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ARTICLES

Communities of cinema, communities of formation: audiovisual production and training processes of indigenous peoples and nationalities in Abya Yala[1]

Comunidades de cinema, comunidades de formação: processos de produção e formação audiovisual de povos e nacionalidades indígenas de Abya Yala

Comunidades de cine, comunidades de formación: procesos de producción audiovisual y formación de los pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas de Abya Yala

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Abstract

In this paper we analyze the audiovisual production and formation of the peoples and nationalities of Abya Yala. Based on post-colonial trends, film studies, the perspectives of intellectuals and indigenous cosmologies, we postulate that, by constituting themselves as spaces of experience, the creative and formative processes establish film communities as communities of formation (political, ethnic, historical). From the experience of the communication and film schools in the territories themselves, we see the film scene expanding as a historical, multi-epistemic and counter-colonial scene, opening up spaces for the emergence of subjects (emancipated, critical, reflective) and the rooting of community issues in film perspectives, with production and formation processes mediating ancestral knowledge and know-how.

Keywords: Coloniality of seeing, Indigenous cinemas, Cinema communities, Communities of formation, Abya Yala.

[1] This article is the result of a postdoctoral internship project. "Cinematografias e comunidades de formação indígenas em Abya Yala: processos formativos e produção audiovisual dos povos originários de territórios na América do Sul", which we developed in the Graduate Program in Communication at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (PPGCOM-UFMG) (2024-2025), under the supervision of Dr. André Guimarães Brasil.

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Resumo

Neste trabalho, analisamos a produção e a formação audiovisual de povos e nacionalidades de Abya Yala. A partir de tendências pós-coloniais, dos estudos de cinema e de perspectivas de intelectuais e cosmologias indígenas, conjecturamos que, ao constituírem-se como espaços da experiência, os processos criativos e formativos constituem comunidades de cinema como comunidades de formação (política, étnica, histórica). Com base na experiência das escolas de comunicação e de cinema dos próprios territórios, constatamos que a cena fílmica se amplia como cena histórica, pluriepistêmica e contracolonial, abrem-se espaços para a emergência de sujeitos (emancipados, críticos, reflexivos) e o enraizamento das questões comunitárias nas perspectivas fílmicas, com os processos de produção e formação como mediação de saberes e conhecimentos ancestrais.

Palavras-chave: *Colonialidade do ver, Cinemas indígenas, Comunidades de cinema, Comunidades de formação, Abya Yala.*

Resumen

En esta investigación analizamos la producción y formación audiovisual de los pueblos y nacionalidades de Abya Yala. A partir de las tendencias poscoloniales, los estudios cinematográficos, las perspectivas de los intelectuales y las cosmologías indígenas, conjeturamos que, al constituirse como espacios de experiencia, los procesos creativos y formativos constituyen a las comunidades cinematográficas como comunidades de formación (política, étnica, histórica). A partir de la experiencia de las escuelas de comunicación y cine en los propios territorios, vemos que la escena cinematográfica se expande como una escena histórica, multiepistémica y contracolonial, abriendo espacios para la emergencia de sujetos (emancipados, críticos, reflexivos) y el enraizamiento de las problemáticas comunitarias en perspectivas cinematográficas, con procesos de producción y formación como mediación de saberes y conocimientos ancestrales.

Palabras clave: *Colonialidad de la mirada, Cines indígenas, Comunidades cinematográficas, Comunidades de formación, Abya Yala*

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It was 1960, Pansitinma only spoke the Amahuaca language, he was 12 years old and already the star of a film, a book, and countless photographs, but he didn't know it. Almost six decades later, he is about to become a filmmaker.

Fernando Valdivia

Coordinator of the Escuela de Cine Amazônico (ECA)

Introduction

Within the Abya Yala peoples and nationalities[2], Indigenous cinematographies are a potential counter-colonization and emancipation tool in the various audiovisual domains (documentary, fiction and experimental) (Teixeira, 2012). Considering their processes and based onpostcolonial critique, educational and film studies, anthropological and historical approaches, and on the perspectives of intellectuals and indigenous cosmologies, this work systematizes questions of audiovisual production regarding educational experiences, particularly those linked to the praxis of communication and film schools coordinated by said communities. We posit that, by constituting themselves as spaces of experience, the production and educational processes constitute film communities as (political, ethnic, historical) education communities. Thus expanding the film scene as a historical, multi-epistemic and counter-colonial scene, opening up to the emergence of subjects and their discourses about themselves, their world, and the surrounding world. In dialogue with film researchers and the subjects of experience, intersecting conceptions, the work on/with/from Indigenous cinemas was based on the problematic of colonialism and counter-colonization, of the filmic operations of (re)inventing, (re)producing, and (re)appropriating the world.

Considering the projects developed mainly by the communities, with their networks of communicators and film schools, we will see that historical and contemporary issues are rooted in networks of meanings and senses, with audiovisual production processes providing spaces for mediating knowledge and learning. If one's (critical, reflective, and emancipatory) development is not restricted to formal education, we welcome the voices of the subjects of experience themselves who, theoretically, move through history and media. In this context, the

[2] From the Guna (Dulegaya) language, the term refers to the ancestral habitat as the great mature land, and was propagated by the Aymara leader Takir Mamani (Constantino Lima Chávez) in the mid-1970s, in opposition to the colonial denomination.

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transformation of the world and of oneself, anchored in the awareness of the contradictions of reality as a vector for one's affirmation in the historical process, occurs by the reflection-action that constitutes liberating praxis (Freire, 2016).

Since community is a central category and dimension of Indigenous cinematographies, two approaches are methodologically essential. Based on César Guimarães (2015), discussing addition and dissent, we start from the film communities that are founded on similarities and divisions. Dialoguing with Maurice Blanchot, Guimarães (2015) formulates the core question: "How, then, can we liberate the politics of the commons—and thought itself—from the figure of the One, if not through that infinite conversation... capable of sustaining non-relationship and rejecting the appropriating understanding that subsumes the diverse into the One, identifies the different, and relates the other to the same?" (Guimarães, 2015, p. 51). In this regard, as they are experienced by subjects in audience contexts, these cinema communities are only constituted in the frictions of images.

We add to this the indigenous conception of territory as a multi-relational place. Based on *kimvn* (knowledge, in the Mapuche language), leader Jorge Calfuqueo conceives of community as a place inhabited by beings other than humans[3]. More than just a geographical space, the community of the Abya Yala peoples includes water, fire, stones, birds, air, mountains and other more-than-human inhabitants—or, in the Andean cosmogony, earth-beings or *tirakuna*—who "are other-than-human beings who participate in the lives of those who call themselves *runakuna* [humans]" (Cadena, 2024, p. 32). As evinced by Wayuu epistemology, in the words of Nat Nat Iguarán Fajardo[4], of the spirituality imbued in the place where they live and are born, which determines their origin and lineage, since the souls of those who die are part of the ancestral community: "… [And that is why] my grandmother used to say that we belong where our ancestors are buried." Besides academic categories, the notion of community here is based mainly on the worldviews of Indigenous peoples and nationalities, thus exceeding the geo-historical dimension.

[3] Testimony in the film *Rewe Nguiñiwe, Aylla Rewe Budi* (2014, Dir. Gerardo Berrocal and Juan Rain).

[4] In an interview with the author on June 20, 2024, via Google Meet, which focused on his education and social activism; the history, cosmology, and current situation of the Wayuu people; and the history, educational dimensions, and challenges of the Escuela de Comunicación. Authorized use.

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Given this context, we highlight three dimensions that enables organizing the myriad forms and modes that shape Indigenous audiovisual education and production processes.

First, among the external and internal proposals, we highlight the experiences of film and communication schools that arise within the territories themselves, unlike proposals that reach communities driven from the outside in based on projects and actions by government agencies or the third sector of national society. Second, in terms of educational and audiovisual creation experiences, we note the proposals of film "schools" located in specific territories which are organized as hubs for knowledge and politics, constituting spaces for mediation within the political structures and organizations of a given Indigenous people; and the experiences of itinerant schools which travel through the territories and communities of the same socio-historical ethnic structure, publicizing audiovisual media as a contribution and tool for identity building and dissemination of struggles and activities for the right to territory and the guarantee of their traditional customs and knowledge. A third dimension emerges in self-management processes based on the expectations and future plans of these communities, in which the Abya Yala peoples and nations can conceive their own Indigenous images[5].

Coloniality of seeing

As the colonial situation is not an abstraction, with visual regimes constituting each other, colonialism laid the foundations for the ways in which Indigenous peoples are recorded—from iconography to digital technologies. By establishing parameters of representation, networks, and systems of meaning and sense in the realm of imagery, the media lay the foundation for invention by the Other as savage, primitive, exotic, tribal, etc. Based on the viewpoint of missionaries, the accounts of chroniclers and travelers, feeding on the medieval-Greco-Roman secular construction of the anthropophagous, the barbarian was modulated as the counterpart of civilization. In this context, according to Joaquín Barriendos (2011), the Western eyecentric paradigm produced two crucial artifacts from the "discovery" of the "New World": colonial-imperial cartography and archival images, with their overlapping layers and intertextual potential dialoguing with other cultural and artistic imagery. Constitutive, in turn, of

[5] We have other reflections, in the field of Indigenous cinemas, in which the relations between history and cosmology are materialized in images (Felipe, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2021, 2022, 2024, 2025).

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radical cannibalistic otherness, to the point of metonymically encompassing the entire "American" territory and populations to be subjugated at all levels.

Once created, this counterpart to Western ways did not only cause a moral, political, and spiritual distancing of these Indigenous populations: from the northern hemisphere to the south of the "new" continent. For Barriendos (2011, pp. 19-21), the modern-colonial-Christian world system gave rise to a "complex matrix of extreme racialization," in which subjects come to inhabit an "absolute ontological outside" and "a radical non-being," based on "a radical epistemic racialization of the cannibalistic being." In the case of Indigenous peoples, from 1492 onwards, visual regimes, when not transporting them to the pre-Columbian period, found ways to represent them as pure entities devoid of historical presence and rendered invisible as objects. Said heterarchical machinery of power historically operates on a dual visual/ontological strategy: "making the wild object appear (the cannibalistic non-being) and, at the same time, making oneself disappear as the subject of observation... (that is, making oneself disappear as subject, by making oneself visible as object)" (Barriendos, 2011, p. 21, 23).

> ...transcending the dehumanization and 'animalization' of cannibalistic otherness, to bring it to a state of maximum racial, cartographic, and epistemic inferiority, in which not only is there no longer any 'humanity' or 'animality' in the cannibal, but there is also no possibility that the ontological monstrosity of the evil savages of the 'New World' can be redeemed by Eurocentric rationality (Barriendos, 2011, p. 21).

In this process, as we have already observed elsewhere, visual regimes operate with the colonial imagery parameterization of the Other, based on the classification, categorization, and objectification of their ways of inhabiting the world. From colonial iconography and anthropometric photography to ethnographic film, the complexity of Abya Yala has been reduced to parameters of racial and epistemic inferiority, framed in what Catherine Russell (2007) called ethnographic pastoralism, that is, the myth of primitivism that relegates traditional peoples to a previous era: a kind of childhood of humanity—stigmatizing them for their difference which, according to Maria Regina Celestino de Almeida (2010, p. 17), are "kinds of living fossils of humanity." For Barriendos (2011, p. 16), the coloniality of seeing comprises "a series of overlaps, derivations, and heterarchical recombinations that, in their discontinuity, interconnect the 15th century with the 21st century, the 16th century with the 19th century, and so on." This heterogeneity, by dismantling the idea of art as progress, with its phases and trends,

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is what allows us to connect the visual regimes of the colonial and contemporary periods in their various domains (cinema, painting, photography).

In this scope of invention, erasure, and control of the Other, official visual regimes inscribe forms of objectification of Indigenous peoples which, in many respects, resemble the descriptors presented by Jean de Léry (1574/1961), in the 16th century, as the characteristics that allow ONE INDIAN to be represented: exoticizing him, in the diacriticity of his physical and cultural traits, to fix an identity, nullify differences and diversity.[6]

Community dimension

In an overview of Indigenous cinema in Latin America and based on Faye Gisnburg's concept of embedded aesthetics, Amália Córdova (2011) highlights the close relationship between audiovisual productions and community issues, identifying, in their narrative systems, the deep roots of traditions, cultural heritage, and internal dynamics. If we look at the perspective of "deconstructing films" by filmmaker Xavante Divino Tseerewahú, as explained in the Cross-Disciplinary Education Program in Traditional Knowledge at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brazil & Belisário, 2016) and applied to the 2021 documentary *Abdzé wede'õ – O vírus tem cura?* (Abdzé wede'õ – Is there a cure for the virus?), made during the COVID-19 pandemic (Felipe, 2025), the community is an inescapable dimension, whose influence explains the many versions of the same film. Driven by the communications departments of political organizations, audiovisual media occupy a central place in the history of every Indigenous people, because what matters is not always the technical result, but rather the documentation of events, traditions, and developments in the history of contact[7].

Tseerewahú's deconstructing method revealed other possibilities for collective filmmaking, the second version of which, in the case of the Xavante, is based on negotiations with elders and family members from a perspective that, in the director's words, is truly Indigenous (Forumdoc.bh, 2022).

[6] We have already devoted an article to colonial visual regimes, the imagistic parameterization of the Other, with Indigenous cinemas presenting counter-narratives of the historical worldview of the Abya Yala peoples and nationalities (Felipe, 2023).

[7] Córdova (2011) noted that the workshop films looked more like exercises than finished products.

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In this Xavante pedagogy of filmmaking, expanding Freire's spectrum on liberating education, a principle of encountering perspectives is consolidated, one that sees the other as a receptacle for deposits, communications, and prescribed content. In this context, the knowledge of other subjects, with the community ceasing to be a mere incidence, strengthens the collective Indigenous dimension, as Paulo Freire (2016, p. 105) states, "knowledge only exists in invention, in reinvention, in the restless, impatient, permanent search that men and women make in the world, with the world, and with others." In a process in which the authorial perspective, in cinema, takes on a communal dimension, we can say that, thinking along with Freire (2016), the contradiction between filmmaker and community is overcome in such a way that, mutually, they constitute the same situational dialogical body. In Indigenous cinematographies, collective participation—by leaders, family members, and villagers—occurs as a method and a principle, rejecting, in film communities as education communities, arguments of authority and the man-world dichotomy, that is, "men and women simply in the world and not with the world and with others. Men and women who are spectators and not recreators of worlds" (Freire, 2016, p. 111).

In the Mapuche case, during the 1990s, the Consejo de todas las Tierras (CTT) emerged in Araucania, Chile, a political organization based on ancestral logic, which sought political, spiritual, and territorial self-determination.

Director Gerardo Berrocal (cited by Mediático, 2019), whose early work with ADKIMVN is linked to the Consejo, explains that, in the beginning, they did not develop audiovisual projects based on contingency, but rather in agreement with traditional leaders. He explains that it was the community that defined the content and approaches, with leaders having the power to decide what and how much of the Indigenous world could be included as images. Participation of other community members depended on authorization from the Mapuche assembly, and in many cases, the records were archived for later use. Moving away from Mapuche political organizations to the community dimension, according to Juan Rain[8], coordinator of the *Escuela de Cine y Comunicación Aylla Rewe Budi* (Aylla Rewe Budi School of Film and Communication), cinema cannot do without the community, as they work in symbiosis in the processes of audiovisual production and education.

[8] In an interview with the author on February 19, 2025, via Google Meet, which focused on the history and challenges, cosmology, and organization of the Mapuche people, as well as the production and formative processes of the Escuela de Cine y Comunicacións Aylla Rewe Budi. Authorized use.

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From Rain's testimony, we understand that:

> These audiovisual processes occur around the reflection on Mapuche knowledge, which is the main basis. The whole family participates, from the youngest to the oldest. It is also a research process, which begins and takes place with the participation of the elders, who propose the urgent topics that need to be discussed. They themselves subsequently guide this process, in which the youngest members, the children, explore and learn about the land through the Mapuche approach to knowledge: the rewe, the lof, and the names of each space—to break down the barriers imposed on us by the municipalities. There is active participation from older people who are knowledgeable and experienced in the subject being researched. They are the ones who monitor every bit of film, every fragment of video that is added. A reflection that we have been making throughout the year... And, once the film has been made, depending on the knowledge, participation, and subject matter addressed in it, a specific space is chosen where an outdoor screening is set up, in which all the families who worked on and contributed knowledge to the research participate. It is a screening, but it is also an instance in which older people, collectively, validate that document....

Working with the Wiwa, Arhuaco, and Kogui peoples, whose communities are located in the Sierra de Santa Marta, Colombia, Pablo Mora (2015, pp. 32-33) observed that Colombian cinema, from the stigmatization of early films to a controlled Indigenous "protagonism," has developed a kind of "semiotic power" that "hegemonically monopolized ethnic representations outside its own symbolic world" and that "maintains the privilege of speaking through those voices, segmenting them, reorganizing them, mutilating them, misrepresenting them." Reporting on his experience with the Yakuna people in the lower Caquetá region of the Amazon, which resulted in the 2003 documentary *Crónica de un baile de muñeco*, he highlights three crucial dimensions of indigenous autonomy in audiovisual media: (i) the technological appropriation of image technologies; (ii) the change in the conception of authorship and property rights; and (iii) the participation of the Yakuna in all stages (research, scriptwriting, filming, and editing).

> The work had three versions: a 90-minute authorial version, a 52-minute version for television, and a 6-hour version for the community (the latter without testimonies and explanations). Each one conveys specific information, has different "editing rhythms," and caters to the preferences of different audiences (Mora, 2015, p. 34).

Identity complexes

In the context of Abya Yala cinema, political dimensions, organizational processes, and subjective processes of group belonging are fundamental. According to Almeida (2010), these determine the formation of the subjects of the experience and, we might say, the constitution

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of complex identities which, if modulated, do not erase community, ethnic, and historical-cultural ties.

Of Quechua origin, brothers Álvaro and Diego Sarmiento were born in Lima, Peru. With postgraduate degrees in Film Directing in the United States (Álvaro) and at EICTV (Santo Antonio de los Banos, Cuba) (Diego), they created the production company HDPERU and are part of a collective that explores the Indigenous world, from the Andes to the Amazon.

In an interview with the *Revélate* podcast, on the Retina Latina platform, on August 8, 2024, they drew attention to the fragility of the paradigms surrounding issues of identity. They observed that, in addition to the Andean and Amazonian communities, migration from rural areas to cities from the 1960s onwards meant that a capital city such as Lima came to have the highest concentration of Indigenous immigrants in Peru. In their view, these are populations who do not express their ancestry, do not practice rituals, their spirituality, and their different ways. By inserting themselves into this diasporic context, as descendants who did not live in a community, they found links to their Quechua ancestry in cinema. If they were previously unaware of their roots, they began to connect with their origins through the journeys they made across the territories and the films they made (Sarmiento & Sarmiento, 2024). They thus revisit the history of their people and (re)elaborate on an experience marked by a certain "restlessness" and "identity anxiety" or "nostalgia for ancestors," if we are to attribute Silvia Cusicanqui's (2015, p. 13) observation about herself to them.

Between historical and anthropological studies, with professor Maria Regina Celestino de Almeida (2010) from the History Department at Fluminense Federal University (UFF), we contextualize that this complex of confluences and transitions between worlds occurs because historical processes and cultural structures are in constant dialogue, converging and transforming, in which concepts such as acculturation, tradition, and identity are dynamic and not static. Mainly because, before acculturation, what actually happens is the appropriation and reinterpretation of the impacts of contact situations in the context of the historical world of traditional peoples and communities, as they incorporate Western society's technologies and imprint new meanings. Consequently, if ethnic identity cannot be seen as immutable, fixed, and unique, nor as defining an ethnic group, as Almeida (2010, p. 24) states, we must understand "identities as fluid and changeable constructs that are built through complex processes of

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cultural appropriation and reinterpretation in the experiences between groups and individuals that interact."

In more than one example, based on phenomenological biology (with the organism/environment pair) and the discoveries of anthropologist Peter Gow among the Piro people of the Peruvian Amazon, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1999) analyzes how this world of Abya Yala peoples and nationalities is confluent and changeable, developing in a reflective process of reversing perspectives. Based on Indigenous anthropology, Viveiros de Castro (1999, p. 136) understands that, historically, Indigenous people are not situated by the colonial authority, but rather they situate it, "*they define it, defining what counts as a situation*," because "a situation is an *action*; it is a *situating*." Hence, if the "colonial device" does not define Indigenous societies, we are interested in "how Indigenous peoples *situate Brazil*—and, therefore, how they situate *themselves* in Brazil and in other 'contexts': ecological, sociopolitical, cosmic." Based on Peter Gow, who, in a program initially driven by a contactualist approach, sought to understand the insertion of capitalist and colonial elements into Indigenous life, Viveiros de Castro (1999, pp. 142-143) observes that the process of acculturation experienced by the Piro was, above all, inherent to "traditional native regimes," "which always had 'acculturation' as the origin and foundation of 'culture,' and social exteriority as a pole in perpetual movement of interiorization."

Thinking in another key, in which projects to create worlds contaminated by encounter engender other shared worlds, Anna Tsing (2022, p. 73) observes that "we all carry a history of contamination; [therefore] purity is not an option." If, as she argues, collaboration, differences and contamination go hand in hand, contaminated diversity is the central category in the author's theses, as is the case of the Mien ethnic group, from Chinese Southeast Asia, emblematic of fluid identities, of "acculturated" communities, of relations of otherness that incorporate the outside world and, consequently, inherent to the Mien relational regime of permanent transmutation, where transformations of oneself and others take place, within one's own species or between distinct species, far from the "decision diagrams of autonomous [and, in her terms, self-sufficient] individuals" (Tsing, 2022, p. 75). A group in constant mutation, adapting to historical situations, to contact with other ethnicities and geopolitics. A cross-border people who probably transmuted themselves through processes of flight and political refuge, from Imperial China to northern Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. They adapted their writing system to Chinese characters for communication with spiritual entities, based on a movement between refusal and acceptance of Chinese power, whose ethos of mobility between countries, nationalities and borders, in the words

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of Tsing (2022), allows us to understand the Mien, at the same time, as Chinese and non-Chinese, Laotian-Thai and non-Laotian-Thai, Americans and non-Americans.

From these complex trajectories, with many nuances and permeability, Abya Yala cinematographies present fundamental dimensions in their processes for (re)appropriating the historical world in their own terms. Based on Berta Ribeiro and relatives from the village, Naine Terena (2022) observed that, with their aesthetics and symbolism, ornamentation of baskets or bodies, artistic practices are a dimension of Indigenous daily life and take up more time than that dedicated to utilitarian artifacts. Contrary to eyecentric colonial regimes, for Córdova (2011), this cinematography stands as a political stance, especially because, complementing Iván Sanjinés (2024), "an Indigenous people that presents themselves on the screen is a political gesture: be it in cinema, in television, in networks." Transiting from community video to experimental film, from film forms in dialogue with the history of cinema and contemporary art, the scope of Indigenous media landscapes that exceeds the community, in the strict sense of the term, is expanded.

For Gemma Orobitg et al. (2021, p. 134), the purpose of these "Indigenous media is to involve both the group members and national societies and sectors of the international audience." By studying these multiple media landscapes (radio, video and social networks), the authors draw attention to the communicative act of conceiving communication as "put into relation." This means that audiovisual technologies (cinema, video, television) promote relationships between people in different contexts: community, intercommunity, interethnic, pan-Indigenous—therefore, from a local, national and international perspective. Among the functions of Indigenous media, based on Latin American experiences, is to promote alternative spaces to hegemonic media, because when the perspective of communities is not hidden, it is in turn not properly valued as ancestral knowledge. Thus, technological appropriation becomes fundamental for conceiving a broader geopolitical complex: from the local, transnational, to the international, as relational spaces and places of social experimentation.

With their specificities, Indigenous cinemas assume the strong injunctions of "the cultural matrices of origin—in which producers and receivers organically form a Communication community" (Mora, 2015, p. 40), which points to what constitutes cinema communities as education communities (political, historical, ethnic). In another context, to reflect on the Vídeo nas Aldeias (Video in Villages – VNA), Dominique Gallois and Vincent

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Carelli (1995) identify, apart from instrumental use, the development of audiovisuals in communities, starting from the production and exhibition of films in a process of image appreciation and collective appropriation of Indigenous people. The authors also note that "the image catalyzes preexisting representations, present in the imagination of each people. Its sensitive impact allows previous images to be reconstructed, updated and refixed in a new way" (Gallois & Carelli, 1995, p. 63). And they reflect on how audiovisual media, in addition to opening up as a space for mediation, drives interethnic experiences, with a comparative game between "technological, linguistic and physical appearance characteristics, the position of each people in relation to white people" (Gallois & Carelli, 1995, p. 65).

Considering the interrelational nature of audiovisual technologies, Guimarães' (2015) perspective on cinema communities appears as an important theoretical contribution. Especially to reflect on the mutually constitutive relations between audiovisual production and education, which activate spaces of mediation, with cinema communities giving rise to (political, ethnic, historical) education communities—appearing, in the image, as a device (Brasil, 2016), which the filmmakers (re)appropriate and expose in the frame. These communities comprise a complex, in which the image, this space of cohabitation of differences, which removes the distribution of identities, essentialities and disjunctive binaries, participates in the community institution: opposed, in essence, to the closure in any interiority, exclusivity and identity, refusing "absolute immanence in favor of exposure to an outside, of a relationship with the exterior, with others" (Guimarães, 2015, p. 47).

From the community as a political unit, under the apparent paradox of openness to dissent and differences, to cinema communities, in which the image is not the repository of the ONE, of the same and of fusion, the training experiences coordinated by the Indigenous peoples configure education communities, emphasizing the presence of audiovisual in all processes. Education thus does not only take place in the technical field (communication issues, technical dimensions, language operations, handling of supports), but is also projected into the field of Indigenous movement politics: the right to land and cultural heritage; the redefinition of ancestral traditions and knowledge, in search of autonomy, self-government and self-determination.

If community is built between different people, adding the formulation of Antônio Bispo dos Santos (2023), unlike Western society which is made with equals, traditional groups

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are made with diversity. If the communication of Indigenous peoples forms communities open to dialogue, the intersection between films and audiences is potentially accentuated. Based on Martín-Barbero, who does not separate the means and their mediations, Orobitg et al. (2021) argue that Indigenous communication opens space for audience co-participation, collective spaces and activates communities of action, as they do not produce a representation of the world, but rather the activation of social situations. This context of socially constructed interactions, with the co-participation of subjects in shared practices, leans towards cinema communities as education communities, in which the audiovisual apparatus mediates socio-historical relations in a world that becomes mediated.

Without delving into it, this cine-formative dimension approaches communities of practice, similar to what we have presented regarding spaces of experience, based on the collective construction of knowledge and wisdom, with subjects (critical, creative and emancipated) constituting themselves in joint actions and shared repertoires, based on audiovisual processes. In a thesis in the area of ethno-mathematics about the Xerente people, Elizângela Aparecida Pereira de Melo (2016) situates the constitution of these communities of practice—in the context of Indigenous peoples—considering the negotiations in the field of sociocultural practices (rituals, traditions, body paintings, etc.), on which learning and, consequently, these communities are based. The author observes that, from these practices, cultural organization and the Xerente Indigenous *Being* arise, whose codes, knowledge and wisdom are negotiated, being socially transmitted and learned for generations. Contrary to what Maria Aparecida Bergamasch and Rosa Helena Dias da Silva (2007) conclude, within an Indigenous school education context which, since colonial times, denied the processes of ancestral knowledge to give way to Western school epistemological enterprises.

In this context, even though a certain colonizing and coloniality bias persists, since, as Gersem Baniwa (2023, p. 8) pointed out, "the school has the mission of reproducing the modus operandi, modus pensanti and the modus vivendi of modern Western society...," paradoxically, the Federal Constitution "recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to their own school education—specific and differentiated, intercultural and bilingual, which respects their own teaching and learning processes" (Bergamasch & Silva, 2007, p. 128).

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Cinema, community and education

Within the scope of Abya Yala cinematographies, formative experiences in/by indigenous communities, although similar, occur under different processes and methodologies. Indigenous cinema and education, as disciplinary areas, have systematically found points of contact, as production processes are invariably linked to programs and projects—whether state-run, third sector, or activist movements—for audiovisual education in communities, with various workshops and formative activities. However, this does not mean approaching production and education from a formal, methodological, or instrumental perspective, based on the use of films as a pedagogical tool: the relationship—as a process and product—between productions and specific courses; evidence in films of methodologies used; correlations between works and teaching materials; or an "education of the gaze" (Zárate Moedano et al., 2019).

For Laura Ximena Triana Gallego (2023), who has studied the routes of Abya Yala cinematographies (from Mexico to Argentina), these scenarios were organized in two basic ways: (i) the transfer and appropriation of technologies by/for communities—from the outside in; and (ii) the autonomy of Indigenous peoples, from within, assuming self-management of audiovisual production and formative processes.

On the one hand, historically, audiovisual education proposals originate from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Indigenous associations, universities, or audiovisual professionals. *Navajo Film Themselves* was developed in 1966 by Sol Worth and John Adair, respectively, communicator and professor at the Annenberg School of Communications and San Francisco State College; VNA, coordinated by Vincent Carelli since 1986 in Brazil, was linked to the Indigenous Work Center (CTI); and the Escuela de Cine Amazônico (Amazon Film School – ECA) which, under the direction of Fernando Valdivia, works with education, production, and dissemination in the Peruvian Amazon. Aiming to create conditions for transferring audiovisual knowledge and techniques (and, in some cases, other technologies like radio, television, and digital media), they develop workshops in communities, sometimes with more structured programs, sometimes on an ad hoc and episodic basis. Many of these experiences are sometimes simply anthropological or communicational experimentation, while in other cases they constitute lasting political alliances.

On the other, audiovisual education originates in the communities themselves, driven by historical and contemporary issues, with filmmakers and collectives appropriating technology

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and language to document everyday practices, ancestral manifestations, and processes of struggle and resistance, the defense of land and cultural heritage.

In the latter case, film and communication schools have sprung up in these territories: the Escuela de Comunicación del Pueblo Wayuú (Wayuú People's School of Communication) in 2014 in the La Guajira region, Colombia; and the Escuela de Cine y Comunicación Mapuche del Aylla Rewe Budi (Aylla Rewe Budi Mapuche Film and Communication School) in Araucanía, Chile, in 2010. They are supported by community communicators' associations, such as the Red de Comunicadores Wayuu (Wayuu Communicators Network) and ADKIMVN – Cine y Comunicación Mapuche. Unlike the formative experiences of the first case, which are driven and led by agents who do not participate in the historical experience, these spaces created in/by the communities themselves point to the self-management of communication processes in education, production, and dissemination, based on their differences, their own demands, issues, and problems.

Other experiences in the audiovisual field have been configured as, so to speak, deterritorialized formative experiences. More in line with the first case, without focusing on specific Indigenous peoples and nations, the direct or indirect management of the communities involved, the Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art and the Center for Intercultural and Indigenous Studies (CIIR) created, in virtual form, the Escuela Diversa de Cine Indígena (Diverse School of Indigenous Cinema) with participation of Indigenous filmmakers, teachers, and researchers in anthropology, history, arts, and communication, for educating youth from Abya Yala to "...reflect and analyze their environment, with the purpose of creating research and/or audiovisual creation projects focused on Indigenous perspectives and from a collaborative practice" (Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino, 2024).

María Paz Bajas Irizar (2008), commenting on the North-American experience, draws attention to a kind of anthropological experimentation, based on a reflection on the "formative" process. It is as if, in their view, Sol Worth and John Adair had set up a laboratory for epistemological speculation in the fields of anthropology and communication. Navajo project's inclination toward hypothesis testing is evident: to understand how subjects behave and what the differences are between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, what methods the "others" use when producing images. It sought "to establish a methodology that would serve anthropological, psychological, and human sciences studies in general, with the aim of moving

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toward an anthropology of audiovisual communication" (Bajas Irizar, 2008, p. 4). It operated within a double paradox: transferring to the Other the means that allows them, from their own perspective, to (re)appropriate—imagetically—the historical world as the subject of enunciation, but under a complex set of prescriptions and domestication, experimentation and observation, which, in Freire's terms (2016, p. 109), erases the potential for critical, creative, and libertarian transformation of individuals, fundamental for going from the condition of "beings for others" to "beings for themselves."

One of the longest-running audiovisual production and educational experiences, which originated within Indigenous political organizations in South America and expresses the internal issues of the community, is *Tejido de Comunicación*, of the Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca (ACIN), in the municipality of Santander de Quilichao, Colombia, in 2005, together with other sectoral organizations.

Researchers Gerylee Polanco and Camilo Aguilera (2011), who studied the struggles for representation based on political and communication organizations in Colombia, conceive of the *Tejido de Comunicación* as part of the Indigenous organizations of Cauca, one of the most significant in Abya Yala, with an unavoidable role in Nasa autonomy (or Paéz, in the colonial denomination): from the recovery of lands to the construction of their own image. They also argue that the appropriation of communication "... is therefore inseparable from the Indigenous political and cultural process ..." (Polanco and Aguilera, 2011, p. 67). To better understand its function, after an initial phase of resistance (from the Conquest to the 1970s) and a second phase called Tierra y Cultura (Land and Culture), focused on territorial recovery (from 1970 to 1980), the work of *Tejido de Comunicación* is part of the *Planes Comunitarios o Planes de Vida* (Community Plans or Life Plans) which, in a third stage called Autonomy, were designed between 1980 and 2000, in which communication is a political artifact of the organizational modes of Indigenous governments[9].

However, between 2000 and the present, communication initiatives in the Department of Cauca have gained momentum. Called Alternative, this stage involves implementing radio, print, Internet, and audiovisual projects that publicize Nasa counter-colonial practices in actions that combine traditional models of organization (assemblies, *cabildos*, councils), political-organizational (mobilizations, congresses, and community projects), and technical-operational (covering various

[9] *Planos de Vida* "... follow two types of 'principles' of 'Life' ('spirituality, reciprocity, integrity, and respectful use of the land') and 'organizational' ('unity, territory, culture, and autonomy')..." (Polanco & Aguilera, 2011, p. 68).

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areas: environment, economy, health, communication). With a predominantly Indigenous composition, working with production, exhibition, and distribution, *Tejido de Comunicación*, according to Polanco and Aguilera (2011), has its origins in the communication committees of the *Planos de Vida* and in the appropriation of various forms of communication.

In the context of indigenous audiovisual education, if we could project the experience as a reference for audiovisual-community crossover, the Nasa people have consolidated a systematically structured process with the Escuela de Comunicación del Norte del Cauca (Northern Cauca School of Communication). We understand this education in two dimensions (Polanco & Aguilera, 2011): in the field of Indigenous politics and in the field of communication (conceptual, technical, and practical). Condensed into the curriculum design of the first formative edition in 1999, which awarded the title of Community Communicators in pursuit of autonomy, self-government, and self-determination for the peoples of Cauca, this process was taken on by professionals in technology from outside the community and, especially, by Nasa and Catholic Church leaders.

> The training process included the curricular components: one, addressed to the entire group of students, contemplates the analysis of the political, economic and cultural contexts of the Nasa pueblo and the Indigenous movement of Cauca, while the other component comprises the teaching of techniques, by groups of students formed according to their affinities, between three media: radio, video/photography and printed media (Polanco & Aguilera, 2011, pp. 76-77)[10].

These Mapuche, Wayuu, and Nasa film and communication schools, which develop their practices between production, education, and audiovisual dissemination, constitute experiences—with particularities, knowledge, and traditions specific to each people—that make up a broader historical context, with their due distances and differences. We refer to the dimension of Indigenous school education which, unlike schools focused on the processes and products of communication, cinema, and audiovisual media in general, is closer to institutional and formal school knowledge and learning. But in these cases, based on Bergamasch and Silva (2007), we can identify a deeper relation regarding the autonomy and protagonism of communities in defining the formative processes that characterize their present. Dimensions and phases of the history of Indigenous school education, which, in line with what we have

[10] The Escuela de Comunicación del Norte del Cauca ended its activities in 2002, and was resumed in 2010, under the *Tejido de Comunicación* management, with admission open to youth from other regions and the curriculum contemplating classes on: writing, radio, audiovisual, internet, photography, printed media, etc.

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analyzed, are initiatives coordinated by the communities themselves, with the educational context at the service of ancestral interests, projects and epistemologies.

At the heart of these experiences, Bergamasch and Silva (2007) observe that the organized political movement and, specifically, Indigenous teachers as subjects of training come into play. These dimensions can be identified and compared, in terms of their aspects and characteristics, with the experiences of film and communication schools in the various territories covered by our study. In this sense, developing from the perspective of community self-management, the discussion surrounding the audiovisual formative processes of the Abya Yala peoples and nationalities resonates in a broader context—from a continental, political, and educational point of view. Regardless of the informal nature of the experiences in Indigenous cinema and audiovisual media, in the comparative framework, besides Brazil, experiences in Mexico, Peru, and Ecuador have "as a common solution for the education of ethnic minorities, the prospect of autonomy in creating and managing authentically Indigenous schools" (Monserrat cited by Bergamasch & Silva, 2007, p. 131).

Continental and trans-originary dimension

In a counter-colonial and epistemic policy on audiovisual technologies, forming indigenous communicators in communities must take center stage. Broadening the spectrum, Córdova (2011) observes that the formative processes in Indigenous audiovisual media have a continental, trans-originary, and decolonizing dimension. In this field, Indigenous cinematographies play a central role as a pragmatic counter-colonial force since, from ancestral territories to urban centers, its films and audiovisual products are constantly challenging "the foundational assumptions of Western education, in which Indigenous peoples are relegated to a past history, considered extinct, frozen in time, or enshrined as objects of ethnographic archives" (Córdova, 2011, p. 84).

In her testimony about the experience of the Escuela de Comunicación de Pueblo Wayuu (La Guajira Department, Colombia), which held its third formative cycle in 2024,

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filmmaker and academic coordinator Leiqui Uriana Henriquez[11] highlights fundamental aspects of technological self-management by Wayuu communities. As an itinerant school that covers the territories between Colombia and Venezuela, the Escuela de Comunicación has a solid educational program covering various media: writing, radio, audiovisual, digital, and others. A graduate of the Escuela de Cine y Televisión de Santo Antonio de Los Baños in Cuba, Leiqui Uriana emphasizes the need for greater knowledge of pedagogical fundamentals that enables educators to understand the youth entering the training process, who come from a wide variety of places and backgrounds. While initially participants belonged to traditional communities, from the second to the third cycle calls for participation were extended to anyone interested in learning about and adopting the technologies.

Although not officially recognized by the national governments (Colombia and Venezuela), the courses are recognized by communities and leaders, and have succeeded in forming professionals who now work as educators at the school itself and play important roles in various fields of communication.

Before the practical activities in the modules, Leiqui Uriana explains that the formative process methodologically begins with a morning meeting with the community to discuss the Wayuu way of life, with the study plan aligned with the normative system of their people, opening up, in particular, to talk discuss "the land, language, social organization, spirituality, and traditional economy." In line with this principle, the coordinator of the Escuela de Comunicación del Pueblo Wayuu, Nat Nat Iguarán Fajardo, in a gap between communication and the normative system itself, contextualizes:

> ...Therefore, we want the youth to identify with, assimilate, and project this connection we have with the land. This allows them to relate to all other communities, learn about their contexts and differences. Learning about different topics is what allows us to envision what we want the school to be: a place of learning not only from a technical standpoint, but also from a spiritual and cultural one.

Through the lens of an eminently Freirean audiovisual pedagogy, so to speak, in a formative process as a practice of freedom and not of domination, one observes elements of an educational method that refuses to conceive of the Wayuu people and world as abstract entities,

[11] In an interview with the author on June 24, 2024, via Google Meet, which focused on her education and social activism; the history, cosmology, and current situation of the Wayuu people; and the history, educational dimensions, and challenges of the Escuela de Comunicación. Authorized use.

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disconnected from themselves and the world, as if the substrate of Indigenous being could not be absent or denied as a concrete reality. Mainly because, from the methodological perspective of the Escuela de Comunicación de Pueblo Wayuu, following Freire (2016, p. 124), we understand that "as women and men, simultaneously reflecting on themselves and on the world, increase the scope of their perception, they begin to direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous phenomena." Beyond the technical dimensions of film and audiovisual language, the historical world constitutes a mediating instance for the subjects of education, "the object of that transforming action by men and women" (Freire, 2016, p. 130).

Based on Dagron (2014), who extensively researched community cinema in Latin America and the Caribbean, we can abstract dimensions, approaches, and contexts to better establish parameters for analyzing the audiovisual formative processes of the Abya Yala peoples and nationalities.

Regardless of the diversity of experiences (implemented in rural and urban contexts, traditional and contemporary marginalized populations) and the latent differences between community cinema and Indigenous cinema, Dagron (2014) also presents perspectives on community audiovisual media based on the study of experiences involving Indigenous cinema. As in Colombia (*Tejido del Comunicación*), Chile (Adkimvn), Bolivia (CEFREC) and Brazil (VNA). From the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP), of the Kichwa Sarayaku people (Ecuador), we read in "Pocho" (Álvarez, 2014, p. 363) that "community audiovisual production is an organic exercise," that is, the works and the community are interconnected. When interviewing Alejandro Santillán, who conducted workshops in the Sarayaku territory and perceived the interfacial dimension between cinema and territory to a significant degree: "The raison d'être of Sarayacu cinema is the community.... The community expresses itself through cinema, and cinema expresses the community's point of view, struggle, and actions..." (Álvarez, 2014, p. 363).

Within the framework of community cinema and audiovisual media, with similarities to what characterizes Indigenous cinema, Dagron (2014) highlights its constituent dimensions: a political, communicational, and artistic expression; a language of its own, without intermediaries and independent of hegemonic cinema; a representation of marginalized, secondary, or invisible populations; and, as a central axis, a cinematography that is committed to the struggle for the right to communication. In line with Triana Gallego (2023), he concludes that the long-lasting

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experiences of technology transfer have enabled communities to gain autonomy to produce and express themselves. Methodologically, we incorporate its parameters by also opting for experiences that "... are carried out by the actors from their own community constitution, excluding external views on them" (Dagron, 2014, p. 30). Hence, the cinematographies of Abya Yala comprise processes in the context of an organized community, with decisions about modes of production and education, the Sarayaku experience being emblematic of audiovisual autonomy because it appropriates three fundamental dimensions: self-management, self-financing, and political self-affirmation (Dagron, 2014).

At the beginning of Vídeo nas Aldeias, Gallois and Carelli (1991) observed the developments of audiovisual media in the Waijãpi communities in the Amazon, and internal issues in the context of the audience, whose social and filmic situations developed close to what Guimarães (2015) called cinema communities: between pacts and disagreements, bonds and fractures of the commons.

In making the documentary *O espírito da TV* [The Spirit of TV], in 1990, and subsequent field visits, Gallois and Carelli identified that meetings at the "TV Houses" were marked by hierarchy, with discourse monopolized by leaders and then transmitted by a third party. With VNA, these spaces broadened political discussion, with leaders incorporating discourses modulated in staging and rhetoric based on what they saw others doing on TV. They identified that these political gatherings, which took place before, during, and after the screenings, refined two types of rhetoric: an internal rhetoric—in their own terms—and another intended for White people—programmatic, so to speak. As a result of the recorded hearings, the arguments, rhetoric, and performance were redefined, with speeches being recorded and constantly reworked for specific audiences: miners, the National Indigenous Peoples Foundation (FUNAI), and the federal government. As a result, Gallois and Carelli (1991) observed inter-community disputes, with Waijãpi leaders from other villages demanding that their voices be included in the communities' audiovisual production process. Under constant control, the records followed three movements: records for themselves, records for White people, and records for other peoples.

We analyzed that Captain WaiWai's presence on the scene marked his place in the community's force field, with an understanding of the film's reach and its power of persuasion.

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In several segments, he attempts to direct the camera and define the final cut to ensure positive images before certain behaviors that could create negative images of the community.

In this sense, the Waijãpi's relationship with the context of audiovisual production and reception in *O espírito da TV* is based on a device of extra-filmic projection and audience (situations that precede the film) and intra-filmic projection and audience (i.e., in the field of the image, with the spectatorship situations being filmed). These contextual aspects, which refer to the constitutive dimensions of cinema communities (Guimarães, 2015), also materialize as a device (Brasil, 2016), based on situations that are not operated by it, but governed by the heterogeneous and the maladjusted (Mondzain cited by Guimarães, 2015). If, in interpreting images, we consider that one procedure is to identify figures of division and reciprocity (scenes of commonality and scenes of dissent), what disrupts the law and order of a community only happens in a social context; when integrated, they constitute the community complex between films and their reception. They thus lean towards a "being/being-in-common" or "being/being-with" and, in turn, open themselves up to the "various kingdoms (human, animal, vegetable, mineral) and divided into singularities (groups, orders, environments, individuals, histories)" (Nancy cited by Guimarães, 2015, pp. 47-48).

Conclusions

Ordering the commons/community is not a matter of theme or power relations between the off-camera and the field of images; rather, it involves spectatorship situations as, between sharing and division, cinema communities are formed through differences, uniting what is never unanimous and closed. In this sense, "...they weave the invisible bond of the community of those who see together, connected in their separation, distant from any identification with a single body..." (Guimarães, 2015, p. 55). The ways and means of identifying these outlines—between the extra- and intra-filmic dimensions—require two methodological approaches: in the ethnographic field which, anthropologically, systematize the socio-historical structures of Indigenous peoples and nations (in their cultural, political, and cosmological organizations), specifically in this case to delineate the place of audiovisual media in the "invisible bond of community"; and in the field of film analysis which, based on film studies, orders the language and materiality of images to highlight the filmic elements that inscribe scenes

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of commonality and dissent, representing, as a device, the Indigenous educations of those who see together without confusing themselves as a single body. Methodological dimensions that complement and feed into each other, especially because they take place from the historical communal world towards the field of images.

In the context of reverse film perspectives, which review the visual regimes of colonialism and reposition Indigenous peoples on the stage of history as subjects of the historical and filmic scene, we observe that audiovisual production and educational processes linked not only to NGOs, agencies, or entities of nation states are gaining prominence. Notwithstanding the importance of these projects, an important field lies in the experiences of film and communication schools in communities coordinated by the communities themselves, based on their networks of communicators and/or political organizations, affirming their difference and different processes mobilized internally, highlighting their specificities and epistemologies, since "'the image of self-knowledge' [must follow] the Mapuche cultural and communication principles..." (Berrocal quoted by Mediático, 2019, pp. 3-4).

Especially with Guimarães (2015), the theoretical basis was fundamental for us to rethink the concept of community as a group of individuals who share the same historical structure and objectives, including communities of interest with specific issues. Mainly because "the commons" implies dissent, conflicts and internal contradictions. As Dagron (2014) observed, what matters in the context of Indigenous cinema are the processes, the journey of the work (from pre-production to distribution), and not just the products (the film itself). In turn, the emphasis on qualitative dimensions highlights the articulation of networks, organization and spaces for debate, educational activities, and the articulation of audiovisual language with other artistic and cultural expressions. In this regard, the implications of the cinema-community interface in audiovisual production and educational processes point to dimensions of a developing counter-colonial pedagogy in the field of cinema communities as education communities.

In an essay entitled "Ficções coloniais" [Colonial Fictions], published in the magazine *Zum*, by the Moreira Salles Institute, in 2021, Denilson Baniwa (2021) recounts how, as a child, he experienced a kind of fiction when he was photographed by a German Indiana Jones-type who appeared in his community with a 50mm camera and asked him to pose naturally for a mise en scène which aimed to capture them as Indians. Producer Fernando Valdivia (2018), who coordinates ECA, created in 2013 in Pucallpa, in the Peruvian Amazon, tells a similar story

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about Pansitinma who, in the early 1960s, was 12 years old and only spoke his people's language, when he was also captured on camera by anthropologist Matthew Huxley and linguist Gertrude Dole. At that time, the Amahuaca boy became the protagonist of an ethnographic film, the subject of a book and countless photographs, which traveled the world like Albert Eckhout's paintings of the tamed and brave gentile and the 19th-century *cartes de visite*, with their scenes of primitive Africans and Indigenous people in their "natural habitat."

In a clear process of invention by the Other, under a coloniality of seeing integrating, in the present, forms of (symbolic, epistemic, racial) violence which, for Cusicanqui (2018, p. 24), refer to "past colonial syntagms…". Pansitinma's body and words—between plans, pages, and acetate sheets—became public, were stored on the shelf of some library (in the case of Huxley's book) and on the institutional collection of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In his 60s, the boy Amahuaca ignored his existence as an ethnographic character. Almost six decades later, thanks to ECA's audiovisual production, education, and dissemination work, with its workshops and screening programs in small villages, university campuses, and indigenous communities in Peru, Pansitinma is now "a respected Amahuaca, the leader of his community, and also an Indigenous filmmaker" (Valdivia, 2018, p. 17), at the forefront, therefore, of recording his own image: of himself, his body, and his desires; of his community and historical-cultural world—on his own terms.

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