Finding one's own voice as an indigenous filmmaker

Jansen, I.E.E.

Finding One's Own Voice as an Indigenous Filmmaker

Itandehui Jansen

Finding One's Own Voice as an Indigenous Filmmaker

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van

de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,

op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,

volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties

te verdedigen op 7 oktober 2015

klokke 16.15 uur

door

Itandehui E.E. Jansen

geboren te Oaxaca (MX)

in 1976

Promotores

Prof. Dr. Kitty Zijlmans	promotor	Universiteit Leiden
Dr. Charlotte Gleghorn	co-promotor	University of Edinburgh

Promotiecommissie

Dr. Adriana Churampi	Universiteit Leiden
Prof. Dr. Ingrid Kummels	Freie Universität Berlin
Prof. Dr. Gaspar Rivera-Salgado	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Prof. Frans de Ruiter	Universiteit Leiden

Disclaimer

The author has made every effort to trace the copyright and owners of the illustrations reproduced in this dissertation. Please contact the author if anyone has rights which have not been acknowledged.

Table of Contents

Creative Portfolio

- *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* (20 minute documentary/ Mexico 2000)
Short documentary broadcasted by the television channel Canal 9 of Oaxaca, Mexico.

- *El Rebozo de mi Madre* (60 minute documentary/ Mexico 2006)
This film screened at many different international film festivals, such as the Latin American Film Festival in Utrecht, the Oaxaca Independent Film Festival, The Morelia Indigenous Film Festival, Forumdoc in Brazil, the Native Film + Video Festival in New York, and others.

- *Dios No Estaba Ahí:* Two filmed rehearsals (6 minutes and 2 minutes). Both fragments were filmed as part of the Binger Director's Lab 2012

- *El Últimо Consejo* (10 minute fiction/ Mexico 2012)
This short film won a post-production grant by the Mexican National Film Fund (IMCINE) and screened at over 20 international film festivals. The short film was nominated for the Mexican Critics Award *Diosa de Plata* 2013, received the Special Jury Award at the Viña del Mar International Film Festival, and the Emerging Talent Award at the ImagineNative Film Festival in Toronto.

- *Alma y Esperanza* (17 minute fiction/ Mexico 2012)
This short film screened in official competition in over ten international film festivals, among others Lakino in Berlin, the Morelia International Film Festival, ImagineNative in Toronto and the Bluestockings Film Series.

- *Yaavi* (20 minute documentary/ Mexico 2015)
Yaavi was selected among others to the Short Film Corner in Cannes and the Indigenous Film and Video Festival in Santiago, Chili.

- *Bouleversement* (14 minute fiction/ Netherlands 2015)

- *Tiempo de Lluvia* (script, 70 pages)

Glossary

This glossary is meant to provide guidance to readers who are not familiar with the cinema concepts frequently used throughout this dissertation. These are therefore short general descriptions for the sake of clarity and should not be understood as rigid definitions. Many of these terms are contested and surrounded with discussions that cannot be reproduced here.

Accented Cinema

Term proposed by film scholar Hamid Naficy to designate and discuss the cinema made by filmmakers with a different cultural background which gives their film a specific, personal 'Accent'. The term refers to migrant, exilic or diasporic cinema. That is to say films made by migrant filmmakers or filmmakers living in a condition of exile or diaspora.

Coming-of-Age films

Term to designate a genre of films which revolve around themes related to the process of reaching adulthood and thus mostly feature young or adolescent characters.

Ethnographic Cinema

Non-fiction films made from an anthropological approach, mostly with an observational character, documenting traditions or rituals from another culture.

Independent Cinema

Used to designate film productions outside of the studio system, or made without national funding. Often these films have a considerably lower budget.

Indigenous Cinema

Films made by Indigenous filmmakers but sometimes the term is also used for films about Indigenous Peoples, even if the filmmakers are not Indigenous themselves.

First Cinema

Filmmakers Solanas and Getino use this term to refer to films made with the principal purpose of profit through entertainment.

Second Cinema

Filmmakers Solanas and Getino use this term for films made with an aesthetic or artistic purpose. According to Solanas and Getino these films promoted primarily the fame and recognition of the author.

Third Cinema

Term launched by filmmakers Solanas and Getino to refer to films made in the 'Third World' which adhered to certain revolutionary ideals. They envisioned Third Cinema as a revolutionary reaction, both in form and content, against First Cinema and Second Cinema.

Hollywood Cinema

Films made within the Hollywood studio system.

Mainstream Cinema

Films that follow generally accepted conventions with regard to genre, form and content.

Imperfect Cinema

English translation of Cine Imperfecto, a term proposed by filmmaker Julio García Espinosa intended to describe the films made in Latin America with little or no means, but with a certain political engagement. The term is similar to Third Cinema.

Direct Cinema

Documentary genre which favors an observational style out of a desire to capture reality in a pure and truthful manner.

Cinema Vérité

Documentary genre which included self-reflexive elements in order to acknowledge the presence and intervention of the filmmakers out of an ideal to represent reality more truthfully.

National Cinema

The film production of a particular country, mostly funded and broadcasted or distributed with national funds.

Transnational Cinema
Films made as the result of coproduction between two or more countries.

World Cinema
Term employed within English-speaking realm to designate the film production outside of this realm.

European Cinema
Films made within Europe.

Art Cinema
Films made primarily for artistic and aesthetic reasons.

Western Cinema
Films made in the so called ‘West’. The term is contested for the same reasons why ‘West’ and ‘Non-West’ are considered often inaccurate and inadequate terms.

Non-Western Cinema
Films made in the ‘Non-West’. The term is contested for the same reasons why ‘West’ and ‘Non-West’ are considered often inaccurate and inadequate terms.

Author Cinema
Films which express the particular creative vision of the director.

Experimental Cinema
A mode of filmmaking which does not follow generally accepted film conventions with respect to form and narrative structure, but instead explores alternative modes.

Preface

The Writer's Journey

As a filmmaker I have found myself often wondering how to frame and contextualize my work. My films are definitely not Dutch films, nor do they fit neatly into the box of Mexican Cinema. While trying to define my own work the concept of Indigenous Cinema seemed an appropriate framework. Yet, what exactly is Indigenous Cinema? Who is Indigenous to begin with? Do I consider myself an Indigenous person and how? And who gets to decide who is Indigenous anyway? Or does this kind of labelling contribute to the further marginalization of Indigenous filmmakers?

All of these questions about my film practice began with topics addressed in the course *Eros and Pathos* by Rosi Braidotti in the department of Women Studies at Utrecht University. For my Masters in Comparative Literature I took this course which centered on existing representations of female bodies and desires. The final assignment for the course consisted in working on alternative representations of female bodies and desires. The assignment required the students to reflect on their own work and the creative choices that they had made: How did the creative and aesthetic choices contribute to a different representation of the female body, or critique existing mainstream representations? I made the video *Heartscapes*, a self-portrait in which I intercut images of my own pregnant body with images of natural landscapes. Throughout the creative process of the video *Heartscapes* I was guided by questions such as: How do I as a woman relate to my own body? What narrative structures and aesthetics can I use that do not imply a male gaze or reproduce a patriarchal structure? How can I create alternative filmic representations of difference and alterity with the existing film language and conventions? Working on this assignment made me more aware of the different conscious and subconscious choices involved in the process of filmmaking, but also made me understand that all these choices have political, representational, and ideological implications. I consequently understood that these questions not only apply to the representation of the female body, but are of general importance to filmmakers belonging to groups who have been traditionally underrepresented in the media.

The questions in this research project are therefore the result of a very personal journey in search of my own voice as a filmmaker, as a woman, a migrant and belonging to an Indigenous community. This journey was first of all incited by my mother. As a child I overheard her uncompromising advocacy for Indigenous Peoples' rights, as she participated in the U.N. working group on Indigenous Peoples. I had the good fortune of meeting and

listening to many of her friends from different Indigenous communities around the world. And at the age of sixteen I accompanied her with a video camera to interview Indigenous Rights activists who had been unjustly jailed by Mexican authorities. My desire to make films was therefore strongly motivated by a sense of justice. This desire to make films was further shaped at the Netherlands Film Academy, where I was guided by filmmaker Rolf Orthel. He encouraged me to participate in the International Documentary Workshop VISIONS, where I had the opportunity to meet filmmaker and teacher Michael Rabiger, among many others. This initial encounter with international documentary makers and teachers has had a lasting impact on my thoughts on film and documentary. The present research is thus the consequence of a longer journey, both as a filmmaker and scholar, influenced by many teachers who guided me on different moments along the way.

The work presented here today would not have been possible without the generous support of a Mosaic Grant by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. I am very grateful to Frans de Ruiter for accepting me in the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts and I thank my supervisors Kitty Zijlmans and Charlotte Gleghorn for their guidance. I also thank Peter Verstraten for his comments.

During this research project I participated in many different scriptwriting and film development programs, such as the Binger Film Lab, the Cine Qua Non Film Lab, and The Babylon Script Development program. I am appreciative of all the comments and advice offered by fellow filmmakers and tutors in these inspiring sessions. I am particularly grateful to filmmakers Jesús Pimentel and Christina Lazaridi for their guidance during the Cine Qua Non Lab. I would like to thank Fiona Howe, Gareth Jones and Ursula Wolschlager for their feedback and comments on the script of *Dios No Estaba Ahí* during the Babylon Script Development Program. The lectures and guidance by Judith Weston and Mark Travis at the Binger Director's Program were crucial for my thinking about acting and directing actors. I thank actors Ángeles Cruz and Tenoch Huerta for giving their time and energy to the scenes we shot during the Binger Film Lab.

During the making of the different films for this portfolio I received generous support from many fellow filmmakers and dear friends. For their support to the short film *Alma y Esperanza* I thank Dzaui Jansen, Esperanza García, Concepción Bautista, Roberto Bautista, Katia and Jesus Pimentel, Fatima Vega, and Esteban Arrangoiz. *El Último Consejo* was only possible thanks to the support of Director of Photography Serguei Saldivar, filmmaker Nicolás Rojas, and the community of San Pedro Quilitongo. *Bouleversement* was made with

the support of Edoardo Ramos Anaya, Oliver Delgado, Marisa Polin and Margarita Foncerrada.

The writing process of this dissertation furthermore benefitted from the company of, and discussions with, different colleagues and I thank Adriana Churampi, Soledad Valdivia, Amanda Delgado, María Ávila, Laura van Broekhoven, Janna Houwen and Elisa Goudriaan, for their time and company during the writing process. Last but not least, this work could never have been completed without the loving support of my husband, children and parents. My children had the patience to endure my long absences while filming and writing, while my parents, Maarten Jansen and Aurora Pérez, on many occasions lent a helping hand. My husband, Armando Bautista, not only made it possible for me to work on this project, but contributed to the production of the creative portfolio as a scriptwriter and producer. He furthermore accompanied me along this journey even when it seemed I had lost the way.

Introduction

Filmmaking from a Marginal Position

> *"Se c'e qualcosa di raccontare, parla forte, in modo che se ascolta da prima a l'ultima fila."*
> (Mimmo Cuticchio in *L'Urlo del Mostro*)

At a panel on Indigenous Cinema at the Berlinale 2012, New Zealand producer Catherine Fitzgerald observed:

> It is very important for an Indigenous filmmaker to find his/her own voice and make a difference. It is all about coming back to one's roots. Any exchange of dialogue is consciously uttered because it is something rooted within my ethnicity. Many people don't think about it but for an Indigenous filmmaker, it is a cultural and, in fact, a political act. (Berlinale Talent Press)[1]

Fitzgerald's remark stresses both the cultural and political implications of finding a 'Voice' as an Indigenous filmmaker. This research indeed examines 'Voice' from an aesthetic and cultural perspective, but also considers its ideological and political aspects. In the field of film as performing art, 'Voice' is generally considered to refer to the narrative and aesthetic choices made by filmmakers to express their vision, whereas in the field of post-colonial studies 'Voice' is regarded as the gaining of access to discourse, to self-representation and thus to a subject position. In this introduction I will elaborate on the different meanings and connotations of 'Voice' and their importance and implications for Indigenous Cinema. As Fitzgerald already notes these two different meanings of 'Voice' are important with regard to Indigenous Cinema.

[1] See the website: http://www.talentpress.org/story/81/4281.html

The Storyteller's Voice

When I started studying at the Netherlands Film Academy, I considered filmmaking a form of storytelling and for my thesis film, I decided to make a documentary about a storytelling tradition.[2] On a trip to Sicily I had encountered the tradition of puppeteers who perform the story of Charlemagne and his knights.[3] At that time the puppet play tradition was under severe stress as in the last decades its function had been replaced by television. Encountering this living storytelling tradition and its struggle to survive led me to make the documentary film *Una nave per tornare* (1998). For this film I interviewed, among others, the renowned puppeteer Mimmo Cuticchio. While researching and shooting my thesis project, I had the chance to listen to his ideas and to learn more about storytelling in general. Voice and orality are of course intrinsic to this form of storytelling and in this respect Cuticchio's insistence on the use of Sicilian dialect and on the articulation and expression of a vernacular language and tradition are comparable to efforts made among Indigenous writers and artists to document, preserve and promote the survival of Indigenous languages.

As a puppeteer Cuticchio tried to adapt stories from a different historical and cultural realm for a contemporary audience. He consequently sought and highlighted the elements of the story that seemed recognizable across time and space. Most of these elements concerned human emotions, such as love, anger, need for revenge, or pride. At a certain moment in *Una nave per tornare*, Cuticchio discusses with his pupils a scene between the characters Beltrame and Galiacella. Galiacella is a Sarecen female warrior. She has fallen in love with the Christian warrior (thus her enemy) Ruggiero di Risa. But Ruggiero's brother, Beltrame, also likes Galiacella. Blinded by his love for her, he is convinced that she would have preferred him as a spouse and decides to confess his feelings. Cuticchio discusses with his pupils the scene in which Beltrame will confess his feelings to Galiacella. Galiacella rejects Beltrame and he consequently takes vengeance by betraying both Galiacella and his brother to the enemy. Cuticchio observes that this is an intimate event and should be presented as such. He states: "these human emotions like love and treason are not discussed in the open on the street, for everyone to witness." Cuticchio further observes that something like a crime of passion, perpetrated by a character blinded by love and hate, is not specific to a particular

[2] I was also influenced by different films at the time which presented puppeteer traditions as a metaphor for life and cinema. For example the films *The Puppetmaster* (Hsiao Hsien Hou 1993) and *Lifetimes* (Zhang Yimou 1994).

[3] For an overview of the different aspects of this tradition, see, for example, the monograph of Pasqualino (1989).

time or culture. Crimes of passion have happened throughout the world, throughout history. Cuticchio explains that the audience should be given insight into the motivations of the character to commit such atrocities in order to understand the character as a human being instead of perceiving him as a monster. The reflections of Cuticchio with regard to the performance of the puppet play are very similar to reflections and considerations when writing a screenplay, or directing a film.

At a different moment in the documentary Cuticchio rehearses for his theatre play *L'Urlo del Monstruo*, a modern theatre play which includes elements of the puppeteer tradition. Here, Cuticchio makes his father appear as the mythological character with eight heads, *Il Mago Demorgene*.[4] Cuticchio reproaches this father figure for probably coming along to critique him, just as he did at his very first independent puppet play. Cuticchio recalls how his father, Giacomo Cuticchio, arrived late and chose to sit on the very last bench at the back of the room. After a couple of minutes the father stood up and shouted loudly: "Speak up boy! Here in the back we can't hear a thing!", and Cuticchio felt like he wanted to disappear from the face of the earth. Through the puppeteer's voice, the head of Demorgene answers: "Come on, of course not. Live your life, tell your stories, only remember that if you have something to tell, you should do it loud and clearly so that they can hear you from the first to the very last row". This fragment is also the last scene of the documentary film *Una nave per tornare*. In the film it is both a reflection on the conflict between generations, a subject that has been present throughout my work, as well as a reflection on the importance of having a strong voice for the art of storytelling. The reaction of *cuntista* Giacomo Cuticchio to his son's first independent puppet play seems to refer above all to literally speaking loud and clearly when addressing an audience.[5] Nevertheless, this statement can also be taken in a figurative sense, expressing thus the general need for storytellers to convey their message to an audience. This alternative meaning is akin to the understanding of 'Voice' in a figurative sense, as a means to express oneself both artistically and politically. When expressing oneself it is important to find the appropriate way to reach the intended audience. While film conventions are different to those of the puppet play, the reflection on why a story should be told in a certain way is very similar.[6] Like the puppeteer, a filmmaker

[4] According to Pasqualino 1989 the name Demorgene is possibly derived from the term Demogorgon, stemming from late antiquity as a reference to the supreme being or possibly also a corruption or equivalent of *demiurge* (the creator of the material world according to Platonic philosophy).
[5] Sicilian traditional storyteller and puppet player.
[6] Film scholar Peter Verstraten examines whether cinema is essentially narrative in his contribution 'Between Attraction and Story, Rethinking Narrativity in Cinema' (2009). His answer to this question is twofold: yes and no. Verstraten states that because of the movement of film through time, there is an inherent narrative element.

has to decide on how to develop certain characters, how to place them in a scene, and with what other means to tell the story. The cinematic choices regarding how to tell a particular story represent what many filmmakers call 'Voice'. In this research I want to focus on the 'Voice' of the screenwriter and director in marginalized circumstances. While I am interested in the filmmaker's 'Voice' in marginal conditions in general, because of my own cultural positioning I will focus mainly on Indigenous Cinema.

The Filmmaker's 'Voice'

Storytelling is in origin an oral practice. Around the world people have told each other stories through oral tradition long before the existence of other mediums. In this sense storytelling is intrinsically connected to speech and voice. As Giacomo Cuticchio pointed out, a story has to be told loud and clearly to be heard and understood, and this depends of course on the voice of the *cuntista* - or storyteller. The analogy between film and storytelling is expressed in a large quantity of literature on films and filmmaking, as testified by the many books on cinema that incorporate the term storytelling in the title.[7] Whereas the puppeteer and *cuntista* use their physical voice to convey a story, but also to add drama and suspense, filmmakers use cinematic devices such as staging, cinematography, art direction, and sound as means of artistic expression. It may, therefore, be of no surprise that in different film training and education institutions throughout the world, filmmakers are encouraged to develop their own 'Voice'. Important film training institutions such as the Sundance Film Lab or the Binger Filmlab state clearly that they are committed to supporting filmmakers with a particular own 'Voice'. Also the Film Program of The University of Southern California states that the school is committed to the development of an own 'Voice'.[8] Obviously 'Voice' in this

---

He observes that although cinema also consists of elements that are non-narrative, such as spectacle, these elements tend to be embedded in an overarching narrative structure. Even when this narrative element is absent, Verstraten argues, an audience might read a certain amount of narrativity into a film. Particularly narrative cinema, such as feature films, short fiction films and feature documentaries can be considered a form of storytelling.

[7] See, for example: Robert Mc Kee's *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (1997), Kristin Thompson's *Storytelling in Film and Television* (2003), or Sheila Curran Bernard's *Documentary Storytelling* (2004).

[8] Shari Frilot, Senior Programmer at Sundance Film Festival: "I look for originality, whether it is in the form the film takes, the narrative structure it realizes, in the characters that develop, or the tone or texture it manages to create. I look for originality in voice - I look for new voices, old voices with new things to say, and voices we don't seem to get to hear enough from."
(http://www.indiewire.com/article/filmmaker_toolkit_meet_the_sundance_film_festival_programmers_in_their_own_/)

context refers to the ways in which a filmmaker expresses his/her vision through the use of cinematic elements. Ken Dancyger, scriptwriter and Assistant Professor in scriptwriting at New York University, elaborates extensively on the filmmaker's 'Voice' in his book *Global Scriptwriting* (2001). Dancyger considers 'Voice' to be the expression of a writer's or director's attitude towards life. Dancyger explains that specific genres enable a writer or director more easily to express 'Voice' than others. He distinguishes documentary, fables, non-linear narratives, satire and experimental narratives. In his book *Alternative Scriptwriting* Dancyger states with regard to 'Voice':

> Clearly, much of what we are calling voice in film is under the control of the director. The relative realism of color scheme, the lighting contrast ratios, the set design, the casting, the balance of ambient sounds to dialogue, and the final editing pattern are beyond the realm of the writer. Still it is possible to construct a script that emphasizes the narrative voice at the level of story.
> (Dancyger 2007: 314)

This is to say, 'Voice' resides both in the narrative aspects, as well as the aesthetic choices of the film. Dancyger's reflections on 'Voice' also make clear that in cinema several 'Voices' can be present at the same time, as a film is mostly the result of different participating agents, such as the screenwriter, the director, but also the director of photography, the music composer, and many others. 'Voice' is extremely important in the development of emerging filmmakers and is generally considered to be what distinguishes a particular filmmaker. For example, during script-development labs the recurring and most important question asked to writer-directors is: Why do you want to tell this particular story? And how does this story relate to your own personal experience?

With regard to the 'Voice' of the filmmaker there is a field of tension between film theory and film practice. It has become common in contemporary theory to avoid a search for an authorial intention or an authorial voice. Literary theory has declared the 'death of the

---

Judith Weston, a prominent tutor for directors, actors and screenwriters at the Binger: "I want the directors to be more connected to actors, more connected to characters and more connected to their own inner voice." (http://www.binger.nl/advisors/7683)
On the website of USC cinematic arts we find a telling interview with Oscar winning writer Aaron Sorkin: "Sorkin commented on how fortunate he felt to have worked in theatre, television and feature films. He told the students that the most important thing that they can learn in film school is how to tell stories in their own voice." (http://cinema.usc.edu/news/article.cfm?id=11660)

author' as an originating source of meaning.[9] Nevertheless, film criticism and film practice still tend to consider the author very much at the centre of film production and appreciation. In his internet contribution *Academics vs. Critics* film theorist David Bordwell explores this disruption between film criticism and scholarly research and states:[10]

> Probably there is no prospect of rapprochement with the hardcore seminar culture that insists on opaque prose, ponderous play with theoretical catchwords, and distance from the creative process of filmmaking. But the gulf between cinephile criticism and academic research isn't absolute. Some notions of authorship, genre, and national cinemas are common to most serious inquiry into films. Although the two camps treat these ideas somewhat differently, interests can sometimes intersect.
> (Bordwell 2012, webpage Filmcomment)

Bordwell consequently characterizes the approach within film criticism towards the author as follows:

> For both Kehr and McBride, the breaking point is academics' rejection of auteurism, which is more than a fruitful way to understand a career and interpret films. It is, as Kehr puts it, "perhaps the simplest, most empirically satisfying way of connecting an audience to a work of art: through a human figure." (ibid.)

But Bordwell also adds a nuance to this apparently unbridgeable divide:

> At the same time, not all film scholars believe the author is dead, subscribe to semiology, disdain popular filmmaking, or smother living work under a blanket of Grand Theory. (ibid.)

While the disengagement with the author has been an important development within film theory, as it has opened up for different readings of the filmic text, for the practice of filmmaking the authorial 'Voice' and intent continues to be of crucial importance. In the realm of filmmaking, the personal drive and the 'Voice' of the author remain key aspects of

[9] In his essay 'Death of the Author' (1967) Roland Barthes argues against the prevailing tendency of attributing the meaning of a text to the biographical knowledge of an author. This essay marks a shift in the ways of reading and interpreting texts. The author of a text is no longer seen as an authority over the meaning of a text, instead interpretation lies with the audience/reader.

[10] In their book *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*, Elsaesser and Hagener refer to the contributions of David Bordwell on his own internet page as "the star-critic-as-blogger" in an analysis of the digitalization of film and the rise of new media (Elsaesser and Hagener 2010: 176).

reflection. For example, acclaimed documentary filmmaker and professor Michael Rabiger gave the following assignment at an international workshop for documentary filmmakers: "Write down your three greatest problems in life. Now, take a moment and think how this should be guiding your filmmaking."[11] This is not an isolated example, having attended many international scriptwriting and film directing workshops, I can confirm that the personal motivations are generally considered a key element of reflection and exploration in the creative process.[12] Director Richard Attenborough explains why he likes directing films as follows:

> If you're directing, you have the opportunity to put your signature at the bottom of the frame. You have the opportunity to say, "This is what I believe. That is my credo. That is what I wish to state." (Sherman 1987: 4)

As a project which explores both the theoretical aspects of film, as well as the practice of filmmaking and its creative process, this research from the beginning integrates this apparent contradiction. The focus on the authorial 'Voice' within filmmaking is very different to the ways in which film theory tends to regard this particular aspect. Being a filmmaker myself this project looks at the author and the authorial 'Voice' predominantly from a filmmaking perspective. However, this approach stems above all from the realm of filmmaking and I am very aware that in general the author is considered differently within the realm of film studies.

Within the realm of post-colonial studies the author also continues to be important. In his work *An Accented Cinema* (2001) film theorist Hamid Naficy elaborates on the relation between the filmic text and the accented filmmaker, while simultaneously addressing the previously mentioned suspicion towards filmmakers as 'authors' in certain academic circles. Naficy argues for the importance of taking into account the 'authorship' of accented filmmakers and observes:

[11] Michael Rabiger was Chair of Film and Video department at Columbia College Chicago, he has been a guest lecturer at the Tisch School of Arts of New York University and is author of *Directing the Documentary* (1997) and other influential publications.

[12] For example, during the Binger Screenwriting Lab as well as the Directors Lab, in which I participated as part of this research, an entire week was designated to explore one's own personal connection to the material one was writing or directing. Also in the Cine Qua Non Lab, in which I participated in 2011, script consultant Christina Lazaridi encouraged us to search for the moment of most pain in our own personal life, to understand the drive for making the film.

> Accented films are personal and unique, like fingerprints, because they are both authorial and autobiographical. Exile discourse needs to counter the move by some postmodern critics to separate the author of the film from the enunciating subject in the film, for exile and authorship are fundamentally intertwined with historical movements of empirical subjects across boundaries of nations, not just texts…However, the questioning of the bond linking autobiography to authorship should not be used as a postmodernist sleight of hand to dismiss the specificity of exilic conditions or to defuse their subversive and empowering potentiality. Such a move comes at the very moment that, for the diasporized subalterns of the world, history, historical agency, and autobiographical consciousness have become significant and signifying components of identity, artistic production and social agency. Accented authors are empirical subjects who exist outside and prior to their films. (Naficy 2001: 34, 35)

Naficy's insistence on envisioning "accented cinema theory as an extension of authorship theory" (Naficy 2001: 34) and on taking into consideration the historical and geographical locatedness of accented filmmakers, arises from an interest in how accented filmmakers have gained voice as subaltern subjects. Here the term 'Voice' is to be understood above all in a political sense. Naficy's emphasis on regarding accented filmmakers as empirical subjects, coincides with a general interest within post-colonial studies to take into account the material reality of history. Post-colonial studies often follow Marxist thought, addressing the material consequences of colonialism and its effects on real people. Several scholars in the field of post-colonial studies have insisted on not only regarding colonialism as a discourse, but to also address it as a practice with real consequences for embodied subjects. The general argument, especially expressed in the 1990s, is that it is not possible to talk about extermination, rape, or poverty in merely textual or discursive terms, without acknowledging the material reality of it all and without taking into account the embodied subjects who underwent the atrocities of the colonial process.[13] In my examination of 'Voice' I will therefore take into account these two interrelated perspectives. On the one hand, I will consider 'Voice' with regard to the cinematic choices and tools employed by filmmakers to express a particular vision; on the other, I will explore 'Voice' as a form of self-representation in a context of marginality.

[13] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam put this forward in their book *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (1994); Ania Loomba makes a similar argument in her book *Colonialism / Post-Colonialism* (1998).

Marginal Voices and Unwilling Ears

Telling stories, writing or making films, are ways of producing multiple meanings in the world. Stories are not neutral texts, but instead are shaped by, participate in, disrupt, and reproduce existing power relations. The effect and reach of a story, therefore, does not only depend on the storyteller's voice, but also on the disposition it encounters to be distributed or reproduced, and its capacity to find an audience. The access to an audience and the disposition of an audience to listen may largely depend on power relations and political interests in which the story is entangled. For example, Feminist Studies has had to unearth the voices of female characters, and re-inscribe women writers into the literary canon as the female voice has often gone unheard.[14] In *Tracing Arachne's Web, Myth and Feminist Fiction* (2003), literary theorist Kristin Bloomberg takes the figure of Arachne as a metaphor for women's writing. This story provides, according to Bloomberg, an interesting metaphor for the entanglement of stories with power and power relations. In the story, Arachne accepted a challenge by the Greek Goddess Pallas Athena as to who could weave the most beautiful tapestry. While Pallas Athena wove a tapestry that depicted scenes of vengeance by the Gods, Arachne wove pictures of the God's misbehaviour, such as Zeus kidnapping of Asia. In the end Pallas Athena turned Arachne into a spider as she did not find any flaws in her weaving. The punishment chosen by Athena is striking. While Arachne was granted to keep her mastery of weaving, she was denied the possibility to ever tell a story again through her art. Arachne thus was rendered voiceless, no longer able to express her thoughts and opinions. It seems Arachne was punished both for her extraordinary craftsmanship, as well as for exposing the misbehaviour of the Gods. Bloomberg observes:

> Arachne is a powerful metaphor for the study of women writers who, like Spider Grandmother, think up new worlds in the stories that they spin, and who, like Arachne, dare to challenge the establishment by comparing themselves to it. But as Jane Caputi observes, Arachne's story reveals that this can be a dangerous and radical enterprise, because when women "foray into the realm traditionally forbidden to our

[14] For example Mieke Bal rereads the Bible explicitly from the perspective of female characters in her book *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible* (1989). Rosi Braidotti uncovers feminine voices in philosophy in *Patterns of Dissonance* (1991). With respect to film, female filmmakers make up a small minority and have been traditionally marginalized from the film canon and major film events. Hardly ever female directors are nominated for an Academy Award, and the official selection for the 2013 Cannes Film Festival did not figure a single film directed by a woman.

> sex—the realm of the sacred storytellers, symbol and myth-makers—we participate in the creative powers of Thought Woman, employing thinking, naming and willing as forms of power exercised consciously and/or intuitively in the creation of the world(s) we inhabit. (Bloomberg 2003: 3)

In 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988), post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak calls attention to the ways in which the subaltern are unable to speak, and if they manage to speak they mostly remain unheard. Spivak's notion of speaking here refers to the possibility and ability to articulate a standpoint and influence decisions and events. Spivak argues in this essay that post-colonial studies tend to unwillingly repeat the colonial structures and power relations that they are supposed to critique. Academics and intellectuals end up 'speaking for' the subaltern instead of creating a space for the subaltern to speak for themselves. Spivak points out that belonging to academia means belonging to a position of privilege and power. She asserts that Post-colonial studies participate in a structure of knowledge production that is ultimately part of existing power structures, and that one should reflect on these structures. She also contends that when the subaltern tries to reclaim a cultural group identity this tends to re-inscribe existing power relations and discourse. Spivak notes in this respect that it is impossible to 'return to lost origins'. She concludes that because of the combination of all these elements, it is ultimately impossible for the subaltern to claim a position as the subject of speech, instead of an object of speech. It is precisely this condition of lacking access to articulate a position that makes one subaltern. What Spivak points out, is that the inability to speak for oneself, and the structural denial of a subject position by the powers in place characterizes the condition of the subaltern. This implies that the subaltern stands outside the production of knowledge and discourse and also has no real access to eventually participate in the production of knowledge and discourse. While many have critiqued Spivak's position, her article has raised important questions and considerations with regard to the possibilities of self-representation, self-expression and self-determination of the subaltern. Spivak's essay has triggered different reactions within the field of post-colonial studies. In her book *Colonialism / Post-Colonialism* (1998) literary theorist Ania Loomba gives an overview of different discussions and issues in the field of post-colonial studies. Loomba acknowledges Spivak to be one of the most important postcolonial thinkers and observes:

> By pointing out how deeply its knowledge systems were imbricated in racial and colonialist perspectives, scholars such as Bernal, Said or Spivak have contributed to,

> indeed extended, the discrediting of the European Enlightenment by post-structuralists such as Foucault. The central figure of Western humanist and Enlightenment discourses, the humane, knowing subject, now stands revealed as a white male colonialist. (Loomba 1998: 66)

Loomba expands extensively on the points made by Spivak in her essay and subsequent critiques and explains Spivak's contribution as follows:

> Scholars such as Lata Mani, as mentioned earlier, have shown that in the lengthy debates and discussions that surrounded the British government legislations against the practice of sati, the women who were burnt on their husband's pyres as satis are absent as subjects. Spivak reads this absence as emblematic of the difficulty of the difficulty of recovering the voice of the oppressed subject and proof that 'there is no space from where the subaltern (sexed) subject can speak'. She thus challenges a simple division between colonizer and colonized by inserting the 'brown woman' as a category oppressed by both. Elite men may have found a way to 'speak', but she suggests, for those further down the hierarchy, self-representation was not a possibility. Spivak's point here is to also to challenge the easy assumption that the post-colonial historian can recover the standpoint of the subaltern. (ibid. 234)

Loomba also explains why Spivak's text has been extensively critiqued and has been considered problematic by different scholars:

> Spivak effectively warns the postcolonial critic against romanticizing and homogenizing the subaltern subject. However, her insistence on subaltern 'silence' is problematic if adopted as the definitive statement about colonial relations. Benita Parry finds that Spivak's reading of Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, for example, does not pick up on traces of female agency within that text and in Caribbean cultures generally, and is insensitive to the ways in which "women inscribed themselves as healers, ascetics, singers of sacred songs, artisans and artists" in colonized societies. Therefore she accuses Spivak of "deliberate deafness to the native voice where it can be heard". (Parry 1987: 39) Parry suggests that such a deafness arises out of Spivak's theory of subaltern silence which attributes "an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse." (ibid. 235)

Loomba considers both standpoints as extremely important and valuable and considers it is unnecessary to choose between the two. Instead, she suggests both points need to be taken into account while doing post-colonial research. Scholar Lata Mani has suggested the question of Spivak can be rephrased in a broader sense, proposing that in each text it is of importance to ask:

> Which group constitutes the subaltern in any text? What is their relationship to each other? How can they be heard to be speaking or not speaking in any given set of materials? With what effects? Rephrasing the questions in this way enables us to retain Spivak's insight regarding the position of women in colonial discourse without conceding to colonial discourse what, it in fact did not achieve – the erasure of women. (Mani 1992: 403)

With respect to cinema Naficy elaborates on the subaltern's access to speech as a filmmaker:

> Accented filmmakers are the products of this dual postcolonial displacement and postmodern or late modern scattering. Because of their displacement from the margins to the centers, they have become subjects in the world history. They have earned the right to speak and have dared to capture the means of representation. However marginalized they are within the center, their ability to access the means of *reproduction* may prove to be as empowering to the marginalia of the postindustrial era as the capturing of the means of *production* would have been to the subalterns of the industrial era. (Naficy 2001: 11)

Naficy's observation clearly makes reference to the Marxist strand of post-colonial studies and evokes Spivak's article 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'. Following Spivak's argument that subaltern colonial and post-colonial subjects have no access to speech nor to the production of discourse, Naficy regards accented filmmakers as having conquered their access. Naficy's explicit choice for the term 'Accented' is clearly a reference to Spivak's article, as accents are literally always inseparably connected to language and 'Voice'.[15] Through his choice of

[15] This analogy is followed in other texts on accented or independent transnational cinema, for example by film scholar Song Hwee Lim in his contribution 'Speaking in Tongues: Ang Lee, Accented Cinema, Hollywood' for the book *Theorizing World Cinema* (Nagib, Perriam and Dudrah 2012)

terminology Naficy presents the accented filmmaker as a subaltern cinematic storyteller who can certainly speak, but whose voice has developed a very own and particular accent because of journeys and displacements. The question for subaltern filmmakers is therefore not so much if they can speak, but rather how and to whom they speak. Finding one's own 'Voice' as a marginal filmmaker revolves thus around the question: How does one express oneself through film, both in aesthetic and political terms?

Indigenous filmmakers and 'Voice'

The central question of this research is thus: How can one find one's own 'Voice' as an Indigenous filmmaker? This question has both aesthetic and socio-political implications, as it refers both to the aesthetic and narrative choices made by filmmakers in their works, but also to the process of gaining access to self-representation. In this exploration it is important to take into account Spivak's critique of a homogenizing approach to oppressed and colonized groups. It is of utmost importance to understand that Indigenous Cinema does not exist as a genre, nor as a unitary cultural expression, nor should it be taken as an essentialist notion. Instead it should be understood similarly to Naficy's concept of Accented Cinema. Indigenous Cinema is produced in similar political and social circumstances. While there exist great cultural, geographical, and historical differences between different Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous filmmakers around the world - like Accented filmmakers - are likely to encounter specific ordeals in their filmic practice. For example, most Indigenous filmmakers will face issues of stereotyped representation and cultural appropriation by the media. Many Indigenous filmmakers will have a limited access to production tools and funding. And most Indigenous filmmakers are working in a context wherein the vanishing of languages and traditions due to ages of assimilation politics by different governments is an important issue that needs to be addressed.[16] The intention of this research project is to discern and analyse a variety of narrative and aesthetic strategies that address the practical, representational and ideological issues faced by Indigenous filmmakers.

[16] For example, Indigenous Peoples in the United States, Canada, and Australia have been forced to assimilate culturally and linguistically through a politics of sending Native children to boarding schools. In Mexico, during many decades there was a prohibition on the use of Indigenous languages at school premises. While Mexico today has an official policy that accepts Indigenous languages as part of Mexico's cultural diversity, Indigenous languages are not taught at schools.

I will explore this question through a combination of artistic practice, reflection and scholarly analysis. The artistic practice consists of an exploration of different issues in documentaries and short films, presented as a creative portfolio. The analysis focuses on my own filmic productions in relation to the work of other filmmakers addressing similar subjects. This approach can be understood as 'the critical practice of film' (Kydd 2011). Film director and scholar Elspeth Kydd considers the critical practice of film to be a combination of research through practice and scholarly analysis and states:

> We will embrace the idea of a continuum between theory and practice rather than absolute categories, breaking down these distinctions, in order to see writing criticism and theory as practical and creative, and practice as critical and theoretical. This integration is not new, filmmakers have always engaged with critical and theoretical ideas, just as critics have explored and experimented with creative practice. Critical practice also means that we debate and discuss our own practice and see theorizing as practice: writing and producing knowledge and ways of engaging with the world. (Kydd 2011: 4)

During the period of this research I worked on different films, including fictional shorts and a feature documentary. In the production process of these films I encountered several recurring political and representational issues which led me to develop particular creative solutions. I will compare the choices that I made with regard to narrative structure and aesthetics with the creative choices of other Indigenous filmmakers in dealing with similar matters and concerns and thus explore the relation between form and content and between form and ideology.

Indigenous Cinema is not a unified genre or film style, nor is it a particular national cinema, instead it is a term that refers to a conglomerate of different authors who somehow belong to an Indigenous community and face similar working conditions and cultural and social issues. Indigenous filmmakers share certain characteristics but are not a homogenous group. Instead, Indigenous Cinema should be seen as the work of a growing group of individuals situated in specific historical, cultural, geographic and social networks producing cinematic texts. In this respect Indigenous filmmakers have much in common with the filmmakers grouped by Naficy under the definition Accented Cinema. Indigenous filmmakers, like exilic and diasporic filmmakers also live through the tensions of the process of globalization and modernization. Most Indigenous filmmakers belong to pre-industrial

societies, which live in conflict and discord with contemporary capitalism.[17] Just as including the author and authorship in the analysis of Accented Cinema allows for a better understanding of the tensions of the process of exile and diaspora, in a similar way including the author and authorship in the analysis of Indigenous films, allows for a better understanding of the effects of the ongoing process of globalization and modernization on Indigenous communities and subjects. Acknowledging the 'Voice' of Indigenous filmmakers in their filmic texts is important both from a political and an academic perspective. As Naficy explains, the insistence on authors and authorship in this respect does not assume the genius of the author, but rather highlights the material and embodied reality to which the filmic texts make reference. Naficy observes in this respect:

> To that extent, accented cinema theory is an extension of the authorship theory and it runs counter to much of the postmodern theory that attempts to either deny authorship altogether or multiply the authoring parentage to the point of "de-originating the utterance". However, film authors are not autonomous, transcendental beings who are graced by unique, primordial and originary sparks of genius. Accented film authors are literally and figuratively everyday journeymen and journeywomen who are driven off or set free from their places of origin, by force or by choice, on agonizing quests that require displacements and emplacements so profound, personal and transformative as to shape not only the authors themselves and their films but also the question of authorship. Any discussion of authorship in exile needs to take into consideration not only the individuality, originality and personality of unique individuals as expressive film authors but also, and more important, their (dis) location as interstitial subjects within social formations and cinematic practices. (Naficy 2001: 34)

While not all Indigenous filmmakers live in a condition of exile or diaspora in a different country, most Indigenous filmmakers have experienced internal migration, as they have moved from their rural communities to urban centres. At the same time, Indigenous filmmakers do share the experience of living in an ongoing context of colonialism and also

[17] Most projects of progress and modernization do not arise from Indigenous Peoples' own interests or initiatives, but are in many cases initiated by multinationals looking to make profit out of Indigenous lands and resources, disregarding the consequences for Indigenous Peoples. Notorious examples are the drilling for oil in Ecuador, and the mining for gold in Brazil. In Mexico several organizations of Indigenous Peoples are living in conflict with mining enterprises, as is the case for the mountains of Wirikuta. More information on similar conflicts can be found on the page of Survival International: http://www.survivalinternational.org

share a continuous tension between pre-modern societies and industrial capitalism as a consequence of globalization. For all these reasons Indigenous Cinema can be examined through the lens of Accented Cinema. Though it is known that Indigenous Cinema is closely related to ethnographic cinema, it is also indebted to Third Cinema. Many Indigenous filmmakers started using film or video after they were handed cameras by ethnographers, or after participating as subjects in documentary films. The first fiction films about Indigenous issues were made in the context of Third Cinema. In Chapter One of this dissertation I will consequently discuss the relation between these various cinemas, and set out the theoretical framework of Accented Cinema.

Indigenous filmmakers also have to take into account the way in which Indigenous Peoples are portrayed in mainstream media, as they either react or elaborate on these previously existing representations. For this reason in Chapter Two I will analyse the representation of Indigenous characters in recent films by non-Indigenous directors. I will focus on how different films employ mainstream narrative and aesthetic elements in the representation of Indigenous characters. Affect and identification are powerful cinematic conventions that can create understanding and deeper bonds between individuals, within, between and across communities. Through the analysis of different films I will explore how affect and identification can be strategies to tell Indigenous stories about human relations and changing identities and communities.

An important concern for different Indigenous filmmakers is the endangerment of Indigenous languages. It seems therefore logical to turn to language and speech for the development of Indigenous narratives and aesthetics. As Indigenous languages are currently in threat of extinction it is of crucial importance to impulse and treasure the knowledge, metaphors, and symbolic qualities of these languages. Languages are symbolic realms, which contain particular metaphors that give access to the imaginary world of a culture.[18] Languages have inherent structures and encapsulate ways in which a culture perceives and represents the world.[19] In Chapter Three I will discuss, through an analysis of my own work

[18] Jacques Lacan has argued that the subject enters the symbolic order through language (cf. Slavoj Žižek 2006). In this context Luce Irigaray (1985) has proposed the need to create and engender new, female symbolic orders that provide an alternative to the symbolic order of patriarchy.

[19] An interesting example of how a worldview can be encapsulated in linguistic properties is for example the existence of an 'inclusive us' and an 'exclusive us' in Mixtec language. There are different words to address a 'we all, including every person present' or a 'we that might exclude, and be in opposition to you and them'. Differentiating between inclusiveness and exclusiveness in the concept for 'we', is quite different from, for example, English, where the word 'we' always maintains a certain amount of conflict and opposition to the words 'you' and 'them'. For the inclusive and exclusive first person plural in Mixtec language, see Aurora Pérez Jiménez 2008: 63-64.

as well as through an analysis of other films with a similar subject matter, how language and speech can provide particular narrative structures and aesthetic strategies for Indigenous Cinema. As each Indigenous language has its own specific particularities and there are many linguistic differences between different Indigenous Peoples, it is not possible to provide a structural analysis that will result in narrative and aesthetic 'formulas'. Instead, this chapter will explore in what ways Indigenous languages and oral traditions can inspire the creation of an own cinematic idiom with its own narrative structures and aesthetic elements.

An important aspect in the cultural identity of Indigenous Peoples is community life and its social structure. It has been largely through community organization that Indigenous cultures and languages have survived and preserved particular knowledge, language, history and traditions. Communities are constructed around shared symbols, celebrations and traditions, which can nourish the aesthetic aspects of Indigenous films. Due to the ongoing process of globalization and migration, many Indigenous communities are suffering from ongoing fragmentation. It is consequently of vital importance for Indigenous Peoples to reconsider the role of community and to find ways in which communities can be (re)configured and valued. In Chapter Four I will explore how community and communitarian structures can contribute to the development of narrative structures and aesthetics. Through the analysis of different films I will discuss the varied ways in which community structures can provide infrastructure for the production of Indigenous Cinema and how community elements can inspire particular narratives and aesthetics. Community structures can provide and replace the absent infrastructure for film production. At the same time, the ways in which communities are organized can provide examples and motives for alternative narrative structures and aesthetics of Indigenous Cinema.

The analysis of my own film practice, in combination with the critical analysis of other accented films and film theory is meant to provide a deeper understanding of Indigenous Cinema and possible narrative and aesthetic strategies but also to further contribute to developing ways in which film practice and film theory can mutually inform each other. With regard to the mutual correlation and complementation of film practice and film theory Kydd observes:

> It stands to reason that the more you know about how films are made, the more you can appreciate the artistry involved in a film. Likewise, the more you appreciate the cultural context and critical ideas that inform how films are viewed, the more interesting and engaged your work will become. Thus, critical practice filmmaking

> and analysis guide you towards both creative expression and an active role as both viewer and a critic. (Kydd 2011: 4)

The films that comprise the creative portfolio of this research project are the filmic outcome of scholarly reflection on Indigenous Cinema and its alternative narratives and aesthetics. At the same time, this written dissertation is also the consequence of actively and intensively participating in the creative process and embodied practice of filmmaking, and bears the preoccupations and insights of this involvement. In Chapter Five I will explore the process of filmmaking. Filmmaking, particularly in the case of Accented Cinema, is in many ways related to processes of transformation and travel. In this last chapter I will look at my own filmmaking journey through the concept of Nomadic Subjectivity as proposed by philosopher Rosi Braidotti.

The strategies explored in this research should thus be understood as unfixed combinations of different approaches that can mould themselves time and again to particular circumstances and situations. When one plays a game of chess, one can choose a specific strategy from the start, but one has to adjust this strategy while the game develops, and in the end one tends to employ a combination of strategies. The strategies examined in this research should be regarded in a similar manner. They are not predetermined structures, nor formulas to be bluntly repeated, but should be rather seen as a set of possible techniques which can be used in different combinations and situations. Certainly these strategies are not the only possible strategies and they can and should be definitely enriched, elaborated and expanded on by other filmmakers and scholars.

Chapter 1

Indigenous Cinema, Third Cinema and Accented Cinema

Indigenous Peoples and the legacy of colonialism

The term 'Indigenous Peoples' is a term that refers to a variety of diverse cultures that still live in a situation of sustained colonialism within a specific state, generally as a continuation of a historical conquest of that region by a European colonial power.[20] There exist great geographical, cultural, linguistic and historical differences between Indigenous Peoples. Obviously there is no relation between the Inuit (Greenland and Canada), the Quechua (Peru and Bolivia), the Mixtec (Mexico), the Māori (New Zealand) or the Masaï (Kenya), other than that they are all considered Indigenous Peoples. In the preparatory process for the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a working definition was elaborated by U.N. representative Jose R. Martinez Cobo, which is still often quoted:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.

Even within one single country, such as Mexico or the United States, there can be great cultural, linguistic and social differences between and within Indigenous Peoples.[21] Next to this, migration and globalization have had an effect on different Indigenous Peoples in varied

[20] The U.N. adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 and has elaborated on the situation of Indigenous Peoples around the world in the report *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* (2009). The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the U.N. (New York) monitors and discusses problems and advances on a yearly basis (http://undesadspd.org/Indigenouspeoples.aspx). The International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), based in Copenhagen, similarly brings out yearly reports (The Indigenous World) and a series of case studies (see http://www.iwgia.org).

[21] As Ania Loomba explains in *Colonialism / Post-Colonialism,* processes of colonization and de-colonization were quite different throughout the world and cannot be entirely meshed together as this does no justice to different historical and cultural circumstances.

ways. But in general terms, Indigenous Peoples continue to live in a disadvantaged and marginalized social reality of poverty and discrimination that is the direct outcome of the colonial experience. There has been little to no decolonization for the peoples that were colonized. For example, while the U.S. gained its independence from British rule in 1776, until today the Native American peoples live in a nation-state which is not their own; in other words, independence did not include Native American peoples' independence. Hence the continuous relevance of the (colonial) term 'Indigenous', which in itself refers to a division between colonizers and 'natives'. What Indigenous Peoples around the world have in common is the fact that they remain living in some form of colonial situation. Or as the political scientists Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel have phrased it in their essay 'Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism':

> Indigenousness is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, tribes and nations we call *Indigenous Peoples* are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centers of empire. It is this oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world. (Alfred and Corntassel 2005: 1)

Owing to this situation most Indigenous Peoples have no, or very limited, access to the production of knowledge and discourse. It is telling that the first film regarded as a Native American film with mainstream distribution was *Smoke Signals* by Chris Eyre, which was released in 1998, at least hundred years after the beginning of cinema and in a country where countless films have been made about 'Cowboys and Indians'.[22] The process of colonization destroyed many Indigenous cultural practices and silenced Indigenous voices in many ways.

[22] See for example: Ward Churchill's *Fantasies of the Master Race* (1998), Peter Rollins and John E. O'Connor's *Hollywood's Indian* (1998), and Jacquelyn Kilpatrick's *Celluloid Indians* (1999).

Indigenous Peoples in Mexico

In the case of Mexico there exist 63 different Indigenous Peoples, each with their own language and culture. Nevertheless, there is only one program on national television that addresses these different cultures.[23] Although there are many Indigenous authors and very interesting literary texts in Indigenous languages, one can really not speak of an established corpus of Indigenous works that is recognized in the public sphere/school curricula in Indigenous languages. These languages in Mexico are not part of the different school curricula and are thus not taught. Nor is Indigenous literature – written or oral – generally accepted as part of the national literary canon. Many of the Indigenous languages in Mexico are endangered and at concrete risk of disappearing in the next hundred years due to persisting policies of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion.[24]

Indigenous knowledge is not part of official educational systems and is predominantly only written down and documented by non-Indigenous outsiders (anthropologists), in spite of a large cultural and intellectual production in pre-colonial times.[25] Pictorial books of pre-colonial times were burnt by the missionaries or otherwise destroyed, temples were torn down and their material was used to construct Christian churches. Indigenous religions were banned and only survived the process of colonization in the measure in which they were able to blend or merge with Christian beliefs and traditions. The destruction by colonization was massive and it is clear that in this sense 'a return to lost origins' is impossible, as Spivak poignantly points out in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988) Not only did the process of colonization destroy the vast majority of the pre-colonial cultural production, but it also continues to hinder cultural production today. While many ancient Mesoamerican cultures had an elaborate system to 'write down' history and religious and philosophical conceptions of the world, most Mesoamerican cultures today are still struggling with the development of

[23] The Television program *De Raíz Luna* started in 2006 and is broadcasted on the Mexican channel CANAL 22. The program concentrates on cultural, social and political issues regarding the lives of Indigenous Peoples. The host of the program, Mardonio Carballo is generally considered to be the first Indigenous TV host on Mexican television. See for more information the following interview with Mardonio Carballo (http://www.canal100.com.mx/telemundo/entrevistas/?id_nota=8132).

[24] See the UNESCO page on endangered languages (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/).

[25] Pre-colonial civilization in Mexico produced pictographic and hieroglyphic books, which dealt with astronomical knowledge, religious beliefs and traditions, but also history and philosophy. Most of these materials were destroyed, which caused an almost complete loss of pre-colonial literary production. A handful of these pictorial books were preserved because they were sent as gifts ('curiosities') to members of European elites, others were collected and taken out from Mexico at a later stage (especially in the 19th and 20th century). These surviving codices are currently in museums in Europe and the United States (Boone 2007; Jansen and Pérez Jiménez 2011). In addition archaeology has recovered part of the cultural production in other media, such as frescos, sculptures, and decorated pottery.

an own grammar and writing system. One of the big obstacles is that they try to use a writing system that was not developed within, nor for the different particular languages. For example, Mixtec is a tonal language, in which meanings vary drastically depending on the tone of the word (high, medium or low pitch). The Roman alphabet was not developed for or by a language with such differentiation in tonality. Consequently, Mixtec writing has been wrestling with different ways of writing down tonality.[26]

The colonial violence perpetrated upon Indigenous Peoples in Mexico and the resulting colonial structures and relations have produced a context of material but also cultural impoverishment. Indigenous villages are characterized by an absence of basic infrastructure.[27] There are few hospitals and poor medical care. There are no schools, or only very deficient ones. In many villages there is no running water and no sewage. Communication and transport are often lacking or limited. At the same time, the own language is not taught at local schools, of most languages there does not exist a proper study of grammar, a proper course book or even an agreement on how to write the language down. In most villages there are no jobs and youth massively migrate to the city, where Indigenous physical traits, Indigenous languages and cultures are looked down upon.[28] Consequently, people stop speaking their language and try to assimilate to dominant Mexican (non-Indigenous) culture by getting rid of cultural, social and racial markers.[29] The word for Indigenous Peoples in Mexico, '*Indio*', is highly offensive and could be compared to the use of the word 'nigger' in the United States. As a consequence of no or only poor schooling, the youth migrate to the cities finds itself obliged to accept badly paid jobs that often include health risks, exploitative power relations and humiliating working conditions. Many Indigenous migrants end up working as household servants for well to do families. They do not have any legal labour rights such as a minimum wage, parental leaves, steady contracts,

[26] A colonial orthography was established by the vocabulary of the Dominican monk Francisco de Alvarado (Jansen and Pérez Jiménez 2009), which did not indicate tones. For a contemporary Mixtec course see: Pérez Jiménez 2008.

[27] According to CONEVAL's *Informe de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social en México* (2011: 86-87): "La población indígena concentra los indicadores más agudos de pobreza y marginación y los índices más desfavorables de desarrollo humano y pobreza. De acuerdo con la medición de pobreza 2010, 79 por ciento de los indígenas se encuentra en situación de pobreza (40 por ciento en pobreza extrema). The report goes on to describe that both in urban and rural settings the Indigenous population has the highest rates of malnutrition, infant mortality and analphabetism. According to the report only 1 % of the Indigenous youth continues with superior education.

[28] A telling example is the recent report of the Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, A.C. to the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2012).

[29] In Mexico "whitening" creams are popular, comparable to hair "relaxers" in Afro-American communities (cf. bell hooks 1988).

regulations regarding working conditions or hours.[30] So, in addition to the colonial destruction, and as a consequence of the same, Indigenous Peoples in Mexico today face a context of exclusion, oppression, exploitation, discrimination, and cultural alienation which can be characterized as what Johan Galtung has called systemic violence in his essay 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research' (1969).[31]

With regard to cinema, in Mexico there does not exist a systematic production of films with Indigenous themes, spoken in Indigenous languages, made by Indigenous filmmakers. While Mexico as a country produces around seventy films a year, there are extremely few films made in an Indigenous language and of those films until now, none was made by an Indigenous author (producer, writer or director). To work as an Indigenous filmmaker in Mexico means to try to make oneself heard in a context of colonial legacy. As an Indigenous artist, be it a writer, a filmmaker or a painter, in Mexico one cannot build on a canon, nor react to or continue with particular artistic traditions, as the Indigenous cultural landscape has been severely marked by cultural erosion and destruction. This cultural destruction and fragmented history is what Spivak points to as the impossibility of returning to lost origins. Indigenous filmmakers, writers and other artists can only pick up pieces of this shattered cultural heritage and try to reshape and reconfigure these elements into something new. As a filmmaker finding one's voice in this context is therefore not only related to developing a cinematic signature, but also to finding ways of expressing oneself within this context of a shattered heritage and systemic violence.

This context of a colonial legacy not only has a tremendous impact on the contemporary production of Indigenous art, but it also has severe consequences for the reception, academic reflection on, and analysis of, Indigenous cultural production. Scholarly research into art, cinema and literature has been developed in a context where there is some kind of canon, where there exist large bodies of work, and there are particular currents, trends, and traditions. How can one analyse, for example, a Mixtec poetics, in the absence of

[30] I have known many cases of maids having to be available 24 hours, allocated in the tiniest room of the house (often no more than 3 square meters, with only a bed and a chair) and being forced to eat scraps in the kitchen. While doing research interviews for a documentary project, I have also heard testimonies by maids working only for food and housing and not receiving a salary at all. The Mixtec activist Marcelina Bautista received in 2010 the Human Rights award from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for her work in advocating for the rights of domestic workers (http://www.fes.de/themen/menschenrechtspreis/en/mrp2010.php).

[31] Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung addressed forms of violence which are less visible than direct violence, but which are often structural such as marginalization, oppression and exploitation under the terms systemic violence and cultural violence. In his different works Galtung explores the ways in which these forms of violence are interrelated.

an ongoing and continuing Mixtec literature?[32] How can one speak of a Mixtec cinema if until now there are only a handful of Mixtec filmmakers working on documentaries and short films, and there have been no feature films made by Mixtec filmmakers? Consequently the research conducted among Indigenous Peoples is often ethnographic, producing unwittingly a re-inscription of dominant power relations. This leads to a delicate, problematic, sometimes hostile relationship between Indigenous communities and outsider researchers. An illustration of this point is made by professor and activist Vine Deloria in his famous 'Indian manifesto' *Custer died for your sins* (1969) which opens with the sarcastic statement:

> One of the finest things about being an Indian is that people are always interested in you and your "plight". Other groups have difficulties, predicaments, quandaries, problems, or troubles. Traditionally we Indians have had a "plight". Our foremost plight is our transparency. People can tell just by looking at us what we want, what should be done to help us, how we feel, and what a "real" Indian is really like. (Deloria 1988: 1)

In dominant discourses it is often suggested that Indigenous Peoples do not have scientific knowledge, literature, religions or art, and are not part of the canons of literature or art history, and therefore do not participate in the production of knowledge. In short, Indigenous Peoples tend to be regarded as objects, and not subjects of knowledge. Research into the cultural production and history of different Indigenous Peoples is therefore of great importance.

What Indigenous artists hence have in common is the necessity of dealing with a colonial legacy which mostly destroyed their cultural heritage and which often continues to have an effect through systematic discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. For example, quite often Indigenous cultural heritage is scattered in museums around the world. In his PhD thesis *The History of Yukon First Nations Art* (2012), artist Ukjese van Kampen chronicles how he travelled throughout the United States and to different European countries to trace the different objects that are preserved today of the artistic production of his own

[32] While there are a many Mixtec authors, there is no such thing as a clearly defined and ongoing Mixtec literature. Authors are scattered across time and genres. From the precolonial period a handful of pictorial manuscripts have been conserved, as most were destroyed by missionaries. Most remaining texts from the colonial period are either part of the colonial administration (testaments etc.) or religious texts, produced by Spanish missionaries (Jansen and Van Broekhoven 2008). Today there are a handful of Mixtec writers, writing in different linguistic varieties and in different genres. There also exists a living oral tradition, which is scarcely and limitedly documented, mainly by non-Mixtec anthropologists. A rare exception is the study of Mixtec ceremonial language by Ubaldo López García (2007).

people, the Yukon Nation. Van Kampen's research is particularly interesting because it was produced by someone with intimate knowledge of Yukon culture, and it has the perspective of somebody actually engaged in the production of contemporary Yukon Art. His research studies how the artistic production by the Yukon Nation changed through time, under the influence of different historical interactions and trading relations. But the most important motivation for van Kampen to conduct this research was that as an active visual artist he was searching for the historical tradition in which to frame his own artwork. He had noticed that much contemporary Yukon Art tended to copy and reproduce West Coast Indigenous art works because this was the Indigenous style most known to and requested by outsiders, and also because there was a lack of knowledge with respect to the artistic production of the Yukon people. His research is thus an example of how Indigenous artists face the challenge of working in a void caused by colonial violence, and how within this context, artistic practice can particularly benefit from artistic research.

What is Indigenous Cinema?

Many debates and discussions surrounding Indigenous Cinema revolve around questions of definition and resulting canonization. Recurring questions with regard to Indigenous Cinema are: What is Indigenous Cinema? Does the term Indigenous refer to the identity of the filmmaker(s), or to the subject matter? Should Indigenous Cinema be considered above all an aesthetic style and quality or should it be seen as a political practice? But one needs to wonder: does the discussion over terminology and labelling do justice to the work of Indigenous filmmakers, or are these categorizations contributing to the marginalization and confinement of their work? It is important to acknowledge that Indigenous filmmakers belong to communities that, due to a colonial history, are encompassed by nation-states that are not their own, and consequently do not have a 'national' film tradition. Instead, the cultural production of Indigenous Peoples is embedded in a national context that is foreign to their own culture.[33] In this respect Indigenous Cinema, like Indigenous literature at this

[33] Faye Ginsburg writes the following in her essay 'Indigenous Media: Faustian contract or Global Village?': "I am defining Indigenous media as that work produced by Indigenous Peoples, sometimes called the Fourth World, whose societies have been dominated by encompassing states, such as the Unites States, Australia and Canada. This is to distinguish such work from the National and Independent cinemas of 'non-Western' Third World nations in Africa, Latin America and Asia, which have developed under different conditions and for which there is considerable scholarship." (1991: 96)

moment, is a term that is always related to a process of decolonization. In her book on Native American Cinema, *Decolonizing the Lens of Power* (2008), literary scholar Kerstin Knopf contends that Western media present a colonial view of Indigenous Peoples. She consequently analyses the decolonizing aspects of Indigenous Cinema. An essential part of the process of decolonization consists of the active participation and presence of Indigenous People themselves in the production of texts and knowledge regarding Indigenous cultures. Kerstin Knopf notes:

> The parent-child relation between mainstream governments and their colonial subjects in North America is also demonstrated by the fact that there still seems to be a paternalistic notion that Indigenous peoples cannot speak for themselves, and that they do not have the potential for making qualitatively good films. This paternalism, coupled with prejudices and institutional and structural racism, fosters a situation in which all kinds of obstacles bar the subaltern's way to autonomous films. Production companies, broadcasters and funding agencies often do not trust Indigenous filmmakers, reasoning that they are not properly trained, that they are not reliable or organized enough, or that they do not have the knack for making good films. As a result, projects with Indigenous content are often placed in the hands of non-Indigenous filmmakers. Documentaries, television series and feature films are made *for* them instead of *by* them. (Knopf 2008: 64)

As Knopf indicates, Indigenous Cinema is intimately connected to the process of finding a 'Voice' from a subaltern, or marginalized position. The reason to use the term to refer to cinematic productions by Indigenous filmmakers, is therefore related to the current ongoing process of decolonization and the need for an increased self-representation of Indigenous Peoples, and not so much to the cultural authenticity, the specific themes or aesthetic aspects of the films. In this respect, Indigenous Cinema should be understood as referring to films produced by Indigenous Peoples, be it by a community or an individual. Nevertheless, this should not be taken as an essentialist definition. The term Indigenous Cinema is useful when it provides a space in which the cultural production of dispossessed peoples, who have become or remained stateless as a consequence of a colonial history, can be analysed and discussed. The term is important in the sense that it creates the possibility to foreground the existence of an own cultural production, at the same time allowing for a cross cultural comparison and exchange between different Indigenous Peoples, be it in a regional or more

global approach. In addition, there needs to be an awareness that the term cannot be taken as referring to a specific genre or aesthetic style, nor should it be used in homogenizing or essentialist terms.

Colonial discourse in general has gone to great efforts to represent colonized lands as 'uninhabited', or as inhabited by 'barbarian' and 'uncivilized' people as a way to justify colonization. In *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), Linda Tuhiwai Smith, specialist in Indigenous Education, sets out how academic writing, literature and cinema have consistently reproduced colonial discourse and have consequently contributed to the effacing or misrepresenting of Indigenous Peoples and how this affects the life and knowledge production of Indigenous Peoples today.[34] Quite often the formation of nation-states after decolonization continued this discourse, or adopted a discourse which maintained that Indigenous Peoples, whether presented as 'uncivilized barbarians' or 'noble savages', had been made extinct by the process of colonization and had only left historical or cultural traces in the form of abandoned ruins. For example, the prevailing discourse of the state of Israel with regard to the Palestinian people has long maintained that the Palestinians do not exist as a 'People' and that the land on which the Israeli state was built was previously uninhabited. The state of Israel does not consider the Palestinians as a 'People' in their own right, but Arabs who could easily be incorporated by other Arab nations. In *After the Last Sky* (1999), Edward Said expresses the impossibility of being a Palestinian while Palestine does not yet exist. He expresses the difficulty of identifying as a people in what he feels is a cultural void, or an absence of cultural capital. At the moment when he was writing there was not yet a Palestinian literary tradition or scholarly body of work. The discourse of the state of Israel with regard to the occupation is precisely that the Palestinians do not exist as a people, and the absence of a visible and recognizable cultural production is taken as proof of this statement.

In a similar way, Indigenous Peoples around the world have often been considered 'natural', 'people without history', or people without 'literature', arguments which have fuelled the rhetoric that the Indigenous population required civilizing by the colonizers. Indigenous Peoples face a continuous erasing of their existence through this rhetoric and its consequent representations. Cultural and academic productions are ways to 'speak up' and to articulate an own 'Voice'. Cultural and academic production functions as a way to assert the

[34] In her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) Linda Tuhiwai Smith elaborates on the colonial discourse of both academic writing and imaginary writing. Similarly to the issues presented by Spivak in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', she contends that it is very easy to unwillingly and uncritically adopt and reproduce colonial discourses and structures while writing as an Indigenous scholar within the existing academic system and structures.

existence of a 'People'. It is in this context that one should understand, and appreciate the need for, the term Indigenous Cinema. Gathering the works of Indigenous writers under the banner of (oppressive) national banners would contribute to the invisibility of Indigenous Peoples with an own cultural production. The term Indigenous Cinema offers a space in which these cinemas can distinguish themselves from the respective national cinema traditions and participate in a project of searching for self-representation and self-determination.

The limited access of Indigenous Peoples to self-representation and the general absence of Indigenous filmmakers in mainstream media, is the main reason for employing the term Indigenous Cinema for films made by Indigenous filmmakers. The term 'Indigenous' is not a clear and fixed concept. For example, the ways in which people define Indigenous ancestry in Mexico are different from the current definition in the United States. While Mexico employs a definition based on language, culture and community, in the U.S. this definition is based on 'blood' (racial ancestry) or 'tribal affiliation'. This has largely to do with the different historical developments and the current social situation of Indigenous Peoples in both countries. Due to the rapidly changing conditions of Indigenous Peoples today, both definitions can be problematic or inadequate. For example, in Mexico the Indigenous languages are rapidly diminishing in numbers of speakers due to processes of migration and the impact of national education. Does this mean that the non-speakers in a village are no longer Indigenous, even if they do participate in all community activities and traditions? And does not speaking the language in any way alter the way in which descendants of Indigenous Peoples are perceived by Mexican society?

In *Visible Identities, Race, Gender and the Self* (2005), philosopher Linda Martin Alcoff discusses the ways in which identity is also produced by the perception of others and thus is strongly related to visible markers on the body such as gender and race. On the one hand, the absence of a reflection on race within the Mexican definitions for Indigenous Peoples obscures the ways in which racial components run through and continue to shape Mexican society. On the other hand, the definition based on racial ancestry as employed in the U.S. can easily lead to an essentialist notion of identity. Neither of these definitions regarding Indigenous identity takes into account the current effects of migration and globalization on Indigenous communities, languages, cultures. Both the definition related to language and culture, and the one related to race, support the discourse which presents Indigenous Peoples and their cultures as static, frozen in time and possessing some essential qualities. Many definitions of Indigenous identity consequently run the risk of searching for some kind of pure

roots, either racial or cultural, contributing once more to the 'erasing' of Indigenous Peoples by labelling them as 'not pure enough' or not being 'real Indians'.[35] A recurring example is the argument that modernization, or an increased access to technology, renders Indigenous communities 'less authentic' or 'less pure'.[36] For example, anthropologist James Farris considers filmmaking to have a damaging effect on Indigenous communities as in his opinion technology corrupts a supposed 'authentic pre-modern' Indigeneity.[37]

The complex matter here is that while on the one hand the term Indigenous could indeed function to foreground Indigenous cultural and scholarly production and could be used to create links and bonds between different Indigenous Peoples, it can also lead to an essentialist notion of identity that functions in a colonial discourse of once more obscuring and rendering Indigenous Peoples invisible. Conscious of these different aspects, Helen Gilbert, professor of Performance Studies, turns to performance and performance studies to understand Indigeneity and Indigenous identity. Gilbert elaborates on the ideas of Alfred and Corntassel (2005) regarding the performative aspect of identity in her essay 'Indigeneity, Time and the Cosmopolitics of Postcolonial Belonging in the Atomic Age' (2013). This approach allows, as Gilbert notes, for a more elastic understanding of Indigeneity and evades much of the essentialist discourse surrounding it.

The Legacy of Ethnography and Third Cinema

Anthropologist Johannes Fabian describes in *Time and the Other* (1983) how anthropology constructs 'the other' as an object of study. Fabian elaborates on how time and the denial of coevalness plays an important role in the process of 'othering' by the ethnographic gaze. Many ethnographic films reproduce this form of 'othering'.[38] At the same time, many ethnographers searching for a different kind of relationship with the people and culture they study resort to video as a form of dialogue. For example, Terence Turner with the Kayapo in Brazil, Sol Worth and John Adair among the Navajo People, and the Instituto Nacional Indigenista in Mexico (Institute of Indian Affairs), all handed the camera to Indigenous

[35] Bautista Garcia explores in his MA thesis *La identidad Indígena en tiempos de Globalización* (2009) how different contemporary artists represent Indigenous identity as fluid, nomadic and fragmentary and provide alternative ways of perceiving and understanding Indigenous identity in a context of migration and globalization.
[36] Johannes Fabian provides an extensive analysis on how particularly anthropology has locked Indigenous Peoples in a pre-modern timeframe in *Time and The Other*.
[37] See James Faris' essay 'A Response to Terence Turner' in *Anthropology Today* (1993).
[38] A clear examples is *The Axe-Fight* (Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon 1975).

Peoples with the intention to construct a dialogue. Many Indigenous organizations started using film and video instigated by workshops or research projects conducted by anthropologists and ethnographers. For example, Turner started working on documentary film projects with the Kayapo in Brazil since 1960. Over time, the Kayapo started using the medium of video for the purpose of communication, cultural documentation and political activism. The appropriation of video as a means for both cultural and political resistance by the Kayapo has been acknowledged as a clear example of Indigenous Media.[39] In 1966, the anthropologist filmmakers John Adair and Sol Worth organized the documentary project *Through Navajo Eyes*, in which they provided Navajo participants with cameras and basic technical training to make their own documentary.[40] In Mexico since the 1980s, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (Institute for Indian Affairs) has provided different Indigenous communities with basic equipment and technical training to make 'Indigenous films'. In her book *Indigenous Media in Mexico: Culture, Community and the State* (2013) anthropologist Erica Cusi Wortham explores how video became an important element of social and political activism within Indigenous communities as a result of government funded programs.

Many Indigenous films are made within and by a community and often strive against having a particular 'author'. Indigenous Cinema in this sense has a paradoxical relationship to ethnographic filmmaking. On the one hand, Indigenous Cinema often presents a reaction to the kind of 'ethnographic gaze' described by Fabian, on the other, Indigenous filmmakers have often been trained by (critical) ethnographers in ethnographic filmmaking. While ethnographic cinema in many cases stimulated the development of Indigenous filmmakers in the field of documentary, politically engaged filmmakers have taken up important issues for Indigenous Peoples in fiction films. In Bolivia, Jorge Sanjinés was one of the first to make films that specifically addressed the difficulties of Indigenous communities. His films are often viewed as examples of Indigenous Cinema, although the filmmaker is not Indigenous himself. The fact that his films deal with Indigenous subjects, were made in collaboration

---

[39] Markus Banks gives an analysis of the Kayapo's use of video in his book *Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research*. The lecture 'Defiant Images: The Kayapo Appropriation of Video' by Terence Turner was published in *Anthropology Today* (1992).

[40] In their book *Through Navajo Eyes: An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology* (1972) Sol Worth and John Adair consider that the films in the project, express a very particular Navajo world view through their choice of form and content. Brian Winston briefly discusses this project in *Claiming the Real*, and considers that the chosen cinematic forms are very reminiscent of an "amateurish" and "non-professional" way of filming. Brian Winston points out that the camera is not a neutral tool that renders reality as it is, nor does it express our thoughts and vision automatically. Instead a camera is a culturally constructed tool, that is only able of expressing something if a vision is articulated in a cinematic idiom.

with Indigenous communities, and are spoken in an Indigenous language, means that they have great political value. The subject matter, form and content of these films document the history and cultural values of Indigenous communities and express the particular concerns of the Aymara population. Sanjinés approached his fiction films from a documentary perspective. He worked with a cast consisting of the inhabitants of an Indigenous community and did not hire actors. Yet the most interesting aspect of Sanjinés's films is not their allure of authenticity, or documentary approach, but the ways in which the films addressed the actual and vital problems of the communities they depict.[41] The films denounce the military interventions in the region, question the practice of sterilization forced upon Indigenous women by government clinics, and challenge racist conceptions with regard to the Indigenous population of Bolivia. The work of Sanjinés is a clear example of how films made by non-Indigenous filmmakers can have a decolonizing effect and might contribute to alternative representations of Indigenous Peoples, while creating a space for Indigenous voices. Sanjínes's work is in many respects a continuation and reaction to Third Cinema practice and theory.

Third Cinema is both a filmic style and a theoretical approach developed within the Third World in the nineteen seventies. Third Cinema is also an early 'transnational' approach as it considered the cinema of many different countries in relation to one general framework. Third Cinema as a theoretical framework was strongly rooted in the praxis of making film. The first texts on Third Cinema were all written by filmmakers. The Cuban filmmaker Julio Garcia Espinosa wrote the manifesto 'Por un Cine Imperfecto' addressing issues regarding film production in the 'Third World'. Argentinean filmmaker Fernando Birri, Bolivian filmmaker Jorge Sanjinés, Cuban filmmaker Tomas Gutiérrez Alea, and Brazilian filmmaker Glauber Rocha all wrote manifestos on the subject of practicing a different kind of film making with a political angle within a 'Third World' context.[42] The term Third Cinema was coined by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino after the completion of their documentary *La Hora de los Hornos* in a manifesto entitled 'Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World' (reprint 1997, original article 1969). Solanas and Getino employed the term 'Third Cinema' to designate an ideological project of making political films in opposition to 'First Cinema'.

[41] See Sanjinés's manifesto *Teoría y práctica de un cine junto al pueblo* (1979).
[42] Several essays of these filmmakers have been republished in important edited volumes on film theory, such as Martin (1997) and Stam and Miller (2000). For an overview and discussion of the Third Cinema movement in retrospect see the volume edited by Guneratne and Dissanayake (2003). Also Pisters (2005:7 ff) discusses First, Second and Third Cinema.

They used the term First Cinema for commercial mainstream (Hollywood) cinema. Third Cinema not only referred to the geographical location of production, but rather to the ideological framework in which the films were produced. The manifesto of Solanas and Getino was intended to provide a theoretical framework and practical guidelines for film production in the so-called 'Third World'. The premise of the manifesto by Solanas and Getino, but also of many others, posited that there exists a relationship between film aesthetics, the process of production and ideology, and was deeply influenced by Marxist thought and inspired by revolutionary ideals. To Solanas and Getino, neo-colonialism and capitalism were joint forces, which the revolution needed to overthrow. Their interest in film was primarily political and film was but one component of a larger ideological movement. The ideal of using film as a means for decolonization is explicitly present throughout the manifesto of Solanas and Getino:

> I make the revolution; therefore, I exist. This is the starting point for the disappearance of fantasy and phantom to make way for living human beings. The cinema of the revolution is at the same time one of destruction and construction: destruction of the image that neocolonialism has created of itself and of us, and construction of a throbbing, living reality which recaptures truth in any of its expressions. (Solanas and Getino 1997: 45-46)

Solanas and Getino considered First Cinema to be films made as mere entertainment and therefore complicit with a capitalist and imperialist system through its mode of production, which focuses on economic profit and propagates dominant ideology. Solanas and Getino also distinguished a Second Cinema in their manifesto, which included auteur cinema and art films. Solanas and Getino considered Second Cinema to be a bourgeois enterprise also primarily stimulated by the aspiration of personal recognition and profit, and in that sense they considered it ideologically no different to Hollywood productions (First Cinema). To Solanas and Getino, Third Cinema would be the only real alternative to First Cinema and the only kind of cinema that could promote social change:

> What determines third cinema is the conception of the world, and not the genre or any explicitly political approach. Any story, any subject can be taken up by third cinema. In the dependent countries, third cinema is a cinema of decolonization, which

> expresses the will to national liberation, anti-mythic, anti-racist, anti-bourgeois, and popular. (ibid. 46)

The new ways of film making proposed in *Towards a Third Cinema* were strongly linked to the historical processes of that moment, such as the Cuban Revolution and revolutionary movements throughout the American continent. The propositions for new modes of production in the manifesto were equally connected to the military guerrilla structures of the revolution itself. Solanas and Getino write:

> In this long war, with the camera as our rifle, we do in fact move into a guerrilla activity. This is why the work of a film-guerrilla group is governed by strict disciplinary norms as to both work methods and security. A revolutionary film group is in the same situation as a guerrilla unit: it cannot grow strong without military structures and command concepts. The group exists as a network of complementary responsibilities, as the sum and synthesis of abilities, inasmuch as it operates harmonically with a leadership that centralizes planning work and maintains its continuity. (ibid. 49)

This is to say that not only the content of the films belonging to this proposed kind of liberating cinema needed to be different, but also the mode of production. Solanas and Getino emphasize that every crewmember had to be able to practice any technological task, from operating the sound to holding the camera or editing the reel. For cinema to be truly liberating and democratic, the production process of cinema itself should be democratic as well. Solanas and Getino viewed the problems of distribution in the same way. Their ideal was a kind of decentralized distribution, which would once again counter the capitalist system of film production and consumption in its structure and access. Third Cinema would consist of films that would not only promote the revolution, but would actually have a liberating effect, in every sense. Third Cinema was a cinema that opposed systems of domination in terms of the production process, subject matter and film language. Third Cinema distinguished itself from First Cinema (commercial cinema) and Second Cinema (author cinema) above all through its liberating aims and capacities expressed in the chosen mode of production, subject matter and also filmic form. In this vision, not only the content and ideology of Third Cinema are opposed to First Cinema, but also its aesthetics and narrative structures. As the narrative structures and aesthetics of First Cinema were regarded

as being complicit with the capitalist ideology it is promoting, any kind of 'counter' cinema cannot employ these forms and narrative structures. Third Cinema consequently needed to have its own, radically different narratives and aesthetics to effectively oppose dominant ideology. Solanas and Getino comment:

> In our times it is hard to find a film within the field of commercial cinema, including what is known as "author's cinema," in both the capitalist and socialist countries, that manages to avoid the models of Hollywood pictures. The latter have such a fast hold that monumental works such as the USSR's Bondarchuk's *War and Peace* are also monumental examples of the submission to all the propositions imposed by the US movie industry (structure, language, etc.) and consequently, to its concepts.
> (Solanas and Getino 1997: 41)

Accordingly Solanas and Getino not only proposed alternative modes of production, but also alternative aesthetics. Adhering to different kinds of production modes would inevitably lead to a different aesthetic quality. The Hollywood studio system works with tightly demarcated functions and thus with extremely specialized crews. An approach to filmmaking, which has democratization as a primary objective and requires every crewmember to be able to fulfil the same technical tasks, will not lead to the same kind of specialization and consequently engenders a different cinematic style. In the same period other filmmakers in the Third World stressed the desire and need to develop a different aesthetic. Filmmaker Glauber Rocha proposed the 'aesthetics of hunger' as the particular style of film making in the Third World. He considered that this raw and unpolished style represented in a truer manner the reality of the Third World.[43] The different manifestos on Third Cinema and filmmaking in the Third World all emphasize the importance of the subject matter over the aesthetic quality of the films. That is to say contents is more important than form. In general terms, the polished and carefully directed look of Hollywood films with particular attention to décor, make-up, lightning, *mise-en-scene*, framing and composition was regarded as unfit and inappropriate to represent the stories of the Third World. García Espinosa writes on this aspect:

> Imperfect cinema is no longer interested in quality or technique. It can be created equally well with a Mitchell or with a 8mm camera, in a studio or in a guerrilla camp

[43] Glauber Rocha wrote this essay in 1965; for a (later) English publication, see Rocha 1997.

> in the middle of the jungle. Imperfect cinema is no longer interested in predetermined taste, and much less in "good taste". It is not quality which it seeks in an artist's work. The only thing it is interested in is how the artist responds to the following question: What are you doing in order to overcome the barrier of the "cultured" elite audience which up to now has conditioned the form of your work? (García Espinosa 1997: 82)

The emphasis on content and political engagement and the dismissal of artistic form and dominant aesthetics are a logical consequence of limited means and limited access to production value. Trying to comply with normative (First World) quality standards would render filmmaking impossible. In view of the need to tell stories rooted in the experience of living in a Third World country, the manifestos urged filmmakers to tell those stories with whatever means they had at hand. In addition, from an ideological and ethical perspective it seemed logical to choose a cinematic style that would correspond to the living conditions in the Third World. Also from the perspective of the story, a glamorous and slick imagery appeared completely inappropriate. Solanas and Getino suggested that revolutionary filmmakers use all the means at their disposal in their distinct countries to accomplish their respective projects. Third Cinema filmmakers consequently used, among other techniques, the combination of several kinds of film stock and of different kinds of equipment (for example, cameras and lenses), which also led to a different cinematic style. Solanas and Getino did not lay down a specific set of rules for a Third Cinema poetics; rather, they appealed to filmmakers to discover new poetics, particular to their own realities and different from the mainstream forms. Solanas and Getino put it in the following words:

> The existence of revolutionary cinema is inconceivable without the constant and methodical exercise of practice, search, and experimentation. It even means committing the new filmmaker to take chances on the unknown, to leap into space at times, exposing himself to failure as does the guerrilla who travels along paths that he himself opens up with machete blows. The possibility of discovering and inventing film forms and structures that serve a more profound vision of our reality resides in the ability to place oneself on the outside limits of the familiar, to make one's way amid constant dangers. (Solanas and Getino 1997: 48)

The Cuban filmmaker García Espinosa explicitly encourages a variety of styles, genres and subjects. Aware of the pluriform and multifaceted character of 'Third world' Cinema, he

writes: “It is no longer a matter of replacing one school with another, one ‘ism’ with another, poetry with anti-poetry, but of truly letting a thousand different flowers bloom.” (García Espinosa 1997: 82)

In the introduction of *Rethinking Third Cinema* (Guneratne and Dissanayake 2003), film scholar Anthony R. Guneratne describes the different debates and the challenges faced by Third Cinema theory. The term ‘Third World’ both in geographical as in economic terms has never been quite adequate, but is now more and more becoming an empty generalization. There exists a critical awareness that the relations within the ‘Third World’ countries themselves, between these same countries, and between ‘Third World’ countries and ‘First World’ countries are far more complex than the terms allow to express.[44] Guneratne also exposes the split that has been present throughout Third Cinema theory from the start. Solanas and Getino conceived of Third Cinema as being an ideological project, not necessarily linked to geographical location. Instead they rejected certain ‘Third Worldist’ film productions as being part of Third Cinema due to their ideological alliance with mainstream (First) cinema. This split in the concept, which indicates a geographical locatedness, but at the same time refers to an ideological position, according to Guneratne has led to “battles over categorization” among the critics (2003). The question is whether the term refers to a geographical or ideological component. This means: are all Third World films indeed Third Cinema? Or should the term Third Cinema be employed to define the ideological components of the films? While some scholars tend to emphasize the geographical locatedness of Third Cinema, others tend to view it more as a specific style. In the first instance, all films produced within ‘Third World’ countries would belong to Third Cinema, in the latter perception, only revolutionary and overtly political films belong to the realm of Third Cinema as well as certain films from the ‘First World’ adhering to the same principles.

Film scholar Teshome Gabriel wrote the first academic reflections on Third Cinema in *Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films* (reproduced in: Stam and Miller 1989). He is one of the scholars who emphasize the geographical locatedness of Third Cinema as being the cinema produced within the ‘Third World’. He examines the industry, theme and style of Third World cinema, and divides them into three phases. The first phase is that of *unqualified assimilation,* the second of *remembrance*, and the third the *combative* phase. In

[44] Loomba traces this issue in regard to terms as ‘colonialism’ and ‘postcolonialism’ in her book *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism* (1998). In *Unthinking Eurocentrism* media scholars Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1994) explore the difficulties of terms as ‘West’ and ‘Non-West’. Particularly influential is the work of Bhabha (1994), who stresses the complex, dynamic, interactive and hybrid character of the postcolonial / decolonizing / globalizing world.

the films of *unqualified assimilation*, the filmmakers try to emulate Hollywood cinema, both in the mode of production and in content and style. According to Gabriel, filmmakers who try to 'indigenize' the style of their films should be grouped under the *remembrance* phase. Gabriel points out that the elements of this style arise from the experience of being and living in the 'Third World'. He argues that the experience of time and space is different in the 'Third World' from these experiences in the 'First World'. According to Gabriel, space is an uncontrolled natural element in the 'Third World', while it is a controlled and cultural product in the 'First World'. Time has its own pace in the 'Third World' and is not something with monetary value. The different conceptions of time and space can lead to a different employment of time and space in 'Third World' cinema. Gabriel distinguishes differences between 'Western' cinema conventions and 'Non Western' cinema conventions. He makes an analogy between these conventions and the difference between oral tradition/ folk art and print/ literate art forms. In this sense, he argues, 'Third World' cinema is a continuation of pre-existing art forms in the 'Third World'. Like Solanas and Getino, and García Espinosa, Gabriel indicates in the *combative* phase the need to develop an own poetics. Essential to these new poetics should be an ideological stance or point of view, and the critique of dominant ideology and its conventions. The differentiation between the 'First World' and the 'Third World', and between the 'West' and the 'Non-West', as proposed by Gabriel, is largely constructed on a binary opposition and perpetrates other existing dichotomies.

While there are of course differences between 'First' and 'Third World' countries, often the differences between a rural and an urban environment within these countries are much larger. One could argue that the way in which Gabriel perceives time and space within the 'Third World' or the 'Non-West' would also apply to rural and natural environments in the 'First World'. Similarly, the characteristics that Gabriel attributes to the conceptions of time and space in the 'First World' are equally valid in a big city in the 'Third World', such as Mexico City or Mumbai. Folk art and oral tradition are equally also part of European cultures, one can think of for example the Sicilian puppet play.[45] At the same time different 'Third World' cultures have, or had, their own- particular writing systems and literature. The dichotomous differentiation between the 'Third' and 'First World' and its respective Cinemas hence overshadows the internal differences and the complexity of relations within and between these worlds and cinemas, and can be limiting for the appreciation and interpretation of films produced in the 'Third World'. For all these reasons, the definitions and

[45] This is the topic of my documentary film *Una nave per tornare*.

differentiations distinguishing a particular 'Third Worldist' and 'Non Western' cinema, proposed by Gabriel, are extremely problematic. Film scholar Mike Wayne argues that Third Cinema is not the same as 'Third World' cinema, and that what defines it, is not its geographical locatedness, but its politics. It is the subject matter, the aesthetics and the practice of a film that define films as Third Cinema. Wayne states:

> Third Cinema is not to be restricted to the so-called Third World. First, Second and Third Cinemas do not designate geographical areas, but institutional structures/ working practices, associated aesthetic strategies, and their attendant cultural politics. Thus, if we understand First and Second cinema in more complexity, we will be more ready to understand that we can have First and Second Cinema in the Third World and Third Cinema in the First World. (Wayne 2002: 212)

Wayne clearly belongs to the group of scholars who argue that Third Cinema designates primarily a film practice, independently of geographical location. This difference in perspective has an ideological and political component. The viewpoint which considers that Third Cinema designates filmic production within the 'Third World', argues that it is important to maintain the term for cinematic production in the 'Third World', as there are hardly any theories or practices that analyse and work through the specific realities and cinemas of the 'Third World'. The perspective which wants to expand the term Third Cinema towards politically engaged cinema in the 'First World', argues that the term indicates first and foremost anti-capitalist movements, in any part of the world, and that a broader use of the term facilitates solidarity between these movements. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam proposed a wider use of the term, precisely to avoid muddling the discussion down to labels. They set out the following:

> As long as they are taken not as 'essential' preconstituted entities, but rather as collective projects to be forged, it seems to us, both 'Third World cinema' and 'Third Cinema' retain important tactical and polemical uses for a political inflected cultural practice. In purely classificatory terms, we might envision overlapping circles of denotation: A core circle of 'Third Worldist' films produced by and for Third World peoples (no matter where those people happen to be) and adhering to the principles of 'Third Cinema'; A wider circle of the cinematic productions of Third World peoples (retroactively defined as such), whether or not the films adhere to the principles of

> Third Cinema and irrespective of the period of their making; another circle consisting of films by First and Second World people in support of Third World peoples and adhering to the principles of Third Cinema; and a final circle, somewhat anomalous in status, at once 'inside' and 'outside', comprising recent diasporic hybrid films, for example those of Mona Hatoum or Hanif Kureishi, which both built on and interrogate the conventions of 'Third Cinema'. (Shohat and Stam 1994: 28)

One of the critiques of Third Cinema as a movement has been that it failed to acknowledge the differences within the so-called 'Third World' with respect to, for example, gender and ethnicity.[46] Critical perspectives of Third Cinema consider that the emphasis on national identity in Third Cinema led to a general invisibility and even exclusion of Indigenous Peoples. Nevertheless, the political ideals and the production modes of Third Cinema, as described and proposed by Solanas and Getino are still very present today among many Indigenous filmmakers, particularly in Latin America. Many Indigenous organizations that use film and video, make videos or films which are of a particular interest to the community, either social, political or cultural. Like the guerrilla filmmaking style proposed by Solanas and Getino in *Towards a Third Cinema*, these films are produced in a horizontal manner, in which every crew member is able to carry out the different tasks of production and the group or community is more important than an author or director. The films, but also the process through which the films are produced, strive to provide an alternative to capitalist and hierarchic production modes and thus continue to adhere to the ideals of Third Cinema.[47]

One important strand of Indigenous Cinema is clearly composed by films and videos made by and within Indigenous communities and whose subject matter is closely related to the propositions of Third Cinema. Yet another important strand of Indigenous Cinema consists of the work of Indigenous authors making authorial films for national and international audiences, catering to, for example, international film festivals. A less common current is that of Indigenous filmmakers producing commercial films or genre cinema with or without Indigenous themes and subject matter. For example, Maori filmmaker Taika Waititi recently directed and acted in the vampire film *What we do in the shadows* (2014) and was

[46] See for example the contribution of Shohat in *Rethinking Third Cinema* (Guneratne and Dissanayake 2003)
[47] Examples of associations working in this way and adhering to communitarian film production and distribution are for example Grupo Chaski in Peru, and Videoastas Indígenas de la Frontera Sur in Mexico. An analysis of this kind of Indigenous media is given by Laura Cardús i Font in the online journal contribution *Sharing video as a cultural and research tool: Videoastas Indígenas in Chiapas* .

the writer of Disney's expected new film *Moana* (2016).[48] In practice most platforms for Indigenous Cinema, such as Indigenous Film Festivals tend to include these different forms of Indigenous Cinema, maybe highlighting one over the other. In this research I will focus mainly on authorial films, as this is the space wherein filmmakers develop an own 'Voice'.

Digitization and Indigenous Cinema

During the last twenty years film production has changed dramatically all over the world. The process of globalization on the one hand, and of digitization on the other, have profoundly influenced the ways in which films are produced, distributed and received. When looking back at film history, it is apparent that technological changes, and modifications in the production process, have always led to the development of new aesthetics and the adjustment of existing conventions.[49] Film, as a relatively new art form, has had a history of transformations in both a technological and artistic sense. One can think of the introduction of sound, the beginning of colour stock, and the introduction of 16mm lightweight film equipment. These developments obviously not only changed the practice of filmmaking but also film aesthetics and narratives: they transformed film as a medium, its process of production, its form and aesthetic qualities, and finally also the ways in which film produces meaning. Digitization has lowered the costs of film production and thus made it more accessible to different, independent, groups and individuals. This development has triggered a whole range of new genres such as Dogma, Guerrilla Filmmaking, but also Reality TV. While the choice for the digital format has everything to do with keeping production costs as low as possible, the official pretext is that in this manner it is possible to film the true intimate moments. At the same time though, this way of filming has become a trope for a sense of familiarity, as it has the 'look' of a family vacation video.[50] The accessibility of video technology is obviously also encouraging and aids the production of video material by Indigenous groups. Developments in the realm of digital video have made equipment more accessible, thus contributing to low-budget and no-budget video productions.

Digitization has provoked a radical change in the ways in which audiences consume audio-visual works. The Internet has not only created a new and different channel of

[48] See http://m.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119andobjectid=11345855
[49] For an overview of the impact of technological developments on cinema see *Film Art: An Introduction* (2010) by Bordwell and Thompson.
[50] See the analysis by film scholar Janna Houwen in her book *Mapping moving media: film and video* (2014).

distribution but also a different mode of film consumption. Films are no longer solely consumed in the cinema, but can be viewed on PCs, laptops and even cell phones. Viewing has become more and more an individual experience and not necessarily the group experience linked to the film theatre, creating a profound difference in viewing context. Also in this respect the technological developments have been blurring the boundaries of cinema, television and consumer (home) video, of the public and the private. While in previous decades cinema and television were considered the media that could reach masses, in opposition to private videos whose outreach was limited to friends and family, today a viral video can as easily reach millions of people. The changing way of consuming films, zapping through endless quantities of channels, or viewing clips via the cell phone, is also altering the cinematic language of films. Distribution has become accessible to anyone anywhere through You Tube, in my opinion realizing in a way García Espinosa's desire for a democratization of the medium.[51] While the practitioners of Third Cinema proposed alternative modes of distribution advocating for travelling and popular cinemas to independently distribute their works, now the internet makes direct and uncensored distribution possible. Many low budget independent films go directly to online platforms for distribution, such as ITunes, Vimeo, Youtube, or Viewing on Demand platforms. Online distribution via YouTube and similar sites has become the preferred distribution mode for activist videos, mostly in connection to social networks, such as Facebook groups, or weblogs. The videos that are posted on the site have the style, quality, and purposes described by Third Cinema proponents. Different NGOs and communitarian organizations supporting Indigenous causes use video mainly for social activism and put the content online. YouTube, Vimeo or Facebook function as the means to broadcasts and distribute videos with information regarding Indigenous issues.[52] Many videos are recorded with cell phones and consumer cameras, without special attention to form or aesthetics, but highlighting urgent matters, be they cultural, social or political. Like the early Third Cinema practitioners, present day activists employ video as a tool for political and social action. As the activist and communitarian videos form an important strand of Indigenous media and cinema (in Latin America perhaps the most important strand) quite often the quality and aesthetic aspect of Indigenous films is associated with reality footage and non-professional material.

[51] In *For an Imperfect Cinema*, a manifest comparable in general terms to Solanas and Getino's *Towards a Third Cinema*, García Espinoza expresses the desire for a democratization of the film medium. He envisions cinema no longer as a mass-medium that is produced by the elites for the masses, but that the masses can use to produce their own stories.

[52] Examples are Survival International, EZLN, Chirapaq, El pueblo Nasa (ACIN, Tejido de comunicación), The Kayapo, etc.

Recently High Definition video has been embraced by independent filmmakers around the world, as it drastically cut down production costs in comparison to 16mm and 35mm celluloid.[53] The access to HD cameras has a similar impact on filmmaking as the introduction of 16mm lightweight equipment in the 1970s, which made it possible to start filming documentaries on location, triggering the rise of documentary approaches such as Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité, but also Third Cinema. On the production side, digitalization has had the effect of blurring the boundaries between cinema, television and consumer (home) video. In terms of production, equipment has become more accessible, digital editing and digital post-production have created new possibilities and have also smoothened the production process. Digital editing and aftereffects have provided new fields of experimentation and led to new images and editing techniques.[54] Digital special effects have become an intrinsic part of the postproduction process and as such also of cinematic language. For example, the possibility of digital manipulation has challenged the truth-value of the photographic image as documentary material among spectators and critics, thus influencing the genre of documentary film.[55] The possibilities created by digital special effects and digital editing, as well as the development of narrative structures inspired by video games or the Internet have transformed cinematic language. With regard to distribution and reception, the digital age has made the exposure of film accessible to larger groups of individuals, not just film studios or companies, and has also individualized the ways in which films can be consumed. The Internet has also been crucial in the rise of transnational co-productions, facilitating contact through email, online writing tools and conference calls contributing thus to a further globalization of filmmaking, but also of film language.

Both the digitization and the globalization of filmmaking have their effects on Indigenous Cinema. Access to low budget consumer video equipment and to online

[53] The developments in digital film equipment are following each other at such a great speed that its effect and impact still needs to be fully addressed. In recent years most cinema theatres have switched to digital projection. Also professional film equipment has been increasingly turning to digital filmmaking. In the consumer and prosumer realm the development of DSLR photography equipment, which also captures video, has in a way reduced the aesthetic gap between film and video. As DSLR cameras allow for the use of different photographic and cinema lenses with different depths of field and textures, a cinematic look can now also be obtained in video. One of the first video films made with a DSLR camera which sparked the use of photographic DSLR cameras for filmmaking was Vincent La Foret's *Rèverie* which attracted more than 2 million viewers upon its first internet release (http://www.laforetvisuals.com/) Several sites on internet list successful independent films made with HD video equipment, such as: http://www.lightsfilmschool.com/blog/5-successful-dslr-feature-films/2205/ . One critic even considers HD and DSLR photography to have deprived independent films from its grainy and dirty aspect: http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/04/are-indie-movies-getting-too-pretty/256367/.

[54] Such as continuous and discontinuous editing.

[55] Brian Winston warns in *Claiming the real* (1995) that the documentary film might be in danger because of the rise of digital photography and the easy manipulation of digital images.

distribution has, for example, encouraged and increased videos that denounce social injustice through social networks. Independent filmmakers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike are making more and more use of social networking to promote, distribute and even fund their films within their own communities.[56] While most Indigenous community videos are still being shot on low budget consumer cameras, producing an association with an 'amateurish' or 'non-professional' look, the recent developments in digital equipment (such as Digital Single Lens Reflex cameras) also mean that a cinematic look and aesthetic is within economic reach of independent filmmakers and thus of Indigenous filmmakers.[57] Obviously the cinematic look does not only depend on the shooting format, but mainly on the choice of lenses, additional lighting, framing and composition. In other words, this depends first and foremost on the cinematic use of the medium of film. While the use of cinematic language through lighting, art direction, *mise-en-scene*, découpage, etc., are employed to distinguish cinema from other visual media such as video, I am gathering the different uses of the medium of film and video under the label Indigenous Cinema, as the digital and technological developments of recent years renders the distinction between the two increasingly blurred.

Indigenous Cinema in a Context of Globalization

The process of ongoing globalization has a continuing impact on Indigenous communities. On the one hand it introduces all kinds of consumer products, such as Coca Cola, television, Hollywood films and fashion to Indigenous communities, thus altering and changing traditional ways of life at great speed. On the other hand, corporate industries menace Indigenous lands and communities, eager to extract the resources of non-urbanized, natural environments. Many Indigenous communities around the world are currently in conflict with mining corporations, oil companies and other transnational industries that want to exploit

[56] *Mosquita y Mari* by Xicana filmmaker Aurora Guerrero was largely funded through crowdsourcing on internet. This Coming of Age film was made for approximately eighty thousand dollars, most of it collected through a kick-starter campaign. The film received above all support of the Latino communities in the United States and queer and lesbian movements. It should be noted that Aurora Guerrero participated in the Native program of the Sundance Film Institute. Also the Maori film *Boy* by Taika Waititi relied for its release in the U.S. on crowd-sourcing through internet (http://news.tangatawhenua.com/archives/3687).
[57] Houwen explores the differences between the medium video and the medium film and elaborates on their different uses and aesthetics. She concludes that there is an increasing overlap between the media (Houwen 2014).

their lands and resources.[58] Furthermore, migration from Indigenous rural communities to urban centres continues to grow, causing also the disintegration and fragmentation of Indigenous communities. Film in this respect has a double function. Hollywood films and national film productions are increasingly available to Indigenous communities, accelerating processes of migration and the rapidly changing ways of life as they present a desirable image of modern capitalist society. The access to video cameras provides an opportunity to document traditions, languages and even oppose particular political and industrial developments. Faye Ginsburg examines this apparent double bind of film and video in her article 'Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?'. According to Ginsburg, video is too often uncritically celebrated as a means to document and preserve Indigenous languages and traditions or as a tool for self-expression, without addressing the effects of the recent continuous influx of mainstream media such as soap operas, (Hollywood) films and consumer TV. Part of the double bind can be understood if one makes a distinction between the consumption and production of film and video. While indeed the films and videos that reach Indigenous communities tend to reproduce colonial discourses and to present stereotypical imagery which has an alienating effect, it is video as a tool of internal and external communication, as a tool for self-representation and as a means of political activism or cultural production that can play an important role for and within Indigenous communities.[59] Ginsburg traces the beginnings of Indigenous media to anthropologist ideals to let the people "speak for themselves" and express their own world views, such as in the aforementioned Worth and Adair films. Ginsburg goes on to analyse different case studies with respect to Aboriginal broadcasting projects in Australia and similar Inuit projects in Canada. Ginsburg points out that a major problem for the production of community stories is the lack of resources which makes it difficult to attain the broadcast quality standards laid out by national television and the lack of trained and skilled Indigenous media professionals which leads to a situation wherein most of the employees of the Aboriginal broadcasting service are not Aboriginal, thus leading to all kinds of mediation. Ginsburg makes clear that she considers Indigenous media to function at an intersection of different influences and cultural realms, and that Indigenous films cannot be read as pure expressions of a pristine

[58] The book *In the Way of Development: Indigenous Peoples, Life Projects and Globalization* (Mario Blaser, Harvey A. Feit, Glenn McRae 2004) gathers different articles presenting case studies from around the world on the complex relation between Indigenous communities, national development projects and corporate industries.
[59] Tuhiwai Smith elaborates on the alienating effects of colonial discourse, and of representations that are very distant from life and experiences in Indigenous communities in *Decolonizing Methodologies.*

culture:

> Indigenous Media, like the ethnic autobiographies that Fisscher discusses as well as other contemporary multicultural artistic production, are a cultural process and product. It is exemplary of the construction of contemporary identity of Fourth World people in the late 20th century, in which historical and cultural ruptures are addressed, and reflections of 'us' and 'them' to each other are increasingly juxtaposed. In that sense, Indigenous media is a hybrid, and (to extend the metaphor), perhaps more vigorous and able to flower and reproduce in the altered environment that Aborigines live in today. Young Aboriginal people, who are or will be entering into production are not growing up in a pristine world, untouched by the dominant culture; they are juggling the multiple sets of experiences that make them contemporary Aboriginal Australians. Many in this generation want to engage in image-making that offers a face and a narrative that reflects them in the present, connects them to a history and directs them towards a future as well. (Ginsburg 1991: 106)

In her essay Ginsburg points out the different realms of cultural mediation. Also, film language is subject to cultural codification and construction. The increased presence of Hollywood films in Indigenous communities impacts upon worldviews, as well as the cinematic expressions of young Indigenous filmmakers.

Hollywood films have a tremendous geographical reach, thus contributing to the further compression of culture throughout the world. Hollywood films are one of those elements that are the same everywhere, and have become almost inescapable; on the airplane, or on a far-away destination, you can watch the same movie everywhere thus contributing to the idea of a global world and a global culture.[60] Hollywood is also exemplary of the interrelation of capitalism, globalization and new technologies. There is an intrinsic connection between Hollywood and other global brands for the purpose of marketing. For

[60] In *Globalization and Culture* (1999) communication scholar John Tomlinson explains how the technological developments lead to a greater sense of connectivity as travel and contact across large geographical distances has become easier and more accessible. The process of globalization also involves a particular kind of homogenization of culture. Certain cultural phenomena, like global brands, are the same everywhere, thus creating a sense of global culture. Tomlinson warns not to simplify this process. He observes that the fact that there exist spaces or commodities that are global, such as airports, brands, and five star hotel accommodations, does not actually mean that culture has become flattened and that indeed everywhere is the same or that cultural differences no longer exist. See also film scholar Robert E Davis, 'The Instantaneous Worldwide Release: Coming Soon to Everyone Everywhere' in: *Transnational Cinema the Film Reader* (Ezra and Rowden 2006).

example, each time a new Disney film comes out, McDonald's standard promotes the film and its own interests through some marketing action. Not only Hollywood's output is part of global culture, but also its cinematic language. Film communicates and creates meaning through the use of aesthetic form and dramatic composition. Hollywood cinema has developed a very particular language in which different genres have their specific codes and conventions. Hollywood – both 'classical' and 'post-classical' – has privileged the Aristotelian three-act structure (Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson 1985; Thompson 1999). Most Hollywood films are plot driven, that is to say the narrative structure is constructed in terms of cause and effect, centered on a hero who has to overcome a number of obstacles in order to achieve his goal (Field 1984; Vogler 1998; Tierno 2002). Découpage has its particular rules such as shot-counter shot, and music plays an important role in dramatizing scenes. As a consequence of globalization, the codes, rules and conventions of Hollywood have spread all over the world. This specific film language is recognized and taken in by a worldwide audience and predominantly taught to both filmmakers and critics, in film academies and departments of film studies respectively, leading to a sort of imperialism of form. While evidently Hollywood is not a monolithic construct, and produces a variety of filmic themes and styles, overall one can argue that as a production and distribution model it has a globalizing effect on film production from around the world. Films around the world are more and more presenting a kind of 'global cinematic language', erasing at times local particularities.

The decision to use film or video in a cinematic way depends largely on the intended purpose and audience of the films. Films and videos that meant first and foremost to denounce injustice or violations of Indigenous rights might not be so preoccupied with aesthetics, but rather with gaining credibility and provoking immediate action. As mentioned before, 'reality' and 'authenticity' have become associated with a video aesthetic that does not use extra lighting, particular lenses, and other tools as there exists the idea that the less the image is mediated or manipulated, the closer its relation to reality. However, Indigenous filmmakers who want to obtain more mainstream distribution will have to function within the realm of transnational film production and will have to consider issues of cinematic language, narrative and aesthetics. The question of how to develop an own 'Voice' through narrative and cinematic language in relation and reaction to mainstream cinema, is one of the important challenges for Indigenous filmmakers.

Indigenous Cinema as Accented Cinema

As Naficy (2001) points out, a significant part of 'Non-Western' film production has shifted to the 'West', as more and more 'Non-Western' filmmakers are themselves either living, working, or receiving funding within Western Europe or the United States, and consequently operating beyond national boundaries. Naficy characterizes this 'independent transnational cinema' as follows:

> My examination of the transnational film genre is focused on the films made in the past two decades by transnational filmmakers who live or make their films in Europe and the United States. By and large these filmmakers are from the so-called Third World, and they operate independently, that is, outside the studio systems and the mainstream film industries of the host countries. As a result, they are presumed to be more prone to tensions of exile, acculturation, and transnationalism, and their films should and do encode these tensions. (Naficy, in Shohat and Stam 2003: 205)

Because of all these different factors, film production today is hardly ever solely a national enterprise, but regularly a transnational project. The filmmakers themselves, the ways in which films are produced, and the subject matter of contemporary films, reflect the process of globalization. Films are increasingly produced through international funding, with international casts and crews, in international co-productions, with a global audience in mind. While this global audience is composed of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds and as such a heterogeneous group of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, audiences, the growing need to address an international, culturally diverse, audience can lead to a search for a 'universal', film aesthetics which is often understood as a Hollywood aesthetics.

Nevertheless, it is also arguable that due to a greater presence of world cinema in film festivals today, the distinct aesthetic properties and narrative structures of these films will also influence mainstream film production. World Cinema is increasingly present within the film festival circuits and often finds support in Europe through funding. In order to satisfy funders and distributors, World Cinema tends to adopt forms and narrative styles akin to European Art Cinema.[61] In many ways, the postmodern condition has been characterized by

[61] The book *Remapping World Cinema: Identity, Culture and Politics in Film* (2006) edited by film scholars Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim explores different contemporary debates surrounding World Cinema, among others the relation and tension between World Cinema and Hollywood or European Art Cinema.

the dissolution of different kinds of boundaries, both between media, genres, and disciplines, but also between cultures, genders, and nations. Transnational film production partakes in this general breaking down of boundaries, dissolving the divides between national film productions, between 'Western' and 'non-Western' Cinema, between mainstream cinema and art cinema and between different genres and media. Although (independent) transnational films may be situated in extremely different local and historical contexts (the economic, political, and historical context of a Cuban film cannot be compared to that of an Algerian, Senegalese, Native American, or Palestinian film), the creative processes of transnational cinema are all affected and influenced by a number of shared circumstances and issues, as they are the product of the context of globalization, urbanization and migration in the 21st century. Within the realm of Independent Transnational Cinema, Naficy distinguishes the Accented Style. He contends that Accented Cinema expresses the cultural tensions and dynamics to which accented filmmakers are exposed.[62] He therefore considers it of great importance to include the figure of the author and the authorial voice in the examination of accented films. While the filmmakers gathered under the Accented Style by Naficy, are migrant filmmakers that live and work in and between the First and the Third World, Indigenous filmmakers can easily be grouped under the Accented Style. Many Indigenous filmmakers have migrated from a rural community to an urban centre, most Indigenous filmmakers live and work, as Ginsburg points out, in the encounter of different cultural realms, and their work is indeed likely to express these tensions. Particularly Indigenous filmmakers who want to address a larger, international audience with their films, will recur to a global film language in which their own particular cultural realm will remain present as a sort of cinematic accent.

Indigenous Cinema is a term that includes many different kinds of film currents from many different places around the world related in one or more ways to the cultural production of Indigenous Peoples. As such it can never be taken as an essentialist term, nor should it be used to define or demarcate 'real' or 'authentic' Indigenous filmic expressions. The term is primarily of importance because of the constant and continuous discursive erasure that Indigenous Peoples are facing in their national contexts. The term Indigenous Cinema expresses the importance and need for own artistic expressions and narratives, but exclusivist and purist employments of the term only contribute to the further obscuring of Indigenous Peoples and their cultural production. Indigenous Cinema gathers a multiplicity of different

[62] Naficy elaborates on this issue in *An Accented Cinema* (2001).

film strands and currents and consists, among others, of communitarian video activism, socially engaged cinema, but also of mainstream films and art cinema. In this research I focus on authorial films made by Indigenous filmmakers. Taking into account that the issues and contexts faced by Indigenous film authors are very similar to those experienced by Accented filmmakers, I will examine their works through the lens of Accented Cinema Theory. Since Indigenous Cinema is often connected to other cinematic representations of Indigenous Peoples, such as ethnographic cinema or politically engaged cinema, I will often include in my analysis a comparison with films made by non-Indigenous filmmakers, all the while addressing Indigenous themes and subject matters.

Chapter 2

Indigenous Characters, Narrative Structure and Identification

As Naficy evaluates in *An Accented Cinema* (2001), Accented filmmakers not only address the tensions provoked by living and working in different cultural realms, but they also blend and combine narrative and aesthetic elements from different storytelling and filmic traditions, expressing thus an own 'Voice'. Cultural exchange owing to globalization provides an influence of mainstream narrative and aesthetic elements and mainstream production modes in World Cinema and thus also Indigenous Cinema. In this chapter I will analyse different films with important Indigenous characters, but which have a fairly traditional (mainstream) narrative structure and production mode. I will focus my analysis on *The Girl* (David Riker 2012) and *La jaula de oro* (Diego Quemada-Díez 2013). In *Decolonizing the Lens of Power* (2008), Knopf analyses the decolonizing aspect of different Native American films. Although *The Girl* and *La jaula de oro* were made by non-Indigenous directors, they do share several of the decolonizing elements mentioned by Knopf. In my analysis, I will explore the decolonizing aspects of these films. The analysis will, furthermore, focus on how these films employ narrative, *mise-en-scene* and découpage to create identification with the Indigenous characters.[63] This analysis arises from my own interest as a filmmaker into how narrative, *mise-en-scene* and découpage can be employed to provide a sense of identification and is therefore in line with the critical practice of film as proposed by Kydd (2011). In this analysis I am thus interested in how the script and different directorial choices create a sense of identification and at the same time have a decolonizing effect.

There are many books and manuals on traditional screenwriting. The most well-known are probably Syd Field's *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (1984) and Robert McKee's *Story Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (1997). The three act structure, the two turning points and the journey of the character are considered important elements in mainstream film narrative. Although varying in focus and approach, most other screenwriting handbooks maintain these as structuring narrative elements. In his book, *Alternative Scriptwriting: Successfully Breaking the Rules* (2007) Dancyger explores the emergence of alternative narrative structures, mainly in the realm of independent cinema. Studies of Film Narrative, such as that of Bordwell and Thompson (2009), also distinguish the importance of the three act structure in the construction of

[63] For an elaborate discussion of this terms see Kydd (2011).

narrative for film, as well as that of character development. Scriptwriting workshops tend to start out with the development of characters and depart from a classical narrative structure composed of three acts and eight sequences.[64] An important aspect of the narrative structure includes the character's so-called emotional journey. The character's transformation throughout the film involves a 180 degree turnaround. The character thus makes a dramatic shift from the beginning to the end of the film. A simple but clear example of this pattern is represented through the main characters in romantic comedy, who mostly start out uninterested in love in general, or on hostile terms with the character with whom they will eventually develop a romantic relationship.[65] This dramatic change in the character is valid in all the different genres of mainstream narrative cinema. Through the journey of the character, the main theme of the film comes to the fore. When writing a script it is therefore important to determine the starting point for the main characters and to have a general idea of where the journey of the character will lead to. As Dancyger shows, the choice for the ending conveys the vision of the film. As an author one can therefore think of the specific message or meaning one wishes to present when writing a film ending. In continuation I will analyse different films with respect to the dramatic journey of the character, the narrative structure and the chosen ending of the film.

Identification in The Girl

The Girl (David Riker 2013) is a road movie and mainstream film with several Hollywood actors in the lead role, including Abbie Cornish and Will Patton. The film encourages the identification of the audience with Indigenous migrants through the perspective and focalization of a non-Indigenous character. The main character is Ashley, a single mother living in a trailer park in Texas. She has lost custody over her four year old son and is trying to regain that. Ashley was convicted for drink driving with her baby in the back of her car and therefore lost custody over her child. The boy is in foster care and Ashley will shortly have a court hearing in an attempt to regain custody. Ashley believes one of the reasons she will not get her boy back is because she does not have a good job, and does not have enough income for a proper house. The conditions for her regaining custody of the child dictate that

[64] Examples are the Binger Filmlab in Amsterdam, the Cine Qua Non Lab in Morelia, Mexico, and The Babylon Workshop in Cannes.
[65] See Mernit (2001).

she should have enough income and a permanent address. The film begins by establishing Ashley's explicit disdain for Mexican migrants. In a discussion she has with her manager (who also has a Mexican last name and appearance) about her desire for a raise, Ashley ends up saying: "Why is it I always get the worst shift? I mean, everyone knows that you like Mexican girls best, the place is full of them". It is clear that as cheap labour force, Ashley sees Mexican immigrants as taking all the jobs. Later in the film Ashley finds out her father is smuggling Mexicans across the border in his truck. Ashley is nervous and appalled by that information. Nevertheless, when she finds out what kind of money is being paid for taking migrants across the border, she decides to try it as well. Ashley rounds up a dozen migrants. She will take them to the river where they will cross by swimming, and she will pick them up at the other side. But Ashley is not prepared for this venture. Most of the migrants do not know how to swim and want tires to hold on to when crossing the river. Ashley did not bring any tires and insists that they can cross easily as the river is low. She will drive to the other side and pick them up there. When Ashley arrives at the other side, only two men and a girl managed to cross. The others panicked when a helicopter with searchlights flew over them. One of the men was carrying the small girl, who consequently got separated from her mother.[66]

The two men leave on their own, and Ashley is left to wonder what to do with the small girl. The girl is called Rosa and blames Ashley for the whole situation. Rosa insists that they have to look for her mother. Ashley feels guilty and returns to the Mexican side of the border with Rosa to look for the girl's mother. Ashley would rather leave her, but Rosa is persistent and Ashley does not manage to get rid of her. Ashley goes to the police department to investigate if there is any news of Rosa's mother. The police suggest she looks at pictures of women who drowned recently in the river, while Rosa waits outside. Ashley recognizes a picture of Rosa's mother and prepares to leave. When the police understand that Rosa has been orphaned they decide to take the matters in their hands and send Rosa to a shelter. Up to this moment in the film Ashley has been trying to get rid of Rosa. But now that Rosa is taken to a shelter, Ashley feels bad. Ashley goes to the shelter in search for the girl. Ashley does not know Rosa's name and can only ask around for 'the new girl' in the shelter. Inside the shelter all the girls are dressed the same and have short hair. They are cleaning the courtyard or doing other household chores. The uniformity of the girls in the shelter is in stark contrast

[66] Mixtec actress and director Ángeles Cruz plays the role of Rosa's mother.

with Rosa's character in the film.[67] Rosa has not yet been dressed in the uniform and Ashley seems relieved to find Rosa is still the same girl.

In a previous scene, Rosa told Ashley that she lived in a beautiful village in the south of Mexico and that she did not want to leave her village. She had wanted to stay with her grandmother, but her mother insisted on taking her with her to the United States. Ashley decides to take Rosa back to her grandmother in the South of Mexico. Ashley and Rosa consequently travel to Oaxaca. During the road trip the bond between Ashley and the girl grows stronger. Through her evolving relationship with Rosa, Ashley understands that she has to change as a mother. The landscape changes gradually along the road trip from an urban environment to a lush green landscape. Ashley expresses that she cannot understand why someone would want to leave such a beautiful place and Rosa replies that they have been told that in the United States everyone is rich. As Rosa and Ashley arrive in the village in Oaxaca, they find the village feast is taking place precisely during these days. The Indigenous village in the film is thus established through the scenery, but also through its cultural traditions. The film establishes a contrast between the desire of the Mexican migrants for a better life and Ashley's state of poverty. Ashley can hardly believe the (natural) riches of Rosa's hometown, while for Rosa it is hard to imagine the poverty of Ashley's daily existence.

In this film, Ashley undergoes a dramatic change as she develops a responsible and caring attitude towards Rosa. While Ashley in the beginning of the film was established as someone unable to face problems and responsibilities, she ends up taking responsibility for Rosa. The fact that Ashley lost custody over her own son because of drunk driving, clearly positions Ashley as a character who seems unable to behave responsibly towards herself and others. At the same time, the film establishes in the beginning a bias and degrading attitude towards Mexicans. This bias changes gradually as the film progresses, allowing an audience who identifies with Ashley to adjust its own perspective. The dramatic arch, which refers to profound changes in the character, allows for a strong identification of the audience with the character and his or her emotional journey.[68] While this film is a mainstream Hollywood production, its approach to the issue of migration is very different to other Hollywood representations of Mexican migration and communities such as *Spanglish* (James L. Brooks

[67] This uniformity is similar to the change of image Hush Puppy undergoes in *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, when she is taken to a shelter, and the way in which the girls are dressed in the re-education compound in *Rabbit Proof Fence*. The uniformity to which the characters are subjected expresses the symbolic and systemic normativity of environment and the overt hostility towards difference and diversity. Native American Boarding Schools ordered Native American children to cut their hair. The idea behind the Native American boarding schools was to kill the Indian and save the child (cf. Giago 2006).

[68] See for example *The Writer's Journey* (1998) by Christopher Vogler.

2004), *Fools Rush In* (Andy Tennant 1997), *From Prada to Nada* (Angel Gracia 2011) or *Sin Nombre* (Cary Fukunaga 2009). Even if some of these films present a rather positive image of Mexican migrants, these films uphold existing stereotypes and the notion of the 'American Dream' goes unquestioned. In *The Girl*, by presenting a main character who is living in conditions of poverty in the United States, the 'American Dream' is in itself flawed from the beginning.

Another big difference lies in the choice for locations and casting. While films such as *Spanglish*, *From Prada to Nada* and *Fools Rush In*, cast either non-Mexican actresses such as Paz Vega (Spanish), Camille Belle (American-Brazilian) and Alexa Vega (American-Colombian) or a Mexican star (Salma Hayek), in *The Girl* an effort was made to cast people from the region. Several of the characters in the village, such as Rosa and her grandmother were played by non-professional actors. Working with non-professional actors is not common in mainstream cinema and is particularly known as a distinguishing aspect of Italian Neorealism. In present times this approach is much more common in independent cinema than in mainstream cinema. Mexican director Carlos Reygadas is known for only working with non-professional actors. Other Mexican films that have worked with a combination of professional actors and non-professional actors are for example *El violín* (Francisco Vargas 2005), *Los últimos cristeros* (Matias Meyer 2011), and *Heli* (Amat Escalante 2013). In terms of representation the consequence is that the image is far less stereotypical than in mainstream films representing Mexican migrants or communities. While the narrative structure of the film is thus fairly mainstream and provides a strong identification with the main character who undergoes a dramatic change, the inclusion of non-professional actors and the choice to film on location gives the film a slightly different aesthetic and is very important in terms of representation. The dramatic arch of the character invites an audience to review its own perceptions of the Mexican community in the United States. From this analysis it turns out that narrative is very important for the representational implications of a film. The presence of Indigenous performers and Indigenous languages often has a decolonizing effect, as Knopf notices. Nevertheless, these elements can be overshadowed by the narrative structure; this is, for example, the case in films such as *Dances With Wolves* and *Apocalypto*. The decolonizing effect of casting, language and art direction, therefore, needs to be supported by the upholding narrative structure. Therefore, in the following analysis I want to concentrate on the script and narrative structure and explore how these influence the representation of Indigenous identity.

Identification in La jaula de oro

La jaula de oro (Diego Quemada-Díez 2013) is a feature length fiction film about the journey of Guatemalan migrants heading to the United States, but crossing through Mexican territory. At first sight, the film appears to follow a rather mainstream narrative structure of a border crossing adventure.[69] Nevertheless, the film combines this mainstream narrative with unexpected elements which trigger a deeper reflection on the subject of migration across Mexico and the United States. The film starts out with Sara, a young girl, who dresses up as a boy. She cuts her long hair, puts on boy clothes and takes a contraceptive pill.[70] The transformation of Sara at the beginning of the film introduces the lurking dangers of the journey ahead. It is clear that Sara is trying to avoid these dangers by adopting a male identity. Next, Juan is introduced, as a teenage boy living in the slums. He roams through a slum until he reaches a garbage dumping ground. The images of the slum are easily associated with Third Cinema, or documentary material. An environment of poverty and violence is overtly present in the images. Children with dirty clothes play war games in the background.

Juan comes to look for his friend Samuel, who works on the huge garbage dumping ground. The image is a wide shot in which the boy can barely be distinguished. This image of the young boy collecting garbage at the dump is overwhelming and depressing. It is absolutely clear why he would undertake a journey in search of a better future. The film establishes that Juan and Sara are boy and girlfriend and have decided to leave together for the United States. Samuel, their mutual friend is travelling with them. It is clear that they are only teens and extremely young to undertake such a journey. Juan prepares himself by sewing all his money into the lining of his jeans, alluding to possible assaults and robberies along the journey. Sara's transformation into a boy make us suspect from the beginning the dangers of gender violence. A study conducted by María Ávila indeed shows that most South American women travelling through Mexico to the United States encounter rape, gender violence and other forms of assault on their journey. Being aware of this, the decision of the youngsters to travel up north is particularly disturbing for an audience.

[69] Similar to for example *Sin Nombre* (Cary Fukunaga 2009) and *Maria Full of Grace* (Joshua Marston 2004).
[70] Presumably five hundred thousand Central American migrants cross through Mexico every year on a journey towards the Unites States. This journey is filled with perils gangs and different forms of assault by both authorities and criminal gangs.

Sara and Juan cross the river to Mexico and wait for the train that goes north, also known as 'La Bestia'.[71] While they wait for the train, they encounter an Indigenous boy of their age. The reactions of Sara and Juan to this encounter are quite different. Juan doesn't want anything to do with this boy because he is an 'Indio'.[72] Nevertheless, and much against Juan's will, the Indigenous boy, Chauk, ends up travelling together with them. Chauk offers Sara and the others some of his food. He carries with him a combination of ground maize and beans, which can be combined with some water. This is the traditional Indigenous version of an instant meal. While Sara accepts the food, Juan is suspicious and rejects it, stressing that he does not want food from the 'Indio'. When they stop in a southern Mexican town, Sara, Samuel and Juan try to make some money performing clown acts in a square. With the money they subsequently buy soft drinks and fast food. Sara offers some of her food and drink to Chauk, mirroring his gesture on the train. The mirroring also marks a difference between them. Whereas Chauk was bringing food with him probably cultivated on his family farm, Sara had to buy it. Whereas Chauk's food was a very natural mixture of beans and water, Sara is used to eating fast food. Juan exacerbates the difference, stressing once more that Sara shouldn't be giving her food to the 'Indio'. The youngsters then encounter a sort of outdoor photo booth. For some pesos they can have their picture taken against different painted backgrounds and with different props. Juan asks for a portrait as a cowboy on a horse. Chauk has his picture taken wearing a Native American headdress. Juan is thus identified with a cowboy, while Chauk is aligned with a Native American. Sara, Samuel and Juan all laugh that Chauk looks like a real 'Indian'. This scene addresses the issue of representation critically as it is clear that Chauk's 'Indianness' at this instance is both a display, performance and explicit construction which is used to mock him and ridicule him. Through this sequence of events a clear difference is marked between Samuel, Sara and Juan on the one hand, and Chauk on the other. The film makes clear that although the travelling youngsters are all from Guatemala, there is a social and cultural difference between them, wherein Chauk is clearly 'the Other'.

[71] La Bestia means 'the beast', and the train has been called so because of the great death toll it takes among migrants trying to board it. The train transports wood, chemicals, and other trading goods and South American migrants climb on the roof. The train has also been called *El Tren de la Muerte* (The train of Death) or *El Tren Asesino* (The murderous train). Spanish Photographer Isabel Muñoz has made a collection of portraits of migrants boarding the train. Her photographs were exhibited in Mexico, Spain and the United States More information on the exhibit and the portraits can be found on the website of the Mexican Ministry of Arts and Culture (http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/detalle-nota/?id=7582#.UhKOkC3CTIU). Other films about the journey by train by Mexican and South American migrants are: *Sin Nombre* (Cary Fukunaga 2009), *De Nadie* (Tin Dirdamal 2005), *Los Invisibles* (Gael Garcia Bernal 2010).

[72] Demeaning word used in Mexico and Guatemala to refer to the Indigenous population.

Sara, Samuel, Juan and Chauk get detained by Mexican police officers, robbed of all their money and belongings, and are sent back across the Guatemalan border. They decide to try again and board 'La Bestia' once more, but Samuel does not feel prepared to undertake the journey and decides to stay. Consequently, Sara, Juan and Chauk are travelling together now. On different occasions Juan tries to get rid of Chauk, but Sara stands up for him and makes it clear that they are travelling together the three of them or not at all. As the film proceeds Chauk turns out to have certain survival skills that Sara and Juan do not possess. For example, as they travel through Mexico they need to obtain food. Juan at a certain point steals a chicken. Yet Juan has a lot of trouble catching the chicken and certainly does not know how to kill it. Chauk takes the chicken effortlessly, it is clear he has been living on a farm. While Chauk caresses the chicken and speaks softly to it, Juan sarcastically remarks that Chauk wants to kill the chicken by talking to it. Chauk then in one quick movement breaks the neck of the animal. Those familiar with Indigenous cultures from the region, understand Chauk is asking permission to take the chicken's life.[73] The presence of this ritual speech and its narrative function within the film are noticeable. The scene presents Chauk as essential for the group's survival as he possesses skills which the others do not. In a different situation, the youngsters are offered work in exchange for food and a sleeping place. The labour consists of harvesting sugarcane. While the work is new to Juan and Sara, Chauk has obviously done this before and is able to work faster. Throughout the film, Chauk's character is presented as important for the survival of the group and as having particular gifts that are related to his Indigenous identity. During the whole film Chauk speaks a Maya language.[74] Chauk's dialogues in Maya are not translated. Instead, the audience understands Chauk from Sara's perspective. In their conversations, Sara tries to learn certain Maya words and at the same time teaches Chauk some words in Spanish. The audience understands and gets to know Chauk through Sara's conversations with him and sees him increasingly through her point of view. The film thus positions the viewer in Sara's situation and only understands Chauk partially. The film in this sense follows a similar strategy to the one chosen by Hopi filmmaker Victor Masayesva in *Hopiit*, a film in Hopi language with no translation, thus making all non-Hopi audience members outsiders to the film. This strategy is interesting because it denies the audience a position of knowledge with regard to the Indigenous subject.

[73] In many contemporary Mesoamerican cultures it is common to say a prayer and to ask for 'permission' when either harvesting crops or taking an animal's life for food. In my own documentary *Yaavi*, I document the prayer that is spoken before opening up an agave plant to extract pulque (traditional alcoholic beverage extracted from the maguey or agave plant).

[74] In the film Chauk speaks Tzotzil, one of the Maya languages, which is spoken in the state of Chiapas in Mexico and is also spoken in Guatemala.

On the contrary, it is clear that the non-Indigenous audience has very little access to understand the Indigenous character and his motivations and desires. In spite of the lack of a common language, the audience feels empathy for the Indigenous character through the identification with Sara. But the film also encourages an identification with Chauk through the use of point-of-view shots, subjective shots and shot-counter-shot. For example, Chauk's point of view of Sara taking a shower, and discovering her secret of being a woman expresses both his surprise and lingering desire. After harvesting, the youngsters get a chance to take a shower. While Sara takes a shower Chauk catches a glimpse of Sara's bare breasts through the curtains and understands she is actually a girl. In this scene Sara and Chauk exchange looks, expressing a sense of desire and love interest. The film thus creates a feeling of identification through the different points of view and the perspectives of the different characters.

The relationship between Sara, Chauk and Juan can be understood as a love triangle. In one particular scene the migrants have an evening with music and drinks and the youngsters dance together. Sara and Juan kiss, and Chauk clearly feels betrayed. The love story is accessible for a general audience, with or without previous knowledge of the conditions of Central American migrants and Indigenous Peoples. In this sense, the film employs a strategy mentioned by storyteller Cuticchio; while the context is very specific, the story presents relations and emotions recognizable for a general audience. The triangulated love story turns rather painful when the train is attacked by a group of delinquents. The assaulters separate the women from the men and it is clear they will be taken for prostitution. At first the audience is led to believe that Sara's disguise as a man will save her. But one of the assaulters discovers she is a woman and Sara is taken anyway. Juan tries to protect her, but is struck with a machete. Sara is then taken with the other women. Her voice continues to cry out for Juan and Chauk as she is driven away Juan remains wounded and unconscious and Chauk picks him up.

The narrative does not follow the mainstream model of resolving the story of Sara in the end, nor does it construct a heroic path. While in many mainstream narratives, the hero would go to rescue 'the damsel in distress', in this film the boys are unable to go for her rescue. Sara is lost in this story, just as many migrants are 'lost' along the way, leaving relatives and loved ones in incertitude about whether they are alive or not. The film makes clear that Juan and Chauk both suffer because of Sara's kidnapping. It is also clear that the boys feel they should rescue her but are unable to do so, as Juan utters: "No vi a dónde se la llevaron" (I didn't even see where they took her). The narrative of *La jaula de oro* is thus in

stark contrast with a film like *Sin nombre* which deals with the same subject matter. Also, in *Sin nombre* the main characters are Central American migrants (Honduran) crossing by train through Mexico. The main characters in *Sin nombre* are Sayra and Willy. Both are travelling by themselves to the United States. Like the events in *La jaula de oro*, the migrants on the train are attacked by local gangs. When one of the gang members tries to rape Sayra, Willy interferes and saves her, positioning him as the hero of the narrative and Sayra as the damsel in distress. This narrative device continues throughout the film, and in the end Willy sacrifices himself for Sayra to safely reach the United States. The motif of the 'damsel in distress' is a recurring feature in mainstream narratives. Many mainstream films are constructed around this motif. Vogler points out that archetypical roles for women are those of the mother, witch, or 'damsel in distress' and mentions *Titanic* (James Cameron 1997) as an example. Vogler states:

> The character of young Rose is a manifestation of the 'damsel in distress' archetype. As such she is a sister of Sleeping Beauty and Snow White, princesses caught between life and death and wakened by a kiss. (Vogler 1998: 259)

Vogler seems aware that the 'damsel in distress' archetype is problematic and contends:

> Women struggle with the 'damsel in distress' archetype because it perpetuates patterns of domination and submission, and can encourage a passive, victimized attitude. However, it is an easy archetype to identify and empathize with, representing the feelings of anyone who has felt powerless, trapped, or imprisoned. The 'woman in jeopardy' is a staple of movie and TV plots because it creates instant identification and sympathy and raises the emotional identification of the audience. (ibid.)

From *The Writer's Journey* it also becomes clear that the 'damsel in distress' archetype mostly functions as the catalyst and object of reward for the hero's quest. Vogler's observations with regard to gender roles in heroic narratives are quite reductionist and seem to miss the criticism that a similar narrative structure constructs women as trophies for male heroes and hardly as protagonists and subjects of their own. It is apparent that *La jaula de oro* chooses to follow a different narrative construction and by doing so offers a different perspective on the migrants' journey. Sara is never constructed during the film as a 'damsel in distress'. She is a young person traveling north like her male companions. Her kidnapping

does not function as a narrative device to offer the other youngsters a chance for a heroic rescue, similar to the developments in *Sin nombre.* Instead, Sara's disappearance is a raw reference to the reality of female migrants crossing through Mexico, as many of the female migrants are forced into sexwork.[75] The choice for this specific turn of events provides an insight, as Dancyger explains, into the authorial voice of the writer. What the narrative seems to imply is that this journey is not really a heroic one, but one of suffering and loss, which becomes particularly clear in the scenes after Sara's kidnapping. Chauk nurses Juan's wound until he gets better. It is clear that both feel guilt and sorrow over what happened, as the film presents us with images of Chauk and Juan sitting silently together in empty train wagons. Juan and Chauk eventually find a place to sleep in a shelter for migrants. The film at this juncture provides an interesting mix of fiction and documentary through the figure of father Solalinde.[76] Father Solalinde appears as himself in the film offering the migrants a place to stay. The presence of this figure ties the story firmly to real events going on at this moment in Mexico and positions the film clearly as a plea for a better treatment of migrants on Mexican soil. In the shelter, Chauk appears to see Sara, but it turns out to be an illusion. Chauk only saw a youngster in similar clothing. The audience receives this information through Chauk's point-of-view and is encouraged to feel the pain and loss that he must be feeling. Just as Chauk, the audience understands that Sara is not coming back. The film will not satisfy the audience's need for suture and closure.[77] Instead, the audience, like the boys, will remain in unresolved doubt and anxiety concerning the fate of Sara.

The film presents the different perils to which undocumented migrants are exposed and is careful to stress the ethnic, social and gender differences between migrants throughout the story. While the film started with the explicit disdain and resentment of Juan towards Chauk, this changes gradually towards the end of the story. It is clear that Juan's transformation or character arch is strongly tied to his relationship with Chauk. After Sara is kidnapped Juan and Chauk continue their journey and are eventually misled and tricked into the hands of a gang that extorts money from migrants. The migrants who are caught by the gang are separated according to nationality (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala). In the story it turns out the gang is led by a man from Guatemala who comes from the same district and

[75] Documentaries on this subject are for example *De Nadie* (Tin Dirdamal 2005) and *Los Invisibles* (Gael Garcia Bernal 2010)

[76] Father Solalinde is very well known in Mexico for his ongoing support to central and South American migrants. He has founded many migrant shelters and has tried to keep people save both from authorities, criminal gangs and drug cartels. A crude example of the violence against migrants can be seen in the attacks of migrant shelters in the year 2010, where approximately 75 migrants were killed.

[77] Suture and closure are the mechanisms through which an audience feels certain satisfaction for having an end to the story. Mainstream cinema tends to fulfil the audience desire for closure.

neighbourhood as Juan. The gang leader therefore lets him go. Initially Juan walks away, but after wandering around he returns to ask for the freedom of Chauk. The leader of the gang asks him why he is so concerned about the 'Indio' and Juan answers that he owes him his life. The leader of the gang replies that he will let Chauk go, if Juan takes his place. Juan agrees to this arrangement, but the gang lets the youngsters go anyway. In this scene it is clear that Juan's initial hostility towards Chauk has completely changed. Juan has come to appreciate Chauk in a manner that he is willing to sacrifice himself for him. In contrast to the beginning of the film, where Juan was outright hostile towards Chauk, this can be considered a dramatic shift. Through the identification with the youngsters, the audience is encouraged to understand the dangers and painful process of migrating to the United States. The identification with the youngsters is established on different levels: through the narrative itself, the development of the characters, the acting, and through the employment of cinematic devices such as point-of-view shots. In the film, Juan's attitude towards Chauk changes gradually, encouraging an audience to revise and rethink their own attitude towards Indigenous people and towards marginalized and stigmatized 'Others' in general.[78]

Juan and Chauk manage to cross into the United States, but are left by the crossers to fend for themselves in the wild. Just across the border Chauk is unexpectedly shot by a sniper. Juan wants to help but is unable to do so and is forced to run. Chauk's bleeding body rests on the grass and seems to blend with the mountainous landscape. The image collapses the bleeding body of Chauk with the land, thus creating a visual statement on the suffering of the people in the Americas. In a way this image can be read as the visual representation of the title *Las venas abiertas de América Latina* (1971), the famous book by Eduardo Galeano on the exploitation of Latin America.[79] The translation of this title in English is *The Open Veins of Latin America*, evoking thus the image of a bleeding body. In this book, Galeano traces the exploitation of the continent back to the period of the Spanish conquest, the colonial period and more recent U.S. imperialism. Feminist writer and academic Gloria Anzaldúa refers on different occasions to the Mexico U.S. border as *una herida abierta* (an open wound), clearly referencing the text of Galeano. She states:

[78] This is of particularly importance in view of the humanitarian crisis at the Mexico / U.S. borders where thousands of unaccompanied minors from different Latin American countries have stranded. The public opinion in the U.S. border towns has grown increasingly hostile, see for example the recent events in Texas.
[79] In 2009 Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez presented the book as a gift to the president of the United States Barack Obama.

> The U.S.- Mexican border is *una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'. Gringos in the US Southwest consider the inhabitants of the borderlands transgressors, aliens – whether they possess documents or not, whether they are Chicanos, Indians or Blacks. Do not enter, trespassers will be raped, maimed, strangled, gassed, shot. The only 'legitimate' inhabitants are those in power, the whites and those who align themselves with whites. (Anzaldúa 1987: 25)

This text, much like the image of Chauk's bleeding body, can be understood as referring to the real violence taking place at the Mexico U.S. border, but can also be understood as a more general reflection on the process of exploitation and systemic violence in Latin America as described by Galeano. Chauk's bleeding body thus becomes a visual metaphor of both border violence and colonial violence.

The portrayal of the continent as a human figure has been present since the first European representations of America. For example, in the early sixteenth century engraving by Theodor Galle entitled *Amerigo Vespucci landing in America*, America is represented by a naked woman lying in a hammock.[80] In his plate *America* from 1671, Jacob van Meurs depicted the continent as a sparsely clothed Amazon warrior. In European Art history the representation of the different continents as human figures, mostly women, is quite common. Famous Mexican painter Frida Kahlo regularly painted her agonizing body as intimately connected to the landscape and to the land. For example, in the painting *The Love Embrace of the Universe, The Earth, Mexico*, the universe and the earth are painted as women and visually mimic Kahlo's body. In this painting both Kahlo and Mexico are wounded. Art historian Janice Helland explores the links between Kahlo's representations of her own body

[80] For an extensive analysis of this image see Mason 1990.

to cultural identity. Helland points out that much of the imagery employed by Kahlo can be traced back to pre-Columbian art. Helland observes in this respect:

> Her repeated use of often bloody Aztec imagery is an intrinsic part of her social and political beliefs and derives much of its power from the depth of her convictions. Thus, the skeletons, hearts and Coatlicue, images relating to the emanation of light from darkness and life from death, speak not only to Kahlo's personal struggle for health and life, but to a nation's struggle. (Helland 1990: 398)

In her analysis Helland specifically frames Kahlo's work in the context of a postcolonial critique. Helland implicitly refers to Spivak's famous text when she states:

> She was a political radical and passionate nationalist, whose art was inspired as much by her public beliefs as well as by her personal sufferings. In a feminist art history Kahlo's pictures are interventions that disrupt the dominant discourse *if* we allow her to 'speak' herself and refrain from imposing on her work our own Western middle-class values and psychology. She should be seen not as a Surrealist, nor as a member of any other Western modernist movement, nor exclusively as painter of the female experience, but as a committed Third World cultural nationalist. (Helland: 405)

Helland's analysis of Kahlo's work seems to be in line with literary theorist Frederic Jameson's considerations on Third World literature:

> Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with properly libidinal dynamic necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society. (Jameson 1986: 69)

Jameson's affirmation is problematic in that it homogenizes experiences and texts in the so-called 'Third World'. In his essay 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the National Allegory', literary theorist Aijaz Ahmad critiques Jameson for his reductionist approach of 'Third World' texts and argues that a more complex reading is required. Nevertheless, as Naficy points out in *An Accented Cinema*, the private and the political tend to be intrinsically connected in many 'Third World' texts, whether they are films, paintings or literary works. It

therefore makes sense to read Chauk's dead body in *La jaula de oro* as a more general reference to the fate of not only undocumented migrants, but also Indigenous Peoples on the continent. As such the dead body of Chauk represents the physical extermination of Indigenous Peoples.[81]

Juan is finally able to make his way to the urban landscape of the United States. He looks at buildings with the U.S. flag which are surrounded by corrals or barbed wire. The image tells us the 'American dream' is not accessible to Juan. This image is in stark contrast with similar images at analogous points in the films such as *Sin nombre* (Cary Fukunaga), *Not Without My Daughter* (Brian Gilbert 1991) and *Maria Full of Grace* (Joshua Marston 2004). In all these films, the protagonists eventually reach the shelter of a United States embassy, or territory, looking up at the US flag as a symbol of saviour. In *La jaula de oro,* the US flag is inaccessible and appears to represent rather enclosure or entrapment. This coincides with the title of the film where the 'Golden Dream' of going to the United States has been replaced by a 'Golden Cage'. The extent of this entrapment becomes apparent in the last scene, where the film shows Juan's new job. In an extremely industrialized abattoir, Juan works picking up the waste. Although shot in a very different fashion, the images of the abattoir immediately call to mind those of the garbage dump. Where the garbage dump seemed overwhelming and exasperating because of its vastness in wide angles, the abattoir seems inescapable and crude due to close ups of raw meat. The film appears to contend that whether in Guatemala or in the United States, Juan seems to have no other option than to clear trash in humiliating conditions. The images focusing on the waste of meat can be read as a metaphor for the loss of life within the current economic and capitalist system which enslaves people to inhuman working conditions.[82]

When Juan steps outside after work it is already dark. He watches how snow starts to fall in the light of a street lantern. Juan murmurs the word "taiv" which is Maya for snow. Chauk had mentioned the word on several occasions to Sara, and Juan had understood its meaning when Chauk and himself were looking at a snow landscape in a toy store. The last image of the film consists of floating white particles against a black background. The image might well be a point of view of Juan looking at the snow falling down in the night. The theme of snow permeates the film as a form of subtext and therefore merits a closer look. After staying at the migrant shelter, Chauk and Juan continue travelling up north. Eventually

[81] Among others the massacre in Acteal in Mexico and the genocide in Guatemala.
[82] Forced Labor, unhuman working conditions and neo-slavery are serious threats to undocumented migrants throughout the world. For the migration of Mexican Indigenous people to the USA, see for example: Fox and Rivera Salgado (2004).

we see an image of Chauk and Juan gazing through a window shop in the snow. The image is deceiving, as at first it appears the boys have already reached the United States. It turns out that they are looking a little electronic train cut through a snowy landscape in a store. This image calls to mind different other narratives and motifs. It is easily associated with the Andersen story of *The Little Match Seller* which starts out describing the cold and the snow outside, while the girl gazes into the comfort of different homes as it is New Year's Eve. This story was also the source of inspiration for the Colombian film *La vendedora de rosas* (Víctor Gaviria 1998) which deals with the hardships of Colombian youth living on the streets. The image of Chauk and Juan in the snow thus creates a link between children exposed to hardship and poverty in different locations and at different moments in time, and expresses the vulnerability of a childhood of poverty and without protection.

Images of snow also figure throughout the narrative of *La jaula de oro* as a symbolic subtext. On different instances the image of falling white snow particles against a black background interrupts the main narrative. This seems to be an explicit citation of the film *L'Amour à Mort* by Alain Resnais (1984). To understand the meaning of these interruptions it is therefore worthwhile to examine the way in which Alain Resnais uses this motif. Film scholar Jenny Munro analyses how snow is present as a motif in different of Resnais films. In this 2012 essay Munro discusses Bazin's essay 'Il neige sur le Cinéma' (1948) and the connotations of snow with death in cinema. Munro goes on to cite Guillot (1999) and Combs (2007) to argue that the interruptions with images of snow in Resnais films are a kind of *temps mort* and make a reference to stillness and death. Munro points out that in the film *L'Amour à Mort*, the main character Simon has a deteriorating health and is living suspended between life and death. She observes:

> Crucially, this suggests not only snow's connotations of frozen morbidity, but its transience and the sense of repetition in the film, which weighs heavily on its protagonists and also disrupts the spectator's viewing experience. Each dissolving flake reflects the imminence of Simon's death, and his constant memories of his death. It is the incongruity with which these images are inserted as visual motifs that highlights the ability of the cinematic medium to allow the spectator to identify with the frustrating hiatus Simon experiences. With each jarring interlude, we experience temporal stoppage ourselves, in an interstice between life and death, and the snow's stark whiteness suggests not only the inanimate barrenness of this space, but the inevitability of the journey from life to death. (Munro 2012: 6)

As in Resnais's film, the images of twirling white particles against a black background in *La jaula de oro* are apparently snow interrupting the main narrative. The idea of snow is reinforced by the end of the film when Juan looks at the snow particles falling in the darkness of the night and whispers "taiv". In this sense, like in Resnais's film, the snow is linked to death, as it becomes emblematic of Chauk who died along the way. If the images are read as a citation of Resnais's *L'Amour à Mort*, they signify a suspension between life and death. In this case, the images seem to convey that the youngsters are suspended in an interlude, a timeless barren space in which they exist without truly living. The film contends that living as an undocumented migrant with no rights, securities, protection or basic living conditions seems indeed to be a form of entrapment. A similar reading is indeed supported by the title of the film.

The interludes of snow position the film in the realm of auteur cinema, even though at first sight the narrative seems rather straightforward. The auteur cinema aesthetics are also present in other images that function as symbolic subtext of the film. Throughout the film, images of tunnels or beams of light disappearing in the dark night are overtly present. One shot depicts an opening of light becoming smaller and smaller in the distance, as the train enters deeper into a tunnel. The image conveys a sense of fleeting hope. These images underline a general sense in the film that the situation of the undocumented migrants is nearly hopeless. The film thus combines mainstream narrative structure and identification processes with the aesthetics of European Art Cinema and the subject matter of Third Cinema. The mainstream narrative structure ensures a greater sense of identification with the youngsters, while the aesthetics provide the film with a subtext. The subject matter focuses on the issues faced by undocumented migrants in real life in present times, making the film strikingly different from mainstream cinema.

The motif of snow and of a snow globe produces a different kind of association in the film *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles 1941). The association with *Citizen Kane* makes sense, as this film also addresses the 'American Dream' all be it in a different context and historical period. The film is considered to be one of the first to be actually critical of the 'American Dream'.[83] When Charles Foster Kane dies, a snow globe drops out of his hand as he whispers the word "Rosebud". Both the globe with twirling snow and the word Rosebud, which refers to his sledge, relate to Kane's childhood memories. The film presents Kane as a child playing

[83] See for example Bordwell (1973) and Gottlieb (1992).

carefree in the snow, before he is separated from his parents by Thatcher, an event that will mark the rest of his life. The motif of snow in Citizen Kane refers thus to his childhood before entering the American Dream, still under the care and protection of his parents. In *La jaula de oro* the youngsters choose to leave the safety of their homes to pursue the American Dream. In *Citizen Kane*, the protagonist succeeds in gaining fame and wealth, but is simultaneously its victim as he dies alone and is estranged from everybody else. He has gained the American Dream at the cost of the loss of a family life and emotional peace. Just as Charles Foster Kane utters "Rosebud" as a way to express what really mattered to him, Juan seems to utter the word "taiv" in recognition of what has been really important to him, namely Chauk's friendship and companionship. Both films seem to imply that in the end personal relations are more important than economic wealth or progress.

When Juan whispers "taiv" as he looks at the snow falling down, he connects with his friend Chauk. Throughout, the film Chauk has mentioned the word "taiv" on different occasions. The snow is constructed throughout the whole film as an element belonging to Chauk. For example, when the youngsters have their picture taken, Chauk is photographed against a background of a snow landscape. The images of snow particles falling against a black background have been like an interior point of view, a sort of interior monologue for Chauk. The image of falling snow in the night can thus be understood as a profound connection of Juan with the inner world of Chauk, a form of intense identification. When Juan whispers "taiv" he finally acknowledges Chauk's Indigenous roots and expresses his esteem and acceptance not only of Chauk, but of this Indigenous heritage. The construction of national identity in Mexico and Guatemala has been largely built on the negation and exclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their cultures. In *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), Anzadúa writes about the negation of Indigenous heritage as a form of self-negation and proposes identification with the oppressed, with the alien, with the other, as a new 'mestiza' consciousness:

> The work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her prisoner and to show through the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundations of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the

> beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war. (Anzaldúa 1987: 102)

Juan's internal journey in the story brings him to connect not only with Chauk as a person, but with the Indigenous heritage of the American continent, dissolving the binary opposition between 'Indian' and 'non-Indian' presented in the beginning of the film. The connection between Chauk and Indigenous roots is visualized in the film through images of long roots lying bare in the tropical landscape of southern Mexico. The film encourages identification on different levels. The film on one hand encourages the identification of the audience with the young undocumented migrants, and on the other, shows the identification of Juan with Chauk. Through this process the film provides an opening for the "breaking down of the subject-object duality" mentioned by Anzaldúa. In stimulating identification with the subaltern on different levels (with the undocumented migrants in the United States, with the Central American migrants in Mexico, and with the Indigenous population in Guatemala itself) the film creates a nomadic movement from one margin to the other. Through the active search for identification with the subaltern in each different context, the film produces what Edward Said has called a 'secular' movement, a continued move towards the margins.[84]

This analysis shows that narrative structure can make an audience identify with marginal characters and call attention to particular political issues and identification is present at different stages of a film, both within the film and between an audience and a film. At the moment of viewing a film an audience identifies with the characters in the film because of the narrative structure of the film, the visual language and the performance. Through the identification with the characters, an audience can be stimulated to revaluate their own feelings or perspective on particular matters. Both *La jaula de oro* and *The Girl* start out with characters that have a biased and negative attitude towards the Indigenous population. The dramatic change in the characters allows and stimulates the audience to reconsider its own attitude towards the migrant and Indigenous population. While the process of identification through the use of conventions such as the shot-counter-shot, points of view, close ups and over-shoulder shots is common in mainstream cinema, these conventions can also be employed in marginal filmmaking. Both *La jaula de oro* and *The Girl* employ rather

[84] See Aamar Mufti's *Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture* (1998).

mainstream storytelling devices but have an oppositional effect.[85] Although *The Girl* and *La jaula de oro* were made by non-Indigenous filmmakers, both films have many elements which Knopf mentions as decolonizing tools. In *La jaula de oro* the voice of the filmmaker is clearly present in both the narrative structure, as well as the visual aesthetics of the film. As Kydd mentions in *The Critical Practice of Film* an analysis of the narrative structure and the aesthetic elements of a film can bring to the fore ideological standpoints. In the following chapters, I will analyse in a similar manner short films and documentaries by different Indigenous filmmakers, although I will also refer occasionally to representations of Indigenous Peoples in films by non-Indigenous filmmakers. The analysis will focus on the ways in which the narrative and aesthetic elements present certain ideological standpoints.

[85] Other oppositional films that employ mainstream storytelling devices are for example: *Paradise Now* (Hany Abu Assad 2005), *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre 1998), or *Rabbit Proof Fence* (Phillip Noyce 2002).

Chapter 3
Indigenous Cinema and Matters of Language, Voice and Speech

Why Language, Voice and Speech Matter

In *The Critical Practice of Film*, Kydd presents questions and issues that can be explored through both the analysis of films and the practice of filmmaking. She proposes to study these aspects by alternating between the analysis of existing films, and the exploration of particular filmic aspects such as the effect of lighting, camera angles or dramatic structure through practical filmmaking assignments. In this research, I opt for a similar approach through which I alternate between the analysis of existing films and the exploration of particular narrative and aesthetic strategies through the practice of filmmaking. I explore aesthetics and narrative strategies of Indigenous Cinema, through the analysis of existing films as well as through the exploration of these strategies in the process of making films myself. My approach consists of analysing alternative representations of Indigenous Peoples in different films and of engaging in the production of alternative representations through filmmaking. In his book, Naficy explicitly examines the production process as being part of the Accented Style and explains that:

> By their mode of production, accented filmmakers define and transform both themselves and the accented cinema. To paraphrase Walter Benjamin, to be oppositional it is not enough that accented filmmakers have oppositional politics. They must also act oppositionally by engaging in alternative practices that have an "organizing function"– a function whose usefulness extends beyond politics and propaganda (1978, 233). Hallmark of this organizing function, […] are the interstitial and collective production modes and the integrated film practices that entail the accented filmmakers' horizontal and vertical involvement in all aspects and phases of their works. Their oppositionality is further enhanced by their films' textual politics, characterized by the accented style. By means of these organizational and textual counterpractices, the filmmakers are transformed from displaced subjects into active agents of their own emplacement. (Naficy 2001:100)

It is clear that Naficy envisions Accented Cinema as a consequence of the combination and interrelation of the production mode, the situatedness of the filmmaker, the content of the

films and their aesthetic style. In this sense Naficy's perspective resembles the stance of Solanas and Getino who argued that not only the content but also the production mode of Third Cinema had to be revolutionary. The process of production which shapes the films is as much an integral part of Accented Cinema as the film itself and the filmmakers producing it. Naficy elucidates that the practice of film in itself constitutes an emplacement of the filmmaker and that thus the post-colonial practice of Accented Cinema lies as much in the content, that is the text of the film, as in the production of the films in question, that is to say in the practice of filmmaking. In my analysis of the films and the artistic process I reflect upon the production process, and on alternative production strategies which may have an 'oppositional' effect in the realm of Indigenous Cinema.

In the case of Indigenous Peoples language is of particular importance as many Indigenous languages are threatened with extinction due to years of assimilation policies, and by the process of globalization and migration. In this chapter I will therefore address how language, speech and voice provide alternative aesthetics and narrative structures for Indigenous Cinema. In *An Accented Cinema,* Naficy observes that many accented filmmakers come from societies with oral traditions:

> Although all of the accented filmmakers are postliterate, many have their origin in societies that maintain side by side with print and electronic literacy a residual oral culture that influences the stories they tell and the manner in which they tell them. Residual orality impacts their film's formal, stylistic, and thematic systems, giving them a different accent. (Naficy 2001: 121)

The situation described by Naficy also applies to a large extent to Indigenous filmmakers. Indigenous Peoples continue to have a living oral tradition alongside the literacy of the dominant societies in which they are immersed as well, as well as the growing electronic literacy stimulated by globalization and digitalization. Naficy adds that it is not only the residual orality that provides the particular accent, but in fact the co-existence of the different forms of orality and literacy. He states:

> The accent comes not just from these sources of residual orality but also from the coexistence of orality and literacy, colonialism and post-colonialism, nationalism and postnationalism, communism and postcommunism, and pre-modernism, modernism and postmodernism. Therefore, the prefix "post" implies "impurity" and "living in

> tension" with conflicting forces and emergent formations, rather than a clean break with them. (ibid.)

The tensions invoked by Naficy are very similar to the tensions and conflicting cultural realms addressed by Ginsburg in her essay on 'Indigenous Media' (1991). While Indigenous filmmakers have not necessarily migrated between Third and First World countries, they have often migrated between rural and urban environments within their own countries. Often, Indigenous filmmakers live in countries that have undergone a process of decolonization, such as for example Mexico, Peru or Kenya, but as Indigenous Peoples they continue to live in a context of internal colonialism. While many Indigenous filmmakers belong to developing countries with an agenda of modernization, Indigenous communities tend to nurture pre-modern traditions such as oral storytelling, traditional healing and spiritual experience. Owing to globalization and migration Indigenous filmmakers are often transnational and Indigenous at the same time. For example, Gilbert analyses how a false opposition has been constructed between the cosmopolitan and Indigeneity in her essay 'Indigeneity and Performance' (2013). Indigenous Filmmakers thus operate in a similar web of tensions and contradictions, as described by Naficy with regard to Accented filmmakers. While each Indigenous filmmaker has their own and specific cinematic accent, that derives from his or her own cultural and linguistic realm, the accent is, as Naficy observes, also consequence of the tensions provoked by the interaction and coexistence of all these different elements.

In *Decolonizing the Lens of Power* (2008), Knopf studies the strategies of self-representation and decolonization in different Indigenous films in North America. She extensively discusses different aspects of language in film, such as the choice Indigenous filmmakers face with regard to the language of the story. Knopf explains that some filmmakers, like literary authors, decide to film in English and employ specific linguistic tools to appropriate the language and adapt it to distance it from colonial discourse. But there are also filmmakers who prefer to film in an Indigenous language. While Knopf attributes a greater decolonizing effect to filming in an Indigenous language, she also points out that this possibly narrows the possible audience of a film and its possibilities to obtain distribution. Also certain pragmatic and production aspects may be involved in the choice for a certain language, such as finding professional actors. Knopf furthermore analyses the different ways in which oral traditions are reflected in Indigenous Cinema and elaborates on the complex relation between oral storytelling and film and video. While the choice to film in an Indigenous language provides, as Knopf notes, 'a greater decolonizing effect', it indeed also

creates certain practical problems, which require solutions from both a creative and production perspective. However, one should be careful not to uncritically attribute an 'emancipating' or 'decolonizing' function to filming in an Indigenous language. For example, the film *Apocalypto* was entirely shot in a Maya language and nevertheless lacks a liberating or decolonizing function. While the presence of a Maya language in *Apocalypto* above all served to provide a sense of historical accuracy and authenticity, it also helped to obfuscate the highly colonialist discourse and ideology conveyed by this film. The stereotypical representation of the Maya people as violent 'barbarians' in the film *Apocalypto* undoes any of the 'decolonizing effects' the presence of the Maya language might have had. Instead, the presence of the Maya language in this film serves to present the stereotyped image of the Maya people as an 'authentic' one.

The following example might serve to illustrate some of the complexity surrounding the choice of a specific language for a film, both in terms of representation and production. On a certain occasion I was asked to function as a cultural advisor for a Mexican/Dutch film concerning an Indigenous language. The Dutch producer had read a newspaper article about an Indigenous language in Mexico that was on the verge of extinction. Owing to a grudge, the last remaining speakers of Ayapaneco, two grumpy old men, refused to talk to each other making documentation of the language impossible.[86] The producer thought this was a great premise for a feature film and wanted a script written on this basis. Our first conversation consisted in discussing his ideas for the film. He proposed the story could be about a North-American or European linguist trying to make the old men speak in order to recover some mythical treasure. The idea of having once more the story of an Indigenous village told by an outsider made me feel quite disappointed. I subsequently proposed to him that it might be interesting to just focus on the grudge of the men and to try to unravel the human drama behind it. I tried to convince him to make a film from within the Indigenous community and to forget about the linguist. The producer reacted bluntly: "But nobody will watch such a film!" I tried to object that there existed nice, internationally distributed films, which focused on the story of a small community, such as the film *Himalaya*. To my great disappointment, he responded there existed no real audiences for this type of story. We needed the North American linguist in order to be able to cast a well-known North-American actor, so that the film would sell, so that the film could actually be made.

[86] Zoque is spoken in southwest Mexico in Oaxaca and Tabasco, Ayapaneco is a specific variant of Zoque which is now presumably spoken by only two persons. This has however been contradicted by different scholars of Zoque which consider the story to be manufactured and overblown in order to garner attention for the delicate situation of Indigenous languages in Mexico.

I consequently asked the producer in what Indigenous language he wanted to make the film and he answered that we could easily make up a fantasy language. For the producer the language in extinction had no importance or value at all, as he was above all interested in the commercial potential of the story. To him it was a funny story about an absurd and hardly believable situation. But to me the story of those two last speakers of Ayapaneco was an opportunity to address the complexity of cultural identity and the social context of Indigenous People in Mexico. In this light, the proposal to make a movie about a disappearing Indigenous language spoken in a fantasy tongue, with non-Indigenous actors, and a North American linguist as a main character, seemed rather offensive. If Ayapaneco is disappearing, it is not because the only two remaining speakers refuse to speak to each other; it is because nobody else speaks it anymore due to a long history of educational neglect, assimilation politics, marginalization and discrimination. Indigenous languages in Mexico disappear because people migrate either to the cities or to the United States leaving deserted villages behind and because of the structural discrimination of Indigenous Peoples and their culture. In addition, there is a total absence of interest towards Indigenous languages, cultures and history within the Mexican educational system, thus creating the perfect condition in which the vanishing of local languages, practices and traditions can take place. The media that present and promote universal consumer culture contribute to the vanishing of local cultures, which have minimal presence within mainstream media. While film might be employed as an instrument to document, appreciate and stimulate the particular traditions and values of a local culture, the flood of Hollywood cinema that inundates Third World markets, is largely responsible for the vanishing of local storytelling traditions. Films spoken in Indigenous languages in Mexico are rare. There are a few radio programs in Indigenous languages and some didactic material. This is in part due to the lack of Indigenous authors, but it is also very much the consequence of a market that needs to reach a broad audience and therefore is hardly interested in works that focus on local issues. It seems rather paradoxical that in order to address issues concerning the effect of globalization on local communities through film, it is necessary to address a global audience and consequently to gloss over the problems at the heart of the matter.

In one of the many conversations we had regarding the project, the scriptwriter asked the producer why he had chosen Mexico for his film; after all, languages disappeared in many more locations. The producer answered: “for no particular reason. It might be anywhere. It is a human story. But the colour and flavour of the Mexican landscape seem interesting to me”. While certainly not all producers have this attitude, I dare to argue that a

certain preference for recognizable 'universal' stories with a particular *couleur locale* are what most international producers and funding organizations are looking for when they participate in an independent transnational film production. Yet, through this example, recognizable appears to actually mean, recognizable for a 'Western' audience, and 'universal' in this case seems to stand for 'marketable on a global scale'. When the Dutch producer proposed to have a North American linguist hunting for some treasure in Mexico for which he had to make two old men talk to each other, he was placing the film within a context of international commercial cinema. The North American linguist would enable a 'Western' audience to identify effortlessly with the main character. Besides he was aiming at the possibility of casting a known actor, which would make the film more 'interesting' for European funding institutions or North American investors. The producer's affirmation that the particular language which was under threat of extinction was irrelevant, while at the same time it was the heart and the inciting event of the story, was the consequence of viewing the story from a 'Western' perspective for a 'Western' audience. Such an approach would lead to a film that had little or no relation to the tragedy of dying languages in Mexico, where the context producing its extinction is one of cultural and systemic violence.

The diverging standpoints between the producer and myself resided in our different perspectives of the world the script intended to portray. While the producer had only known and ingested the Indigenous setting of Mexico through its representation on television, books and travel guides, I had experienced this particular Indigenous world physically. My awareness of infant mortality, analphabetism, malnutrition in Indigenous villages is not a statistical kind of knowledge, but the consequence of interaction and conversations with close relatives, and people I care for on a personal level. Consequently, my feelings for, and identification, with the characters to be portrayed in the Ayapan project, were radically different to the identification felt by the producer. I tended to view the old men as I viewed friends or close relatives, while they constituted a distant 'other' for the producer. In short, while for the perspective of an outsider, the language spoken in the film might indeed be irrelevant, for an insider like myself, it would be impossible to make up a 'fantasy' Indigenous language. The pre-existing misrepresentations of Indigenous Peoples in films and literature had already shaped the perceptions of the writer and producer of the film and consequently permeated the creative process. Simultaneously, the desire to make 'local' stories accessible for a 'global' audience required an adaptation to a more general taste, and to a widely known and accepted film language and thus to pre-existing schemes and stereotypes. Proposing a different 'more decolonizing' approach proved, therefore, useless.

Through the analysis of the film *Snuu Viko (El Lugar de las Nubes* y *Unas Palabras Perdidas)* by Nicolás Rojas and an analysis of my own films *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* and *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, I will in continuation explore possible alternative strategies and more 'decolonizing' approaches with respect to language, voice and speech.

Matters of Speech in Snuu Viko

Snuu Viko (*El Lugar de las Nubes* y *Unas Palabras Perdidas*) is a short film by the Mixtec filmmaker Nicolás Rojas. The title of the film highlights the multilingual aspect of the film, as the film is both Mixtec and Spanish spoken. The title also alludes to the limits or impossibility of speech, as *Unas Palabras Perdidas* means 'a few lost words'. The meaning of this mysterious title becomes clear throughout the film, which tells the story of a young boy who is struggling with his (linguistic) identity. The protagonist of the film is Emilio, a schoolboy who is told by his grandmother he should only speak Mixtec, while he learns at school that he should only speak Spanish. As the story unfolds, the film shows the painful consequences of these conflicting stances. The film *Snuu Viko* combines both fictional and documentary elements. The main narrative of the film is intercut with documentary interviews with respect to the discrimination of the Mixtec language at schools and in Mexican institutions. These documentary interviews link the film to the current social reality of the region. The interviewed participants are social activists, linguists, anthropologists and ordinary people who tell their own experiences. The film thus introduces different voices, which share their experiences, thoughts and opinions on the subject. Through this device the film also embeds the story in a larger Mixtec community. The fictional story in the film shows us one day in the life of Emilio. The grandmother of the boy tells him that he should honour his mother tongue and only speak Mixtec, and that she will be very sad if he ever speaks Spanish again. In the afternoon Emilio is reprimanded at school for speaking his mother tongue. The teacher insists that Emilio answers why he was speaking Mixtec. But Emilio is true to the promise he made to his grandmother and refuses to answer. Because of this Emilio is reprimanded and has to clean the school after class.[87] Emilio does so without

[87] Although Mexican legislation officially recognizes the multilingual character of the country, and in official discourse promotes Indigenous languages, in many rural communities children are fined or reprimanded by their teachers for speaking their mother tongue. The INALI (National Institute for Indigenous Languages) attends complaints regarding the prohibition or discrimination against Indigenous languages. Nevertheless people in rural communities are not always aware and informed about this legislation.

speaking. However, Emilio's silence seems natural and adequate to the teachers. The film seems to state that Emilio's decision to remain silent is an act of defiance and resistance, but is interpreted by dominant society as simply another example of a voiceless Indigenous subject. Within the Mexican educational system, Emilio does not have his own voice and he is not supposed to talk, instead he should obey and remain silent. The film thus shows the spectator the institutional bias and repression of Indigenous languages and culture. When Emilio arrives at home later that day, he finds his grandmother is very ill. Emilio's mother sends him to fetch a doctor. Emilio walks for some miles towards a dirt road and waits around for a ride. The long waiting of Emilio and the obvious distance towards a village or city with medical care, stresses the isolation and marginalization of Indigenous communities. When finally a car stops, Emilio is unable to ask for a ride as he is still keeping his promise of speaking only in Mixtec. The driver and co-driver of the car only speak Spanish and do not understand Emilio's needs. Instead, they start talking about the political party they are representing and give him a party campaign talk, which means nothing to the young boy. The film here has a cynical undertone, clearly implying that Mexican politicians are unable and unwilling to understand the needs of Indigenous people and only serve their own interests. Emilio never finds a doctor and when he returns home, his grandmother has passed away.

In the film, the grandmother figure functions as a reference for tradition and 'the old ways'.[88] The film expresses the preoccupation that Indigenous traditions and language are dying. Indeed, UNESCO has published a study that states that with current developments most Indigenous languages in the south of Mexico will disappear within this century. The film underlines how bias, repression and marginalization are the main reasons for the vanishing of Indigenous culture and language. Yet the film also shows that a dogmatic stance, which rejects a multilingual and multi-cultural reality, will only contribute to the vanishing of the language. The tone of the film seems pessimistic with respect to the future of Indigenous languages and cultures, but in itself it constitutes an assertion of Mixtec language and culture. The film gives voice and visibility to a problem that involves and concerns the Mixtec community. Although the film addresses the impossibility of having a voice and being heard, the film in itself can be understood as a strong statement regarding being voiceless and having a voice. The 'Voice' of Indigenous filmmaker Nicolás Rojas is clearly present in his work in both an authorial and a political sense.

[88] In his poem Babylon is Falling Down, Native American poet and activist John Trudell speaks about the younger generations trying to hold on to traditions. The poem at a certain moment says: "You say you want to learn the old ways, when all you must do is remember". The poem expresses the cultural split and alienation to which the Indigenous youth is exposed.

The story of Emilio illustrates the subaltern condition of Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous children. The different state institutions in the film that could support and help the boy are consistently unable and unwilling to listen to him. The film makes it evident that even if the boy would speak Spanish with his teacher or the drivers of the car they would be unwilling to really listen. The different institutions, both the educational system and the politicians, have their own interests and agenda, and demonstrate little willingness to listen to and support the boy. The film furthermore shows the marginal conditions in which the contemporary Indigenous population lives, isolated and marginalized from basic infrastructure, such as medical care. Although the fictional story of the film shows the impossibility to speak or rather to be understood as a subaltern, the documentary interviews include a multiplicity of voices which can be heard and understood by the film's audience. As such, it provides a space in which people can share their experiences and express their thoughts. The film thus accomplishes what the different state institutions are unable to do; it provides a space wherein the problems of a contemporary Mixtec community can be articulated and expressed. While Emilio is unable to speak up, Rojas, the director, manages to express himself through film in a distinct Mixtec voice.[89] As Rojas is bilingual himself and has faced linguistic discrimination in his own experience, the film has an autobiographical tone. Through the presence of his own grandmother and of his community, Rojas inscribes himself further in the film. Rojas thus embeds his bonds with his community and with the Mixtec People in the fabric of the film.

Voice and Orality in Ocho Venado y Seis Mono

The documentary *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* was commissioned by the Secretary of Tourism of the State of Oaxaca. The request was to make a film about an ancient Mixtec warrior, Ocho Venado (Eight Deer), to promote the Mixtec region as a place for tourism. Originally, I was supposed to participate only as a scriptwriter. At first I decided to follow the conventions of an educational and informational film. The first version of the script thus contained an explanatory voice-over, many interviews with experts and visits to particular historical places. Part of my agreement with the producer of the film was that in exchange for the script I could assist the director of the film during the shoot. But when I arrived in Mexico things

[89] The short film won the award for best Indigenous film at the Morelia International Film Festival 2008. Since then Nicolás Rojas Sanchez has continued making films. His recent short film *Música para después de dormir* won the award for Best Short Film at the San Diego Latin American Film Festival as well as the Mexican Academy Award (Ariel) for Best Short Film.

turned out completely different. On the one hand, the intended director of the film did not feel like making a commissioned work and instead wanted to use the resources for a more artistic personal project. The producer, on the other hand, had already pitched and promised the idea of a film about the life of this ancient Mixtec warrior to different funding institutions. In order to solve this issue the producer asked me if I could direct the documentary about the ancient warrior myself in order to make both projects: the personal and artistic project of the intended director on the one hand, and the documentary about the life of Ocho Venado on the other hand. As most of the resources were going to be spent on the artistic documentary, which was going to be shot on 35 mm film, the remaining budget for *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* was next to nothing. The producer arranged for transport, a video camera and camera operator from the local television channel and some Betacam tapes. These new production conditions basically turned *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* into an independent low/no budget film and meant that the script had to be radically adjusted to meet this new production scheme. Most of the creative decisions in the making of *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* were consequently driven by production restrictions. We had to find alternative ways to tell the story with the limited time and means at hand. The idea arose to connect images of the ancient pictorial manuscript with modern day images of the region. While this decision was the consequence of considerations with regard to production, it had great consequences for the form and content of the film.

A reaction that I have often received when screening the film is: "the film made me feel Mixtec for a moment". What triggers this reaction is probably the choice of the language spoken in the film and the choice for the narrator. Due to the changing production scheme I had to radically rethink the script for the film, but I did not have the time to write a new script. Instead, I decided to work with a general concept. The published commentary on the manuscript included a text which was a narration of the story in Mixtec.[90] This text was written by my mother, Aurora Pérez and her text was included in the film. Instead of making an educational documentary, I tried to tell the story of warrior Ocho Venado, through the combination of the Mixtec narration of the story and images from the manuscript intercut with images of the Mixtec region. The images chosen from the ancient manuscript were filmed first. Consequently, film images were chosen to be intercut with these images of the manuscripts. When I started thinking about the narrator for the voice-over, it seemed obvious

[90] Anders, Jansen and Pérez Jiménez (1992).

to ask my mother to read her own text. While this choice appeared obvious to me, it had specific implications for the film.

To begin with, without giving it much thought I had chosen a female narrator. After deciding my mother would do the voice-over, it was an obvious choice to start the film with the image of a *curandera* (traditional female healer) lighting the fire for the *temazcal* (traditional steambath). Although a general audience will probably not be aware of the implied meanings, both a Mixtec audience and an audience of ethnographers will probably understand the presence of the *curandera* in symbolic terms. In Mixtec oral traditions, but also in Mesoamerican tradition, an older woman is the keeper of the *temazcal*. There are many different tales about the grandmother of the *temazcal*. The *curandera* is a person with extraordinary powers and healing qualities. The combination of a female voice-over with the image of a *curandera* lighting the *temazcal* was intended to produce the feeling that the female voice narrating the story might be the voice of a *curandera*, or a female wise elder. Because of the way the film starts, it frames the story in the context of oral tradition, in which a wise elder shares knowledge with future generations. The insertion of the story in the realm of oral tradition and the blending together of ancient pictorial manuscripts with modern day images of the Mixtec area and Mixtec people created a sense of continuity between the past and the present. This story telling device connected the story of Ocho Venado to the region and its present inhabitants. If I had followed the general conventions for educational documentaries the story would instead have been presented as something from a distant and exotic past.

My mother's voice-over was intended to be in Mixtec with Spanish and English subtitles.[91] It was precisely the choice for a Mixtec spoken voice-over that included the viewer in the realm of Mixtec culture. Nevertheless, the producer of the film preferred to have the film narrated by a Spanish voice-over. Her argument was that in Mexico people are not used to reading subtitles. In the end I convinced the producer to make a Mixtec version for an international audience and thus the film exists in two versions, a Mixtec version with English subtitles and a Spanish voice-over version. The audience response to the Mixtec version on the one hand, and to the Spanish version on the other, has shown that the Spanish

[91] Hopi filmmaker Victor Masayesva made his film *Hopiit* exclusively for a Hopi audience, therefore the film has no subtitles and is only Hopi spoken. This assertion of the own language is a way of claiming a subject position and turning outsiders into temporal 'others'. In short, this strategy inverts and therefore questions dominant self and other relations, aiming at deconstructing the normativity of this relation. Later films of Masayesva where subtitled to English. In the article 'Seeing with a Native Eye'(1994), Sands and Lewis analyse the work of Masayesva and observe that for later films he has chosen to make a version with English subtitles, expanding his audience to people who do not know Hopi culture.

spoken version does not generate the same sensation of being part of a Mixtec world. Even though the voice is also of a female narrator, the Spanish voice-over does not appear to belong to the *curandera* in the beginning of the film. For this reason the Spanish voice-over does not have the same effect of positioning the story within the context of oral tradition, nor does it allude to the wisdom of elders. Instead, the voice is that of an unknown and distant narrator providing a history class. The difference between the otherwise identical versions makes it very clear that the choice of language and voice can deeply influence the tone and meaning of a film.

Throughout the film, I tried to use elements of Mixtec symbolism without specifically explaining those elements. For example, the scene when Ocho Venado meets the warriors who have died in combat, I combined images of the ancient pictorial manuscript with images of trees. In the pictorial manuscript these warriors are represented as people holding white banners. I decided to intercut this image from the pictorial manuscript with images of trees in the Mixtec landscape. I knew that in many pre-colonial but also present day popular beliefs the deceased are considered to continue on living as trees. Another Mixtec pictorial manuscript narrates the origin of the Mixtec people and depicts how the first Mixtec rulers were born out of a sacred tree. This background information is not shown in the film. Yet the combination of the ancient images of fallen warriors with the present day images of trees in the landscape does provoke an awareness of the past surrounding us through the landscape. The combination of these images on the one hand introduces Mixtec concepts to the film, but at the same time allows for a philosophical reading that is not uniquely Mixtec and is far more related to my interest in the movement of life and the ephemeral aspect of our existence. In this manner, the entire film is filled with a symbolic subtext that connects it strongly to Mixtec culture, history and story-telling traditions. In retrospect, the search for a personal voice started out when making this film. The desire to connect past and present and an interest in the ephemeral have continued throughout my work.

Multivocality and Dialogic Mode in El Rebozo de mi Madre (My Mother's Rebozo)

The project *El Rebozo de mi Madre* originated in the third year of Film Academy in Amsterdam, while living in Mexico City to work on the documentary film *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono*. During this period, the idea surged to make a documentary film about 'household servants' (maids) in Mexico City. This idea had a strong personal motivation. My own

mother had left her home village at the age of seventeen to work in Mexico City as a servant. Her stories about this part of her life had made me very aware of social injustice, exploitation and oppressive structures, but had also been a source of pain. Ever since starting making films, I had felt a strong need to express how the social injustice and the existence of servitude in Mexico had scarred my own family. At the time, it was quite challenging for me to find an adequate form for the documentary. It was difficult to find the right film language for all these thoughts and feelings. My idea was to make a film which showed the humanity hidden behind the social construction of 'the maid'. I felt that maids in Mexico City were hardly ever seen as individuals and were instead treated as anonymous figures without a face. But there were all kinds of practical impediments: How would I get access to domestic workers, without involving the employers? Was it possible to film without the employers' consent? What consequences would such a documentary have for the people who participated in the film? While researching the idea and trying to figure out possible solutions, somehow all my journeys returned to my mother's hometown Chalcatongo. It made sense to start the film at the place where my mother had left. I recorded a couple of staged scenes of my mother leaving her village in which my cousins were the actors. The very first script for the film had the title *Caminos de la Vida* and was basically a *collage* of both fiction and documentary, including elements of my own experiences in Mexico, but also my mother's story, and many interviews with all kinds of people that had left their village to work in Mexico City. The script was largely based on conversations and experiences I had during that period in Mexico. Upon returning to the Netherlands I presented the script to my former documentary teacher and producer of the film, Rolf Orthel. He found several things interesting, but felt the script lacked a narrative structure or binding element. He consequently suggested introducing a main character, preferably myself, in search of something, or to find a unity of location and advised me to have a look at the narrative structure of *Metaal en melancholie* (Heddy Honigmann 1994) which is constructed around the director's personal search for a former friend in the streets of Lima.

Coincidentally, in this period I happened to watch the Malian/Mauritanian/French film *La vie sur terre* (Abderrahmane Sissako 1998). The film begins with the filmmaker wandering in a French supermarket looking for butter. As the filmmaker drowns in the excess of brands and products offered by the supermarket, he decides to travel back to his own hometown in Mali. The rest of the film shows how life in the village Sokolo goes on peacefully, without drama or conflict, on the verge of the new millennium. The narrative structure of this film is based around themes and is structured more around places than

around particular events. Although the film is almost entirely set in the village of Sokolo, the film builds a stark contrast between the modern urban world in which the filmmaker is living and the rural setting from which he comes. Whilst viewing the film in a theatre in the city of Rotterdam I became increasingly aware of the contrasts and contradictions evoked by the film. Suddenly I realized that this was precisely the feeling I wanted to convey with my own work. The contradictions of living between such different worlds were the driving force behind my desire to make a film.

Inspired by Sissako's film, I decided to make a film about my mother's village and to start the film with my own trip towards the village. The plan for the film was to interview several characters in the village about their life stories and thus make a portrait of the place through its inhabitants. From the start, it was clear that a scientific documentary approach which was going to tell an audience 'the truth' about Mixtec culture and traditions through the use of a voice-over was not an option. It was explicitly not my intention to make a documentary according to the norms and structures used by scientific or ethnographic films. Also a Direct Cinema approach in which the camera invisibly records 'what's going on' was excluded.[92] This approach, in my opinion, would largely deny agency to its participants, as they would not interact with the camera, but would be 'shot' from a distance. I wanted to avoid in any case a film that was going to show a generalizing and homogenizing perspective on 'Mixtec identity'. Anthropologists Kathleen Sands and Allison Sekaquaptewa Lewis write in *Seeing with a Native Eye* about the difference between an ethnographic film and an Indigenous film:

> Artistic interpretation of cultural events and images was violently threatened by European invaders who, unable to comprehend the intensely connotative forms used by tribal people, "saw it as their duty to take over the task of documentation" (Bataille, p. 122) of Native cultures. The result: Indian cultures interpreted by and for non-Indian audiences. In popular film, the results have been grotesquely misinterpreted and harmful; images of savages haunt the mythscape of the American psyche. In

[92] Direct Cinema refers to a documentary approach that surged in the 1960 with the availability of light weight film cameras. Direct Cinema wants to record life as it unfolds before the lens and capture it as truthfully and objectively as possible. Direct Cinema rejects the use of voice-over and interviews and instead proposes a fly-on-the-wall approach where the camera tries to register from an objective stance what is going on. Both filmmakers and scholars have critiqued the implied 'objectivity' or 'neutrality' of this approach, as all camera standpoints and editing moments are always subjective choices by the filmmaker. Furthermore framing, what is inside or outside the frame, and what is and what is not shown are obviously also choices and standpoints. *Theorizing Documentary* (1993), edited by Michael Renov, gives an overview of the different ways in which different documentary 'schools' have constructed a truth claim.

> documentary film, the results have ranged from simplistic to sensitive, but inevitably, even documentary films with their claims to objectivity have been ethnocentric, encoding tribal cultures in the language, images and values of Euro-American culture. The subordination of aesthetic to scientific goals in filmmaking is just one example of the imposition of Anglo cultural norms by even the most sensitized ethnographic film-makers. (Sands and Lewis 1990)

To me it was very important to give the participants agency in the documentary film and therefore chose a form in which interviews play a key role. As language is a crucial aspect of representational strategies, I decided to conduct the interviews as much as possible in the Mixtec language. First of all, this choice was an assertion of an Indigenous language that has been institutionally denied and discriminated against, but it also placed the participants in a more privileged subject position, as they were able to speak more fluently in their own language while the filmmaker, not being fluent in Mixtec at all, was greatly dependent on participants, interviewer and translator. The project started out as an independent film, and was made outside the mainstream cinema production without any financial means. Like many independent transnational filmmakers, I resorted to an artisanal mode of production, covering many of the production aspects myself, and involving family members in other aspects.[93] While the main reason for this approach was to limit expenses, it had the effect that it greatly facilitated communication within the community. Again my mother was the interviewer and translator in *El Rebozo de mi Madre*. The film thus not only portrays the village, but also my relation to the village, the inhabitants and my mother. Like the strategy employed by Rojas for his film *Snuu Viko*, I inscribed myself in the film through my own presence and that of many family members. Through the relationships with the other participants in the film I express my connection and bonds to the village of my mother. A bond that is captured by the image of the *rebozo* present in the title.

The film was structured around childhood memories of the village and the ways in which the village changed in relation to those memories. Around 1995, the road to

[93] In *An Accented Cinema* (2001), Naficy explains that due to a lack of institutional support and because of limited financing possibilities, many independent transnational filmmakers recur to an artisanal or interstitial mode of production. An artisanal mode of production being a form of production in which the filmmaker covers most of the aspects of film production him or herself, or recurs to family and friends to cover these aspects. An interstitial mode of production refers to the fact that most of these independent transnational films are made with support outside of the mainstream film funding institutions and often have a distribution outside of mainstream film distribution circuits. This way of operating leads in itself to a particular aesthetic quality in the works by independent transnational filmmakers, often resembling documentary film and often with a minimalist and realist approach.

Chalcatongo was finally paved. Ever since, changes followed one after another at great speed. In my childhood we had to travel by truck from Mexico City to the village. Now, there is a bus-line going directly to Mexico City, and even a shuttle service to Tijuana (Mexico's northern frontier), and the wooden houses have almost all been replaced by cinder block buildings. There are gasoline stations, restaurants and internet cafes. Many villagers migrate either to Mexico City or to the United States. For several reasons – one, being the pollution in Mexico City – just as many return to the village with money, new ideas and a different lifestyle. As time passes, the elder people die, and more and more of the things I remembered from my childhood seem to vanish into oblivion. The film thus documents a fragment of the process of modernization in the village and a way of life that is rapidly changing. As the idea developed to make a film about the village of Chalcatongo and the changes it was undergoing, I started examining my own standpoints towards the village and ongoing changes. As a migrant, I have developed a particular relationship to this town in which I am both insider and outsider at the same time. Being far away, the 'homeland' can easily become an imaginary place of mythical dimension. But, after all, one of the main reasons for people to migrate is the lack of jobs, the lack of water, the lack of schools, hospitals, and other daily necessities in the so beloved place of origin. Within the documentary I wanted to grasp and treasure some of the beauty of a way of life that is slowly disappearing, without judging the irrevocable process of modernization. In order to help the audience to clarify the perspective and position of the film director, who was both insider and outsider at the same time, I included myself within the film. The film incorporates several voice-overs of my own in which I comment on my relation to the village. Through this narrative device the audience obtains some insight into the position that I was filming from.

Before starting with the film I did not write a new script. Instead I made a list of persons and topics for the interviews in the form of general questions. In deciding whom to interview, I searched for a variety of characters, trying to include as much as possible diversity in age, gender and labour activities. The film had to feel like a conversation between me and the inhabitants of the village. Therefore, in the interviews I did not ask for specific information but rather for personal experiences and life stories. The general questions for participants were: "How has the village changed since your childhood? Did you go to school? How did you meet your significant other? When did you know you wanted to marry him/her? What work do you do? How did you start out with this work? How do you see the future? What knowledge or experience would you like to pass on to the younger generations?" The stories told by the participants are consequently personal stories to which audiences can relate

on a personal level. In the cinematography, particular attention was given to the framing of participants, filming as much as possible on, or right under, the eye-line, to encourage identification among the audience and to create the feeling of an informal, interpersonal conversation. In addition to the interviews, I tried to film small spontaneous conversations between participants, by waiting around the houses of the participants until there occurred an interesting moment to film. In this way, the conversations between my mother and my grandmother were filmed, but also those that took place between the barber and his friend. The presence of these conversations stresses the dialogic mode of the film. Also, the personal voice-over spoken by myself and the recurring presence of the interviewer's voice (sometimes my mother's, sometimes my own) contributes to this dialogic mode. At particular moments, the participants explicitly address my mother or myself. For example, in one interview, one of the participants says to the camera: "You went so far away, and when my time comes, you won't even know." This specific address invokes the world outside the film and evokes the presence of the filmmakers outside the frame.

The film is constructed as a dialogue with different inhabitants of the village and the filmmakers are explicitly part of that village. Also, in this film the stories in a particular symbolic Mixtec universe were embedded. The first voice-over of the film invokes the plumed serpent and therefore refers to the religious and mythical realm of the Mixtec people, while the images set the film in the landscape of the region. Just as in *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono*, the film is permeated with a symbolic subtext that is rooted in Mixtec traditions and culture. For example, one of the participants gets married during the film. The ceremony is filmed, but its symbolic meaning, structure or function is not highlighted within the film; instead the wedding is embedded in a love story. In one interview, Adelina explains how she met her husband and how they fell in love. Whether one identifies the images as a ritual of matrimony depends to a large extent on one's knowledge of Mixtec culture, privileging in this sense insiders over outsiders. References to Mixtec rituals, stories and religious or philosophical beliefs are not, or rarely, explained in the film, instead they are a natural part of the symbolic landscape of the film. In this sense, the almost trivial conversation the participants have about their *nahuales* ('animal companions' or *alter egos* in nature) opens up a field of shared experience among insiders, leaving outsiders to wonder: what is *nahualismo*? Viewers will relate, or not, to this subtext depending on their perspective and standpoint.[94] This strategy is similar to the one used by Hopi filmmaker Masayesva, who

[94] Feminist standpoint theory parts from the idea that knowledge and the production of knowledge are socially positioned. Scholars doing in academic research should therefore be aware of their social positioning and

does not translate the Hopi texts in his film *Itam Hakiim Hopiit*. Masayesva thus positions the film as primarily directed to an audience of insiders.

The narrative composition of *El Rebozo de mi Madre* was to a certain extent an exercise in constructing an alternative 'Mixtec' poetics. Instead of one main hero, the film foregrounds a community, as Mixtec culture tends to be more communitarian than individualistic.[95] Much use is made of symbols that have a special importance within Mixtec culture, like several forms of maize and related elements (such as the making of tortillas or ploughing). Drawing on stories of the participants themselves, but also on ancient Mixtec pictorial texts (codices), the film tries to embed the characters and their stories in a particular natural environment. In the structuring of the film, several religious festivities were used as markers of time. The film begins with the celebration of All Saints and ends with Carnival. The symbolic and social meaning of this will be certainly clear for insiders. All Saints is connected to death or rather to ancestors, while Carnival is much more connected to new life and new beginnings. At the same time, on the interview level the film was structured by themes, starting out with the theme of 'education' and finishing with the theme of 'old age'. These contradictory movements between youth, old age, death and new life, construct a cyclical movement that disrupts the apparent chronological order of time. While the film sets out with 'my own personal journey' towards an imaginary homeland, the outcome of this journey becomes of little importance upon arriving in the village. The principal 'I' character that launches the film almost disappears from the stage, and the stories of different villagers get a central role, creating a family and community based narrative. The journey of the 'I' could be read as a movement towards a community. The 'I' character in the film is more a narrative device than a real protagonist. As no other clear 'protagonist' can be distinguished, the question arises: Whose film is this? The question seems to point towards the village. Family life and cross-generational relations were highlighted by filming the interviews in pairs, either of married couples, but also of mothers and daughters, or different friends. The film foregrounds a multi-vocal and communitarian experience above the individual story of a

---

question the standpoint from which they are doing research. Cinema Vérité has a similar argument with regard to documentary filmmaking. Arguing that all films are always the result of subjective perceptions and choices, the practitioners of Cinema Vérité choose to include their own person in their films as to clarify the filmmaker's starting point and personal view on things. The Cinema Vérité approach tends to have the filmmakers as characters in the film (mostly searching for something), and includes for example the filmmaker's considerations to conduct particular interviews. Quite often the process of production is an integral part of the film. Viewers get to see the camera and sound equipment on screen, and quite often discussions at the editing table form part of the final film.

[95] Sands and Lewis observe that Indigenous films tend to favour family and community above an individual protagonist.

single protagonist. The film is thus like a woven blanket of multiple stories giving us a glimpse of life in a particular place.[96] This narrative choice coincides with the preoccupations and aesthetic choices of other Indigenous filmmakers, such as Masayesva. In their analysis of Masayesva's work, Sands and Lewis notice a continuous presence of community life and family presence (1990).

The second voice-over of the film is my own, spoken in Dutch and referring to my family history and our departure from Mexico to Holland, while the images are childhood pictures of my family in Mexico. This second voice-over introduces the multi-linguistic aspect of the film, which is spoken in Mixtec, Spanish and Dutch, and at the same time presents the film as a family narrative. The old pictures and the accompanying voice over introduce my own family, but also create general associations to childhood memories, migration and the feeling of nostalgia. The film thus starts out with my mother's Mixtec voice-over, and continues with my own Dutch voice-over, causing a cultural disruption between generations but at the same time establishing a relationship of continuity between these generations. After the title the film shows my journey towards the town of Chalcatongo. While the motif of the journey encourages the identification of an 'outsider audience' travelling towards the village, my memories in voice-over position me as an 'insider' to the village and stimulate the identification of community members and migrants. Thus, the film on several instances tries to explore and balance the existing tensions between insiders and outsiders, between migrants, villagers and visitors. One such visitor was my own father, who in an interview in the film comments on the first time he visited Chalcatongo (in Spanish by the way): "So here I was, suffering from the cold, not being able to eat the food, and telling everybody I was not a Gringo. So that was a little strange." While the interview clearly positions my father as an outsider, the imagery and his ability to speak Mixtec and Spanish might also position him as an insider. This shows us that the boundaries between insiders and outsiders are not fixed nor rigid, but rather fluid and subject to change. Instead of creating an exotic universe in which the Mixtec people in the village are different and consequently 'othered', in the Mixtec context it is clear that my father becomes the exotic other who has trouble fitting in. This small interview fragment consequently questions our preconceived ideas about otherness and cultural norms.

[96] Anthropologist Tim Ingold comments on the relation between time and space: "In other words, when we say that life is not just one story, but a host of different stories, we are asserting the possibility that these multiple stories can run alongside one another. Space establishes this possibility. If time is the guarantor of life, space is the guarantor that heterogeneous lives proceed concurrently." (Ingold 2011: 141)

On a different level, I tried to subtly point out the construction of the cinematic text. The film makes use of formal aspects belonging to the fictional genre, like the shot-reverse-shot, the use of fast and slow motions, dramatizing music, and the staging of scenes. Through the use of these aesthetic elements, which are more common in fiction films, the viewer is invited to question how particular scenes were shot. For example, at the beginning of the film is a scene of a bus travelling to the village of Chalcatongo. This scene is shot both inside and outside the bus. As one can obviously not be simultaneously both inside and outside the bus, the way in which the scene is constructed provokes questions regarding the veracity or documentary character of the scene and triggers thoughts on the complexity of filmmaking. The viewer will probably ask him or herself: How was this scene shot? Is it staged? Were there two film crews? For this scene I used specific strategies that are common in fiction film production. The scene was partially staged and shot on two different days. The fragments shot inside of the bus are documentary material in the sense that they were shot on a day in which I really made a trip from Tlaxiaco, a nearby town, to Chalcatongo. The bus was a regular bus and passengers were regular passengers. But obviously the part in which I was sleeping was staged.[97] The fragments that were shot outside were also completely staged. We hired an empty bus with driver that would stop along the way so that we could film the bus driving through the landscape. It would have been impossible to film the bus trip from the outside if using a true documentary approach. To film the trip simultaneously outside the bus, while I was making the trip, would have required an extra camera crew, which would travel along the way. This was not only a financial consideration but also a practical one; the small road from Tlaxiaco to Chalcatongo would not really allow such an approach.

This kind of staging is actually quite common in documentary films. It is a kind of staging that does not alter the content of the film, but that is needed to shoot material that cannot be filmed in any other way. The outside shots of the landscape in this scene actually allow the viewer to experience some of the amazement that I feel whenever travelling through this region. It also provides some sense of time and distance to the trip, which would otherwise be absent from the film. It is a form of staging that most documentary makers consider acceptable, and even necessary at times, in order to communicate the truth or reality of moments and events that cannot or can just barely be filmed using a Direct Cinema approach. The staging of this scene is quite apparent within the film and in fact not only serves to express some of the emotive elements of the trip, but also to confront the viewer

[97] At the Binger Documentary Lab (2005), documentary editor Stan Neumann commented on this fragment: "This is obviously staged…the director never sleeps on the set!"

with the construction of the cinematic text. Viewers often enjoy being seduced to believe the transparency of a film. Fiction films are largely based on 'the suspension of disbelief" of the viewer, while documentary films are dependent on the veracity and 'truth claim' of the image.[98] In *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, I enjoyed fusing a documentary approach with a bit of a fictional approach, thus creating some tension and doubt regarding the documentary character of the film. By clearly establishing a documentary approach throughout the film, the audience tends to accept fragments of staging and fictionalization as documentary images. On the other hand, the presence of fictionalization also provokes some doubts on the 'truth claim' of the documentary images. This strategy is not self-reflexive but has a similar effect in the sense that it makes the viewer more aware of the filmmaking process without truly revealing the process of production. This strategy is different from self-reflexive approaches in Cinema Vérité. The strategy does not consist of references to the production process, such as including the presence of the microphone or the camera in the image. The strategy is also not really a revelation or explanation of the production process, instead the strategy is a combination of elements from different genres and different film currents, that in their combination invite the viewer to reflect on the genre of the film and indirectly also on the process of production.

An example of this mixing of fictional and documentary elements is the sequence of the cake and the cab. This is a sequence in the film in which a three-store wedding cake has to be delivered by cab, an old Volkswagen beetle, to a nearby village. The cake barely appears to fit into the cab, and the small Volkswagen beetle has to drive extremely slowly over the dirt road. Also this scene is a mix of fiction and documentary. The scene is completely staged, but happened in reality on a different occasion. One day, my mother and I attended a traditional wedding in a nearby village. My mother was the godmother of the bride, and was therefore in charge of buying the wedding cake. As the small town where the wedding took place did not have a bakery store, my mother ordered the cake in her own village (a thirty minute drive from the place). She asked a relative to deliver the cake on the day of the wedding. But the relative was indisposed and sent a taxi instead, a small Volkswagen beetle, which barely managed to deliver the cake. It took the taxi a three-hour drive to reach the village with the cake, and everybody was concerned about the delay. When we saw the exhausted and nervous taxi driver arrive at the venue we all laughed about the incident. I wanted the story to feature in the film, but of course I did not carry a video

[98] Houwen refers to both mechanisms as the Realism Effect and explains extensively how both mechanisms work in her PhD thesis (2014).

camera. I therefore decided to stage the scene, as I could not film the original event. When I decided to film the scene, it turned out the original taxi driver had migrated to the U.S. so I had to stage the scene with a cousin, who is not a taxi driver in real life. The original cake had been a two-store wedding cake of hundred servings. For the film, I ordered a three-store wedding cake of three hundred servings. The result is that the cake in the film is outrageously big and does not seem to fit into the cab. The cake actually did not fit and the shots of the taxi driving through the landscape were taken of a taxi without the cake in it. Summarizing, for these scenes I used fictional conventions that construct a suspension of disbelief, even when the scene appears improbable or impossible. The presence of this element within the documentary prompts the audience to question the 'reality' of the documentary but also creates a very particular absurd or surrealist environment. As Naficy observes about the Accented filmmakers' context, in which different cultural elements are mixed up and pre-modern aspects coincide with modern and post-modern aspects, life in an Indigenous village may indeed feel somewhat absurd or surreal. This strategy of mixing fictional conventions in a documentary film, expresses the tensions present between different aspects: geographic locations, different cultural realms and perspectives, my memories and present, family and community ties. This negotiation Naficy finds characteristic of Accented Cinema.

A particular cinematographic device in the film is the use of fast motion for images of moving clouds. These images of moving clouds are the very first images of the film combined with a Mixtec poetic text. This text makes a clear connection between the Mixtec perception of an ethnic and cultural identity (People of the Rain) and the clouds. At the same time, the fast moving and continuously changing clouds can also be read as references to movement and the passing of time. Peter Verstraten analysed the presence of these cloud images in his chapter for the book *Mixtec Writing and Society* (Jansen and van Broekhoven 2008). He considers this aesthetic element through the framework of the *théorie du nuage* and interprets the recurring presence of clouds in my film as a reference to the impossibility of representation. References to change and movement are present throughout the film. Images of tin roofs, laundry, and leaves blowing in the wind are recurrent elements. The closing sequence of the film very specifically points out this element when one of the characters states: "We only have a breath of time on this earth, and then we pass it on as an inheritance to our children." The closing images of children, on a bicycle, with a car wheel, and with a hoop, resonate with the words of the old man as the circular movements of the wheels echo the cyclical movement of the earth. This imagery thus emphasizes the perception of life as something ephemeral, subject to continuous change. The ending of a film is

considered to be the place where a filmmaker can and should most clearly express his/her views on life. It is striking that both in *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono*, and also in *El Rebozo de mi Madre* and in my graduation film *Una nave per tornare*, I chose to end with imagery that refers to the passing of time, the cycles of life and the binding threads between generations. In all these three films the images at the end refer to the ephemeral aspect and the fragility of life.

Conclusions

Through the analysis of these different films it becomes clear that language in many respects is of great importance to Indigenous Cinema. The presence of an Indigenous language in a film can certainly have a decolonizing and oppositional aspect. Since most Indigenous languages are discriminated against and marginalized, film can offer a space of expression. Nevertheless, the presence of an Indigenous language, or an Indigenous language as subject matter alone, is not a guarantee of an oppositional or emancipatory stance. Language is one of the many elements in a film and it depends on its interaction with narrative, theme, etc., as to whether the film takes an oppositional and decolonizing stance. For example, although *Apocalypto* is entirely spoken in a Maya language, the representation of the Maya people and culture and the chosen narrative make it a retrograde and biased film towards Indigenous Peoples. On the other hand, although *Snuu Viko* is largely Spanish spoken, its subject matter, narrative structure and aesthetic choices make it an important film for the Mixtec community and the film in itself constitutes a speech act, a particular Mixtec voice. The choice of language in a film can, as the example of *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* demonstrates, deeply influence the possible meanings of a film. In the same way, the voice of a narrator (male, female, young or old) can attribute certain meanings to a filmic text. Language and voice are embedded in symbolic systems, oral traditions and history, and thus can connect or embed a film in this oral tradition. As Loomba observes in *Post/ Colonialism*, questions to be asked in the analysis and the filmmaking process are: Who speaks? To whom? About what? In what language? A reflection on these issues is of outmost importance for Indigenous filmmakers. Yet, because of the realities in which Indigenous filmmakers work and live, and the experiences that they have, most will probably be quite aware of these issues and questions. Unlike the Dutch producer who wanted to make a feature film about the Ayapan case in a fantasy tongue, Mixtec filmmaker Nicolás Rojas chose to film in Spanish and Mixtec, exposing the painful conflicts and issues of his own childhood. In the filmmaking process he

involved his own family, among others his own grandmother. Starting from personal experience and presenting a personal point of view, the film *Snuu Viko* articulates a statement about current issues in Mixtec communities.

Chapter 4

Community, Family Narratives and the Inscription of the Author

From the analysis of *Snuu Viko*, *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* and *El Rebozo de mi Madre* emerges a strong presence of community bonds and family relations. Indeed, both Ginsburg (1991) and Knopf (2008) consider community and family to be recurrent elements in Indigenous Cinema. In *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* my own family was above all involved in the production of the film. My mother wrote the voice-over for the film and my family in the village provided much of the infrastructure for the production of the film. In addition to this, several relatives appear in the film. The narrative structure of *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* is strongly embedded in the specific symbolic universe and oral tradition of the Mixtec people, as it presents the story of a historical character as written down in Mixtec pictorial manuscripts. The film, therefore, recounts an aspect of the shared memory and history of the Mixtec people, but is simultaneously a contemporary adaptation and continuation of Mixtec storytelling traditions.[99] *Snuu Viko* and *El Rebozo de mi Madre* had a similar production mode in which family and the community provided the infrastructure for the film but simultaneously acquired a strong presence in the construction of the narrative. The films have an artisanal mode of production, which Naficy (2006) considers typical of much Accented Cinema and at the same time family and community constitute the central themes and solidify the narrative structure of these films. Moreover, the relationship between different generations is central to this kind of cinema. In this chapter, I will analyse how the presence of different generations and generational bonds can be understood, both in my own work as well as in the work of different Indigenous filmmakers. I will first reflect on Indigenous characters as a motif in mainstream film. I will proceed with an analysis of different films by non-Indigenous filmmakers that address Indigenous issues, and then I conclude with an analysis of different films by Indigenous authors.

[99] Something similar occurs with *Journey of a Mixteco* by artist and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh. In this work the story of a Mixtec migrant is told through images similar to pre-colonial Mixtec pictorial writing. The combination of a contemporary story and an ancient pre-colonial medium produces a sense of cultural continuity, creating a strong link between past and present, between history, memory and autobiography.

The Wise Elder

The image of the (elder) 'wise Indian' is a specific figure in 'Western' imagery about Indigenous Peoples, and can be found in literature, cinema, photography and a variety of other representations.[100] A well-known example is the wise elder Ten Bear in the film *Dances with Wolves* (Kevin Costner 1990), played by Native American activist and singer-songwriter Floyd Westerman.[101] This film has been extensively critiqued for its principal focus on the non-Indigenous character John Dunbar, while the Sioux community served above all as a tool for the character development of the protagonist.[102] Also, the Disney film *Pocahontas* (Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg 1995) features a wise Native American grandmother, all be it in the disguise of a tree. In the Netherlands an example of this motif can be found in the children's film *De Indiaan* (Ineke Houtman 2009). In this film, an adopted Peruvian boy is struggling with his identity and in his quest gets help from a wise Indian from Peru. Another Dutch example is the 'Indian shaman' character in the television series *2012, Het jaar nul* (Jan Albert de Weerd and Ingeborg Wieten 2009) in which a group of youngsters are entangled in a mystery quest. In all these narratives, Indigenous characters play the role of providing non-Indigenous characters with wisdom, solace or spiritual strength. Vogler refers to this figure as one of the possible helpers of the hero in mainstream film narratives as the Shaman.[103]

Quite often the presence of elder Indigenous characters in Mexican films can be read as a metaphorical reference to the Indigenous distant past as being part of national identity. For example, in *Japón* (Carlos Reygadas 2003) and *Y tu mamá también* (Alfonso Cuarón 2001) elder female characters are presented as symbols of Mexico's Indigenous heritage. Much has been written about how *Y tu mamá también* can be read as a reflection on Mexico's national identity. Cultural studies scholar Marina Diaz López provides an elaborate reading of the film in terms of gender and national identity, and explores extensively the implications of the names of the characters in her paper 'Dónde Están los Hombres? Crisis de la masculinidad Mexicana en Y tu mamá también' (2008). The main characters of the film have names of national heroes and allegorically represent the clash between the lower middle class

[100] See for example *Hollywood's Indians* (Rollins and O'Connor 1998) or *Fantasies of the Master Race* (Churchill 1998).
[101] Floyd Westerman was an important Native American rights activist and played in numerous films and tv shows, quite often in the role of medicine man, chief or wise elder.
[102] Both Churchill (1998) and Verstraten (1999) elaborate on this topic.
[103] Vogler (2007) mentions the hero can be aided by a spiritual guide which can take different forms and is often a wise elder figure. Vogler refers to this figure as the 'Shaman' although he does not attribute him or her to a specific cultural realm.

and the high upper class of Mexico. The last names of the boys explicitly refer to important characters of Mexican history. Zapata is Mexico's hero of the revolution and can therefore be aligned with the peasants and working class, while Iturbide installed a monarchy after Mexico's independence and can therefore be aligned with Mexico's elite. Luisa's last name, Cortés, is an explicit reference to Mexico's colonial past, as Hernán Cortés was the principal *conquistador* of Mexico. The Spanish love interest of the boys can therefore be read as an explicit reference to Mexico's colonial past and as a continuing but impossible desire for Spain and Europe. The imagery of Mexico as a primarily 'Western'/white nation is prevalent in Mexico's visual culture. An interesting example is the representation of the main character in the film *Tizoc* (Ismael Rodriguez 1957). In *Tizoc*, Mexico's famous actor Pedro Infante, plays Tizoc 'the last Indigenous prince of the Totonacas' (this is all, of course, historically inaccurate). Throughout the film Indigenous characters are played by non-Indigenous actors in Brown Face. In the film, Tizoc is in love with a 'white girl' María, played by María Felix. At a certain moment Tizoc imagines himself dancing with María. In this phantasy, which is presented through a point-of-view shot, Tizoc has rid himself of all his Indigenous attributes, such as skin colour and thick hair, and has turned into the perfect white Mexican gentleman as exemplified by Pedro Infante himself. The representation of racial tensions and a desire for Europe and 'whiteness' have long been present in Mexico's film history.

In the films *Japón* and *Y tu mamá también* the Indigenous elders are marginal characters. The elder woman in *Japón* hardly has any dialogue, while the elder woman in *Y tu mamá también* does not speak at all.[104] The function of both characters in these films is to provide the non-Indigenous main characters with solace, and therefore they do not really have any individual agency or desire. Both characters thus conform to Vogler's description of a spiritual guide or Shaman figure within the narrative. In *Japón*, the elder woman dies in an accident after the main character has left. It seems the Indigenous roots are destined to disappear. In *Y tu mamá también*, the elder woman only makes a very short appearance in which she gives the female lead a charm. In both films, the elder characters are tropes of a forgotten and distant connection with the Indigenous roots of the Mexican nation and their presence is built on the stereotypical imagery of the female shaman.[105] It is therefore hardly coincidental that the main character in *Japón* had been considering a suicide, while Luisa in *Y tu mamá también* had already been diagnosed with terminal cancer when the travelling trio encounters the Indigenous elder woman. The Indigenous women in both films thus clearly

[104] Similarly in *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre 1998) the phrase is used: "Indians are stoic".
[105] Quite similarly to the grandmother-tree figure in the film *Pocahontas*.

perform the role of providing some form of solace or spiritual guidance to characters that are in a liminal space between life and death.[106] In both films, the Indigenous world is furthermore associated with something that is coming to an end. The films, therefore, share the nostalgic idea of *Dances with Wolves* that the Indian is something of the past, or soon to vanish.[107] While stylistically and in terms of content *Japón* and *Y tu mamá también* are very different films, and also have a very different narrative structure and aesthetic compared to, for example, *Dances with Wolves*, *Pocahontas* and *De Indiaan*, all these films employ the same motif of the 'wise Indian' as a helper and even spiritual guide to the protagonist. Except for *Pocahontas*, all these films have in common the fact that they centre around a non-Indigenous protagonist. The narrative function of the 'Indigenous wise elder' is thus very similar in the different films, although the films are incomparable in many other aspects.

At first sight, the short film *Snuu Viko* appears to present a similar motif with the death of the grandmother. Nevertheless, the narrative function of the elder Indigenous grandmother in *Snuu Viko* is very different. While *Japón* and *Y tu mamá también* pivot around non-Indigenous protagonists, *Snuu Viko* on the contrary presents the Mixtec boy Emilio as a main character. *Snuu Viko* presents the Indigenous elder in a very different context and the narrative function of this figure is also very distinct. First of all, *Snuu Viko* deals explicitly with an issue that is of vital importance to many Indigenous communities, namely the survival of language. This already sets up a very different narrative in comparison to the previously mentioned films. The grandmother figure in *Snuu Viko* represents traditional values within an Indigenous community, instead of 'solace' for a non-Indigenous protagonist. The passing away of the grandmother in *Snuu Viko* can surely be read as a metaphor for the eminent loss of the Mixtec language and cultural values. Nevertheless, Emilio's commitment to only speak Mixtec can also be read as an insistence on cultural continuation against all odds. The autobiographical inscription of the author in Rojas's text, furthermore allows for a different reading, as he continues to make films in Mixtec.[108] *Snuu Viko* thus does not present an idea of a vanishing past, but rather a condition of structural and cultural violence (Galtung 1969) in which cultural survival and continuity are threatened but nonetheless existent. *Snuu Viko* in this sense addresses an issue which many Indigenous communities confront and

[106] Inspired by Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the folktale* (1928), Vogler (2007) distinguishes eight different archetypes in narrative film that perform a specific narrative function within a film. One of the archetypes he distinguishes is that of the spiritual guide or 'Shaman'.
[107] For an elaborate discussion on how the other is often framed in a "different time" and associated with the past, see Fabian (1983).

which is strongly related to processes of globalization, migration and modernization. The approach of the film is thus, in Naficy's terms, oppositional with respect to the discursive practices described by Fabian in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983) as it grounds the Indigenous community firmly in the present with its present-day problems.[109] The modernization of Indigenous communities might improve the quality of life, providing greater access to medical care and education, but at the same time modernization and globalization may also lead to the erosion of a traditional way of life, and often do not provide lasting sustainable alternatives for the communities. Film itself as a modern medium is paradoxical in this respect. On the one hand, it can provide a tool to document traditions, spoken language, on the other, film also participates in the process of transformation through the globalization of traditional communities (Ginsburg 1998). As Naficy (2006) points out, the tensions provoked by the intersection of cultures and of living between pre-modern, modern, and post-modern realities, lead Accented filmmakers to explore these tensions and contradictions in their work. It stands to reason that their films address the changing attitudes towards the transformation of traditions brought about by modernization and globalization. Many films employ a conflict between generations as a narrative device to address these issues, as explored below.

Generational Conflicts and the Rift between Tradition and Modernity

The films *Himalaya* (Eric Valli 1999), *Whale Rider* (Niki Caro 2002), *Birdwatchers* (Marco Bechis 2008), and *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (Zacharias Kunuk 2006) foreground an apparent conflict between tradition and modernity, but they are set in the present. *Himalaya* is a film by Eric Valli and was filmed in Nepal with inhabitants of the region. The film has a strong ethnographic focus, in the sense that it documents a particular way of life and religious traditions. The *making-of* shows that the film requested participants and extras to dress in traditional regalia, which was no longer in use in the Dolpo, as people were wearing jeans in their ordinary life. The *making-of* also portrays how the inhabitants of the Dolpo have largely replaced the Yaks with motorized vehicles as means of transport. Nevertheless, the feature

[109] Massive migration to urban centres is leading to the fragmentation of Indigenous communities and has as an effect that Indigenous languages are no longer spoken and increasingly face threats of extinction. The INALI (National Institute for Indigenous Languages in Mexico) considers that at least 107 of the 364 Indigenous linguistic variants in Mexico are in high or very high danger of extinction in the near future (Embriz Osorio and Zamora Alarcón 2012).

film presents a culture more isolated from modernization and globalization. The story of *Himalaya* focuses on the rivalry between an elder leader with the name of Tinle and a young man named Karma. The two men have different opinions as to how to lead the caravan of yaks that transports their salt to the market. While Tinle wants to hold on to traditions such as depending on the outcome of an oracle for what is the best day for departure, Karma prefers to trust his own, individual perception of the weather and decides to leave as soon as possible without awaiting the outcome of the oracle. The resolution of the film brings both men together. Neither standpoint necessarily excludes the other, and a collaboration between the two perspectives is not only possible, but even desirable for the wellbeing of the community. While the film foregrounds the generational conflict between two individuals, it also stresses the need for both standpoints for the prosperity and wellbeing of the community.

Whale Rider is a film by Niki Caro based on a short story with the same title by Māori writer Witi Ihimaera. The film tells the story of a young girl named Pai. Her grandfather Koro is the leader of his people and expects his firstborn grandson to be the next leader. Yet when Pai is born, her twin brother and her mother die during labour. Pai tries very hard to fulfil the role of the firstborn grandson Koro would have desired, but cannot live up to this as she is a girl. Koro starts a school for boys to teach them the old ways of the Māori but Pai is not allowed to join, as she is not a boy. However, Pai observes the classes from a distance, and she trains in secret. When a large colony of whales washes up on the shores, Pai and the entire community go out to rescue the whales, even though she is not supposed to participate. The film thus explores the conflict between the traditional views of Koro with regard to gender roles on the one hand, and the interest of Pai in her ancestors and culture on the other. The film resolves this conflict in the end and shows that the sense of community, solidarity and collaboration are far more important than leadership. The grandfather understands that tradition can only survive if it opens itself up to the youth and thus to change. *Whale Rider* consequently presents change and gender inclusion as a vital necessity for cultural continuity.

Birdwatchers (Marco Bechis 2008) is a film set in Brazil and is about a Guaraní community which starts living next to a highroad with the idea to recover some of their former lands, now being used for industrial agriculture. The community is led by Nadio, who challenges the right of the landowners to take away their lands.[110] Nadio is a single parent to an adolescent son. Eventually father and son clash over their different choices. The biggest

[110] In the film Nadio is a Guaraní activist who is murdered by landowners who want to crush the Guaraní movement. Nadio was performed by Ambrósio Vilhava, a Guaraní activist in real life. Vilhava was murdered in December 2013 under unclear circumstances, after years of receiving multiple death threats in relation to his role as an activist, resulting in a tragic intersection of fiction and reality.

clash between Nadio and his son occurs when his son decides to work for a few weeks on a sugar plantation. After the work assignment, the young man decides to spend his money on a pair of sneakers, instead of bringing the money back to the community. Nadio sees this as a betrayal of his cause and as giving in to the oppressive system of the landowners. Nadio therefore bans his son from the community. An important character in the film is an elder medicine man, who tells Nadio he should be less hard on his son. While he is from an older generation, the medicine man is presented as a mediator between father and son. Nevertheless, this comes too late for Nadio's son, as he commits suicide after the clash with his father. Nadio himself is eventually killed by the gunmen of the landowners. This film presents the generational conflict between tradition and modernization as embedded in more complex power structures. The appropriation of Guaraní lands by Brazilian landowners for large-scale agriculture, has made it impossible for the Guaraní to continue living in traditional ways. On the other hand, the marginalization of the Guaraní from modern urban development has forced them into cheap labour. A dignified life seems impossible for the Guaraní under these circumstances. Father and son thus both become victims of a system of exclusion, which can be understood as a form of both systemic and cultural violence.

The preoccupation with generational conflicts related to traditional viewpoints and modern perspectives are present in different Indigenous films around the globe. *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (Zacharias Kunuk 2006) is set in Arctic Canada in 1922 and explores the encounter between an Inuit Shaman and European explorers. The film is based on the journals from the 1920s of ethnographer Knud Rasmussen. The film highlights the encounter between the Inuit people and the new settlers and shows how the Inuit culture begins to change through contact between them. The film evokes a sense of a way of life that has ended. The film is Inuktitut spoken and consequently the explorers communicate in flawed Inuktitut. This can be interpreted as a cinematic comment on mainstream representations of 'the other'. While Indigenous Peoples and 'the other' in general, are represented in mainstream cinema as speaking 'flawed English' (Shohat and Stam 1994), it becomes clear through this little reversal of roles that from an Indigenous perspective the settler could also be considered an 'other'. As such, this little scene questions existing constructions and hierarchies of self and other.[111] The main character of the film is a shaman who is confronted with the choice of either continuing to live in his own way, or adapting to the changing

[111] A similar instance occurs in *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, when my parents tell in an interview how they first met, my father acknowledges to have been completely out of place in the village, thus destabilizing prevalent self and other dichotomies.

environment around him in which increasingly more Inuit communities convert to Christianity. His opinion clashes severely with that of his daughter who also possesses shamanic powers. She prefers to abnegate the gift of shamanism in order to convert to Christianity as this would guarantee a certain degree of physical survival. Most European traders are Christians and will only trade with other Christians. Converting to Christianity, therefore, would facilitate the supply of food. As famine starts to affect the family of the shaman he eventually also decides to convert to Christianity. The conversion takes place in the form of a ritual in which the different family members eat a part of the walrus, which is considered taboo by Inuit culture. In participating in this ritual the shaman renounces his shamanistic powers and his 'spiritual companions'. It turns out that many of what seemed family members in previous scenes are in fact spiritual companions presented as human characters. During the ritual of conversion to Christianity these characters leave the shaman and the community crying and in great sorrow. The scene visualizes the pain connected to the loss of Inuit traditions and religious beliefs in a changing world. This sense of pain and alienation, caused by the rejection of the Inuit culture, permeates the film. While the film appears to be about 'the loss' of culture, the film is not only a form of documentation, but also a form of contemporary cultural continuity through its very own use of Inuit language and symbolism. The relationship between the shaman and his daughter therefore not only stands for a generational conflict, but also for the continuity of a shared cultural memory that is passed on from one generation to the other. Even though the traditions are changing, the memory of shared experience connects one generation to the other. The painful process of converting to Christianity is part of Inuit history and cultural memory.

The difference between generations serves to convey the contrasts and tensions of present day issues in Indigenous communities. While in *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, the changes of traditions and religious beliefs are presented as a violent event provoked by the outside world and marked by loss, in *Himalaya* the changes are generated organically from within the community and are presented as an expansion rather than as a threat of existing traditions. The films show how different generations negotiate their different approaches to changing times and environment. While changes in cultural values and traditions can, on the one hand be perceived as threats, they can also be seen as an addition to and expansion of the existing cultural norms or even as a necessity for cultural continuity. The different films explore these tensions while presenting at the same time a sense of connection between different generations. In *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, *Whale Rider*, and *Himalaya*, for example, the elder generations in the end accept the younger generation's

changing attitudes towards tradition, change thus being an element of Indigenous cultures and cultural memory. Contrary to the stereotypical and marginal representations of Indigeneity, which rework the prevailing notion that Indigenous Peoples are confined to the past, the above mentioned films provide a more complex perspective on Indigeneity with respect to time and the changing of traditions.[112] While traditional anthropological approaches tend to present a search for 'pristine' origins or an Indigenous culture 'untouched' by modernization, the films analysed here instead explore the tensions and contradictions but also connections incited by changing traditions. The films present generational conflicts and cultural transformations as inevitable consequences of the changing times and environment and offer different, conflicting perspectives and attitudes towards these changes.

The Community as an Ethical Posture

The motif of the 'wise elder' has also been present throughout my own cinematic work. In *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono*, I included different images of an elder Mixtec woman sitting next to the fire.[113] *El Rebozo de mi Madre* includes several interviews with elder people in the village. The last interview in the film, concerning the passing of time and the meaning of life, was taken with Don Isauro who was then 81 years old. The short film *El Último Consejo* contrasts a council of elder men with a council of younger men. The different generations indeed represent different world views and traditions. The council of elders represents traditional communitarian values, while the council of young men represents a more individualistic and capitalist view of the world. In this sense, the short film *El Último Consejo* explicitly deals with community values. The story was inspired by a true event, but was fictionalized.[114] As Indigenous filmmakers, the writer Armando Bautista García and I

[112] As noted earlier, Fabian has argued that Anthropology often constructs and ultimately 'others' its subjects as confined to a specific (past) time (1983).
[113] The elder woman was my grandmother. Her onscreen presence coincided with the voice off mentioning the goddess Nine Grass who was guiding the destiny of the main character.
[114] This short film was conceived as my first fictional work, and surged from a need to explore particular aesthetic concerns and aspects of production regarding the feature film *Dios no estaba ahí*. *El Último Consejo* was written by Bautista García who is also the writer of *Dios no estaba ahí*. The short film was originally intended as a casting and location exercise. When searching for a story that would allow us to have similar characters and locations as in the feature film, Bautista García remembered an event from his childhood. During the traditional ceremony for the change of authorities in his community, the council of elders used to count all the money from the village treasury in public in order to assure the transparency of power. He recalled that on one particular occasion the money was stolen shortly after the ceremony. This event was the starting point for the story of *El Último Consejo*.

wanted to express our own frustrations concerning common political conflicts in our communities, and more in general, our annoyance with political corruption in Mexico.

The production process of *El Último Consejo* involved strong community participation. The Mixtec community of writer Bautista García provided the staffs of authority for the film and several other props as well as transportation.[115] The Mixtec community of Quilitongo, where we filmed, participated as extras and provided the space for storing equipment, as well as props and assistance during the shoot. From the beginning, we intended to work with a combination of professional and non-professional actors, as we wanted the elder men to speak Mixtec. While discussing the first drafts of the script I immediately had someone in mind for the role of the leader of the elders. I have known Ubaldo López García since my childhood and I knew him as a Mixtec scholar who had also been part of the traditional authority in his community on several occasions. He has also done extensive research on Mixtec ritual speech acts (López García 2007). As López García had experienced being in a traditional council himself and possessed excellent knowledge of Mixtec ritual speech acts, he seemed perfect for the role of leader of the council of elders. But the presence of López García in the short film can also be seen as an inter-textual reference to his work and as such attaches the film to a community of Mixtec scholars, writers and artists interested in the preservation of language and cultural values.[116]

Originally, I wanted to cast professional actors for the council of young men. But we did not succeed in finding professional actors who were available in the shooting period that we had in mind. Or the available actors did not fit the description of young men living in an Indigenous village. The only professional actor who participated in the short film is therefore Roberto Mares, who acts as the leader of the young council. While not originally intended in this way, the cast thus ended up consisting primarily of relatives and friends, as is common in artisanal and interstitial productions (Naficy 2006). All the extras in the short film were people from the village. Taking into account that most of the participants had no experience with acting at all, directing the scenes had much in common with documentary filmmaking. I tried to give everyone small actions within the scene that would help them to feel at ease and less self-conscious. Even the scene in which the two young men get into a fight was filmed in a very 'documentary' approach. As Juan Camiro is a teacher of Taekwondo in real life, and

[115] These "staffs" are for ceremonial use only and are not supposed to be taken up by non-authorities, nor should they be taken out of the village.

[116] During the production of the short film it turned out that Rojas, the assistant director, was familiar with the work of López García and had wanted to interview him for his own film *Snuu Viko*. Also, actor Ezequiel Marín had read different papers by López García and proceeded to invite him to give a seminar in his village.

Ezequiel Marín is a professional wrestler, they choreographed a fight together, without my intervention. The Director of Photography and I watched their choreography and decided where to place the camera accordingly. This documentary approach and working with non-professional actors has been a common practice in Third Cinema and, for example, in the work of Bolivian filmmaker Jorge Sanjinés.[117] The main reason to work with non-professional actors was motivated by the desire to work with Indigenous performers and, as I mentioned in previous chapters, in Mexico there are hardly any professional Indigenous actors due to structural social and economic marginalization. The intention to give certain onscreen visibility to Indigenous faces thus resulted in the approach of working with non-professional actors and with the community.

To me the story was about a conflict between tradition and modernity. For this reason, the elders spoke Mixtec, while the youngsters spoke in Spanish. Also the title song for the short film is in Mixtec. The song is taken from a ritual speech act registered by López García and addresses the values that the people expect from their authorities. We tried to continue the conflict between 'old' and 'new' and between 'traditional' and 'modern' as much as possible. The location was chosen for the lack of urban elements in the scenery. Although we could not get the traditional clothing we intended to use, we tried to give the elders certain traditional attributes, such as the straw hats and the woven blanket. The general production approach of the short film was akin to making a documentary. We had no budget for Art Direction, so the actors and the extras came in their own clothes. Also, props were all borrowed from the local community. The short film was shot with mostly existing light, except for the night scene, which was lit with simple light bulbs. The aesthetic look of the film was therefore also prevailingly documentary or in fact very similar to certain aspects of Third Cinema aesthetics. With regard to the camera style, we wanted to mark a difference between the elders and the youngsters. Serguei Saldívar, the Director of Photography, and myself had figured that it would be interesting to film the elders always using a tripod, and at the same time film the youngsters with handheld camera. We thought the steady and static camera would in a way represent the traditional values of the elders, while the handheld camera movements would represent the wish for change from the youngsters. As there was a hurricane in Mexico, we lost a day and a half of shooting time, due to excessive rainfall. Consequently, we had to severely economize the shooting time. The Director of Photography and I decided to film everything handheld in order to speed up the process of production. Although we had to adapt the original plans, in retrospective the decision to shoot the whole film handheld reinforced its particular documentary aesthetics.

El Último Consejo is above all a story about the clash between modern capitalism and traditional values in an Indigenous village. In the short film, a council of elders transfers the

[117] *Teoría y práctica de un cine junto al pueblo* (Sanjinés 1979).

power to a new council of young men. As part of the ceremony they count all the money in the village treasury. The young men throw a big village feast upon receiving their new responsibilities. During this party the different members of the new council get into a fight over how to spend the village money. The following day the money from the village treasury has disappeared. The communitarian values are represented by a council of elders, while the individual interests are represented by the incoming council consisting of five young men. One of the elders gives a speech in which he stresses the importance of looking after the wellbeing of the community. In contrast with this speech, the young man who receives the staff of authority from him stresses in his own speech the importance of money for progress and modernization. The first action of the new council consists of throwing a big party for the village. The next morning they find the village treasury is empty. While the young men suspect the thief must have been a vendor from outside the village, the audience sees how the former council of elders distributes the money among each other and then throws it on a fire. The values and interests of the community are thus contrasted against the wants and interests of individual politicians. For this reason, the short film does not have a very clear protagonist. It is not a story centered on a single main character, instead it is a story that presents conflicting worldviews and attitudes towards power and money. The ceremonial change of authorities in *El Último Consejo* represents the organizational structures of an Indigenous community. In the dialogues the community and its wellbeing are continuously present. As the elders address the incoming council, they tell them to watch over the wellbeing of the whole community. When a foreigner arriving in the village asks a local lady what is going on, she answers that it is the change of authorities and that they are counting all of the community money. When the money has disappeared, the leader of the new council agonizes: "What will we tell the community?". The wellbeing of the community and community values are thus a central element of the film. The story foregrounds a form of communitarian ethics and addresses the conflict between an individualistic and capitalist worldview on the one hand, and a communitarian perspective based on solidarity on the other. The story tries to provoke the question: what is the value of money if it is only used for personal interest and gain?

Community and Inter-generational Trauma

While the presence of different generations can explore and represent the dynamics of cultural change it can also function as a link to a shared, often violent and traumatic, past.

There are different social and mental health studies exploring how the process of colonization provoked a trauma, which is passed from one generation to another.[118] Both the violent encounters during the process of (de)colonization, as well as the being subjected to forms of structural violence since, provoke different kinds of trauma among Indigenous Peoples which are then passed on from one generation to another. Here I want to explore how this inter-generational trauma is explored in relation to gender and gender violence in the films *La Tiricia o de Cómo Curar la Tristeza* (Ángeles Cruz 2012) and *La Teta Asustada* (Claudia Llosa 2009).

Ángeles Cruz is a Mixtec actress who appeared among others in *La Hija del Puma* (Åsa Faringer, 1994) and *El Violín* (Francisco Vargas 2000).[119] *La Tiricia* is her debut as film director. The short film has won many national and international awards.[120] Like *Snuu Viko* and *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, *La Tiricia* made use of family and communitarian infrastructure for production and is what Naficy calls an artisanal film. Cruz filmed in her home village, San Miguel el Grande in the Mixtec highlands.[121] Many of Cruz's relatives participated in the production of the film, either as actors or crew-members. The film obtained production funding from IMCINE (the National Mexican Film Institute) and was filmed with a professional photographer, art director and some professional actors. The production was thus a mix of artisanal modes of production with more mainstream production modes. Cruz has mentioned that almost the whole village participated in the production of the short film. The town's megaphone was used to announce the beginning of the shoot and to ask the whole town to not turn on radios or use electrical saws during the shooting period. The village also housed and fed the professional crew of the film.

---

[118] On the subject of Intergenerational Trauma in the context of Indigenous People in North America see for example Duran, Duran and Brave Heart (1998), and Struthers and Lowe (2003). These studies are in the field of clinical psychology and address present day social issues among Native Peoples in the United States, such as drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, suicide rates, and mental health.

[119] *La Hija del Puma* (Asa Faringer and Ulf Hultberg 1994) is a Swedish film about the genocide of the Maya people in Guatemala. Ángeles Cruz plays Aschlop, a 17 year old girl who witnesses the massacre in her village and has to flee to Mexico. Aschlop decides to go back to Guatemala in search of her missing brother. The film is based on the book by the same title (*Pumans Dotter*, 1986) by Monica Zak, a Swedish writer and journalist. Zak wrote the book in the period of the genocide of the Maya people by the Guatemalan regime. On 10 may 2013, former dictator of Guatemala Effrain Rios Montt was sentenced to eighty years of prison in Guatemala for the genocide of the Maya people (but released in a matter of days). Rigoberta Menchú Tum describes the genocide against the Maya people during the regime of Rios Montt in her autobiography. She received the Nobel-prize for Peace in 1992 for her advocacy for the rights of Indigenous Peoples. *El Violin* on the other hand is a film that deals with the violent repression of Indigenous Peoples by the military in recent years. While most people will read the film as a reference to the repression of the Maya people in Acteal (South of Mexico), the film is not set in a specific place or time, thus presenting an image of perpetual violent repression against the rural and Indigenous communities on the continent. *El Violin* shares the aesthetic and ideological messages of Third Cinema and can be seen as a present-day continuation of that movement.

[120] Among others the awards Mexican Ariel, La Palmita, and La Diosa de Plata 2013.

[121] San Miguel el Grande is a neighboring village of Chalcatongo, my mother's hometown.

La Tiricia is a film about sexual abuse within different generations of one family in an Indigenous community.[122] In this sense, the short film has several similarities with the film *Madeinusa* (2006) by Peruvian filmmaker Claudia Llosa. Nevertheless, an important difference between *La Tiricia* and *Madeinusa* is that *La Tiricia* presents incest and sexual abuse as social issues that need to be addressed within Indigenous communities, while *Madeinusa* employs incest as an element to construct Indigenous communities as a distant, alien and monstrous Other. The feature film *Madeinusa* is the directorial debut of Claudia Llosa and is also the debut of Magaly Solier as an actress.[123] The film starts out with the journey of Salvador, a geologist who comes from Lima, and is travelling to a remote village in the Andes.[124] The isolation of the village in relation to the rest of the world is stressed several times at the beginning of the film. In this remote village lives the young teenager Madeinusa with her father and sister. The beginning of the film establishes that the most important annual festivity of the village is soon to take place. During this festivity, one of the virgin girls of the village will represent the Virgin Mary.[125] The festivity lasts three days and during this time, the Saints of the church will be blindfolded and 'not see', which opens up the road to all possible sins. In the absence of the fear for God everything is allowed. It is clear that Madeinusa's father has been eagerly awaiting this moment, as it is his wish to deflower his own daughter. The desire of the father, who is also the town mayor, to sleep with his daughter is not a secret in the town. Throughout the film it becomes clear that all the villagers are aware of what is going on and condone it as part of the celebrations. One elderly lady, who is in charge of dressing Madeinusa for the festivities, at a certain point laments that Madeinusa has given herself to another man, as Madeinusa's father had been waiting so long for this special moment. The film thus presents incest as a culturally accepted and even promoted practice in Andean cultures. For the general public, however, incest, like cannibalism, is considered a major deviance. Although such things exist, most societies do

[122] Studies show that in the United States over 80% of Native American women have encountered some form of sexual abuse at least once during their life-time. Bohn (2003) links this excessive pattern of abuse to substance abuse, mental health issues, and high suicide rates in Native American communities and relates many of these issues to historical trauma.

[123] Magaly Solier was born in Ayacucho, the Andean part of Peru and speaks Quechua.

[124] The actor who plays the role of Salvador is Carlos J. de la Torre. He was born in the Dominican Republic from a Peruvian mother and Spanish father. Carlos also played a Spanish character in the TV film *Columbus , The Lost Voyage* (Anna Thomson 2007). His appearance and accent within the film Madeinusa position him as an outsider to the Indigenous community. His position as an outsider is further emphasized because the people from the town al call him *el extranjero* (the foreigner).

[125] This invented feast is clearly inspired by different religious festivities in Central and South America wherein different members of the community represent different Biblical characters during village processions.

not consider incest or cannibalism culturally and socially acceptable practices.[126] A culture that practices either incest or cannibalism is therefore perceived as monstrous. It should be noted that incest is not a culturally accepted practice in Andean cultures, although it may exist as a social problem.

Through its representation of incest as a cultural practice, the film constructs an image of the Andean population as over-sexualized, violent and without moral values. These elements fit into biased constructions of Otherness.[127] It is important to take into account that the Andean population in Peru has been othered since the process of colonization and is generally presented in the Peruvian national discourse as backwards, barbarian and primitive.[128] Taking into account the context of discrimination, exclusion and exploitation of the Andean population in Peru, the film participates in a discourse that justifies systemic violence as described by Galtung (1969). Although the film has visual and artistic merits and has been positively received at international festivals, it is important to address the aspect of 'othering' present in the film. This aspect makes itself predominantly present through the narrative structure, but also the art direction and acting contribute to this general representation of the Andean population as exotic and barbarian.[129] Shohat and Stam clearly explain in *Unthinking Eurocentrism*: *Multiculturalism and the Media* that the representational aspect of cinema can have social effects and consequences for marginalized and underrepresented groups. They argue that:

---

[126] In her paper 'A Contemporary Andean Type: The Representation of the Indigenous World in Claudia Llosa's films' (2013) cultural studies scholar Maria Chiara D'Argenio explores how excessive violence and sexual deviancy are employed to represent otherness within Llosa's films.

[127] Philosopher Raymond Corbey analyses in *Wildheid en beschaving* (1989) how constructions of otherness are generally based on different cultural norms regarding food, clothing and violence. Particularly in the Americas there is a long history of such hostile stereotypes and cultural misconceptions being constructed to inferiorize Indigenous Peoples (as cannibalistic, irrational and satanic) and so legitimize the European conquest and colonization (cf. Mason 1990). In *Fantasies of the Master Race* (1998) Churchill analyses the ways in which Native Americans have been represented in film and how many of these representations are constructions of otherness, presenting deviant cultural norms with respect to sexuality and violence. Churchill also argues that most films made about Native Americans have a narrative structure in which the protagonist is a non-Native, to inform and express the perspective and viewpoint of the audience. Although Madeinusa is the protagonist of the film, the narrative structure does employ the character of Salvador as an outsider to give the audience the outsider's point of view.

[128] See for example the literary analysis of Adriana Churampi in 'Los otros en Ushanan Jampi y El Campeón de la Muerte de Enrique López Albújar'(2012). For an analysis of the lack of inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in the sphere of politics see the study by Maria-Therese Gutafsson: 'Inclusión o cooptación de comunidades indígenas en la política local. Reflexiones desde los Andes peruanos' (2008). The organization CLACPI (Latin American Coordinating Council for Indigenous Film and Media) has recently issued a statement against the stereotypical representations on television and in films, predominantly against the popular figure 'Jacinta'. The arguments against such forms of representation are that the effect of othering contributes to the marginalization, discrimination and exclusion of Indigenous women in Peru. See for example the discussion at http://clacpi.org/observatorio/?p=4241

[129] In Peru many critics in fact objected to this representation.

> No deconstructionist fervor should induce us to surrender the right to find certain films sociologically false or ideologically pernicious, to see *Birth of a Nation* (1915), for example, as an 'objectively' racist film. That films are only representations does not prevent them from having real effects in the world; racist films can mobilize the Ku Klux Klan, or prepare the ground for retrograde social policy. Recognizing the inevitability and inescapability of representation does not mean, as Stuart Hall has put it, that "nothing is at stake". (Shohat and Stam 1994: 178)

Birth of a Nation is widely considered a masterpiece of its time, as it was a highly innovative work, using for the first time many elements of the cinematic idiom that are considered mainstream today, such as the close-up and the shot and counter-shot. Nevertheless, as Shohat and Stam point out, the aesthetic qualities of the film do not change its pernicious ideological message. The aesthetic and artistic qualities of a film do not necessarily influence the discourse of a film, nor should they be construed as a compensation for, or justification of the ideological message.

The representation of the Andean population in the film *Madeinusa* is stereotypical and negative in different respects. To begin with, the name of the girl 'Made in the USA' is of course an example of the lack of knowledge and infantilized character of the girl's parents. Who would seriously give such a name to a child? The implication that the Indigenous population is 'backward' and not knowledgeable of the modern world is explicitly played out when Madeinusa looks into the shirt of Salvador and tells him that they are meant to be together, as her name is written in the back of his shirt. This stereotype of Indigenous 'backwardness' is, as mentioned before, overtly present within dominant society. The Andean population has also regularly been depicted as extremely violent or over-sexualized. The film represents the Andean culture as permissive towards incest. This representation is in line with previously existing stereotypes. An additional questionable element in the film is the presence of the outsider and his perspective within the narrative structure of this film. Salvador in Spanish means the saviour and his name in a way implies the white saviour complex.[130] The audience of the film is not a direct viewer of the incest, but is indirectly present at the moment through the focalization of a male outsider. In this scene the audience is presented with the perspective of Salvador, as he passes by Madeinusa's house and

[130] Film scholar Matthew Hughey writes extensively on this subject in his book *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption* (2014). According to Hughey white saviour narrative is a cinematic trope in which a white person rescues people of colour from their plight.

accidentally catches what is going on inside. As a viewer we relate to the outsider's disgust and abject reaction. The point-of-view and perception of the Spanish character accentuates the Otherness and monstrosity of the Andean community and culture.

La Tiricia treats the problem in a radically different way. While incest in *Madeinusa* is presented as an Andean cultural practice, in *La Tiricia* it is presented as a family problem. The narrative structure of *Madeinusa* relies heavily on the outsider's perspective – an external male gaze – to witness the abuse; instead, in *La Tiricia* the women recount their experiences of abuse in a desire to heal each other. While one film relies on the male gaze to convey the abuse, the other foregrounds female voices. The narrative structure of *La Tiricia*, makes it very clear that the incest is not an exception nor an isolated case, but a widespread problem within the community. Yet it is not a culturally promoted practice, but rather a social problem. Child abuse is an existing problem in many Indigenous communities, and finds its origins in poor schooling, widespread alcohol abuse and poverty.[131] Addressing this problem is therefore important and urgent. Contrary to the narrative of the film *Madeinusa,* which presents incest as a cultural practice propagated by the community, *La Tiricia* presents it as an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. The short film starts out with a village festivity, with music and alcohol. In this sense both *Madeinusa* and *La Tiricia* foreground a community organized around religious and festive events and embed the characters clearly in a community. Nevertheless, the embedding of the sexual abuse in both films is drastically different. While *Madeinusa* clearly foregrounds the abuse as an integral part of the community festivities, in *La Tiricia* the abuse belongs to specific characters that are part of a larger community.

At the beginning of *La Tiricia*, Lucía sees how her drunken husband lifts up their small daughter. As her husband swings the girl around, Lucía hurries to take her from him. She leaves the festivities with the girl and on their way home she has a flashback of herself as a young girl hiding from her older brother. It is evident that her older brother fondled or abused Lucía as a child. In this flashback, it is also clear that Lucía's mother did not intervene because she did not (want to) see the abuse. Through the continuation of the story the audience understands why Lucía's mother preferred not to see the abuse. The next day Lucía is sitting at the breakfast table with her mother and daughter, feeling 'tiricienta', which means having an illness of the heart or having pain in the soul. The title of *La Tiricia o de Cómo Curar la Tristeza* explicitly refers to the process of healing as *de cómo curar la tristeza*

[131] See Bohn (2003).

literally means 'about the ways to heal sorrow'. Healing in this context should not be taken as a 'magical' solution through which all problems disappear. It indicates instead the possibility of the character to change and to find strength through a traditional *limpia* (cleansing ritual).[132] Psychologist Suzanne L. Stewart conducted a study on the incorporation of traditional healing methods in mental health services to Indigenous People from Canada. In the introduction to the study, she states that:

> Indigenous cultural understandings of mental health and healing are distinctly different from understandings that have prevailed in most North American mental health provider settings, including counseling contexts. (Stewart 2013: 2)

She furthermore explains how the lack of incorporation of traditional healing methods in contemporary medicine perpetuates a form of colonization and observes:

> These differences in paradigmatic perspectives can form a barrier to effective health promoting services for Native peoples who seek mental health support from formally trained counsellors, including those who may be trained in cross-cultural and multicultural approaches. Further, Duran (2006) suggests that counselling Indigenous individuals from a non-Indigenous perspective (i.e. Western perspective) is a form of continued oppression and colonization, as it does not legitimize the Indigenous worldview of mental health and healing. Health promotion within Indigenous communities, in the current context of decolonization, could instead accept an Indigenous view of health that was not judged or valued by non-Indigenous views. (ibid.)

The presence of Indigenous healing practices in *La Tiricia* can be read in this light and understood as having a 'decolonizing effect' (Knopf 2008). The representation of traditional healing methods as a way to overcome or deal with sexual abuse is thus in line with present-day attempts in decolonizing Western (mental) health perspectives and approaches. Within the film, Lucía gains agency through her participation and performance of a ritual. Gilbert has noted, in an elaboration of Butler's theories on the performing of gender (Butler

[132] In accordance with Mesoamerican worldview a *limpia* is a traditional cleansing with plants or flowers, often performed for illnesses of the soul such as stress and fear produced by a traumatic event. It plays a central role in Mixtec medicine, particularly when mental, religious or psychological factors are involved.

1990), that Indigeneity is performed through self-fashioning acts and the embodied processes of enactment (Gilbert 2013). Participation in and performance of ritual are thus elements through which Indigeneity is enacted. Gilbert cites Alfred and Corntassel with respect to the enactment of Indigeneity observing that "being Indigenous means thinking, speaking and acting with the conscious intent of regenerating one's Indigeneity" (Alfred and Corntassel 2005). Throughout *La Tiricia* the filmmaker 'speaks' about an important issue in present day Indigenous communities, while presenting a decolonizing perspective. It is therefore possible to read Ángeles Cruz's short film as a conscious intention to speak as an Indigenous filmmaker.

The sadness of Lucía is very similar to the 'emptiness' of soul suffered by Fausta in *La Teta Asustada*, Claudia Llosa's second feature film. Both *La Tiricia* and *La Teta Asustada* deal with inter-generational trauma and the need to find healing. Both films have female protagonists and focus on the emotional scars provoked by sexual abuse. The main character of *La Teta Asustada*, Fausta, is ill in a spiritual as well as physical sense. The film begins with Fausta's mother singing in Quechua. Her sorrowful song details how her husband was killed and she was raped while she was pregnant of Fausta.[133] Fausta answers with a song in Quechua while she tends to her aging mother. The entire film is partly Quechua, partly Spanish spoken. As the film continues, the viewer understands through different events and comments, that Fausta has an ailment provoked by the rape of her mother known as 'La Teta Asustada'. The family believes that as Fausta was nursed by her traumatized mother, she ingested the fear and sorrow of her mother through her mother's milk. Therefore, it is thought that Fausta goes through life joyless and fearful, without a soul. When her mother dies, Fausta is forced to undertake action to be able to arrange for a burial in her hometown, as Fausta and her mother have been living in the suburbs of Lima. To earn some money Fausta goes to work for a wealthy Peruvian lady, Mrs. Aida, as a house-maid. The relationship between Fausta and Mrs. Aida is exemplary of the exclusion, discrimination and exploitation faced by Indigenous People in urban centres.[134] When Fausta arrives at the house she is

[133] The film makes clear that Fausta was born during the time that Peru was suffering from a violent conflict between the terrorist movement Sendero Luminoso and the state military authorities. The Truth Commission in Peru established that 75 % of the victims of the armed conflict were Quechua speaking peasants. While the Truth Commission attributed 66 % of the murders to Sendero Luminoso it attributed most of the rapes to military members and state officials. The majority of the women who suffered sexual violence during the conflict were also Quechua women. The violence hit the Andean region of Ayacucho particularly hard. The film does not make explicit whether Fausta's mother was raped by the military or by Sendero Luminoso and as such does not align Fausta's family with a particular camp. The film instead presents Fausta and her family as victims of the violence.

[134] See, for example, the Project *97 Empleadas Domésticas* by Peruvian artist Daniela Ortiz. The project presents 97 pictures, all collected from facebook. In all the pictures, a house maid in uniform is present in either

thoroughly inspected by Fina, the other household-help. Fina examines Fausta's teeth, hands and ears to see if they are clean enough. She also cautions Fausta that Mrs. Aida can be easily put off if she does not watch her personal hygiene and takes a bath every day and that the use of a uniform and deodorant is obligatory. Fausta is supposed to stay in the kitchen unless Mrs. Aida requires her presence. The film thus presents the distance between and the prejudices existing among economically privileged Peruvians towards the Indigenous population.[135] The scene presents the Indigenous body as exposed to inspection and judgment by a 'dominant master' and recalls the treatment of Indigenous and African bodies during slavery, as well as the approach by early anthropologists to the body of the colonized.[136] The same scene calls to mind an event described in the novel *Caramelo* by Chicana author Sandra Cisneros. In the novel, the main character Celaya describes her childhood love for the daughter of one of the servants in her grandmother's house in Mexico City. But Celaya's cousins insisted that the Indigenous girl was dirty as she did not wear any undergarments. Celaya describes how the children thought of a way to verify if the servant girl did indeed not use underwear.[137] Like the novel, the scene in which Fausta is inspected, demonstrates how Indigenous bodies have been constructed as 'Other' through a colonial discourse which continues to shape perceptions, stereotypes and judgments in the present.

In the film, Fausta suffers from both an emotional or spiritual malady as well as from a physical health problem. Both problems are interrelated. It gradually becomes clear that Fausta has chosen to introduce a potato in her vagina as a form of protection against possible rape. When she was still living in the village she heard that a neighbour had done so to prevent herself from being raped. It is clear that Fausta has incorporated the rape of her mother Perpetua as a traumatic event in her own life. Fausta is consequently fearful of men and in a broader sense of life in general. Fausta avoids all physical contact with men, and does not dare to walk alone. She always walks close to the walls. When Perpetua dies at the beginning of *La Teta Asustada*, Fausta faints and is taken to a medical clinic. Here the doctor

---

the background or margins of the image. The project thus questions the normativity and invisibility of domestic workers within Peruvian society.

[135] In Mexico different cases of public figures speaking dismissively about (Indigenous) domestic servants have recently provoked discussions on internet.

[136] E.g. by the notorious measuring of skulls, still realized in the first half of the 20th century.

[137] In Colonial discourse the body, sex and sexuality of the colonized were often employed to construct otherness. An example of how the private parts of an individual were embedded in the colonial discourse is the fate of Saartje Baartman. Performance artist Gómez Peña mocks the obsession with the private parts of the 'Other' the performance *The Couple in the Cage*. This performance alludes to the public display of 'other races' as was common in the 18th and 19th century. As part of the performance Gómez Peña offers the audience to display his own private parts for five dollar. But when Gómez Peña lifts his skirt, there is nothing there to see, thus alluding to the impossibility of representation.

explains to her uncle that they have discovered a potato in Fausta's uterus. The subsequent discussion between Fausta's uncle and the doctor expresses a profound disconnect between traditional beliefs and medical science. This hostility between traditional medicine and Western medical science is present as a motif in many other films about Indigenous communities. For example, in the film *Altiplano* there is a conflict between traditional medical practices and modern medicine practices. In my own film *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, the characters express their gratitude for having access to modern medicine facilities. In *Snuu Viko*, the lack of access to modern medicine facilities ends up being fatal for the grandmother. Jorge Sanjinés's film *Blood of the Condor* (1969) is about forced sterilization. In Mexico, recent cases of medical neglect and misconduct towards the Indigenous populations are abundant and criticized in the press. [138] It is, therefore, not surprising that the relationship with modern medical practice is a topic of tensions and conflicting viewpoints. As mentioned previously, the inclusion and acceptance of Indigenous knowledge regarding (mental) health is part of a decolonizing practice with respect to contemporary medicine and health institutions.

Fausta finds herself forced to travel alone and confront her fears. She finds support with the gardener of the wealthy mansion, a man who also speaks Quechua. Throughout the film, Fausta learns to be less afraid and becomes stronger, she thus finds 'her soul'. It is noticeable that in the film Fausta's emotional growth is strongly connected to her voice and speech. Throughout the film, Fausta's condition of having an 'empty soul' and excessive fear, is expressed through an inability to speak, or when she speaks she does so in an extremely quiet voice. When she is alone Fausta conjures her fears and anxiety through singing. A particularly interesting scene in this sense occurs when Mrs. Aida, the wealthy owner of the house where Fausta is employed as a maid, calls Fausta to help her with hanging some photographs on the wall. As Fausta enters the room she sees the photographs of different Peruvian military officials. Mrs. Aida hands Fausta her drilling machine to hold it while she arranges a picture. Fausta sees herself reflected in the glass frame of the pictures. As she is holding the drilling machine, in the reflection Fausta resembles a guerrilla fighter. The image thus imbues the picture of the military official with the presence of armed resistance. As such, the image captures opposing forces within the Peruvian national context:

[138] The Mexican weekly opinion magazine *Proceso* dedicated an article to a recent event in Oaxaca where an Indigenous woman gave birth outside a hospital, because the medical staff refused to offer her assistance. The event gained attention after a picture and video of the event were spread through social media. The analysis of the magazine makes clear that the hospital staff refused assistance because of racism and bias: http://www.proceso.com.mx/?p=354510

that of a Quechua woman coming from the Andean country side and belonging to the suburban class in Lima, and that of a white, male, military elite whose family belongs to Lima's wealthy urban upper class. As Fausta looks at the pictures of the military officials and her own reflection, she gets nauseous, is unable to speak and her nose starts bleeding. Fausta's loss of voice in this scene can be read as a traumatic reaction, but also as a reference to the silencing of Indigenous voices through the colonial legacy and contemporary (state) violence.

Fausta runs from the scene and in order to comfort herself, she sings a song in Quechua and Spanish about the gift of singing. The song recalls her mother's tale about how humans obtained the gift of music. Mrs. Aida, who is a professional musician working on a piano piece for an official recital, is fascinated by the song and asks Fausta to teach her the song. Fausta is unable to do so, as the song came spontaneously to her and is not a learned song. In other words, Fausta composed the song and is unable to repeat the performance on command. Eventually Mrs. Aida tells Fausta she will give her a pearl from her necklace for every time Fausta sings the song for her, and Fausta agrees. Through this exchange, Mrs. Aida converts the song into a piece to be played on the piano. The day of the recital, Mrs. Aida is applauded and greatly congratulated on her piece. Fausta watches the performance backstage from afar. On their way home, in the car, Mrs. Aida discusses the performance with her son. When Fausta mentions that people liked their song, Mrs. Aida throws Fausta out of the car for her impertinence. Fausta has to walk back home without receiving her rightful payment. Fausta was manipulated by Mrs. Aida into an unjust and unequal exchange in which she was robbed of her identity and of her most valuable asset. After receiving all the credit for work that was to a large extent the merit of Fausta, Mrs. Aida scolds her and rejects her. This narrative element in the film can be seen as a metaphor for the colonial encounter in the Americas and the continuing exploitation of Indigenous Peoples. A similar metaphor for the colonial encounter can be found in the film *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre 1998). In a specific scene the Indigenous protagonists Victor and Thomas come back to the bus in which they are traveling and find their seats taken by two cowboys. The cowboys refuse to move and send the boys to the back of the bus with the remark: "these are our seats now and there's nothing you can do about it." Indigenous Peoples throughout the American continent and their natural resources are exploited for the gain of Western oriented governments pursuing personal gains and profits. In *La Teta Asustada* Fausta is robbed of her voice in a way that is representative of how Indigenous Peoples are blatantly absent from most discourses regarding the future of Latin American countries and their national resources. Fausta's songs

are a way to counter discursive and systemic violence and can be read as a form of resistance through the presence of her 'Voice'.

Like Fausta's ailment in *La Teta Asustada*, in *La Tiricia,* the sadness (*tiricia*) is an intergenerational problem, passed on from mother to daughter. This becomes apparent in a scene in which Lucía sits at the table with her daughter and mother. All three are sad. None of them wants to eat. When Lucía's mother asks her what is going on, Lucía answers that she feels sick, she is cold and she does not want to eat. Her mother understands that Lucía is 'tiricienta' and that she must have inherited it from her. Lucía asks her mother how she got 'la tiricia' and her mother answers she inherited it in turn from her own mother. In a flashback we see how Lucía's mother was abused as a child by an uncle while her mother (Ita) chose to not see it. The audience understands that both Lucía and her mother have been victims of sexual abuse as a child. Furthermore, in both cases their mothers were unwillingly complicit. As Lucía understands her pain is part of a deeper family dynamics, she decides to end the circle of sadness for the wellbeing of her own daughter. Being submerged in her own pain, she will unwillingly pass on the 'tiricia' to her daughter. Tiricia can be understood as a sadness, which will produce a weakness similar to the absence of an own soul in *La Teta Asustada.* Lucía's sorrow will eventually affect her daughter. Similarly to what happens in the narrative of *La Teta Asustada* the trauma in *La Tiricia* is thus treated as having an inter-generational effect. While both in *La Teta Asustada* and in *La Tiricia* the pain and sorrow is passed on by the mother and grandmother, in both films also the strength comes from the elder generations. The mothers are not only the source of pain, but also the passage to healing for future generations. To end the circle of sorrow, Lucía takes her daughter to the river to perform the '*limpia*'. Lucía and her daughter throw a crown of white flowers into the river to throw off their pain and sadness. In the short film the husband of Lucía brings her grandmother to the river as well, so that the four generations of women can heal together. Since this is the end of the film, it is obvious that the idea of 'healing' is crucial to the film. *Healing and Mental Health for Native Americans: Speaking in Red* (Nebelkopf and Phillips 2004) addresses the need for a combination of traditional healing methods and modern medicine with respect to substance abuse and other mental health issues as the consequence of colonial trauma among Native Americans. The volume furthermore focuses on the importance of healing within family and community.

Lucía in this short film loses her fear and finds a way to forgive her mother and to trust her husband. The film thus presents the traditional *limpia* (cleansing ritual) as a practice to heal from sorrow and to come to terms with traumatic events. Although *La Tiricia* presents

a family story of intergenerational trauma and sorrow, it can be seen in the wider context as a comment on the need to heal from poverty, abuse and colonial trauma within Indigenous Communities. In *La Teta Asustada* it becomes clear that while modern medicine is needed to cure Fausta from her physical complaints, she needs to 'heal' as a person from the trauma provoked by the violence the country and her family have suffered. In *La Tiricia*, Lucía resorts to traditional healing practices to cure her soul. It is noteworthy that her mother, husband and grandmother join her, turning it into a family event. In a way, the end also calls to mind the ending of *La Teta Asustada*, when Fausta runs to the sea to wash off her sorrows. The films seem to state that there can be a healing power in one's relation to the environment. These different films thus propose and present traditional values and religious beliefs as a path to 'healing' as a community and to find strength as a person.

When *La Tiricia* was screened within the community where it was produced, it opened up discussion and the need to talk as a community about how these problems and issues might be addressed and prevented. It made people open up about their own painful experiences with abuse and thus opened a way to search for healing. In this sense, *La Tiricia* empowers the community at different levels. In a personal conversation, Ángeles Cruz, the director of the film, told me that the need to make *La Tiricia* arose from a conversation with a relative who confided she had been abused as a child. The film was a way to address and process this information. The film, like Nicolás Rojas's *Snuu Viko*, thus connects different communities both within and outside the film. The films are directed to Indigenous communities and aim to open up dialogues and an exchange of ideas regarding present-day issues that affect those communities. This may be the biggest difference between *La Tiricia* and *Madeinusa.* The community in *Madeinusa* is imaginary and the film is clearly not directed to an Indigenous audience with the purpose to promote dialogue and discussion, but rather to a film festival audience with the purpose to provoke amazement and shock. The films thus address very different audiences with different purposes. It can be noted that the different films by Indigenous filmmakers discussed here, are also always directed towards Indigenous audiences, addressing present day Indigenous issues. For example, *Snuu Viko* addresses the loss of language in a context of marginalization and exclusion, *La Tiricia* addresses the need to heal the scars caused by child abuse. Both issues are matters that deeply affect Indigenous communities throughout the continent and that have not received much attention by governments. While the aforementioned films do not belong to the genre of activist or educational videos, they can serve similar purposes in educating and engaging communities on the issues in question. These films are, therefore, not only communitarian in

their modes of production or subject matter, but also in their address and effect.

Who are we, where do we come from and where are we going?

Community structures, family ties and generational bonds can also be present in cinematic works as a way to convey a shared history and memory and thus a specific identity. *El Rebozo de mi Madre* is a film that revolves around generational ties. The title of the film explicitly foregrounds a mother-child relationship. A *rebozo* is a long scarf worn by women in Mexico, but also used to carry children and can therefore be seen as a metaphor referring to the umbilical cord. The narrative composition of *El Rebozo de mi Madre* is constructed around my own relationship to my mother and by extension to her native village. The film weaves together different stories that end up connecting one generation to the other. At various moments in the film, the different generations of my family – my grandmother, my mother, myself and my daughter – are interacting or sitting together in the frame. All the interviews in *El Rebozo de mi Madre* at a certain point touch upon family relations, but invest these with questions about how the village was in the past and what the villagers expect or want for the future, thus constructing a narrative which entails both change and continuity in time. In the final interview, Don Isauro, one of the participants, wonders about what the future might bring. He ponders on his finite existence, as he asks whether we will know of his death having travelled so far. He then concludes with a philosophical reflection about how we only have a breath of time on this earth and when we leave this place we pass on our struggles of existence to our children. The final reflection of Don Isauro foregrounds once more the link between different generations. This aspect is stressed by the fact that during his interview Don Isauro is framed together with his granddaughter. The girl meanders around the chair next to him, while he talks about life and the passing of time. In this film, time and temporality are intrinsically connected to the bond between generations. This bond is not necessarily one of harmony but is also marked by tensions and changes. A telling example is the conversation my mother and grandmother have about schooling. While they are sitting on a bench in front of grandmother's house, they recall how my mother went to school. My grandmother tells in Mixtec how her former husband did not want their daughters to go to school, as girls did not need an education because later on they would "just have babies", but my grandmother thought school was important and sent the girls anyway. She herself had never gone to school and therefore did not speak Spanish either. The scene therefore

highlights the contrasts, differences and conflicting worldviews between the generations, while at the same time accentuating the bond between the women.

El Rebozo de mi Madre has a circular narrative, as it begins and ends with similar images. The film ends with the image of a one-year old toddler (my daughter) trying to walk up a small sand hill. The film starts out with a montage of black and white photographs picturing myself as a small child. The last picture in this montage is one of my mother, myself as a four year old and my brother as a baby, sitting in the front cabin of a truck. The voice-over of the film explains that when I was still an infant, my family decided to migrate to the Netherlands.[139] The film continues with video images in the 'cinematic present' in which I travel by bus to my mother's village in the company of my own small child;[140] the same child that tries to climb a sand hill at the end of the film. The narrative of the film thus introduces a sense of pastness through my own childhood pictures, while the presence of a small child appears to imply a sense of futurity. The figure of a child in itself encapsulates a sense of pastness, presentness and futurity, as this figure can, on the one hand evoke childhood memories of both filmmaker and viewer, while simultaneously announcing an unforeseeable and unknowable future.

Film Theorist Karen Lury (2010) explores the different functions of the figure of the child in films addressing an adult audience. Her study conveys among others how children in narratives of war, are on the one hand witnesses who are not yet able to judge the events taking place, but on the other, function as a figure that intertwines history and memory. Film theorist Vicky Lebeau analyses in *Childhood and Cinema* (2008) the interrelation between early cinema and images of childhood and connects the onscreen presence of children to film's ability to compress time:

> In this instance, the promise of the cinematograph – its movement, its animation – is *oneself as a child*, captured in the form of a moving image to be revisited, and passed on. 'It will be possible,' runs one striking claim, 'for the octoganerian of 1990 to see

[139] Film theorist and art historian Kaya Silverman states in *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988) that the 'disembodied male voice' is almost an institution in documentary, while female voices are excluded from positions of discursive power in classical film. The turn to documentary and the choice for a disembodied female voice (that of my own, also the author of the text) was a specific strategy to regain a form of discursive female presence within the filmic text.

[140] Scholar in Gender Studies Kathleen Rowe Karlyn analyses the mother's voices and daughter's voices in the film *Antonia* (Marleen Gorris 1995) and their investment in female subjectivity (Karlyn 2011). In *El Rebozo de mi Madre* my grandmother, mother and daughter are present throughout the film, in the film *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* my grandmother appears in the film while my mother's voice provides the voice over of the film, and in *Alma y Esperanza* my daughter plays the role of Alma. The mother-daughter motif is thus not only present within the filmic text of *El Rebozo de mi Madre* but continues outside the text, throughout my work.

> himself laughing or crying in his cradle, taking the first tottering steps of his life.' The uncanny effect of this image, its doubling and compression of moments in time, depends on that ready equation between the moving image and life, its capacity to support the possibility of seeing oneself young and old *at the same time*. Nearing the end of his life, an eighty-year-old man gazes back at himself laughing, crying, walking (as a fond, and now dead, mother might have done?). In this sense, part of the novelty of the cinematograph is its capacity to bring the end of a man's life into renewed and mobile contact with its beginning: the infant self, the child self, such an elusive, and yet such a passionate, object of investigation throughout the modern period. (Lebeau 2008: 9)

Film theorist Bruce Bennet on the other hand analyses the role of children and their relations to robots in science fiction films and observes that an important element of the child figure in these films is their being in a process of becoming. He observes in this respect:

> What is at stake in child/robot narratives is a struggle/desire for agency insofar as child and robot are in the process of acquiring agency through various rites of passage. (Bennett, Furstenau and Mackenzie 2008: 171)

According to Naficy childhood, temporality and memory are also strongly linked in migrant or diasporic narratives and Accented Cinema.[141] For example, Salman Rushdie explicitly connects childhood memories and the loss of access to the past with the experience of migration in *Imaginary Homelands*:

> It may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity. (Rushdie 1981)

The presence of my own childhood pictures as well as the child travelling with me to a country I left in a time when I was a child myself, situates the film in the realm of childhood memory and evokes Rushdie's notion of the past as being a country we have left behind. The trip towards my mother's village can therefore be equated as a journey into the past.

[141] In *An Accented Cinema*, Naficy argues that home and home coming journeys are important themes in Migrant and Diasporic Cinema. Film theorist Daniela Berghahn explores the relation between childhood memory and 'Heimat' in her examination of the films of Fatih Akin (Berghahn 2006).

Nevertheless, the figure of the young child at the same time elicits the idea of an unknown and not yet accessible future. The film thus sets up a circular narrative, which connects past and future and which resonates in the ending of the film. The bus trip with my own child in the beginning of the film is moreover reminiscent of a scene in the Native American film *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre 1998).

A particular scene in the film *Smoke Signals* produces a 'narrative loop' or maybe even a kind of *mise-en-abyme*. Throughout the film, past and present are edited together by a hard cut, as if they were interchangeable, or even happening at the same time. For example, in a particular scene Victor remembers a quarrel he had as a kid with Thomas. The child Victor walks back home after this fight holding a basketball in his hand. When he enters the house he throws the ball towards his mother. His mother catches the ball, looks at him and asks him how his day has been. We expect to see the child, but instead an adolescent Victor answers in the counter-shot. This kind of shift between past and present occur constantly within the film. Victor remembers (through this same kind of alternations between past and present) on several occasions in the film, each time in a slightly different and more complete manner, how his father left his family. During the bus trip with Thomas, Victor remembers his father stepping into his pick-up truck. He feels his father will not be coming back and starts running after the truck, unable to catch up. The next shot appears to be a point of view of the father who is looking at him running behind the truck. Nevertheless, the following counter-shot is that of an adolescent Victor looking through the window of the bus, which implies he is watching himself as a child running behind his father, while the child is actually chasing a grown up version of himself: Victor the child chasing Victor the adolescent who is watching Victor the child, thus creating a kind of *mise-en-abyme* in which past, present and future are all collapsed. Victor is simultaneously travelling through past, future and present and turns out to be framed in a perpetual hunting of the self. At the same time, this editing device positions Victor in his father's place, thus creating a mirror or unconscious coupling between his father and himself. This scene can in a way be read as a conscious reflection and questioning of identity. As the audience participates in the point of view of Victor, the *mise-en-abyme* ultimately invites the audience on a journey through memory and future, asking: "Who are we, where do we come from and where are we going?" [142] This cinematic

[142] The phrasing of this question is indeed intended as an explicit reference to Gauguin's work. I saw the painting when I was still a film student at an exhibition and it made a lasting impression. Like the scene in *Smoke Signals*, the painting creates a dynamic between past and present, between memory and the unknown as it depicts a sleeping infant on one side and an elder woman at the other. This coupling between the infant and old age is repeated in the scene of *El Rebozo de mi Madre* where Don Isauro is framed together with his

rendering is very similar to the meandering thoughts of Don Isauro towards the end of *El Rebozo de mi Madre*. Similarly to the narrative of *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, which is a circular structure evolving around mother-daughter relations, the fictional narrative in *Snuu Viko* is constructed around the relationship of Emilio to his grandmother. It is the relation with his grandmother that makes him decide not to speak Spanish anymore, as she implores him to speak only Mixtec. Nevertheless, Emilio's refusal to speak Spanish in the end precipitates the grandmother's death. Both in *Snuu Viko* as in *El Rebozo de mi Madre* the presence of different generations highlights the passing of time and the transformation of traditions and of a cultural landscape. The coupling or mirroring of children and elders in both films functions as a reflection on the passing of time and poses existential questions with regard to memory, identity and becoming.

In the film *Me parezco tanto a tí* (Luna Maran 2009), a group of young women is paired with their elder relatives. The young women and the elder women reflect on different aspects of life, such as education, marriage and their personal dreams. The interviews in the film are in this sense very similar to the conversations in *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, but have a clear gender focus. While in *El Rebozo de mi Madre* I am explicitly present and somehow part of the community represented, Luna Maran appears absent from her text. Nevertheless, in *Me parezco tanto a tí* the filmmaker is implicitly present through the title and the conversation with her peers. It is clear that the interviews touch upon issues that are important to a young woman and thus connect not only the younger generation to the older, but also the filmmaker to the different participating women in the documentary. Both films have titles that explicitly tie the author of the films to the filmic text and the other participants in the film. *El Rebozo de mi Madre* as a title asserts the relation between the filmmaker, the film and a mother figure. Indeed, the title expresses my relation to the village. It is through the mother-daughter relation that I am somehow connected to this place.

Me parezco tanto a tí, which means 'I am so similar to you', introduces again an authorial voice and relates the author to a general 'you' which could refer to either the audience of the film, or the different participants in the film, but it could also refer to the mirroring between the elder women and younger women within the filmic text. The conversations with other villagers in both films seem to be a way for the filmmaker to insert herself into the tissue of their communities. The authors of both films seem to inscribe themselves within this network of relations, thus inserting themselves in the communities

---

granddaughter and throughout the film as it implicitly explores the mother-daughter relationship between myself and my mother on the one hand, and my daughter on the other.

they are representing. The films can therefore be seen as a speech act, or a conscious performance of identity. Gilbert proposes that performance is crucial to the understanding of indigeneity (Gilbert 2013). One could say that both Maran and I are employing the production of film as a way to perform our Indigenous identity by inserting us through film into our respective communities.

Conclusions

Just like many other Indigenous filmmakers, I have often recurred to artisanal modes of production involving family members and community structures for the realization of my films. The films *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono*, *El Rebozo de mi Madre* and *El Último Consejo* are embedded in a Mixtec community. Community festivities, such as All Saints and Easter Celebrations are markers of time in the narrative structure of the film. Also, elements of community organization and community life aid in constructing a narrative structure. For example, the village market and the church gatherings serve to link different characters together. Community and family are indeed important themes of Indigenous Cinema. The presence of community, family ties and different generations can have different interrelated functions. On the one hand, the presence of different generations in the films can be a way of addressing the contrasts between more traditional and more globalized and modernized perspectives within Indigenous communities today. In this case, the relationship between the generations can express cultural tensions but at the same time provide a notion of cultural continuity through change and transformation. Community and community values in Indigenous Cinema can, moreover, propose ethical standpoints as an alternative to more individualistic and capitalist views of the world. But the coupling or mirroring of grandparents, parents and offspring also allows for a reflection on memory, time and the passing of time, thus inviting a reflection on identity.

Through the analysis of different films, such as *La Tiricia*, *Snuu Viko*, *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* and *El Último Consejo,* it becomes clear that both as a production strategy and a narrative device, the communitarian and artisanal approach is important in the making of Indigenous Cinema. Due to limited resources, many Indigenous filmmakers work on video and recur to an aesthetics that blends fiction and documentary elements. At the same time, this mode of production embeds the films in the community and turns the films into a communitarian expression. Community structures, such as festivities, ceremony and ritual can, furthermore, be an important element in the narrative structure of the film. Indigenous

filmmakers inscribe themselves in the text through the visible bonds with their respective communities. Their films not only portray their communities but also strengthen the relations and bonds with those same communities, as the films articulate and present a Voice that is rooted within those Indigenous communities. It can therefore be said that Indigenous filmmakers through their films "consciously think, speak and act with the conscious intent of regenerating their identity" (Alfred and Corntassel 2005: 597).

Chapter 5
The Process of Articulating an Own 'Voice'

My filmmaking practice has always wandered around themes related to migration and travel and many of my films have involved physical displacement. The documentary *Una nave per tornare* (A ship home) encloses the element of travel within the title. The short documentary *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono* recounts an ancient Mixtec story in which the main character is most of the time on a quest. In the documentary *El Rebozo de mi Madre* I travel back to my mother's home town and in the short film *Alma y Esperanza*, a young girl travels from an unspecified city in the US to a small rural village in Mexico. My thesis film for the Netherlands Film Academy was the result of a journey to Sicily. Nevertheless, the idea for the documentary originated somewhere else. After reading Tahar Ben Jelloun's *L'Enfant de Sable* (1985), I decided I wanted to make a film about traditional storytellers. So when I encountered a storytelling tradition in Sicily I decided to make a documentary about this subject.

What had fascinated me in the book of Ben Jelloun was how he mixed different styles and stories and how he played with the element of 'reality' and fiction within the narrative. *L'Enfant de Sable* employs a so-called *mise-en-abyme*: it is a story within a story in yet a different story. The first story starts with a traditional storyteller telling a tale on a Moroccan marketplace. His tale is about a woman who was brought up as a man. However, when the marketplace is bulldozed to make place for a mall, the storyteller is said to die from heartache. The audience who listened to his tale gets scattered, but four people decide to continue telling each other the continuation of the story for it to have a proper ending. While one of the first audience members continues with the story and constructs a grotesque ending, another claims to have met the woman in the story and have had a love affair with her. Yet a different audience member claims to be the woman in the story herself. I initially wanted to reproduce the aspect of multi-vocal storytelling and the shifts between different perspectives and sustained truths to the film by combining documentary and fictional elements. Yet, while developing the film, the original idea transformed into something else and the final film turned out to be above all a portrait of *puparo* Cuticchio.

In the film, Cuticchio elaborates on his own journey as a storyteller while taking the audience on the journey of Ulysses through a puppet play. Until today one of my favourite moments of Cuticchio's play and of the film is Ulysses' encounter with Nausicaä. This scene also provided the film with its present title. Cuticchio himself plays the shipwrecked Ulysses,

while a puppet's head represents Nausicaä. It is noteworthy that Cuticchio's staging presents the storyteller as a wandering traveller. The practice of storytelling is indeed in many ways related to travelling. After Ulysses explains his ordeal, Nausicaä tells him not to worry as the king of this country is very fond of strangers and if Ulysses wants to go home, he will provide him with a ship to do so. The scene thus encapsulates the idea of travel and return, a theme that, as Naficy has noted, is also often present in Accented Cinema:

> Every journey entails a return, or the thought of a return. Therefore, home and travel, placement and displacement are always already intertwined. Return occupies a primary place in the minds of exiles and a disproportionate amount of space in their films, for it is the dream of a glorious homecoming that structures exile.
> (Naficy 2006: 229)

Naficy elaborates on how journeys and border crossings are important themes for Accented Filmmakers and distinguishes different kinds of journeys. According to Naficy, the motivation for and direction of the journey can be read in symbolic terms:

> The direction of the journey has profound empirical and symbolic values that shape not only the travel, but also the traveller. This is because significant journeys tend to be meliorative and redemptive experiences. (Naficy 2001: 223)

He elaborates on how the physical journeying is often connected to the emotional journey and therefore to the transformation of the characters:

> Depending on their motivation, journeys may take the form of exploration, pilgrimage, escape, emigration, or return – the latter three more precisely qualify as exilic and diasporic journeys. However, journeys are rarely simple or homogenous. Most often, they are composite and evolutionary. Exploration, for example, may involve quest, wandering, search, homelessness, or even conquest and colonization. Once initiated, journeys often change character: begun as an escape, for example, a journey may become one of exile, emigration, exploration, or return.
> (Naficy 2001: 222)

It comes therefore as no surprise that much of my work, just as that of many other Accented filmmakers, revolves around travelling. According to Naficy, the motivation and sense of the journey tends to shift during the film. Narrative films always include some kind of character transformation. Most Accented films thus incorporate some form of journeying which parallels or mirrors the character's transformation. However, the transformative experience is not limited to the characters of the story. Anzaldúa notes that stories have the capacity to transform both the storyteller and its audience. Anzaldúa also refers throughout *Borderlands / La Frontera* to different Indigenous elements, such as shamanism and *nahuales* with regard to the transformative aspect of stories and storytelling. She writes for example:

> In the ethno-poetics and performance of the shaman, my people, the Indians, did not split the artistic from the functional, the sacred from the secular, art from everyday life. The religious, social and aesthetic purposes of art were all intertwined. Before the conquest, poets gathered to play music, dance, sing and read poetry in open air places around the *Xochicuahuitl*, *el Árbol Florido*, Tree-in-Flower. The ability of story (prose and poetry) to transform the storyteller and the listener into something or someone else is shamanistic. The writer, as shape-changer, is a *nahual,* a shaman. (Anzaldúa 1987: 88)

As Anzaldúa notes, storytelling transports both the storyteller and the audience to a different realm, transforming them both. In other words, filmmaking as a form of storytelling is a transformative journey for both the audience and the filmmaker. As discussed in chapter two, narrative films present the audience with characters that undergo an emotional journey of transformation of some kind. The audience will participate to a certain extent in this process of transformation through the mechanisms of identification with the characters. Narrative cinema therefore always entails forms of identification and affect, and the audience participates to a lesser or greater extent in the transformative emotional journeys of the characters. As Naficy notes, many Accented films visualize the emotional journey of the character through a physical journey in the film. In this final chapter I want to explore the theme of travel in my work, filmmaking as a journey in itself and its transformative aspects for audience and filmmaker. I will first look at the theme of journey, travel and transformation within my own work in relation to the work of other Indigenous filmmakers. For this purpose, I will analyse the short films *Música para después de dormir* (Nicolás Rojas 2013), *La Carta* (Ángeles Cruz 2015) and *Alma y Esperanza*. I will explore how the journey

of filmmaking has transformed me and my approach to film along the way and consider how finding one's 'Voice' as a filmmaker is also a form of journeying.

Cinematic Journeys, Homecomings and Displacements

In continuation I want to explore the aspect of travel and return in the short films *Música para después de dormir*, *La Carta* and *Alma y Esperanza.* It is an interesting coincidence that all these short films are our second fictional works as directors. *Música para después de dormir* is a short film about the return of the body of a migrant to his native village. In this film, Fidencio and his wife receive the news that their son has died and that the body will be returned to the village. Gradually it becomes clear that the son has migrated and did not return to the village in many years. Fidencio decides to gather the members of his old music band in order to receive his son's corpse. When the coffin arrives, the son comes out of the coffin and starts dancing with his parents and all the villagers. It is then clear that the story was not taking place on earth but in a kind of afterworld. The son has only been reunited with his village and relatives in death. The film has different characteristics mentioned by Naficy. It is, for example, telling that the title of Rojas's film encapsulates the idea of dreaming. In Spanish the title of the film alludes to the state of dreaming through the word 'dormir' (sleeping), while the English translation of the title is *Music for the Ultimate Dream*. The dream appears to refer to the illusionary world in which the son arrives and which turns out to be inhabited by all the villagers in the film. This reading is reinforced by the dreamlike visualization of the landscape.

Rojas captures the place with beautiful cinematography and most of the shots in the film are either tracking or crane shots. The aesthetic thus creates a dreamy atmosphere. The son therefore returns to a non-existent idealized place. The return at the same time encapsulates the idea of leaving and of memory. When Fidencio receives the news of the death of his son, he goes out to look for the former musicians of his band. In the same way that children in films tend to incorporate a sense of pastness and futurity, people of old age are often an explicit reference to the past and memory. The reunion of the old band members is therefore in itself a journey into the past, a so-called trip down memory lane. Rojas's short film indeed might be understood as a comment on Rushdie's notion that "it may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity". Rojas appears to contend that indeed it is impossible to return to lost

origins, and that the past is only accessible in dreams and memories. The film thus expresses the desire of a grand homecoming, but simultaneously formulates the awareness that it is impossible to return to the condition that was left behind by the migrant, as both the migrant and the hometown have inevitably changed. The place that was left behind is now a place of the past only accessible as an imaginary homeland. Once again it is inevitable to hear and see Rojas inscribe himself in his filmic work. It is apparent that the short film *Música para después de dormir* is a comment on the process of filmmaking. For Rojas, as for many Accented filmmakers, film itself is the locus of homecoming, as it is through the illusory capacity of cinema that the lost home of the Indigenous migrant can be emulated.[143]

Cruz's second short film *La Carta* also presents a homecoming journey. In this short film Lupe, a young woman, returns to her hometown in the Mixtec area. Just as for her first short film, Cruz shot *La Carta* in her home village San Miguel el Grande. Similarly to Rojas film, the homecoming is represented through aesthetic elements that provide a dreamlike atmosphere. For example, the arrival of Lupe is filmed through a flutter of light sparks.[144] Also the element of memory and pastness is present throughout the film. When Lupe arrives, a former school companion recognizes and greets her, saying: "Look, it's still the same time as when you left" referring to the village clock, which has been eternally standing still. The village clock seems to hint at the perception of Indigenous Peoples living in the confinement of a past time.[145] A different example of the prevalence of memory and pastness in *La Carta* can be found in the art direction. The bus, with which Lupe arrives, is a model that is no longer in use in the region and as such it is a reference to past memories.

Lupe's return is all but glorious or grand. When she arrives at her parent's home, they ask her if she has been cured of the illness that sent her away in the first place. It becomes clear through the dialogue that Lupe is not ill but lesbian and that her parents do not accept her as such. When Lupe's father understands that Lupe has not changed in this respect, he announces he no longer has a daughter. Lupe leaves devastated and stops to vomit in a maize field. Lupe needs to externalize the rejection by her parents through the vomit. Lupe then visits her former school friend Rosalía. Gradually it becomes clear that there is a specific attraction between the women, an attraction Rosalía is not ready to admit. The attraction is shown through the use of wandering camera movements between the women. The

[143] Naficy observes about the films of Lithuanian filmmaker Jonas Mekas: "His homeland is Lithuania, but his home is elsewhere, and it is not a place; it is Western high culture and art (poetry, alternative cinema, and film criticism)".(Naficy 2006: 230)
[144] An effect created through the use of small mirrors which diffuse the light source.
[145] Fabian analyses in *Time and the Other*, how Anthropology and ethnography construct their objects as confined to a different and past time.

cinematography of *La Carta* in this respect bears a certain similarity with *In the Mood for Love* (Wong Kar Wai 2000) as it expresses the attraction and lingering sensuality between two characters. After one night together, Lupe returns to Mexico City. In the first instance Rosalía tells Lupe that she cannot continue the relationship, but when Lupe's bus is about to leave, Rosalía arrives with a suitcase. As the girls leave together, a close up of the village clock shows that time is still standing still. The journey in *La Carta* is thus twofold. On the one hand, there is the 'homecoming' journey of Lupe, on the other there is Rosalía's departure towards a different life. Where Rojas's film seems to be a comment on the impossibility of returning, Cruz film seems to address the difficulties of staying. Both films share an aesthetic that presents an idealized landscape of the hometown, or what Gabriel characterizes as the 'remembrance phase' in Third Cinema in *Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films*.

Alma y Esperanza is a 17-minute short fiction film about a girl in the United States who loses her mother and travels to her grandmother in a rural Indigenous community. The story is about the grief of both, who have never met before. On a different level the film also expresses the hope that both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population in Mexico might find a way to relate to each other. Alma is the name of the girl and means 'soul' in Spanish. Esperanza is the name of the grandmother and means 'hope' in Spanish. As both the girl and the grandmother have no common language, the film is almost without dialogue and is told visually. The film was shot with non-actors in an Indigenous community. In the visuals there is a stark contrast between the urban environment of the girl and the rural landscape where the grandmother lives. The idea for the story arose during a visit to my in-laws in a small Indigenous community in Oaxaca. I remember the sight of my daughter, wearing a pink dress and a straw hat, walking through the rocky landscape, looking like a tourist. This surreal image of a foreign girl in the mountainous landscape of Oaxaca was the first instance of inspiration for the short. I decided at that moment I wanted to make a short film with both my daughter and my mother-in-law. I was interested in the contrast between the rural landscape and environment and an urban character that would be completely out of place. The relationship between my daughter Dzaui and my mother-in-law Esperanza was in fact a perfect metaphor for the disruption and distance created by the migratory experience: their worlds could not be further apart, yet there somehow existed intimacy and a true connection between them. Their relationship somehow summarized the fragmentation and contradictions I had been feeling throughout my youth as a migrant.

The first idea for the film was the story of a tourist girl who gets lost in an Indigenous village when her parents stop the car to look at a map. The film would explore the encounter between the lost girl and an old woman in the village. While I was working on the script and development of the short film, we were also applying for the residence permit of my Mexican partner in the Netherlands. While trying to meet all the necessary requirements, I started to worry more and more about the consequences of the Dutch immigration policies on my family life. What if my partner would not qualify for a residence permit, would that mean our son would not be able to see his father? And if something ever happened to me, would that mean our son would be left parentless? Or would he be sent to Mexico? Reading different stories about undocumented children or children of undocumented parents in the Netherlands and the ways in which the immigration office has dealt with similar cases, I started to get outright nightmares. The fears and uncertainties I was experiencing in this period influenced the script of the short film *Alma y Esperanza.* The story of the tourist girl consequently changed into the story of a migrant girl who loses her mother and is sent to live with her grandmother in Mexico. This change in the script was the direct consequence of my need to express the fear and anguish provoked by the Dutch immigration policies at that time. So on different levels, the script for the short film *Alma y Esperanza* is strongly rooted in personal experience. This does not mean the film is autobiographical. For example, I have not experienced the loss nor the journey made by Alma in the film.

The films of Cruz and Rojas are equally connected to their personal experiences without being autobiographical. Rojas has mentioned many times that he has family members who migrated from the community and never returned. The element of an impossible return features prominently in his work. This theme is also present in his documentary plan *El Abuelo* (unfinished), where the body of a migrant is returned to be buried in his community by the family and it is present in his feature film script *Welcome To San Juan* (in script phase) where the ghost of a migrant returns to his home village only to discover the village has disappeared. While the theme is not present in his first film *Snuu Viko*, it is striking that also this film features the death of one of the characters. In other words, Rojas's work, as that of many Accented filmmakers, revolves around the impossibility of return and holding on to traditions. This theme is obviously, as Naficy observes with respect to Accented Cinema, strongly rooted in Rojas's experience with respect to his own migration, but also regarding the rapid changes in his Indigenous community. Cruz's work concentrates on the experience of women within Indigenous communities. *La Tiricia* addresses the problem of family violence and abuse, while *La Carta* presents a painful coming out story. While the films are

not an autobiographical account, they do reflect Cruz's heightened sensibility towards female and queer experiences.

My work in this sense is the result of my particular affinity with displacement and fragmentation because of living in two countries and because of the great distance between myself and dear family members. These personal experiences make me more attentive to stories about displacement, distance and fragmentation. In this sense the creative process leading to my work shares many similarities with the writing process described by Anzalduá in *Borderlands*:

> Writing produces anxiety. Looking inside myself and my experience, looking at my conflicts, engenders anxiety in me. Being a writer feels very much like being a Chicana, or being queer – a lot of squirming, coming up against all sorts of walls. Or its opposite: nothing defined or definite, a boundless, floating state of limbo where I kick my heels, brood, percolate, hibernate and wait for something to happen. (Anzaldúa 1987: 94)

It is interesting how Anzaldúa connects the writing process to her personal identity and sees how these overlap and interact. In a similar way, my own creative process is tight to the personal experience of living as a migrant. From the start, *Alma y Esperanza* was intended as a short film about distance, fragmentation but also closeness experienced as a migrant with respect to family ties and human interaction. The relationship between my daughter Dzaui and my mother-in-law Esperanza, contained and expressed simultaneously the distance and connection between the two worlds I had been living in as a child. The film was therefore strongly grounded in my own personal experiences as a migrant and the motivation to make the film was the need to express the contradictions between the urban environment I was living in, and the rural world that was part of my youth. In retrospect, this was also the driving motivation behind *El Rebozo de mi Madre*. Personal experience is what drove me to set the film in a particular context and to find a certain narrative to express personal emotions, such as fear, anguish and the contradictions of living as a migrant. My own identification with other migrants passing through similar experiences led to this particular film. In this sense, the film indeed emerged from the personal, or as my documentary teacher Michael Rabiger would phrase it, "from one of my greater problems in life". Anzaldúa connects the writing process to the personal:

> To write, to be a writer, I have to trust and believe in myself as a speaker, as a voice for the images. I have to believe that I can communicate with images and words and that I can do it well. A lack of belief in my creative self is a lack of belief in my total self and vice versa- I cannot separate my writing from any part of my life. It is all one. When I write it feels like I am carving bone. It feels like I'm creating my own face, my own heart- A Nahuatl concept. My soul makes itself through the creative act. It is constantly remaking and giving birth to itself through my body. It is learning to live with *la Coatlicue* that transforms living in the Borderlands from a nightmare into a numinous experience. It is always a path/state to something else.
> (Anzaldúa 1987: 95)

Anzaldúa notes that while the personal gives rise to the writing process, the writing process also is an embodied experience which changes her as a person. Filmmaking for me has the same potentiality, of on the one hand expressing personal preoccupations, experiences and desires, and on the other generating growth, change and transformation.

The Journey of a Film from Script to Edit

From the description of the filmmaking process of my different films, from *Una nave per tornare* to *Alma y Esperanza*, it becomes clear that this process is always a journey in itself. Film plans transform and shift, sometimes quite drastically, during their development, shoot and edit. The creative process of *Alma y Esperanza* was very similar to that of a documentary and many of the creative choices were improvised or found on the spot. As Dzaui still did not read English, and Armando's mother cannot read at all, we did not really use the script for the shooting. Instead of staging the script we improvised the scenes in the script in an almost documentary approach. I decided early on that I wanted to film in Armando's village, particularly in his parent's home, a small house with a dirt floor and no commodities. I wanted to film on this location because the house brought back memories of my own youth and of my grandmother's kitchen. Due to the limited production budget, there was no real crew and I shot everything myself, while Armando operated the sound equipment. I told Dzaui and Esperanza what the film was about, what their relation was in the film (grandmother and granddaughter) and the kind of scenes that I wanted to film. The shoot was further complicated because of extremely bad weather conditions (hurricanes) and shortage

of time, as Dzaui was going to school in Oaxaca city, a three hour drive from the village. We therefore focused on the most essential scenes and decided we could film the rest of the story in the Netherlands. Back in the Netherlands I continued working with a documentary approach and improvised the remaining scenes with Dzaui. We thought of images in which the girl would be clearly alone and in grief. Together we came up with a couple of scenes, which we shot in a documentary manner. The final story was constructed in the editing, much like in a documentary process.

From the beginning it was clear that the story had to be told without much dialogue: Dzaui and Esperanza did not speak the same language. This forced me to think about the story primarily in visual terms. I tried to search for imagery that would convey the feeling of loss and the loneliness of the girl. Most of the images were improvised with this feeling of loss and loneliness in mind. I spent an afternoon with Dzaui, wandering through the streets of The Hague, in order to orchestrate little moments and scenes that would represent Alma's grief. I had planned a couple of possible scenes, such as Alma looking at a construction ground. I thought the chaos and emptiness of a construction ground could be a metaphor for Alma's feeling of loss and abandonment. While walking through the streets of The Hague we saw a poster of a massive hamburger. This image struck me as exemplary of urban consumerism and I decided to film Dzaui sitting in front of it listening to music on some electronic device. I tried to underline the feeling of loneliness by using, for example, a wide angle lens to create a feeling of distance and isolation.

In the filming style I tried to create a sense of identification with Alma, through close-ups and over-shoulder shots. I had decided Alma was the protagonist of this story and both in the script as later on in the editing I started out with an image of Alma. In the original script the first scene consisted of an image of Alma lying on her bed. During the improvisations with Dzaui I had filmed an image of Alma writing the word 'Mum' on the stained window of the shower. In the editing this image became the first image of the story. As I was revising the material, I felt that this image expressed the whole drama of the story. Alma's writing of the word 'Mum' on the stained window could be understood as a longing and desire for her mother. The image also captured the sense of isolation and loneliness of the girl. The stained window also provoked a fuzzy image which implied an aspect of uncertainty, thus hinting at the unresolved future of the girl. I included a point-of-view shot of Alma looking at water slipping through her hand as I intended this image to function as a metaphor for life slipping through one's fingers. The ephemeral aspect and the fragility of life are themes that have also been present in my previous work. The images of Alma lying on her bed were included in the

film, after this improvised image of Alma writing on the stained window. Although the final edit of the film differed in many ways from the script, the general sense of the story remained the same. The journey of Alma in the film is one of less hostility, than in, for example, *The Girl* or *La jaula de oro*. The film instead starts with distance between the characters, and Alma gradually develops a connection and a feeling of closeness towards her grandmother. The film closes with the embrace between the girl and her grandmother. The narrative therefore follows the conventions of mainstream drama, in the sense that it provides a feeling of closure and the main character makes an emotional journey in which she undergoes dramatic change. Alma's feeling of loss at the beginning of the film evolves into a feeling of connection towards the end of the film.

Alongside the narrative structure of a film and the visual language, an important element in establishing a feeling of identification in the audience is the performance of the actors. In *Alma y Esperanza* I was working with non-professional actors, as I did previously for *El Último Consejo*. Many directors have worked on films with non-professional actors. In Mexico Carlos Reygadas, Amat Escalante and Diego Quemada-Díez and Matias Meyer have often worked with non-professional actors. This practice was common in the Italian neo-realism and director Roberto Rosselini comments the following on working with non-professional actors:

> When you work with nonprofessional actors, each one has his own technique, so I don´t want to say that my technique is the only one, but I can tell what mine is. When I make the choice and want someone to play a role, I have the patience to be with him for lunch or dinner so I can discover what kind of work he is suited for. I discover what kind of gestures he does mainly, and when I do the scene, I do the scene thinking of it. So when we rehearse, I give him the suggestion to do himself. (Sherman 1987: 82)

In short he suggests that when working with non-professional actors, one technique is to give them directions to act as themselves. A similar comment is made by director John Cassavetes, as he states:

> I have the confidence that I can take anybody and have them give a good performance, because I don't think there's anything to acting except expressing, being able to converse. The mistakes that you make in your own life, in your own

> personality, are assets to the film. So if you can just convince somebody not to clean themselves up, and not to be someone that they're not and just be what they are in given circumstances, that is all that acting is to me. (Sherman 1987: 81)

This idea of asking a performer to be him or herself within the circumstances of the set, whether a professional actor or not, is a crucial element in different acting and directing techniques. In her book *Directing Actors* (1999), Weston gives different techniques to create convincing performances. Convincing here refers to a performance that supports the audience's identification with the character and promotes the suspension of disbelief.[146] Mainstream fictional cinema is largely built on this convention, which requires that for the duration of the film the audience will believe in the veracity of the world the film is creating. Mainstream cinema takes great efforts in not disrupting the investment of the audience in the imaginary world created by the film and the veracity of the film's world is carefully crafted through the narrative structure of the script, the visual language of the film and the performance of the actors.[147] Weston promotes a style of acting which she calls "being in the moment".[148] This concept departs from the idea that actors should have truthful reactions to real (emotional) events. An example of how this concept plays out can be found in the performance of Marina Abramovic during the exhibition 'The Artist is Present' at the MOMA in New York in 2010.[149] In the documentary *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (Matthew Akers 2012) the meaning of 'being in the moment' becomes very clear, when during a performance Marina Abramovic unexpectedly encounters Ulay. Abramovic and Ulay were involved in a relationship when they were young and had parted ways more than twenty years ago. Abramovic's reaction to Ulay's presence is a wonderful example of what Weston means when she discusses a truthful (not performed or staged) reaction to a real emotional event, in this case the unexpected reencounter between Abramovic and Ulay.

When casting my own daughter and my mother-in-law for *Alma y Esperanza*, I was indeed thinking of people who would somehow be themselves in the circumstances of the script. I needed to cast a girl who would be foreign to the Mixtec village, but simultaneously hold a connection to it through family ties and I needed to cast an elder woman who would

---

[146] Christopher Vogler elaborates on the suspension of disbelief in *The Writer's Journey* (2007).
[147] Other less mainstream styles, such as experimental cinema, try to make the audience reflect on this process, by breaking the established rules.
[148] Both in Theatre as in Cinema there are different schools of acting, such as Meisner, Stella Adler, and the method acting promoted by Stanislavski.
[149] More information can be found at the webpage of the Museum of Modern Art: http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/

have the experience of children who migrated from the village and who might have never met some of her grandchildren. As Dzaui and Esperanza indeed had these connections and experiences I was confident that they could reflect themselves in the circumstances of the story. In the direction of Dzaui and Esperanza, I tried to establish such truthful reactions to real (emotional) events. Creating the distance between the characters was not so difficult as both indeed were unable to communicate with each other and did not know each other that well. The reaction of shock and sorrow during Esperanza's telephone call, and Alma's sorrow and release at the end were more complicated scenes. In order to create a truthful reaction of shock and sorrow, I asked Armando to talk to his mother Esperanza about a particular painful event in his youth. Armando had told me that when he was a small boy, his elder sister migrated to Mexico City. His family was not aware that she had crossed all the way to the United States and was not able to communicate with them. During several years his mother did not hear a word from his sister. In 1985 a strong earthquake hit Mexico City and caused the death of approximately ten thousand people. Armando's mother started to fear that her daughter had been among the casualties and spent entire days grieving. While filming, Armando started to describe his own memories of that period to his mother while standing at the other side of the telephone booth. His mother was not expecting this and reacted truthfully to the recollection of the memory. Even though her daughter is alive and in good health and contact has been re-established many years ago, Armando's description of his memories made her recall her own pain and produced a real reaction of sorrow and tears. The identification of Esperanza with the character she was representing is what in turn enables the identification of an audience with the story.

Script Development and Directing Scenes

While working on this research project I participated in different film workshops and training programs. The Babylon Film Lab concentrated on script development, while the Director's program of the Binger Film Institute was specifically aimed at developing directing skills. Both workshops depart from a mainstream approach. The script advisors of the Babylon and Binger Filmlab are also working for and supporting films from the mainstream industry. Tutors such as Judith Weston, Mark Travis, Ken Dancyger, and Gyula Gazdag are well

known in the Hollywood realm.[150] At the same time, the development programs concentrate on film auteurs as they require applicants to have already developed an own 'Voice'.[151] Part of the Binger lab was dedicated to exploring an own visual language, another part was dedicated to directing actors and editing. The workshops on directing actors were imparted by Judith Weston and Mark Travis. At the end of the Binger program we were required to film and edit two scenes from our respective scripts as a directing exercise. I was participating in the workshop with the film *Dios No Estaba Ahí* and I was therefore working with two scenes from this script. Examining the rehearsal process and the shooting of these two scenes can give more insights regarding the role of identification not only in the story, but also in the process of filmmaking.

During the Binger workshops we practiced different rehearsal and directing techniques by staging the scene with professional Dutch actors. The other participants in the group, and the workshop tutor, would then comment on the effect the directions had on the performance of the actors. We worked with a combination of different techniques such as giving the actor a specific goal for a scene, or action verbs.[152] To explore the deeper layers of the characters, Weston asked us to talk to the actors about how the scene was connected to our own personal experiences. The task given to us was very similar to Rabiger's assignment to write down our three greatest problems in life and investigate how documentary making was connected to that.[153] The assignment also resembled the questions asked by Christina Lazaridi (Princeton University) during the Cine Qua Non Script Writing Lab, where she urged us to explore why we wanted to tell a particular story and to understand how the story was connected to our own life experiences.[154] The reason behind this was that in order for the actors to identify with the characters, they had to understand the drive of the director.

I had chosen to stage a scene with the characters Victoria and her daughter Lupita. In the script Victoria is a single mother and her daughter Lupita recently found out she is having

---

[150] Judith Weston wrote the well-known handbook *Directing Actors* (1996) and directors such as Alejandro González Iñarritu followed her course in Los Ángeles. Gyula Gazdag teaches scriptwriting at UCLA, and Mark Travis is author of the book *The Director's Journey* (1999).

[151] Filmlabs such as Sundance, Babylon, Cine Qua Non and Binger are aimed at emerging filmmakers with a strong own 'Voice' and who know what stories they want to tell and why.

[152] These techniques are also described in *Directing Actors* (1999) by Weston. Action verbs have an effect on someone else, for example: to seduce, to scold, to belittle, to charm, etc. These verbs can be given to actors as an assignment in a particular scene. As these actions are real actions they are bound to provoke a real reaction in the acting partner and produce the effect of 'being in the moment'. A goal refers to an instruction given to the actor to provoke a specific reaction in the acting partner, such as: make her / him smile, make him/ her leave the room, etc.

[153] In 1998 I assisted the VISIONS II workshop organized by CILECT for documentary students across Europe. One of our advisors was Michael Rabiger from Chicago University.

[154] I participated with Armando Bautista in the Cine Qua Non Lab in 2011 with the script *Where The Sky Rests*.

an affair. When Lupita comes home she is upset and mother and daughter have a discussion. Later in the script Lupita will run away from home with the idea of leaving to Mexico City. The scene is set in the context of an Indigenous village in Mexico. As preparation for the scene I chose to bring different photographs of my mother's hometown more than 20 years ago. I started out by showing the photographs to the Dutch actresses and telling them about my mother's hometown Chalcatongo.[155] I told them my mother had left her own village at the age of seventeen to make a life in Mexico City. I also told them about a cousin who left the village for the United States in order to escape from a marriage filled with domestic violence. My cousin left her two year old son behind with her parents, and until today she has not come back to the village. Her son, who is now 21 years old, has never seen her in person. I also told them that Armando, my partner and the principal writer of the script, left his village at the age of ten to go to school in Mexico City and after that he did not see his parents for six years. In this context, the conflict between mother and daughter and the mother's fear of her daughter leaving for Mexico City acquires other dimensions. The discussion between Victoria and Lupita is very different to a regular mother-daughter discussion in a regular Dutch family. Relationships between children and parents are different in a place with extreme poverty, malnutrition, domestic violence and multiple issues derived out of the pressure to survive on a daily basis. For both Dutch actresses, this setting and context was extremely foreign and thus difficult to access. Nevertheless, their performance in the scene changed drastically after our conversation. They tried to relate and to find experiences that would somehow touch upon the ones I was sharing with them.

At the end of the workshop I filmed the scene with Mexican actresses Ángeles Cruz and Alhely Bautista. Ángeles comes from the village San Miguel in the Mixtec area, a neighbouring village of Chalcatongo. When discussing the scene between mother and daughter, the conversation developed quite differently than during the Binger rehearsals. I did not need to show her pictures of my mother's village, as Ángeles had her own recollections and memories of the place. Instead, we talked about how our villages had changed in the course of time and tried to find events and places that we had in common in our childhood memories. When I told Ángeles that my mother had left her village at the age of seventeen to work as a household servant in the city, Ángeles had similar stories in her direct family circle. While during the Binger rehearsals I had to extensively describe the cultural and social

[155] For this exercise The Binger invited professional Dutch actors to rehearse a scene with participants. Among the actors were Waldemar Torenstra, Dragan Bakema and Daniel Boissevain. For this scene I had the pleasure to work with actresses Hannah Hoekstra and Dagmar Slagmolen.

context in which the story was taking place, Ángeles was completely familiar with this context. Accessing similar experiences was therefore much easier for her. The performance of Ángeles was consequently very different to that of the Dutch actresses and made much more sense as it was embedded in the fabric of the story and the context of the place.

The second scene I filmed at the Binger lab is one in which Tino, the main character, visits Victoria to prove his masculinity. In the script Tino has had a fight with his friend Alarii and is left with feelings he does not understand. He decides to ask Victoria to sleep with him in order to prove to himself that 'he is a real man'. In the script the people of the village gossip that Victoria is a prostitute, although this is not the case. Victoria's need for intimacy leads her to accept Tino's advances, but the encounter between Tino and Victoria turns out differently to how Tino expected. Both in the writing of the script and in the staging of the scene and in discussing the visuals I was searching for ways to express the need for intimacy in both characters and the connection they establish towards the end of the scene. The actor playing Tino for the scene is Tenoch Huerta. We had talked extensively about both racism and homophobia in Mexico and our personal experiences with racism and exclusion. Eventually, we rehearsed the scenes several times in which we tried to construct greater distance at the beginning of the scene and develop towards a feeling of intimacy. At the end of the rehearsal Tenoch observed that he felt as if he had just met his best friend for life. That would be indeed the feeling Tino should have at the end of the scene. Through the physical contact between them, the characters had developed a certain bond. Both Tenoch and Ángeles had more access to the world of the characters in the script than the Dutch actors I had been rehearsing and staging the scene with, because of the simple reason that they had personal experiences similar to, and embodied knowledge of, the world portrayed in the script. Owing to being foreign to the world of the script the Dutch actors needed much more information to be able to understand and identify with the characters. Ángeles and Tenoch therefore had more resources to draw from when playing the scene. The embodied experience of an actor thus plays an important role in the process of identification with a character. An aspect of performing a role is the ability to find ways to identify with the character and obviously this is easier if one has lived through similar experiences as the ones portrayed by the film. Certainly the physical appearance of Tenoch and Ángeles also contributed to the realism of their performance. Nevertheless, even with a great performance, the Dutch actors would have looked out of place in these scenes because of their physical appearance. In my work, the reason to cast Ángeles Cruz, Tenoch Huerta, and non-professional actors such as Ubaldo López was not only motivated by reasons of realism, however. As mentioned in

chapter one, the presence of people with an Indigenous appearance is limited in Mexican media. To begin with, there are only a limited amount of stories with Indigenous characters and quite often Indigenous characters were, and sometimes still are, performed by non-Indigenous actors with non-Indigenous features.[156] In my work I have made the choice to cast as much as possible performers, both professional and non-professional, with Indigenous features for Indigenous characters. The reason for this was mainly political and ideological. Shohat and Stam explore the political and ideological aspects of casting extensively in a chapter of *Unthinking Eurocentrism - Multiculturalism and the Media* (1994) and with my work I have wanted to contribute to a greater presence and visibility of Indigenous Peoples in the media in Mexico. One of the exceptions to this idea is my casting of Dzaui Jansen as Alma in *Alma y Esperanza*. The casting of Dzaui was mainly motivated by pragmatic reasons. I needed to cast a girl who would belong to an urban setting, but have strong ties to an Indigenous community. I also needed to cast a girl whom I could film both in the Indigenous village as well as in the Netherlands or the United States without requiring arranging the travel of parents or other supervision. While I questioned myself for a long time on my casting decision regarding *Alma y Esperanza*, I think the presence of Dzaui in the film adds another layer of meaning to the story. Being my daughter and growing up surrounded by Indigenous family members, Dzaui's presence in the film questions and disrupts preconceived purist notions of Indigenous Identity.[157]

The transformative aspect of film is therefore present throughout the whole filmmaking process. While an audience identifies with characters who undergo a process of transformation when watching a film, actors and crew participate in a process of identification and transformation in order to tell the story. The film itself changes, shifts and transforms from the script phase to the shooting phase and to the final edit, under the influence of different creative participants, such as the director, actors, directors of photography, sound designers and editors who all contribute their own particular vision. In the process of making a film, the cast and crew members identify with (certain aspects of) the story. Being able to access the personal experiences of the director, permits the actors to identify with the story and to develop their performances. Important questions in the process of making a film are therefore: Why do I want to make this film? How am I connected to this

[156] An example is the film *Tizoc* (Ismael Rodriguez 1957) in which non-Indigenous actor Pedro Infante performs the role of an Indigenous character in brown-face. Also actors such as Dolores Heredia, Adriana Barraza and Damian Alcazar have been made to look darker to represent a particular social class within Mexican cinema. As elaborated in previous chapters, there exists within the Mexican society a certain relation between race, class and ethnicity which is in turn reflected in the media.

[157] This aspect reminds of the Australian Aboriginal film *Beneath Clouds* (Ivan Sen 2002).

story? Indigenous filmmakers, like other Accented filmmakers, will probably choose stories that reflect and express the conflicting worlds in which they live, explore the problems common to Indigenous communities, or address the different forms of violence and exclusion to which Indigenous Peoples are subjected. These experiences are present in the life of most Indigenous filmmakers and they are therefore likely to draw material from these experiences to tell their stories.

Future Roads and Unexpected Journeys

The theme of journey and travel in my work is strongly related to my own wandering experience, but also the process of filmmaking is in retrospect a journey in itself. Each film tends to shift and transform during the creative process, but also the filmmaker somehow travels from one film to the next. Certainly a filmmaker has different experiences and possibly also different knowledge and skills before and after the making of a particular film. When I first heard Rabiger's recommendation to explore how our film plans were connected to our three greatest problems in life, I considered this an absurd exercise and it took me many films to understand the purpose and meaning of this assignment. Reflecting on the common themes and threads in my work, I can now clearly see the value of exploring personal dilemmas in relation to film plans. Film Director Claude Sautet observes in this respect:

> Seeing your films again, you also discover all the things that they have in common, all the things that you systematically put into them without being aware of it…The sets change, the characters too, but the same underlying themes return. (Tirard 2002: 34)

Looking back at my work, I can see my filmmaking has changed in different ways. For example, I have made a clear movement from documentary to fiction. Coming from documentary, when starting out on fiction projects I resorted to documentary techniques such as shooting on location and working with non-professional actors. In this sense, my own work developed an aesthetic more akin to Third Cinema and Independent Cinema. The subject matter of most of my work revolves around migration and around the contrast between urban and rural environments. A certain kind of nostalgia is present in several of my

films.[158] Most of my work since the film academy has been set in Mexico. However, my latest work, *Bouleversement* (2015) is a short film set in the Netherlands. At first sight this film seems very different to my previous work, but at the same time there is a clear continuation of particular elements and themes.

The aspect of travelling remains clearly present in *Bouleversement* as it is a short film about wandering and the main character spends most of the short film walking around, wanting to travel to Paris. Nevertheless, the setting is clearly different, as the short film is explicitly set in an urban environment, unlike most of my work. Partly as a consequence of this different setting, the aesthetics of this film is also quite different to that of my previous work. Whereas in *El Rebozo de mi Madre*, *Alma y Esperanza*, and *El Últimо Consejo* the images were defined by the mountains of the Mixtec region and the clear blue sky, the images of *Bouleversement* are clearly outlined by the geometric lines of urban space and buildings. In the filming of *Bouleversement* I explicitly tried to emphasize geometric lines in the composition of the images. A different element that is present throughout most of the visual language of the film, is camera movement, whereas most of my previous films are characterized by the absence of camera movement. There are manifold reasons for this adjustment. Again, the different filming style was to a certain extent motivated by the change of environment. Whereas the lack of motion was somehow related to the pace of rural life, the stir of city life seemed to require more camera activity. A very different and less profound reason was that in between my previous work and *Bouleversement* I actually acquired the necessary skills and also gear to adequately perform certain camera movements. As in previously for *El Rebozo de mi Madre* and *Alma y Esperanza*, I was doing the camerawork myself for *Bouleversement*.

All my intentions to perform camera movements in the shooting of *El Rebozo de mi Madre* disappeared miserably in the editing room, leaving me convinced that I should never embark on this endeavour again. But since filming and editing *El Rebozo de mi Madre* many things have changed. It should be noted that this was the first film for which I employed the camera myself, whilst in the film academy I had always worked with a director of photography. At that time I had therefore only limited knowledge and hardly any experience handling a camera. It is therefore hardly surprising that my first camera movements turned out to be useless in the editing stage. *Alma y Esperanza* was the first film for which I employed the camera while using a DSLR camera. While I had worked on commissioned

[158] *Una nave per tornare* and *El Rebozo de mi Madre*

videos after shooting *El Rebozo*, I had always worked with a prosumer camcorder (the Canon XL1). Shooting on a DSLR was quite different due to the size of the camera, the absence of a viewfinder, the possibility to change lenses, and much more. In a way, shooting for *Alma y Esperanza* was akin to handling a camera for the first time. Having learned from my experience with my failed camera movements in the cutting room of *El Rebozo de mi Madre,* I opted for a more cautious approach from the beginning and shot most of the film from a tripod, avoiding camera movements as much as possible. An unforeseen technical inconvenience during the shoot of *Alma y Esperanza* was the narrow depth of field of the camera lens. Because I liked the visual texture, I had opted for a 1.4 USM/50 mm lens, which had as a consequence that only a very limited part of the shot was in focus. I had many issues trying to focus and in the end several unintended out of focus shots had to be used in the final edit of the film.

Since *Alma y Esperanza* I have shot many other documentaries and commissioned videos on the DSLR. I also worked with different directors of photography who shot on a DSLR: *El Último Consejo* was shot by cinematographer Sergei Saldivar Tanaka, the Binger scene with Tenoch and Ángeles by cinematographer Guido van Gennep, and the second Binger rehearsal scene by cinematographer Ignacio Miranda. Observing the work of professional cinematographers gave me more insight as to how to use the camera. For example, Miranda decided to use a slider for the entire scene thus reinforcing the conflict and tension between the characters in the scene. Additionally, during the Binger Film Lab I edited both scenes myself, under the guidance of editor Molly Malene Stensgaard. This experience provided me with a more direct and thus greater understanding of what kind of shots are crucial in the edit. Thus, when I started shooting *Bouleversement* I had developed many more camera skills than when I shot *Alma y Esperanza*, I had acquired a different and certainly greater understanding of how to plan and execute certain shots, and I felt much more confident in handling the camera. One of the factors that is responsible for the difference in camera style between *Alma y Esperanza* and *Bouleversement* is hence an increased proficiency in the handling of the camera, something that could only be acquired through practice, time and experience.

While it is evident that acting is an embodied practice, it should be noted that the other aspects of filmmaking, and thus also directing, are embodied activities which are dependent on skill, but also on physical and emotional abilities and health. Film director and associate professor David Irving dedicates a special chapter to ‘Health’ in his *Fundamentals*

of Film Directing (2010). He observes about the embodied aspects of filmmaking the following:

> A fit director controls the pace better, commands with more authority, and communicates with clarity. The entire focus of the project is funnelled through the director, and the results will reflect that. (Irving 2010: 85)

Irving elaborates on his argument that good physical health influences the psychology of filmmaking and contends that this last aspect is crucial when directing a film. He states:

> Just as important as physical health is emotional health. A positive frame of mind is necessary to direct a film. Depression and cloudy thinking go hand in glove with fatigue, poor diet, and lack of sleep. Even so the most debilitating factor may be fear. Fear of failing, fear of not making the pages, fear of not being in control. Directors arriving on set to hear the director of photography ask: "What's the first shot?" often dart to the toilet to throw up. Fear is natural. Vomit if you must, but muster the courage to perform the task at hand. (ibid. 84)

Irving points to different embodied and physical aspects of filmmaking, such as fatigue but also emotions, such as fear. Of course confidence also increases with practice and fear diminishes accordingly. My decision to operate the camera on *Bouleversement* was thus also the result of increased confidence acquired through practice.

Throughout working on this research project I discovered that as a filmmaker I had been above all concerned with the narrative structure of a story and much less involved with the visual aesthetic of a work. Therefore, in *Bouleversement* I wanted to explicitly experiment more with visual artfulness. Of course, the most important aspect to influence the aesthetic of *Bouleversement* remained the story. Just as all my other films, the story of *Bouleversement* had its own journey. The idea for the film arose with an image I had shot accidently at an Amsterdam fair. In order to practice with the camera I had shot some images of the Christmas fair and unexpectedly captured a flock of birds. Since filming this shot I thought of ways to construct a story around the image. The movement of the Ferris wheel in this image incited me to think of a story in which the character was undergoing emotional turmoil and this led me to think of adolescence. An increased awareness of the need to tell stories close to my own personal experiences reinforced the idea of constructing a story centered on the identity

crisis provoked by adolescence. As the story explores this aspect of identity crisis, I decided to include imagery such as window reflections, glass and blurred or unfocused shots. The notion that in adolescence identity is under constant change and motion required a camera style that would accentuate this. The movement of the Ferris wheel was, furthermore, the source of inspiration for the title and for the presence of movement in the camera style. I tried to maintain the camera as much as possible in movement and resorted to a slider, but also to a DSLR stabilizer. However, *Bouleversement* is not only a shift in style or approach, many elements of my previous work are still present. I continued to work with untrained actors on existing locations and improvised many of the scenes based on an initial script that was adapted along the shoot and edit. This approach in the Mexican context in a way continued Third Cinema propositions which were strongly linked to communitarian filmmaking practices; however, in a European context they shared more similarities with film currents such as the French Nouvelle Vague or Italian Neorealism. Being aware of this I decided to film in black and white to somehow reference these film currents. It is also no coincidence that the girl in the film wants to go to Paris. For this same reason I tried to avoid explicit markers of time, such as smartphones. But a different reason for opting to make the film in black and white is because I considered adolescence to be a time of extremes – black and white photography would allow for shots with more contrast.

Conclusions

When looking back at the different works that comprise the corpus of this thesis, I can see many shifts, but also a persistence of style and themes. A noticeable transition is, for example, my increased awareness of gender. Whereas *Una nave per tornare* focuses on a male protagonist and would not in any way pass the Bechdel test, *Alma y Esperanza*, *Bouleversement*, *Where the Sky Rests* and *Tiempo de Lluvia* all have a female protagonist.[159] Another discernible development is my growing interest in family relations, specifically in the tensions between parents and children. This theme is already present in *Una nave per tornare*, wherein Cuticchio recounts the clash between him and his father, while simultaneously continuing his father's legacy, but it is not an explicit theme of the film. In *Alma y Esperanza*, *Bouleversement*, *Where the Sky Rests* and *Tiempo de Lluvia* the tensions

[159] This informal test to screen films on sexism is based on a 1985 cartoon by Alison Bechdel. In the cartoon a character states that she only watches films in which there are at least two women who have a conversation about something else than a man. The film festival Bluestocking Film Series only presents films that 'pass' this test. *Alma y Esperanza* screened at the Bluestocking Film Series in 2015.

and conflicts between family members are the explicit focus of the story. This is also the result of attending different labs and workshops which led to a more profound consciousness of how our personal experiences as filmmakers shape the filmmaking process. I came to realize and understand the necessity of laying bare and exposing oneself in the process of filmmaking in order to access the story.

Filmmaking is hence a journey in itself; both the process from script to finished edit, as well as the trajectory of the filmmaker during the making of a film and from one film to the next, are transformative processes comparable to travelling distances. Filmmaking as a form of storytelling is, as Anzaldúa notes, a transformative experience or a nomadic activity. Filmmaking, like writing or drawing can be seen as an embodied activity with different kinds of bodily effects, while simultaneously the result of embodied endeavour, such as acting, camera operation and directing. Many film directors acknowledge the importance of being open to an intuitive approach to decision making, while on the set. For example Sydney Pollack describes this stage as follows:

> It's important not to intellectualize the filmmaking process too much. And particularly not during the actual shooting. I might think a lot about the film before I make it, and certainly after, but I try not to think too much when I'm actually on the set. The way I work is that I try to determine as early as possible what the theme of the movie is, what the central idea is being expressed through the story. Once I know that, once I figured out a unifying principle, then any decision I make on the set will be influenced by that and will therefore fall into a certain logic. And to me, the success of a film depends on whether or not the choices you make on the set, as a director, remain true to the original idea. (Tirard 2002: 16)

During the shoot of a film, directors, cast and crew need to be 'in the moment' which is a state of heightened sensory perception. Weston, Travis and Lenore de Koven all stress the importance of 'being in the moment' both for actors and directors to reach a convincing performance. This state of 'being in the moment', as noted by Weston in *Directing Actors* (1996) and by Travis in the *Director's Key* (1999), consists of intuitive reactions to true emotional events. A very simple example of this mechanism can be distinguished in the short film *Bouleversement*. In the scene between the girl and the youngster I used the first take. The actor, Jelte Ramos, was obviously nervous for this first take and smiles nervously at the beginning of his shot. Nevertheless, he does not look at the camera, nor does he stop his

performance, but instead uses the energy to produce a flirtatious scene. In this same scene in one of the takes an unexpected train approached; instead of cutting the scene, we continued shooting, thus incorporating the train's arrival in the scene.

Also the development of the director during the filmmaking process as well as in between films can be understood as a journey or nomadic movement; this surely also applies to other filmmaking aspects, such as acting or cinematography. In the filmmaker's journey films are realms that are inhabited momentarily by the cast and crew and the characters of the story and as such constitute temporary homes. In the construction of these provisional spaces a filmmaker invests previous knowledge, skills and personal experiences which needs to be shared with the participating cast and crew in order to access the motivation and drive for this particular story. If I look back at my own development as a filmmaker since finishing the film academy I can clearly distinguish recurring themes and subjects, such as the contrast between rural and urban environments, the preoccupation with holding on to traditions and a pervasive sense of nostalgia. At the same time, I can discern a movement towards fiction and towards more personal stories focusing on family fragmentation and conflict, and an increased presence of female characters. The script of *Tiempo de Lluvia* has a female protagonist and centres on the fragmentation of family relations due to migration. It also assigns a central role to parenthood and the painful relation between parents and children, but also between siblings. The film is strongly rooted in both the writer's experiences as a migrant as well as my own, but also on our own relationships. For the writing of this script we tried to explore and express the more painful moments of our personal histories, just like Lazaridi, Weston and Rabiger have all encouraged. *Tiempo de Lluvia* mixes even in the incipient script phase elements of documentary with fiction, a mode of production I have come to feel very comfortable with. The script is multilingual in the sense that it is Spanish and Mixtec spoken, reflecting the present day cultural context of the region. Although the film has specific protagonists, the story is also firmly embedded in a Mixtec community and presents issues and concerns of present day Indigenous Peoples in Mexico, such as migration, fragmented families, labour exploitation in the cities and the imminent loss of language and traditions. The script and preparation for this film are a consistent expression of a distinct and particular voice that is both personal as well as rooted in the Mixtec cultural context.

This particular 'Voice' could only be attained through the process of making all the different films in the presented portfolio. 'Voice' cannot precede the making of the different films, as it is through the practice of filmmaking that a particular voice is articulated. 'Voice' is hence the outcome of the active practice of filmmaking in combination with personal

experience and reflection on one's own learning curve and can therefore only be distinguished in retrospect when there exists a collection of work. Nonetheless, the filmmaker's voice is never a finished, fixed or unitary entity, as it is always subject to change and development and on an endless journey wherein the filmmaker keeps configuring temporary, imaginary homes in the creation of cinematic texts. Braidotti observes in her introduction to *Nomadic Subjects* that identity is a retrospective notion. She compares identity to a cartography of the places where we have once travelled:

> The nomad's identity is a map of where s/he has already been; s/he can always reconstruct it a posteriori, as a set of steps in an itinerary. But there is no triumphant *cogito* supervising the contingency of the self; the nomad stands for a moveable diversity, the nomad's identity is an inventory of traces. (Braidotti 1994: 14)

A filmmaker's 'Voice' can be seen in a very similar way, as it is an expression of the filmmaker's cinematic identity. In that sense, the authorial voice is also a retrospective notion. Voice is not laid down in advance or the result of previously fixed ideas; instead voice is a collection of threads that link the different works of a filmmaker together. These threads remain in continuous motion, and 'Voice" is thus in constant development. It is the expression of lived experiences in films. It is in retrospect that one can distinguish recurring themes and preoccupations in different films and that one can see a relation between them. It is in retrospect that one is able to recognize the driving fears and desires, the visions of life and humanity that have shaped a body of film works.

Conclusions

Indigenous Cinema does not refer to an aesthetic style or approach, but is a term that can only be meaningful if used in relation to decolonizing practices. Indigenous Peoples are not homogeneous groups and encompass a great variety of different cultures with different colonial histories and complex situations of colonial realities in the present day. Nor is Indigenous Cinema a homogenous, clearly defined style or methodology. Indigenous Cinema includes both communitarian video practices as well as individual Indigenous film authors. Indigenous Peoples define themselves in different ways based on a variety of elements, such as territory, language, race, ethnicity, and tribal affiliations depending on each respective case. As such, Indigenous Cinema cannot be understood as a genre with particular cultural or aesthetic characteristics. The term Indigenous Cinema has above all a political and discursive value, as it designates the audio-visual production of Indigenous filmmakers from around the world. Since Indigenous Peoples are living a continuing form of colonization, the term has primarily a decolonizing objective and serves to give visibility to the self-expression and representation by Indigenous Peoples through the use of cinema. The term should not be taken as a strict definition connoting some kind of cultural essence or authentic origin. Indigenous Cinema is not only heterogeneous in cultural terms, but also includes many diverse genres and film forms, as it can refer to both fiction and documentary, politically engaged cinema, art films or even mainstream films. It can refer to films and videos made by Indigenous communities within Indigenous communities, that primarily address issues that are of importance to the community, but it can also refer to the work of Indigenous filmmakers working either within or outside their communities. The common denominator between Indigenous films is that they were produced by an Indigenous filmmaker. Indigeneity and Indigenous identity are understood differently in different parts of the world, and many discussions have surrounded this term. The approach proposed by Alfred and Corntassel is probably the most workable, when they state that the Indigenous identity of the filmmaker can be understood as a conscious identification with his or her Indigenous community and cultural heritage.

Indigenous Cinema can be understood through the framework of Accented Cinema. The Indigenous identity of the filmmaker provides the film with a distinct Accent. Indigenous authors are likely to tell stories derived from their specific realities. As Indigenous filmmakers have been confronted by particular issues concerning the Indigenous communities they belong to, their work will probably address these issues. Indigenous

filmmakers, therefore, quite often share particular concerns with respect to social marginality, discrimination, cultural continuity, sustainability, and the survival of language. Recurring themes and issues can be the loss of language and tradition, and the contrast or conflict between rural and urban environments. Other recurring themes are marginalization, discrimination, exploitation, and different forms of cultural and state violence. But these themes are the consequence of specific concerns and contexts, and can differ accordingly. As being Indigenous means resisting the persistence of present day structures of colonialism, Indigenous filmmakers often inscribe themselves and/or their communities in their films as a form of self-representation. Representing Indigenous identity and Indigenous community has an important decolonizing effect. This self-representation can take up many different forms. Indigenous communities often participate in the production of the films. Community experience can also be an important element in the narrative structure and aesthetic elements of Indigenous films. Yet, as filmmakers they also belong to a community of filmmakers. This community is obviously diverse and composed of independent filmmakers from around the world, figuring in different constellations and often shaped by (niche) film festivals. Filmmakers influence each other directly and indirectly through their works. In Mexico, the festivals *Cine Ambulante*, *Cine en Tu Comunidad*, *Campamento de Cine Itinerante*, *Ecocinema* and other similar initiatives are bringing art house cinema to remote villages and promoting the work of emerging Indigenous filmmakers. It is good to see how different Indigenous filmmakers are working together and developing new initiatives. Indigenous film festivals and training initiatives can play an important role in forging those bonds. At the same time, the inclusion in international non-niche festivals can provide different perspectives, bonds and relations and stimulate the more positive aspects of globalization.

'Voice' in the context of Indigenous Cinema can thus be understood as the gaining of access to self-representation, as Indigenous Cinema is always engaged in a post-colonial or decolonizing context. Nevertheless, 'Voice' can also be understood as the very distinct cinematic expression of an Indigenous author related to his/her personal experience. For the development of 'Voice' an active practice and parallel reflection is needed: 'Voice' cannot precede the filmic practice. As Fitzgerald stated during her talk for the Talent community of the Berlinale 2013, finding an own 'Voice' as an Indigenous Filmmaker is of great creative and political importance. 'Voice' is the result of personal artistic choices with regard to subject matter, narrative form and aesthetic. While this is true for all filmmakers, for filmmakers belonging to a marginal group, such as Indigenous filmmakers, these choices obtain political dimensions. In my search for an own 'Voice' as a filmmaker, I can trace the

films I have made, the subjects I have chosen and the way I have addressed those subjects in a cinematic language. Owing to being a migrant and feeling connected to the Indigenous community of my mother, my own past work rather unconsciously touches upon matters of social inequality, marginality and conflicts between urban and rural lifestyles. I am interested in matters of exclusion, marginalization and segregation and my future work more explicitly deals with these subjects. At the same time, my work is permeated by stories of fragmented families. My own particular film practice is thus informed by both my specific cultural heritage, a Mixtec Accent so to speak, and by very personal experiences. 'Voice' could be understood similarly to Braidotti's concept of nomadic identity, as a "retrospective notion, a cartography of places I have been" (Braidotti 1994:14). The 'Voice' of a filmmaker consists of the different roads that connect the temporarily created imaginary homes of the wandering storyteller.

Bibliography

Ahmad, Aijaz. 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory''. *Social Text* 17. 1987.

Alcoff, Linda Martin. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Alfred, Taiaiake and Jeff Corntassel. 'Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary. Colonialism'. *Politics of Identity*- IX. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 1.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.* (1987). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

Ávila, María: *El Efecto del Capital Económico, Social y Humano en el Proceso de Tránsito que Realizan los Migrantes Guatemaltecos, en Busca del Sueño Americano*. PhD Thesis, Leiden University, 2012.

Bal, Mieke. *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.

Banks, Markus. *Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, 2008.

Barthes, Roland. 'Death of the Author'. *Roland Barthes, Image, Music,* Text (1977): 142-148. New York: Hill And Wang, 1977.

Bautista García, Armando. *La Identidad Indígena en Tiempos de Globalización: Una Mirada desde el Arte*. Madrid: Editorial Academia Española, 2012.

Bazin, André. 'Il neige sur le Cinéma'. *L'Écran Francais,* 140:8. Paris: Éditions de l'étole, 1948.

Ben Jelloun, Tahar. *L'Enfant de Sable.* Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1985.

Bennett, Bruce, Marc Furstenau, Adrian Mackenzie (eds.). *Cinema and Technology: Cultures, Theories, Practices.* Michigan: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Berghahn, Daniela. 'No Place Like Home? Or Impossible Homecoming in the Films of Faith Akin'. *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film, 4,3.* 2006: 141-157.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London/New York: Routlegde, 1994.

Blaser, Mario, Harvey A. Feit and Glenn McRae (eds.). *In the Way of Development: Indigenous Peoples, Life Projects and Globalization.* London: ZedBooks, 2004.

Bloomberg, Kristin M. Mapel. *In Tracing Arachne's Web, Myth and Feminist Fiction.* Florida: University Press of Florida, 2003.

Bohn, Diane K. 'Lifetime Physical and Sexual Abuse, Substance Abuse, Depression, and

Suicide Attempts among Native American Women'. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 24 (3), 2003: 333-352.

Bordwell, David. *Film Guide to La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

Bordwell, David, Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger, Kristin Thompson. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*. London/New York: Routledge, 1985.

Braidotti, Rosi: *Patters of Dissonance: A Study of Women and Contemporary Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

--- *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Churchill, Ward. *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indian*. San Francisco: City Light Books, 1998.

Churampi, Adriana. 'Los otros en Ushanan Jampi y el Campeón de la muerte de Enrique López Albújar'. *Agua. Revista de Cultura Andina* 6. Lima: Centro de Estudios SCAF, Centro de Capacitación Arguedianos, 2012.

Cisneros, Sandra, *Caramelo*. Estados Unidos/ México: Knof, 2003.

Combos, Richard.' Living Rooms'. *Sight and Sound* 17 (8), (August), 2007: 42-45.

Corbey, Raymond. *Wildheid en Beschaving. De Europese Verbeelding van Afrika.* Baarn: Ambo, 1989.

Curran Bernard, Sheila. *Documentary Storytelling for Video and Film Makers.* Oxford: Focal Press, 2004.

Cuticchio, Mimmo. *L'Urlo del Monstruo.* Palermo: Figlio D'Arte Cuticchio, 1993.

D'Argenio, Maria Chiara. 'A contemporary Andean Type: The Representation of the Indigenous World in Claudia Llosa's Films'. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 8:1, 2013: 20-42.

Dancyger, Ken. *Global Scriptwriting.* Burlington: Focal Press, 2001.

Dancyger, Ken, Jeff Rush. *Alternative Scriptwriting: Successfully Breaking the Rules*. Burlington: Focal Press, 2007: 314.

Deloria, Vine Jr. *Custer Died for your Sins: An Indian Manifesto.* New York: Macmillan, 1988.

Dennison, Stephanie, Song Hwee Lim (eds.). *Remapping World Cinema: Identity, Culture*

and Politics Film. London: Wallflower Press, 2006.

Diaz lópez, Marina. '¿Dónde Están los hombres? Crisis de la Masculinidad Mexicana en Y Tu Mamá También'. *Negociando Identidades, Traspasando Fronteras*. Susanne Igler and Thomas Stauder (eds.). Vervuart: Erlangen, 2008: 137-154.

Duran, Eduardo, Bonnie Duran, Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Susan Yellow Horse Davis. 'Healing the American Indian Soul Wound'. *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (Yael Danieli ed.). New York: Plenum Press, 1998: 341-354.

Ezra, Elizabeth, Terry Rowden. *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London/New York: Routledge, 2006.

Elsaesser, Thomas, Malte Hagener. *Film Theory an Introduction through the Senses*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Fabian, Johannes. *Times and the Other*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Faris, James. 'A response to Terence Turner'. *Anthropology Today* 9 (1). 1993: 12-13.

Field, Syd. *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting: A Step-by-step Guide from Concept to Finished Script*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1984.

Fox, Jonathan, Gaspar Rivera Salgado (eds). *Indigenous Migrants in the United States.* San Diego: University of California, 2004.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina*. Siglo XXI, 1971.

Galtung, Johan. 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research'. *Journal of Peace Research,* 6 (3). 1969: 167-191.

García Espinosa, Julio. 'For an Imperfect Cinema'. *New Latin American Cinema, Vol I. Theory, Practices and Transcontinental Articulations*. Michael T. Martin (ed.). Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997.

Gabriel, Teshome. 'Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films'. *Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*. Philip Simpson, Andrew Utterson and K. J. Shepherdson (eds.). London: Routledge. 2004: 355-369.

Giago,Tim. *Children Left Behind: Dark Legacy of Indian Mission Boarding Schools*. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishing, 2006.

Gilbert, Helen. 'Indigeneity, Time and the Cosmopolitics of Postcolonial Belonging in the Atomic Age'. *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 15 (2). 2013: 195-210.

Ginsburg, Faye. 'Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?'. *Current Anthropology* 6 (1). 1991: 92-115.

Guillot, Matthieu. 'La Neige et le Silence'. *Snow, Forest, Silence: The Finnish Tradition of Semiotics*. Eero Tarasti (ed.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Gustafsson, Maria-Therese. 'Inclusión o cooptación de comunidades indígenas en la política local. Reflexiones desde los Andes peruanos'. *Etat et Nation II* (20e siécle). 16, 2008.

Gottlieb, Sydney. 'Citizen Kane: American Heroes and Witnesses'. *North Dakota Quarterly* (Fall 1992). 1992: 105-115.

Guneratne Anthony R., Wilma Dissanayake (eds.). *Rethinking Third Cinema.* London/New York: Routledge, 2003.

Helland, Janice. 'Aztec Imagery in Frida Khalo's Paintings: Indigeneity and Political Commitment'. *Woman's Art Journal*, Xi, 2. 1990-91: 8-13.

hooks, bell (1988). 'Straightening Our Hair'. *Z Magazine*. New York, 1998.

Houwen, Janna. *Mapping Moving Media: Film and Video*. PhD thesis. Leiden University, 2014.

Hughey, Matthew. *The white savior film: content critics, and consumption.* Temple University Press, 2014.

Ingold, Tim. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description.* New York: Routlegde, 2011.

Irigaray, Luce C. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Irving, David K. *Fundamentals of Film Directing*. North Carolina: MacFarland, 2010.

Jameson, Frederic. 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism'. *Social Text*, 15. 1986: 65-88.

Jansen, Maarten E.R.G.N., Laura N.K. van Broekhoven (eds.). *Mixtec Writing and Society / Escritura de Ñuu Dzaui.* Amsterdam: KNAW Press, 2008.

Jansen, Maarten E.R.G.N, Pérez Jiménez. *Voces del Dzhaha Dzavui (mixteco clásico). Análisis y Conversión del Vocabulario de fray Francisco de Alvarado (1593)*. México: Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca y Colegio Superior para la Educación Integral Intercultural de Oaxaca & Yuu Núú A.C., 2009.

Karlyn, Kathleen Rowe. *Unruly Girls, Unrepentant Mothers: Redefining Feminist on Screen*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011.

Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn. *Celluloid Indians-Native Americans and Film.* Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Knopf, Kerstin. *Decolonizing the Lens of Power: Indigenous Films in North America.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.

Kydd, Elspeth. *The Critical Practice of Film:* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Lebeau, Vicky. *Childhood and Cinema.* London: Reaktion Books, 2008.

Lim, Song Hwee. 'Speaking in Tongues: Ang Lee, Accented Cinema, Hollywood'. *Theorizing World Cinema*. Lúcia Nagib, Chris Perriam, and Rajinder Dudrah (eds). London: I.B.Tauris, 2012:130

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London/New York: Routlegde, 1998.

Lopez García, Ubaldo. *Sa'vi. Discursos Ceremoniales de Yutsa To'on (Apoala)*. PhD Thesis. Leiden University, 2007.

Lury, Karen. 'Children in an Open World: Mobility as Ontology in New Iranian and Turkish Cinema'. *Feminist Theory*, 11(3). 2010: 283-294.

Mani, Lata. 'Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning'. *Cultural Studies*. Laurence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler (eds). New York: Routlegde, 1992.

Martin, Michael T. *New Latin American Cinema, Vol I. Theory and Transcontinental Articulations.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997.

Mason, Peter. *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other.* London: Routlegde, 1990.

Mc Kee, Robert. *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.

Menchú Tum, Rigoberta and Elizabeth Burgos-Debray. *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y Así me Nació la Conciencia.* Siglo XXI Editores, 1985.

Mernit, Billy. *Writing the Romantic Comedy: From "Cute Meet" to "Joyous Defeat": How to Write Screenplays that Sell.* New York: Harper Collins, 2001.

Mufti, Aamir. 'Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture'. *Critical Inquiry, Vol 25, 1.* The University of Chicago Press. 1998: 95-125.

Munro, Jenny. 'Toujours sous la Neige: Snow, Stasis and Immobility in Alain Resnais L'Amour á Mort and Coeurs Scope'. *An Online Journal of Film and Television Studies, Issue* 23, 2012.

Naficy, Hamid. *An Accented Cinema. Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

--- *Situating Accented Cinema. Transnational Cinema, the Film Reader*. Elizabeth Ezra, Terry Rowden (eds.). New York: Routlegde, 2006: 111- 129.

Nebelkopf, Ethan, Mary Phillips (eds.). *Healing and Mental Health for Native Americans: Speaking in Red*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2004.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Pasqualino, Antonio. *L'opera dei Pupi.* Palermo: Sellerio editore, 1989.

Pérez, Jiménez Aurora. Sahin Sau. Curso de Lengua Mixteca (variante de Ñuu Ndeya) con notas históricas y culturales. Oaxaca: Colegio Superior para la Educación Integral Intercultural de Oaxaca, 2008.

Pisters, Patricia. *Opereren in de Werkelijkheid. Politikie Cinema en de Vrije, Indirecte Rede.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005.

Rabiger, Michael: *Directing the documentary* (fifth edition). Oxford: Focal Press, 2009.

Renov, Michael. *Theorizing Documentary.* New York/London: Routlegde, 1993.

Rocha, Glauber. 'An Esthetic of Hunger'. *New Latin American Cinema, Vol I. Theory, Practices and Transcultural Articulations*. Michael T. Martin (ed.). Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 1997: 59-61.

Rollins, Peter, John E. O'Connor (eds.). *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands*. London/New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

Said, Edward. *After the Last Sky*. Palestinian Lives. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Sands, Kathleen, Allison Sekaquaptewa Lewis. 'Seeing with a Native Eye: A Hopi Film on Hopi'. *American Indian Quarterly* 14 (4). 1990: 387-96.

Sanjinés, Jorge. Teoría y práctica de un c*ine junto al pueblo*. México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1979.

Sherman, Eric. *Directing the Film: Film Directors on Their Art*. Michigan: University of Michigan, 1988: 4.

Shohat, Ella, Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism-Multiculturalism and the Media*. London/New York: Routledge, 1994.

Silverman, Kaya. *The Acoustic Mirror. The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London/New York: Zed Books, 1999.

Solanas, Fernando E. and Octavio Getino. 'Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World'. *New Latin American Cinema, Vol I. Theory, Practices and Transcontinental Articulations.* Michael T. Martin (ed.). Detroit: Wayne State University Detroit, 1997.

Spivak, Gayatri. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Cary Nelson, Lawrence Grossber (eds). Urbana Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988: 271-316.

Stam, Robert, Toby Miller (eds). *Film and Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 2000.

Stewart, Suzanne L. 'A New Holocausto: The Consumable Youth of Neal Shuterma's Unwind'. *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*. Carrie Hintz, Balaka Basu & Katherine Broad (eds). New York: Routledge, 2003: 159 -174.

Struthers, Roxanne, John Lowe. 'Nursing in the Native American Culture and Historical Trauma'. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 24 (3). 2003: 257-272.

Thompson, Kristin. *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique*. London: Harvard University Press, 1999.

--- *Storytelling in Film and Television*. London: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Tierno, Michael. *Aristotles Poetics For Screenwriters*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2002.

Tirard, Laurent. *Moviemakers' Master Class: Private Lessons from the World's Foremost Directors.* New York: Faber and Faber, 2002: 34.

Tomlinson, John. *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Travis, Mark W. *The Director's Journey. The Creative Collaboration between Directors, Writers, and Actors*. Wiese Productions, Studio City, 1999.

Turner, Terence. 'Defiant Images: The Kayapo Appropriation of Video'. *Anthropology Today,* Vol. 8, No. 6. 1992: 5-16.

Van Kampen, Ukjese. *The History of Yukon First Nations Art*. PhD thesis, Leiden University Press, 2012.

Verstraten, Peter. 'Between Attraction and Story, Rethinking Narrative in Cinema'. *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*. Sandra Heine, Roy Sommer (eds.). Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009: 154-169.

Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey. Mythic Structure for Storytellers & Screenwriters*. Los Angeles: Michael Wiese Productions, 2007.

Wayne, Mike. 'The Critical Practice and Dialectics of Third Cinema'. *Third Text Reader: On Art Culture, and Theory.* Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt, Ziauddin Sardar (eds.). New York: Continuum Books, 2002: 211-226.

Winston, Brian. *Claiming the Real. The Documentary Film Revisited.* London: British Film Institute, 1995.

Weston, Judith, *Directing Actors*. *Creating Memorable Performances for Film and Television*. Studio City: Wiese Productions, 1996.

Zak, Monica, *Pumans Dotter*. Stockholm: Opal, 1986.

Žižek, Slavoj. *How to Read Lacan*. New York/ London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Filmography

Abu Assad, Hany, *Paradise Now.* Augustus Film, Lama Productions and others. Distributed by 1More Films, 2005.

Akers, Mattew, *The Artist is Present*. Show of Force. Distributed by EuroVideo, 2012.

Asch, Timothy, Napoleon Chagnon. *The Ax Fight*. Distributed by DER documentary, 1975.

Bechis, Marco, *Birdwatchers*. Classic. Distributed by Homescreen, 2008.

Brooks, James, L. *Spanglish*. Distributed by Columbia Pictures, 2004.

Brosens, Peter, Jessica Woodwort, *Altiplano*. Ma.Ja.De Filmproduktion, Bo Films. Distributed by Farbfilm-Verleih, 2009.

Cameron, James, *Titanic*. Paramount Pictures. Distributed by 20th Century Fox Netherlands, 1997.

Caro, Niki, *Whale Rider*. South Pacific Pictures. Distributed by RCV Home Entertainment, 2002.

Clements, Ron, *Moana*, Walt Disney Pictures, 2016.

Costner, Kevin, *Dances with Wolves.* Tig Productions. Distributed by Movies Select Video, 1990.

Cuarón, Alfonso, *Y tu Mamá También*. Anhelo Producciones and Bésame Mucho Pictures. Distributed by Paradiso Home Entertainment, 2001.

Cruz, Angeles, *La Tiricia o de Cómo Curar la Tristeza*. Distributed by IMCINE, 2012.

--- *La Carta*. IMCINE, 2014.

De Weerd, Jan Albert & Ingeborg Wieten, *2012, het jaar nul*, 2009 (television series)

Dirdamal, Tin, *De Nadie.* Producciones Tranvia. Distributed by Lonely Seal Releasing, 2005.

Eyre, Chris, *Smoke Signals*. Shadow Catcher Entertainment, Distributed by RCV Film Distribution, 1998.

Escalante, Amat, *Heli.* Mantarraya Producciones. Distributed by NDMantarraya, 2013.

Faringer, Asa, *La Hija del Puma*. Red Barnet, Rädda Barnen and others. Distributed by UIP, 1994.

Fukunaga, Cary, *Sin Nombre*. Canana. Distributed by Universal Pictures Benelux, 2009.

Gabriel, Mike & Eric Goldberg, *Pocahontas*. Walt Disney Pictures. Distributed by Laurenfilm, 1995

Garcia Bernal, Gael, *Los Invisibles.* Amnesty International. Distributed by Canana Films, 2010.

Gaviria, Victor, *La vendedora de rosas*. Producciones Filmamento. Nirvana Films S.A. 1998.

Gilbert, Brian, *Not Without my Daughter.* Pathé Entertainment. Distributed by Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 1991.

Gibson, Mel, *Apocalyto*. Icon Entertainment International. Distributed by A-Film Home Entertainment, 2006.

Gómez Peña, Guillermo, *The Couple in the Cage.* DVD, 1993.

Gorris, Marleen, *Antonia*. Bergen, Prime Time and others. Universal Pictures Benelux, 1995.

Griffith, D.W., *Birth of a Nation*. Epoch Producing Corporation. Distributed by Videolog, 1915.

Guerrero, Aurora, *Mosquita y Mari.* Indion Entertainment Group Maya Entertainment. Distributed by Homescreen, 2012.

Gracia, Angel, *From Prada to Nada*. OddLot Entertainment, Gilbert Films and others. Distributed by A-Film Home Entertainment, 2011.

Honigmann, Heddy, *Metaal en melancholie.* Ariel Film, 1994.

Houtman, Ineke, *De Indiaan*. Bos Bros. Film & TV Productions. Distributed by A-Film Home Entertainment, 2009.

Jansen, Itandehui, *Una nave per tornare*. NFTA, 1998.

--- *Ocho Venado y Seis Mono*. Canal Once TV, 2000.

--- *El Rebozo de mi Madre*. Rolf Orthel Productions, 2006.

--- *Alma y Esperanza*. Lista Calista Films, 2012.

--- *El Último Consejo*. IMCINE, 2012.

--- *Bouleversement*. Lista Calista Films and Filmar3, 2015.

--- *Yaavi*. Lista Calista Films, 2015.

Kar Wai, Wong, *In the Mood for Love*. Block 2 Pictures, Jet Tone Production. Distributed by A-Film Distribution, 2000.

Kunuk, Zacharias, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen.* Igloolik Isuma Productions Inc., Kunuk Cohn Productions and others. Distributed by SF Film, 2006.

Llosa, Claudia, *Madeinusa*. Oberón Cinematográfica, Vela Producciones. Distributed by Trigon-film, 2006.

--- *La Teta Asustada.* Generalitat de Catalunya - Institut Català de les Indústries Culturals (ICIC) and others. Distributed by Canana Films, 2009.

Marston, Joshua, *Maria Full of Grace*. HBO Films, Santa Fe Productions and others. Distributed by Paradiso Home Entertainment, 2004.

Maran, Luna, *Me parezco tanto a tí*. Universidad de Guadalajara, 2009.

Masayesva, Victor, *Hopiit.* Is Productions, 1982.

Meyer, Matías, *Los últimos cristeros*. IDTV Film, Axolote Cine and others. Distributed by Axolote Cine, 2011.

Noyce, Phillip, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. Olsen Levy, Showtime Australia and others. Distributed by Fu Works, 2002.

Resnais, Alain, *L'Amour à Mort.* Philippe Dussart, Les Films Ariane and others. Distributed by MK2 Editions, 1984.

Reygads, Carlos, *Japón.* No Dream Cinema, Mantarraya Producciones. Distributed by Artecinema, 2002.

Riker, David, *The Girl*. Journeyman Pictures, Axiom Films. Distributed by Film Collective, 2012.

Rojas, Nicolás, *Snuu Viko: El lugar de las nubes y unas palabras perdidas.* Cienvolando Films, Sinfoko Films, 2008.

--- *Música para después de dormir.* IMCINE, 2013.

--- *Welcome to San Juan* (screenplay).

Rodriguez, Ismael, *Tizoc*. Producciones Matouk, 1957.

Sanjines, Jorge, *Sangre de Condor*. Ukamau Group, 1969.

Sissako, Abderrahmane, *La Vie sur Terre*. Haut et Court, La Sept-Arte. Distributed by Califonia Newsreel, 1998.

Sen, Ivan, *Beneath Clouds.* Autumn Films Pty. Ltd. Distributed by Axiom Films, 2002.

Tennant, Andy, *Fools Rush In.* Columbia Pictures Corporation. Distributed by Columbia TriStar Films de España, 1997.

Thomson, Anna, *Columbus, The lost Voyage.* History Channel, Lion Television, 2007 (television series).

Quemada-Diéz, Diego, *La jaula de oro.* Animal de Luz Films, Kinemascope Films. Distributed by Wild Bunch Benelux, 2013.

Valli, Eric, Michel Debats, *Himalaya*. Galatée Films, France 2 Cinéma and others. Distributed by Arthaus Filmverleih, 1999.

Vargas, Francisco, *El Violin*. CCC. Distributed by Canana Films, 2005.

Waititi, Taika, *What We Do in the Shadows*. Defender Films, Funny or Die. Distributed by Remain In Light, 2014.

--- *Boy*, Whenua Films. Distributed by 2010.

Wells, Orson, *Citizen Kane.* RKO Radio Pictures .Distributed by Indies Home Entertainment, 1941.

Worth, Sol, John Adair, *Through Navajo Eyes.* Television Series. 1966.

Yimou, Zhang, *Lifetimes*. Era International. Distributed by Kinowelt Home Entertainment, 1994.

Zeitlin, Benh, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*. Cinereach. Distributed by A-Film Home Entertainment, 2012.

Other Sources

Audio CD

Trudell, John, *Tribal Voice*. Album, CD Effective, 1983.

Webpages

Daniela Ortiz *97 Empleadas Domésticas*.
https://ia800505.us.archive.org/21/items/97EmpleadasDomesticasOrtizPublicacion/97_empleadas_dome%CC%81sticas_ortiz_publicacio%CC%81n.pdf

Berlinale Talent Campus.
http://www.talentpress.org/story/81/4281.html

Binger Filmlab.
http://www.binger.nl/advisors/7683

Canal 100.
http://www.canal100.com.mx/telemundo/entrevistas/?id_nota=8132

Coneval, México.
http://web.coneval.gob.mx/Informes/Coordinacion/INFORMES_Y_PUBLICACIONES_PDF/INFORME_DE_EVALUACION_DE_LA_POLITICA_DESARROLLO_SOCIA_2011.pdf

Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, México.
http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/detalle-nota/?id=7582#.UhKOkC3CTIU

Domestic workers.
http://www.fes.de/themen/menschenrechtspreis/en/mrp2010.php

Filmcomment.
http://www.filmcomment.com/article/never-the-twain-shall-meet/

Herald Entertainment.
http://m.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=11345855

Instituto Nacional de las Lenguas Indígenas, México.
http://www.cdi.gob.mx/dmdocuments/lenguas_indigenas_nacionales_en_riesgo_de_desaparicion_inali.pdf

Indiewire.
http://www.indiewire.com/article/filmmaker_toolkit_meet_the_sundance_film_festival_programmers_in_their_own_/

International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs.
http://www.iwgia.org

La Foret Visuals.
http://www.laforetvisuals.com/

Lights Films School.
http://www.lightsfilmschool.com/blog/5-successful-dslr-feature-films/2205/

Laura Cardús I Font.
http://antoine.chech.free.fr/textes-colloque-JR/cardus.pdf

Maori News and Indigenous Views.
http://news.tangatawhenua.com/archives/3687)

Survival International.
http://www.survivalinternational.org

UNESCO.
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/

United Nations: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
http://undesadspd.org/Indigenouspeoples.aspx

USC Cinematic Arts.
http://cinema.usc.edu/news/article.cfm?id=11660

The Journey of a Mixteco.
http://www.duncantonatiuh.com/codex.html

The Atlantic.
http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/04/are-indie-movies-getting-too-pretty/256367/

Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

In deze studie *Zoektocht naar een Eigen Stem als een Inheemse Filmmaker* onderzoek ik de 'stem' van de filmmaker vanuit een politiek en esthetisch oogpunt. De eigen 'Stem' refereert binnen de filmpraktijk vooral aan de esthetische stijl die een filmmaker hanteert. Binnen het veld van de postkoloniale studies refereert 'Stem' vooral aan de toegang die postkoloniale subjecten hebben tot de productie van discours. Films en andere media worden in deze context gezien als een vorm van discours. Voor Inheemse filmers zijn beide benaderingen van 'stem' en 'stem hebben' van belang. Deze studie onderzoekt de wijze waarop Inheemse filmmakers, uit met name Latijns Amerika, hun 'stem' in zowel politiek als esthetisch opzicht uiten in hun films.

Het eerste hoofdstuk behandelt hoe Inheemse Cinema bezien kan worden vanuit de theorie van Third Cinema (Tercer Cine) en Accented Cinema, maar ook welke kanttekeningen geplaatst kunnen worden bij deze termen. Third Cinema is een term die naar voren gebracht is door de filmmakers Fernando Solanas en Octavio Getino in 1970 om de films aan te duiden die in hun ogen in de 'Derde Wereld' gemaakt zouden moeten worden. Zij vonden dat deze films een revolutionaire (antikapitalistische) productiemethode en content zouden moeten hebben om zo bij te dragen tot de onafhankelijkheid of revolutie binnen de 'Derde Wereld'. Inheemse cinema sluit vaak aan bij de geëngageerde Third Cinema. Door migratieprocessen en globalisering kan Inheemse Cinema echter ook bezien worden vanuit de benadering van Accented Cinema. Hamid Naficy gebruikt deze term om de films aan te duiden die de spanningsvelden tonen tussen verschillende werelden, omdat de makers zelf gemigreerd zijn. Bij Inheemse Cinema is bijna altijd sprake van een (interne) migratie van een rurale omgeving naar een stedelijke omgeving, of van vergelijkbare spanningen ontstaan door processen van globalisering.

In het tweede hoofdstuk analyseer ik twee films van niet-Inheemse makers maar met belangrijke Inheemse personages. In deze films wordt getracht een vorm van identificatie met de Inheemse personages te bewerkstelligen onder een niet-Inheems publiek. In dit hoofdstuk onderzoek ik hoe deze films de identificatie tot stand laten komen en hoe deze identificatiestrategie binnen Inheemse Cinema ingezet zou kunnen worden.

In het derde hoofdstuk onderzoek ik de rol van taal, spreken en stem binnen verschillende Inheemse films. Omdat Inheemse talen in verschillende contexten vaak gemarginaliseerd zijn en in sommige situaties daardoor nu bedreigde talen zijn, kiezen veel

Inheemse filmers ervoor om films te maken in de eigen taal. Sommige makers, zoals Victor Masayesva, hebben er op momenten voor gekozen om hun films niet te ondertitelen om zo de rollen van toeschouwer en object om te draaien. De film *Snuu Viko* van Nicolás Rojas gaat concreet over hoe het schoolsysteem in Mexico kinderen verbiedt om de eigen taal te spreken en de consequenties hiervan. In mijn eigen films heb ik regelmatig gekozen voor dialogen of *voice-overs* in het Mixteeks.

In het vierde hoofdstuk onderzoek ik de rol van gemeenschap en familiebanden binnen Inheemse Cinema. Aan de ene kant speelt de gemeenschap en de directe familie van de makers vaak een grote rol bij de productie van de films. Anderzijds is de gemeenschap en familie vaak onderwerp van Inheemse films. Familie en de gemeenschap verwijzen dan vaak naar de Inheemse identiteit van de makers en maken binnen de films duidelijk dat er sprake is van zowel een culturele breuk als van culturele continuïteit tussen verschillende generaties. In het laatste hoofdstuk ga ik in op het maakproces van mijn eigen films, van ideefase tot eindproduct.

Summary

In this dissertation I examine the ‘Voice’ of the filmmaker from a political and aesthetic perspective. Within film practice the own ‘Voice’ refers mainly to the aesthetic style of a filmmaker. Within the field of postcolonial studies 'Voice' is related to the access that postcolonial subjects have to the production of discourse. Movies and other media can be seen in this context as a form of discourse. For Indigenous filmmakers both approaches to ‘Voice’ and having a ‘Voice’ are important. This study explores the way in which Indigenous filmmakers, particularly from Latin America, express their 'Voice' both politically and aesthetically in their films.

The first chapter discusses how Indigenous Cinema can be understood from the theory of Third Cinema (Tercer Cine) and Accented Cinema, but also which comments can be made concerning these terms. Third Cinema is a term that has been coined by the filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino in 1970 to refer to films that in their opinion should be made in the ‘Third World’. They thought that these films should employ a revolutionary (anti-capitalist) mode of production and should have corresponding contents in order to contribute to the struggle for independence or the revolution in the ‘Third World’. Indigenous Cinema often has the same social engagement as Third Cinema. Because of migration processes and globalization, however, Indigenous Cinema may also be seen from the approach of Accented Cinema. Hamid Naficy uses this term to describe films that show the tensions between different worlds, because their makers themselves have migrated. Indigenous Cinema almost always speaks of a (internal) migration from a rural environment to an urban environment, or of similar tensions that arise from globalization processes.

In the second chapter, I analyze two films that were made by non-Indigenous filmmakers but have important Indigenous protagonists. These films attempt to achieve a form of identification with the Indigenous characters among a non-Indigenous audience. In this chapter I examine how these films create such identifications and how this identification strategy could be deployed within Indigenous Cinema.

In the third chapter, I explore the role of language, speech and ‘Voice’ in different Indigenous films. Because Indigenous languages are often marginalized (and in several cases are therefore now endangered languages), many Indigenous filmmakers choose to make films in their own language. Some of them, such as Victor Masayesva, have at times chosen not to

subtitle their films in order to invert the roles of viewer and filmed object. The film *Snuu Viko* of Nicolas Rojas is concretely about how the school system in Mexico forbids children to speak their own language and about the consequences of this policy. In my own films I have regularly opted for dialogues or *voice-overs* in the Mixtec language.

In the fourth chapter, I examine the role of community and family relationships in Indigenous Cinema. On the one hand, the community and the immediate family of the filmmakers often play a major role in the production of the films. On the other, the community and family is often the theme of Indigenous films. Family and community often signal the Indigenous identity of the filmmakers and make clear in the film that there is both a cultural rupture and a cultural continuity between different generations.

The last chapter focuses on my own filmmaking process from idea phase to final product.

Curriculum Vitae

Itandehui Jansen (Oaxaca, Mexico 1976) studied film directing at the Netherlands Film and Television Academy in Amsterdam and graduated in 1998 with the documentary *Una nave per tornare*. She went on to pursue a MA in comparative literature at Leiden University and graduated in 2003. She worked as a lecturer in the Department of Film Studies at Utrecht University and was a guest lecturer in the Institute for Gender Studies of the Autonomous University in Barcelona. For her PhD research she received a Mosaic grant by NWO, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. She has directed several documentaries, which screened at international festivals such as the IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam), The Morelia International Film Festival and the Bluestocking Film Series. Her short film *El Último Consejo* won several international awards, among others the Special Jury Award at the Viña del Mar International Film Festival in Chile in 2012, the Emerging Talent Award at the ImagineNative Film and Media Festival and the prize for best short at the Rodando Film Festival in Mexico in 2012. *Alma y Esperanza* won the award for best short at the Festival Présence Autochtone in Montréal in 2015 and the first prize at the Bluestocking Film Series in Portland in 2015. Her feature film projects have been selected for different international training programs. She participated among others in the Babylon Film Development Program, The Cine Qua Non Lab, the Binger Film Lab and the Berlinale Talent Campus. The project *Tiempo de Lluvia* was recently selected for the Coproduction forum of the Raindance Film Festival.