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Assessment of Intercultural Bilingual Education in the Brazilian State of Amazonas

Abstract In Brazil, and more generally, in Latin America, the struggle of the indigenous movements for the demarcation of their ancestral land and the development of an intercultural education contributed to the constitutional changes of the 1980s, which led these states to regard themselves as a multicultural nation and to recognize specific collective rights to native people and tribes living on their territory. This dynamic deals with the scope of a democratic transition and a decentralization process which characterizes a new form of governance of almost all Latin America countries where the indigenous territories and the resources at their disposal can be preserved. By giving the possibility to formulate another vision of the school education based on a dialectic between indigenous knowledge and school knowledge in a sustainable developmental perspective of the indigenous territories, new experiments started to be expanded from the 1990s.

This article advances the discussion between globalized and localized educational practices. It enlightens the debate between the homogenization of school systems and other alternatives such as the use of traditional knowledge. It focuses on socio-cultural knowledge and its intersection between formal and informal education.

The first section of this paper presents the theoretical framework of my research and its methodology. The second section discusses, in a historical background, how the Brazilian indigenous public policies were implemented. In the third section, I use my fieldwork data to examine and analyze the advent and the development of intercultural bilingual education (IBE) in two regions of Amazonas state (Alto Solimões and Alto Rio Negro) among the Ticuna, Baniwa, and Tukano people during the 1990s and 2000s.

Keywords Intercultural Bilingual Education; Socio-Cultural Knowledge; Formal and Informal Education; Cultural Anthropology; Brazilian State of Amazonas

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Theoretical Framework and Methodology

My theoretical posture deals with cultural anthropology (Geertz 1973; Clifford and Marcus 1986) and qualitative sociology, in an *interactionist* perspective (Mead 1934; Becker 1963; Glaser and Strauss 1967). I regard *culture* as a dynamic organization of internal differences. Compared with this approach, *intercultural education* is thought of as a transmission of a plural and critical knowledge, resulting from interaction, reciprocity, or more globally, *intersubjectivity*. It addresses all students, to see beyond their differences. *Pluralism* is promoted as a value and an educational prospect, a keystone between the human universal and the uniqueness expressed by differences.

Intercultural psychology (Segall, Campbell, and Herskovits 1966; Retschitzky, Bossel-Lagos, and Dasen 1989; Amin 2012) explores interactions between individuals and various cultural groups through stereotypes, values, and attitudes which emerge during exchanges. This involves utilizing the individual in his cultural context and determining the cultural influence on his behavior in multicultural situations. The *interaction* is defined as interdependence between dominant and minority cultures, and as a coherent plurality. Then the intercultural educational goal is to facilitate decentering and reframing processes resulting from otherness to build new thought patterns, non-reducible to the cultures in interaction.

By using these contributions of anthropology, sociology, and psychology, *interculturality* can be considered as a major educational aim in terms of

knowledge, skills, and attitudes, within a *comprehensive approach* to handling plurality.

Educational research from “Western” culture cannot be universally valid. Education is a cultural transmission which more largely depends on socialization in informal and formal learning contexts. *Culture* is linked to meanings, customs, and rules coming from predominant groups, which is translated into education policies or into a normative traditional transmission of learning. According to cultural contexts, *formal education* or *informal education* can be more or less useful in delivering knowledge and skills.

Following the “Western model,” *formal education* is directed by systematic instruction dealing with “universal” knowledge, in limited time and space by specialists. Traditional education can also remain formal during ritual ceremonies or in different forms of religious learning (Koranic school), even if there are differences in the institutionalization of education. Lifelong learning (education not limiting itself to the school period, but lifetime lasting: it does not correspond to the liberal significance related to this concept) deals with *informal education*: family or peers transmit specific cultural values and norms in everyday situations (Segall et al. 1999:78-88). It is provided constantly and everywhere by relatives and elders, and adapted to the local culture, to productive work, and to the society’s cosmology. According to Bruner (1996:iv), “schooling is only one small part of how a culture inducts the young into its canonical ways.” The transmission of know-how (apprenticeship, observation, guided participation) is a characteristic of *informal education*, just as writing

is a characteristic of *formal education*. School knowledge is rather general, abstract, and partitioned into categories, while traditional knowledge is specific and principally developed from the local people's experiences, thinking, beliefs, and memory (Semali and Kincheloe 1999:3; Battiste 2008:499).

Intercultural bilingual education (IBE) results from a combination and rethinking of both education systems (including specific curriculum), a process of translation of the "Western" formal school into other socio-cultural environments, a textual development of the knowledge from oral tradition in the native tongue, as well as the national language (Hornberger 2000). Nonetheless, the "domestication" of oral tradition through writing involved a deformation of the ways of thinking of societies without writing (Goody 1986). The fixture of words on paper can simplify narrative discourses whereas before they took various significances according to the place and context in which they were pronounced. Indigenous students can access the universality of science, but from their natural environment, with their socio-cultural techniques, and generally, initially, from their native language. Regional history and geography are being reworked in IBE through oral transmission to develop a *critical thought* relating to the school and traditional knowledge and their contextualized development. Arts and productive activities depend on more traditional know-how, but dialectics are sometimes developed with the aim of improving or transforming traditional techniques. However, pedagogic and didactic approaches are perceptibly different since relatives and elders contribute to this training, often outside the school, which

is also open to them. Knowledge is not only the privilege of teachers, but that of traditional society, mainly depositaries (elders) of each skill or area of workmanship. Curriculum can increasingly be fortified by new disciplines which make sense in local context, such as: rights of the indigenous people, indigenous myth and history, applied linguistics, ecology and sustainable development, health education, and use of medicinal plants, et cetera.

With the *Great Confinement* analyzed by Foucault (1975), aimed at arranging the world starting from the *classical theory* by separating school from ordinary life, the *school form* (Vincent 2004) emerged in the 16th and 17th centuries in European societies (Ariès 1962). This global model of schooling is characterized by a relationship between a teacher and his pupils not directly linked to other social relations, impersonal rules which both must be respectful to, similar temporal and spatial arrangements for learning, a definition of a certain knowledge considered as "universal." This shift towards a regulation and a discipline of rhetoric art was intended to break up the spontaneity and the resistance of traditional training patterns. People did not employ their traditional knowledge any more in particular situations and socio-cultural contexts, while the institutionalization of their relationship to writing immobilized them, giving an impersonal significance to them.

The traditional transmission of knowledge in oral societies (Goody 1977) and the "Western" model of the *school form* can appear *a priori* dichotomous, which often contributes to their juxtaposed development and to a process of domination by the "Western" of

the "indigenous." In fact, the generalization of an IBE in the indigenous territories allows dialectic between the "Western" *school form* and indigenous socio-cultural knowledge (Aikman 1997). We attend to the institutional invention of an indigenous school in the context of questioning the hegemony of "one-way thinking" resulting from the colonization and the building of the Brazilian state-nation. This dynamic of autonomous processes of decolonization of knowledge offers a significant alternative to reconceptualizing the relationship of indigenous peoples to schooling. It opens up a new dialogue (Freire 1970) with all human sciences (Overing and Passes 2000) and promotes student empowerment (McLaren 2007:195).

This article presents three IBE cases (schools) that can be compared and contrasted regarding the use of the public educational policy in order to benefit the population. The comparative elements of my anthropological research (qualitative methodology) are Ticuna, Tukano, and Baniwa IBE cases with several facets (degrees of political/religious domination/submission and indigenous awareness, teaching training, IBE developments), IBE before and after 2008 (IBE in secondary education—as "integrated education"—was only legally recognized in 2008).

The comparative study I conducted (6 field research missions, primarily for Brazilian Universities [UFAM, UEA] as associate researcher, between 2006 and 2010) in 24 Ticuna, Baniwa, and Tukano communities allowed me to grasp the variations introduced in practices, representations, and speeches relating to IBE, in terms of the indigenous

group, as well as pupils, parents, teachers, communities, and schools. Overall, I spent several months in each community, sometimes with Brazilian colleagues or postgraduate students. I was introduced by political indigenous leaders and helped by indigenous teachers for translation between Portuguese and indigenous languages. I conducted interviews (364) and observations (248), not only in schools and classrooms, with directors, teachers, and pupils, but also in families and with various traditional knowledge carriers (shamans, leaders, elders, craftsmen, etc.). I identified part of the traditional knowledge and know-how of each community, questioned the implication for social or economic relations, observed their practices in local contexts and questioned informants on their practical and symbolic meanings. I followed the teachers' activities inside and outside the school, IBE generally implying training with various members of the community outside the classroom. According to the level and the type of school, I analyzed the variations of IBE in its practices and representations, but also its relations to each community expectations, with regard to local and sustainable development.

Likewise, the various training centers (with indigenous and non-indigenous trainees) for indigenous teachers (initial and further training with Teaching Diploma [*Magistério Indígena*] for the first series in basic education, training at superior level with Bachelor series [*Licenciaturas Interculturais*] to extend availability of the second series of basic education and implementing secondary education in indigenous territories, and University courses in IBE which I have participated in) were exciting places

to carry out interviews and observations (DeWalt, DeWalt, and Wayland 1998)—including during practical training—in order to analyze student-teachers' practices and thought processes (initial training), as well as those of the teachers (continuing education) and to compare them.

Brazilian Indigenous Public Policies in Education

At the beginning of the 16th century, when Europeans arrived in the territory currently occupied by Brazil, there were nearly 10 million natives and more than 1200 different languages. These populations developed their own forms of production and transmission of knowledge by the means of oral tradition and iconographic constructions supporting their memorizing (Severi 2007). Firstly, the colonizers were unaware of traditional forms of indigenous education; in the second half of the 16th century, the Jesuit missionaries tried to destroy the social organization, cultural, political, and economic systems of these people through schooling, to better enforce the Catholic religion and use the indigenous labor for economic purposes (Oliveira 1983).

In order to achieve a domination-subordination relationship in their favor, the missionaries challenged the indigenous people's vision of the world, and persecuted the traditional carriers (*pajé*, i.e., shaman) of the indigenous knowledge (Barreto 2007). The process of importing the Portuguese language was largely imposed by the Portuguese colonial state, as well as the consequent Brazilian state. In less than 5 centuries, nearly 1000 indigenous languages and

knowledge systems were erased, notably through the monolingual and monocultural *school form* allied to an extremely predatory colonial system (Ribeiro 1970).

In Brazil, the Portuguese and their descendants considered the "Western" *school form* as "universal" and to be imposed on societies suspected of being without any form of knowledge transmission. This ethnocentrism supports the idea of the subservient dependence of indigenous people on the missionaries and the official welfare organizations during the Republican period. From 1914, Catholic missionaries (as Salesians in Alto Rio Negro)—followed since the 1950s by different preachers from the Protestant Churches—remained permanently in the Amazonas state and pursued an enrolment process of the indigenous children by building large boarding schools—like in other countries with Indigenous (Adams 1995)—for catechism and education, applying the integrationist Brazilian state policy (Oliveira 1988). To Salesians, the basic education strategy concerns the *school form*, and more precisely—the S. J. Bosco Pedagogy, known under the name of "preventive system," initiated in Turin in the middle of the 19th century to educate young prisoners. This terminology is still found in the school rules of the São Gabriel da Cachoeira Diocese. This approach to education, aimed at generating "good Christians" and "honest citizens," was transposed into Amazonia by the assimilation of the Amerindian people to "European and Christian civilization" with the idea of "saving" these populations in this life and in the hereafter. By their religious proselytism, evangelical pastors coming from the United States strengthened this

deculturation and brought divisions between the indigenous groups from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. Until the end of the 1980s, in Amazonia and more widely in Brazil, the school can be regarded as an instrument of acculturation (even if it did not always succeed) to the "Western" world and concealment of the cultural difference (Cardoso de Oliveira 1988).

From the end of the 1970s, these dynamics of educational, cultural, and religious deculturation/aculturation were reinforced by a national policy of indigenous land demarcation, determining the integration level of native-born people in the Brazilian nation, from the categories: "isolated," "with intermittent contacts," "permanent contacts," and "integrated." Once "integrated," the indigenous people definitively lost their specific rights and saw their territories "released" for economic exploitation in favor of mining and forest companies, great landowners, and small colonists (Albert 1997).

In the 1980s, numerous conferences and indigenous assemblies followed in several Brazilian regions, which resulted in open discussions on a specific indigenous and differentiated school education. The indigenous policy—initiated by the Indian Protection Service (SPI) in 1910 and prolonged through the FUNAI (National Indian Foundation)—which aimed at integrating the indigenous people into the national community, was denounced by the indigenous organizations which claimed the recognition of their difference in the Nation and the establishment of a differentiated education to consolidate it. That was why the 1988 Constitution considered the Indigenous not as a "disappearing

transitory category," but as *citizens who have a cultural autonomy to decide freely, consciously, and with understanding which future they desire, which elements of other cultures they want to incorporate or reject in their own, in accordance with their own needs*. Since this new Constitution, the State has assumed the pluricultural composition of Brazilian society and the fact that Indigenous can have a specific, differentiated, intercultural, and bilingual education (Ministério da Educação 1988).

The legal bases of indigenous school education are instituted by 9,394 permanent arrangements of the 1996 Law—Guidelines and Bases of the National Education (LDBE)—in Statement 14/99 of September 14, 1999 issued by CNE/CEB (National Council of Education), and in Resolution 3 of November 10, 1999 issued by CNE/CEB. Thereafter, the National Plan of Education gives rise to Law 10,172 of January 09, 2001 (which specifies what must be an indigenous school education), and the 5,051 Presidential Decree of April 19, 2003 promulgates the ILO Convention 169. The LDBE affirms teachers and indigenous schooling autonomy for the politico-teaching project formulation (indigenous people are entitled to design the IBE framework with local realities) registered in accordance with the communities' needs and expectations, the use of indigenous language, and their own learning processes in basic education. It establishes intercultural education to guarantee indigenous cultural rights and traditions, as well as the access to the technical and scientific knowledge of the national society. Integrated education (as a technical and local IBE extension) was formalized (Ministério da Educação 2007) by the 5840 Decree of July 13, 2006

which offers “integral training,” preparing activities for the indigenous communities by taking into account the local potentialities and difficulties.

However, indigenous people living in urban areas do not have access to IBE which concerns only indigenous territories. We must be aware that this article is less representative of all Brazilian states—where IBE has not been implemented and/or where the dynamic of appropriation by the indigenous people has been less or different (Rockwell and Gomes 2009; Tassinari and Cohn 2009)—than the Amazonas state and, more precisely, its indigenous territories.

Advent and Development of IBE in Alto Solimões (Ticuna Case) and Alto Rio Negro (Tukano and Baniwa Cases)

According to available sources (FOIRN/ISA 2006), 215 to 225 indigenous people currently live in Brazil; they speak more than 180 different languages, as well as Portuguese and Castilian (in the border zones). Some groups remain monolingual, but the majority also speak Portuguese, *Nheengatu* (a common language created by the Jesuits as a general indigenous language which was adapted by the indigenous groups having lost their native tongue, as the Mura or the Tariano did), quite often between 1 to 5 other indigenous languages, according to the speakers, and sometimes Castilian, as Ticuna (which one also finds in Colombia), or Baniwa (towards the Venezuelan border).

Amazonas state has the highest indigenous density (168,680 or 20.6% of the total [817,963 Indigenous or 0.4% of the Brazilian population—190 million], not

including “isolated Indigenous”) (IBGE 2012). The indigenous populations of Amazonas state (which has 62 municipalities) live mainly in São Gabriel da Cachoeira (29,017) and Tabatinga (14,855) municipalities. In São Gabriel da Cachoeira municipality, where the two indigenous groups (Tukano and Baniwa) from my research live, there is a high concentration of indigenous residents (76.6%), with 57.8% in São Gabriel da Cachoeira town and 95.5% in the rural areas. In Alto Rio Negro region (São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Santa Isabel, and Barcelos municipalities), there are 23 indigenous groups speaking the languages resulting from four linguistic families: eastern *Tukano*, *Aruák*, *Makù*, and *Yanomami*. In São Gabriel da Cachoeira municipality, 750 indigenous communities are located mainly in the five larger indigenous territories which were officially recognized and approved in 1998, forming a continuous zone of 106,000 square kilometers. After Alto Rio Negro, Alto Solimões is characterized by the greatest concentration of indigenous people, where the most important group is Ticuna with more than 30,000 speakers (more than 47,000 Ticuna are distributed in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru). Alto Solimões (in particular Tabatinga and Benjamin Constant municipalities) and Alto Rio Negro (especially São Gabriel da Cachoeira municipality) were the first two regions to develop IBE in the Amazonas state, and that through the initiative of indigenous professors, traditional and political representatives.

I present my fieldwork research results in Alto Rio Negro and Alto Solimões by comparing IBE development (after 20 years of IBE experimentation) before and after 2008 to more accurately reflect steps concerning IBE in basic education (officially recognized

since 1996, but initiated with pilot experiments since 1991) and IBE in secondary education (officially recognized since 2008, but initiated with pilot experiments since 2004). IBE policy concerns only schools in indigenous territories where only indigenous teachers can teach, stay, and speak the students’ mother tongue. One perverse effect of this IBE policy has been the indecisiveness to generalize IBE in Métis towns (outside indigenous territories) where a lot of indigenous children live alongside *Caboclos*.

As for Ticuna people from Alto Solimões, Indigenous from Alto Rio Negro—like Tukano or Baniwa—organized themselves to establish and develop an IBE in their territories, but the difference between them is the Tukano and Baniwa ability to break free from the grip of religious influence in indigenous education, to take creative initiatives, and to explore solutions using a *critical thought*. Also, the Tukano and Baniwa territories are located far from Métis towns, unlike Ticuna. However, São Gabriel municipality (Alto Rio Negro area) is mostly indigenous compared to others. Likewise, Indigenous are more likely to have retained their cultures, languages, customs, and organizational traditions. Nonetheless, there are some differences between Tukano and Baniwa according to their ability to organize themselves or cooperate with partners that can support them, and educational strategies envisaged.

Degrees of Political/Religious Domination/Submission and Indigenous Awareness

Ticuna have been living for centuries in a territory common to three neighboring countries: Brazil,

Colombia, and Peru. After having experienced war and slavery, they remained semi-nomadic until the beginning of the 20th century, while seeking to escape conflicts and colonized areas. The evangelist sects, which a lot of them joined during the 20th century, contributed to their relocation by gathering them in villages with the support of official organizations, which provided them with basic material assistance (schools, dispensaries, etc.) under an incentive policy. However, the rule of uxorilocality (the husband residing with his father-in-law) contributes to promoting this mobility, and cross-border visits between relatives are still common. In Brazil, Ticuna are concentrated mainly in Alto Solimões area. The larger villages are nearer to the Métis urban areas due to their expansion, like Umariáçu, located beside the town of Tabatinga.

During the 1970s and 1980s, many Ticuna communities were the target of the evangelist sects’ proselytism (God’s Assembly, God’s Cross, etc.) which gradually prohibited the majority of the Ticuna’s cultural practices (initiation rites, etc.), which contributed to a deep acculturation/deculturation of these populations, with the exception of their native language (used as an instrument of religious communication). For example, Umariáçu village was divided into two administrative entities because of competition between two evangelist sects. However, some indigenous teachers tried to work again with traditional knowledge (without superficial folklorism) with the elders and shamans, but they were not very highly regarded by religious, political, and economic leaders close to the evangelist sects.

When the religious sects are proselyte, as I perceive in Umariáçu villages, the shamanic knowledge is not promoted and its links with health or natural sciences cannot be discussed or confronted. Indeed, in the face of undue appropriation and use of the traditional indigenous knowledge, promotion and defense of the bio-cultural collective heritage fit into IBE curricula, but in Ticuna case, cannot be sufficiently worked in the links between academic and traditional knowledge.

IBE is more particularly developed in Alto Rio Negro area (located in São Gabriel da Cachoeira municipality), where more than 90% of the population is indigenous. São Gabriel da Cachoeira is the only municipality where Indigenous obtained a Law (Decree 145 of December 11, 2002) formalizing in addition to Portuguese three other languages (*Nheengatu*, *Tukano*, and *Baniwa*), and where the mayor and the deputy-mayor since 2008 have been Indigenous (respectively Tukano and Baniwa).

The Federation of the Rio Negro Indigenous Organizations (FOIRN), based in São Gabriel town, remains however at the heart of decisions concerning indigenous people. It is organized in five regional bodies which represent more than 40 indigenous associations distributed throughout territories of the Rio Negro tributaries. The FOIRN thus plays a major role in IBE development and establishment.

In 2004, the FOIRN organized the first seminar relating to implementing an indigenous secondary education (COPIARN 2004). It questioned the role of religious bodies in indigenous schools, presented an assessment of IBE in basic education, and proposed

implementing pilot experiments in secondary education. The representatives of the indigenous professors requested that the school regulation of São Gabriel Diocese be replaced by a politico-pedagogical project (PPP), specific to each basic education school. It decided that PPP establishment should, on the one hand, result from a discussion between indigenous professors, parents, students, representatives, and, more generally, each community concerned and, on the other hand, respect indigenous cultural differences, their languages, and their historical heritage. Each school is led to work critically by applying traditional knowledge in a dialogical relation to other cultures from the intercultural point of view, by avoiding any prioritization. In order to support this initiative, the indigenous organizations require the Brazilian universities (UFAM, UEA) to organize intercultural higher training (to which I have contributed) in order to help indigenous professors to elaborate new local curricula in a dialectical thinking between traditional (oral and practical transmission with contextualized meaning) and academic (theoretical and universal with written transmission) knowledge.

In March 2008, the first seminar on “indigenous integrated secondary education” (FOIRN 2008) was an opportunity to present the indigenous pilot experiments in secondary education, so that they could be recognized by the Amazonas state, and to clarify indigenous expectations in terms of collaboration in implementing integrated secondary education. The conclusions specified that this teaching uses new knowledge, technical developments combining theory and practice, and requires the establishment of a reference center for research with

specific activities. The aim is to develop technical, scientific, and technological traditional knowledge, to improve anthropological and artistic knowledge over the first eight years of schooling, to create conditions allowing young people to be able to become teachers in communities, or researchers, technicians, craftsmen, as well as consolidating traditional knowledge with the elders, relating, for example, to traditional plants and remedies which result from this. Indigenous secondary education can be differentiated, only if this does not constitute an inequality in terms of access to “the tangible and cultural properties” and if it is able not only to allow students to continue onto higher education, but also to have appropriate knowledge and skills to manage their territory and to provide alternatives concerned with sustainable development at the end of secondary education. This teaching should be carried out in schools located in indigenous communities for four years, regarding indigenous school education (school organization, own assessment and training, schedule and didactic teaching material for differentiated education, traditional meals, etc.).

Baniwa are dispersed in 96 communities along the Içana river (Alto Rio Negro tributary) in the North-West of the Amazonas state and in the Venezuelan and Colombian borders (Inírida and Guainía rivers). The majority of Baniwa speaks the Baniwa language, part of the *Arawak* linguistic family. Its speakers are located in the middle and upper Içana river, Aiari river, and their tributaries. A minority lives in lower Içana, speaks only *Nheengatu*, and is influenced by Salesians who have stayed in Assunção village for several years and built a sec-

ondary school in 2000. On the Brazilian side, these populations represent more than 5500 people (9000 in the three countries).

Missionaries have been present in Alto Rio Negro since the 18th century, but Baniwa Christianization intensified in the second half of the 19th century with the advent of Millenarian movements. The “Cristos” Venâncio Kamilo and Aniceto established a religious doctrine incorporating elements of Baniwa mythology and rituals, with beliefs and symbolic practices from popular Catholicism in the Içana area. Wright and Hill (1985:42) reported syncretic practices based on the relation between the collective ritual representations and knowledge about nature, like fasting and reclusion to increase psychological control of followers, the belief that diseases cure and spiritual ills should be compensated by material offerings (which can also be found in the Baniwa cosmological conception). However, the “Cristos” were fought and persecuted by the Brazilian state, not only because they opposed the interests of its faithful ally, the Catholic Church, but also for preaching in favor of the Indigenous liberation from “White” oppression.

Interviews with elders informed us that, at the beginning of the 20th century, Salesian missionaries settled permanently in the area and initiated a process of schooling of indigenous children by building boarding schools on the banks of the rivers:

Father Jose Schneider and Sister Therese began to catechize the Baniwa along the Içana river and built a center and a boarding school in Assunção village [lower Içana], and then small schools in the neighboring

communities of middle Içana and Aiari river. They were joined by Protestant missionaries [New Tribes Mission] from 1950 to 1970. [André]

Then, Protestants and Catholics sought the allegiance of the various Baniwa lineages and thus contributed to their division. Since the end of the 1990s, two thirds of Baniwa were considered Protestant, more than 80% living in the area of the Içana river; but more than 70% are still Catholic along the Aiari river. This religious proselytism has also resulted in the quick removal of most traditional rituals and holy artifacts. Flutes, horns, and maracas were thrown into the rivers by missionaries. Traditional carriers of knowledge (*pajés*, song masters, ritual officiates, and healers) were stigmatized. Missionaries actively contributed to the destruction of various forms of traditional knowledge transmission and to the reduction of numerous *pajés* by demonizing them. By combining catechization with healthcare through a nursing sister, the link with the sacred in the *pajés'* traditional remedies was partly eroded.

Until the 1990s, like other indigenous people, some of the Baniwa children attended conventional school with teaching only in Portuguese, without relation to indigenous realities, and limited to the first 4 years of basic education, except for the Salesian boarding schools offering continuity over 8 years. To carry on their studies, pupils had to travel to the chief town (São Gabriel) even Manaus.

The Baniwa organized themselves politically by creating the Indigenous Basin Içana Organization (OIBI) in 1992 to enforce their rights and to set up indigenous teaching.

From 1995, representatives progressively developed an alternative school project which corresponded to the realities and the needs of Baniwa communities. Various meetings followed...That of 1997 defined objectives, methodology, school organization, and function...The principal founders of the Pamáali school [network] were Valentino and his son Roberto who came from the Juvitera village and Antonio from Ambauba. [Juvêncio]

They received support from André Fernando, a young Baniwa political leader who was elected deputy-mayor of São Gabriel municipality in 2008. It appears that these founders came from families which regularly opposed various forms of colonial and postcolonial domination, in particular religious proselytism:

Some elders, being both chief and *pajé*, are respected far beyond their village for their world-view. The oldest, like us, who refused to be educated by the priests, had to flee sometimes inside the forest, but we always keep in mind the past and the Baniwa traditional lifestyle. This is why we have transmitted this cultural heritage throughout the indigenous school we created. [Valentino]

During the school establishment process, priests were not invited to the assemblies, which symbolically aimed to dispossess them of this institution and to make it fully indigenous, going beyond socio-religious conflicts between lineages. Moreover, Christianity was removed from the curriculum.

There is no Christian influence in the Tukano *Ye'pá Mahsã* network, as Baniwa, but shamans, were not

associated with this project. Teachers and political leaders (some of them living in the town of São Gabriel with administrative functions) formed a politico-pedagogical project based on universal knowledge associated with respect of indigenous culture, language, and historical heritage.

Teaching Training Before and After 2007-2008

Before 2007-2008

Before the 1990s, the school curriculum in Ticuna communities did not reflect their cultural and linguistic reality because teachers were mainly "White" and offered instruction in Portuguese without reference to indigenous cultures, which involved a progressive deculturation of indigenous pupils. In order to overcome these pervasive effects, the Bilingual Ticuna Teacher Organization (OGPTB) was created in 1986 to provide a differentiated indigenous education in the communities. OGPTB participated in implementing a teacher training project in 1993 with the Ticuna teachers of 93 schools in Ticuna territories of the Tabatinga, Benjamin Constant, São Paulo de Olivença, Amaturá, and Santo Antônio do Içá municipalities. The main objective was the training of the resident Ticuna teachers to Teaching Diploma level, in order to upgrade all the teachers independent of their educational level (between the 2nd series of basic education and secondary education). The first stage of the project (1993 to 1997) concerned 212 teachers from the 1st series of basic education. The second stage related to the training of the 2nd series with courses during holidays in the Ticuna teachers training center, which is located in

Filadélfia village with 230 teachers (95% of practicing Ticuna teachers). The use of Ticuna language and a lack of recognition of indigenous schools, by public authorities, as well as by some non-indigenous teachers, were initially the main difficulties, until the State Council of Education approved Resolution 11, 2001, which defines standards for the creation and the functioning of an indigenous school, authorizing and recognizing this teaching on the level of basic education.

In Baniwa area, as with Ticuna and Tukano, IBE has been implemented since the 1990s. From 1998 to 2000, the elders have been used in order to homogenize and to enrich the Baniwa scripts already employed in basic education. It is also used for adult literacy in various communities. In 2000, an assembly, joining the vast majority of the villages' household heads, decided to build a school on a sacred territory (Pamáali), unspoiled by man, to provide lessons for the 2nd series of basic education, which had until then been reduced to 1st series in the area's schools. As the Baniwa's political awareness was reinforced, the school became a place where *critical thought* could be openly applied, together with the support of shamans as regards Baniwa cosmogony. During the early years, even if classrooms were erected, the lack of infrastructure, food, transport, or means to buy fuel limited the school development. Then, partnerships were set up with the FOIRN and the ISA (Social Environment Institute), which brought the financial support of the Rainforest Alliance NGO which agreed to finance the project for six years (2002-2008), including technological training (as computer and fish farming courses).

After 2007-2008

Since 2008, the Amazonas State University (UEA), starting from its branch in Tabatinga (until then in charge of the conventional training for indigenous and non-indigenous teachers), has come to support OGPTB by jointly giving intercultural higher training for all Ticuna teachers working in middle school (2nd series) and secondary education. This advanced vocational training, in which I assisted, allowed teachers to gain tangible and theoretical subjects (mainly anthropological and linguistic) both general and specific to their cultural group, from which they have elaborated pedagogical projects that they explained at the evaluation sessions. The presence of anthropologists also supported in giving them methodological tools to carry out research on their culture, or, more exactly, that of the community (village) where they are assigned. Nevertheless, these two weeks of training could be supplemented by more specific courses on indigenous knowledge—with the participation of the traditional carriers of knowledge and cosmogony (shamans, elders, etc.)—and their use during secondary education (building links between cultural and academic knowledge).

In August 2007 in Baniwa area, integrated secondary education was established in Pamáali. Parents and representatives (associations, chiefs, shamans) took an active part in the school, as everybody has the capacity to help students improve knowledge and action research. The environmental management plan promoted by the school aimed to facilitate the use of territory wealth, as well as safeguard it. The political decision-making of the school is

based on a General Assembly which consists of parent representatives, elders, chiefs, shamans, health workers, students and teachers, the school council association, the economic council, and the school board. According to the school principal:

Pamáali is regarded as an ever-changing system open to its environment, which is being taken forward actively day-by-day, coordinated through a democratic process based on the Baniwa model of social organization. Thus, students, as well as teachers are responsible for school performance and are accountable to parents and elders...The self-management of the school is based on weekly meetings, where all students and staff assess and provide daily operations which foster emergence of new initiatives in a constant construction process. [Juvêncio]

My observations reveal that traditional representatives define the general political and organizational framework, such as school rules, while teachers, elders, shamans, and students (who have special skills in traditional knowledge) try to improve IBE curriculum. Everybody seems to be concerned with the continual school improvement.

IBE Developments Before and After 2008

IBE Before 2008

Before 2008, my fieldwork in Ticuna area shows some limitations of IBE, which is predominantly oriented to bilingual education in addition to a few cultural traits. Nevertheless, the work of the OGPTB allowed the creation of a Ticuna words register with the support of elders (but no shamans).

As I have seen, they were able to take part in courses to tell legends, myths, and the major historical facts of Ticuna people. These stories provided young people with an access to Ticuna world concepts, words, and expressions, which, sometimes, had almost disappeared, and constitute a linguistic *corpus* for teachers.

My classroom observations (basic education, 1st series) and my comparisons with these without IBE in mestizo boroughs proved that when students are using native language, both oral and written, during the first few years, those supports not only the linguistic comprehension of Portuguese but also the subjects being taught.

Proficiency in mother tongue facilitates a second language learning. However, the ability to communicate is not limited to the ownership of a linguistic capital because it also depends on a communication capital whose foundation is the culture which gives the direction and how to use it. Indeed, culture is expressed through a language, each language contributing at the same time cultural content and membership. Communication fits into a social and cultural dynamic, the evidence of which is cultural membership, whether at the linguistic or non-verbal level.

Thus, even in mathematics, I can see that figures are correlated with fruits or seeds' names which are traditionally used to count, which leads pupils to develop competences in mathematics in the two cultural worlds. The traditional tales, songs, and arts are also used to facilitate this schooling with pupils gradually gaining assurance in the two lin-

guistic registers according to their level. Teachers used booklets, and created posters and other didactic materials in Ticuna to support courses on surrounding landscape, health, and indigenous social organization. However, until 2008, I witnessed, even in the villages closest to the chief municipal towns (like Filadélfia near Benjamin Constant or Umariáçu close to Tabatinga), that IBE relates to only the 1st series of basic education: afterwards, the Ticuna language is only added to the conventional curricula and sometimes used to explain some words or expressions. The transition from a national curricula to an IBE curricula in the same schools seems not to be as easy as in new schools where indigenous teachers started their job directly with an IBE program.

Indeed, before 2008, secondary schools were not using an IBE program. For example, in Filadélfia, there are still non-indigenous teachers who came to teach; most of them are not looking to adapt the curricula and bring it closer to indigenous realities and there is little incentive (starting with non-compliance with their work schedule, higher absenteeism, etc.). The secondary school is located in the basic school directed by an indigenous director who could manage this non-indigenous personnel more effectively, but he does not have the administrative authority over secondary education which depends on the Amazonas state and thus on the Secretariat of Education located at the distant Manaus.

In Umariáçu villages, teachers are indigenous, including in secondary education; however, a large proportion of them do not know (lack of training) how to adapt disciplinary teaching, such as it is

presented in the conventional books, to the socio-cultural contexts of communities by the means of intercultural teaching approaches.

Despite all these difficulties, Ticuna leaders that I interviewed consider that:

The IBE [dynamic] has supported the recognition of teachers and indigenous schools, on the level of municipalities, as well as that of indigenous villages, and in particular promotes recognition of indigenous rights. [Nino]

On the economic front, seventy percent of teachers who have completed the training were contracted, the majority by local municipalities [which coordinate basic education] and others by FUNAI...At the educational level, this project made it possible to develop a new model of IBE in the Alto Solimões Ticuna schools. [Constantino]

My analysis shows that the success of IBE (learning outcomes, social recognition, effectiveness) depends on who the teachers are, their standing in the community, and their language abilities. First attempts with non-indigenous teachers living in towns (and not in indigenous communities) and speaking only Portuguese were a failure.

The Association of the Indigenous Tukano School *Ye'pá Mahsã* (AEITYM), founded in 2004 in the Cunuri village (located in Taracua district along Uaupés river, a Rio Negro tributary), took part in the establishment of another IBE model inside São Gabriel da Cachoeira municipality. Pupils learn Portuguese and their native tongue (Tukano) si-

multaneously, based on cultural contents, like the significance of ritual, mythological origins, dances, hunting weapons, and everyday objects. This IBE was already being used in other communities of the district: Ipanoré, Monte Alegre, Santa Terezinha, Açaí, Uriri, Trovão, and Monte Cristo.

Before 2008, in *Ye'pá Mahsã* basic education, teaching was bilingual and intercultural (esteeming of the indigenous culture and knowledge in a dialogical relationship with those of the "Western" world) as nowadays. In order to develop an "integrated" orientation, a collaboration with the Agro-Technical School (EAT) of São Gabriel was established to train students as technicians in ethno-development, but in 2007 and 2008, there were only two or three scholarship students who were annually involved, and only boys.

Before 2008 in the 2nd series of basic education, as well as that of secondary education, it remained difficult for indigenous teachers to leave the framework reference of *school form*, the majority of them having followed a conventional schooling and training:

Teachers are responsible for students' success...We need IBE training in the second series. We only have books to learn Tukano. Students are followed closely and help each other. We take time to have exchanges between teachers: it is the outcome of collective work, as well as traditional field work, but sometimes we do not have solutions to make an intercultural education. [Cleidiana]

I am a mathematics teacher and I would deepen my knowledge in indigenous ethno-sciences. My books

are only related to mathematical theories. Naturally, with pupils, we make comments about local flora and fauna and productive work, but we are not always able to connect those comments with sciences. [Geraldo]

The lack of relation between secondary education and development projects of indigenous communities removes its "integrated" orientation and limits its scope to simple "cultural" or "differentiated" additions, which is reinforced by disciplinary breakdown.

IBE After 2008

In 2009, my observations in Ticuna area showed that only a few teaching modules (offered by UEA) really worked with IBE approach in secondary education. They prefer to use a disciplinary program from formal teachers' textbooks. At an advanced level, science and mathematics, as theoretical knowledge, cannot really be interpreted with traditional knowledge which deals more with its historic construction and furthermore its cultural practice.

However, the IBE implementation is more systematic in Ticuna basic education (than in secondary education) which is interdisciplinary, deals less with theoretical knowledge, and is more open to experimentation on and in the environment. This difficulty can be overcome over time, as I have seen with IBE in basic education. Another less easy to overcome problem is the influence of the evangelist sects, which continue to conceal and overshadow large areas of their traditional values, cosmogony, and culture that cannot be used in IBE teaching:

It is not always easy to talk about our ancestral knowledge at school, in particular everything concerning our religious beliefs. However, language training without a part of our cultural heritage is limited. Some parents [Christian leaders] supervise what their children learned at school...Sometimes, they told us we cannot use some words or cultural explanation, as links between men and nature or spirits...Our mythology and our history is depleted and we are losing knowledge and spiritual preciousness. Our [world] sensibility disappears when we try to ignore the world where we live. [anonymous teacher]

Indigenous secondary education was only established in 2008 in Cunuri village (Tukano area), but during the first years it was not really coordinated with development projects aimed at answering the needs of the 8 indigenous communities concerned. Moreover, teachers were few; those who were involved in secondary education did this as well in the 2nd series of basic education, and also had to take time during the first years to train to teach "administratively" legally in secondary education. In 2008, 84 students were registered in secondary education and 72 in basic education: this important number in secondary education is due to the fact that many students did not have opportunity to complete their schooling in the town of São Gabriel da Cachoeira and/or have chosen to stay in their indigenous territory.

Teaching in the basic schools of the *Ye'pá Mahsã* network remains open to the community world and its knowledge, with teachers having time to develop and experiment with various IBE approaches. My

observations showed that teachers in basic education were upgraded to secondary education and were replaced by new ones after 2008, who, unlike the first, benefited from entire IBE training. It is easier for them to teach, even in the 2nd series of basic education, with interdisciplinary and intercultural thinking.

However, in Tukano schools, training and knowledge are not only prospect offered by teachers. Thus, one day a week, a representative from the community comes into the classroom (basic education) to tell a story, a myth, or a legend from which pupils will work (younger children make a drawing, older children write a text in Tukano). On another day, pupils leave the classroom with the professor to study a social or productive activity near or with the members of the community, or to observe nature.

When there is more academic disciplinary teaching (like mathematics) carried out in the classroom, the traditional method is presented first. For example, the traditional method to count or measure refers to the parts of the body (fingers, hands, feet, arms, etc.) or to plants (seeds, parts of a tree, etc.) coming from natural environment. Then, its relationship or its equivalence to the “Western” mainstream is formulated, while showing the advantages of each according to context or situation. The physical or chemical principles are clarified from concrete observations of the immediate environment (cooking food, drinks fermentation, etc.) or, when they are difficult to carry out (such as fish traps), from scale models as didactical material. Mathematics, science, and technology are already present in the ma-

terial productions of Tukano people and vary from the selection of cassava varieties (women continue to select more than 60 to cultivate) to the weaving rules of baskets used to transport dried fish, while incorporating solid geometry used to design roofs (that of a *maloca* being particularly complex). Some traditional knowledge such as astronomy, like the names of stars and constellations, and the relation between their positioning and the calendar of domestic activities (particularly agrarian), is introduced, but first in Tukano to help understand their daily socio-cultural meaning, and then in Portuguese. Constellations are not always the same (they represent mythical animals or beings which are familiar to indigenous people) as those of the “Western” world and use other names for stars or planets: both types of representation are compared to their respective mythology and use. In addition, the indigenous school calendar follows that of the domestic activities, which allows pupils to fully participate in certain collective activities.

However, since 2008, in secondary education, I have noticed that certain teachers are fairly good at using the intercultural approach to question “Western” and “Amerindian” cosmogonies. For example, in the philosophy course, the representations of the world among ancient Greek thinkers and those of Tukano are presented, analyzed, and compared by the teacher and his students. The relation between history and myth is questioned (Gow 2001), in particular according to the formulation (who writes or who speaks?) and reception (for whom and why?) contexts. They examine written sources and myths and compare them reciprocally. For example, the history of the colonization of the

indigenous territory and the relation between colonists and indigenous people is revisited, the idea being to move towards resolving the contradiction or the apparent texts or myths’ neutrality, and thus to develop *critical thought* on the history while confronting and reworking the various sources.

We learn a lot with elders from Tukano communities. This coming back to sources gives us the opportunity to recover our collective memory. It is enriched with courses in anthropology and research methods at the university training [intercultural higher education]. The latter has helped me to understand how to work with elders as you did, to get them to talk in specific spaces where they can find meaning. [Cleidiana]

IBE in the Tukano case is much more sophisticated than for the Ticuna—for the reasons I have already mentioned—even if “integrated” secondary education is still not really operational. Nonetheless, interviews and observations that I have accomplished indicate that is a concern for communities.

Now, I am able to work with ethno-sciences, that is to say, theorize traditional practices, show pupils they can perceive implied mathematics in their community, that is, identify math operation, chemical processes, physical operation in everyday life. The ancestors knew so many things...All of this knowledge was within our grasp, but the elders considered it was no longer important in comparison to academic knowledge. Now, we know it is possible to enrich one another and we are beginning to think, to use, and to promote solutions for local and regional development, too. [Geraldo]

EIBI network (Baniwa area) consisted of 9 indigenous schools (1st series of basic education) located in some of the 35 communities and the Pamáali school (2nd series). In the 2nd series of basic education, there are few differences before and after 2008, except the enhancement of didactical material and IBE pedagogical methods. The school philosophy still consists of encouraging indigenous citizens to enjoy their community, to hold responsibilities, and to set up new projects in a framework of sustainable development, by respecting the traditional values of intercultural dialogic thinking. Thus, Pamáali school is very different from conventional schools, with its own curricular proposals, procedures, and schedules. Students do research in various fields, while trying to connect traditional knowledge to “Western” technical-scientific knowledge: in particular, organizing a house of science (“living museum”) from which they perform regular observations of animals and experiments on the surrounding plants, for example, orchid grafts on various trees. Other activities have been implemented in the fields of craft (Baniwa arts) and agriculture (plantation of various pepper species).

The evaluation is based on a continuous and regular teaching assessment (no scores). It also focuses on the annual research tasks, where each student, supervised by a teacher, carries out a field investigation into a topic of his choice with an intercultural approach. For this purpose, each year, he has two months to undertake his research, generally with those who have developed competences in the field concerned. This research work leads to the drafting of a report which allows improvement in traditional knowledge and oral transmission. Thus, historical

questions are worked on with the elders who use petroglyphs, for example, as helpful reminders. The symbols of the past are often hidden under the river waters, but when they recede, petroglyphs reappear, and storytellers, in particular *pajés* who know how to interpret them, can connect past to present again. Details abound and the complexity is revealed when they come to collect this tradition, both oral and *scriptural*, in order to write research papers or indigenous school textbooks.

Pamáali was founded and encouraged by elders. The rules they have decided for the boarding school are stringent and monitored collectively. Now [2010], we usually receive nearly one hundred students [2nd series and high school] regardless of age or sex. Two months a year, students return to their communities to deepen and extend research already carried out, which makes it possible for them to share knowledge acquired over this period with students and teachers. In this way, courses are continuously improved with knowledge transmitted by the elders on cultural and environmental heritage, agriculture, nature, or ritual knowledge, but also songs, stories, and the skills of hunting or surviving on the land, the secrets of plants and their medicinal value...Every day, slots in school are reserved for traditional activities: men go fishing, clear land for agricultural purposes, gather in the forest and make wickerwork; women are going to plant, care, and harvest cassava, peppers, and transform cassava into flour. Furthermore, every week, a student is appointed to be responsible for a dormitory or the library, in order to participate in school administration. Knowledge, skills, theoretical knowledge, and practices are practiced in an intercultural and collective perspective. [Dzoodzo]

The 2nd series of basic education can be examined as a knowledge base into the perspective between the indigenous and the “Western” knowledge, according to their formulation and realization contexts, while integrated secondary education is more a dialectic between them with a view to improving the indigenous living conditions, while specializing in different knowledge areas: indigenous policies, rights and movements, ethics, health education and traditional knowledge, sustainable development, et cetera.

We are teaching citizens to be able to assume responsibilities in their community, as development activities, in accordance with sustainable development principles and socio-cultural values. Our research and lessons are participatory. The goal of the school is to raise the consciousness of Baniwa students and empower them to assume an active role in the development of their communities, the defense of their rights, and the revalorization of their culture. We believe that a sustainable future is possible, we can take advantage of material and immaterial goods, in an ecological, economic, and social way, while avoiding predatory use of all the bounty of our territory. [João]

To endorse these training orientations, the school is supported by various projects integrated into the Regional Program of Indigenous Sustainable Development of Alto Rio Negro. In the light of this, it benefits teaching, technical, and material support by specialized trainers, Indigenous or not. The program objective is to support self-sustainment in the region, not only by developing research projects to increase and diversify food, but also by

improving traditional knowledge (stories, myths, legends, respect of the sacred places, etc.), and by using them as a framework to improve the way of life and territorial management. Responding to Baniwa requests, various research projects were developed in Pamáali: fish farming, poultry farming, environmental management, improvement of traditional food production, beekeeping, fish resource management, and traditional storytelling (Meunier 2011).

Pamáali school seems to be the most successful IBE achievement of all indigenous experiments. It allowed a *recovery initiative* (Balandier 1970) by turning *school form* into an “open school” with an *intercultural dialectic* (Meunier 2009) between traditional and “Western” knowledge, but also a teaching oriented towards the future needs of indigenous people. Even if NGO policies are not exactly the same as those of the Baniwa, Indigenous were able to provide guidance to the projects according to their own expectations of environmental possibilities (some projects were subsequently abandoned). They have considered both education and vocational training in the Amazonian context.

In the Tukano and Baniwa cases, the teachers’ linguistic ability and their vocational training are more or less the same as in the Ticuna case. Indeed, with Tukano and Baniwa IBE models, the influence of Christian proselytism is smaller and often non-existent at school, what increases the Indigenous’ theoretical thinking to innovate and to develop IBE curricula with a large part of autonomy (with shamans in the Baniwa case). These local innovations in IBE contribute to preserve and revitalize local

languages and cultural practices specific to certain localities and help to enhance cultural diversity. Indigenous peoples themselves can adequately safeguard, maintain, manage, develop, and recreate their cultural heritage with IBE for the next indigenous generations. They also enrich cultural diversity and human creativity, as in the Baniwa school of Pamáali which improves the epistemological diversity of IBE by new ways of thinking.

Closing Thoughts

Nowadays, the globalization of education standards does not have the same signification according to local contexts (Anderson-Levitt 2003) and can be changed with *collective subjectivities*. In contrast to the rhetoric international organizations (Van Zanten and Ball 1997) preaching for standardization and homogenization of the school systems, other alternatives remain possible, mostly in certain Southern or boundary countries where education can be opened to the socio-cultural context by successive dialectics between school education and traditional knowledge. In this perspective, the *intercultural dialectic* concept can be used to think of a new *school form* which considers the governance of diversity from an intercultural educational perspective. In Latin America, indigenous people rightly have the choice to invent a new form of school education using their native languages and their own learning processes, that is, cultural transmission and acquisition of knowledge through educational practices which are not involved in the “universal” *school form*. The possibility of implementing a curriculum incorporating knowledge from the students’ cultural background

can prevent a hierarchical biculturalism, that is, an artificial juxtaposition between indigenous knowledge as “singularity” and “Western” knowledge as “universality,” with educational ideologies, didactic, and pedagogic practices (McConaghy 2000). In fact, indigenous knowledge is also able to inform education theories and teaching methodologies (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2005). On the one hand, the Republican education rhetoric, founded on the notion that a uniform national culture is a prerequisite of equal citizenship for all, is over. On the other hand, after having experience of various models of schooling in indigenous territories with historical and cultural variations: the weight of NGOs’ programs financed through international aid, the Catholic and Protestant missionary activities, national and provincial government policies,

the support of universities and research organizations, indigenous people know their world is definitively changing, even if curricula incorporates, in its formulation and implementation, a respect for indigenous identities, cultures, knowledge, and learning. Certainly, indigenous students need to utilize the *otherness* to negotiate between various ways of learning and thinking, striving to reach a broader identity by this *intercultural dialectic* to become entirely citizens of the world without forgetting where they come from. However, to be really intercultural, IBE should also concern indigenous people who live in cities, such as non-indigenous Brazilian students, in order to foster a vision of an egalitarian relationship between indigenous and “Western” cultures, which the mainstream community does not wish for, at the “moment.”

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