Against Extinction: Space Nomads and Ancestral Futures in *Ximan Poteh: contos dos futuros puris* (2021)

HANNAH BURDETTE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO

Abstract

Indigenous futurisms is a growing genre throughout Abiayala, from short fiction, novels, and film to visual art, music, and comics. This essay focuses on a 44-page collection of short stories by Indigenous Brazilian author Kigéw Puri (published under the name André Muniz Puri). *Ximan Poteh: contos dos futuros puris* (2021) imagines a future universe in which First Nations engage in space exploration, planetary worldbuilding, and interstellar diplomacy grounded in traditional communal practices. Placing her approach within the broader context of ancestral futures in Brazil and Indigenous futurisms throughout the hemisphere, I consider how Puri subverts the colonial trope of the vanishing Indian by projecting her people into the distant future as a radical affirmation of presence.

Keywords: Indigenous futurisms, ancestral futures, extinction, ethnogenesis, science fiction

> *The rivers, those beings that have always inhabited different worlds, are the ones that suggest to me that if there is a future to imagine, it is ancestral, because it is already present.*
>
> -Ailton Krenak

Speculative fiction has flourished worldwide in recent years, as people in diverse cultural and political contexts grapple with climate change, late-stage capitalism, and settler colonialism. Throughout Abiayala (the Americas),[1] authors of various backgrounds and nationalities are increasingly turning to Indigenous stories as source material for speculative worldbuilding. Although often labeled as speculative fiction—an umbrella term that includes science fiction, fantasy, magic realism, alternate histories, utopia, and dystopia—, many of these texts more aptly fit what Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice calls wonderworks: narratives that explore the possibility for other realities by building upon existing Indigenous worldviews.[2] The proliferation of wonderworks is particularly prominent in Turtle Island (North America),[3] thanks in part to *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction* (2012), where Anishinaabe scholar Grace L. Dillon explicitly invited more Native authors to create what she calls Indigenous futurisms. In dialogue with Afrofuturism and many other subsets of SF, the genre has since proliferated, with authors such as Waubgeshig Rice (Anishinaabe), Louise

Erdrich (Ojibwe), Drew Hayden Taylor (Ojibwe), Chelsea Vowel (Métis), Eden Robinson (Haisla and Heiltsuk), and Darcie Little Badger (Lipan Apache) publishing speculative novels and short stories—not to mention countless examples in theater, poetry, film and television, video games, comics, visual art, and music.

Throughout southern Abiayala, the genre has been somewhat less prolific, with fewer Indigenous writers producing what might be described as speculative fiction.[4] In Pindorama, or Brazil,[5] the scene is small but vibrant. Musicians such as Katú Mirim, Kaê Guajajara, and Kunumi MC; visual artists Denilson Baniwa and Kadu Xukuru; and authors like Kigéw Puri, Daniel Munduruku, and Ailton Krenak have united under the hashtag #*ofuturoéancestral* (the future is ancestral). As Célia Xakriabá and Alok's song "Manifesto o futuro é ancestral" puts it, they represent "the root of the past that connects with today," with the goal not to fight against time but rather to reclaim it.[6] Concurrently, the adjacent genre of Amazofuturism builds on the principles of solarpunk, an optimistic movement geared towards building sustainable futures based on communitarian principles. Initiated by visual artist João Queiroz and later taken up by author Rogério Pietro and others,[7] this genre is primarily the product of white and mestizo writers, though it centers Indigenous protagonists and technologies in a utopian vision of the Amazon Rainforest. Together, Indigenous futurisms and Amazofuturism challenge assumptions that Indigenous people simply want to return to the past and refuse to modernize. Instead, the appeal to ancestral futures challenges the linear narrative of progress and looks to the "not yet" as an emancipatory horizon for reclaiming suppressed stories and building better worlds. What might it mean to retrieve time, then, and how might that gesture look different based on the artist's locus of enunciation? Moreover, why do Indigenous political philosophies provide such a compelling framework for questioning the progression of capitalist exploitation into the future?

Ximan Poteh: contos dos futuros puris (2021) by Kigéw Puri (she/they, publishing here as André Muniz Puri)[8] offers a powerful response to these questions. Self-published as an e-book on Amazon, this 44-page short story collection depicts a world where the Puri, Krenak, and other First Nations maintain their traditions in outer space, while navigating a reconfigured political landscape. All three chapters feature the same core set of characters but are self-contained, resembling episodes of television series like *Star Trek*. Much like the Voyager, the Ximan Poteh ("Path of Light") is piloted by an altruistic crew of space explorers who promote reciprocity throughout the galaxy. Yet where *Star Trek* uncritically posits deep space as the "final frontier" of human expansion, Puri creatively inverts classic SF tropes to question space colonialism and build a world in which First Nations use traditional practices to foster balanced relationships with other planets.[9] Focusing primarily on the

theme of extinction, this essay argues that Kigéw Puri projects the Puri nation into the future as a radical affirmation of presence. First, I contextualize her approach to Indigenous futurisms within Brazil's history of settler colonialism and miscegenation. Then, I examine how each story undermines and subverts the trope of the vanishing Indian, with particular emphasis on chapter two. I conclude that *Ximan Poteh* renders a compelling reminder that many of the languages, cultures, and peoples declared extinct in Brazil never truly vanished; they were there all along, just hidden from view.

Fantasies of the Lost and Found

While fictionalized and futurized, the crew of the Ximan Poteh is based on the author's own community. A nonbinary theologian and anthropologist of Puri descent, Kigéw Puri is actively engaged in a process of ethnogenesis, reinterpreting suppressed practices passed down over generations with the goal of restoring tribal sovereignty and securing communal rights. In an essay on LGBTQIA+ trajectories of (re)existence, she explains how generations of Indigenous people concealed their identity under the weight of "shame and psychic pain" (Muniz and Vasconcelos 171). She notes that by extension, colonial violence has threatened queer Puri bodies, emphasizing the connections between the genocide of Native populations and the patriarchal erasure of queer futurities.

Originally inhabiting the Paraíbo do Sul watershed in southeastern Pindorama,[10] the Puri were subject to a deliberate strategy of erasure—first by the Portuguese crown and later by the Brazilian state—aimed at disenfranchising Native and *quilombola* (maroon) communities. Political scientist Desirée Poets maintains that this dynamic marks Brazil as a settler colony and that these processes continue to undergird both popular and official deployments of Indigeneity today.[11] Poets writes that

> The Puri's taken-for-granted extinction can be partially attributed to the myth that the flag-bearing troops known as *bandeirantes* had successfully brought this *sertão* (hinterlands) region under absolute Portuguese control. The bandeirantes drove the colonization of Brazil's interior, fighting bloody frontier wars to destroy quilombos and force autonomous Indigenous peoples into enslaved or otherwise coerced labor regimes, and in search of mineral riches. (12)

In the 19th century, the region was subject to another racist settler colonial scheme that advocated European immigration as a vehicle for *branqueamento*, or whitening. The myth of racial democracy that took hold in the early 20th century then masked these practices of erasure, positing that "Brazil's history of miscegenation was evidence that it was not founded on exclusionary racism. And since it was no

longer possible to identify who was Indigenous, Black, or white, there could be no racism in contemporary Brazil" (2).

In reality, however, miscegenation served not to democratize but to dispossess. The idea of a founding triad formed by three distinct peoples—white Europeans, Black Africans, and Indigenous Americans—implies that each contributed equally to the formation of Brazil's national identity, yet settler colonial "pacification" and frontier wars deliberately decimated Native populations, and today they comprise less than one percent of Brazil's population. This demographic decline contrasts sharply with the prominence they hold in the national ideology, which symbolically invokes Indigenous roots while obscuring or denying living communities in the present.[12] At the same time, Amazonian perspectivism has significantly shaped global debates on posthumanism, ecology, and multispecies futures, even as Indigenous communities themselves continue to be marginalized within Brazilian society.[13]

Official protocols of *demarcação* (territorial demarcation)[14] continue to render invisible urban Indigenous and *quilombola* peoples, since the prevailing notion is that Native and maroon communities live only in rural, isolated villages in the interior, disconnected from technology and modern society. Popular fascination with uncontacted tribes in Brazil took root in the 1970s, when military governments began to develop a network of roads through a region previously assumed to be unoccupied; since then, FUNAI (Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas, Brazil's federal agency of Indian affairs) has continued to release aerial photos of seemingly incredulous Natives pointing at the sky with bow and arrow in hand. From the legend of El Dorado to the conceit of a lush, earthly paradise, the idea of a lost civilization hidden in the depths of the jungle has inspired countless colonial fantasies over the years. As Candace Slater and others have amply documented, this utopic image is inextricably linked to what Euclides da Cunha first described as a "green hell".[15] The story goes that, like the colorful lure of a poison dart frog, the Amazon seduces explorers with the mirage of a golden city and then swallows them whole, as was the case with British explorer Percy Harrison Fawcett, who disappeared in 1925 searching for the Lost City of Z. Fawcett's expeditions also sparked the imagination of his good friend Arthur Conan Doyle, whose 1912 novel *The Lost World* supposes that prehistoric animals survived in a hidden enclave of the Amazon Rainforest. Slater notes that "As time progressed, outsiders' nostalgia for a seemingly more harmonious and simpler world became more specifically identified with the Amazon as a home for not only ancient species (Doyle's dinosaurs) but above all people who continue to live in a largely vanished harmony with nature" ("Visions" 6-7). She adds that this fascination harbors vestiges of the noble savage trope and reflects a modern longing for

a lost innocence that, though perhaps well intended, "often blunts actual indigenous voices and crucial differences among native groups" (7).

In short, the Brazilian settler colonial imaginary tends to locate Indigenous peoples at one of two extremes: either as uncontacted tribes uncontaminated by modernity or as *over*contacted peoples so heavily absorbed into the mainstream that they have disappeared altogether. United under the slogan *o futuro é ancestral* (the future is ancestral), Native activists are increasingly contesting this rural/urban dichotomy and the related assumption that Indigenous peoples are bound to the past. Afro-descendant and Boe Bororo hip-hop artist Katú Mirim challenges that condition of invisibility, reflecting on the links between *aldeia* and *favela*.[16] Her song "Indígena futurista" voices a refusal of settler colonial erasure:

> Hey! Our people never die; the root will save us.
> Hey! Look here, it was never just luck.
> I had to bring light to the darkness.
> Hey! They threw me off the cliff
> and I had to learn to fly.
> Hey! They threw me into the fire
> but I turned into water to put it out.
> And here I stand, with faith.
> I won't crawl.
> You want my death,
> but I won't give it to you.
> […]
> You thought I wouldn't come back. I came back
> to fight and even reincarnated.
> You thought I would stay silent, but I screamed.[17]

The juxtapositions throughout the song contrast a series of ongoing attacks with equally continuous forms of resistance, where attempts to eliminate and absorb Indigeneity just incite it to come back even stronger. Mirim's defiant affirmation of presence embodies what Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) scholar Audra Simpson refers to as refusal, voicing a reminder that settler colonialism is always incomplete and therefore perpetually failing (7-8).

Nomads in Space

In response to that history of erasure—and in dialogue with Mirim—Kigéw Puri offers a powerful affirmation of existence by projecting a supposedly extinct tribe from the past into a radically reimagined future. While Amazofuturism has become the dominant shorthand for indigeneity in Brazilian science fiction—largely by non-Indigenous writers—*Ximan Poteh* pursues a different itinerary, expanding the parameters of what Alexander Meireles da Silva and Lidia Zuin call the Fourth Wave of Brazilian SF. Where movements like Macumbapunk, Amazofuturism, and Sertãopunk relocate visibility and authorship beyond the country's cultural-industrial hub in and around São Paulo, Kigéw Puri situates Indigenous futurity within the center and extends it into extraterrestrial realms.[18] The book's cover reappropriates a 19th-century portrait by German painter Johann Moritz Rugendas (Fig. 1), locating it in outer space and superimposing a cybernetic lens over one eye (Fig. 2). Accordingly, Puri invokes her community's historical specificity and the painful history of settler colonial erasure, fusing past, present, and future in a single image. The accompanying blurb explains that "These tales are from a time I have not yet lived, for they took place in the future, and I do not yet exist there. They are the stories of a Puri who has not yet been born."[19] *Ximan Poteh* thus challenges static notions of Indigeneity, transposing it into unexpected domains and subverting genre conventions.

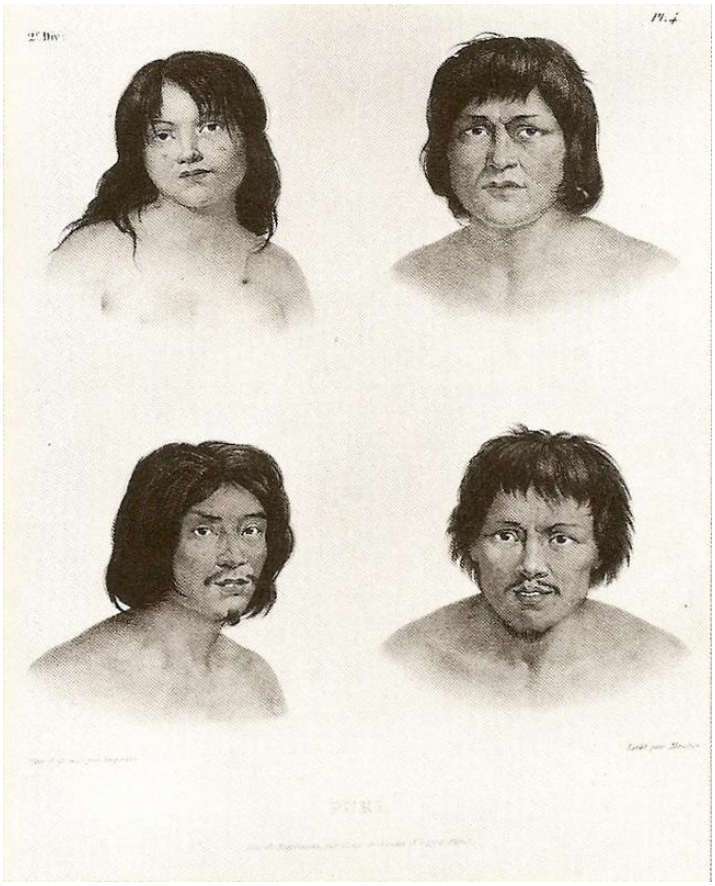

Fig. 1. 19th-century portrait of Puri tribal members by Johann Moritz Rugendas (lithograph, 22.3 x 19.5 cm, Wikimedia Commons)

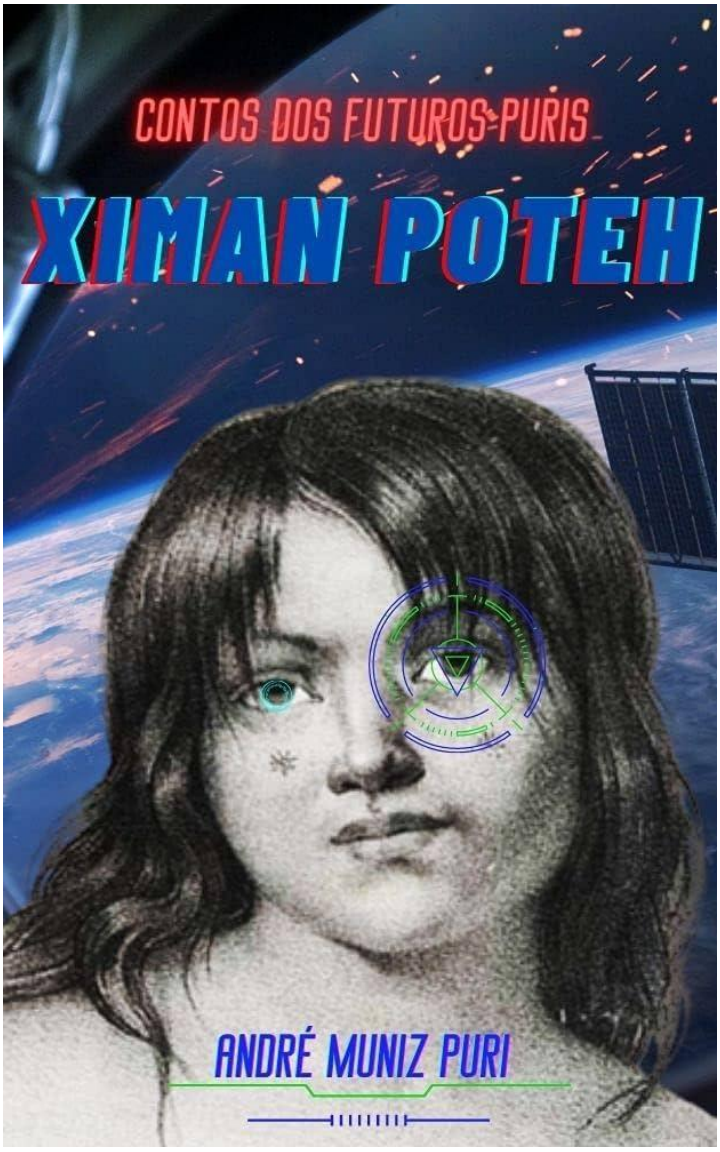

Fig. 2. Book cover of *Ximan Poteh: contos dos futuros puris*

As John Rieder points out, space exploration narratives often exercise white colonial fantasies by uncritically positing interstellar discovery as the "new frontier" of human expansion (1-2). In response, Puri activates different models of space exploration and worldbuilding, countering the assumption that these are essentially and unavoidably colonial enterprises. The Ximan Poteh is not just any spaceship; it is the fastest spacecanoe in the galaxy, built by the best Puri engineers known throughout the universe for their technological expertise (Puri 4). For its crew—which includes legendary mligapeom (warrior)[20] Xipu and pajé (shaman) Txuri—space travel entails settlement without domination and exploration without conquest. Drawing on a nomadic understanding of

territory common to lowland tribes throughout Pindorama, Puri imagines a post-anthropocentric universe in which Indigenous nations are no longer subject to a state apparatus. Here, they migrate, explore, establish new settlements, and return cyclically to Earth—like they have always done, but on an interplanetary scale. Paradoxically, Chief Xipu is an Indigenous alien; though human, he was born on Oru Uxo, a planet first catalogued by the Krenak that is now home to multiple diasporic nations (5). Kigéw Puri thus uses speculative fiction to explore what it means to be a tribal citizen in exile and to imagine futures beyond settler colonialism. Indigeneity is configured here not only by territorial relations—which the Puri maintain across spacetime—but also by the continued cultivation of Native languages, spiritual practices, and community relationships.

In the first story, "A canoa, o chefe e seu principal inimigo" (The Canoe, the Chief, and His Principal Adversary), Xipu confronts Yosi, a detribalized warrior who was exiled and prohibited from using traditional body adornments for betraying his people out of self-interest. Now the captain of a pirate ship, he captures Chief Xipu, who soon discovers that Yosi has raided an uncatalogued planet in violation of interplanetary law. The ensuing conflict stages a clash between two models of exploration: one based on nomadism and the other on colonial extraction and private property. "The Puri have always been nomadic," the narrator observes; "they have always enjoyed exploring, learning about, and settling in new places" (Puri 11). The story explains that, despite occasional conflicts, the Puri would never claim a planet exclusively for themselves. Their operating principles are based not on purity or noninterference, since they engage in their own practices of terraforming. However, they do so by carefully studying planets' particular ecosystems and assessing what species from elsewhere could thrive and adapt without disturbing the local biome. In contrast, Yosi and his crew exert little care for the place, destroying a large hollow tree that stores the area's water supply in order to imprison the Native inhabitants and sell them on the black market as scientific specimens. *Ximan Poteh* thus juxtaposes two distinct civilizational models: one based on extraction and the other on reciprocity. At the same time, Yosi's story of exile also challenges the stereotype of the "ecological Indian" and paints a complex portrait of Indigeneity in outer space.

The second chapter expands further on this contrast between colonial and nomadic space travel. "Uma revolta de seres sem-espírito" (A Revolt of Spiritless Beings) takes place on Yuy-Iporayma, a once-uninhabited planet similar to Earth named by the Tupinambá. With careful planning, Puri agronomists and astrobiologists have successfully introduced several plant and animal species and built out a lush forest (13). Among its inhabitants is the fearsome but nonviolent xam'mun-mun, a jaguar-sized, ten-legged creature with a serpentine head, black eyes, and flashing teeth. Rather than

attack, it uses its crab-like pincers to climb trees and crack open fruit. The narrator explains that on its home planet "all the beings that seemed inoffensive to human eyes were dangerous, and those that inspired fear posed no risk at all" (14). Kigéw Puri thus playfully subverts expectations, affirming that sometimes things are the opposite of what they seem.

This strange creature also helps to illustrate the Puri approach to terraforming, which permits deliberate human manipulations of the biome within limits. "The secret that Indigenous scientists discovered long ago," the narrator explains, "is to take just the first step, plant the first seedlings and introduce the first species, because from then on the forest would know how to build itself on its own" (14).[21] Crucial to this process is the work of pajés who help welcome the spirits of foreign species to their new home and build relationships with the land. Txuri explains that the spirits of previously uninhabited planets like Yuy-Iporayma tend to be reclusive since they are unaccustomed to the presence of living beings (13). Accordingly, *Ximan Poteh depicts* a form of worldbuilding rooted in the principle of animism, a philosophy common throughout Pindorama and beyond that teaches that everything has a spirit, even objects.

Meanwhile, it becomes clear that rayon (non-Indigenous) scientists have taken terraforming too far; an American scientist named Dr. Geller has recreated dinosaurs via archaeogenesis, a technology that brings extinct species back to life. The creatures rebel, and she is physically transformed into "a mix of woman and dinosaur" (25).[22] *Ximan Poteh* thus invokes Doyle's 1912 novel *The Lost World* as well as Michael Crichton and Steven Spielberg's adaptations from the 1990s.[23] Like Crichton, Puri presents the ancient reptiles not as a hidden relic in the jungle but as an aberration, a genetic experiment that exposes the folly of scientific hubris. By framing that critique through the lens of animism, however, she effectively rewrites the Jurassic Park adventure tale to challenge Western scientific progress.

As with the xam'mun-mun, things here are not as they seem; scientific reason is ultimately insufficient to explain the strange sequence of events that have transpired in the lab, and Txuri's spiritual interpretation slowly emerges as the more logical explanation. When the crew of the Ximan Poteh arrive at the lab, they notice an uncanny feeling that contrasts sharply with their own terraformed forest: "Everything there seemed out of place. The plants, the insects, even the soil was strange—they tried to recreate a world that was long gone, but there was nothing natural about it" (19).[24] A far cry from the museum specimens curated by Indigenous paleontologists on Earth, the dinosaurs more closely resemble Frankenstein's monster, "the fruit of human vanity that had spiraled out of control and revolted against its own creators" (19).[25] Txuri conducts a pajelança (ceremony)

and reports that the spirits of Yuy-Iporayma are angry because the scientists didn't ask for permission to be there, and they should never have resurrected ancient beings so far from their homeland (20).

All signs point to the breakdown of Western science, but the company's representative continues to scorn Puri perspectives, even as he depends on Xipu and Txuri to set things right. Txuri offers a diagnosis: the scientist's spirit is infected, and she needs Puri medicine to heal. Yet Santiago dismisses her assessment as superstition and seeks treatment by the company instead. The medical team concludes that radioactive waves from the lab drove the dinosaurs mad and activated a genetic mutation in Dr. Geller, thus confirming Santiago's belief that "*everything can be explained by science*" (25).[26] However, Xipu notes a slight hint of doubt in the functionary's voice and responds with an ironic twist: "*Santiago, you don't have to convince me of anything. You are free to believe in your own superstitions*" (25).[27] Xipu thus parrots the functionary's own words back to him and flips the script, challenging the assumption that Western science is the only knowledge system capable of explaining complex astrophysical and biogenetic phenomena.

In effect, Puri engages in what Darko Suvin refers to as cognitive estrangement,[28] not only by transposing the story to a distant future in outer space but also by confronting science with Indigenous spirituality. The futuristic setting allows her to provincialize Western technology, revealing it as one knowledge system among many—and not always the most effective at engineering solutions for the future. She resemanticizes the "science" in science fiction by mobilizing principles habitually dismissed as superstition and opening the door to alternative explanations. In doing so, she appeals to speculative fiction as a vehicle not only for imagining a radically different society but also for defending and affirming real, existing knowledge systems in the present.

From Lost to Resurgent

Ximan Poteh extends this epistemic shift to interrogate extinction: can what is defunct be brought back—and under what ethical, ecological, and spiritual conditions? Kigéw Puri imagines that First Nations and their allies have healed the Earth after megacorporations exploited and abandoned it. Thanks to Indigenous caretakers, endangered species and cultures now thrive. In contrast, New World Tech's archaeogenetic experiments appear to be little more than a naïve and pointless flex. While the corporation seeks novelty and profit, the Puri hunt, gather, and trade within sustainable bounds. Xipu muses that "it was one thing to recover recently lost life," but resurrecting beings from thousands or even millions of years ago violates the natural order of evolution (17).[29] Every species has its own arc, though "nothing is ever completely extinct, least of all life—it transforms" (17).[30] The issue, he

suggests, is not regeneration itself but the scientists' failure to consider the material and spiritual consequences of their actions.

Here, the author herself bridges past and future. Unlike the dinosaurs, the Puri never truly vanished; their supposed extinction reflects colonial desire rather than reality. *Ximan Poteh*'s appeal to futurism thus affirms Indigenous presence and counters the myth of erasure. As Marcia Geralda de Almeida observes, "The Indigenous can only exist in the future if they exist in the present" (16).[31] Accordingly, Kigéw Puri reframes the lost-world trope as a resurgence. Her ethnogenesis contrasts sharply with New World Tech's archaeogenesis: one revives ancestral language, spirit, and culture, while the other extracts genetic material as a vain experiment. Yet by presenting these approaches as points on a spectrum, the author avoids false binaries and offers a more nuanced vision of revitalization. Both systems engage in planetary worldbuilding, but with fundamentally different purposes. The choice is not between tradition and modernity but between divergent models of change in relation with the past.

The third story in the collection, "Friends, Enemies, and Communists" (Amigos, inimigos e comunistas), continues this motif to flesh out the political and linguistic terrain of Xipu's universe. While the United States has expanded its reach, Portugal's inability to compete in the Space Race yielded its final imperial decline (27). Ironically, then, Puri writes the book in a colonial language that she imagines no longer exists as such: Portuguese is now defunct. In its place, she envisions a universal lingua franca—known as the X-Language—alongside the proliferation of Indigenous tongues and a radically transformed Brazilian Portuguese that barely resembles its Iberian origins. As explained earlier in the collection, most nations retain their own languages, while others adopt the X-Language for interplanetary communication. Among Indigenous peoples, however, Nheengatu (Nhẽẽgatú) has become the official language of Pindorama since nation-states abandoned Earth.

Also known as Modern Tupi or Amazonian General Language, Nhẽẽgatú is currently undergoing revitalization and is spoken by several thousand people in Brazil and Venezuela. It is one of four official languages in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, a predominantly Indigenous municipality in northwest Brazil ("São Gabriel"; Cruz 117).[32] Nhẽẽgatú is the only living relative of Classical Tupi, once widely used by Native groups, Jesuits, maroons, and *caboclos* (people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry) throughout the region. As Maraguá and Sateré-Mawé writer Yaguarê Yamã notes, Nhẽẽgatú was banned twice in Brazilian history: first in 1778 by the Marquis de Pombal, and again after the Cabanagem Revolution (1835–1840) when Indigenous people and maroons attempted to form an independent Amazonian republic. In both cases, speaking the language was considered a form

of treason and could lead to prison or execution (Yamã). In response, *Ximan Poteh* portrays a future in which languages and tribes once declared extinct now thrive. The X-Language functions as a common tongue, but unlike Portuguese and other colonial languages, it does not erase; it enables multilingual exchange. *Ximan Poteh* thus restores a language presumed defunct and projects it into the future, echoing Nhēēgatú's historical role as an Indigenous lingua franca and affirming the growing consensus that languages no longer spoken are simply dormant, not extinct (Nelson et al 196).

It is important to remember, however, that this gesture does not reflect mere nostalgia for a lost utopia or a desire to return to a simpler past. Instead, ancestral futurisms propose a different understanding of time altogether that challenges the linear narrative of capitalist development. Ailton Krenak reminds us that capitalism orients toward the future with a promise of material growth, but that future doesn't actually exist (59). Almeida notes that this shift in perspective entails a fundamentally different way of moving about the world: "for Indigenous people, it is not about planning the future, but rather looking to the past, taking care of the present in the best way, so that the future is possible" (17).[33] If the goal is to retrieve time, not fight against it, we must also reconsider the purpose—and even the very definitions—of technology and scientific innovation.

Illustrative of this principle is the story of the I.N.D.I.O., a robot in *Ximan Poteh* designed to modernize Native tribes. "Friends, Enemies, and Communists" explains that most Indigenous communities have little interest in such technology; some find it useless, others unsettling. In response, New World Tech develops the Artificial Neural Intelligence for Outreach to Indigenous and Native Peoples (Inteligência Neuroartificial de Divulgação aos Indígenas e Originarios, or I.N.D.I.O.)[34] to target this untapped market. The android bears a stereotyped appearance, with annatto-red components and a vermillion metal headdress. But like Dr. Geller's dinosaurs, it is little more than a spiritless shell. Eventually, the robot kills someone and attempts to eat their flesh. A pajé explains that a human-eating spirit has possessed it, and the tale spreads, prompting communities to further reject the device and New World Tech's efforts. To recoup its investment, the company sells the I.N.D.I.O. to the United States of the Universe, which repurposes it as a covert weapon to sabotage a Krenak diplomatic mission and discredit the Intergalactic Communist Republic.

The I.N.D.I.O. thus reveals its true colors: not only does it literally cannibalize the community it was supposedly designed to serve, but it is later deployed as a weapon against a Native fleet in a maneuver to discredit a communist utopia.[35] Puri makes clear that "outreach" to Indigenous communities has long served the interests of outsiders for material gain. In colonial Brazil, Jesuit-run aldeias—like *reducciones* in Spanish America—were framed as sites of salvation but functioned instead

as tools of conversion and control. This religious imperative eventually gave way to state policies of branqueamento and national integration. Cast as a liberal and humanitarian project, education became another vehicle for cultural assimilation and a mechanism through which communities like the Puri were rendered extinct in the national imaginary.[36]

New World Tech extends these colonial dynamics, though their attempt at cybernetic social engineering fails; unable to market their products to Indigenous communities, they salvage their investment by selling the I.N.D.I.O. to the U.S. government, where it is further weaponized against Native peoples. The red-skinned android thus exposes the complicity between capitalist development and Indigenous exploitation. In response, Kigéw Puri invites us to imagine what Ailton Krenak describes as an "anti-teleological future" that "breaks free from the logics of accumulation" (Brostoff and Dias vii). Rather than confirming the stereotype of Natives' failure to modernize, the I.N.D.I.O.'s breakdown reveals the necropolitical limits of settler capitalism itself. The point is not to romanticize a simpler past or reject technology altogether, but to expand our understanding of what technology is—and what it could be.

This retrofuturistic perspective represents one of the unifying features of Indigenous speculative fiction throughout Abiayala. Although each community has its own conceptions of time and place, a common thread is the idea that ancient traditions may offer some of the most radical ideas for a decolonized future, precisely because they have stood the test of time. For instance, human innovations like the milpa and practices like tequio (collective labor) offer concrete alternatives to extractivism. Much like Krenak, Mixe linguist Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil questions the assumption that technological development is inherently capitalist; on the contrary, she contends that capitalism has hindered human creativity by privileging profit above all else, where the market drives the desire for the newest gadget, and apparatuses are designed to fail so that we will continually purchase more and more. A model of development based instead on collaboration and sustainability—or what Aguilar Gil refers to as tequiology—could effectively shift the emphasis away from profit to prioritize human and other-than-human well-being (*buen vivir*) instead.[37] Ancient practices that have existed for thousands of years increasingly appear to be neither handicaps nor quaint relics of the past but rather concrete solutions for the future that have existed all along.

This approach resonates with the Haudenosaunee Seventh Generation Principle: the idea that decisions should consider their impact not just years but centuries ahead. It also implies obligations to ancestors in the past and reciprocal relationships with other-than-human kin. Contrary to stereotypes that posit Indigenous cultures as timeless and unchanging, this sense of continuity implies

strategic planning and foresight. In that sense, it is arguably more forward-thinking than capitalist development, which presents itself as cutting-edge but is ultimately short-sighted. From the perspective of Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa, "White people don't think very far ahead. They are always too preoccupied with things of the moment" (12). Similarly, Aguilar Gil observes that Western society claims rationality while promoting the irrational idea of infinite growth based on finite resources ("Tequiologías"). The problem is not only that Western rationality does not live up to its own standards but also that it claims superiority by denying other forms of reason. The more climate change accelerates, the more it appears that Indigenous peoples were on the right side of history and that practices previously deemed uncivilized or backwards can offer real solutions for the future.[38] Indigenous science fiction thus exposes the fictions of science, challenging the assumption that Western epistemologies are the only viable means of systematizing knowledge of the universe.

Unwritten Futures

In a sense, *Ximan Poteh* evades conclusion; the author indicates in the blurb that "the stories are not yet complete; I will be adding new ones periodically."[39] Though she has not done so yet, this gesture is deeply symbolic: by leaving the narrative open-ended, she refuses closure and affirms that future Puri stories remain to be told. That refusal echoes the broader conditions under which the book circulates—or fails to circulate—today. *Ximan Poteh* is available as an e-book on Amazon for $0.99 but has little online presence otherwise. As of March 2025, a search for the title yields only nine results, highlighting the challenges of visibility for Native authors. I want to close, then, with a brief reflection on the book's materiality as it relates to the question of erasure and resurgence.

Compared to countries like the U.S., Canada, or even Mexico, Brazil's book market is volatile, and Indigenous literature remains largely relegated to the realm of anthropology and folklore. The prevalence of the oral tradition among Native communities in Pindorama also fuels the misconception that their stories represent a quaint holdover from the past rather than a complex aesthetic system engaged with its own concerns for the future. Potiguar writer Graça Graúna argues that ethnocentric stereotypes cast literature as exclusively Western, consigning oral societies to a 'pre-literary' status and rendering Indigenous writing in Brazil invisible (20-24). In an interview on the *Território Cyberus* podcast, Puri also notes that Indigenous literature and science fiction are both niche genres, such that readers are unlikely to find her work unless they deliberately seek it out (Demingos 20:28). She acknowledges struggling with self-promotion (Demingos 16:25), and despite being active on Instagram—where she posts book reviews on Indigenous and mainstream authors alike—she made

no mention of her own book when it came out in 2021. My point here is not to blame Puri for any shortcoming but rather to highlight the added burden of Native writers who must serve as author, editor, publisher, and publicist all at once. I maintain that *Ximan Poteh* has literary value far beyond the narrow category of Indigenous science fiction and that its relative invisibility stems less from the work itself than from market forces, algorithmic bias, and prevailing assumptions about Indigeneity.

Paradoxically, however, these editorial constraints have contributed to the obscurity of a text aimed at combating the erasure of the Puri people. Though available on Amazon, *Ximan Poteh* remains largely invisible to mainstream readers and inaccessible to those unable to read Portuguese (including many Spanish speakers).[40] Accordingly, it serves as a reminder—especially for white American academics like myself—that not everything is right at our fingertips. I argue that Kigéw Puri reorients hemispheric debates on Indigenous futurisms from southeastern Pindorama and that bringing her work into the conversation can widen our collective horizons. By projecting a supposedly extinct people into the distant future, she provincializes Western technoscience and advances decolonial worldbuilding rooted in animism and reciprocity. In doing so, she dismantles space-colonial logics and the "vanishing Indian" trope while offering concrete alternatives grounded in Puri history. However, we must take care not to replicate the colonial logic of discovery through literary criticism. The goal is not to unearth a marginal text as yet another lost world, but to recognize how settler-colonial logic blinds us to other realities that have been present all along.

Notes

[1] Abiayala is an alternative name for the Americas derived from the Guna language of Panama. In the 1970s, Aymara activist Takir Mamani of Bolivia proposed adopting this term as an alternative name for the Americas, and since then, it has spread widely in usage, particularly among Indigenous activists and organizations. Whenever possible, I opt for Indigenous toponyms in an effort to refrain from reifying colonial and national boundaries, unless I am referring specifically to the nation-state. Although many use the term as a synonym for Latin America, I argue for using it the broader, hemispheric sense.

[2] Justice argues that labels like science fiction, speculative fiction, and fantasy are all "burdened by dualistic presumptions of real and unreal that don't take seriously or leave legitimate space for other meaningful ways of experiencing this and other worlds: through lived encounter and engagement, through ceremony and ritual, through dream" (152).

[3] Turtle Island is another name for North America that has been widely used among Indigenous activists and academics since the 1970s. It derives from a creation story common to several peoples of the Northeastern Woodlands nations, such as the Lenape and Haudenosaunee, that tells of the continent being formed on the back of a turtle.

[4] Notable exceptions include novels and short stories by Daniela Catrileo (Mapuche), Mario Molina Cruz (Zapotec), Kigéw Puri (Puri), and Daniel Munduruku (Munduruku) as well as films by Itandehui Jansen (Mixtec) and Zahy Guajajara (Tentehar-Guajajara). Journalists Ailton Krenak (Krenak) and Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil (Mixe) have also written about Indigenous futurisms, and much like Dillon, Aguilar Gil explicitly calls for more Native authors to "conjugate our world in the future tense" by drawing on lessons learned from a long history of catastrophe ("Mesoamérica" 60).

[5] The name Pindorama ("The Land of the Palms") derives from the Tupi language and was used by many groups in the region to refer to their territory prior to European invasion. Many activists still use it today as an alternative to "Brazil."

[6] The lines from the song in Portuguese are "Nossa luta é pela retomada do tempo e não exatamente uma luta contra o tempo" and "Somos a raiz do passado que conecta com o hoje."

[7] Pietro has authored several works in this genre, including the novels *Amazofuturismo* (2021) and *Amazofuturismo II: Primavera ancestral* (2022). The anthology *Amazofuturo: histórias amazofuturistas (vol. 1)* (2022) features short stories by twenty different authors inspired by Pietro's five pillars of the genre: 1) The characters are Indigenous people of the Amazon; 2) The Indigenous technology is innovative and unique; 3) The technological advances are in harmony with the environment; 4) The stories are told from the point of view of Indigenous characters; and 5) Amazofuturism is about life, in all its forms and expressions (*Amazofuturismo* 6-7). For more on the relationship between these two genres, see Castelões Gama and Velloso Garcia.

[8] Kigéw Puri has previously published under the names André da Silva Muniz and André Muniz Puri but now uses her Indigenous name exclusively. Since Indigenous people's tribal affiliation often functions as a surname in Brazil, I often refer to Puri by her full name to avoid confusion between the author and her community at large. All works are cited under the name used at the time of publication.

[9] For more on the final frontier trope, see John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 1-2.

[10] This territory corresponds to the present-day states of Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and São Paulo.

[11] Brazil has typically been described as an extraction colony in contrast with settler colonies like Australia, the United States, and Canada. However, scholarship on this division has been shifting in recent years. See also Shannon Speed, "Structures of Settler Capitalism in Abya Yala."

[12] In some ways, this phenomenon echoes the mestizo nationalism of countries like Mexico and Peru. However, Brazil's current Indigenous population (0.83%, 1.7 million) is drastically smaller than Mexico (19.4%, 23.2 million) and Peru (25.7%, 6 million) relative to the overall population. Comparatively speaking, then, Indigenous erasure is more pronounced in Brazil, and the prevailing yet erroneous assumption is that all that remains are a few uncontacted tribes in the Amazon.

[13] On Amerindian perspectivism and multinaturalism, see Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). For more on how these ideas have informed posthumanist and multispecies theory, see Eduardo Kohn's *How Forests Think* (University of California Press, 2013) and Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser's *A World of Many Worlds* (Duke University Press, 2018).

[14] Demarcation is the official process of land recognition in Brazil for Indigenous and *quilombola* communities. The legal procedure is based on the temporal landmark thesis, which posits that only claims based on territorial occupations at the time of the 1988 constitution are valid (Poets 2-3).

[15] The phrase was later popularized by Alberto Rangel's 1908 book *Inferno verde*. See Slater, *Entangled Edens*; Queiroz; and Hecht.

[16] In Brazil, the term *aldeias* refers to rural Indigenous villages, while *favelas* are densely populated urban settlements associated with low-income residents, especially people of color.

[17] "Hey! / Nosso povo nunca morre, a raiz nos salvará. / Hey! Olha aqui, nunca foi sorte. / A escuridão tive que iluminar. / Hey! E me jogaram do penhasco / e tive que aprender voar. / Hey! E me jogaram na fogueira / mas virei água pra apagar. / E estou de pé com fé. / Não vou me arrastar. / A minha morte você quer, mas não vou te dar […] Você pensou que eu não iria voltar. Voltei / pra lutar, até reencarnei / Você pensou que eu ia me calar mas gritei. / 1, 2, 3, no sistema eu entrei. / Me infiltrei para matar o rei."

[18] Traditionally, Brazilian SF production has been heavily focused in the nation's Southeast, especially São Paulo. For Da Silva and Zuin, one of the key characteristics of the Fourth Wave is the geographic and ethnic diversification through other locales like the Amazon and the sertão. Some presses associated with the Fourth Wave, like Cyberus and Corvus, are based in the North or Northeast, while others like Plutão and Draco continue publish and distribute from of the state of São Paulo. In either case, these movements expand visibility beyond traditional production circuits and authorial voices and challenge that stereotype that "the southeastern region is … urban and technological, while the northeastern region is … violent, underdeveloped, and untechnological" (Gama, "Afrofuturism" 286). In the case of *Ximan Poteh,* Puri challenges the adjacent stereotype that Indigeneity has been eliminated from the urban center.

[19] "Esses contos são de uma época que eu ainda não vivi, pois aconteceram no futuro e eu ainda não existo lá. São as histórias de um puri que ainda nem nasceu!"

[20] I follow recommendations by the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association and the Native Governance Center to not italicize words from Indigenous languages, since this practice can have the effect of othering Indigenous knowledges rather than normalizing them.

[21] "O segredo que os cientistas indígenas há muito descobriram é dar apenas o primeiro passo, plantar as primeiras mudas e introduzir as primeiras espécies, pois a partir daí a própria floresta saberia se construir sozinha."

[22] "um misto de mulher e dinosauro"

[23] Crichton's *Jurassic Park* (1990) and its sequel *The Lost World* (1995) were the basis of films by the same names, released in 1993 and 1997, respectively. The Jurassic Park franchise has released six more films since then. In Crichton and Spielberg's version, the action takes place on the fictional island of Isla Nublar off the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, while Doyle's original tale was set in the Amazon.

[24] "Todo ali parecia fora de lugar, as plantas, os insetos, até mesmo o solo era estranho—tentaram recriar um mundo que há muito se fora, mas não havia nada de *natural* naquilo."

[25] "o fruto de uma vaidade humana que saíra de controle e se revoltara contra seus próprios criadores"

[26] "*Como vê, tudo pôde ser explicado pela ciencia*"

[27] "*Santiago, você não precisa me convencer de nada. Você é livre para acreditar nas suas próprias superstições.*"

[28] See *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*.

[29] "uma coisa era recuperar a vida recémperdida"

[30] "Nada é extinto por completo, muito menos a vida"

[31] "O indígena só pode existir no futuro, se ele existir no presente"

[32] The exact number of speakers of the language at present is unclear. Many sources cite a UNESCO study in 2005 that estimated the population at 30,000, but more recent data suggests that the current number is much lower. See Cruz and Brito.

[33] "Assim, para o indígena, não se trata de planejar o futuro, mas, sim de olhar para o passado, cuidar do presente da melhor maneira, para que o futuro seja possível."

[34] "Indio" in Brazilian Portuguese is similar to "Indian" in English; both derive from Christopher Columbus's mistaken belief that he had arrived in India, and both are often used disparagingly against Indigenous people today. In a forthcoming translation of this short story into English, I opted to render the acronym as Intelligent Neural Device for Intercultural Assistance and Navigation, or I.N.D.I.A.N.

[35] In the story, Utopia is the official name of the planet inhabited by Terrans from around the globe who band together to form the Intergalactic Communist Republic.

[36] For more on this history and ongoing challenges, see "Indigenous School Education in Brazil" by Roseli R. Mello, Marcondy M. de Souza, and Thaís J. Palomino; *Educação escolar indígena no século XXI: encantos e desencantos* by Gersem Baniwa; and "A diversidade sociocultural dos povos indígenas no Brasil: o que a escola tem a ver com isso?" by Edson Kayapó.

[37] The concept of *buen vivir* is most heavily associated with the Andean notion of *sumak kawsay* (Quechua) or *suma qamaña* (Aymara), but the basic principle is common to many Indigenous philosophies worldwide. For Indigenous conceptions of *bem viver* in Brazil, see *Das coisas que aprendi: ensaios sobre o bem-viver* by Daniel Munduruku and *Cartas para o bem viver*, ed. Rafael Xucuru-Kariri and Suzane Lima Costa. See also Leanne Betsasamosake Simpson's discussion of the Anishinaabe concept of mino bimaadiziwin in *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* and Mariana Mora Bayo's treatment of the Tzeltal and Tsotsil concept of lekil kuxlejal in *Kuxlejal Politics: Indigenous Autonomy, Race, and Decolonizing Research in Zapatista Communities*.

[38] Aguilar Gil attributes this observation to Mapuche journalist and historian Pedro Cayuqueo. See "Tequiologies: Indigenous Solutions Against Climate Catastrophe."

[39] "Obs.: os contos ainda não estão completos, estarei adicionando contos novos periódicamente."

[40] I am working with Kigéw Puri on translating *Ximan Poteh* into English, but she has expressed a desire to hold off on publishing it until she completes her doctorate and can add more stories.

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