

ARTICLE

INDIGENOUS LITERATURE: BETWEEN MEMORIES

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ABSTRACT: This text shows Brazilian indigenous writers and their journey to become effective as content producers. The research took place through a bibliographic and audiovisual review on indigenous social, political and cultural movements, especially with articles and texts written by these people. This academic path was fundamental in tracing a history of the communities associating the way of guaranteeing rights to the development of indigenous literature. When bringing the voices of indigenous people to confirm the facts, the article demonstrates that such literature can be developed collectively or personally, and regardless of that, it always refers to every people, to every ancestry. This research is also justified as oral memory writings where they describe their experiences between Indians and white man, searching for knowledge and recognition.

Keywords: literature, indigenous, Brazil.

LITERATURA INDÍGENA: ENTRE MEMÓRIAS

RESUMO: O presente texto retrata escritores indígenas brasileiros e sua caminhada para se efetivarem enquanto produtores de conteúdo. A pesquisa se deu por meio de uma revisão bibliográfica e audiovisual sobre os movimentos indígenas, sociais, políticos e culturais, especialmente com artigos e textos escritos por estes povos. Esse percurso foi fundamental para traçar um histórico das comunidades, associando o caminho de garantia de direitos ao desenvolvimento da literatura indígena. Trazendo as vozes dos indígenas para confirmar os fatos, o artigo demonstra que tal literatura pode ser desenvolvida de forma coletiva ou pessoal, e que independente disso sempre faz referência a todo povo, a toda ancestralidade. Também se justifica como escritos da memória oral onde descrevem suas vivências entre indígenas e brancos, na busca pelo conhecimento e pelo reconhecimento.

Palavras-chave: literatura, indígena, Brasil.

LITERATURA INDÍGENA: ENTRE RECUERDOS

RESUMEN: El presente texto retrata a los escritores indígenas brasileños y su recorrido para ser efectivos como productores de contenido. La investigación se realizó a través de una revisión bibliográfica y audiovisual sobre los movimientos sociales, políticos y culturales indígenas, especialmente con artículos y textos escritos por estos pueblos. Este camino fue fundamental para traer una historia de comunidades que asocian el camino de la garantía de derechos al desarrollo de la literatura indígena. Trayendo las voces indígenas para confirmar los hechos, el artículo demuestra que dicha literatura se puede desarrollar de manera colectiva o personal, y que independientemente de eso, siempre se refiere a todo el pueblo, a toda ancestralidad. También se justifica como escritos de memoria oral, donde describen sus vivencias entre indios y hombres blancos, en búsqueda del conocimiento y reconocimiento.

Palabras clave: literatura, indígena, Brasil.

INTRODUCTION - FROM SOCIAL TO LITERATURE

The 1970s and 1980s were significant for the indigenous peoples of Brazil, as a process of political awareness, social organization, and struggle to guarantee their rights began. The Brazilian indigenous movement began as a collective effort between leaders, peoples, and organizations that put on the agenda a common struggle for land, health, education, culture, and other fundamental rights. In the 1970s, the so-called “Non-Governmental Indigenism” took place, when universities, civil organizations, and the Catholic Church (indigenous pastoral care and the Indigenous Missionary Council – CIMI- *Conselho Indigenista Missionário*¹) became allied actors of the peoples. With the emergence of several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support the Indians, the monopoly of the State and the old religious missions as guardians or saviors of the indigenous communities is broken, which, little by little, places the Indian as the protagonist of its history (BANIWA, 2006).

After, the 1980s “was an extremely rich period, especially in the indigenous mobilizations”, encouraged by non-governmental organizations that supported meetings and assemblies between peoples (BANIWA, 2006, p.73). All in favor of indigenous rights, in a struggle that culminated in the conquest of articles 231 and 232 of the 1988 Constitution. The third stage of the indigenous movement was then consolidated, Contemporary Governmental Indigenism, which expanded the link between governments and indigenous peoples, especially in the creation of specific sectors, previously exclusive to FUNAI, such as health, transferred to the National Health Foundation (FUNASA- *Fundação Nacional de Saúde*) or Indigenous School Education, which was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MEC).

After these 20 years (the 70s and 80s), interventions by the State, universities, NGOs, and/or associations in indigenous villages², the flow of contact and coexistence between indigenous and non-indigenous also grows, promoting knowledge and access to communication technologies by peoples. Since then, they have been able to get to know the tools, learn to use them, and shape and record their experiences, whether through written texts, sound recordings, or movies.

In this text, the history of literary production is observed, carried out outside and inside Brazilian villages, which unites technology and a code created by white people, with their ancestral knowledge, in a written record of oral memory. Texts, narratives, poems, and indigenous tales appear as means of remembrance of their ethnic cultures, immersive and violent contact with whites, or the self-determination of peoples, past and present issues recorded in words, accessible both to the indigenous

1 The National Conference of Bishops of Brazil, CNBB- *Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil*, instituted in 1970 the indigenous pastoral, which acted in the assistance to basic needs; and also the CIMI, which has a political articulation role in favor of indigenous rights. (BANIWA, 2006).

2 In this text, the term indigenous is used in the same sense given by Luciano Baniwa (2006), who emphasizes the denomination as an identity that unites, articulates and internally strengthens the original people, it does not have a pejorative sense, of nickname, given by whites.

audience and for the others. To carry out this route of theoretical textual construction, a bibliographic review on the main theme, indigenous or native literature, and others that complement it, such as the political movement and Indianist literature, was essential, citing here Ailton Krenak and Denilson Baniwa. Much of the search took place on academic internet sites and local libraries. With a vast list of sources and references, floating reading was fundamental for the final selection of texts, which chose to deepen the central concepts coined by the people and their recent theories, such as Graça Gráuna, Daniel Munduruku, Cacique Payaya, and Olívio Jekupé.

Indigenous movements

To understand how the contact between indigenous and non-indigenous, or white, reaches literary production, it is necessary to review a historical path of cultural exchanges and struggles experienced by these Brazilian peoples, in constant demand for rights. Without forgetting the entire violent process of colonization, slavery, missions in the villages, as well as the constant process of organizing and maintaining the groups³. This is especially true from the end of the 20th century onwards, a moment that brings together important events for indigenous access to fundamental rights and technology, reviewing some decisive milestones in socioeconomic and cultural relations between native peoples and whites, resulting in an intense and productive contact, mainly for identity and for native literary production.

First, the Statute of the Indian stands out, the main normative document of the time for the original peoples, enacted as Law 6.001/1973. This document regulates the relations of the State and civil society with the indigenous people, following the integrationist principles that governed the old Brazilian Civil Code of 1916. The norm had in its first article the following: “This Law regulates the legal status of indigenous or forestry and indigenous communities, to preserve their culture and integrate them, progressively and harmoniously, into the national communion”. In general lines, it treated the Indians as relatively incapable and therefore had to be tutored by some state indigenist body until they were integrated into the national community, reducing the notion of preservation only to non-integrated peoples⁴ and considering the indigenous condition as something to be briefly abandoned. (BRASIL, 1973).

After the Statute of the Indian, theoretical reflections on Brazilian indigenous people marked the end of the 1970s as the beginning of a political structuring of peoples, breaking the institutionalized silence. Viveiros de Castro's analysis, in the preface to the book *Encontros com Ailton Krenak* (2015), points to the failure of the political emancipation project proposed by the dictatorship as a powerful factor for the social, political, and cultural achievements of indigenous peoples. Ailton Krenak, mobilizer and coordinator of the Union of Indigenous Nations – UNI (*União Nacional de Indígenas*) at the time, refers to the moment of 1970 as a real possibility of representation at the national level of indigenous peoples, when “they started to meet, they started to see that they had common problems and that they could forward some solutions together” (KRENAK, 2015, p.25).

In this context, the UNI emerged, as a new tool for the effective national organization of indigenous peoples, an entity that was not defined as a political party, club, or with restricted interests, as stated by Krenak (2015, p.27), “The Union of Indigenous Nations is an institutional form of representation, which we found to bring together the different indigenous nations and defend their interests and needs in an organized way”.

The 1980s saw a great deal of indigenous mobilization in the sense of meetings to organize and direct the UNI. Plenary sessions were held with the presence of more than 3 ethnic groups in 1979,

³ The existence of an organized indigenous movement goes back a long time, as is the case of the *Confederação dos Tamoios* (1535) which faced the Portuguese, led by the great king Konyan-Bébe or Cunhambebe, chief of the Tamoios, a group of Tupinambá from the coast of São Paulo (KRENAK, 2015; STADEN, 2006).

⁴ Non-integrated Indigenous: innocent image of the Indigenous, naked, only speaking their language; Indigenous in the process of integration: they maintain untouched tribal characteristics, but already relate to white customs, with the use of the Portuguese flag and language; Integrated Indigenous: who vote, who speak Portuguese, who have a car or cell phone, who watch television.” (BRASIL, 1973).

1981, and 1983. In April 1987, the people acted considered a priority, grouping more than 100 indigenous peoples in Brasília to deliver the Popular Proposal for Amendment to the Project Constitution, which had 45,000 signatures. In the movie “*Índio, Cidadão?*”, directed by Rodriguarani Kaiowá, Ailton Krenak describes the feeling of that day, about the strong presence of the people who came straight from their villages to the Congress, creating a “very strange feeling, people entering here (Assembly) only with their adornments, in some cases without pants and shirt, wearing some clothing specific to each people” (ÍNDIO..., 2014, 5'02”).

The proposal demanded fundamental points for the survival and demarcation of indigenous lands, for the recognition of their social organization, their uses, customs, languages, traditions, and original rights, and the right to usufruct of the soil's riches as a condition for internal economy indigenous communities, including a life project. The people still demanded the alteration of two articles of the Constitution, one that considered the Indian as incapable (Law 6.001), and the other that took away the right of the acculturated Indians. Regarding this law, Krenak criticizes the then president of Funai, Romero Jucá⁵, 1987, who, instead of supporting the discourse in defense of nations, ended up creating conditions for congressmen to give differentiated treatment to indigenous peoples who underwent acculturation, that is, separating

those indigenous peoples who already recognized national symbols, such as the Brazilian flag, spoke some Portuguese, had contact with Brazilian society since the 50s, 60s [...] their (congressmen) idea is that this part of our population would not even have the right to demarcate their territories because they were no longer indigenous. (ÍNDIO..., 2014, 7'40”).

Regarding the promulgation of the Constitution in 1988, Baniwa (2006) reiterates that it was a great achievement for indigenous peoples, as it dedicated a chapter (VIII) to declare, for the first time, the civil rights of indigenous communities. This fact “improved and consolidated the emergence process and the legal existence of indigenous organizations, [...] by recognizing the civil capacity of the indigenous people and their organizations”. The decision changed the cultural value of the communities, with a solid internal appreciation of customs, rituals, and the reaffirmation of ethnic identities. (BANIWA, 2006, p.77).

The rights acquired by the Constitution of 1988 helped to keep indigenous peoples alive and, in a way, it was an impulse in the increase of indigenous populations in Brazil, as well as in the return of some almost extinct ethnic groups, in a context of valuing cultures and affirming identities.

In the last 30 years (1990 to 2010) formal indigenous organizations have multiplied in Brazil, assuming more and more actions that the State does not carry out, making organized civil society guide the indigenous cause in several segments, especially in the-sustainable development and territorial self-management. The spaces of representation in public institutions are also consolidated, with the movement of government funds and positions in the public administration, which brought “new achievements, but also new challenges” for indigenous peoples (BANIWA, 2006, p.79).

The struggles to unite peoples from all over Brazil, the debates on the Constituent Assembly, the conquest of rights, and the emergence of public policies defined for the indigenous people are some of the points responsible for the ethnic effervescence in this century, as well as for the self-assertion as Indians, or ethnogenesis, as stated by Baniwa (2006). The process of acceptance of ethnicity makes it possible to recover an immaterial and vital asset for communities, the self-esteem of indigenous peoples, something lost over centuries of colonial domination.

⁵ Romero Jucá was the president of FUNAI between 1986 and 1988, during the government of José Sarney and according to the final report of the national Truth Commission, this was a period of ineffectiveness and omission by the body towards the indigenous people, with the expansion of landing strips for miners and expulsion of health agents from the territory, the latter linked to the death of thousands of indigenous people from flu, malaria, measles and whooping cough (COMISSÃO NACIONAL DA VERDADE, 2014).

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND LITERATURE

Before, literature

There are many definitions and modifications of concepts about literature since Plato, 400 years ago BC, one of the first thinkers to try to understand the process of literary creation. Studies show that at the origin of human records, through cuneiform writing or Egyptian hieroglyphs, narratives were present and drawn on walls and/or wooden or clay plaques, recording stories experienced by people to represent their oralities in drawings and/or written. Thus, the narration has been present since humans have been present in the world, and from them, we move towards what we know today as literature.

Ferreira (2001, p.429) defines literature as “1. Art of composing artistic works in prose or verse. 2. set of literary works from a country or an era.” dealing with written artistic production in its entirety. Barthes draws attention to the educational and formative character of literature, which is not always perceived when he states that “literature assumes many kinds of knowledge... science is gross, life is subtle, and it is to correct this distance that life matters to us... literature does not say that it knows something, but that it knows something” (1987, p.19).

Literature is historical and alive, it moves, both in content and in language, changing, consequently, its characteristics. For Rabbit,

Literature is a specific language that, like all languages, expresses a specific human experience, and it can hardly be defined exactly. Each era understood and produced literature in its way. To know this “mode” is, without a doubt, to know the singularity of each moment of the long march of humanity in its constant evolution. (2000, p.27).

Therefore, in this text, literature is understood as a set of written productions that are elaborated as language in the constitution of fictional or documentary texts.

Indianist literature

It is important to situate a movement that for a long time occupied an alleged place of indigenous literature, with poetry and fiction that sought to reveal to Brazil a character present in the interior of the country, an Indian with caricature traits, idealized and distant from the authors, all men, white and literate. The writing by eyes and hands out of context, - Indianist literature – has, as classic Brazilian examples, the poetry of Gonçalves Dias (1823-1864) or the novels of José de Alencar (1829-1877), both having the indigenous person as the main character and under different aspects, described below from the perspective of researcher Amanda Lima,

For the first, the Indian appeared as a being closely linked to nature, possessing freedom and physical and spiritual tranquility, as opposed, in this way, to the ambition and desires that characterized the civilized man. The indigenous world, for Gonçalves Dias, evoked a universe that, despite all its wars, or rather precisely because of them and the rituals so characteristic of the Amerindians, remained in perfect harmony until the arrival of the Europeans. This is the great innovation of this writer: removing the animalistic character that the missionaries implied to the Indians and to some of their rituals, such as anthropophagy, which, after centuries of distorted representation, has its rehabilitated meaning in “I-Juca Pirama”. as a coherent and symbolic practice. José de Alencar, on the other hand, had a project that went further, following the line of an integrationist policy, proposing to create a mestizo national imaginary, in which the indigenous person placed himself as one of the founding elements of Brazilian civilization. It can be said that, from him, Brazilian society internalized the “myth” of miscegenation as the root of the formation of the Brazilian people (LIMA, 2012, p.26).

This Indianist period precedes the trajectory of political movement and indigenous literary production described at the beginning of this text and marks the consecration of stereotypes and prejudices towards traditional peoples propagated and reproduced until today, thus, this contextualization and naming. The image of this person revealed by the lens at that moment was idealized according to its authors, circumventing symbolic, strong, and beautiful characters, who would be about to be incorporated into society, transiting between the naive and the ignorant. According to Lima, the real

figure of the indigenous people, marginalized and excluded, does not match the romantic literary description of the Indianist era, because “while he appeared in literature as the good savage, in reality, he still fought for his lands, to maintain his language, his customs, and culture” (2012, p. 26).

Indigenous literature

Indigenous literature is the texts written, illustrated, and idealized by the indigenous people, within their experiences, whether in rural or urban spaces, and whether individually or collectively authored, most of them stimulated and initiated as a way of recording oral histories of grandparents, elderly people, and connoisseurs of the local history where the authors of this literature live (JEKUPÉ, 2009; GRAÚNA, 2013; MUNDURUKU, 2021).

Accompanying the entire indigenous social and political movement in Brazil, indigenous printed matter began to be published in Brazil in the late 1970s. Eliane Potiguara, the first female public representative, presented the poem “Indigenous Identity” in 1975 as a way of recording their trajectory and their family. The pioneering print of this literature was in 1994 with the publication *Todas as vezes que dissemos adeus* of Kaká Werá Jekupé. Kaká Werá's book was an inspiration for future publications and features the author's reports on his experiences between the two worlds, the world of the village and the white world.

Together with the individual authorship movement, collective publication followed quickly, with the great stimulus of making public the research carried out by indigenous teachers in training⁶, reinforced by the possibility of books becoming didactic material for schools. They were also promotional material among the people and outside society, which at the time was more unaware of the traditional knowledge and identities of the villages, once again highlighting the importance of this editorial line. Interviews and recordings were carried out by indigenous teachers in their communities, with people of reference for local stories and knowledge, which normally involve village elders: those who know the stories and those who keep the people's memory.

With the help of these narrators, the writing of the history of some peoples begins, with a possible transcription of the vast orality present. The role of the school was a pillar of this production, through technology that they did not master. Thus, they sought and recorded an oral memory, as complements the testimony of Elisa Pankararu from Pernambuco, for the book *Tempo de Escrita*:

From a historical point of view, indigenous societies are unwritten, with an oral tradition. So writing is a post-contact element, and as a consequence, it comes (sic) to school, both together with the colonizer. In the context of contact that we live in, writing is necessary for indigenous societies, not as something that will replace orality, but as a record of it, as didactic material, as an affirmation and appreciation of our culture (PANKARARU, apud GRUPIONI, 2008, p. 12).

The creation of the Nucleus of Indigenous Writers and Artists (NEArIn- *Núcleo de Escritores e Artistas Indígenas*), in 2004 was highlighted in the consolidation of indigenous writing, linked to the Brazilian Indigenous Institute for Intellectual Property (INBRAPI- *Instituto Indígena Brasileiro para Propriedade Intelectual*). Some of the writers present at the creation of NEArIn were Eliane Potiguara, Daniel Munduruku, Graça Graúna, Edson Kayapó, Cristino Wapichana, and Olívio Jekupé. In addition to those present at the 2004 meeting, other highly relevant indigenous writers can be cited⁷: Kaká Werá Jekupé, Lia Minapoty, Márcia Wayna Kambeba, Cacique Juvenal Payayá, Ailton Krenak, Glicélia Tupinambá, Julie Dorrico, Auritha Tabajara, Yguarê Yamã, Vângri Kaingáng, Aline Rochedo, Denizia Kawani, Lúcia Tukuju, Nankupé Tupinambá, Telma Tremembé, among many others.

In 2008, the enactment of Law 11,645 of 2008, which regulates the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture at all levels of education in public and private schools,

⁶ The indigenous teacher training project was consolidated through the proposal of formal intercultural bilingual education between the villages and would only work with an indigenous presence prepared to take over the classrooms. The trainings passed on the schedule and contents to the local teachers (LIMA, 2012, p.30).

⁷ These and other authors are cited on the Maracá bookstore website, which brings together original publications and encourages the production and publication of this content, see more at <<https://www.livrariamaraca.com.br/escritores-indigenas/>>

was yet another stimulus for indigenous writing. The political and social movement is still necessary for the recognition of indigenous peoples as historical subjects and with responsibility for the social, economic, and historical construction of Brazil, as stated in paragraph 1 of article 26-A of law 11.645:

§ 1. The syllabus in this article will include various aspects of the history and culture that characterize the formation of the Brazilian population, based on these two ethnic groups, such as the study of the history of Africa and Africans, the struggle of blacks and indigenous peoples in Brazil, black and indigenous Brazilian culture and blacks and Indians in the formation of national society, recovering their contributions in the social, economic and political areas, pertinent to the history of Brazil (BRASIL, 2008).

Since then, the titles, authors, and sales of indigenous literature have been growing, as is the recent example of the book *Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo*, by Ailton Krenak (2019), which entered the Nielsen Publish News list in 15th place in the Non-Fiction category worldwide and was the third best-seller at the Paraty Literary Fair - FLIP, in 2019. Also, in 2019, the book *A Queda do Céu*, by Bruce Albert, co-authored with the shaman Davi Kopenawa (2010) the Right Livelihood Award, the alternative “Nobel”, for his fight in defense of the forest and biodiversity. Today this editorial line already adds up to more than 550 titles with different ethnicities in the authorship. Another indication of this increase is the publishing houses, which are increasingly open and with publication opportunities, such as the “*Palavra de Índio*” project, an editorial label launched by Daniel Munduruku, the Nova Tribo, by Kaka Werá Jekupé, the Coleção Vozes Ancestrais, organized by Daniel Munduruku, in addition to Instituto Uka, organized by Cristino Wapishana and Daniel Munduruku, all promoting the publication and dissemination of indigenous works throughout Brazil.

The recognition of indigenous literature is a cultural statement made from within the villages and occupies editorial spaces outside of them. For the author Kaká Werá Jekupé (1994) for a long time, indigenous culture was known through the “voice” of the other, whether of anthropologists or social scientists, always through the foreign gaze, and for the first time, through his book, the Guarani universe was presented from a Guarani perspective, in its name, through its voice. This is also the thinking of author Olívio Jekupé when he asks:

[...] so many centuries ago, Brazil was dominated by the Jurua Kuery, not Indians in Guarani, and since that time, everything that is said about our relatives is written by them. I didn't see that as something interesting, because we have to tell our stories to our children and if it has to be written, why not by the Indians themselves? (JEKUPÉ, 2009, p. 11).

The written text, despite being a white technology, appears in the indigenous context as a tool of resistance and memory, becoming an act of reflection and social ascension. For the researcher Graça Graúna, current indigenous literature

[...] it is a place of survival, a variant of the epic woven by orality; a place of confluence of silenced and exiled (written) voices, over more than 500 years of colonization. Rooted in its origins, contemporary indigenous literature has been preserved in the self-history of its authors and the reception of a differentiated readership, that is, a minority that sows other possible readings in the universe of autochthonous poems and prose (GRAÚNA, 2013, p. 15).

The same occurs with the texts of the writer Juvenal Payayá, the Chief of the Payayá village in the center of Chapada Diamantina, Bahia, who believes in the strength and power of his literature as one of the first tools in the process of evolution and identity of peoples, as he describes below,

We make literature since the world began (laughs). I think that without our literature, one of the elders, which is not the book, it is the wisdom given by the enchanted ones, prayer, our dances, our parties, paintings, our culture, and everything. Because, you know, the book, the writing, that just came later. Without all that, we wouldn't have recognition, and it's not just theoretical recognition, it's recognition that you request a policy; it is for people to remember that the Payaya people, in addition to being indigenous people, also have their sector, their chief, their organization, and that they take things seriously. We, the Payayá people, are developing our

projects, and among the serious things we also point out our literature. So, I go so far as to say the following: I think that literature, the book (the writing), was the element, the link that gave, shall we say, visibility to the peoples of the world. And this question is a key because literature opens paths; I think that the literature that we create, my literature, the one that I create, has weight within our people, in our name, without a doubt, and I believe that it will create others that will continue this (PAYAYÁ, 2015, Apud SANTOS, 2016, p.30 and 31).

Complementing this thought around indigenous writing and its importance for the original peoples, Professor Edson Kayapó states in a recorded excerpt for Daniel Munduruku's YouTube channel:

Indigenous literature today has a fundamental role in the dialogue with this citizen constitution in the sense of thinking about the construction of other instruments, for example, education. The books produced by Brazilian publishers and by non-Indians are not suitable for our people because it is totally out of line with our way of being. What is then used to form, from the point of view of didactic material, for the formation of our peoples? It is a production that our indigenous writers will have the authority and legitimacy to produce. So I think that in this sense, there is a great affinity between indigenous literature and the formation of indigenous warriors, this is one perspective, but there is another very interesting perspective, which is to think that indigenous literature is also an instrument for the production of material for the formation of non-indigenous people in indigenous history and culture, after all, Brazilian society must be very clear about what it is they are calling indian[...] indigenous literature certainly has and will have this role of informing Brazilian society about this way of being and this indigenous diversity, this great richness (PROFESSOR..., 2015, 1'03")⁸.

For Professor Edson Kayapó, indigenous literature is so necessary that new warriors, new indigenous people, and new forms of resistance will come from it. He associates this literature directly with the school environment, as a starting point for writing.

The story of the educator and many authors coincides with and demonstrates possible triggers for indigenous writing. Many of them grew up in contact with the non-indigenous world, attended formal school to be literate by whites, and contested their indigenous legitimacy. All the researched authors start their writings by reporting their life experiences, in the environments they are in. Through this study with whites, learning, and appropriation of non-indigenous technologies, it was possible to make writing an instrument of identity and appreciation of indigenous history.

Another feature is that they can be produced individually or collectively. According to Graúna (2013) the classic period of native literary production was a record of oral tradition, thus, a collective production, capable of overcoming times with mythical narratives. Lima believes that it is difficult to think of authorship in indigenous writings, because, "often, the history or knowledge that is being written belongs to an entire people and, therefore, we see several books whose author's role is not fulfilled by one person, but by a people – like the Krenak people, the Maxakali people." (2012, p.41).

The word can be a weapon, writing can be a political act. Some people are using words and writing as forms of self-expression in the face of the invisibility given to indigenous communities, either as cultural preservation of groups or as collective care for the entire nation.

The Native text

The writer Olívio Jekupé (2006) brought this term to the current scenario of indigenous literature, as he explains in a live broadcast on YouTube:

When I created this term called native literature, about 20 years ago, I created the term native literature and I still receive a lot of criticism because many people do not understand what I say [...] so within the village we have a Guarani experience, so when we Indians write a text, our children have a childhood that is speaking, is living the culture, a child here speaks only Guarani. The child doesn't know the outside world, when our children are going to write a story today, because, in the past and today, we continue with oral history, but the child learned to write inside

⁸ Excerpt taken from the video on Daniel Munduruku's YouTube channel. Available at: < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIQ5KFhF2dU&t=137s> >; Access on 03/2020.

the village today, and we have schools. When one of our children goes to write, he writes in Guarani thinking. So, for me, when I said 20 years ago that we write native literature I wasn't inventing, I wasn't lying, I'm saying that we, indigenous people, write native literature because that's our way of life. José de Alencar wrote this indigenous literature that is talked about, but it was a fiction created by him, so it's different, that's why I say that indigenous people write native literature, which is our life, our way of living [...] there have always been indigenous writers, indigenous writers are storytellers, it wasn't just in the 2000s that they appeared, indigenous writers have always had...we know ancient history (FLICHINHA..., 2020, 18'36").

The literature of Olívio Jekupé (2006) and its concept, native literature, seek to defend a community cause and affirm the identities and thoughts of a people, of a village, encouraging the identity groups to take responsibility for their memories, the authorship of their stories, without mediators. For the author, in addition to this internal strengthening, with native literature, knowledge about these peoples, their ethnicities, their cosmologies, and their beliefs can be promoted to non-indigenous Brazilian society. In a text published on his blog, Olívio Jekupé (2018) talks about the importance of native literature for people to better understand how people live in the villages from an indigenous perspective, through which people, in general, will be able to know:

How we thought because it's not just writing about the Indians that people will understand, because many books were written centuries ago, but they brought more prejudice against our peoples, so let's get to know the native literature so that things can be better understood (sic). (JEKUPÉ, 2018).

For Jekupé (2006) native literature needs to be more valued, so that indigenous people can express what they think, and what they want, without limiting history to a single reality, whether romantic, exotic, or wild, but never the real one.

Then, indigenous or native literature?

Olívio's proposal to defend the native term for the literature made, produced, and carried out from within the villages by the indigenous people, for the villages and/or for the whites, does not differ from what other authors who use and define as literature writers treat indigenous, both describe and speak of the same place, the same source, and original writing process. Therefore, it is acceptable to say that the texts of Graça Graúna, Eliane Potiguara, Ailton Krenak, or Olívio Jekupé make up indigenous, or native, literature. Thus, we can say that all indigenous literature is native literature, but not all native literature will necessarily be indigenous literature.

Daniel Munduruku, a reference in Brazilian indigenous literature, with more than 50 books published and a complete 25-year career now in 2021, reinforces the chorus that understands the Brazilian as native, preferring to use the term indigenous literature for the original production, after all “the Brazilian literature is native, all Brazilian literature is native, because Brazilians are native to Brazil, but not all Brazilians are indigenous.” For the author, being born in São Paulo makes someone a native of Brazil, but not an indigenous person, “but a Guarany, he is more than a native, he is an indigenous person, he is original.” (MUNDURUKU, 2021).

The meaning of the term native shows an issue with the place of who speaks, with the origin of the narrator. According to Ferreira (2001), native is an adjective for “1. Which is natural; congenital. 2. Who is born; which proceeds. 3. Not a foreigner; national” or even a masculine noun that is defined” 4. Natural individual of a land, of a country; indigenous, natural, national” (2001, p.481). For both grammatical categories, the meaning of native is linked to being a native of a place, being aware of where you are, and not being an outsider.

The second definition, item 4, when it places the concept in a trinity: indigenous, natural, and national, can help to understand why not all native literature is indigenous. If the native is the native and the national, it can also be the *sertanejo*, the *quilombola*, the *geraiçero*, or the indigenous. Daniel Munduruku says he prefers the term indigenous to native as a way of marking this space “when I talk about indigenous literature, I am marking a territory, marking a territory that belongs to a literature written by original people, not native people” (MUNDURUKU, 2021).

In the preface to the book *Nós: Uma antologia de literatura indígena*, Maurício Negro writes that the book brings together stories narrated by indigenous writers, “legitimate heirs of different ethnic groups”. Later, Negro (2019, p.9) relates the indigenous to the native, when he states that “indigenous people are those who belong to the place. Natives, as they say [...] Indian, countryman, caboclo, caiçara, riverside, quilombola, peasant, countryside – each with their culture, languages, customs, traditions, and territories.” Therefore, indigenous people belong to a place and they are natives as well as other communities that belong to other places. The term indigenous includes exclusively the indigenous, given the various ethnic groups present in the territory. The term native understands who is natural from a place, therefore more comprehensive, when it comes to Brazil.

Therefore, it is understood that this term, native literature, coined by Jekupé (2006), is the same cited indigenous literature and can encompass other writings as well, it is not limited only to this production. Unlike Indianist literature, which is written by white people, indigenous literature is a legitimate representative of the people who write it, speaking from within their community experiences. Native literature, on the other hand, comes from the same experience in the villages, as well as in the *quilombos* or the *sertão*, as long as it is written and told by the native peoples of these places.

CONCLUDING BUT NOT FINISHING

Now, after centuries of knowledge accumulated and also violated, the indigenous peoples of Brazil write in their native languages and Portuguese, what they hear in their villages, what their memories say, speaking from within history. They publish books, recite poetry, show their films, broadcast live on social networks, update podcasts, communicate on the radio, or exchange information on the websites they plan as a group. Growing numbers in indigenous literary and cultural production can provide new possibilities of reality, both for people and non-indigenous people, in a chance to know and approach the national historical reality.

Indigenous native literature intends to awaken in the interested reader another vision of their country and also to record their oral memories, and their life experiences for the next generations. They are written from a past almost erased from history, capable of demonstrating social, cultural, philosophical, political, educational, and environmental behaviors that go beyond the present, the future, or even formal knowledge.

In the growth of both people⁹ and indigenous literary production in Brazil, reading/writing is reinforced as the basis of the struggle of peoples for their rights, or as a trap in this battle. For Daniel Munduruku,

[...] literature ended up falling for me as an instrument, I took advantage of this opportunity in the best way I could, to reflect, to think, for myself above all, but then to put it as a small trap for Brazilian society, because Brazilian society needs these traps from time to time so that it can wake up a little, I have used literature a lot for this purpose.” (MUNDURUKU, 2021)¹⁰.

Along the same lines, Amanda Lima described research in indigenous literature as something that goes beyond issues of letters or publishers, and when doing this reading she realized that “it was more than a book on Indian history. It was a political and well-defined act by a people seeking affirmation.” Political in its way of dealing with a specific and peculiar experience of each registered people, with its “unique and singular” reality, which should and “can be understood as an important weapon in guaranteeing their rights” (2012, p.13, 49).

By reading the words, we can see that indigenous writing is extensive, as in the letters on the torés, in the lines painted on the body, or in basketwork and tapestries with their complex designs. Reading is trying to understand that such content does not only cover the culture of that people, but also

⁹ Data on the growth of indigenous populations indicate a number of 294,131 individuals in 1991 and 817,963 in 2010, the date of the last Census carried out in Brazil. According to the IBGE Census, growth of 11.9% is confirmed in the referred period. (IBGE, 2012).

¹⁰ Answer by Daniel Munduruku given to researcher Renata Lourenço during an online course, 2021.

their life plans, their contributions to science, their cosmology, and their countless everyday problems/solutions, it is a tool for evolution.

Therefore, this study indicates that through indigenous literature, we can learn about ancient and present teachings that help how to live today and take care of the future. Talking about this literature does not end in this text, nor the next one, but continues, as a provocation for those who seek to delve into the history of Brazil, to know a little more about the original cultures and modern cultures, in a closer view at the indigenous villages.

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Eliana Marcia dos Santos Carvalho – Project coordinator, in data analysis and review of the final writing.
Renata Lourenço dos Santos – Data collection, data analysis, and text writing.

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