

# From Ancestrality to Possible Futures

## A Journey of Multispecies Politics

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### Dear Reader, Here Is a Warning: Get Ready!

Prepare to break perceptual cocoons which treat nature utilitarianly.<sup>2</sup> This will foster a new type of sensitivity to transform the natureculture relationship dichotomy. This text is an experiment in anticipatory narratives and speculative fabulation (Haraway 2016), blurring the boundaries between humans and non-humans. It occurred in 3989, after the end of our times – with the effects marked by the loss of hope and biodiversity, civilizational crisis and climate emergency. This text is part of a doctoral thesis on the regenerative process in the encounter between city and forest, specifically the Atlantic Forest of Southern Brazil – guided by the life of plants and indigenous ancestral wisdom, which helps sustain the planet's forests. The intention is to raise affective politics through the multispecies alliance, providing visibility and activating the collective imagination to other ways of existing and relating, such as cooperation with plant sociability, to build other worlds and possible futures.

### And Deep Down, What Is There?

In fact, countless meetings have happened after the first climate agreements in the 20th century. Now, everyone is exhausted. Only a few attend the current Assemblage. Few believe that anything is worthwhile in these meetings, especially after the last tree has been cut – even with all the environmental laws and international agreements on global goals!

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- 1 This chapter is part of a PhD research project in community psychosociology and social ecology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), supported by a scholarship from the Improvement of Higher Education Foundation (CAPES) in Brazil. No crossing is done alone; few are done in encouraging company. Thank you, Laura Dolan, for your tireless support that never abandoned the boat, regardless of the storm. I will always remember it.
  - 2 Emerson Elias Merhy, the adviser of my PhD project, said this during a collective orientation in 2024.

It is a time of loss and hopelessness. Everyone remembers the first world conference about the environment as a major issue in 1972: the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm (UN 1972). We have not forgotten the Paris Agreement when the global goal was to hold the global average temperature well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels (UN 2015). However, these words were devoid of value, discredited and wasted. Men were forgetful then and failed to recognize the power of words as actions that create the world (Kopenawa and Albert 2013).

It is the year 3983. The Assemblage, also known as the Cyclical Assemblage of Mutant Multispecies, has convened on the Transatlantic Bridge. The bridge is crafted from solar threads and salt pieces. The Atlantic Ocean, which has always been a nexus for diverse species' encounters, holds ruin and abandonment in its depths. The oceans have drowned much of the land, continents have succumbed to submersion, and once towering mountain peaks are now scattered islands resting at sea level. As scientists had repeatedly warned in the past, Earth's temperature has unsurprisingly soared by over 7 °C (IPCC 2023a, 2023b). It is uninhabitable for non-hybridized species, known as a place ravaged by humans who continually ignored Indigenous peoples who had known what was to come. As *The Falling Sky: The Words of a Yanomami Shaman* had warned us, the sky fell as soon as the last tree was cut down (Kopenawa and Albert 2013).

However, glimmers of life shine through on this diseased planet. Plants eat abandoned structures. Human remnants – metamorphosed with aquatic life, birds, and flora – made existence possible by recalling witchcraft and *Reclaiming Animism* (Stengers 2007) to create clusters of humans with mutations. Women engaged in daily witchcraft have established profound connections and reciprocal relationships with plants, evolving the ability to form spaces to manifest life (Federici 2003; Stengers 2007; Sztutman 2018). We have cultivated conditions of living by existing in otherness experiences. Activating imagination, transcending linguistic boundaries and improving sensitive perception have become prerequisites for composing possible worlds (Deleuze and Guattari 2013; Krenak 2020a). We operate the *Cosmopolitical Proposition* – a way of practicing politics incorporating multiple perspectives (Stengers 2007). All existences have political agency, and everyone participates in multispecies politics. We convene periodically in Cyclical Multispecies Assemblage to discuss the precariousness of living conditions on Earth.

The attendees of the Assemblage are intrigued, despite the historical indifference and neglect we have faced. Word of a talking notebook spreads rapidly, sparking curiosity. *A talking notebook? How could this be?* Odnanref – a woman-whale-bromeliad – found it during a routine dive into the ruins of the world's depths, where she discovered the rainbow-hued and translucent bag that held it. Intrigued by what she had found, Odnanref swam speedily southward to the Atlantic Ocean towards a place known as Brazil – a historically rich land teeming with diverse life forms and biomes (unfortunately, Brazil succumbed to death due to global policies in ancient times, and this resulted in the devastation of forested areas. The suffering of that time is tattooed on her own mixed-species body).

As soon as Odnanref emerged from the water after her discovery, she arrived on a small island where she was enthusiastically welcomed by Plant – her sister, guide-researcher (Seixas et al. 2019), and companion species (Haraway 2003, 2008, 2010, 2016). Panting, she was excited to show her what she had found, a relic documenting multi-

species political actions in 2023. As they admired the rainbow-hued bag, she recalled their first encounters. Since the start of the hybridization process, *The Life of Plants* (Cocchia 2019) has been the essence of Odnanref's existence and the focus of her investigations. So, when Plant chose to be part of her – to graft into her original human-woman body as part of their hybridization process – they made an unconditional commitment: sharing everything they found with each other. Plant and Odnanref opened the little bag with the notebook together as a non-negotiable best friend and research partner. To their surprise, something happened: they discovered unprecedentedly that the little notebook was a talker!

They realized the notebook contains notes, drafts of the first Multispecies Conference held in 2023: *Narrating the Multispecies World*, a precursor to the Multispecies Cyclic Assemblage the future would bring (Würzburg University 2023). The notebook pages narrate community participation in urban planning and the governance of protected areas once covered by the now-extinct Atlantic Forest. The multispecies politics action took place in an archipelago known for its magic – both because of the beautiful landscapes and the witches who used to live there. The notebook also holds letters of multispecies politics and unfolds a narrative of exercising citizenship alongside *forestizenship*, the citizenship of forest people (Krenak 2022, 2024).

The notebook also has traces of a story of a woman with a plant, deeply connected to the beings responsible for the magic of the archipelago that was sold ages ago. Odnanref realized that the little notebook was a portal, revealing the encounter between humans and non-humans already working together in the political arena in a cosmopolitical dance across time. I will come back to this woman, known as Lis, later. The little notebook's scribbles bring forth multiple languages in drawings and writings. Touching it, Odnanref immediately became aware that its messages were sufficient to invite it to join us at the Multispecies Cyclic Assemblage.

## Multispecies Cyclic Assemblage: Art as Political Imagination

Today, Odnanref feels confident, having dedicated considerable time to readying herself for the Assemblage. She knew it would test her limits and abilities to navigate the radical differences and encounter her ancestral past. The Assemblage's host is typically chosen through a raffle, and the name is drawn. This year, 3983, it was hers: Odnanref. She tells us more about herself: She is a mixture of a woman, a whale and a bromeliad, a plant from the extinct Atlantic Forest. A warm sensation enveloped her when she was called upon, radiating from her throat and commanding her entire mixed-being. It had awakened her deepest fear: public exposure. Simultaneously, as a researcher on aquatic times and life conditions, she recognizes this experience as an opportunity deeply connected to these themes. After all, she routinely dives into the ocean on expeditions to investigate times when humans could live as a specific species. She maintains a collection of Multispecies Assemblage Diaries and Drifting Letters that she has found in the depths of the worlds. Being a moderator of the Multispecies Cyclic Assemblage allows us to experiment with multilingual dialogues and compose another compass: the encounter of times.

Now, the Multispecies Cyclical Assemblage starts, featuring the talking notebook from deep down in the world and herself. Polyphonic drums set the stage as it opens its first page. An ancient drawing of a multispecies assemblage is exhibited.

(Figure 1: ) *Polyphonic assembly: multispecies landscape. Painting by the author.*



Aroeira, a special *art-intelligence*, exudes a nostalgic fresh wood scent, and her role is translating the little notebook to the guests. Aroeira was once a doctor and nurse healer, residing in the forest with profound roots and dedicated to the care of women. In a rare metamorphosis (Coccia 2021), she transformed into a tree intertwined with jellyfish and butterflies, supported by artificial intelligence. Due to her heightened sensitivity, artistic talents and healing capabilities, Aroeira has become a translator of worlds and times. Recognizing her unique abilities, she is the guest of honour participating in the Multispecies Assemblage. Her challenge is to express the secrets concealed within the little notebook, offering landscape perspectives from 2023 and translating them for the assemblage in the year 3983.

Recognizing the translation's inaccuracy, precarious like the world (Tsing 2015), Aroeira delves deeply into the drawing shown by the little notebook and cites the multifaceted relations between humans and non-humans. The drawing brings messages from whales, oceans and plants during an era when humans considered themselves separate and superior to nature. It is not easy to describe the meeting between humans and non-humans when the latter were treated as objects and not as producers of life conditions. Aroeira attempts to describe it with a piano and flute melody. In other words, it is translated as follows: It was a spring afternoon in the southern hemisphere with a full moon rising from the ocean. The sky had twilight tones: pink, blue, and purple – whales passed by Matadeiro beach in southern Brazil, where the magic was auctioned. “Matadeiro” means “slaughterhouse”. It was where the whales were killed in the 16th,

17th and 18th centuries. Plants attentively presented the whale arrivals and departures through the times. Bromeliads bloomed from the top of the trees, between the cracks of the stones, and lived with bamboo and snake plants – Saint George’s Sword. With Aroeira’s help, the atmosphere at the Multispecies Assemblage becomes alive with the sounds of whales, the ocean waves and the rustling of the plants depicted in the drawing. The sudden emergence of these non-human voices surprises everyone, for in 2023, it was rare for non-humans to take centre stage in political meetings. The shock reverberates throughout the gathering as attendees realize that the whales, ocean and plants are the protagonists of their narratives and integral to the collective story of existence: “Can I show landscape as the protagonist of an adventure in which humans are only one kind of participant?” (Tsing 2015: 155).

Providing the context of these ancient times, Aroeira probes the roots of the natureculture dichotomy. As she accesses her memories, she feels the reverberations of the past, witnessing one specific way to live, which allows the violent colonization of the Americas and the enslavement of Africa by Europe – a brutal annihilation of countless diverse ways of life. She shows us a way of life that treats nature as a resource, the times before the sky fell when the patriarchal society perpetuated colonialism and fed capitalism. It was a time when the white men – from “commodity people”, whom everything they touch becomes a product, as the Yanomami Shaman teaches us – violently exercised their supposed superiority in intellectual, economic, political and social relationships. Exploring, oppressing and exterminating Indigenous people, black people, women and non-human entities, such as plants, rivers and oceans, was deemed beneficial to their economy during that era, even producing massive inequality and ecological crisis. This way of life, though once accepted, is now inconceivable and beyond the bounds of possibility for those who still exist. We need cooperation, especially with plants and Indigenous people, to sustain life conditions for everyone, except for creatures such as Malvaro Developon Specularex, an experienced and well-known scientist who is vengeful and resentful.

Despite having once advocated for environmental causes, he blames the remaining hybridized humans (especially those made with female) for the deteriorating conditions of life on Earth. His persuasive power, and deep and strong voice intimidates people and leads them to obey his commands. He is one of the few who seeks to accumulate resources to create living conditions solely for his benefit. Malvaro retains traces of individualism and selfishness, which should have been extinguished long ago. His hybridization occurred in an unauthorized and dangerous manner, resulting in an appearance where the beings that merged with his body cannot be identified. Therefore, he is predominantly composed of artificial intelligence, governed by strict and uncompromising rules. Using this feature, Malvaro seeks to manipulate and control where witchcraft is practiced, charging taxes for his power and wealth.

Malvaro devises destructive policies, contributing to the demise of diverse magic words that could restart ecosystems. Creating narratives is a potent method for reforesting our collective imagination (Krenak 2024) and developing theories for life – our collective response-ability (Haraway 2016). We enhance our coexistence ability by embracing *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (Le Guin 1986). We tell stories that are not epic tales of triumph where someone wins but, instead, forgotten and dismissed ones that

no one has told before, such as collecting seeds and focusing on gathering rather than hunting and conquering (ibid.). We know the importance of plurality, community and collective efforts in storytelling to survive. We have also shared an ethical understanding of prioritizing women's stories, which were undervalued in favour of patriarchal, heroic exploits in ancient times. Malvoro's disdain and disregard for the interconnectedness of all beings and his ruthless exploitation of the common environment make him a feared adversary in our efforts to carry bags with stories of multispecies worlds. The resonance of ancient irresponsibility and his interference evoke a collective sense of physical and emotional sickness.

Amid these sensations exploring the encounter of times, a ritornello bell plays for our attention. Everyone is still. The notebook invites us to play with the collective imagination. For a moment, it seemed strange because it had been a long time since we played. The embarrassment lasts until the notebook starts a joyful dance, and everyone laughs aloud. In the midst of the joy, Malvoro, a know-it-all in a permanently bad mood, complains and disrupts the joyous laughter and dancing.

However, the notebook resists and triggers our imagination in a playful tone. It poses a question: *If you could be any other being in nature, which would you choose?* The query unravels our memories, and we are affectively connected to 2023. The realization strikes us, and we are transported into a fold outside of time, offering a chance to alter the past radically. An atemporal encounter across existential territories allows for co-creating alternative futures by speculative fabulation (Haraway 2016). Despite our free imagination, we stay with the trouble without succumbing to extermination or forgetfulness, recognizing our responsibility for life and death (Davies and Loftus 2010; Haraway 2008, 2016). Focused on the notebook's invitations, we start to perceive that we are dreaming of building a world where many worlds fit (Baschet 2021; Morel 2023). The narrative merges with the living territories of the past presences, and a collective dream ignites.

## Decolonizing Collective Imagination about Possible Futures

Imagine if you could be any other being, which would you choose? The question beckons from the little notebook, urging participants to attune to otherness rather than merely empathize. The exercise challenges human-centric living. It awakens our response-ability towards other-than-humans (Haraway 2016) and recognizes beings with far longer histories and experiences on Earth.

Before we start to imagine, Malvoro interrupts, defending his radical ideology that prioritizes technological dominance over collective creativity. He does not believe in the possibility of a *Sensible Life* (Coccia 2016) or a collective imagination. He postulates the return of human-centric interests. Viewing the multispecies ecosystem solely as a resource to be exploited, he advocates for manipulating multispecies without female parts, evolving specialized men's prosperity. He wants to take resources to improve artificial intelligence, which he considers more accurate than art-intelligence. Dreaming is a superstition for him, and awareness of other possibilities in life is a waste of time.

Realizing that the Assemblage is activating the collective imagination, Malvoro becomes very restless. We ask the notebook a question, and suddenly, he starts screaming:

“You should stop believing in the nonsense of imagination. Sensitivity is bullshit! Rationality comes from the practice of reason with metrics that only artificial intelligence can achieve, not the affections.” His favourite game is to paralyze our vocal cords. He thinks it is funny when we try to speak, but the voice does not come out. However, it is agonizing and forces an unbearable lump into her throat. Everyone’s discomfort is visible. Malvoros control is embarrassing as he continues: “Once and for all, you should keep in mind that drawing is not a way of cognition, and imagination does not equate to knowledge.” In an orderly tone, he adds: “We must maintain the reason and distinguish between rationality and emotion, establishing quantifiable goals with precision, traceability and scientific justification.”

Then, he laughs sarcastically, wipes out the records of the past five Multispecies Assemblages, and dismisses all that had been collectively built. Enraged by the little notebook, he punctures the colourful bag that houses it and shatters our oldest, most cherished ceramic vase for carrying our revolutionary collective stories. He callously burns two of her notebooks. Everyone is plagued with heavy hearts and hopelessness. She is filled with profound sadness and anger. He proclaims: “I am the right mixed-being to guide you.” Odnanref’s instinct is to run away, screaming and crying. The lump in her throat grows. Malvoros abuse of power and authority hurts her profoundly. The only thing she can do is breathe and hope that this moment will soon pass.

Suddenly, as if from the mists of a forest, Aroeira generously disperses a fresh morning breeze reminiscent of the scent of the sea at sunrise. As everyone calms down, we realize it is a momentary pause to regenerate our vocal cords. This interruption discourages Malvoros from continuing, and Aroeira provides the opportunity to recall our collective understanding throughout time: “Not even the cleverest person in this place is more clever than the collective cleverly emerging from our interaction.” Dissolving the lump in her throat and relieving the voices silenced by Malvoros, Aroeira continues, nullifying any possibility of an individual leadership as a hero or saviour: “Each of us can guide ourselves, creating the common and the shared conditions of life for all of us.” Aroeira holds on to the space of stillness and enables us to imagine freely in alignment with the invitation from the little notebook written in 2023.

With our voices restored, Odnanref seizes the moment to respond to Malvoros, reminding him that rationality has evolved significantly. The notion, epitomized by “I think, therefore I am” (Descartes [1650] 1986), puts thinking before existence, regarding the value of thoughts as a condition of existence. This way of thinking builds knowledge but overlooks alternative modes of rationality beyond the human experience. Examples include the lives and sociabilities of entities such as plants, which do not rely on human-like rationality to thrive. There are other rationalities and ways to build the world and gain knowledge of it. Now, delving into our hybridization scriptures imprinted on our skin, we consider an alternative path through thought. Affection, neglected in the construction of research methods in old modern science, is, in fact, also a form of thought and a means of knowledge production (Deleuze 1988; Spinoza 1677). Affection is a potency that can either enhance our will to live and power to act or diminish them, depending on the conditions of encounters (Deleuze 1988; Spinoza 1677). Encounters with Malvoros consistently diminish our potential for vitality. Fortunately, we are lucky

to have Aroeira among us, who is able to offer some devices that amplify our capacity to act and create.

Returning to the invitation from the little notebook, Odnanref starts to imagine. If she could be another being, who would she be? She would be a whale, she thought to herself. They play together and take care of each other, living in cooperation. They are deeply aware of the ocean's delicate balance. She pondered on the question curiously as many of the beings around her reflected on the same inquiry.

While lost in her mind, wondering who she would be, some of the little notebook's pages intone the voice of a woman named Lis, who, from the past, was answering the same question for the Narrating the Multispecies World Conference (Würzburg University 2023), wrote the little notebook. The notebook shows us that Lis references the old cities and arguments about human civilization against the Multispecies Landscape (Tsing 2014, 2015). Odnanref is choked up listening to the resonance between the composition of their answers through the times. Moreover, there is an encounter of times, between Lis – a woman of a specific species from 2023 and herself, Odnanref – a woman-whale-bromeliad from 3983.

Through the notebook, Lis tells us that if she could be any other being in nature, she would be a plant because they have ancient knowledge of the planet and know how to evoke the forest. They are profoundly cooperative. Together, they co-create life conditions for many beings and help each other to support the ecosystem's specific composition. Lis concludes: Such a way of life is difficult for some humans, who are deeply entrenched in societal structures rooted in colonialism and violence, to understand because it relies on colonial and violent systems driven by oppressive values. The world is Berlin, New York and São Paulo for humans. Instead of evoking the forest, we kill it and build cities. For the plants *The Word for the World is Forest* (Le Guin 1972).

## Becoming-with Plants: A Process of Enchantment with Multispecies

In the notebook, Lis wrote and illustrated stories of an archipelago in southern Brazil, intimately recounting her bond with the plants during a time of deep concern over the exploitation of the Atlantic Forest. Within the pages of the little notebook, she vividly describes a beautiful place blanketed by this biome that was once one of the world's largest biodiverse reserves. Tragically, by her time in 2010, 92 % of this biome had been ravaged by deforestation and urban expansion. Lis's hometown faced the ongoing threat of massive urban expansion, leading to the gradual disappearance of the magic of the Island where she was born. While the cities grew, the forest died.

However, her city had a fantastic coast where marine life still prospered. She explains that, in the past, humans killed whales there, but “perhaps the whales have forgiven us because they still come back every spring to nurse their babies”. She continues: “When the whales arrive, my heart fills with joy. I fall in love with them each time I see them.” As Lis recounts her experiences, Odnanref feels a profound connection in her hybridized skin – plant-whale-woman – that becomes translucent and shiny, resonating deeply with Lis's words.

The question of “What being could I be?” initially dawned on Lis as an epiphany during a stroll through the forest. It arrived like a whisper in the wind, a gentle breeze that broke the silence and conveyed a message from the trees. It invited her to find her place among them, to belong there. She had been consumed by worries about urbanization and the loss of creatures in her city, finding solace in walks through her favourite place.

Once, she was walking amidst the trees, sunlight filtering through the canopy, enveloped in the damp soil, crisp air and the invigorating scent of foliage. A fresh smell of greenery surrounded her, and the symphony of birdsong provided a full talk-talk as a soundtrack to her thoughts. At first, there was a distinct separation between the trees and herself. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, something extraordinary happened. The trees receded into the background, and a network emerged, intertwining from the ground, rocks and branches, blurring the edges between them (Haraway 2008). In a moment of revelation, Lis was entwined with a tangle of plants, a seamless part of the forest. That is when the separation disappeared. In a moment, she was connected to them, part of them, one with them – the sensation of belonging washed over her.

To Lis’s astonishment, she encountered a remarkable plant that she had not noticed before, known as the Bromeliad. The Bromeliad was enchanting, and Lis could not believe what she was seeing. The Bromeliad’s presence felt magical, and Lis sensed the plant had a message to impart. Eager to learn from this enchanting plant, she had an epiphany: What if we recognize non-humans’ existence and allow their knowledge to teach us how to live together? This realization inspired her to dive deeper into the plant world, studying the intricacies of *The Life of Plants* (Coccia 2019).

Lis recognizes an incomparable connection with the Bromeliad and is guided by her to examine many questions concerning coexistence with other-than-humans, including the works of Donna Haraway. On the back of one of Lis’s drawing pages, Donna Haraway’s ideas are etched, emphasizing the importance of the kind of relationship that we cultivate with other-than-humans in a process of “becoming-with” (Haraway 2008, 2016). She delves into the unruly edges (Tsing 2012) of the boundaries between nature and culture and asks: Who do we invite, and who do we overlook when we meet the other in ethical encounters?

Aroeira – the jellyfish-woman-butterfly mixed being, the art-intelligence translator of times and worlds, brings the lights and shadows of that Sunday morning when the Bromeliad encountered Lis walking along the Atlantic Forest.

## Who Does the Bromeliad Think She Is?

Everyone at the Multispecies Assemblage wants to know more about the Bromeliad from the extinct biome, so Aroeira asks the little notebook to tell us who does Bromeliad think she is?<sup>3</sup> The little notebook reveals a drawing of the Bromeliad from that day of the encounter with Lis in 2023.

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3 Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (2013: 39-74) asking *Who Does the Earth Think It Is* and *If the Earth had politics, what would it be?*

(Figure 2:) *Messages from the Atlantic Forest Bromeliad. Painting by the author.*



The Bromeliad introduces herself to the Multispecies Assemblage, presented by a poem studded on the branches where she rests her roots. The group of researchers in *Therolinguistics* – a new and revolutionary area of science specialized in wild literature (Despret 2022; Le Guin 1974) – quickly tried to understand the message of the Bromeliad. They translate:

*We do not need to be fragile to be a flower.*

*I am the Bromeliad, a witness to time,  
Through the ages, my wisdom chimes.  
Embracing the tropical water, I thrive,  
A testament to life's will to survive.*

*In the heart of the forest, I unfold,  
A plant, ancient and bold.  
My body dances as colours ignite,  
A multiple symphony of green hues, plural and bright.*

The team continues investigating why the Bromeliad left the poem on the tree trunk. They find some marks in that drawing: “With my roots, I leave messages. Making a hole in the blocked walls and crossing edges are my skills. For eons, I rest in the structures of abandonment. I have cultivated within the core of my being a shelter for many creatures.” We are stunned by the message, deciphering its meaning as it continues: “I cultivate a sustainable ecosystem teeming with biodiverse life generation. Different beings cohabit in my womb and are nestled in the centre of my being. My body is their home. As if creating a mini planet, some species only exist within the water tank that I can reserve.”

In the following pages of the little notebook, Lis describes the Bromeliad and her aesthetics:

The Bromeliad is a colourful queer crown, blooming without shame, giving all her brilliance to the forest. Her glorious flowers take a long time to bloom, but when they do, they come without shame in stunning colours: bright red, hot pink and sunny yellow. She looks like a brave hero with a circular composition made up of sharp leaves. Instead of using them to command or fight, her leaves form a cup whose power lies in sharing water and nutrients and cultivating space to allow life to prosper. It is a bag that carries the stories of many. Her water and colourful flowers even attract frogs, bees and hummingbirds. She creates life-giving relationships. That is why one of her specialties is the aggregation of biodiversity. She is a very experienced being that invites life to flourish in unexpected places. Her response-ability (Haraway 2016) creates habitability for other creatures, sheltering biodiversity in her own body living otherness in the depths of her skin. She knows how to defend herself and take care of others.

Lis's story with Bromelia moves us all at the Multispecies Cyclic Assemblage significantly. As we know, the Bromeliad is a survivor, one of a few species that has survived climate mutation and overcame the sixth mass extinction as a specific species. Their existence holds much of the planet's hope. With a life experience of 64 million years on Earth, she can spawn forests even in inhospitable living conditions. Her roots are deep and, even broken, grow in rock cracks. She can live in difficult places, such as sandy and dry soils. She holds onto life firmly.

In 2023, Lis believed that communicating with plants was impossible, and the Bromeliad showed her otherwise. As she notes in the little notebook:

Non-human beings tell stories to us, even without verbal language. They express themselves through their presence. The Bromeliad reveals there are other ways to live in society. Sociabilities more-than-humans can teach us how to live on Earth. The flowers' philosophy, for example, can be an inspiration for our civilizational crisis.

The encounter with the Bromeliad transformed Lis's mind and behaviour and, as she writes, she shifted her point of view:

By existing, Bromeliad explains to me how to be courageous enough to stand up to those who separate us and to act instead of being complacent. Since I met her, I have never been the same. The Bromeliad became my friend, sister, partner and advisor. We are moving on together, shaping public policies in my city. We are building a collective story alongside her, a plant, the Bromeliad as a citizen in a Multispecies Politics.

If the Bromeliad had a politics, what would it be? I think to myself while Lis starts to express herself through the little notebook from the depths of the worlds.

## **Ancestral Future: Dreaming Is a Political Action**

I, Lis, have a message for the people of a future Multispecies Cyclic Assemblage. It is information for those who imagine collectively, live in otherness and reclaim witchcraft. The notice is this: Indigenous wisdom recognizes that memories can be alive without

words through our experience. *They cannot burn our memories and the contra-colonization stories that all beings have lived across the eras* (Bispo dos Santos 2023). Since the encounter with the Bromeliad, I have been learning with Indigenous people how to live with socialities of other-than-humans – citizenship-with-forestizenship (Krenak 2020a, 2020b, 2022, 2023, 2024).

Seeking an explanation, I confessed to Ailton Krenak about the encounter with the bromeliad, and he told me that there are plants that adopt us. “Maybe the Bromeliad has adopted you”, Krenak said. For Brazilian indigenous communities, plants are wise teachers and sage healers, sharing wild knowledge of how to thrive. In fact, they consider all non-humans as people. The Krenak people, for example, treat the Doce River as an ancient grandfather known as Watu. In addition, Guarani people weave *affective alliances* and engage in *creative dialogues* with non-human beings, learning from and living with them (Krenak 2020a; Takuá 2019).

Cristine Takuá (2019) invites us to cultivate spaces for nurturing creative dialogues with the forest and its inhabitants because they embody ancestral wisdom. Plants and animals possess profound knowledge of how to thrive on our planet, having survived across time (ibid.). Despite that, a colossal mistake of modernity is the extermination of the knowledge held by the forests and the beings that inhabit them, including the plants (ibid.). Indigenous people do not see ‘nature’ as ‘outside’ or separate from themselves. The word ‘nature’ does not even exist for Guarani people, so the boundaries of nature and culture do not make sense; all is nature, and everyone makes culture. The separation is a lie that justifies domination over non-humans. Seeing nature as a resource is an illness for the Indigenous people (ibid.).

Ailton Krenak explains that our separation from nature has caused a disconnection from life. We are now plummeting into a void. In his words, we are falling into an abyss – a result of the separation between the civilized and the savage, who are susceptible to being exploited and annihilated to the detriment of economic wealth. For Cristine Takuá (ibid.), modern life takes our time hostage, kidnaps our imagination, cuts our sensibility into slices and mutilates our capacity to notice and learn from and with non-humans. We are living in a time that wants to consume nature and, with the same eagerness, wants to consume our subjectivities. Even our imagination has been colonized. Indigenous people emphasize the urgency of decolonizing collective imagination and reimagining possible futures (Krenak 2020a, 2020b, 2022, 2023, 2024).

Indigenous people have faced extermination for 1,500 years of the European invasion. When asked how Indigenous people have been dealing with the end of the world, Krenak (2020a) tells us that they are keeping their stories alive. Enriching subjectivity to resist the homogenization of thinking is the strategy of Indigenous peoples to resist modern and capitalist capture. For him, suspending the sky means expanding the horizon of imagination and creativity with songs, dance, poetry and stories. He tells us that the magical experience of suspending the sky is common to many traditions of people originally from Brazil: “We resist by expanding subjectivity, not accepting the idea that we are all the same. There are still 250 ethnicities that want to be different from each other in Brazil, who speak more than 150 languages and dialects” (ibid. 2020b: 59). Therefore, he calls us to live our subjectivities with the freedom we can invent.

Since nature is being robbed in an indefensible way, let's not put our subjectivity on the market; let's enrich our subjectivity with different visions and poetics of existence [...] sharing space, being together, does not mean that we are equal. Still, we can unite through difference. (ibid. 2022)

Living in a civilizational crisis, Krenak (2024) offers a clue: *the future is ancestral*. Considering it, the plants, with their millions of years of wisdom, surpass human understanding about how to live on the planet. We must listen to Indigenous people before it is too late. They offer us technologies to transform our relationship with nature, which can help us sustain *the falling sky*.

For the Yanomami people residing in the Amazon rainforest, the “white men” – known as merchandise-people – were bewitched by capitalism because they transform everything they touch into a commodity, including the forest and beings who are living there (Kopenawa and Albert 2013). We must break free from the spell of capitalism that has colonized even our imagination. To do that, Krenak (2020b) invites us to co-create colourful parachutes to fly over the abyss we have caused by regarding the Earth, a living entity, as a useful resource to unsustainable capitalism. The parachutes are woven with threads of dreams and are colourful because they radically encompass the diversity and inclusion of humans and non-humans. However, the white men sleep a lot but dream only of themselves, while the Yanomami's dream is always the dream of others (Kopenawa and Albert 2013; Limulja 2022). The collective dreams allow us to decolonize our imagination and reinvent futures. We have remembered to dream inclusively and have common dreams and visions of the future together. Dreaming is a political action. Paulo Freire says that the collective dreams are possible dreams that can co-create unprecedented viable:

Dreaming is imagining horizons of possibilities; dreaming collectively is taking on the struggle for the construction of conditions of possibility [...] The act of dreaming collectively [...] carries within it an important (trans)formative potential [...] by the viable unprecedented, since the impossible becomes transitory to the extent that we collectively assume the authorship of possible dreams. (2001: 30)

Enchantment opens the doors of our dreams, sparks joy and frees our imagination. Without domination, it allows our collective creativity to emerge as an ally for creating narratives and multispecies alliances. To enter the portal of enchantment, we have to awaken our sensitivities and take back space-time to have creative dialogues with nonhumans.

Against Ailton Krenak warning us that *Tomorrow Is Not for Sale* (2020b), we are selling the magic of the archipelago where I, a woman enchanted by the Bromeliad, was born for real estate speculation. Living the paradoxes between development and conservation, Atlantic Forest is asking for help, in a red risk alert. Despite covering only 1.4 % of the planet, it is one of the hotspots containing 60 % of terrestrial species diversity. Even so, Krenak (2020a) has given us *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World*, summoning us to decolonize our collective imagination, break free of the capitalist spell and reimagine others' possi-

ble futures. Enchantment, dreams and collective stories can transform our relationship with nature and help us face the civilizational crisis together.

So, what if we follow the clues of enchantment and dreaming? What do bromeliads dream of? I have dreamed of plants bodied by bromeliads. Have they dreamed of me? On one of these nights, before going to sleep, worried about urban expansion and the magic sale of my hometown, I asked for advice to help sustain the sky up, and I dreamed of Davi Kopenawa. He blew his breath out of the forest. *It was a gift: a whisper from the wind that caressed my skin and said: "Be an instrument of plants. Make yourself the voice of flowers."*

So, as Lis in 2023, I look to you and all future Assemblages. Please remember: The future is ancestral (Krenak 2024). The whale is the ancestral mayor of our community in the future and the Bromeliad would become an advisor to her. The Bromeliad finds receptive humans willing to act with the flora, fauna and oceans. Her phenomenal capacity to aggregate, adapt and be resilient is shaping an open and alive multispecies school in the forest nearby. From the Atlantic Forest, living in the burred edges of the world, at the encounter between city and forest, and dwelling in the remnants of magic, I invite you to embark with the bromeliad on a journey of enchantment and multispecies politics. I urge you to dream of another possible future by asking, "If you were any other being in nature, what would your dreams be? What would we need to break the spell and flourish together? What futures would we reimagine?"

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