

Forest Mind SCRIPT

Ursula Biemann

Reality comes into being in the most surprising and diverse ways.

Around the outer rim of the universe there is a holographic inscription that holds information on its configuration.

The universe is mathematically precise.

Every event, every matter, being, thought and emotion has a precise pattern and code inscribed in the hologram.

The codes are written by imagination and conscious thought.

They are the powerful means by which ideas are pulled into reality and become a sensorial, tangible experience.

Everything we create already exists in nonlinear time.

By imagining things as already created, we write the mathematical code to manifest them into reality.

In this cosmic hologram, things are held together by the quantum entanglement of mind and matter.

Mind must interact with matter to give perceptible form and generate reality for us.

This is so from the cosmic hologram down to the cells and DNA molecules that make up our living world.

CARLOS: When I had about 22 years of taking the medicine, they said, now you know a little about the medicine. They took me to the mountain. I was truly innocent. They told me that to take yagé means to study it. But I never thought where it would take me. They gave me a little piece of vine, like this big, and they told me: "This is for you to take and to learn".

I thanked them and drank it. Two hours passed, I didn't feel anything, I was calm. But then I heard a voice telling me: "Carlitos, get ready. It is time to get ready". When I heard that voice, I looked around and found nobody. Nobody. I saw that the firmament began to go down and the earth began to rise. I put my hands to support the world, so that it would not fall. But there was no time. Nothing. The world came

down on me and I fell. And I turned to Earth. The voice told me: "Now scream". Those who were present heard me scream. That scream was heard deep in the Earth. When the Earth answered me, it screamed too, saying: "I am Mother Earth who gives life to you and that is why you must listen".

In this Amazonian territory, indigenous people have always known that knowledge emerges from the encounter with the land and its living beings. All knowledge comes from here. The territory is the maximus teacher.

Knowledge is understood as the practice of living in relationship with all beings who inhabit this space. The territory is alive, cognitive and spirited. The forest is a field of mind. To mentally engage the forest is what generates reality here. The forest and the perception of the forest are one and the same thing.

CARLOS: Other cultures here like the Cofan, the Siona, they have another name. Further into the Amazon, in Peru and Ecuador, they call it Ayahuasca. But it is the same kind of medicine. In our science of yagé (Ayahuasca), it is never about learning. It's about knowing. And to study yagé doesn't take four or five years. It takes a lifetime. As long as you live, you will continue to get to know yagé. Because the science of yagé is infinite. It doesn't end. We die, but the science continues.

Indigenous science emerges from the interaction with the intelligence of Ayahuasca, the plant teacher. The plant is ingested during ceremonies as a brew, activating areas in the brain that are responsible for imaging, sensing, perceiving. Intelligence is not conceived as being located inside the human brain. It rather happens in the encounter with the other and is a matter of sensitivity and reciprocity.

WAIRA: These rivers were enormous. But after people started to settle further up, where these rivers originate, the water started to diminish.

HERNANDO: We have a thread and that is Ayahuasca, Ambihuasca, the sacred plants that allow us to weave vital relations and to understand our paths in the spiritual. In our science of yagé, the visible and the materially palpable are coming together in a kind of spider web made of different threads and colors. Ayahuasca allows us to have those dialogues and to understand the states of matter and spirituality.

In spite of the fact that we are said to be on the way to physical and cultural extinction, in spite of the war, the conflict, all the impositions of forces foreign on us, we are here. Sometimes when we talk about resistance, it doesn't allow us to have dialogues. It fragments the possibilities of making biocultural peace, peace among us as human beings. What we need is to weave, we need to make alliances. Because in the end, we are in a space that you and I share together. Our responsibility is to take care of it, to protect it.

There is no framework within modern science to understand the intelligence of Ayahuasca. But science does recognize the intelligence of plants in more general terms. Plant cells use a similar signaling system to neurons. They have the capacity of making

decisions as complex as within a brain. Plants can compute up to twenty different chemical and physical parameters. Aside from light, humidity and temperature, they can detect magnetic field, pathogens, heavy metal, electrical field, vibration, sounds and gravity. Plants have no need for a brain because they are decentralized hyperconnected systems. They are vast neural networks the size of ecosystems.

The plant, too, communicate through chemistry and part of their chemistry are neural transmitters. Through a curious coevolution, these transmitters happen to fit into receptors in the human brain creating a unique mode of telepathic communication between the plant and the person who ingests it. The connection between the vegetal mind and the human brain produces hyper-communication by means of imaging, feeling, perceiving and understanding. As if the mind was plugged into the overmind. Once ingested, the plant is a teacher that will stay with you forever and keep teaching you in her plant time.

CARLOS: When the Earth answered me, she said: "Scream hard again." And my scream was heard up in the firmament, in deep space. And there it turned around as a house with seven doors. It said: "I am the house of seven gates of the power of divine intelligence." I managed to see only the reflection of a light. "Go calmly back to Earth." I returned to Earth and Earth said to me: "Now put your feet on the earth. Put down your feet. You will barely know what earth is."

I sat on the earth and then the earth flipped. I detached myself and fell into the abyss. I came back to Earth. I was the only human on Earth. There were no other living beings on Earth. Only forest, forest, forest. Virgin forest. Without pollution. The air you breathe is clean, your lungs are completely clean. Protected, totally pure. Trees move, trees talk. They are alive. If I point my fingers this way, I guided the water. Wherever I wanted to send water, the water followed. The animals. All kinds of animals. My thought was, what am I doing here now?

With the arrival of the first botanists in the Amazon, two timelines were simultaneously set in motion: colonial conquest and the beginning of modern natural science. These two histories were entangled from the very beginning and determine the modern relation to the nonhuman world. Scientific colonialism continuously overwrites the indigenous respect for plants so as to pursue a more utilitarian exploitation of bioprospecting and DNA sequencing the entire Amazonian rainforest.

WAIRA: People in our community used this medicinal plant to treat mosquito bites and high fever. This is quinine. The villagers know that there is a lot of quinine here and they come and harvest it here. This whole area here. It's all quinine.

WAIRA: Here you cannot live as a doctor or lawyer. Here you can live with empirical knowledge. But that empirical knowledge is not recognized within the system of sciences. There is already an imbalance at the level of recognition and justice, in terms of what is considered the norm. That is where we begin to speak of subject or object. The empirical ones are the objects. They are not recognized as subjects. They are the

objects. So, there is no justice there either. The elders have always demanded recognition as experts, because they are the experts. Who invented the chemical mix of two plants, the chagropanga and yagé, so that the combination of these two makes you fly to another world, or be teleported to another world? Who did more research in the forest than a biologist? An elder. It would only be just to understand this knowledge in the framework of the sciences. I mean the sciences.

Indigenous science in the Amazon is practiced by their traditional medics. It is the domain of the shamans. In Colombia they are called Taitas.

WAIRA: Caspi is, what do you call this? Bark. Cucucaspi. Cucu means critter, like bad microbes. Parasites. My father used to say that it's for purifying the blood. For when there are bugs in the blood, little worms or something. When the blood is contaminated. This remedy is to purify the blood. The man was full of sores. So, this cleans the blood. It's a therapy. He stayed with us for a year and a half.

Amazonian medics have long known about the role of microbes in the contagion of disease. Western scientists introduced this new medical knowledge to European Universities after their return from the Amazonian forests.

Traditional medics are operating on a microbial level. They see with their mind, rather than with their eyes. As quantum beings, their mind is in direct conversation with the cellular energy field in all living things. It happens on a microscopic level. Taitas are like engineers who go into the nuclear plant to reprogram the cosmic order. They manipulate non-ordinary reality in order to elicit changes in the ordinary one.

The ordinary world is the zone of hyperconventionality that is governed by the collective imaginary. Art impacts reality by interacting with the collective imaginary. But sometimes, like shamans, artists sever the attachments across time, generations and species, and cross the threshold to the non-ordinary zone.

DNA is the code of life nested in every living cell. Like the cosmic hologram, DNA are quantum. They emit light waves in the low visible light range, called biophotons. Barely measurable, DNA act as antennas, emitting and receiving energetic waves.

Amazonian medics have become masters of interacting with this energetic part of DNA, which they sometimes call spirits. In their practice, they become transmitters for the light signatures proliferating in the living world. Taitas are quantum beings who interact with the mind-spirit inherent in all existence.

With the discovery of DNA in the 1950, modern science has also become aware that there is an underlying order that interconnects all life.

The master plant has a mind. It also has semiotic agency and intention. When ingested, the plant evokes a feeling of social belonging and trust within a social group. It is a psycho-

integrator plant, mediating a fully embodied thinking-feeling-knowing-imaging. It is a thinking with Earth. The plant-induced state is worlding a community of persons not all of whom are human. It is mediating a collective experience of mutual responsibility that is bringing the Amazonian people together and binding them to the land. This is how the master plant works its way into their sociality and brings forth territory.

During the 500 years of colonization, the Inga Taitas were hiding out in these mountains, protecting their traditional medicine. They didn't relinquish their knowledge even under great pressure from centuries of missionaries, modern educators and science. Undeterred, they kept insisting on a reality mechanics that science only starts to grasp.

The DNA transcribed in this image are a composite of a photograph, a sound recording, and a living seed, from this tropical forest.

The sound and image files written in the binary code of 01 were first translated into the DNA language of ACGT and then added to the DNA sequence of the living seed.

This is how the living forest and its sonic and pictorial representation were written into one and the same genetic code, effectively collapsing the distinction between life and its representation.

The image is produced on the surface of the sequencer in 4 colors, one for each DNA base: red for A, green for C, blue for G, white for T. The image has 519 460 pixels, corresponding to 519 460 DNA strands.

Biodiversity and technology have coevolved over millennia.

There has always been a desire to make the intelligence of the rainforest preservable and retrievable.

To access this vegetal intelligence, indigenous medics and molecular biologists have developed their distinct methodologies. Biologists by studying and computing, indigenous medics through visions.

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in Amazonian Colombia.

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To the indigenous Inga People of Colombia
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