‘Mediacosmologies’

The convergence and renewal of indigenous religiosities in cyberspace

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Introduction

In Canada the 1960s marked a turning point for indigenous peoples. Their aspirations and conceptions of the world have since then been expressed in academic research, films, political actions, as well as spiritual and religious choices. Despite ever-growing interest, the contemporary religious practices and representations of the indigenous peoples of Canada remain poorly understood. Indigenous religious traditions are plural and diverse and are ceaselessly reformulated through the development and reinforcement of numerous networks, including, increasingly, through digital communication technologies. Religion is an important factor in the social and political reconstruction of these peoples, and remains closely linked to contemporary processes of identity and cultural affirmation and to the definition of national and transnational indigenous identities.

Indigenous affirmation movements have gained further traction through the use of social network sites and media coverage of the Idle No More movement, for instance (Jérôme 2015; Sioui Durand 2014; Tupper 2014; Wood 2015). Today, these processes take on various forms: dictionaries and interactive online training courses on indigenous languages, mapping apps, virtual museums, heritage protection websites, videogames inspired by traditional mythologies, spiritual and religious websites, and so on. All these manifestations remain consistent with traditional indigenous knowledge while illustrating the contemporary cultural shifts affecting the religions of indigenous societies. By exploring new creative platforms, they have created hyperspaces for indigenous celebration and resurgence (Simpson 2011, 2017) through text, art, videogames and virtual worlds.

This chapter explores the diversity and complexity of indigenous religious dynamics, as well as some examples of the process of indigenization of virtual worlds through the very particular case of the management of death and mourning in socio-digital networks. What does religious diversity entail in these virtual worlds? How is the relationship with the ancestors expressed? What are the functions played by the concepts of territory, solidarity, reciprocity and relations with non-humans?
Indigenous religious landscapes: the complexity, diversity, and tradition of ‘networking’

Talking of indigenous spiritualities or religions represents a major challenge for both researchers and indigenous peoples alike, mainly because of their diversity. The colonial histories of the indigenous peoples of Canada and Quebec share numerous points in common with those of the United States or Australia: the creation of reserves, the confiscation of territory, deplorable material conditions (some communities still have no access to running water or electricity), profound social problems, the consequences of sometimes violent processes of assimilation, as well as Christianization.

Secondly, the historical sources that give access to pre-colonization practices and representations are essentially those left by the first explorers or missionaries. Although rich in detail, they are marked by an ethnocentrism typical of the colonial period and suffer from the absence of the viewpoint of the indigenous peoples themselves concerning their own practices and traditions. Thirdly, and I return to this point later, we can observe that the term religion has no equivalent in indigenous languages. In Atikamekw (the language of one of the ten First Nations of Quebec), the term utilized for religion is aiamihe, which literally means speech. Finally, what constitutes indigenous tradition is an object of debate. For some, indigenous traditions have been reappropriated and thereby distorted beyond recognition (the theme of cultural appropriation as cultural theft, for instance in neo-shamanism). For others, indigenous traditions are believed to have completely disappeared in the wake of assimilation policies and Christianization.

On this issue, Laugrand and Delâge (2008) argue that it would be mistaken to believe in the complete disappearance of the precolonial ancestral indigenous value systems and practices. They are rather subjected to profound reconfigurations today. They are used in healing processes and are solicited within new forms of resistance, as Jean-Guy Goulet (2000) has reported among the Lakota, who refuse to allow the presence of tourists and media in their ceremonies. Such dynamics are shaped by a historical context marked by successive and radical ruptures with the ancestral ways of life, the transition from nomadism to a sedentary lifestyle, and the influences of Catholicism and other Christian denominations, including Evangelicals and Baptists.

The following factors combine to reshape indigenous religious landscapes:

1. Heightened exchanges with other Canadian First Nations are highly influential and contribute to formalize and normalize certain practices and representations, such as the pow-wow, which are large gatherings where dances and songs are performed (Buddle 2004). Other examples include the ceremony of the first steps, the sweat lodge, tobacco offerings, the medicine wheel as well as drumming, all of which have become defining features of a new Pan-Amerindianism, which breaches trans-nationally across North America and even beyond, in Central and South America.

Shunning the term ‘religion,’ which is associated negatively with Christianity, the term ‘spirituality’ (whether Pan-American or traditional) is sometimes used to describe the larger religious systems in which these practices are embedded (Bousquet 2007; Doran 2005; Fontaine 2006). Rituals play several roles: they help to maintain social relations with the non-human world, to ensure maintenance of the order of the universe in which humans and non-humans cohabit (e.g., the sweat lodge as a ritual of communication), to guarantee protection from non-human entities (e.g., through the use of tobacco offerings), as well as to heal. In historic and ethnographic sources on the Algonquian, for instance, one finds abundant
references to practices such as the ritual festival *makushan*, the shaking tent rituals, the sweat lodge as well as scapulimancy (reading porcupine shoulder-blade bones), all of which are linked to hunting and communication with the spirit-world (Armitage 1992; Brightman 2002[1973]; Flannery 1939; Hallowell 1976; Speck 1977[1935]). Among these, the sweat lodge and the vision quest have been the object of a formidable renewal and reappropriation within neo-shamanic circles (Brault 2005; Bucko 1998; Csordas 1999; Prins 1994; Waldram 1997a, 1997b).

2. The settling process combined with the rise of a new Pan-Amerindianism has produced new forms of knowledge transmission: everywhere in Quebec, Canada and the United States, spiritual gatherings occur which are based on traditional medicine (Adelson 2000, 2001). It is increasingly common in indigenous communities that encounter ‘professional’ ritual officiants whose main activity consists in accomplishing spiritual retreats (isolation, fasting) and performing rituals for indigenous, non-indigenous and mixed publics. This is a relatively new phenomenon, as is their new legitimacy to perform and revive ‘ancestral’ traditions which are constructed through a mixture of handed-down and retrieved knowledge (including from ancient missionary sources and academic scholarship) as well as contacts with other indigenous peoples. Some of these officiants travel across Canada and the United States, but also increasingly to South America (Peru, Bolivia and the Amazon especially). The opposite is equally true, since numerous South American ‘shamans’ or ‘healers’ are invited to perform rituals in the Amerindian communities of the North, in a network of exchange and reciprocity.

3. Finally, the historical influence of the Catholic and Protestant Churches and the rapid expansion of Pentecostalism on indigenous religious systems needs to be considered (Laugrand 1998; Servais 2005; Westman 2008). Through the intermediation of its missionaries, the Catholic Church advocated the eradication of certain practices, both within the public spheres and in the more secluded context of the hunt camps. Today Catholicism and Protestantism are weighed down by their involvement in indigenous boarding schools and other practices of assimilation, even though many elders remain devotees. Amerindian spiritual practices are heavily influenced by mainline Christianity, while Pentecostalism is a recent yet very significant actor (Tanner 2005; Bousquet 2007). Not only have indigenous groups developed resistance strategies in response to the missionaries, they have also rethought their worldviews by appropriating diverse dimensions of Christianity.

Overall, though, there has been a significant process of rejection of mainline Christian denominations (the ones that were involved with the state in pursuing assimilation), especially among younger generations. During a field trip to Kangiqsujuaq in the semi-autonomous Inuit region called Nunavik (Jérôme and Kaine 2014), I met Father Jules Dion, of the Oblate order. He spoke of the different religious movements in the village and recalled how he gradually found himself alone in Nunavik:

There have been Catholic missions in most of the villages: Kuujjuarapik, Puvirnituq, Ivujivik, Salluit, here, Wikenbé, Quaqtaq, and Kuujjuaq. All these villages had resident priests, two per village. And then after a while, twenty years, for example in Ivujivik, there were no more conversions. There were no Inuit asking to become Catholic. So they closed the mission. In Salluit, it was the same. Puvirnituq too. Quaqtaq too. Here the mission has remained open because there are Catholic Inuit. In the other villages,
In November 2011, a few months after my stay in Kangiqsujuaq, I invited seven Inuit representatives to select objects from the collection in the Quebec Museum of Civilization Quebec and explain their choice. Mattiusi Iyaituq, a celebrated contemporary Inuit artist, chose one of his own sculptures on display. After he presented the context in which the sculpture was made, an exchange on shamanism took place between him and another Inuit present, providing an insight into the debates that animate Inuit society today on the question of shamanism:

Shamanism was very important in our past. Before Christianity was introduced in our culture, shamanism was bad. Because Christians said shamanism is bad. Many shamans were doctors, they told the hunters: if you go there you will see such-and-such animal. You will kill one, two, or three. And so they would come back with what the shaman had said. Because the shamans were able to travel by air without planes, they were able to transform into a bird, a seal or whatever ... and they were able to travel unnaturally to places we cannot visit today. As I want to keep the culture from my past alive, I’ve made many shamanistic sculptures, but never bad shamans.

LK, a forty-year-old Inuk, was keen to respond:

I have a comment about that, not necessarily a question because I think shamanism is viewed by the Inuit in a sort of ambiguous way. In fact, some Inuit, in the more religious (i.e., Christian) sector of our society, say that shamanism is bad, whether they were good or not, it’s not from God, so it’s considered bad. So they think we should not learn about shamanism because it was banned. I think it’s time, like Mattuisi is saying, for us Inuit to also learn more about our past before Christianity; so we can learn about our real true values, those we still have today, which come from that period. We talked about food this morning, how it was used to guide people’s conduct, it comes from that time. Good or bad exist in both shamanism and Christianity; good and bad exist side-by-side in Christianity too. So, I don’t think Christianity should trump shamanism. I think shamanism should now start to return on equal terms in our society.

This relationship to shamanism among the Inuit is reminiscent of the processes of encounter between traditional religious systems and those of religions other than Christianity. Concepts such as dualism (Armitage 1992) and syncretism (Goulet 1998), which have been used in academic literature, mask the complexity of the interactions between indigenous traditions and Christianity. In my view, Laugrand’s (2002) use of the concept of reception in the case of the Inuit is more appropriated as it emphasizes the ways in which Christianity, which was in many cases imposed on indigenous peoples, has in the end been appropriated and integrated into the Inuit and other indigenous traditional religious systems.

In such a complex and moving context of interaction which has moved in the last decades from colonial to post-colonial, concepts such as ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ have certain heuristic limits. In order to avoid these limitations and open a less normative space of interaction with indigenous realities, researchers have tended to adopt the use of the concept of cosmology, which is increasingly used by indigenous peoples themselves across the Americas.
‘Mediacosmologies’: forces, powers, and animism in virtual mode

In the transfer of the term ‘cosmology’ from an emic to an etic meaning, scholars refer to a conception of the world that organizes space and time, structures rituals and stories, carries the memory and voices of the ancestors, and frames practices of linkage and reciprocity with the land and the entities dwelling in it (Ingold 2000). In the frame of this contribution, ‘indigenous cosmology’ refers to a conception of the world based on the multi-various relations which bond all beings in the universe in a web of obligations and responsibilities, whether human or ‘non-human’—an indigenous category that includes beings classically known as ‘spirits,’ for example animal spirits and other spirits present in nature (Kohn 2013; Poirier 2016). As Van Woudenberg tells us, the oral traditions of the Wabanaki, for example, speak of ‘the interconnection between all people in the universe,’ including the earth and the land, which are considered living and ‘sacred’ beings (2004, p. 76). Following Laugrand (2013a), I argue that cosmologies are first and foremost constructed, sustained and passed on via embodied interactions.

In this chapter, I also use the term mediacosmology, first suggested by the Kanien’kehá:ka intellectual, curator and artist Steven Loft (2014). In an article, Loft emphasizes the idea of a technical, scientific, relational, ritual and communicational continuity between traditional indigenous systems and the virtual world. Rather than emphasizing incompatibility between the digital realm and the ancestral traditions of indigenous peoples, Loft echoed a trend within these communities, which have massively converted to the use of the internet and cell-phones, by considering the new virtual world as a new arena in which to translate, renew and update indigenous conceptions and practices. For instance, digital means of communication could be used to rekindle and maintain extended kinship ties as well as relations with humans and non-humans more generally,1 namely through the sharing of stories on social media, creating a new space for the construction and dissemination of collective memory. In an interesting twist of history, the internet and social network sites have emerged as spaces that can and have been invested in ways that enable the voices of ancestors to be heard and indigenous stories and memories to be transmitted, as well as being tools of communication and mediation between time, space and even worlds (De Largy 2013; Wachowich and Scobie 2010; Warschauer 1998).

In accordance with Loft’s perspective, the indigenous peoples of Canada make abundant use of the internet and social media, and smartphones are the first consumer object, even in very remote areas, such as the Great North. Facebook, in this respect, is the main social media platform used in indigenous communities. What follows is a categorization of the different ways of appropriating, engaging in and even inhabiting (in Ingold’s sense of dwelling) in digital worlds, through the example of rituals around death and grief.

Practices and knowledge linked to death and mourning

Death is only a stage in the great circle of life. It strengthens the spiritual relationship with the ancestors while ensuring a consolidation of our relations with the younger generation.

(Gilles Ottawa, NIKPIS, 2002, cited in Nikatcikan, L’Héritage)

Death can take diverse forms, as we are reminded by the anthropologist Louis-Vincent Thomas, a specialist in the study of death and dying. It can be physical, mental, biological, social, cultural and/or spiritual. For Thomas, these different forms are a point in common in
Western societies: ‘The theme of the cut is always found. Thus the dead and the mourners are physically and socially rejected from the world of the living’ (Thomas 2003, p. 9). The indigenous peoples and anthropological studies of non-Western societies have taught us, however, that the dead often still have much to do in the world of the living, and that the living do not lack creativity when it comes to remembering the deceased. In numerous indigenous societies, the dead become ancestors and participate actively in balancing the world of the living. This is what Gilles Ottawa, an autodidact researcher originating from the Atikamekw community of Manawan (Central Quebec) wished to emphasize in the thought cited above. Death is not an end, but a stage; it is not nothingness, but a sensory experience with the ancestors; it does not cut off the world, but ensures a continuity with the following generations.

Considering that mourning and death in numerous societies are subject to rituals that highlight the body, what happens to this bodily dimension in a space often described as ‘virtual’? How do socio-digital networks operate in continuity with the indigenous cosmologies experienced and expressed in everyday life, particularly in relation to death and mourning? What is the place of the body in indigenous funerary rites? Many interlocutors cite the importance of gathering around the deceased at the moment of displaying the body in the houses. The dead person is considered a voyager. This gathering of the family is essential since it allows their emotions to be expressed through prayers, songs, anecdotes and the sharing of food. The body of the deceased thus gathers the bodies of the living, who dress and shoe it, preparing it for the voyage west, considered a departure that requires considerable attention. Like other groups from the Algonquian linguistic family, the Atikamekw perceive the person as having a body (uiaw) and a soul (atakw). The two are intrinsically linked in the conception of the person (irinïa). The soul is considered to be a significant entity endowed with an autonomous power regardless of the context of expression: the person, non-human entities or the invisible world (animals, plants, rocks, spiritual entities, the journey of the soul after death, dreams).

Other ritual stages and gestures are essential to the preparation of this voyage. The preparation of the grave, for example, is an important responsibility, generally assigned only to men. The ritual gestures surrounding death and mourning all revolve around the idea of a continuation of the person’s life beyond his or her physical presence: preparation for the journey, the wake, meal, songs, prayers, the use of a black ribbon for a year afterwards to materialize the absence of the deceased ... All these gestures constitute a desire to affirm the presence of the person through his or her body and soul despite death. But what becomes of these ritual gestures and practices in cyberspace?

**Materialization of absence**

More than a support tool, Facebook can become as space for bringing together the deceased, the bereaved and their circle of relations (friends and family), like the domestic space can be at the moment of the display of the body. Facebook is also a means by which the bereaved person can share images (photos, texts) of the ritual gestures made to pay tribute to the memory of the deceased person and materialize their presence. People thus share images of plates and food for the deceased, the black ribbon hanging on a chair or a candle on which the name and photograph of the deceased are found. This sharing of images of ritual gestures performed in everyday life shows how mourning and the accompaniment in death that takes place in the ‘actual’ world is extended into digital space and socio-digital networks. This is equally the case of the photomontages made in homage of the deceased, which give rise to new visual creations.
The socio-digital networks also emerge as places of creativity in which numerous indigenous users invest during mourning. Following the death of William Mathieu Mark in 2015, a respected Innu elder and drummer originally from the Unamen Shipu community (Quebec), messages of condolences and support were posted on Facebook. Numerous photomontages, leading to a reconfiguration of the indigenous image, were placed online and widely shared. In one photomontage, a young Innu man created especially for the socio-digital networks an image that linked four important dimensions of Innu cosmology (North Coast of Quebec), namely the forest (Nutshimik), the territory (Nitassinan), the light (awac) and the drum (teueikan), with the face of the deceased elder in the background. The territory is an omnipresent theme in the photomontage memorials created to honor the deceased. The photomontages form part of a new visual culture in the indigenous context, fostered by the possibilities for sharing them on socio-digital networks. The references to material culture (the drum) and immaterial culture (relations to the territory, the drum’s communicative power) are associated with the images of the deceased, whose presence on socio-digital networks is in keeping with a fundamental principle of indigenous cosmologies in relation to death: the dead, having become ancestors, still have much to do in the world of the living. While the creation of tribute pages is a common practice on Facebook, in an indigenous context this practice results in the writing of original texts in the indigenous language. These tribute pages foster the development of a new visual culture, founded on one of the ancestral principles of figuration, combined with the technological possibilities of fusion and references to themes like territory, forest and the drum (teueikan).

The body and the expression of emotions on socio-digital networks

But how is a central part of these rituals and this relation to the body, namely the expression of emotions, expressed on the socio-digital networks? Emoticons were created to encourage the expression of joy, laughter, anger or sadness. For a long time, the proposed aesthetic was based on representations of the Western body, uniform, white. Increasingly, though, emoticons have been created to better reflect the ethnocultural diversity of the users of Facebook and socio-digital networks in general. Aware that the development of emoticons was related, for example, to African American minorities, and following the current movement of decolonization of knowledge and images in indigenous environments, one company is engaged in a process of creating culturally adapted emoticons. Indigicons (Indigenous+Emoticons) was thus born from the desire to culturally anchor the digital expression of emotions from an indigenous aesthetic perspective: a ‘stereotypical Indian’ face with braided hair and feathers, is used to express different emotions. Marked by anger, sadness, tiredness or laughter, this face is also depicted with devil horns or an angelic halo; shaved and tattooed, it becomes a warrior and serves to express political struggle. Numerous other emoticons have been created: the emoticon of the raised fist, for example, is used to express resistance, while the image of the drum or the bear paw are employed to refer to the sacredness of certain objects of material culture or relations to certain animals. This reappropriation of digital visual culture, which involves a large degree of standardization and stereotyping, can be considered a political gesture embedded within broader strategies of media recognition, but also in the current processes of indigenous identity affirmation.

In these creative acts, it is important not to underestimate the role of an essential dimension of indigenous cosmologies, namely that of humour and self-mockery. The aesthetics of some of these emoticons, like the features of this ‘Indian’ face that seems to be taken from a comic strip from the 1960s, or those of the bloodthirsty warrior, make it
possible to mock the enduring prejudices of the majority society concerning indigenous peoples, which oscillate between pessimistic views linked to suicide and social problems and the romantic view of the ‘Indian of Nature’ living under a tipi. Through these emoticons, it is also possible for indigenous people to reappropriate a self-image and practice self-mockery by playing on the myth of the ‘vanishing Indian’ (the brave and proud Indian ready to die) which has long marked the history of artistic representations of indigenous people and continues to fuel clichés and prejudices concerning indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada. A political act aimed at reappropriating digital space through a more representative image, this project is also an act of affirmation promoting a greater visibility and awareness of indigenous cultures in digital space.

**Digital space as domestic and ritual space?**

The engagement in digital worlds seems to be a strategy favored by numerous indigenous groups worldwide to preserve the vitality of their cultures, their heritage, their cosmologies and their relations with the religious sphere (Jérôme, Biroté and Coocoo 2018; Jérôme and Veilleux 2014; Lewis 2014; Lumby 2010). This strategy is aimed in particular at processes of transmitting local knowledge to young people evolving in the contingency of cultures that, with social networks like Facebook, tablets and smartphones, are now becoming largely digital (Laugrand 2013b; Laugrand and Luna-Penna 2013). For indigenous peoples, it is a question of affirming their specificity within a global culture, inscribing their approach to identity in a spirit of socialization and sharing with the contemporary world (Alexander et al. 2009, p. 240). Here the affirmation of identity and culture does not involve the preservation of existing worldviews or knowledge, but the appropriation of digital space in order to share and enrich their identity. Warschauer thus suggests that the internet constitutes an excellent network for exploring identity (Warschauer 2006, p. 154). The ability to circulate anonymously or to embrace fictive identities allows young users to experience what is specific to them. The case study of Singleton et al. (2009)—conducted in Western Australia with indigenous young people frequenting an information technology skills development program—also reveals the affirmative potential of such an approach to appropriating these technologies. Mastering technological media allows young people to develop agency (Singleton et al. 2009, p. 405). The appearance of indigenous cultures within digital media can also be read as a process of these nations regaining power in the face of a global world, the former becoming participants of a shared space where their social, political and cultural concerns are now visible (ibid., p. 406). The internet and new media in general are thus becoming a new space of creative and transformative resistance (Iseke 2002; Jérôme and Veilleux 2014) in the sense attributed by Ortner (1995). The internet has emerged as a complementary initiative (Ginsburg 1994, 2018; Ginsburg and Myers 2006), inspired and nourished by existing heritage initiatives and projects (museums, cultural centres). The success of the enterprise of transmission through information technologies (or other media like comic strips) seems to reside in the process itself of constructing these new spaces. Two elements appear to be essential here: self-determination and the respect for local cosmologies.

The anthropologist Naomi Adelson, a specialist in health and the concept of healing in indigenous contexts, draws a parallel between social networks (more specifically the internet) and their ritual dimension in her exploration of the creation of neologisms linked to these new technologies. In the North Cree dialect, she recalls, the word for computer is *kaamsinaastaahthich*, a term that can be translated as ‘what the shadows write by themselves.’ The term is almost identical to the word for film, *aahtikaashtaahtihch*, ‘what the shadows play
by themselves.’ In Atikamekw, by comparison, the word for computer is *Kinokepitcikan*, ‘the thing that remembers for a long time.’ The internet is designated by the term *Kice kinokepitcikan*, ‘the big thing that remembers for a long time.’

It is well-known that indigenous languages are descriptive of the actions and things (here the machines) whose logic or operation they aim to render comprehensible. But Adelson reports that another term is utilized among the Cree of Whapmagoostui to trace the connection between computers, and more specifically the internet, and a very powerful ancestral form of communication. Adelson tells us that some Cree elders jokingly call the internet a contemporary form of *kusaapihchikin*, the shaking tent, a shamanic communication ritual that has today disappeared (Adelson 2012, p. 268). This analogy speaks volumes about the power that these Cree elders may attribute to digital networks and new technologies, beyond any religious affiliation. It also shows the potential for renewal of indigenous religious traditions. Thus it matters little whether people are primarily linked to the Pentecostal, Catholic, traditionalist or Evangelical movement, they will use the internet and socio-digital networks to express and manage their grief, but also to maintain relations with the ancestors and the dead. Far from influencing or serving to recruit followers, the socio-digital networks are perceived as a new strategy for sharing and for community relations in a form complementary to other kinds of large gatherings, like the spiritual gatherings, retreats to the territory, masses or pow-wows.

**Conclusion**

At international level, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN 2007) establishes a universal framework for respecting the rights of indigenous peoples. Articles 12, 25, 34 and 36 relate more specifically to indigenous spiritualities, since indigenous peoples are recognized to have the right to ‘practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions’ (Art. 12), to ‘maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned and otherwise occupied and used lands’ (Art. 25), to ‘develop and maintain their … spirituality’ (Art. 34) as well as to ‘maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders’ (Art. 36). But how can we comprehend such complex universes, which make and unmake themselves continually, under the influence of multiple movements, sometimes successive, more often simultaneous? Catholicism, Pentecostalism, the Evangelical and Baptist Churches, traditions and neo-traditions, exchanges with neighboring groups, all participate, whether through rejection or affiliation, in shaping indigenous conceptions of the past and present world. They maintain specific knowledge, such as that linked to managing grief and death. Like many indigenous groups and communities throughout the world, the indigenous peoples of Canada and Quebec maintain, weave or consolidate networks of exchanges with other Nations in Canada, the United States and more recently South America thanks to the internet and socio-digital networks. Since the 2000s, the moment when internet connections spread to the communities, the networks expanded. Some Mapuche leaders (Chile) organized to travel and give lectures in Wemotaci (Atikamekw, Quebec); some Atikamekw travelled to Chile or Peru to better understand the local perceptions and uses of the coca leaf. Regular exchanges were organized between spiritual leaders, as in the case of Ricardo Tsakimp, a Shaur healer from Ecuador living in Sucua, in the province of Morona Santiago, who has visited Atikamekw and Innu communities in Quebec several times. While these exchanges between indigenous groups are not new, they take on a whole other dimension in the current context of development of socio-digital networks.
Note

1 Here I am referring to all the non-human entities with whom humans interact in indigenous cosmologies and ontologies (game, fish, bodies of water, plants, ancestors, astral bodies, spirits, etc.).

References


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