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TIKM'N-MAXAKALI: COSMOCINEPOLITICS: AN ESSAY ON THE INVENTION OF A CULTURE AND OF AN INDIGENOUS CINEMA
DOSSIER
INTERSECTING GAZES

ABSTRACT

Our aim in this work is to explore ways of making cinema and ritual among the Tikm'n – also known as the Maxakali. We argue that the 'way' of filming and making cinema of this indigenous people cannot be understood without comprehending the logic and strategy employed to perform the rituals that, generally speaking, guide the making of the films. At the same time, by recording these rituals, the rituals and the culture of a people are simultaneously recuperated and multiplied. We also suggest that in order to gain a clearer insight into this cinema, it needs to be understood alongside the concepts that inform Maxakali cosmology, without forgetting that the history narrated for the films (and beyond them) is a history of the Maxakali viewpoint concerning pacification and the harmonious coexistence sought with both the 'spirits' and the white world. It amounts to a cosmocinepolitics or, put otherwise, a type of film-ritual.

INTRODUCTION

In a previous article, we presented the idea that indigenous cinema devotes as much attention to the pre-production of the film as to the act of making the film per se, including its filming, editing and divulgation. It is as though each of these phases were longer or more extensive than the way of making cinema in western society or than the spectacle. We propose the provisional notion of 'film-ritual' to describe an indigenous way of making cinema (Caixeta de Queiroz, 2008). This implies more or less the following: 1) what is outside or anterior to the film itself (or its conditions of production) needs to be taken very seriously, whether it is the ritual or the everyday life that serves as the basis or guide for the film, or the opinion of whoever serves as a mediator to the film's existence (the elders in the case of the *xavante*-films of Divino Tserewahu; the shamans in the case of the *tikm'n* films[1] of Isael); 2) what happens during the film is an extension or a composition of what happens in everyday life or ritual; 3) what happens after the film (who sees the film, the indigenous elders or children, or the non-indigenous public?) or where the film is shown (in a cinema theatre or in the village?) is a crucial horizon for the pragmatics of indigenous cinema.[2]

Put in terms closer to the conceptual universe of the audiovisual, indigenous cinema seems to entail a very strong imbrication or dependency between field and extra-field, or, to cite André Brasil's recent theoretical propositions (2013), between field and ante-field. We take into account the fact that indigenous people make cinema for themselves and for us, deploying a technological repertoire and a language that is exterior to them and subject, therefore, to transformations when it is translated-transported to the interior of a community based on oral tradition. In other words, we are speaking here of a technology and a type of knowledge (we call all of this, both the instruments and the know-how associated with them, a 'machine' – a cinematographic machine by analogy with a shamanic machine) exterior to the people who manipulate it and, in so doing, incorporate and transform it. We evoke an 'invention'

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1 Foreign terms appear in italics except when these are nouns for a people: in these cases, the first letter is placed in capitals. For instance, we shall use '*tikm'n*' as an adjective and 'Tikm'n' as a substantive referring to the *tikm'n* people. We shall also use the terms Maxakali and Tikm'n interchangeably to refer to the same people.

2 Here we use the term 'indigenous *cinema*' solely to designate the films (audiovisual products) made by indigenous people. We are aware that this use is open to a critique (one that we do not intend to explore or respond to here) that would deconstruct one or other term of the expression: in other words, our intention is not to give a reply either to what cinema is, or to what indigenous is: instead we wish to ask what type of cinema is made by a particular indigenous person or people.

or 'reinvention' of Maxakali culture in the sense given to these terms by Roy Wagner (1975) and, by extension, an 'invention' and 'reinvention' of Maxakali cinema. As demonstrated below, we believe that to 'invent' an indigenous cinema is to counterinvent a culture. In this specific case, to invent a Maxakali cinema is to counterinvent (or reinvent) a ritual, and vice-versa, in the same way that cosmology is reinvented whenever it is actualized in ritual practice.[3]

Our aim in this work may appear somewhat presumptuous: namely, to attempt to comprehend indigenous cinema – and more specifically, Maxakali cinema – through three dimensions of their existence that we delineate as their 'extra-field': history, cosmology and ritual. Conversely, we aim to comprehend Maxakali ritual through their cinema and, ultimately, how one is transformed into the other, or one transforms the other. We know that an extensive literature exists that tends to comprehend cinema solely as a 'language' sustained and reproduced through its internal structure. However, we believe that a better understanding of the kind of indigenous cinema made today requires, as a minimum, that we venture into the history and the cosmology of the people to which it relates. More than this, we need to comprehend the type of training received by the concrete individuals who make this cinema. While it is necessary to question the idea of indigenous 'culture' in general (just as we have to speak of 'cinemas' and not 'cinema') or even in particular, along the lines of 'Maxakali culture,' we must also recognize that each of these cultures contains the trajectories of particular persons that need to be considered in order to better comprehend the type of cinema that they make. In other words, this topic necessarily slips into the 'problem of authorship,' but among indigenous (or non-western) societies, it acquires another relevance. In these contexts, the relation between collective and individual (or the dimension of collective authorship) appears in a form distinct from our own society. In the case of the Maxakali cinema analysed here, just as we cannot separate the dimension of ritual (and cosmology) from film, so we cannot separate the 'directing' of ritual and film from the particular shamans and filmmakers involved. We hope to demonstrate this hypothesis more clearly over the course of

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3 In this discussion, we follow Roy Wagner's proposal that the idea of 'invention' should not be seen as something opposite to a given 'reality' (or to the innate or an 'original culture'), but rather as a dialectical process intrinsic to the functioning of any 'culture' in which invention and convention combine (in this sense, there is no emergent or 'spurious' culture). In the author's words (1975, 52; 53 and 55, original italics): "*The necessity of invention is given by cultural convention, and the necessity of cultural convention is given by invention.* [...] Invention changes things, and convention resolves those changes into a recognizable world. [...] Invention is always a kind of 'learning,' and learning is invariably an act of invention, or reinvention."

the text and, in so doing, explain why we cannot – and do not propose to – undertake a film 'analysis' grounded in a cinematographic critique or an "anthropological literature of film analysis." Still less do we propose to discuss 'products' and processes of 'cultural projects.'

Before analysing the films themselves, then, we present a brief history of the Maxakali people and the 'training' (as filmmakers and indigenous leaders) of the couple Isael and Sueli Maxakali. In Isabelle Stengers's terms (2007), 'cosmopolitics' is a proposal (less than a concept) that serves to describe the relations that 'men' constitute not only with other men but also the relation that men and women establish with other men and women and with non-human others.[4] Hence we conclude that these indigenous filmmakers not only make cinema, but also ritual and politics through their films – that is, they make a kind of cosmocinepolitics.

Next, we also present some basic concepts from Maxakali cosmology on the pretext that these provide us with a clearer insight into the content and meaning of Maxakali films. The latter are made from images and sounds, of course, but images and sounds do not mean the same things for 'them' as they do for 'us.' Without understanding what is in play exterior and anterior to the frame (the extra-field and the ante-field, the invisible), it is less easy to perceive or be affected by what is emphasized in the (cinematographic) field itself. And, in this case, what is outside is everything: an entire world, an entire other world.

After analysing various Maxakali films in terms of their techno-practical dimension and their 'symbolic structure,' we conclude – albeit inconclusively – with some remarks on the conceptual (political and aesthetic) implications for our own 'economy of images' and on the possible worlds that emerge from the images produced by other women and men about othernesses.

4 We stress that this involves a proposal, not a concept, in which the term politics is traversed by the cosmos. Isabelle Stengers (2007, 49) writes: "In the term cosmopolitical, cosmos refers to the unknown constituted by these multiple, divergent worlds, and to the articulations of which they could eventually be capable." If we understand the author correctly, her argument contains a critique of the idea of representation and consensus in the functioning of the dominant politics (the kind inherited from the Greek tradition – the polis – that excludes the presence of non-humans), at the same time as it radicalizes the meaning of cosmos. It is a question of expanding politics to include not only humans but all non-humans: animate and inanimate beings, technical objects and spirits, among others. In this article, by adding cinema to the term cosmopolitics, we hope to demonstrate how the Maxakali cosmos traverses their cinema and politics and imbues them with meaning.

THE MAXAKALI

The contemporary ethnographic literature describes the present-day Maxakali as the remnants of various indigenous groups that once inhabited a vast portion of Atlantic Rainforest along the coast of Brazil, on the borders of the current states of Minas Gerais, Bahia and Espírito Santo.[5] In the past, the Maxakali probably lived in numerous small villages. Fleeing the persecutions of colonization or the wars with the so-called Botocudos (whose remaining descendants today form the Krenak), they dispersed into forest areas of the region. The persecution and encircling of the Maxakali by the colonizers prompted a dramatic decline in their population. The data gathered by the ethnologist Marcos Rubinger in 1949 (cited in Berbert, 2017, 27) indicated a total population of just 59 people.

After this period, however, the Maxakali recovered their strength and their population: today they number around two thousand people, according to data from 2014 produced by the Special Secretariat of Indigenous Health (Berbert, 2017, 27), "with a large predominance of children under the age of 6" (Tugny, 2014, 157). Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, the entire population lived inside the Maxakali Indigenous Land, which, since 1993, combined the former areas of Água Boa (located in the municipality of Santa Helena de Minas Gerais, MG) and Pradinho (located in the municipality of Bertópolis, MG).[6]

The Maxakali call themselves Tikm'n.[7] Until very recently this

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5 In addition to the extensive research of Rosângela Tugny on the Maxakali, still in progress, from which various important works have already been produced, among them Tugny (2011, 2014), Tugny et al. (2009a), Tugny et al. (2009b), there are also around a dozen MA dissertations and PhD theses on this indigenous people, including the pioneering works of Álvares (1992) and Paraíso (1998), and a number of more recent works: Berbert (2017), Teodolino de Andrade (2017), Costa (2015), Vasconcelos (2015), Romero (2015), Rosse (2013), Jamal Junior (2012), Campelo (2009), Ribeiro (2008), Alvarenga (2007), and Vieira (2006).

6 Previously these two areas occupied by the indigenous population were split down the middle by a corridor of farms. The Maxakali Indigenous Land (IL) was eventually demarcated in 1993, uniting the two former indigenous areas of Água Boa and Pradinho. The Maxakali IL was homologated in 1996 with a surface area of 5,305.67 hectares. In July 1999, the farmers who had settled in the strip of land dividing the former areas were evicted by court order. As soon as the farmers left, the Pradinho groups occupied most of the area. The Água Boa groups countered by delimiting the areas of the groups in accordance with the municipal border: those from Pradinho would retain the areas lying within Bertópolis municipality; the Água Boa groups would be allocated the areas lying within Santa Helena de Minas.

7 According to Berbert (2017, 27), citing a Maxakali informant and the dissertation of Costa (2015), the term *tikm'n* is an expression formed by the contraction of the words *tihik* ['person,' 'people,' 'human'], *gmg* [we exclusive] and *hn* [woman].

self-denomination was used internally only, but today its use has expanded, becoming a category commonly employed in relations with white people and, above all, anthropologists, taking the term as a substitute for 'Maxakali': today the talk is more of the 'Tikm'n people' or '*tikm'n* cinema,' and less of the Maxakali people or Maxakali cinema. Almost the entire population speaks the maternal language, which is classified by linguists as a member of the Macro-Jê stock. Few people speak Portuguese fluently, which is noteworthy given that they have been surrounded by farmers and colonists for more than three centuries, and today visit the nearby towns and even the state capital, Belo Horizonte.[8] From the start of the twenty-first century, the presence of scholars – especially anthropologists and ethnomusicologists – increased considerably among the Tikm'n, while the latter began to become more visible in the university environment, especially at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). This included taking courses like the Intercultural Training for Indigenous Educators (FIEI) program, where the indigenous students invested considerable efforts in narrating their histories and myths, producing drawings to illustrate books, learning how to handle photographic-video cameras, and researching other areas of knowledge focused on translating the scientific tradition into knowledge closer to their own tradition.

At the same time as the Tikm'n increased their presence among the white population through the intermediation of the university, in 2004, inside the indigenous land, a large-scale conflict broke out that led to the 'local groups' dividing. Two distinct groups left their villages in Água Boa and Pradinho as a consequence and moved to new territories. For a long time, Dona Isabel (Noêmia's mother and Sueli Maxakali's grandmother) harboured the dream of returning to the land where she had grown up, on the border of the present-day Maxakali Indigenous Land, an area through which the Córrego do Norte (North Stream) flows (Romero, 2015, 112). The two groups moved away, therefore, and reoccupied the land of their ancestors, but after a conflict with the local farmers (see below), they were forced to leave the locality. From 2007, two new villages were established, situated in two other separate indigenous lands: Aldeia Verde (close to the town of Ladainha, MG), formed through the leadership of Noêmia and Sueli Maxakali; and Mundo Verde Cachoeirinha (close to Topázio, a district of Teófilo Otoni), formed under the leadership

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8 For this reason we can assert that while the Maxakali suffered acutely and violently from colonial invasion, they were never completely dominated and always resisted on the basis of their own cultural premises. They are not, therefore, an emergent people. This does not mean that transformation has been absent from their history. Indeed, it is precisely in this sense that we use the Wagnerian concept of 'invention' to explore such processes of change and the ways in which local groups divide and unite, as we shall see below, always keeping a given convention in mind and in action.

of Rafael Maxakali. The two thousand Maxakali people are distributed today, therefore, between these four main areas of occupation: Água Boa, Pradinho, Aldeia Verde and Cachoeirinha.

In this work, we focus on examples taken from Aldeia Verde and the development there of a unique experiment in indigenous cinema, articulated by a filmmaking couple, Sueli and Isael Maxakali.

THE (RE)INVENTION OF A CULTURE AND AN INDIGENOUS CINEMA

The emergence of a Maxakali cinematographic production is intertwined with the population's participation in various activities and articulations with the white world, notably via the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Despite the difficulty of situating this 'history' in time, we can highlight one specific event, the 'International Ethnomusicology Encounter: African and indigenous music in Brazil,' held in October 2000 in the city of Belo Horizonte. The primary aim of this meeting was to refute the absence of indigenous and African voices that, though singing profusely, were (and are) almost never heard at national level. Under the coordination of Professor Rosângela de Tugny, various researchers from the areas of music and anthropology participated in this event (such as José Jorge de Carvalho,[9] Samuel Araújo, Angela Lühning, Glaura Lucas and Rafael de Menezes Bastos) with one basic preoccupation: on the eve of the 500th anniversary of European invasion (rather than discovery) of Brazil, how to reinvent a university (a city, a society) until then self-represented as predominantly white, based not on a diatonic perspective but a more plural and open chromatic vision (both auditory and visual, both de jure and de facto)?[10] On this occasion, the Maxakali came to the university to present their music, along with many other makers of ethnic music with indigenous and African roots. This encounter reverberated widely and developed into a very strong alliance between the Maxakali-Tikm'n and Professor Rosângela de Tugny who, since then, has made both audio and audiovisual recordings of the *tikm'n* songs with her students and research partners.[11]

9 At that time, racial quotas were still no more than a political and social demand within the Brazilian university system. José Jorge de Carvalho, from the University of Brasilia, was responsible for elaborating one of the first quota proposals, presented in 1999, but approved only in 2003, at his own university.

10 The result of the event, a compendium of texts and reflections on the subject, accompanied by a rich acoustic archive (music and dialogue), was published by Rosângela Tugny and Ruben Caixeta de Queiroz (2006).

11 Not only those studying music: many students from the MA course in Anthropology at UFMG also visited the Maxakali area, whether or not members of the team coordinated by Tugny, with the intention of 'working with' and learning more about the people (see note 5 above).

Subsequently, among many other different forms, these encounters-registers were actualized in the 'Image-Body-Truth-Project: transiting Maxakali knowledge,' also coordinated by Rosângela Tugny. More than an academic project, 'image-body-truth' was first and foremost a 'cultural action,' which was submitted as a project for funding in the name of Associação Filmes de Quintal and approved by the Ministry of Culture. This action proposed to record, transcribe and illustrate the corpus of *tikm'n* songs, and resulted in the production of various books accompanied by CDs. Audiovisual workshops were also proposed to be run in partnership with the non-governmental organisation Vídeo nas Aldeias, which would be able to initiate the Tikm'n into film technology, or improve their skills, and help them finish two films. Finally, photography workshops were proposed, which resulted in the publication of a catalogue of photos. Begun in 2005, the project was completed in 2009, culminating in the publication of a book of photos and two books of songs: *Cantos do Xnm* (Songs of the Bat) and *Cantos do Mõgmõka* (Songs of the Eagle).[12]

Additionally, two films were completed through the video workshops: *Acordar o Dia - Ãyõk Mõka òk Hãmtup* (Vila Nova-Pradinho Village, directed collectively, 2009) and *Caçando Capivara - Kuxakuk Xak* (Vila Nova-Pradinho Village, directed collectively, 2009).[13] These two films explore a thematics central to the spirit of one phase of the Vídeo nas Aldeias project, namely the declared intention to 'film nothing' as a mechanism against the kind of reified idea of culture frequently represented by 'films of ritual,' more widely found in indigenous cinema.[14] In *Acordar o*

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12 The photography and photographic editing workshops were coordinated by the researcher Ana Alvarenga. A first edition of the books was published by Editora Azougue.

13 The workshops that gave rise to the filming and editing of these two films was coordinated by Mari Correa, linked at the start of this project to Vídeo nas Aldeias and later to Instituto Catitu – Aldeia em Cena.

14 In an interesting reflection on the topic, Mari Corrêa states: "The recurrent theme [of many workshops] was that of 'filming the culture': filming the culture so as not to lose it, to show the younger generations, so that the whites would respect them more. In this conversation, and in many others held before and after, culture is very often identified exclusively as ritual; it means traditional festivals, full stop. We began by asking them [the indigenous people] about this idea: so a people who no longer perform their traditional festival no longer have a culture? The concept of culture expanded as our discussion deepened: speaking their language, their ways of looking after children, planting swiddens, preparing food, the things that people believe in, histories, values... these would all surface as elements and manifestations of culture. At a certain point, one of the participants, a Terena man, visibly relieved, said: 'In my village, traditional festivals are no longer held and only the elders speak our language. I'd been thinking that there would be nothing to film, there was no film to be made there.'" Source: http://www.videonasaldeias.org.br/2009/biblioteca.php?c=21 (consulted 04/10/2017).

dia ('Awakening the Day'), morning in the village is shown with billows of smoke and steam coming from the house fires and filtering coffee, and everything unfolding at a very slow pace, controlled by the *tikm'n* people – all of which contrasts with the truck, which leaves for the town and market, the destination for the indigenous people 'outside their world.' In *Caçando Capivara* ('Hunting Capybara'), meanwhile, the aim is to recount the challenge posed by hunting in the territory occupied by the Maxakali, a region devastated by colonization. What is at play here – beyond the search for food – is a relation, made present by the songs, between humans and those former humans who transformed into other beings (the animals, ex-humans).

Sometime before these two films were made, though, Isael Maxakali, who had already taken part in a video workshop in 2004 (see below), filmed a boys' initiation ritual called *Tatakok* (caterpillar-spirit) on his own initiative in his new village (Aldeia Verde) in 2007. This 'film-ritual' shows or expresses the spirit of the dead children, the mothers weeping from the pain of being separated from their sons. As described elsewhere (Caixeta de Queiroz, 2008, 121), these are the children who died and turned into spirits and those who momentarily remain in seclusion in the *kuxex* ('religion house') to be instructed in the ways of 'becoming a man' in the *tikm'n* world.[15]

Isael films the ritual and comments at the same time as he is filming (a procedure unparalleled in documentary history[16]), reinforcing the dimension of the visible and the 'elements of *tikm'n* culture' behind the images. We discuss this film in more detail later. For now, though, we mention it here simply to emphasize an important point of our argument: in 2007, the same year when Aldeia Verde was founded (created) following a huge conflict that provoked the dispersal of 'local groups' (see below), Isael Maxakali filmed in order to re-establish his group in the new village, reinventing his people at the same time as inventing their cinema – a kind of Maxakali cinema.[17]

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15 *Tatakox* was shown for the first time to a non-indigenous public at *Forumdoc.bh.2007*, held in the city of Belo Horizonte. The film had a big impact on the public, so much so that the Jury of the International Competition Show (composed of three women: Roberta Veiga, Stella Senra and Paula Gaitán) invented and awarded a new prize (the Glauber Rocha Award) to Isael's film in recognition of its intensity and narrative force!

16 In fact, as we shall see below, Isael Maxakali had been acquiring a set of audiovisual techniques and languages since the beginning of 2000 and, through the use of bricolage, had created his own technique and style of *tikm'n* 'writing.'

17 We emphasize once again that we use the notion of invention or reinvention here in the sense attributed by Roy Wagner (see note 3 above) and not an invention out of nothing (as though it were something artificial), nor an absolutely new or original reinvention.

As we shall also see, soon after the showing of *Tataxox* in the Aldeia Verde community and beyond, the residents of Aldeia Pradinho, under the leadership of Guigui Maxakali, held another ritual and made another film on the same theme, increasing the cinema-ritual through a process of addition and differentiation.

THE MAXAKALI FILMMAKING DUO: ISAEL-SUELI

When a conflict erupted among the Maxakali in 2004, Sueli's and Isael's families were completely immersed in its dynamic. In August 2005, two subgroups formed by around 150 people and led by Noêmia (the couple's mother and mother-in-law, respectively) occupied an area of the Monte das Oliveiras Farm, or Córrego do Norte, on the border of the Indigenous Land. The farmers organized and threatened to kill the indigenous population, making occupation unsustainable in practice. Romero (2015, 112-113) describes the account given to him by Noêmia Maxakali ten years after the actual event:

> Despite the persecution by the farmers and the repeated death threats, the leaders kept the occupation going. Then one afternoon the same year [2005] the Indians heard the engine roar of an approaching truck. It was carrying two gunmen armed with 22 and 38 calibre revolvers. They arrived already shooting. Women and children hid and began to throw stones at the vehicle. They managed to smash the windscreen and dent the bodywork. Amid all the confusion, [the spirits] *Kotkuphi* and *Putuxop* arrived. *Kotkuphi* cried aaaax aaaax aaaax aaaax, accompanied by *Putuxop*: yap yap yap yap yap yap yap yap yap yap! ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti! Armed with a small air rifle, *Kotkuphi* managed to catch one of the invaders by surprise, injuring him in the back and the belly. Wounded, the two men hurried back into the truck and left. The word was that they abandoned the 'job.'

The 'encampment' lasted just three months. After this period, the two subgroups roamed between different 'shelters' and makeshift dwellings in the region's towns, or even in the territory of the Krenak indigenous people. Finally, in 2007, FUNAI acquired lands in the region and transferred one subgroup to what is today Aldeia Mundo Novo Cachoeirinha, and the other to Aldeia Verde. Sueli Maxakali told us the reason for accepting the latter village as their new home: "we were tired of fighting, we wanted a place to live in peace, to live and reorganize Maxakali culture." At first, they complained a lot about the location and their new territory: distant from other parents, with no forest to hunt in, or any river to swim and fish in! But very soon the native vegetation began to take over the pastures, and the trees and animals – which had never ceased to occupy a virtual place in

tikm'n thought – gradually began to form part of Aldeia Verde's landscape. A health post and school were constructed there, as well as, of course, the Kuxex (the religion 'house' or 'cabin'). The village plaza began to be frequented again regularly by the 'spirits' (*yãmiyxop*). All of this was impelled by *tikm'n* words and songs, mediated by the shamans (*payexop*), and finally, as we shall see, manipulated/inspired by the camera of Isael Maxakali. An indigenous collective type of cinema began to be invented and reinvented, a people strengthened by the cinematographic *mise-en-scène*.[18]

In fact, we need to turn back in time to obtain a clearer insight into the resurgence (through addition and multiplication, rather than fusion or synthesis) of a people and a 'resistant way of life' mediated by shamanic tradition and cinema. Sueli is a political leader from Aldeia Verde who gained her training working alongside her mother (Noêmia), resolving land issues and internal conflicts, while also attempting to translate the intentions of the elders for white people to understand. Notably Sueli is the daughter of a Guarani-Kaiowá man, who had been taken to Água Boa village as a detainee from the Krenak 'rehabilitation' home during the military dictatorship.[19] Thus her life course has been marked by the

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18 Earlier we cited the idea of the invention or reinvention of a culture, in the sense formulated by Roy Wagner. This notion can be extended to the field of documentary cinema, connecting it to the notion of reinventing a people through cinema, as proposed by the Canadian filmmaker Pierre Perrault. Commenting on Perrault's work, the French philosopher and critic Michel Marie (2012, 18) wrote that he "always fought for the survival of a community, a language and a culture. His work is traversed by a siege mentality." Another French philosopher, Jean-Louis Comolli (2008, 28-29), also inspired by Pierre Perrault (particularly his film 'Pour la suite du monde,' 1963) and writing the preface to the Brazilian edition of *Voir et Pouvoir* under the title of (in translation) "For the continuation of the world (with cinema)," remarked that "the relations of force in the world evidently transformed cinema [...]. At the same time, cinema transformed the world – and the camera transformed the human figure. The cinema-machine includes the world just as the world includes the machine. Documentary cinema is the mixing console of this reciprocity. Just as the world produces it, so the cinematographic relation annuls or suspends any stable distinction between 'inside' and 'outside,' 'true' and 'false,' 'documentary' and 'fiction,' 'objective' and 'subjective.'"

19 An important detail. As we shall see later, in 1966 Captain Manoel Pinheiro was appointed to head the operations of the Indian Protection Service (*Serviço de Proteção ao Índio*: SPI) in Minas Gerais. Linked to the National Information Service (*Serviço Nacional de Informações*: SNI) and the Military Police Reserve Service of Minas Gerais State, the captain created the Rural Indigenous Guard (*Guarda Rural Indígena*: GRIN) in the Maxakali area. This unit was made responsible for keeping order in the villages, curbing the movements of the indigenous population, imposing work and denouncing offenders to the Military Police Detachment stationed there. Minor offences were punished by prison in the area itself, while those deemed more serious led to exile at the Indigenous Agricultural Reformatory, also known as the Krenak Indigenous Reeducation Centre, located in the area demarcated for the Krenak people, in the Rio Doce

abusive presence of the colonizers, the invaders of her lands, from the time she was born. As she became older, she assumed the position of a political agent in the reverse pacification of the whites.

Isael, Sueli's husband, experienced at close hand the story told by his mother-in-law and the latter's own mother (Noêmia and Isabel, respectively). When a larger-scale conflict erupted among his people, Isael was already imbued with the spirit of making connections with the white world, especially through his participation in the workshops run by *Forumdoc* (the Belo Horizonte Documentary and Ethnographic Film Festival), held for the first time in 2004,[20] his matriculation on the Intercultural Training for Indigenous Educators (FIEI) course, and his participation in the latter's painting and video workshops from 2006 to 2011, when he stood out through his production of drawings to illustrate the book *Hitupmã`ax: Curar*, published in 2008.[21] He also attended the UFMG Winter Festival, held between 22 and 26 July 2013 in the city of Diamantina, when he participated in a video workshop coordinated by Divino Tserewahú. Prior to this, Isael, in 2008, along with a non-indigenous friend with whom he had worked in the FIEI workshops, Charles Bicalho, founded a non-governmental organisation to produce and edit videos, Pajé Filmes. The organization has been responsible for editing and divulging an important corpus of material filmed and directed by the Maxakali themselves. This partnership with Charles Bicalho added yet further impetus to the incessant production and multiplication of *tikm'n* cinema.

Almost invariably accompanied by his partner, Suely, and Maxakali shamans like Mamey and Totó, Isael thus participated in various 'artistic' training events with white allies in order to take back these ideas and knowledge to their village, applying and transforming them to invent their own 'culture.' Isael and Suely Maxakali undertook (and still undertake today) all of this in conjunction with and parallel to two other 'professional' activities, as teacher and indigenous health agent, respectively, at Aldeia Verde. In addition to all his other activities, in 2016 Isael was elected town councillor in Ladainha (MG). In sum, Isael and Sueli are figures who play various roles in Maxakali society and in the relationship between this society and the outside world.

Valley in Minas Gerais. This correctional institution was created by Pinheiro to hold members of indigenous groups who resisted the orders of their village administrators or those considered 'socially maladjusted.' As described later, the film *Grin* was based on the experiences of the Maxakali people during this period, still present in the memories of older people.

20 This workshop was coordinated by Pedro Portella and run by indigenous filmmakers from the Vídeo nas Aldeias project (Natuyu Ikpeng, Kumané Ikpeng, Karané Ikpeng and Divino Tserewahú) to train a group of Maxakali youths, Isael Maxakali among them.

21 This book is a collective publication on aspects of cosmology and practice relating to health and sickness. It includes illustrations by Rafael Maxakali, Pinheiro Maxakali, Isael Maxakali, Suely Maxakali, Mamey Maxakali and Totó Maxakali.

To conclude this brief portrait of our main characters, it is worth citing their own account of themselves:

> Isael: I teach classes in Maxakali language and culture in the village school. I lived in Água Boa village until 2006. My family and I, along with other relatives, spent a year in a temporary camp called Duas Lagoas, close to Campanário in Minas Gerais, following a conflict in Água Boa, which led us to look for other land. In 2007 we were transferred to a new reserve in the municipality of Ladainha, also in Minas, where we still live today.

> Sueli: I am president of the Maxakali Association of Aldeia Verde. I am a photographer. I take *still* photographs and help direct Isael's films.

In an interview given to Andriza M. Teodolino de Andrade (2017, 41), Isael Maxakali tells the researcher how he learnt to make films by watching films made by people from other indigenous groups, in a curious and amateur fashion, driven by the desire to make films about his community and to show his 'culture':

> The reason is I saw a lot of videos of our kin, from other indigenous groups. When I arrived in Belo Horizonte, I would watch films by our Guarani and Xavante kin... In the house of Rosângela (Tugny), I would ask to play videos of our kin. Then I thought: wow, I want to do this too, show our culture. I want to show my community too, right? I'm really

interested in showing us in this way, I'm not earning [money] but I like to show my work to the community.[22]

SOME CONCEPTS OF MAXAKALI ONTOLOGY

Before turning to our analysis of the audiovisual works produced by the Maxakali, it is important to briefly examine their ontology, or some of the basic concepts. These are crucial to understanding what and why they film or show in their films.[23] These are: *Ãyuhuk, Ĩnmõxa, Koxuk, Kuxex, Mĩmãnãm, Tihik, Tikmʼn, Yãmĩyxop, Yãmĩyhex, Yãmĩy.*

One point to stress here is that definitions or translations of these concepts into another language are always provisional (or equivocal) and can only be clearly recognized and differentiated through the relations between the terms. These terms are, in turn, composed and recomposed through the act of speaking or through ritual pragmatics. As we stated earlier, *tikmʼn* means something like the 'Maxakali' indigenous group, 'us people,' a concept that refers to a people who speak the same language and share territorial or marital relations, distinguished from other nearby or more distant indigenous peoples, such as, respectively, the 'Pataxó' (who may be 'ex-Maxakali') or Krenak (with whom the Maxakali warred in the past) and the peoples of the Upper Xingu. Meanwhile the concept *tihik* refers either to humans generically, or to 'kin,' in opposition to the non-indigenous population.[24]

Conceptualized precisely in opposition to the *tihik* are the *ãyuhuk*, the strangers, visitors, enemies, but also the non-indigenous population or 'whites' – beings endowed with formidable technological powers, including the capacity to destroy other beings (the *tihik* themselves, but also other non-humans we call fauna and flora, or 'the natural environment').

Both 'non-human' persons (animals and other 'natural' beings) and 'human' persons (the *tihik*) possess a spirit or what we call 'soul.' But this spirit better corresponds to an idea widespread in the Amerindian universe known by the term 'double,' which defines a doubling of the person. Differently to our own acceptations, therefore, the idea of spirit

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22 We have modified the orthography of the original text, which, in our view, mistakenly tries to convey the interviewee's way of speaking a foreign language (Portuguese).

23 These concepts are basically taken from the works of Tugny (2011, 2014) and Tugny et al. (2009a, 2009b).

24 To add further nuance to this translation, *tihik* is a primordial Maxakali human, the kind that existed prior to the differentiation between subjects or entities, including the earth and sky. In this sense, *tihik* is 'a background molecular unity' that traverses human subjects – those recognized as such by the Tikmʼn. Put otherwise, they are the primordial Tikmʼn.

more specifically refers to the capacity for agency, as distinct from personhood, that resides in the 'body.' Thus when the Tikm'n pronounce the word that we usually translate as 'spirit,' *yãmĩy* or *yãmĩyxop*, they are referring to the body and spirit simultaneously. For example, there are the *tatakox* (which are both caterpillars and 'caterpillar-spirits'), or the *yãmĩyhex* (the women-spirits), or the *yãmĩyxop* (the spirit-peoples or the 'human-animal-peoples'). However, the concepts of *yãmĩy* and *yãmĩyxop* belong to a semantic field that extends far beyond this pure contrast with humans. According to Tugny (2014, 160-161):

> the concept of *yãmĩyxop* can be perceived as a complex, formed by the notion of: spirit, songs and the events in which they reveal themselves. [...] Some [of these 'spirit-peoples'] help men to make arrows, others assist during hunts, others order the village houses, and so on. All of them are at once virtual devices employed in shamanic journeys to rescue the spirit of someone sick in the village, and possibilities for rekindling kinship ties with people, always yearning for their dead kin, transformed into song-images.[25]

figure 2
Isael filming the *yãmĩy* on the plaza of Aldeia Verde, exchanging food with the women. Source: Renata Otto (2011).

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25 It should be emphasized that the *yãmĩy* and the *yãmiyxop* are 'beings' of nature and culture at the same time, figures of 'supernature' that still exist in the present world and time, as 'representatives' of those beings that belonged to the primordial times when the world was still undifferentiated (before any differentiation into 'species' had taken place). The *yãmĩyxop* were created from the ancestors, mõnãyxop, and are manifested today through figures of nature (animals) and simultaneously as figures of 'supernature' (spirit) and 'culture' or figures of attributed humanity (song and ritual).

When the *yãmĩyxop* come to the village, they sing, dance and exchange food. There the spirits are guided by men and by shamans. Hence they answer human solicitations through men. With women, though, they "dance, play, fight, flirt, and receive food and other items from them" (Tugny, 2014, 161).26 When the *yãmĩyxop* arrive in the village, they remain in the 'religion house' or *kuxex*: a simple cabin, covered in thatch, built on the village periphery during the ritual, with one 'wall' completely sealed to the inside or village plaza, and an opening that provides access to the 'outside' of the village, connecting to the 'forest' and the world of 'spirits' and 'others.' Women cannot 'see' the spirits when the latter are lodged inside the *kuxex*. This is why they are barred from entering and, in the Maxakali films, the 'universe' inside this house is never shown, since the women – as potential viewers – cannot 'see' what is happening there.

Ĩnmõxa is a type of 'malevolent spirit,' a dead body of a woman or man that did not move on to the celestial level. Instead, it wanders the terrestrial surface whenever it emerges from its dwelling place in the lower layers of the earth (a sign of rottenness); a devouring, cannibal monster able and willing to eat and prey on living 'humans.' The polar opposite to *ĩnmõxa* is the figure of *mõnãyxop*: an ancestor and ally of present-day humans.

When the *yãmĩyxop* arrive in the village, their eyes are usually blindfolded: they appear to have been abducted by the shamans or by the *mĩmãnãm*, a painted and shining mast (translated as 'pau de religião' in Portuguese, 'religion pole'), identified as an attribute of some of these *yãmĩyxop*.
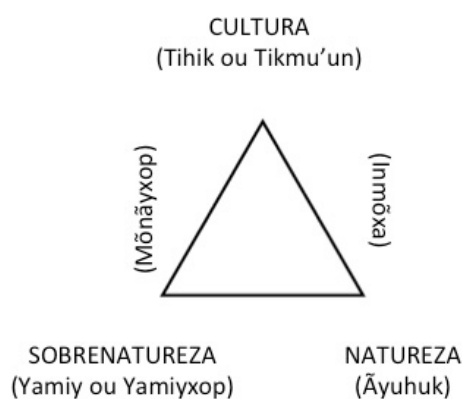
The word for shaman in contemporary Maxakali is *payexop*, a derivation of the Tupi-Guarani term 'payé' or 'pajé,' which has entered the Brazilian Portuguese lexicon. Shamans can also be simply called *yãyãxop*, the term used to designate village elders (Romero, 2015). They occupy an important place in all Maxakali rituals and films. Neither the rituals nor the films (especially those on rituals, or the 'film-ritual') are made without the input of shamans concerning what can be 'depicted' or shown, what should be 'cut' (or left unshown) and what should be made explicit in the relation between humans and spirits, men and women. To use a cinematographic language, the shaman is the primary agent responsible for defining the composition between field and extra-field. In other words, the shaman performs a 'director' function within the ritual and the film. Or more precisely, he is a kind of cosmological diplomat (someone who invites, converses with and instructs the movements of the spirits in the ritual) at the same time as acting as a cinematographic co-director, assisting the director or camera operator in the *mise-en-scène* (or modulation) of the

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26 According to Tugny et al. (2009a, 400), today the Tikm'n enumerate various large groups of *yãmĩyxop* possessing song repertories, "which in turn proliferate in countless subclasses."

visible and the invisible, the control of what to show and emphasize and what not to show (obfuscate) or blur, within a subjective pragmatics.[27]

This is why, in the present essay, our discussion focuses not on film in a generic sense, but on a Maxakali film-ritual in which the role of the shaman is of critical importance, since he translates what is unfolding in the scene into the device of the film. The shaman is the one who enables the visible or the invisible – whether contained within the 'field' or in the 'extra-field' – to be 'seen' and composes the *tikm'n* 'images' properly speaking. Below we provide a schematic diagram of the basic (and unstable) relationship between the *tikm'n* cosmological agents in order to demonstrate that the 'framework' of cosmological relations, even if not explicit in the *tikm'n* film narratives, certainly serves them as a guide:[28]

figure 3
The basic (and unstable) relationship between the *tikm'n* cosmological agents.

CULTURA
(Tihik ou Tikmu'un)

(Mõnãỹxop)

(Inmõxa)

SOBRENATUREZA
(Yamiy ou Yamiyxop)

NATUREZA
(Ãyuhuk)

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27 Here it is worth citing the contrast (image) between two 'modes of knowledge' proposed in visionary form by Viveiros de Castro (2013, 25): "Shamanism is a mode of action entailing a mode of knowledge, or, rather, a certain ideal of knowledge. In certain respects, this ideal is diametrically opposed to the objectivist epistemology encouraged by Western modernity. The latter's telos is provided by the category of the object: to know is to 'objectivize' by distinguishing between what is intrinsic to the object and what instead belongs to the knowing subject, which has been inevitably and illegitimately projected onto the object. [...] The form of the Other is the thing. [...] Amerindian shamanism is guided by the inverse ideal: to know is to personify, to take the point of view of what should be known or, rather, *the one* who should be known. The key is to know, in Guimaraes Rosa's phrase, 'the who of things,' without which there would be no way to respond intelligently to the question of 'why.' The form of the Other is the person."

28 Here we draw direct inspiration from the synthesis proposed by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1986, 204 passim and 612) for the structure of Tupi-Guarani cosmology, which operates in three terms and domains: "(1) gods, divinized souls, sky; (2) living humans, earth surface, village; (3) animals, spectres of the dead, forest (or subterranean world). These domains correspond to ontological categories that can be glossed as (1) Supernature, (2) Society, and (3) Nature. These three levels of being may be qualified respectively as metacultural, cultural, and infracultural." The author adds the proviso (an observation that also applies to the Maxakali case): "This structure is temporally and logically unstable."

As we have seen, the terms 'religion house' and 'religion pole' are used by the Maxakali themselves to translate their native terms *kuxex* and *mĩmãnãm*, respectively. This translation is made in their relationship with white people (especially anthropologists) or in the attempt to translate elements of their ritual (and their 'culture') into white culture. When it is a question of realizing not only a ritual but a film too, the Maxakali shaman and filmmaker then have to cope with a crucial concept in western ontology, specifically in cinematography, which is the concept of image. For us, the concept of 'image' typically refers to the idea of 'representation' or a 'trace of the real' (in a Bazinian ontology of the image). In her text, Tugny (2014, 166) informs us that the Maxakali translate the word *koxuk* as 'imagem' [image, in Portuguese], but also use the Portuguese terms for 'shadow' and 'soul.' She concludes that, for this people, an "image is not definitively something found in the domain of appearance, immateriality, the visible envelope or representation, supposing that something truer remains invisible."[29] In other words, the author defends the idea that we cannot find there (or in *tikm'n* cinema) the problem ('our' problem) of truth or reality, or, therefore, the problem of representation. Put otherwise, the field of cinematography (and of the image) and of *tikm'n* 'reality' is much more indiscernible or blurred than it is for 'ourselves.' However, the Maxakali – at least the shamans and the filmmaking couple Isael-Sueli – seem to have encountered in cinema a form of 'revealing' or relating to spirits in a more potent and intense form, at the same time as the images cannot be made or divulged in just any form (they are 'real' and provoke-act on humans aggressively or collaboratively). Some can and indeed should be shown, while others should be deleted or left concealed, recognizing here that the relation of the Maxakali with others (including 'whites'), like the relation of humans (including men and women) and shamans with spirits, should be based on a kind of dialogue or diplomacy.

We can illustrate this idea through a comment made by Sueli Maxakali. In our house one time, during a screening of a film made by herself and Isael called *Espírito* ('Spirit,' 2008), Sueli said about the image: "They (the *yãmĩy*) are highly impetuous, they push the women, beat the mean, I don't like confronting them, I flee from them, but my sister (Elisângela), doesn't let them off lightly, she messes with them." Afterwards, commenting on a scene in which the *yãmĩy* invade their houses, Sueli said,

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29 In the Maxakali universe, therefore, *koxuk* (image) forms part of the same semantic field as *yãmĩyxop* (spirit-people), much like other indigenous peoples, as Viveiros de Castro has already emphasized (cited in Tugny et al., 2009a, 400): "A spirit in Amazonia is less a thing than an image, less a species than an experience, less a term than a relation, less an object than an event, less a transcendent representative figure than a sign of the immanent universal background."

laughing and berating them at the same time: "they're going to take our chicken, look, they're taking it, they're merciless." What we mean is that, through the film (or the images), Sueli was able to see not only the images (our images) of what the spirits are, but also their own bodies, subject to the same affections as the humans, in a kind of cinema-ontological vision of what the Maxakali *yãmĩy* are – and the desire that, through the films, white people know it too.

Of course, in this relation-translation, there is always a semantic loss or an expansion of the context of reference, just as a transformation is taking place of the ritual itself (when *realized-actualized* in a form anterior or exterior to the film) and a transformation of the film on the ritual. A transformation exists from one to the other, but a transformation that involves a return to the starting point (the ritual when re-realized) in a multiple form. We shall come back to this point in our final remarks. For now, though, we turn to examine specific 'concrete' material through the analysis of some *tikm'n* films.

WHEN THE YÃMĨY COME TO DANCE WITH US[30]

We submitted the film project to the fourth edition of the *Filme em Minas* (Film in Minas) competition, held in 2009, where it received the prize for best film in the documentary category. It is worth pointing out that this award is an initiative of the Minas Gerais State government, financed by CEMIG but involving the Ministry of Culture in the form of a law for promoting audiovisual work and the Rouanet Law. Consequently, the prize was approved not only by the Minas Gerais State government but also by the Ministry of Culture. We underline this fact so as not to lose sight of how bureaucratic procedures, almost endless, are capable of disorienting even experienced producers during the realization of an apparently simple project. It also helps counter the idea that making an 'indigenous' film (or project) is something 'pure,' uncontaminated by a 'mode of production,' while simultaneously drawing attention to the lines of flight or even fissures that these same projects (and films) potentially imply for the mode of production of cultural projects and for 'non-indigenous' cinema.

This point aside, the film *Quando os Yãmĩy vêm dançar conosco* (When the *Yãmĩy* come to dance with us) began as a response to the demands

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30 This 52-minute film, completed in 2012, is the collective authorship of Maxakali, Sueli Maxakali and Renata Otto. Editing is by Carolina Canguçu, production by Milene Migliano. Among all the films analysed in the context of this work, this provides the strongest example since we participated directly in its production. Consequently, we can discuss the process in depth (field, extra-field or ante-field), an essential element in understanding how any film is made, even more so a Maxakali film, including which agencies were involved in its making.

for training activities and for better film recording and post-production equipment to be provided to Aldeia Verde too, as had happened in Vila Nova do Pradinho village (in the context of the *Image-Body-Truth Project*, see above) in 2008. In other words, the film project emerged from a debt we owed to Isael, Sueli, Noêmia and Aldeia Verde in general.[31]

At the same time, though, the film project was also integral to an accord made between the people of Aldeia Verde and the *yãmĩy* spirits. The film would enable the performance of the eagle ritual (*mõgmõka*), since this *yãmĩyxop* had been invited to descend, come to the village, sing and exchange with the men and women there. According to Tugny et al. (2009a, 34), the *yãmĩyxop* of the eagle-spirit (*mõgmõka*) is primarily associated with the feeling of nostalgia. The history of mõgmõka narrates that he emerged from the dead body of an ancestor-spirit. This mõñãyxop was a provider of game for his kin. He knew how to make traps: he would set one and wait up in the tree while the animals came to feed on its fruits until eventually his trap would catch a prey animal: armadillos, tapirs... While he was waiting one time, he was able to see, from his high vantage point, his wife permitting herself to be seduced by one of his kin. Distraught at being cheated on, the mõñãyxop turned into an eagle-spirit, a *mõgmõka*. This story also tells that the *mõñãyxop*, transformed into an eagle, favoured a 'brother-in-law' (a father's sister's son), allowing himself to be caught by him. Imprisoned and led to the other kin, he was plucked and killed. From his body then emerged all the qualities of present-day eagles, as well as the *yãmĩyxop mõgmõka*. The *mõgmõka* ritual is associated with a celebration of the generosity (the capacity to provide game) of the animal-spirit and, simultaneously, with the meanness (sexual and alimentary greediness) of the *tihik* kin. It provides an illustration of the etiquette of sexual relationships: brothers-in-law should be generous, not greedy. Nonetheless, despite the excessive behaviour of his kin, in the condition of ex-humans (*mõñãyxop*), *mõgmõká* feels a sad longing for the former kin of the village. People say that women miss him too and urge him to visit (Tugny et al., 2009a, 36). At the time of writing the project, though, we only took into account that the shaman had agreed the coming of mõgmõka to his village as the result of someone's dream. The project, then, proposed to focus on the realization

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31 In addition, the *Image-Body-Truth* Project planned for the purchase of video equipment for three villages, including Aldeia Verde, looking to run other workshops in the future and/or enable the production of their own films. But a serious mishap occurred. The equipment that was due to be delivered by us, a camera and a microphone, stored in the glove compartment of our car on the eve of our trip to Aldeia Verde, were stolen. Our debt increased exponentially with Aldeia Verde! First because there had not been a Vídeo nas Aldeias workshop held there and, second, because the equipment that should have been handed over was not. Hence proposing the project to continue the video workshops and make films, purchasing equipment that we had already planned, became even more necessary.

of this single ritual. At the moment of the proposal, however, we did not take into account (or take seriously enough) what the ritual would actually involve: namely, that mõgmõka was a 'commander' of various other *yãmĩyxop*, as the shaman Mamey explained afterwards: "Eagle is the commander. Eagle orders Pin-tailed Manakin[32] to hunt. He orders Pin-tailed Manakin to sing, to dance. Eagle is responsible for all of them. He is big and powerful, just like the government. Eagle is the government."

Hence, the ritual and the film, planned to welcome and record him, were taken over by the visit of the *yãmĩyxop* who form a ritual 'group' with *mõgmõká*, and are 'commanded' by him, comprising 'pin-tailed manakin' (*kepmiy*) and 'woodpecker' (*mãnmãn*). But the ritual also included the arrival of various other *yãmĩyxop* groups in the village. The *yãmĩyxop* of *tatakox*, *kumayxop* and *Yãmĩhex* all came.[33] At the start of the project, we were also unaware that a *yãmĩyxop* never travels alone: "The *yãmĩyxop* are never a singularity, they always come in packs" (Tugny et al., 2009a, 400); and they never end, just like the songs that they actualize: "the songs never end, we can never write them all, I could sleep on top of all the books that we would write and still the work would remain unfinished" (Tugny et al., 2009a, 13).

Over the period of the ritual that we would accompany to shoot the film *Quando os Yãmĩy Vêm Dançar Conosco* at the start of 2011, which lasted around 15 days, performed from early in the day until nightfall, and during the early hours of the morning, the diverse *yãmĩyxop* began to inhabit the *kuxex* (the ritual or religion house). Some would arrive, sing, play, bid farewell and depart. Later others arrived, followed by others, and so on. As the shaman Mamey comments in the film: "We don't forget our *yãmĩyxop*; here they are always rituals and everyone is filled with joy by the *yãmĩyxop*, men, women and children. Everyone is happy."

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32 TN: A species of small bird, Ilicura militaris (tangarazinho in Portuguese), endemic to lowland forest habitats in Brazil.

33 Echoing Tugny, Ribeiro (2011) states the following about the differentiation between the *yãmĩyxop* groups: "According to the data that I obtained working for my doctoral thesis (Ribeiro, 2008), the Tikm'n unite the *yãmĩyxop* into 10 large groups, each formed by a myriad of beings that narrate their stories through the songs. The names of these groups are taken from the entity reputed to be the 'strongest' of each of them, six of them being headed by animal spirits: *putuxox* (parrot spirit), *mõgmõka* (eagle spirit), *xũnĩm* (bat spirit), *ãmãxux* (tapir spirit), *tatakox* (the spirit of a caterpillar that inhabits bamboo), and *po'op* (monkey spirit). The other four are linked to other types of beings: *koatkuphi* (inedible manioc fibre), *yãmĩy* (male human ancestral spirits), *yãmĩy hex* (female human ancestral spirits) and *kõmãyxop* (a ritual linked to formal friendship, that is, to people who call each other by the term *komãy*)."

At the moment of filming, three cameras were used. We had already tried to establish a minimal structure during the initial phase of the project: one camera would be kept by one of the *tikm'n* women – this viewpoint would ensure the position of women in ritual circumstances was filmed, since they are the people who the *yãmĩyxop* come to visit and with whom they come to exchange songs and food. Unlike men, however, they are barred from crossing the wall of the *kuxex*. They cannot see what happens inside. Furthermore, they must not catch sight of any *yãmĩyxop*.[34] The *yãmĩyxop* themselves cannot see the *tihik* or *tikm'n*: they are 'blinded,' their faces covered. Their vision is said to be non-empirical and non-intentional, a sight guided by other sorts of 'images,' those attained through contiguity (Tugny et al., 2009a, 23). So while the *yãmĩyxop* should not exchange glances with any of the Tikm'n, whether women or men, children or adults, women are more strictly prohibited from interacting with them, although they do exchange songs, jokes and food with the *yãmĩyxop* and are, so to speak, the focus of their visit to the village. But if they do more than this, if they exchange glances, if they place themselves in close proximity (contiguity) with the *yãmĩyxop* in the same way that men do, then they risk being confused with what they had once been in mythic times, 'co-wives.' The *yãmĩhex* (women as a whole) are, even on earth in the present (*yãmĩhex* seen as *tikm'n* women: that is, *uhex*) the potential co-wives of *tikm'n* men and the *yãmĩyxop*. According to Tugny et al. (2009a, 27), "the Tikm'n have the *yãmĩyxop* as their ritual doubles, these anti-affines, and also refer to them as *kokux mutix*, joint-images." On leaving the villages, the *yãmĩyxop* usually say goodbye to the wives ceded to them.

The second camera would be handled by one of the *tikm'n men* so that he could accompany the other men, staying especially close to the shaman, who provides instruction on all the ritual events. This man-camera was also prohibited from crossing the *kuxex* to prevent him recording those scenes that women are barred from seeing. But he could film the preparations reserved to men, as well as locate himself closer to the *yãmĩyxop*.

The third camera would be used by a member of our team of whites (Carolina Canguçu and Renata Otto, there as workshop monitors), in the position assigned to the outsiders, *ãyuhux*. When it came to actual filming, however, this plan failed to function and had to be reworked. None of the women was able to accompany the entire workshop. Sueli felt unable to organize the hosting of the workshop (of the outsiders) in the village and

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34 Such restrictions on women's involvement in sacred ceremonial life are widespread in the Amerindian world. A famous example is the ban on women seeing the Jurupari flutes, which form part of the ritual life of various indigenous groups (speakers of Arawak and Tukano languages) on the Upper Rio Negro.

also participate in the activities that would demand almost all of her time. Nor were we able to keep track of all the ritual scenes: as outsiders, we were completely uninformed about the ritual structure. All the cameras thus ended up in the hands of the *tikm'n men*. One was used by Isael, another by Gilmar and another by Alessandro. They filmed non-stop, accompanying the rituals which likewise, as mentioned earlier, never ceased.

figure 4
Isael (on the right), Gilmar (on the left) and Alessandro (in the middle), during the filming of *Quando os Yãmĩy vêm dançar conosco.* Source: Milene Migliano (2011).

It was only when we began to process the images for editing that we realized that the film could not be about the *mõgmõká* ritual alone. As Isael narrates in the actual film, the rituals do not end (rituals constantly pervade the collective life of the village), they are not just made for the camera nor for the benefit of 'whites' present. Isael explained in one scene: "The shaman's words are good. Here in Aldeia Verde everything is very good. Here in our village there are always *yãmĩyxop*. It's not because the whites arrived that *yãmĩyxop were here*. Here it always happens."

So the project was radically transformed. The film became about the ritual sequence of the event, although *mõgmõká* still revealed his prominent position as 'governor.'

At the moment of editing, we also realized that, given the planned running time for the film (around 50 minutes for broadcasting on public TV), it would be impossible to include all the visiting *yãmĩyxop*. The *kõmãyxop* cycle (the godparent ritual, involving *compadres* and *comadres*) and the *tatakox* (caterpillar-spirit) thus remained 'outside' the edit of *Quando os Yãmĩy Vêm Dançar Conosco*. The former because it was too long and could be made into a separate film, the latter because two versions had

already been made by the Tikm'n themselves as separate films and to-day, we know, a third exists, with others possible.

While editing some scenes or narrative blocks, we also decided to dissolve the chronological or 'real' sequence of the visitations of the *yãmĩyxop* groups to the village. On this occasion, the ritual sequence began with the arrival of the *yãmĩyxop mõgmõká* (eagle) group: pin-tailed manakin (*kepmiy*) and woodpecker (*mãnmãn*). Afterwards *mõgmõká* left and the ritual action turned to welcome the other *yãmĩyxop* who had come to the village. The scene opened up to include the *yãmĩyxop yãmĩyhex* group, comprising *yãmĩy*, also known as *kup xahi* ('principal') and the *yãmĩyxop* called *xekax xekanix* ('water caboclo'),[35] along with the *yãmĩyxop* called *armon* ('spider'). This group also encompasses *yãmĩyxop yãmĩyhex*, who stays for several nights, and, in this particular case, culminated with a specific *yãmĩyhex* called *xokanitang*. After these came the *yãmĩyxop* from the *koimayxop* group and the *tatakox* group (not in the film).

In the film, however, the first ritual sequence to appear is the arrival of the *yãmĩyxop* from the *yãmĩyhex* groups: the *yãmĩy kup xahi* (descending from the hills, reaching the religion house and continuing to the village plaza to exchange food with the women). The film continues with the presentation of the other *yãmĩyxop* from the *yãmĩyhex* group: *xekak xekanix, armon* and the *yãmĩyhex* themselves, dancing collectively on the plaza around the *kuxex*. This part of the film culminates in a narrative of the shaman, Mamey, concerning the image of the *kuxex* in a nocturnal scene, explaining how the ritual does not end. He was referring to the ritual in general – he explained that the village became happy and strong with the *yãmĩyxop*: the ritual was held in the village all the time, not just when the film was being shot or when white people were there – but he also meant that the specific *yãmĩyhex* ritual had not ended: the *yãmĩyhex yãmĩyxop* had not left the village yet, which is why there would be many *yãmĩyhex* songs. After this scene, the film shifts to the second part of the narrative, which shows the ritual sequence of the *yãmĩyxop mõgmõka* group. This part seems like a restart since it opens with a second panoramic shot of the village – as though repeating the panorama that began the film – which supports the audio with the shaman's off-screen narration telling the story of *mõgmõka*. The second part of the film (which is the first part of the ritual) finishes with a scene of the *yãmĩyxop* from the *yãmĩyhex* group, more specifically, with the off-screen voice of *yãmĩyhex xokanintang*, who sings from inside the *kuxex*, demanding food. In other words, the film reverses the order of the visits of the *mõgmõka* and *yãmĩyhex* ritual groups, isolating and relocating part of the *yãmĩyhex* group in order to close its narrative. Moreover it

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35 TN: The Brazilian Portuguese term *caboclo* refers to someone of mixed European and indigenous ancestry.

omitted other ritual groups that also made themselves present in the village on the occasion. Hence the film radically altered the ritual scene.

It should be emphasized, though, that this decision to limit and cut a set of the *yãmĩyxop* and invert some of the sequences of their passages through the village, even though subject to the approval of the shaman and the filmmaking couple, as well as the village assembly, was a possibility derived from the 'cinematographic' (aesthetic and logical) point of view of outsiders – in this case, our own point of view. It is unclear whether this editing could or would have been imagined by someone Tikm'n.[36] Nevertheless, acceptance of the editing proposal, as can be seen in the film, appears to reveal another condition of the rituals themselves, namely their aversion to synthesis and refusal to submit to consensus – or we could say, their regulating by the variation or transformation between versions. As Tugny et al. (2009a, 25-26) emphasize:

> Through the work with the songs, it became clear just how much these peoples systematically rejected the consensual structures controlled by the State and how much the regime of songs is itself a function and driving force of another logic opposed to synthesis and in favour of multiplication, ontological disjunction, difference [...]. [I]t almost always proved impossible to reach a single version that would satisfy all the groups.

Hence just as the ritual dissolves the filming program, so the film dissolves the ritual program, converting the ritual into a film. But perhaps this film cannot be recognized as a 'Maxakali film,' precisely why we stressed its co-authorship. Perhaps...

In every event, in every filmed scene, whether or not these were included in the final edit, a structure resisted: a clear triangulation, analogous to the distribution of the cameras and filming positions that we had proposed during the earlier project phase – in other words, a triangulation between a *tikm'n* man, a *tikm'n* woman and an *ãyuhuk* (an outsider, one of us, non-indigenous). Analogous because it did not become concrete, of course, but resisted in the sense that the film is based on the distribution of the positions of a *tikm'n* couple (a man and a woman) and the shaman (as well as our own position, shadowing and doubling

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36 According to other examples, when it comes to editing the filming of their traditions, the shamans most frequently opt for continuity, both in the internal duration of the takes, and in the temporal chronological order of the events. Tugny et al. (2009a, 24) note that the *tikm'n* leaders "asked for the entire sequence of a *yãmĩyxop* to be recorded and not to mix songs from different repertoires. They also wanted the sequence in which they were sung to be maintained."
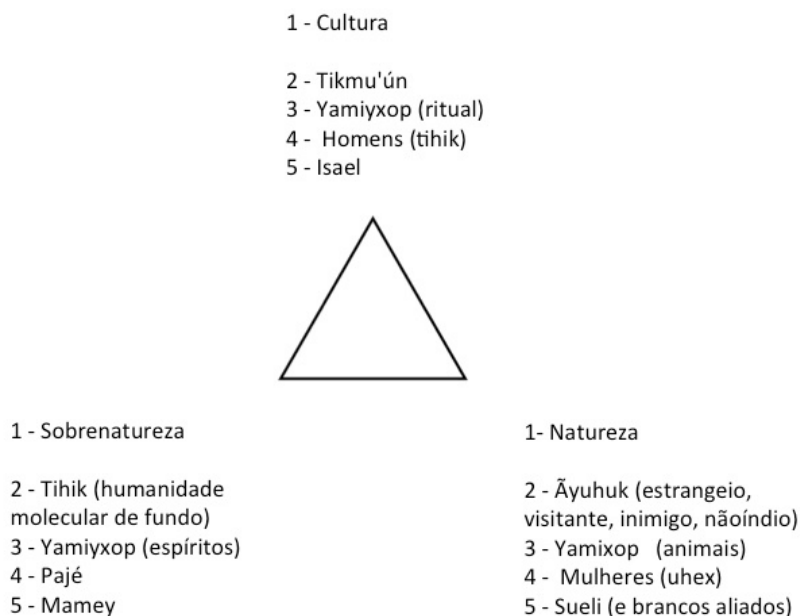
this initial triangle). Thus the fundamental (effectuated) triangulation of this film takes the following form: at one vertex, the command of the filming (of the images) and the explanation of the scenes were the responsibility of Isael; at another vertex, the command of the ritual performance and the transit of the *yãmĩyxop* with the others present, as well as the indication of what to film or not, were the responsibility of the shaman; at another vertex, the command of a 'domestic,' 'everyday' organization needed for the realization of the ritual and film were the responsibility of Sueli. We can say, therefore, that the cinema of Isael and Sueli is a cinema of at least three: Mamey, Isael, Sueli. And we say 'at least' because one of the vertices unfolds into other openings of third parties, including our own participation as outsiders.

figure 5
Ternary relation of the project, the cinema and the ritual.
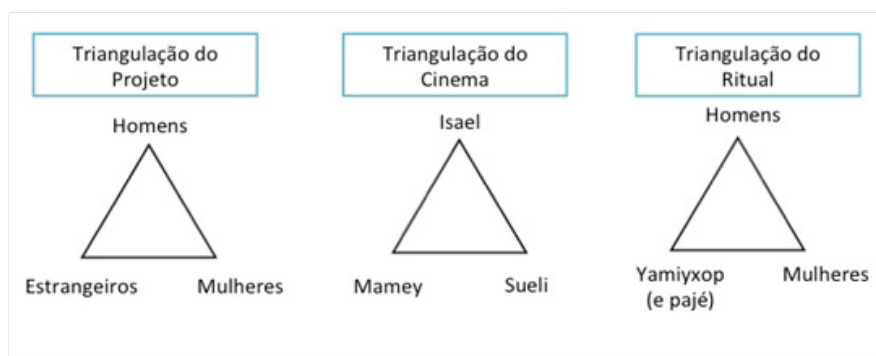
This triangulation can be schematized in transformation with the more encompassing cosmological triangulations (see above), presuming the convertibility between these and the relations involved in Maxakali cinema and ritual:

figure 6
Triangulations of project and cinema in transformation with triangulations of *tikm'n* ritual and cosmology.

1 - Cultura
2 - Tikmu'ún
3 - Yamiyxop (ritual)
4 - Homens (tihik)
5 - Isael

1 - Sobrenatureza
2 - Tihik (humanidade molecular de fundo)
3 - Yamiyxop (espíritos)
4 - Pajé
5 - Mamey

1- Natureza
2 - Ãyuhuk (estrangeio, visitante, inimigo, nãoíndio)
3 - Yamixop (animais)
4 - Mulheres (uhex)
5 - Sueli (e brancos aliados)

In proposing to experiment with the relation between the relations occurring in these triangular transformations, it is essential to remember that the positions (vertices) are no more than this: positions (of relative opposition) that are logically and chronologically unstable or mutable. In this sense, and under this condition, we believe that these schemas can also be configured in accordance with the transformational schema proposed by Viveiros de Castro (2002) in his theory of the actualization and contraeffectuation of the virtual in Amerindian social structure and cosmology. In sum, we argue that this relational form or 'framework' (with its positions of relative and triangular opposition) also applies to *tikm'n* cinema as a transformation of the relation between what we have called the 'field' and 'extra-field':

figure 7
Actualization of the cinema and contraeffectuation of the ritual.
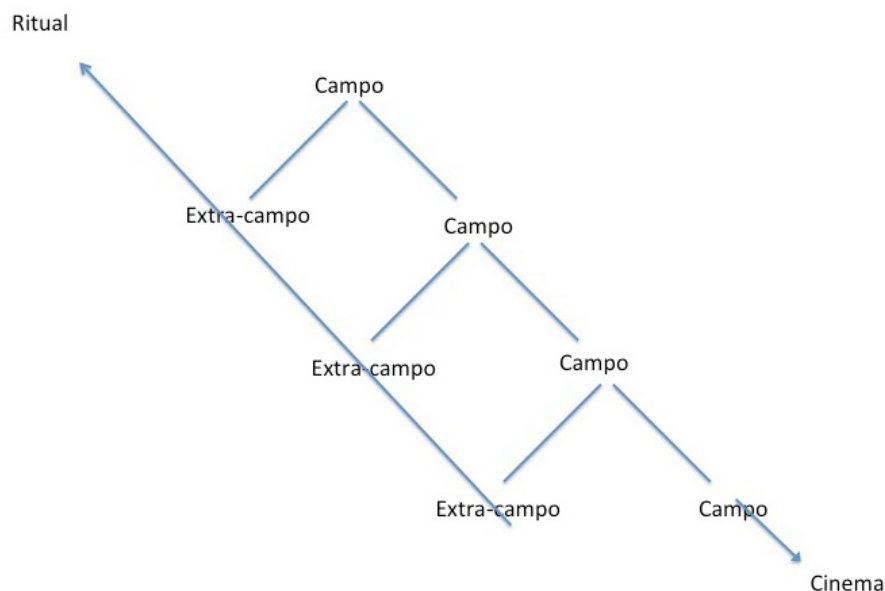
THE *TATAKOX* TRILOGY

As we stated earlier, the first *Tatakox* film was made by Isael Maxakali in Aldeia Verde in 2007. As soon as the residents of Aldeia Vila Nova (Pradinho) learnt that their 'kin' had made the *Tatakox* ritual and film in Aldeia Verde, they wanted to remake it both in their own village with the idea of correcting any errors or defects. While the first was directed by Isael Maxakali, who filmed and at the same time commented on what he was seeing and filming , the second was directed collectively, though the presence of the person filming (an indigenous camera) and another person commenting while the filming was taking place, in this case, the political leader Guigui Maxakali, are both strongly marked[37]. A

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37 Here it is important to emphasize how Isael Maxakali's "commentary on the images

third episode, this time based on a more extensive ritual that took longer to realize, was made by Isael Maxakali in Aldeia Verde: this was *Kakxop pit hãmkoxuk xop te y m gãhã - Iniciação dos filhos dos espíritos da terra* (Initiation of the children of the earth spirits), made in 2015.

While the first episode of this series was made almost off the cuff (while Isael was first experimenting with making 'indigenous cinema'), the other two episodes were made with the intention of 'improving,' 'correcting inaccuracies' – and, it is important to stress, not only to improve on the 'inaccuracies' found in the form and technique of filming and editing, but also to achieve a better match between the film and the ritual. An interesting point, since filming better entails 'enacting' better or even remaking the ritual more in 'accordance with' or 'proximity to' the 'traditional' culture – that is, the form that the figures (in the ritual and the film) believe to be more in line with 'tradition.' Consequently, while there exists an attempt to improve and to make the film and ritual coincide as much as possible, there is also nearly always a divergence between what is imagined as traditional, what is enacted (as performance) and what is filmed. A simultaneous movement of invention (and actualization) of ritual and film. We return to this point in our concluding remarks. For now, we focus on describing in more detail the films of the trilogy, observing that these have been subject to an extremely rich analysis (from which we draw our account) by authors like Rosângela Tugny (2014), Brasil (2017), and Brasil and Belisário (2016).

What exactly is *Tatakox*? As noted earlier, it comprises a male initiation ritual. But it is also much more than this. According to Tugny (2014, 164):

> It is when the boys are chosen by the *Tatakox* spirits to be adopted by the different *yãmĩyxop*. The *Tatakox* are at once a caterpillar and a caterpillar-spirit-people. The word derives from two roots: *tata*, a derivation of *tataha*, which means 'to carry,' and *kox*, which is glossed as 'hole.' It is the *Tatakox* who organize the transitions: during the second funerals, they carry the dead children that they have removed from the earth for the mothers to see them and weep at their loss, and take

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while they are being filmed" constitute an original and fascinating invention by the indigenous filmmaker himself. From afar we can draw a comparison to the "commentary on the image" invented by Jean Rouch for his films, but with a crucial difference: Jean Rouch always advocated the use of improvised commentary (previously unscripted), but did so – after he had invented the method for *Moi, un noir* – over previously filmed images, later projected for this purpose. Isael, though, comments while he himself is filming. Guigui Maxakali comments (and provides orientation, directing the ritual) while another member of his own group does the filming.

the children from the care of their mothers in order to carry them into the adult world. This initiation of the young adults is marked by a double movement: the exposure which makes visible to the mothers their already dead and buried children, and the painful gesture in which the mothers hand over their living sons to their new adoptive parents, the *yãmĩyxop*, to be initiated into adult life. The *Tatakox* carry the dead children from the excavated hole in their arms and hand them over to the mothers, who perform the gesture of cradling them like newborns. For a few seconds, the mothers readopt the previously dead children, brought back to them by the *Tatakox*. In these gestures, they weep from the longing they feel for their dead children, now visible, close to their arms. When the *Tatakox* take the living children from their mothers to the initiation cycle, they carry them on their shoulders. The *Tatakox* adopt these young adults and the mothers weep dramatically from abandoning them. All these transitions take place on the same day and the mothers therefore cry twice: receiving and readopting their dead children and saying farewell to their living sons who will be introduced into the adult universe.

How is the *Tatakox* series filmed? Generally there are long sequential shots in which the cameras are positioned very close to the filmed action. The bodies of the person filming and those being filmed almost collide, disputing a space that allows them to 'see' better, see 'inside,' see the 'invisible,' or turn the apparently 'invisible' (the spirits: invisible at least for the non-indigenous public) into something 'visible' via the film.[38] Numerous authors have already emphasized the extent to which in indigenous cinema (but also in documentary cinema generally) the pragmatics of the body-to-body of the filmmaker, intermediated by the camera, is nearly always a constitutive element of the filmed scene. We can recall in passing that the master Jean Rouch was a fierce defender of the filmmaker as the camera of his or her films, carrying the camera in their hand, so as to be as close as possible to the people and the interior of the scene, as though grazing the world of which it was part in being filmed. Rouch was also an eternal admirer of the Vertovian camera-cine-eye-ear.[39]

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38 Briefly, the ultimate objective of Maxakali films can be said to be to render visible what remains invisible to non-indigenous society, i.e. Maxakali 'culture' or 'ontology' or 'history' itself.
39 This specific phenomenological dimension of indigenous cinema (what is inscribed concretely in the image, in its 'indexical' genesis) is emphasized in a notable article by Brasil & Belisário (2016, 604): "It comprises a body that, in filming, marks its presence in the scene, allowing itself, in turn, to be affected by what it films. The image is the index of a relation mediated by the camera. To a greater or lesser extent, this camera-corporal-artefact – camera-mask, camera-animal-skin, camera-arrow, camera-canoe, camera-trip,

What is filmed in the *Tatakox* series? Primarily it is an exercise in filming a ritual. But a ritual whose parts are lengthened or shortened in order to be filmed and to fit into a film (an edited film). The effect is the creation of a kind of film-ritual. In the ritual itself, though, we can observe 'effects' or traversings that are cosmological or mythological in kind. And here the question posed earlier is slightly modified: it is not a matter of how to film the ritual as such, but the 'spirit' or the invisible. In other words, how to film spirit?

For us westerners, we can only film bodies or matter. At most we can express or evoke the spirit, a 'whole' that is unattainable by either the human eye or the 'eye of the camera.' But were the indigenous camera to be something else, a spirit-camera, an eye-camera, a caterpillar-camera, then what would happen if we borrowed it to see what the Tikm'n are seeing? Perhaps they are seeing *kokux* (images) that are the spirits themselves or the actual bodies of the spirits. For this very reason, as we discussed in response to Sueli Maxakali's commentary about the images (of the *yãmĩy* or spirits) who "pillage the village and humans," she does not see (human) bodies that represent the (non-human) spirits in the cinema of Isael (or in the *Tataxok* series), but is touched and affected by the agency of the spirits themselves, firstly in the ritual and subsequently in the film, or when she sees what the film (the image-spirit) frames and captures through the eye of the camera. In the visible, therefore, the dimension of the invisible is present or affective (for us, it should be observed, not for the indigenous people themselves, who do not separate the dimension of the visible and invisible from this form[40]) – a moment, we could say, when the field is traversed by the outside-the-field, when cosmology invades or revitalizes the ritual.

This cosmological dimension, while it initially traverses the ritual, also pervades the film and leaves its indelible mark on it (albeit one not visibly perceived): in this sense we can say that the field is composed with the outside-the-field or with the invisible.[41] Or as Brasil & Belisário put it

camera-flute, camera-sloth (Brasil, 2013) – is incorporated into the ritualistic and quotidian practices in the villages."

40 Here we can cite a fact narrated by Tugny (2014, 166) concerning the second film from the series (*Tatakox – Aldeia Vila Nova*, 2009), which "elicited from the festival and conference audiences questions relating to the children removed from the hole: how much time do they spend inside? Were the children alive or dead? On one of these occasions, one of the shamans who was present, both in the film and at the debate, replied that they did not know and that 'the *yãmĩyxop* raised little animals there where they lived, they were their offspring.' They said that they had been thrilled to observe that these offspring moved their little hands and were therefore alive."

41 The cosmological dimension of the film, Brasil & Belisário (2016, 604) tell us, is "very

(2016, 607, our emphasis):

> The centrifugal plane, open to what comes from outside – the outside-the-field, precisely – produces an indexical relation through which the visible is traversed by the invisible, being affected and altered by it. [...] The invisible traverses bodies, like the wind traverses the sail of a boat, making itself concrete in its invisibility and *conferring on the sail and the boat something of its agency.*

Why continue to make *Tatakox*? The third episode of the *Tatakox* series is the film *Iniciação dos filhos dos espíritos da terra* (Initiation of the children of the earth spirits), made by Isael Maxakali in Aldeia Verde, in 2015. This appears even more significant than the two previous films because it was taken by Isael and Sueli Maxakali as a kind of multiplication and, at the same time, 'a return to the origins' of the *Tatakox* ritual. As we mentioned earlier, when they founded Aldeia Verde, Isael Maxakali's family wanted not only a peaceful place (a refuge from the wars and conflicts) but also a place where they could 'rebuild' or live Maxakali culture again. This meant resuming the performance of seclusion rituals of young adolescents "as was done in the past." Only it was no longer enough to hold the ritual, it also had to be filmed. This gave rise to *Iniciação dos filhos dos espíritos da terra*.

In this film, the *tikm'n* of Aldeia Verde are kept in reclusion in the kuxex for around three months (although the film does not show this 'time' inside the house, since 'this' cannot be shown to white people) when they are initiated by the earth spirits. Thereafter the boys can frequent the kuxex without danger, living, eating and learning with the *yãmĩyxop* – who frequently return to the village and lodge there temporarily. But it is remarkable that the ritual and the film have renewed practices that had disappeared, never seen or experienced by those officiating their realization. Had this ritual been made for cinema? Or is the cinema a ritual function? Any categorical response is impossible, just a partial observation: ritual and film are at the service of the invention of culture, recuperating or producing a people's tradition.[42]

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often constituted by invisible processes that affect the image but go beyond it. As in situations involving shamanism and ritual, the body is affected by agencies whose presence neither we nor the camera can see: what the latter apprehends and inscribes will be an effect of the relation not only with visible objects and phenomena, but also with these invisible agencies. The body-camera establishes connections, contiguities and vicinities between the visible and invisible dimensions, one resonating with the other: and what is inscribed in the image thus constitutes relations."

42 Here we once more draw inspiration from Comolli's idea of a "continuation of the

In a previous film, *O fim do resguardo* ('The end of reclusion,' 2010), Isael Maxakali had already filmed another ritual in Aldeia Verde with the aim of 'rescuing' aspects of Maxakali culture taken to be 'dormant' and thus in need of being revived. In this type of 'rescue' film, the parents of Juan Maxakali (a boy born in Aldeia Verde in October 2009) stayed in reclusion for thirty days after his birth, a period in which they underwent a series of restrictions, such as, for instance, avoiding red meat. The film focuses on the ritual that marks the end of reclusion: the community goes to the waterfall; the shaman Mamey goes into the forest to collect jaborandi (the *Pilocarpus microphyllus* plant) and find a stone to cut the bamboo later used to blow water towards the sunset and sunrise, (almost) exactly as the ancient ones did.

GRIN

The synopsis of the film *Grin* (2016) by Roney Freitas and Isael Maxakali is brief: "A Maxakali filmmaker recovers memories of the formation of the Rural Indigenous Guard during the military dictatorship, with accounts of the violence suffered by his kin." In fact, it seems to announce the viewpoint of the directors concerning the violence committed during the Brazilian dictatorship (1964-1985) against indigenous peoples by the Rural Indigenous Guard (see above, note 19). Since the directors are an indigenous man and a 'white' man, people ask – and this is a very frequent question posed to 'indigenous cinema' in general – who actually had the idea to make the film (who planned, filmed, edited it)? And is the resulting viewpoint indigenous or white? We believe that this kind of preoccupation makes little sense (indigenous cinema is always undertaken from a collaborative perspective), but it is worth determining whether Maxakali history and thought traverse the film. In fact, it seems that *Grin* aims to echo the outrage over the violence committed by the whites against the indigenous population and, more than this, that this violence is still present since "for us the dictatorship never ended," as Sueli Maxakali said.[43]

The history to the film *Grin* begins with the discovery by Marcelo Zelic (an activist from the group *Tortura Nunca Mais/SP*) of an old roll of film deposited at the Indian Museum.[44] This roll, filmed by Jesco von

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world" (with cinema) (Comolli, 2008, 26), itself a homage to the documentary cinema and work of Pierre Perrault.

43 This remark was recorded by Berbert (2017, 18) during the field research for his MA dissertation, based on Sueli Maxakali's presentation at the seminar "History of the indigenous viewpoint: violation of indigenous rights and the National Truth Commission," held in 2015 at the Faculty of Education of the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

44 Here we base ourselves on the account given by Romero (2016).

Puttkamer, contained scenes of eighty indigenous people formed by GRIN parading through the city of Belo Horizonte on February the 5th, 1970, showing the use of a type of torture called 'pau-de-arara' (macaw pole): the prisoners had their hands and feet tied to a pole and were hung upside-down. The young filmmaker Roney Freitas decided to meet the Tikm'n and reveal, tell and denounce the event through a film.

Grin takes as a starting point this 'old' history, then, and constructs its narrative through use of this archival footage, supplemented by interviews made with older Maxakali who participated in the period of GRIN and Colonel Pinheiro (some of the former guards), interviewed in the Maxakali language by the filmmaker Isael Maxakali. Finally the film includes a scene from the contemporary history of Daldina: an indigenous woman who had been run over and killed in the town (Ladainha) close to Aldeia Verde.

In his inspiring analysis of the history and film, Romero (2016, 240-241) writes that the Tikm'n themselves refer to this period as the 'Pinheiro Era,' when they 'became soldiers.' To illustrate what this means, the author explains:

> In Maxakali, the verb *yãy hã* refers to the transformations or metamorphoses as those of the figures from myths who, in the ancient times, 'turned into snake,' 'turned into capybara,' 'turned into eagle'... So when the Tikm'n tell us that they 'turned into soldiers,' this assertion needs to be referenced not only to the historical transformation that they traversed, but also to their history of transformations or to their history lived as transformations.

He concludes by evoking the "doctrine of animal clothing" proposed by Viveiros de Castro (cited in Romero, 2016, 241) in relation to Amerindian perspectivist multiverses: "the difference between the diverse points of view that constitute the world is inscribed in the bodies, or more precisely, in the difference between them, and not in the 'soul,' 'mind' or 'culture,' as certain cosmologies appear to presume – 'ours,' for example."

When Isael Maxakali conducts the interviews, then, the elders who lived that time recall what their bodies were like: they wore 'green clothes,' used black boots, revolvers, truncheons: in other words, they experienced a way of being a soldier. Many of the elders interviewed seem to have aroused some discomfort among both the interviewer-indigenous filmmaker (perhaps also the white filmmaker) and the audience watching the film by responding that the 'Pinheiro Era' may have had "its good side and its bad side," and that they even liked "being police officers,

because they received clothing and all the equipment."[45]

The film *Grin* is not limited to showing-speaking of the past: one of its scenes involves a demonstration held after an indigenous woman (Daldina) had been run over and killed by a motorcycle in the town of Ladainha (MG) while returning to her village carrying a sack of potatoes. The accident was seen as murder by the indigenous community, but "due to a lack of proof" the culprit was not identified by the police 'authorities' or the judiciary. The Maxakali ritual (they return to the place where Daldina was killed and where a song of hers had been heard after her death) is edited and articulated with the visit made by Isael and Sueli Maxakali to the burial place of Osmino Maxakali – Daldina's husband, killed by a farmer and abandoned on the Água Boa road in 1984. The editing of these scenes aims to show white people how much the Maxakali suffer from a systematic violence perpetrated by this same white world – or, as quoted above, how "the dictatorship never ended" for this people.

The film is clearly designed to be shown to non-indigenous spectators, since in the village, when shown for the first time to the Maxakali, there was a profound sadness, followed by intense wailing from the audience, similar to what happens when "the Tikm'n mourn their dead," Romero (2016, 245) tells us. The impact of this ritual-cinematographic event was so strong that before a screening planned for the next day, a proposal was made to cut those images of the ritual in which people wept over the death of Daldina. As the anthropologist reminds us, "the danger in watching them, there in the village, was precisely of remembering the dead relative, feeling longing for her, becoming sad, dreaming, sickening... Among the Tikm'n, images can indeed kill" (Romero, 2016, 245).

We provide a detailed account of the screening of the film *Grin* in a Maxakali village, and its anticipation, in order to emphasize four points:[46] 1) the Maxakali are making films not only about rituals but also about the historical and political events that shape their lives; 2) these political

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45 Of course the indigenous members of GRIN quickly realized that 'being' a police officer was incompatible with the indigenous free spirit: it was a bad idea to 'pursue relatives,' arrest people and follow orders. The body of a soldier (and a white person) once experimented, had to be abandoned. GRIN lasted a short time! But not without leaving its traces.

46 For the purposes of the present analysis, we have chosen just one of a large number of Maxakali films. Most of them are on rituals, but some are on history and 'songs,' while more recently an animated film was made on mythology, *Konãgxeka: O Dilúvio Maxakali* (2016). The latter has received considerable recognition from film festival audiences in Brazil and abroad. In the Maxakali language, Konãgxeka means 'big water': it concerns a myth about the selfishness and greed of men in which the *yãmĩyxop* send a deluge (the 'big water') as punishment.

films seem to be more than just a "review of their history" or a 'telling of their history"; they also tell a "history of the present" to *the whites* (for them, as for so many other indigenous peoples, the "history of the ancestors or the dead" is actually meant to be forgotten) in order for them to reveal the 'marks' (of the violence) of the past that white people imposed on them; 3) the culture of the Maxakali is not frozen in the past (something needing to be 'rescued' or 'preserved' through 'history' or 'cinema'); on the contrary, it is inserted in a transformational dimension in which experimenting or becoming 'white' (like becoming 'anything else') is one mode of existing or resisting; and finally, 4) the films never cease to also be film-rituals insofar as they necessarily deal with the passage of 'images' (*kokux*), that is, the relationship of frequently invisible beings/agencies, which are interpellated (in the case of the film, enacted and edited) in accordance with the terms of their cosmology.

On the last two points, we should remember that it is not just recently that the Maxakali of Pradinho have been endeavouring to experiment and control other modes of life external to their world. We are not talking about obvious instances of this exposure to the outside, like the indigenous schools and sporting events, but more daring experiments, such as the contemporary attempt to mount a "genuinely indigenous police force" or "carnival parades." Of course, all of this is seen as an 'exoticism' or something 'out of context' by some of the indigenous population themselves. Here, perhaps, it may be useful to recall another detail: while working with Sueli Maxakali to identify films to discuss in this article, she told us about a film-ritual that the Maxakali themselves had made: "that one I didn't help to make and don't want to see either." This was a film (apparently collectively authored and without much attention given to editing) of an event in which her kin had performed a 'ritual' on National Indian Day in which they 'enacted' the arrival of the first whites among them, including missionary priests and employees of the now extinct Indian Protection Service. For Sueli, at least, this is not her history and she is uninterested in performing the event in a ritual, much less in filming it. Although Maxakali history and culture, yesterday and today, are replete with what constitutes them from the outside – including the world of whites – there seems to exist a persistence (a resistance) of a (particular) sociocosmological field. Such at least is the conclusion reached by Tugny et al. (2009a, 11) concerning their musical universe (which cannot be dissociated from ritual):

> Over so many centuries of encounters and all kinds of coexistence with the whites, we can imagine just how much the Tikm'n have been listening to music of all styles: music of the Capuchin monks, the explorers, the military personnel who kept them in barracks, the regional population living

alongside them, the slaves, anthropologists, farmers and Evangelicals. Since I have known them, they have never ceased to display a deep curiosity and talent for learning this music, all of it. Excellent singers and dancers of for-ró, arrocha, pisadinha, performers of the romantic songs of Amado Batista and the Evangelical songs, aficionados of the brega genre or bands like Calipso and Calcinha Preta, celebrants of Junina festivals and more recently carnival, the Tikm'n do not lack the musical skills to adopt white music. [...] But what seems certain and what interests us here is that this white music forms part of a set of practic-es of another kind among the Tikm'n, which communicate nothing of their efficacy or their mode of operation to the songs brought to them still today by their *yãmĩyxop*.

FINAL REMARKS

Over the course of this article we have sought to comprehend the expe-rience of indigenous cinema, especially the films produced by the Max-akali and by the filmmaking couple Isael-Sueli. This reflection led us to ask various questions, shared by many colleagues and scholars of the subject. These include: What is indigenous cinema? If it exists, of what and how is it made? Is Maxakali cinema similar to other indigenous films? What is specific about it? Among those authors who have invest-ed in thinking and writing about the subject, we can highlight the works of Tugny (2011, 2014), who has dedicated herself for almost two decades now to an in-depth study of Maxakali society (including above all their songs and their cosmology), as well as the work of Brasil (2017), a scholar from the area of communication who has produced a highly perceptive and fertile reflection on indigenous cinema.

In the works of these authors from which we have drawn support here (in addition to our own fieldwork, including our involvement in the production of films alongside the Maxakali), there is a disquiet similar to the ques-tions that we posed above: what is the *tikm'n* concept of 'spirit' and 'image'? What is the cosmological dimension of this society that slips through the cinematographic dimension of their films? What happens when the cine-ma machine meets the shamanic machine? How do the phenomenological and cosmological dimension of *tikm'n* cinema intersect? Is there a 'visible' *tikm'n* aesthetic in their songs, films and rituals?

Firstly, in speaking over the course of this text of an 'indigenous cine-ma,' or its variant, a '*tikm'n* cinema,' our intention has been to empha-size that the kind of films made by indigenous people are not to be con-fused with the cinema that we make: in other words, their 'audiovisual

practice' is traversed by other intensities and other lines of flight that escape our cinematographic practice.[47] This was why we strove to describe in detail the processes involved in making some of their films, almost always hybrid versions between a technique-language that we (non-indigenous filmmakers) took to the 'village' and what they themselves make of all this. And make from what they have to hand, in a kind of bricolage (Caixeta de Queiroz, 2008), without any model, by multiplying and adding material (cameras, sound recording equipment and editing tools) accessible to them. In the 'video workshops,' Isael Maxakali has learned from studying the cinema of the whites and the films of other indigenous peoples how to make a *tikm'n* cinema *à là* Isael. The alliances that he forges with non-indigenous people to edit and divulge his films do not prevent his own distinctive mark from being imprinted in the 'final version,' nor the editing (in the version for whites) being completely drained of *tikm'n* 'body and soul' – which allows these two worlds to communicate, albeit in an almost always equivocal form. 'Image' or 'cinema' or 'spirit' do not mean the same thing for the Tikm'n as they do for non-indigenous audiences.

The *tikm'n* cinema or the cinema of Isael Maxakali is very similar, or contains similar concerns, to those of other indigenous collectives. These can be summarized as: a) how to make a long, uncut version and circulate the film in the villages for one's own relatives to watch; b) how to make a film that contains the viewpoint not only of the 'author-director' but also of his or her people as a whole, including the opinion of the elders and the shamans; c) how to make a cinema or a 'version' for people outside the village as a means of communicating with the white world; d) how to make cinema into a tool that 'keeps' the culture – knowing that in this process 'keeping' is 'inventing'?

The Tikm'n never fail to make films with white people (or with their assistance), never fail to make films to 'keep' their culture, at the same time as they never fail to make films to learn more about their own history, to show their 'culture' to white people and, for all these reasons, never cease to make a multiple *tikm'n* cinema in which a cinema and a culture are simultaneously invented.

We could venture to say that *tikm'n* cinema is a composite of forms and content. It is difficult to locate within it any aesthetic essence of a proof (or illustration) of their sociocosmology. Firstly, *tikm'n* cinema itself is a way of 'conversing' with spirits, making them more present and visible

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47 We also know how inappropriate it is to speak of a western or national cinema, such are its variations from the point of view of its technical device, language, forms of consumption and divulgation!

through the filmed bodies. In other words, the camera for the Tikm'n performs a kind of shamanic function in which the mediation with spirits (taken as persons) is essential to obtaining cures for diseases and to ensuring well-being or a happy and healthy life in the village. Mediated by the shaman himself, who coordinates the realization of the films and the rituals, *tikm'n* cinema multiplies and amplifies the function of their shamanism itself: which is to place humans and non-humans in relation. This is what we suggest with the notion of *tikm'n* cosmocinepolitics, in an analogy to Stengers's notion of cosmopolitics.

There is more, though, since *tikm'n* cinema cosmopolitics is a form of dialoguing with their own history or their own form of history, in which changing or transforming comprises a way of experimenting other points of view and other bodies, of making a body. In this sense, the *tikm'n* film-ritual is a kind of resistance to the disappearance of the Maxakali people and world. A resistance that involves transformation, via a process that, inspired by the 'Body-without-Organs' of Deleuze & Guattari (1987, 160-161), signifies dismantling an organism, opening the body up to connections that "presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations," or again, living possible lines of flight, "produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times." Through their rituals and their film-rituals, through cinema and their contact with the white world, in a more or less controlled (or uncontrolled) relation, the Tikm'n transform and re-exist, as Romero (2015, 114) aptly observed, in a form that, "rather than operating through fusion, synthesis or assimilation, operates through addition, multiplication and supplementation." We should not delude ourselves, though: the Tikm'n "are continually striving to 'become *tikm'n*' (through precisely the sharing of songs, food, residence, marriages and the *yãmĩyxop*)," through their rituals, songs and cinema that invent in order to display and see themselves as 'they themselves' see themselves or allow themselves to be seen, through the 'image' and their cosmology: this amounts to an open system, one that feeds back on itself, not without, of course, a dose of entropy or transformation.

Lévi-Strauss (1958/1963, 233) wrote in "Structure and dialectics" that it was time to abandon the idea of a myth as an ideological projection of a rite, or a rite as a kind of illustration of a myth, concluding that: "we shall have to give up mechanical causality as an explanation and, instead, conceive of the relationship between myth and ritual as dialectical." Inspired by this passage, then, what we wish to say is that a *tikm'n'* film is not properly a ritual. Nor is a ritual a film. This is why we speak of a film-ritual in which the rite (and the cosmology) traverse cinema, just as cinema is traversed by the rite (and by cosmology).

We have shown how the duo Isael-Sueli makes – with the help of shamans and whites – films and rituals, or more precisely, film-rituals. The two are a kind of firefly of Maxakali cinema. We, the whites (and our naturalist ontology) nearly finished off not only the Maxakali physically, but also their myths and songs, their spirits that populate the world, the animals and rivers (like the Doce River). Almost miraculously, all these entities still populate Maxakali cosmology in a resistant, non-residual form. For this reason, there still exists a 'narrow door' or a band of light through which Maxakali cinema and song can pass, as Didi-Huberman (2014, 86) would say, inspired by Benjaminian messianism. This 'narrow door' opens for barely a second: "More or less the time needed for a firefly to glow – to call – its peers, just before the darkness reimposes its dominion. The image [even more so, the other of the image] is characterized by its intermittence, its fragility, its interval of ceaseless apparitions, disappearances, reapparitions and disappearances."

Faced with all this, we can conclude that if there is an entire (indigenous) world on the verge of vanishing, from time to time it reappears and reignites, more multiple and diverse. Perhaps it will continue blinking insistently until the narrow door is closed once and for all by this capitalist world and its relentless production of consumer goods (including the industry of the 'imagination') and sameness (through the devastation of other forms of life, including non-human) in place of the subtle and indispensable differences of the world and in the world. This is what the Tikm'n wish us to see in their films, in an action in favour of the 'continuity of this world,' before it ends, or to prevent it from ending. This is why they sing and make cinema, another cinema.

The Tikm'n expect their films to reach out to a non-indigenous public from the outset, even if they are not addressed to them exclusively. Made for neither the outside nor the inside: Maxakali cinema should be seen from inside, but should also be sent to other villages (as in the case of the *Tatakox* series) and even to the 'president of Brazil' (as Totó, a shaman from Aldeia Verde, exclaimed about the film *Tatakox*, 2007) so that everyone can see what happens when people from the community (the earth) welcome visitors from other cosmic levels, the *Yãmĩy*.

Along these lines, the shaman Mamey, interviewed for one of the Maxakali films, also points to the relevance of the documentaries produced in Aldeia Verde as a way of making visible the Tikm'n *way of life*. "It's good. They don't make the films, the documents, just for the Maxakali, they are for everyone: for the non-indigenous population, chickens and also for our relatives. It's a document made to avoid being wiped out, to avoid disappearing."

figure 8
The anthropologist Roberto Romero is led by his Maxakali 'mother' in the initiation ritual. Source: Sueli Maxakali (2016).

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