Finding one’s own voice as an indigenous filmmaker

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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,

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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.