

off the fence.

Between Worlds

2 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Part 1

Disintegration is at hand: while the Yanomami still celebrate ancient marital customs and rituals, life as they know it is being threatened. The rights of the Yanomami people to ownership of their territory and the integrity of indigenous land and traditions have been guaranteed by the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, but still the so-called 'Garimpeiros', illegal gold miners, intrude the land and exploit the Yanomami's natural habitat. Dario Kopenawa, a young Yanomami, left the forest and went to the city when he was a boy of 17 years. Far away from his homeland he started to work on new ways of saving the Yanomami's cultural heritage.

In Greenland, the custom of hunting seals using dog sleds has almost been replaced by a modern lifestyle. Some still remember the old ways. It is unknown though how much the next generation will remember. The uniqueness of the Inuit's cultural heritage is on the edge of destruction.

Different conditions prevail in the Pacific Ocean. There, in affairs of cultural and traditional importance to the inhabitants – for example the purchase of land or the arrangements of weddings – they still deal in their own currency, namely 'Ray', or stone money instead of dollars.

The Yapese people, residents of the picturesque Micronesian island Yap, know about the so-called 'western ways'. Tourism hit the island a while ago, as Yap is a premium diving spot. On the other hand Yapese teenagers are sent to the US or Australia for apprenticeship. Most of them later return to the island to stay forever.

2. Part 2

Very often, identity is connected with ancestry, origin and cultural heritage. How people, who have to live in different conditions than they would wish for, adapt to change, can be witnessed in different societies. Respect towards modern societies does not necessarily mean adaptation.

The Tarahumara, indigenous people in Mexico, sell homemade snacks to the passengers of stopping trains, but otherwise renounce society and live their lives in small autonomous families.

In Niger, the Woodabe also stick to their nomad lifestyle and travel from one watering place to the next, without feeling the need to change. They cling to their lifestyle, but fear they might be the last generation of travellers.

The Suri of Ethiopia still practice their ritual 'Donga' stick fights, but the Ethiopian government wants them to stop. Lip plates and other significant characteristics are bound to vanish, as the government tries to relocate the Suri due to intended land sales.

Some indigenous populations haven't yet found a way to protect their land and heritage but some have started to fight the windmills.

Davi Kopenawa, charismatic leader of the Yanomami people of Brazil, nowadays lives between the worlds. He travels the globe to raise public interest for the threats against the Yanomami people, and on the other hand still lives a chief's and shaman's life in the middle of the Brazilian jungle.

From the Andaman Islands to South America: a few undisturbed peoples still exist on this planet. They want to be left alone and in peace, which at times is necessary to prevent them from being exposed to illnesses they are not used to, and which could even threaten their lives. Tourism is another great threat nowadays. The wish of many to discover the last mysterious places on Earth might be the final step towards the destruction of the very same.

However, the era of untouched populations living unchanged for thousands of years, far away from globalization and Western values, is coming to an end. When those peoples disappear, their languages, cultures, knowledge and unique perspectives will also vanish forever.