

## REWINDING THE TAPE: ARCHEOLOGY OF VIDEOTAPE IN VILLAGES

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### ABSTRACT

The article digs on the soil of experiences, movements, workshops, and processes with videotape production within indigenous communities in Brazil when magnetic tape recording equipment started to become popular with portable formats. Filmmaker Andrea Tonacci is concerned about the possibilities of videotape recording and reproduction, and its figuration inside the community as a procedural, reflexive look. The Kayapó camcorders recorded speeches, trips, events, and community rituals, even before the very first tries of Video in the villages (VNA). Vincent Carelli's film *The girl's celebration* (1987) alters what was imagined as "other's look" by Tonacci – and many of the productions by Popular Video Movement in Latin America – as it places its spectator with a displacing look, which witnesses the resumption of the bodies of young people by the community, decorated and marked like their ancestors', while at the same time placing us as non-indigenous spectators.

**KEYWORDS**  
Community-based films; Video in the Villages; Andrea Tonacci; Documentary; Indigenous Media.

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Long before the invention of videotape, cinema had already traveled through villages and indigenous communities in Brazil as a scientific instrument in the hands of the military, in the first decades of the republic. The camera became part of Luiz Thomaz Reis' equipment in the expeditions of the Indian Protection Service (SPI), led by engineer Candido Rondon in 1914. "Before 1912, Rondon hired the services of a commercial house in Rio de Janeiro, which did not work out due to the distances covered and also to the photographers' lack of experience in fieldwork" (Tacca 2002, 1989-90).

The SPI military quickly realized the strategic character of those films, due to the effect they could have on the national imagination about indigenous populations, and tried to produce images that expressed the success of the republican administration of indigenous populations – marketed by the Rondon Commission itself (Tacca 2002). Later, other cameramen and filmmakers began filming the expeditions and villages managed by the SPI, as well as those under missionary administration. There were several ways in which indigenous communities in Brazil were filmed from then on, as were the films made – ethnographic films, television series episodes, institutional pieces of State indigenism, feature films, documentaries, etc.

The purpose of this article is to investigate the experiences that involved the arrival of the first videotape equipment in the villages, based on a set of concerns and intuitions of filmmakers, anthropologists, and indigenists, but also some of their relations with the broader debate being had at that time, especially in the field of Visual Anthropology and Social Communication. Although we make connections with later elaborations and debates, the analysis period goes from the end of the 1970s, when Andrea Tonacci undertook his first films with videotape in the villages, until the end of the 1980s, when Vincent Carelli directed *The girl's celebration* (1987) in the Nambikwara village, with a quick detour due to the experience of Terence Turner and Monica Frota with the Kayapo. These pioneering experiences have already been described and analyzed in depth by the participants themselves and by researchers. Our objective here is to trace a modest path of concerns, doubts, strategies, and insights that motivated (or even discouraged) the first attempts to bring videotape to indigenous communities in Brazil. With this, we intend to explore the context that preceded the creation of the *Video in the Villages* project, establishing practical relations of continuity and transformation, but also in the discursive field.

## THE TONACCI VIDEOTAPE

Videotape (VT) was the first form of reproduction and electromagnetic recording of images produced by electronic cameras. In the same year that Kodak launched the Super-8 amateur film format in the United

States (1965), the Japanese company Sony introduced the portable videotape recorder CV-2000, which was recorded in black and white with a half-an-inch roll of magnetic tape.

Filmmaker Andrea Tonacci realized, “that it was possible to use the image in the moment of recording” (Tonacci *apud* Trevisan 1983, 6). On a trip to the United States in 1973, he purchased secondhand equipment. “During this period, I was already beginning to understand what the VT allowed, which was this construction of a certainly lived circumstance, made by the various people who lived that circumstance” (Tonacci 1980, 8). The film *Jouez Encore, Payez Encore* (1975, 120’) marks the beginning of the filmmaker’s research with videotape.

Technology was something that intrigued me, an instrument that was created by our culture, by our civilization, the production, and reproduction of images. And what would the look of someone who has never lived in a civilization of this type be like [...] Who was that “other” look? It was the native who never saw such an instrument nor thought of producing it (Tonacci *apud* Zea; Sztutman; Hikiji 2007, 243).

With similar concerns about the “Indigenous look” through audiovisual media, Sol Worth and John Adair developed a research project that involved filmmaking workshops with a 16mm film camera in the Pine Springs reservation of the Navajo people in 1966, in the United States (Worth and Adair 1997 [1972]). However, unlike the North Americans, it was the possibility of synchronicity between recording and viewing the image recorded on videotape that instigated Tonacci in his work for indigenous villages and communities in Brazil.

Andrea Tonacci then sought out the group of anthropologists and indigenists that would form the Indigenism Work Center (CTI) in São Paulo, to develop a communication project between different indigenous communities through videotape. “The video was a black and white VT reel, so he [Tonacci] had proposed this idea to us. He had created an NGO called *Inter-povos* [...] Portable video did not even exist in Brazil, he had it imported from the United States. It wasn’t even a tape, it was a roll, like a roll recorder” (Carelli [2003] *apud* Gonçalves 2012, 77, note 83). Andrea Tonacci and Vincent Carelli even wrote a project to compete for a scholarship that the Guggenheim Foundation grants to Latin American artists. The project would make it possible “to travel through indigenous areas in crisis and make these people realize their *vision* from within. It would be an attempt to construct history from the *point of view* of the other” (Tonacci 1980, 8, emphasis added).

Tonacci and anthropologist Gilberto Azanha planned to start the videotaping project in the Canela village (Apanyekra) in 1976. “The idea was to

record with them, make their record, have exhibitions, discuss, record the discussion process, see what the result was [...] but it was done in their stead, to try to express what went on in their communities” (Tonacci *apud* France 2003, 13). The American Foundation’s negative response came with the justification that they would not finance the project due to the continent’s political instability (Tonacci 1980, 8). Without funding, the video project did not advance, and Tonacci went to the Porquinhos village (MA) with the anthropologists, bringing a Super-8 camera and the Eclair NPR 16mm, with which he made *Conversations in Maranhao* (1983, 120’), a documentary about the Canela’s discussions and demands for the demarcation of their territory. According to Tonacci, Canela ended up filming some images in Super-8, but “the only thing that was possible at that moment was to explain that little device captured an image that someone else, in another part of the world, could see” (Tonacci *apud* Zea; Sztutman; Hikiji 2007, 45), as they could not watch the filmed images. “Then, the video never happened. They did it on film, and the idea of Inter-povos did not happen” (Carelli [2003] *apud* Goncalves 2012, 78, note 84).

Shortly thereafter, Tonacci began his autonomous videotape work with indigenous communities, until the possibility of traveling to the north of Brazil arose to follow a scouting party that sought to establish contact with an indigenous group isolated in Para State’s forests, led by the indigenist Sydney Possuelo (Funai).

When the possibility of following a front of attraction arose in 1979, of participating in an expedition to establish the first contact with a group that was still shy, I thought to myself: “Ah, this is the chance to witness this eye that is completely unaware of an image, what the production of images is. It’s my chance to get to know that eye that can eventually get behind the camera and show me how it sees things” [...] I had this idea in my head and made those two documentaries which TV Bandeirantes participated in called *The Arara*, whose third part was never edited (Tonacci *apud* Zea; Sztutman; Hikiji 2007, 244).

This third part, in which the filmmaker records the meeting with Piput and his group, was filmed by Tonacci exclusively with videotape equipment. Cesar Guimaraes (2012) analyzed the material that would form the third episode of the series directed by Tonacci for Sao Paulo TV. When describing the filming process from the moment the Arara arrive at the Funai Attraction Front camp, Guimaraes notes the destabilization of space, the decentering of the field, the change in the regime of the visible in the “strong periods” of the film, in which the natives appear for the first time in front of Tonacci’s videotape camera.

By asserting the camera’s mediation (...), its coordinates waver without collapsing, the space is shaken by the trem-

or of contact, ever so close, not directed, not calculated. The field becomes momentarily centerless, unstable. The current regime of that which is visible changes in face of one of the other being filmed. (Guimaraes 2012, 62).

Clarisse Alvarenga (2017) also analyzes Andrea Tonacci's footage showing contact. For the author, a tactile regime is established in the village, in which bodies and objects, including the videotape camera itself, are scrutinized by the Arara, forming a space in which bodies are within reach of each other's hands. And it is precisely from the hands of one of the Arara hosts that the filmmaker receives a bowl of porridge. The permeability of the boundaries between the field and the foreground allows us to perceive a trace of Arara sociability, in which the filmmaker, while still shooting the footage, is invited to participate. It is a moment of tender hospitality coming from newfound friends. "The scene momentarily became a place of commonality; and the image, a mediator of exchanges. On both sides, the exchange of things which are not always familiar sustain the contact." (Guimaraes 2012, 65). The author would come to find several other examples in which the background in Tonacci's Funai Camp footage is interpellated or summoned to take part and relocate in the scene while the film is being shot.

Regarding these images filmed with a videotape camera as a "trptych" along with the two episodes edited for TV, Clarisse Alvarenga cunningly identifies a discursive-argumentative interruption coming from the Arara's on display, revealing another regime "of touch, listening, and reciprocity" (Alvarenga 2017, 265). The story that began in those first two episodes could not provide a conclusion in terms of the narrative that the long-awaited contact with the natives, both on and off-screen, would supposedly solve. Unresolved, the images filmed by Tonacci in Pará seem to be an interruption to the very project of finding an idealized perspective of the other. As we have seen, what the filmmaker encounters is, above all, their hands and their gestures of hospitality; but also their curiosity in touching the filming equipment and recording sounds. As Cesar Guimaraes noted, in the scenes in which women and children emerge from inside their dwellings, their gazes cross the edges of the frame in unimaginable directions.

The possibilities of the invention provided by the simultaneity between the filmed image and its visualization by the ones being filmed, provided by the videotape technology, was only one of the aspects explored by Andrea Tonacci in her extensive production on magnetic tape. With the TV contract terminated, Andrea Tonacci continued the activity he began with the videotape with other indigenous communities, financed by the Guggenheim Foundation. "I traveled to the south of the United States, where I visited indigenous reservations, I went to Central America, some countries here

in South America, such as Bolivia, Peru... At that time I learned about many projects” (Tonacci *apud* Zea; Sztutman; Hikiji 2007, 246).

I went to Arizona and New Mexico [USA]. They use VT in an internal communication system, autonomously. They receive funding for education and health and use the media for those purposes. Then I asked myself: “Why to draw from here information that these people would convey to other groups in Brazil?” (Tonacci 1980, 8).

The experiences that the filmmaker had witnessed in the North American context ended up getting American researchers interested in *Indigenous Media*, mainly stemming from the debate raised by anthropologist Faye Ginsburg (1991). In 2015, Tonacci exhibited three statements recorded on black and white videotape during the trip mentioned by the filmmaker: Dona Aurora Tataxin, Guaraní leader who led his people to the coast of Espírito Santo, recorded in 1978; Cherokee (USA) activist Jimmie Durhan, who tells the story of the struggle of the indigenous movement in the United States (1980); and Constantino Lima, the first indigenous deputy (Aymara) then elected in Bolivia (1980).

The conversations, speeches, and news of the indigenous experience in America recorded by Tonacci during the period he filmed with videotape equipment (and later with other video formats) demonstrate that the filmmaker’s engagement went beyond the assumptions that first urged him to travel with his videotape to such distinct indigenous contexts. In Tonacci’s view, the new equipment would enable communication, the construction of an interethnic communication network through videotape, an inter-people *network*.

## **POPULAR VIDEO MOVEMENT**

In the Bolivian context of Constantino Lima, the video would only become part of the struggle of popular movements systematically after 1989, with the foundation of the Center for Cinematographic Training and Realization (Cefrec). At the same time that it continued the project led by Jorge Sanjines and his *Ukamau* group for a cinema with indigenous peoples, the film school had been training indigenous filmmakers in the development of different narratives, ways of filming and making films and videos with communities, especially from the Bolivian plateau.

Throughout the 1980s, training courses for audiovisual production collectives tied to movements and organizations connected to popular struggles were held in Brazil and Latin America.

The video reaches popular groups and movements as another component of struggle, and, due to its technical char-

acteristics, adapts well to popular communication projects that have different social groups as a target audience, providing from simple display of pre-recorded programs to the production of original messages (Santoro 1989, 60).

The Popular Video Movement was consolidated in Brazil with the constitution of the Brazilian Association of Popular Video (ABVP) in 1984, working for eleven years in the articulation of hundreds of audiovisual production groups, linked to different social movements across the country. Festivals and video shows, meetings, and training workshops for filmmakers began to be organized in Brazil and Latin America, thus establishing spaces for the exchange of experiences, images, and networking between the various movements engaged in audiovisual production, which sought popular organization – workers unions, civil associations, etc. As of 1986, the most important Latin American film festival at the time, the International Festival of Latin American New Cinema in Havana (Cuba) began to incorporate video productions into one of its exhibitions.

It was evident to everyone on the jury that the main political and social events that took place in Latin America were recorded on video: from the invasion of the Court of Justice to the eruption of a volcano in Colombia; the repression of popular demonstrations in Chile; the FMLN struggle in El Salvador; the conflict with the “contra” in Nicaragua; the murders of peasant leaders in Brazil; the actions and justifications of the Peruvian guerrillas, among dozens of other examples (Santoro 1989, 15).

The second edition of the festival organized by the Latin American Film and Video Committee of Indigenous Peoples (Clacpi), founded in Mexico, was held in 1987 at the Museum of the Indian (Funai), in Rio de Janeiro, on the occasion of its first edition in 1985. The festival brought together indigenous people from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Canada, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela who participated in the exhibitions as part of the jury, but also in an audiovisual training workshop (Bermudez Rothe 1995). Among the guests were director couple from the Zapotec people (Mexico) Martha Colmenares and Alvaro Vazquez, pioneers of indigenous video in their country, who brought the only indigenous film at the festival, *Aztec Dance* (1987, 90’).

The Zapotec director says that, since 1981, young Zapotec indigenous people started to get together to talk about the problems of their communities. After the publication of a bulletin, they began to produce photographic records and the communication of the indigenous assembly of their community through bulletin boards.

A friend lent us a piece of equipment (Betamax camera) to record the celebration and the regional community party in

Tagui [Oaxaca]. As there was no electricity in this community, we took a generator, a voltage regulator, and a television. He just told us how to turn on the camera. We recorded the meeting and the party and played the tape that same day. That was in 1981. Without proposing to do so, we started to search for a language and a creative way to deal with our issues and how we see ourselves. In 1982, we edited this first material and projected the videos on the basketball courts, and people had fun watching themselves [...] We sent the videos to some Zapotec organizations that had emigrated to the United States, and that still did not, or could not, return. That is how relations were established between the Zapotec villages (Martha Colmenares *apud* Minter 2008).

There were countless popular video productions in Mexico, especially in the state of Oaxaca. In 2019, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Oaxaca held an exhibition with videos made not only by the Zapotec communities but from various other audiovisual production initiatives, many of which were undertaken by institution Ojo de Agua – which is currently digitizing its magnetic tape archive.

Unlike Bolivia and Mexico – where video equipment reached indigenous communities as one among other media in the communication networks of popular and community movements that were established in a somewhat organized way – it was through partnerships with anthropologists and indigenous communities in Brazil that their first video cameras were obtained.

In 1987, Vincent Carelli noticed the beginning of the diffusion of portable video equipment and the start of a tape distribution network between the villages. According to Carelli, until that moment, “groups supporting the indigenous cause, hesitating between insecurity about the final product and the ‘high cost’ of investment to be made, remained, so to speak, closed to this type of initiative” (Carelli 1987, 42).

In addition to the pioneering work of Andrea Tonacci and the video production company with which Monica Frota carried out her experience with the Kayapo in 1985, as we will see below, Carelli (1987) mentioned the presence of videocassette in Salesian missionary centers in Mato Grosso and the State of Amazonas, Rio Negro region. At that time, the Ecumenical Center for Documentation and Information (Cedi) started shooting indigenous productions with the Indigenous Missionary Council (Cimi), Operation Anchieta (Opan) and the Indigenism Work Center (CTI), mainly.

### **FIRST PORTABLE CAMERAS IN VILLAGES**

On the occasion of the trips to film two documentaries where he worked as a consultant, the anthropologist Terence Turner met some of the indigenous people who were part of Monica Frota and her team’s inaugural



experience in 1985, a series of three workshops for using integrated portable video equipment (*camcorder*) in some of the Kayapo communities (Rios, Pereira, Frota 1987; Feitosa [Frota] 1991; Frota 2000). The anthropologist had been working with these people for over twenty years.

Before that experience with documentary cinema, Turner had already worked as a consultant on TV episodes produced by the British broadcaster BBC. “I began making ethnographic films of the Kayapo in 1976, working as an anthropological consultant to a BBC film series [...] I returned to the Kayapo communities [...] to make the first of two films for Granada Television’s *Disappearing Worlds* series” (Turner 1991: 69), directed by Michael Beckham.

Young people and Kayapo leaders, who had already realized the potential of recording their parties and documenting other events and trips, asked the anthropologist to negotiate the delivery of new video cameras with the Granada TV film team for Mentuktire and A’ukre, the young Kayapo who had participated in Monica Frota’s workshops. In 1990, Terence Turner starts a video documentation project carried out by the Kayapo themselves.

With the partnership of Vincent Carelli, from the Video nas Aldeias project, I have been working on my entire Kayapo Video Project and the consolidation of the Kayapo video archive. It was with his support, in the editing room of CTI, when I was still in Sao Paulo, that I learned how to work with video and its possibilities, and how to explore these possibilities anthropologically. I learned a few things I could teach the Kayapo so they could make their videos (Turner *apud* Coffaci de Lima; Smiljanic; Fernandes 2008, 149).

When Turner was starting the project, his colleague Faye Ginsburg still needed to defend the idea that indigenous peoples could assimilate the video according to their own cultural and political interests, given the first decade of experiences with communication networks. Among indigenous communities in Australia and Canada – despite the concern of some of their colleagues who believed that “authentic” cultural practices would inevitably be compromised by the presence of Western media (Ginsburg 2016, 582). Terence Turner ended up joining Ginsburg in this debate, based on the analysis of the first results of the video experience among the Kayapo (Turner 1990; 1991; 1993).

Advancing on the issue that Carelli identified in 1987 about the concern with the quality of videos made by indigenous people, Faye Ginsburg (1994) formulated reflections that significantly shifted the problem of qualification of these productions beyond Western aesthetic standards concerning the audiovisual aspect. Aiming to create a discursive space that showcased indigenous media from the complexity of its exhibition

and appreciation circuits, Ginsburg proposed the notion of *embedded* aesthetics, drawing attention to “a system of evaluation that refuses a separation of textual production and circulation from broader arenas of social relations” (Ginsburg 1994, 368).

In the context of reflection on the practices of the Popular Video Movement, the conception of the edited video as the final objective, apart from its processes of creation and circulation, also came to be questioned:

One of the most promising fields of action is the so-called video process, where a given community or group systematically uses video as an element of integration, information transmission, or leisure, in a constant self-feeding flow based on a generally collective production that seeks to meet their interests (Brazil 1992, 7).

In the field of cinema, it is from Andrea Tonacci’s films that researcher Ismail Xavier approaches the procedural dimension, primarily in the way in which the film *Bang Bang* (1970, 84’), the filmmaker’s first feature film, stanches the continuation and the chaining of the characters’ actions, subverting the logical concatenations and blocking the foundation for the viewer’s identification and emotional investment (Xavier 1993); and then in the filmmaker’s investment in indigenous America, reflected both in his production with videotape, as we saw earlier, and in one of his last films, *The Hills of Disorder* (2005, 136’). In his essay on this film, Xavier formulates the notion of *cinema-process* to characterize the filmmaker’s work and trajectory, as well as that of the character Carapiru himself, guided by the condition of marginality and nomadism (Xavier 2008, 18).

As we will see below, it was the technical possibilities imagined by Andrea Tonacci, regarding the simultaneity between recording and displaying the images and sounds of the videotape, and the incorporation of the procedural dimension in the film itself that marked the beginning of Vincent Carelli’s video endeavor in indigenous communities in Brazil.

## **THE GIRL’S CELEBRATION**

The importance of images for indigenous peoples who struggled to re-emerge in Brazil came to Vincent Carelli’s attention in the documentation and research work of the Ecumenical Center for Documentation and Information (Cedi): “This idea of the importance of image as a support base for a reevaluation of itself. The possibility that, through images, the Natives can perceive their processes of change and reconstruct their memory” (Carelli *apud* Carvalho 2010, 366).

I think I started working on the photographic memory of indigenous peoples through the 10-year project I did at CEDI

to build a photographic collection, and visited all the great collections in Brazil. [Vladimir] Kozak's photos of the former Kayapo chiefs at the time of contact, Eduardo Galvão's collection, [Curt] Nimuendaju, *Cruzeiro* [magazine], etc. [...] Returning these photographs to their communities could provide the Natives with a retrospective view of their process of change (Carelli *apud* Caixeta de Queiroz 2009, 151).

Gilberto Azanha worked as an indigenist at Funai amongst the Kraho in the State of Tocantins. His undergraduate colleague Vincent Carelli had already dropped out of the Anthropology course when he joined Funai's indigenism course in 1973. Azanha and Carelli worked together to implement a community development project with the Kraho, who went to Sao Paulo to look for indigenists when the project came to an end.

So the Kraho came to get us and said: "you have to come back". Thus the CTI (Indigenism Work Center) was founded in 1979, as a result of a demand from the Natives. At the CTI, we used to do reverse "subversive indigenism". We initially started by looking for ways to guarantee the survival and autonomy of those communities (Carelli *apud* Carvalho 2010, 366).

It was precisely with the Kraho that Carelli's first attempt to bring a video camera to the village was "at a fledging party for my son, as a mascot for women in rituals. But that was not possible, there was no generator; technically it was impossible to even charge the battery" (Carelli 2017, 236). Shortly thereafter, now in possession of a portable electricity generator, Carelli decides to head to a community in Rondonia where the Nambikwara people (Mamaindê) reside, accompanying a Funai team in 1986.

This is when video *camcorder* came along. The *camcorder* was a two-in-one camera. First came the camera, which was attached like an umbilical cord to a portable VT [videotape]. In 1986, I decided to do it. I was so into it, this idea had been hammering in my head. I bought a VHS [camera] with a monitor, a little generator and such, a VCR [videotape recorder], and I decided to do an experiment. That is more or less the story that is told in that video, *The girl's celebration* (Carelli [2003] *apud* Gonçalves 2012, 78, note 85).

In the film *The girl's celebration* (1987, 18'), Vincent Carelli records the Nambikwara ritual of female initiation on VHS video. The natives are unhappy with what they see as they watch the tape. They then decide to perform the next rite with their traditional adornments and body paintings. The result of the new shooting is not only received with great satisfaction by the community but also triggers an impetus in the boys to resume the male initiation ritual – piercing the lips and nose –, abandoned twenty years ago so that they too could be filmed. According to Carelli, the routine of filming and showing the images to the Nambikwara community-generated feedback immediately. "The Indians rapidly took control of the

direction of the process and the only thing that I had to do was to allow myself to be led by them, who began to ‘produce themselves’ as they liked to see and to be seen on the screen” (Carelli 2004, 23).

Everything we did [in the first years of the project] was crazy because we didn’t have money for anything. I started with three thousand dollars that a guy from the EDF (Environmental Defense Fund) in Washington gave me to buy a TV monitor and a VHS camera (Carelli *apud* Leandro; Cesar; Brazil; Mesquita 2017, 236).

These first experiences with VHS video *camcorders* in indigenous communities in Brazil, which had served as a means for the CTI to establish collaborative relationships, were fundamental to the constitution of the indigenous film libraries that Vídeo nas Aldeias started to establish in the communities.

Vincent Carelli’s experience with the Nambikwara in 1986, as we see in *The girl’s celebration*, gives us a look into the community’s desire to hold the parties again as they did in the past. The camera is included as part of this process. Looking into the Nambikwara community is precisely what mobilizes Vincent Carelli’s camera and the film itself.

This experience of documentary filmmaking with video, which responded to filmmaker Andrea Tonacci’s concerns about the possibilities of knowing the native’s look through the videographic device, subtly shifted the problem. If we can speak of a “look” of the Nambikwara community, it is not expressed in the film as something existing previously, but with a singular intensity that displaces the documentary itself at the moment of its making. This is not about finding a form or a filmic discourse that represents, in a more or less adequate way, the Other and its “look” (or its worldview), but about finding the collective desire in the community to participate in its creation, as well as finding ways to make it inscribe itself in the film’s form, in its narrative.

We could say that the film reinvents, through video technology, modes of creation that go back to the documentary inventions inaugurated by Robert Flaherty, when he filmed with Alakariallak (Nanook) and his Inuit community in the Canadian arctic. On the trip to film *Nanook of the North* (1922, 79’), in addition to the hand-cranked Akeley cameras and the blank film, Flaherty also brought an electricity generator, a copying machine, and a video projector to Hudson Bay. (Flaherty 1922). In this endeavor, the filmmaker took a technical apparatus that allowed both the development of the filmed negative and its copy for positive, thus being able to show it to that community. For the filmmaker Jean Rouch, when setting up a development and copying laboratory and projecting

his newest images to the Inuit, his first spectators, Flaherty had just simultaneously invented *participant observation*, a concept still used by ethnographers and sociologists fifty years later “which sociologists and anthropologists will use for the next thirty years”, and the feedback, “an idea with which we [filmmakers] are just now clumsily experimenting” (Rouch 1979). This feedback strategy was decisive in the creation of his most important films such as *I, a Negro* (1960, 70’), *Jaguar* (1967, 88’), and *The Lion Hunters* (1965, 77’). Rouch incorporates the impromptu comments of the subjects who participated in the filming in these movies by using these images.

Carelli’s experience in the Nambikwara village inaugurated a new way of making films with indigenous communities in Brazil. The project and the films produced by *Video in the Villages* project started to appear as references in the practice of cinema with these peoples. *The girl’s celebration* describes a singular movement in such previous experiences in Brazil. We are distant from the tradition of ethnographic film, which would seek the means to record the material, bodily and ritual techniques of indigenous peoples before their disappearance. What the film both witnesses and provokes is the *reappearance* of certain Nambikwara practices that had been abandoned by the community. On the other hand, we are far from audiovisual narratives whose “pedagogy” would consist in suppressing conflicts or contradictions under the justification that the video should point the viewer to a single direction, to take him to actual action - the practice of popular video criticized within the scope of the ABVP’s publications (Henrique Luiz Pereira Oliveira [2001] *apud* Alvarenga 2010, 94). In this sense, we could say that *The girl’s celebration* prefigures the changes that Clarisse Alvarenga (2010) identified in the audiovisual production engaged with social struggles in Brazil, especially after the closing of the ABVP in 1995. In this second phase, audiovisual production practices were reorganized to enable more effective participation of groups in the formative processes of audiovisual realization. Thus, *The girl’s celebration* prefigures a communal intensity in the film’s *mise en scene*, which mobilizes and embeds in the film’s form the *mise en scene* and the community’s desire to participate in this creation.

The technological possibilities of videotape not only broadened the horizons of imagination and action in the struggle for indigenous rights in America but also highlighted a series of controversies and misunderstandings about these peoples. Researchers Nadja Marin and Paula Morgado (2016) recall that until the decade before the first initiatives with videotape in villages, there was the idea that indigenous populations were doomed to disappear through integration (“acculturation”) into the national society. The assumptions that supported this idea do not seem very different from those which Faye Ginsburg had to oppose in the academic circle,

and that indigenous peoples still face in their relationship with Brazilian society. In this sense, the initiatives we describe here, even if motivated by somewhat mistaken ideas, can help us understand the field of action and practices with indigenous peoples as a space for engagement capable of overcoming the impasses that our restricted imagination is often unable to let go of. Rewinding the tape and returning to the context of these early experiences can help us move beyond the frayed loops inherited from our colonial past.

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