the other and 2. being together and building an affective ground is an *a priori* for the dialogical encounter to happen. Based on the leaderships' speeches and in the notions of Amerindian perspectivism and the phenomenology of alterity in Cultural Psychology, we propose alternative paths to understand constitutive aspects of a dialogical meeting in such interethnic situation. These reflections are proposed as a theoretic-empirical work, as it departs from the comprehension that the theoretical problems are not separated from the concrete situation that enables them to emerge.

Keywords Amerindian peoples · Alterity · Interethnic dialogue · Cultural psychology

We use the notion of ethnicity to refer to a group of people who share and construct together an *ethos*, i.e., customs and habits, principles, values, norms of action and ideals. We understand, however, that the notion of ethnicity is extrinsic to the way these Peoples understand each other, even though at the same time it has been appropriated in indigenous discourses, especially in dialogues and disputes with governmental and non-governmental institutions. For further insights into the limits of the notion of ethnic identity in the Amerindian context, see Albert (1997), Gallois (2000), Pantoja et al. (2011) and Viveiros de Castro (2006).

✉ Rafaela Waddington Achatz
rafaela.achatz@usp.br

¹ Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

This article discusses the process of interethnic encounter between the psychologist and Amerindian Peoples, its conditions of occurrence and its possible implications. Besides the problems that are immanent to the interethnic dialogue, the psychologist and Amerindian People face another great challenge: for more than 500 years, a process of genocide and ethnocide of the Amerindian Peoples has been happening in the colonized territories, with different histories and meanings for its participants (Carneiro da Cunha 2012; Ribeiro 1996; Todorov 1982). The diverse Amerindian Peoples resist in various ways to the pressure of colonialist and post-colonialist processes. With the excuse of the development and growth of the nations systematic massacres take place, carrying on the ethnocide and genocide of millions of peoples, producing great suffering and leading the Amerindian Peoples to numerous situations of psychosocial vulnerability. Nowadays, violence against Amerindian Peoples tends to intensify. At the same time, the Amerindian Peoples' fight for their original territory and specific rights grows.

In this scenery, what are the possibilities for psychologists to work with Amerindian Peoples, respecting their experience in its singularity and complexity? It is quite a task, considering that Psychology is a complex field of knowledge, historically based upon Eurocentric and racist theories that supported the subjugation of other Peoples (Jahoda 1999). Besides, one of the motivations of this research came from realizing that even if the psychologist has "good intentions", their work with Amerindian Peoples can be very violent, considering the very common attitude of psychologists in assuming the position of knowledge and of owner of the right values. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that our speech departs from and has as its interlocutor a professional and an academic field that is mostly white, still very Eurocentric and that keeps relating to Amerindian Peoples mainly as objects and not as agents of knowledge – keeps relating to the Amerindian Peoples as if they were part of exotic cultures, there to be explained by scientific knowledge.

Thus, we faced questions about the ethical, political and aesthetical postures Psychology assumes when relating to Amerindian People, seeking to hear the Amerindian voices that speak about these issues to understand how the encounter between the psychologist, the indigenous person and the community can be creative and transformative, instead of perpetrating meetings that are violent and silencing. What can we do when these failed meetings happen also with those who search (or at least say they do) for encounters (psychologists, supporters in social movements, priests, etc.)? How can the work between Amerindian People and psychologists be a dialogical encounter and promote new encounters in the dialogical sense?

How to enjoy the creative potential of the encounter (being aware of its risks), instead of repeating the failed meetings that have been creating so much suffering? Listening to the Amerindian People is important for us to try to find paths through which the dialogical encounter can happen. Therefore, we propose a theoretical discussion that articulates the Amerindian leaderships' speeches, the notion of dialogism (Bakhtin and Voloshinov 1976), and the notion of Amerindian Perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 2004) – having as background the Cultural Psychology that recurs to the phenomenology of alterity (Simão 2010, 2015; Coelho Junior 2008). Thus, assuming the position of researchers and psychologists, we put ourselves into a field of *interethnic mediation*, from which this article is one of the voices that emerged. We share the paths travelled in an exploratory study about the theme-field that concerns the

relation between Psychology and Amerindian Peoples. Spink (2003) proposes that the theme of research is situational, it is fabricated in the relationship between the researcher and what they research. What is researched is not a fixed and a priori reality, but a social product that is continuously built – a field that is constructed by people in dialogue. Therefore, the theme of the research is a dwelling field that is produced upon the process of negotiation between what is being researched and the researcher.

Meeting the Amerindian Leaders

Not all the meetings are dialogical encounters and not every communication is a dialogue. Many of the so-called ‘interethnic meetings are actually irresponsible euphemisms for failed meetings. The failed meetings happen when one or both parts involved in dialogue are not recognized as so being and their mystery is not respected, which can be experienced as a deep violence. Thus, the dialogical encounter requires (at least) three parts: two interlocutors that share but don’t turn into one and an infinite Other that inhabits both interlocutors and their sharing (cf. Comejo 2008). Those interlocutors transform and create, but persevere as agents that express themselves and always preserve mysterious parts (as well as maintain the relationship with an unknown third which is known to be there, even if it is not perceived to be there). We propose the notion of ‘dialogical encounter’ to refer to a process that is not necessarily only verbal and the dialogue doesn’t lead to a synthesis (see Valsiner 1997), but to the multiplication of meanings and paths. Thus, the dialogical encounter implies availability to hold the tension of not-understanding and not-knowing (not only the person in front of you, but including what is possibly real from the perspective of the other) and, *through this tension*, be able to share, creating something new (cf. Simão 2010).

For many Amerindian Peoples, the (failed or not) meetings with alterity did not start in 1500, but already had been happening, and still are. It is an “eternal return of the meeting” (Krenak 2000), a meeting that happens at every moment. Krenak (2000) discusses the different experiences and temporalities that are lived in those interethnic experiences, telling us about the stories of the contact of ancient peoples of the American territory with white people that were told by those ancient peoples, emphasizing that they already knew about this announced contact:

In the ancient narratives, there were already prophecies about the arrival of the white people. (...) The time of this meeting between our cultures is a time that happens and is repeated every day. There wasn’t a meeting between the cultures of the Western Peoples and the cultures of the American continent in a demarcated time that we could call 1500 or 1800. We are living with this contact since always. If we think that 500 years ago some canoes landed in our beach, arriving with the first travellers, the first colonizers, those same travellers are arriving today to the sources of the high rivers in Amazonia. (p. 47)

The notion of an “eternal return of the meeting” points that the aperture to alterity is continuous – it is constitutive of each person and people. It also points to the non-linear temporality of the encounter. Moreover, Krenak poses the question: what can be done from this (unstoppable) encounter with the other? This question outlines that, when

facing alterity, one has choices: to subjugate, to violate, to reproduce the violent relationships, to live together in a respectful way, etc. This kind of discussion has been densely made by historians (cf. Todorov 1982) concerning different Amerindian contexts. Nevertheless, Ailton Krenak (2000) elaborates it in his own way inside the Brazilian context:

(...) In all those places that were Spanish, Portuguese or English colonies, our relatives always recognized the arrival of white people as the return of a brother that had been away for a long time. When he went away, he also withdrew himself in the sense of humanity that we were constructing. He is a subject that learned lots of things far away from home, that forgot where he is from and that has difficulty to know where he is going to. (p. 47)

Krenak (2000) proposes a narrative quite different from the ones in the didactic history books traditionally used by Brazilian schools¹ – not only for its content but also because here the Amerindian People are agents of their own histories. It becomes evident that listening and placing the different voices that express the Amerindian Peoples' experiences is fundamental to walk through paths that can contribute to the “full exercise of the capacity of Peoples to manage their processes of education, promotion of health, economy, alimentation, knowledge, and choices regarding what those Peoples intend to construct for the future generations” (ABRASME 2014). We take the notion of voice from Bakhtin (1997), nevertheless, it is important to recognize the limitations of the term ‘voices’, as it usually designates only the verbal dimension of expression, which we consider as embodied and constituted by multiple sensible layers.

Trying to hear what Amerindian leaderships had to say to psychologists, we analysed the transcriptions of a set of speeches delivered by Guarani Mbya, Pankararu, Xavante, Baniwa, Tupi-Guarani, Terena, Kaingang and Krenak leaders that live in the state of São Paulo. They spoke in the 2nd and 3rd Forums “The Amerindian presence in São Paulo” (organized in 2014 by the Amerindian Support Network, an extension service headquartered at the University of São Paulo, Institute of Psychology), and in events promoted between 2005 and 2009 by Sao Paulo’s Regional Council of Psychology. The material analysed consists in 21 speeches of Amerindian leaders published in CRP’s book *Psicologia e povos indígenas* (Psychology and indigenous peoples) and the transcription of 282 min of the speeches filmed in the 2nd and 3rd Forums “The Amerindian presence in São Paulo”.²

Our analysis consisted in an attempt to dialogically construct meanings through 1) mapping the antinomies in each speech and identifying how the speaker affectively relates to this antinomies and 2) we identified the antinomies in general topics – role of psychologists, territory, identity, alterity, racism, genocide and ethnocide,

¹ Amerindian people in Brazil have been strongly criticizing how they are presented in the history school books that have an evolutionist approach to history, and present their stereotypes as peoples belonging to the past. For further insights, see Gandra and Nobre (2014), Lindemeyer (2013) and da Silva (2014).

² II Fórum: *A Presença Indígena em São Paulo: Indígenas e o contexto urbano: Lutas, vivências e identidades* (2014, October 09). Video file available at <http://iptv.usp.br/portal/struts/video.action?idItem=24382> and III Fórum: *A Presença Indígena em São Paulo: Saúde e educação indígena - oralidade, cultura e políticas públicas* (2014, November 13). Video file available at <http://iptv.usp.br/portal/transmission/video.action?sessionId=D4C4742DC710B796E1EE7128E30FA6AF?idItem=24518>

assimilationism and multiculturalism, external support, State, rights, dignity and public policies, education, fight and resistance, memory, construction of the person, 'spirituality' - due to their prevalence in the speeches. The set of analyzed materials allows to develop the several topics identified above. The discussion of the results, in turn, was guided by the objective of the research, which was to problematize and understand how Brazilian psychologists are starting to deal with Amerindian Peoples and the effects of this approach. The excerpts presented in this article, therefore, express a very selective cutout that serves the purposes of scientific dissemination of the main conclusions of the research.

All the leaders spoke in Portuguese, although it was not the first language for most of them. It is important to outline that the Amerindian leaders have an important role of mediating the relationship between their communities and the Brazilian society. In this sense, they are very skilled in the interethnic transit and in the operations of cultural translation, as we will discuss later in this paper. In those Forums, the leaders' interlocutors were mostly psychologists, and the leaders denounce their situation and call us psychologists to work with them, proposing how this work could be done. Thus, they call our attention to other worlds, other possibilities of a world and to look to our world from other points of view.

We need to remember that those leaders belong to very diverse Peoples, each one with complex cosmologies and histories, what requires a deep ethnic contextualization of each speech to understand deeply what they may be saying. Thus, we outline that this analysis gives a "panoramic view" of very different Amerindian peoples, which represents the way psychologists approached these peoples in these forums. The specificity of each Amerindian people and person demands the emergence of fine points and more subtle understandings. For instance, there was a sharp difference between analysing the Guarani Mbya leaders' speeches and analysing the speeches delivered by leaders belonging to other Peoples.

While we were doing this research, we were also participating in the Amerindian Support Network, an academic service that guide the practical work of the students with indigenous people from the communities. Therefore, we went every week to the Guarani Mbya communities at the Jaraguá Peak. *Being together*, sharing not only stories but also smells, temperatures, rhythms and other dimensions of experience created a completely different dialogical ground from the one we were upon when analysing the other peoples' speeches. Besides, this difference was even bigger when analysing Pedro's and Sonia's speeches, with whom we spent more time together. Therefore, we outline that the considerations made in this article are guided by our experience with the Guarani Mbya communities of the Jaraguá Peak while participating in the Amerindian Support Network and by our different experience of participating in social movements that deal with Amerindian issues.

Even if we consider the shortcomings of a panoramic view, the choice of dealing with speeches from leaders belonging to diverse Amerindian peoples is related to the way the psychologists who organized the events approached them. This kind of approach reflects an historical debate between psychology and anthropology about the generality of the psychological conceptions of the human person in opposition to the singular way that each culture constructs the person. In this sense, the choice of giving a panoramic view of different Peoples is consistent with the purposes of this work, namely, to problematize and understand how Brazilian psychologists are starting

to deal with Amerindian Peoples and the effects of this approach. Furthermore, we consider that some dimensions of the experiences of these interethnic meetings might be shared by persons from different Peoples. This paper is a reflection concerning these shortcomings.

Listening to Amerindian Leaders

The analysis of the speeches began by outlining its extra-verbal situations. Bakhtin and Voloshinov (1976) proposes that the extra-verbal is what is shared by the interlocutors (jointly seen, jointly known, unanimously evaluated – which are socially constructed) and it is presumed in the enunciation, constituting its meaningfulness. Thus, the comprehension and evaluation of an enunciation is only possible when an extra-verbal situation is shared between the participants in the dialogue. But some questions emerged through the analysis, as we began to see that our problem was investigating what happens exactly when the extra-verbal situation is not shared, when it is fuzzy, and how a new situation of shared presumed grounds can be built.

If there are distinct extra-verbal grounds in each culture that co-exist with shared and parallel dimensions, how to dialogue when the presumed acts and judgements are distinct, when the ontologies - or even the personal experience - of the interlocutors are different? In other words, how can we dialogue when we don't share the same referents? Instead of emphasizing the role of the intersubjectivity in the construction of meaning, the problem was to deal with a dialogism without an extra-verbal context (thus, without an a priori intersubjectivity) where the enunciations are built in co-authorship. In the dialogical encounter (not only the interethnic one), there is always a gap where the meanings are uncertain. This gap is uncomfortable, disquieting, sometimes anguishing and at the same time immensely compelling and creative, as the possibilities of dialogue, worlds and being multiply. It is from this gap that temporary common extra-verbal grounds can be continuously (re)created.

This gap exists because alterity is not reducible to the stable binomial difference-identity, as the Other is constitutive of the encounter and of the person. The contact with alterity implies a dislodgement of myself (Coelho Junior 2008). In other words, when facing alterity, becoming another than myself is the condition for the encounter to happen. As the dislodgement of myself is a condition to encounter the other, it is also necessary to sustain a deformation of my own conceptual schema. As 'comprehending' the other can be just reducing them to my own voice or conceptual schema, we face a problem of translation. If translating the experience of the other into my own conceptual schema isn't a path for the dialogue, how could we do it?

Therefore, it is in this interethnic gap that an important part of the work between the psychologist and the Amerindian People happens. As the meanings emerge in the encounter with Other - inside and outside oneself – we propose that the task of the psychologist is not to try to comprehend the other, finding answers, solutions, fixing meanings. But to dialogue in a way that allows the other to maintain its Otherness (which remains as a mystery), at the same time that it allows to search for the co-construction of temporary shared meanings and paths.

The cultural translation - instead of being the process where one tries to find how different points of view talk about the same transcendent thing - can be a process of

transduction. When facing the untranslatability of a poem, Faleiros (2014) discusses the process of transduction – a process in which the “experience” of the poem happens through one’s *body*, enabling paths of comprehension in which the translated words can be signified through one’s senses. For the Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004), the transduction is the process in which the difference (and not the similarity) between the terms is the condition for its meaningfulness, as a relation can only exist *due to* the difference between the terms. Here, the image of what connects one to another is what they differ, not their sameness. Thus, the transduction creates connections by producing difference, showing how two discourses do not say the same thing (as they don’t share the same referents). Therefore, we take the cultural translation as a continuous “operation of differentiation—a production of difference—that connects the two discourses to the precise extent to which they are *not* saying the same thing, in so far as they point to discordant exteriorities beyond the equivocal homonyms between them.” (p.20) For instance, we translate in order to compare, and not the opposite.

Dealing with the differences between the referents of the speeches, the transduction aims to outline the equivocation that is inherent to the dialogue. Instead of explaining what the others say in our own concepts – reducing their voices to ours, Viveiros de Castro (2004) proposes the “method of controlled equivocation”. The Amerindian perspectivism, a theory about translation, proposes that it is through the equivocation that two perspective positions can communicate: “(...) perspectivism projects an image of translation as a process of controlled equivocation— “controlled” in the sense that walking may be said to be a controlled way of falling.” (Viveiros de Castro 2004, p. 3). The communication happens *because* of the alterity of referents between homonymous concepts. Thus, the equivocation is at the same time the limit and the possibility of comprehension in an interethnic dialogue: The equivocation is a situation in which the notion of reality itself becomes uncertain. For instance, Berger and Luckman’s classical discussion about the empirical suitability of psychological theories can help us to understand the equivocation. They pose that it would be an equivoque to interpret what the Haitian live through a psychology that is appropriate for the New York Jews and vice-versa: “The two psychologies demonstrate their empirical adequacy by their applicability in therapy, but neither thereby demonstrates the ontological status of its categories.” (Berger and Luckmann 1967, pp. 198).

The method of controlled equivocation consists in the constant work of readjusting our equivocations when listening to the other (the first step, therefore, is to recognize that our comprehension of the other will always be somehow equivocated), allowing what the others say or do to deform our own conceptual schema. And this has an ethical dimension: *with whom are we engaged in our (limited) comprehension?* What are the effects of our equivocations?

Facing these questions, our analysis consisted in an attempt to dialogically construct meanings through 1) mapping the antinomies in each speech and identifying how the speaker affectively relates to these antinomies - it is the analytical moment, when you receive the voice of your interlocutor, framing it through your own position in the dialogue - and 2) selecting some antinomies and reconstructing the sense of the speech as a whole. But it is a new whole, since the speech and its interlocutors have become different through this dialogue that includes the interpretation of the researcher. Thus, considering this relationship between interlocutors, the Amerindian leaderships and we

are, in the dialogical sense, co-authors of the speeches analysed and co-authors of this article (and who is reading this article becomes also a co-author, in another level).

It is a truism to say that the dialogical analysis implies participating in a dialogue. But that wasn't a simple task for us. For a dialogue to happen, first of all it is necessary to not consider the speech as an abstract thing which is your object of analysis, but to consider that you are dialoguing with another speaker (that speaks not only with words, but with gestures, regards, smells), whose voices can never become an object of yours. Besides, when one considers one's interlocutor as a person, one recognizes the alterity relationship that constitutes their dialogue. This means recognizing that one can't put oneself completely in the place of the other and that the places of the interlocutors are actually filled with embodied persons, who will always maintain their surprising dimension of alterity.

Discussing about the interethnic encounter focusing in its alterity dimension is not only fundamental to work with Amerindian People. It is also helpful to think how the encounter with the others that belong to what we call "we" happens. And can help us to deal with the encounter with the alterity that inhabits ourselves.

Travelling through Interethnic Encounters

In an interethnic encounter, the interlocutors can embody different positions that communicate and dwell with each other. Each position express different worlds and experiences, positions through which multiple meanings, paths of knowledge and rhythms emerge. When these positions interpellate each other, these different meanings, voices and rhythms create hubbub (Guimarães 2016). With a new tuning, it is possible to have a temporary common extra-verbal ground where the meanings can be shared and understood. This sharing is always limited, concerning the infinite unknown that constitutes each position. Besides, the construction of shared meanings need to take into account the embodied and affective dimensions, and not only its cognitive-rational elaboration. But how to achieve this sort of shared tuning?

When analysing the Amerindian leaders' manifestations, and concretely meeting some of them, we identified that there were certain dimensions of dialogue usually approached in the communicative path constructed between the psychologist and the Amerindian People(s). For analysis purposes, we present this path divided into 4 layers of the dive the psychologist experiences when trying to encounter people with whom they do not share the same cosmology. Nevertheless, the limits between those dimensions/layers are porous; they are experienced simultaneously, but with different intensities and different degrees of awareness of it by the participants. This enumeration of layers guide the presentation of the analysis of the speeches in this paper. We argue that it indicates inherent steps to the development of the encounter between psychologists and Amerindian Peoples.

1.

One of the dimensions of the dialogue is mostly about the interethnic relationship and it is more like a role game – the psychologist, the Amerindian person, the leaders, the white people, and their positions in dialogue. The leaders sometimes interpellate the

psychologists as generic non-Amerindian People and sometimes specifically as psychologists. Besides, the leaders self-refer as Amerindian People (making generalizations about being Amerindian) and at the same time emphasize the heterogeneity of Amerindian Peoples and the different meanings and experiences of being Amerindian to white people and to each Amerindian People.

When interpellating psychologists, they emphasize that most psychologists don't know how to listen carefully, and that learning how to listen carefully is a long path that should be travelled together. Many leaders talk about their fear that meeting a psychologist will be one more failed meeting. They talk about the violent postures of psychologists and white people in general, sharing how these failed encounters are deeply inscribed in themselves and their communities. They emphasize the big risks of these attempted encounters. They question us how can we be careful; how can we deal with these deep scars of the continuous failed encounters? Dora Pankararu (2010), to begin her speech, says:

When I was talking to some of my relatives, in the beginning we thought that this event would be about a group of professionals evaluating us, studying us. What we think and hope in this moment is that this new work group is really interested in helping us find a path, a definition, as a solution is something more complicated to be achieved. (p.41)

The first step some leaders point seems to be to recognize that we *don't* have a ready answer, neither a solution. Here, psychologists are not interpellated as helpers neither as saviours. If one puts oneself in the place of solving questions, one presupposes that one understood the question. Instead, the paths those questions open should be travelled together. For this, it is necessary that we psychologists recognize our positions in the dialogue. In other words, these questions are not asking to be solved but for our availability as psychologists to recognize that we are heirs of an atrocious history and a Eurocentric and racist Psychology. They also ask for an availability to be together with Amerindian Peoples to compose paths and build a common space where the interlocutors in the interethnic dialogue can trust and feel safe to express themselves and create. Creating this common space of safety, thus, is not an aim, but a process. Trusting is not an a priori here, but is continuously co-constructed, and one should know that, in this interethnic zone, one should always "trust while not trusting" (Veríssimo Guarani Mbya, personal communication, 2015). And those paths aren't always pleasant and instigating; they can be difficult, threatening, tense and anguishing.

When the positions and conflicts in the dialogue are recognized and experienced, the interlocutors begin to build a shared affective ground (a ground full of holes, cracks, mirages, fertile soil and unknown fields). Through being together, the psychologist and their interlocutor begin to access dimensions that are beyond or beneath the interethnic relationship itself and belong specifically to the person and the community.

2.

Another dimension is accessible if the interlocutors are more aware of each other's mirrors and positions. Thereby, they can better give sense to the leaders manifestation of anger, pain, fear and concern, denouncing the attitudes of white people towards

them, other living beings and the territory. The leaders talk about the historical issues of the interethnic contact, emphasizing their singular experience over it. Here the psychologist is interpellated as white people in general and the manifestations concern the violence of the white people. The Amerindian leaders tell us: *look what you have done, look how you, white people, are violent, look at the effects of your way of living and thinking*. And they ask and call us to reflect with them why we do this and how we can change it. They convoke us to look at our way of relating to the territory, to our prejudice towards them and to our ways of relating to alterity. Many leaders talk about the usual posture of white people to make alterity invisible through rude generalizations (what is not the Same is the same Other thing), by idealizations or by not taking the other as an interlocutor.

One could find an ambiguity in the speech of some leaders: at the same time they outline how they are different from white people and other Peoples, they share how it hurts to be considered as something different. If one listens carefully, one realizes that this apparent ambiguity actually emerges from the different meanings and experiences of difference. Eunice Martins Guarani Mbya (2010) says:

I live in a community at the Jaraguá Peak, which is 15 minutes by car from São Paulo city's centre. So, as we are living in the middle of the white community, we feel a bit shy, a bit caged. When you walk in the street, people stare at you as if you were an animal, as something different. When they come in the *aldeia* to visit the Amerindian People (...) they are all admired: 'wow, this little child is running all naked in the *aldeia*!' It is like if it was an extraordinary thing, and I think it is very bad for us to feel that we are something different. (p. 57)

As Eunice said, it hurts to feel that you are "something different" - it hurts to be objectified in the position of an a priori different. Taking difference as a stable and fixed "thing" usually leads to the posture of looking to the other from what it lacks the other to be as myself or as what I desire the other to be like. Pedro Macena Guarani Mbya (3rd Forum), when talking about "differentiated education" and the equivocations that happen in the dialogue with the government, gives us a glimpse of how "difference" could be faced in a way that it doesn't imply an a priori and fixed position. He addresses a process of continuously differentiating, which is the process where one person or community can be, explore and express oneself in their authenticity, as an active interlocutor:

It is not possible to talk about equal rights as people usually do in meetings. In those meetings, I talk like this: 'I am Guarani, I have my own culture, my people, my *aldeia* where I live, where I learn, where I live my day-to-day life in a different way'. And what is this 'different way' that I talk about? It is a different way in the sense that I can feel well where I live, I can walk without a shirt or shoes; nobody is there to interfere in my day-to-day, because where I live is my territory (...) (p. 10).

In this dimension of the dialogue, the leaders talk about their struggle and suffering with the impossibility of living well in the territory to which they belong. Some of the leaders tell us about how their community was expelled from their territory; others talk

about the difficulties faced and the suffering in living in a demarcated territory; others talk about their struggle to have their territory demarcated. Like Pedro, many leaders talk about the difficulties and suffering they and their communities face because of the common posture of the white people (posture which is systematically adopted by the State) to demarcate, delimitate and confine the alterity – the territory is reduced to land and then shredded and demarcated; to be Amerindian is reduced to an identity (and to be Amerindian becomes something measurable by stigmas) or is put together with other people in a big bowl tagged minorities.

Recognizing the common aspects of the violence that Amerindian People and other groups experience can't suppress the singularity of the way each person, community and People live the failed encounters. The homogenization of this experience is a step in the path to naturalize it and to promote indifference towards it. And the indifference and naturalization of racism and prejudice can hurt deeply. Antonísio Lulu Darã Tupi Guarani (2010) says:

We have to hear most of the public opinion chastising Amerindian People in words; we hear it a lot and sometimes we have to remain silent so as not to cause indifference. This hurts inside our people and our children suffer as well. (p. 70)

The leaders convoke the psychologists to think about the binomial which separates the “speaking” subject from the “mute” object, which is directly related to the binomials nature Vs. culture/human, mind/body. It is the fundament of the conception of the territory as a land, as a mute thing available to provide goods and resources, to be explored, a land that can be divided and possessed by subjects, with no agency, no life. Meanwhile, the leaders emphasize that when they talk about “land” or “territory”, they refer to something sacred, related to numerous dimensions of life. In this sense, the leaders emphasize that it is not possible to discuss the so-called “cultural issues” without discussing the invasion of their territory.

In other words, it is fundamental to understand the historical, political and cultural contexts from which these manifestations depart. But this understanding has to be personalized and the multiple meanings and experiences for each Amerindian People and community have to be taken into account. As Roberto Veríssimo Guarani Mbya (personal communication, 2015) said, “the work with Amerindians is very different from the work with Amerindian persons”. Thus, it is fundamental to be aware of the way each person singularizes the expressions their culture in relation to others and to us psychologists and then support the singular dynamics of each person inside their community.

3.

If the dive in the dialogue goes deeper, we face other questions: what can we do together, how can we create from this dialogue since we don't share the same referents? Here, we face not only the difficulties inherent to the interethnic dialogue but we are also urged to think about the difficulties of modern western people to deal with alterity. The availability to encounter alterity implies being open to transform and to deal with non-rational dimensions, as we realize deeply that the world that we experience as solid and objective is not as solid as we thought. In this case, it also implies to assume the

responsibility for a process of ethnocide and genocide, what requires us to be aware of our postures and its consequences.

The leaders tell us that if they are recognized as interlocutors and feel respected, the dialogue can access new dimensions and it is possible to build paths together. The leaders point to the obstacles of those paths, emphasizing that there will be conflicts and equivocations about each other, since many of the referents are not shared. A big obstacle is to overcome the usual posture of looking to the other from what it lacks them to be like me. To build paths together is very different than to diagnose which are the other's problems and what I suppose (and maybe desire) that lacks them. Another big obstacle is the way the State relates to Amerindian Peoples. How not to contribute to the institutionalized violence enhanced by the State?

The State and groups moved by economic interests try to undermine the possibilities of the Amerindian communities to live autonomously - transforming life in goods and the Amerindian Peoples into poor people, citizens whose rights to access the fundamental "goods" to live are systematically violated. These actions are usually presented as a good thing for Amerindian People. For instance, many leaders talk about the perversity of *Universalist* public policies, focusing in public health, which are elaborated for generic and abstract citizens, or for generic and abstract Amerindian People, without the participation of the communities. They denounce the violence of the imposition of programs which are not elaborated together with the communities and that don't consider the heterogeneity of Amerindian Peoples, outlining that health, education, social organization etc., aren't universal and homogenous conceptions.

4.

If there is a more consistent shared affective ground and the interlocutors can bear being dislodged, it is possible to have a denser dialogue. One invites the other to dive in deeper dimensions of themselves, the community, their cosmology etc. The leaders point to this dimension of the encounter when, besides outlining the necessity to recognize that the referents are diverse, they give us glimpses of the world these referents belong to and the way they and their communities have been elaborating the encounters, the successful and the failed ones. The situations where the speeches were delivered were very limited, in the sense that the shared affective ground between the interlocutors was very fragile and that the leaders should "adapt" to a way of speaking, behaving, sitting, etc. Alcides Gomes Guarani Mbya (4th Forum), for example, emphasizes that the place where he is delivering his speech is a place where he can't use his pipe, which is sacred. When it is possible to inhabit these spaces of alterity in a way that the interlocutors feel safe to be unsafe, the tension inherent to the encounter can become a game where the participants can experiment, express themselves and create. This is a very meaningful dimension of the encounter, where it is possible to create, discover, re-discover and face the unknown not only with fear, but with joy. In this sense, this dimension of the encounter is connected with the ethnic self-affirmation – where the persons or the community can feel safe to build and live what they are in the relationship and be recognized as such. In this invitation, the limits of what can be shared are also delimited and negotiated.

For instance, many leaders share what is "to fight" for them, saying how it pretty much isn't a choice, as they see themselves forced to face the state, the enterprisers, the

church... but also how it strengthens them, as it puts them as political agents and as it connects past, present and future. When they talk about their fight, the leaders tell us stories in which they are not confined to the role of the victims of the colonizers (which is still a perspective in which Europe is the epicentre) but stories where Amerindian People are “warriors”, they are political and historical agents. They also try to make us sensible to why they keep resisting, fighting so hard for their “land” or “territory”. Some of the leaders say that they keep resisting because they fight for something very different than what western people understand by “land”, “territory” or “environment”. They emphasize that, for them, the semantic field of “land” includes time, their ancestors, themselves, their children, many other beings and communities and “spirituality”.

“Spirituality” (as well as *god*, a word which was also used by many leaders) is a word that houses diverse worlds and experiences, of which we have no idea of the dimension. Saying from the rude understanding that this kind of listening and analysis permits, it seems that, in their speeches, “spirituality” is not grounded in the opposition transcendent/immanent as it generally is for westerns. When the leaders talk about “spirituality” they are talking about their territory, their ancestors, their memory, about the relationship between different generations, the intrinsic value of every being, the carefulness one should have with the world, etc. Renato Mariano Guarani Mbya (2010), says:

I think nowadays there is no respect, no consideration of the value of each people (...). Because us Guarani, we always have thought about spirituality; because it is spirituality that will make us to continue being the Guarani people. We believe a lot in this. (p. 43)

The spirituality appears as something very proper, intimate, and thus of high value for each person and each community: “Our spiritual part is very important for us. We carry it in our hearts and then when we get older as I am, we transmit to the others how important it is our spiritual part.” (Juraci Cândido Lima 2010, p. 79). And, as it is such a valuable, singular and at the same time immense experience, Cândido Lima (2010) emphasizes how it is a dimension that has to be considered very carefully in the interethnic encounter:

Nowadays I don't do my praying in public, because this is our sacred thing. (...) This sacred part is very important for us, I don't even know how to explain it, because we have children inside our *aldeia* and we transmit to them what the ancient ones have transmitted to us and that nowadays we know. I lived with lots of elder people, so we know how culture is important, specially our spirituality inside the *aldeia*. (p. 79)

Claudino Marcolino Tupi-Guarani Nhandéwa (2010) also talks about the importance of being gentle and respecting the rhythms of the spiritual paths:

It is hard for us to talk about this spiritual part, because we have feelings, we deal with our ancestors, who were very strong, and now we search slowly. One can't search for everything at once, the emotions are too big and, in the end, we can't

handle it, do you understand? So, we have to search slowly, first Amerindian culture in the braids, in the language and then Nhanduru, who is god (...). (p. 81)

Since talking in an auditorium for some unknown psychologists makes it very difficult to express the meanings of “spirituality”, “land” and “environment”, the leaders give us some glimpses of how they live and create space, time, memory, how they build knowledge, themselves and their communities. Facing the frightening perspectives of the destruction of the world as we know it, how is it to think about the future from a past time when there was everything? When talking about the processes of the construction of knowledge and construction of the person, Alcides Gomes Guarani Mbya (4th Forum) emphasizes the importance of not forgetting:

(...) I think our life is free, we are free. As the white people have their way of living, we have a way of living too. I think before we had everything: water, hunt, fish... Even though the little we had is now over, we still try to assure that our children don't forget their words/speeches, that they don't forget their prayers, their origins (...) (p. 21)

(...) lots of people told me that we would never make it (to stay in their territory), but I have been living there for ten years. Lots of people want my neck there, but I hide... We survive in this situation, because we are leaders and we fight for our family, for my children, for my grandchildren. We want a place for them. Nevertheless, thank God I am happy, I didn't forget about my words/speech, I didn't forget about my prayer, I didn't forget about my pipe, which I don't have today, but I always had it (...) (p. 22)

When the leaders talk about the different processes of person building and knowledge building, they not only outline the importance of considering the diversity of worlds in a psychological work, but also invite the psychologists to travel to other grounds/worlds and to realize other possibilities of experiencing the world. They talk about the intrinsic value of every world, person and being, outlining how this is not considered by most of western ways of living. When the leaders talk about the value of every person, some of them outline the importance of the “spirituality” and the “land” in the construction of the person and the construction of knowledge.

Postures of Psychologists

Considering those dimensions of the encounter, what are the possible postures of the psychologist and its effects? How to evaluate those postures if many of the presupposed values aren't shared?

The leaders repeatedly convoke us psychologists to listen to them and their communities. How can we psychologists effectively listen, in depth? Besides, recognizing our interlocutor their alterity, respecting the legitimacy of their experiences and being aware of the mutual equivocation that is inevitable upon the other, the leaders make it clear that the dialogue happens through being

together, when a shared affective situation can be constructed. With this, it is possible to work together, co-creating new paths, narratives and meanings. Thus, the leaderships don't ask for the psychologist to come up with solutions. Besides, they outline that some dimensions won't be shared with the psychologist. It is important for the psychologist to be implicated with whom they work but also to know when to "step back", to recognize that some of the work and stories concern just the community. As Mariano Guarani Mbya (2010) said, the work should be done jointly and in parallel.

Deeply listening implies being together because very important dimensions of the interethnic dialogue happen in pre-reflexive dimensions – it is a dialogue that happens through the body which affects and is affected. These dimensions of dialogue aren't in the sphere of thought or shared values, as the latter are constituted by different ritualistic and mythological grounds from which each culture grounds its own intelligibility patterns of the world. Therefore, the encounter with alterity – the non-apprehensible dimension of the other – is a disquieting experience (Simão 2015) that affects us pre-reflexively, destabilizing our intelligibility patterns of the world. Thus, the encounter with alterity creates zones where the meanings are ambiguous and one's conceptions of oneself are uncertain. These zones can be experienced with a great amount of suffering and anguish, but if explored with due caution, they can be tremendously creative and transformative.

In the interethnic encounter, we, psychologists, are required to listen not only to what is being said in words, but to "listen" with all our body and senses. Being together implies availability to live rhythms, smells, touches, temporalities and regards that we are not used to. It implies the availability to sustain discomfort, fear and a disquieting experience. It implies the availability to be surprised and to be transformed, not only in the level of thought, but to go through an embodied transformation. Also, the availability to maybe suddenly find a surprising intimacy with some of those smells, rhythms and temporalities.

The ethic dimension that should ground and orient any psychological intervention, including the research, is the posture of implication with the person and the community with whom the psychologist works. It is through the bonds of trust and respect created with the person and the community that a therapeutic encounter can happen and that a research that effectively serves the person and the community interests can be done. For instance, one should not "implicate" oneself *in order to* do a good research that leads to an appropriation of the community's experience and knowledge for the researcher's own interests, but one does a good research *because* one is implicated with whom one is researching with, because this can be good for the community or the person.

Thus, the posture required recognizes the community and the person as political and theoretical agents, as "subjects of their own image and history" (Albert 2002, p. 8). Therefore, the Amerindian People and their speeches are not considered as data or objects of the research (or as ill people to be *cured*, in a sort of the therapeutic work), but as agents. In this sense, we reinforce the importance of not considering the leaders' speeches as mere empirical data to which we apply a theory or an analysis. Instead, the Amerindian leaders' propositions problematize theoretical conceptions, pointing to paths of reflexion and transformation. Thus, there is an important dimension of the psychologist's work and research that is the interethnic mediation between multiple political and theoretical agents that have different ontologies and epistemologies.

Besides, the Amerindian leaders outline the violent implications of the usual posture of assuming the position of the only knower and of considering that the western scientific psychological knowledge is rational while other knowledge systems are mythic, symbolic or illusory. Beyond stressing the legitimacy and rationality of various systems of knowledge, it is important to recognize the participation of the myth and the non-rational dimension in the construction of western knowledge and its cultural basis (Guimarães 2017).

For instance, not only other peoples' knowledge is mythologically grounded, but the scientific knowledge also constructs its generality over the elaboration of a mythical and narrative experience of the world. Since antiquity, western societies have been cultivating myths about the Others that participated in the elaboration of supposed truths that helped to subjugate other peoples. One of those suppositions is that there could be only one true knowledge – what presupposes the binomial logos Vs. myth and its consequent assumption that fantasy or imagination hides reality and is opposed to scientific knowledge.

With secularization, Amerindian knowledge was associated with mythical knowledge - in opposition to rational or scientific knowledge - and not considered valid. Establishing the limits between knowledge and lack of knowledge was fundamental to the projects of assimilation of Amerindian Peoples in Brazil (Guimarães 2016) and has been playing an important role in the processes of ethnocide and genocide (religious proselitism, State's guardianship regime, integrationism etc.).³ Facing this, the Amerindian People resist, constructing strategic speeches that can impact public opinion. Amerindian Peoples strategically construct some of their political speeches "playing" with the interethnic equivocation to impact public opinion, turning it into a "productive equivocation" (Albert 2002). The anthropologist Bruce Albert conducts an important discussion about the Amerindian political speeches and how its efficacy in the "interethnic arena" depends on their ability to deal with the white people's double imaginary of Nature (the objectified and domesticable nature Vs the transcendental and irreducible, savage nature), and to translate their own alterity into the terms of the white people at the same time as translating white people's alterity into their own terms. Nevertheless, is important to not reduce the Amerindian elaborations to mere strategic operations.

³ Before the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Amerindian People were under a guardianship regime (*tutela*): legally, Amerindian peoples were considered as children, for whom an institution/citizen has to respond for. This regime was grounded in the idea that Amerindian peoples and their ways of living would and should disappear – they should be assimilated to national society so that Amerindian people would become citizens and (cheap) manpower and their territory would be replaced by monocultures, mining, cities and major infrastructure projects. However, in 1988, they conquered the right to respond for themselves under the courts and also the rights to have differentiated education and differentiated health systems. The differentiated education includes bilingual adequacy of the general contents of the public school and the possibility to teach specific contents, between many other aspects. A differentiated health would supposedly be guaranteed by an indigenous health subsystem that integrates the national health system (SUS). However, the 1988's Constitution has never been effectively respected and the indigenous health and educational system are still precarious and have been progressively dismantled. (Cf. Carneiro da Cunha 2012; Varga et al. 2013).

(Not a) Conclusion: Ethics in an Interethnic Arena

Some questions were shouting to us during all the research. They require a deep and complex discussion that won't be made in this article, but we consider important to outline them. How to evaluate the effects of the psychologist's work? How to dialogue when the referents are not shared? Amerindian and Western cultures followed very distinct ontological routes, each one with its own ways of dealing with others (Descola 2008). The worlds to which each route has taken aren't evident to each other; there is always an equivocation that constitutes the understanding of the other. Thus, when one takes into account the various ontological routes of different cultures, one has to try to recognize one's own routes and how it guides one's perceptions and evaluations when meeting the other.

Psychology is based upon a naturalistic ontological route (Descola 2008) which presupposes that nature is shared by every being while humanity is an exclusive attribute of the persons that constitute "us". This naturalistic route is Eurocentric and has been promoting a destructive attitude towards the other taken as not human or less human. Therefore, to evaluate our own epistemology, it is necessary to take into account an ethical dimension - an ethical posture implies recognizing and respecting that the other always exceeds the Self (Coelho Junior 2008), and recognizing that the other can never be reduced to my knowledge system - being aware of the effects produced by the ways our culture deals with alterity.

These discussions don't lead to a conclusion because they are part of paths for seeking encounters – more specifically, for seeking how psychologists and Amerindian People can work in ways that effectively deal with suffering and that open new possibilities of fight against genocidal and ethnocidal processes, dialogue, experience and psychological knowledge. What became evident during the paths already travelled is that this search is only fruitful if it is based on the "being together" and the availability to face and dialogue with alterity. If not, we will keep doing more of the same while thinking we are innovating. Seeking the encounter implies one's availability to throw oneself into the unknown, assuming the risks and sustaining the discomfort, but being careful not to lose all the ground one has, falling into a non-creative anguish. How to balance the both necessary risk and carefulness in the interethnic encounter? Why does it seem that nowadays it is each time harder to be available to alterity?

It is not a conclusion because it is an *invitation* to become aware of the experience and the dialogue that can happen if we open ourselves to live an affective experience and multiple kinds of understandings. This academic experience only allows expressing a few facets of the travelled paths. In this level of communication, we sometimes have to use many words and concepts that do not reach all dimensions of the focused problem, dimensions that are sometimes better reached by poetry, colours, smells, touches etc. Therefore, we always need to question the academic presentation of the phenomena and be available to confront it by living our own experience.

Becoming aware that our own words aren't the wisest neither are universal allows us to realize that the questions concerning the interethnic encounter aren't only (but also) specific questions of a particular group, but are questions that concern all beings that inhabit this planet. The Amerindian leaders have been trying to make numerous transductions to warn and prevent the white people from destroying something that

exists for much more time than since the European colonialist enterprise started. They have practices, knowledge and propositions for the future that must be taken into account. Besides, the Amerindian leaders make a reverse Psychology, guiding the meetings to issues concerning how to face the appalling future we will share and try to get off this path of massive destruction of the world as we know it. It is important to outline that *our point here is not that the Amerindian People have the truth and the solutions Westerns don't have, but saying that it is by learning how to travel through the encounters with alterity that we can create, trying to experience out of our usual conceptual schemas.*

We have so many different forms of knowledge, ways of living, experiences and worlds that can dialogue! If we don't consider that various experiences and forms of knowledge are legitimate, we will always travel through the same paths, making the same questions – which won't help us to deal with the future that is announcing itself neither to repair historical debts with Amerindian Peoples. In the focused and other manifestations, the Amerindian Peoples convoke us to pay attention to the world *we are* dialogically sharing and not sharing. They convoke us to work together - and in parallel.

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Rafaela Waddington Achatz is a Psychology undergraduate student at Universidade de São Paulo.

Danilo Silva Guimarães is professor at the Institute of Psychology (Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil). He has been working with theoretical and methodological issues concerning the cultural construction of senses, from a semiotic-cultural and constructivist perspective in psychology. His focus of investigation is the process of dialogical multiplication from the tensional boundaries between cultural alterities, psychology and Amerindian peoples.