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The Films of Ciro Guerra and the Making of Cosmopolitan Spaces in Colombian Cinema

Maria Luna and Philippe Meers

Abstract: *This article proposes to use the concept of "cosmopolitan cinematic margins" to analyse the paradoxical meeting of the cosmopolitan meaning and discourses of Ciro Guerra's Colombian films and the spatial restrictions and immobility of the rural and remote places in which they are set. Such areas as seen on screen are usually interpreted by urban audiences as exotic locations, independently of their actual distance from cities. The article explores how films that, at first sight, show images of marginal and remote places like the Colombian Amazonian Jungle, when inserted into a global context—such as the hierarchical system of international film festivals—become symbols of cosmopolitan cinematic margins, and represent a country in the global spaces that legitimise the importance of that country's film production. The cosmopolitan cinematic margins in the films of Guerra are then strategically situated in environments of global mobility and international prestige.*

Introduction

The three feature films directed thus far by Colombian filmmaker Ciro Guerra—*Wandering Shadows* (*La sombra del caminante*, 2004), *The Wind Journeys* (*Los viajes del viento*, 2009) and *Embrace of the Serpent* (*El abrazo de la serpiente*, 2015)— were all produced by the independent production house Ciudad Lunar. They show the dynamics and tensions in the making of a cosmopolitan cinematic space within a peripheral cinema or "small cinema", expressions that will be used in this article to remark the particular position of the cinemas of the "remaining countries" beyond the dominant production of Argentina, Mexico and Brazil—also known as "the big three" (Falicov and Middents 115). All three films were presented at Cannes Film Festival, and *Embrace of the Serpent* enjoyed a noteworthy global success, becoming the first Colombian film to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film.

In order to analyse the role of international film festivals as showcases of diversity, in which the margins become spaces of global legitimisation for Colombian cinema, this article addresses cosmopolitanism as a multidimensional concept built from the perspective of a critical and situated cosmopolitanism. As Gerard Delanty states, a critical cosmopolitanism allows for the examination of the encounter between local and global expressions; according to Walter Mignolo, such notion, rather than defining cosmopolitanism as a universal project, should be understood through the idea of "diversality" (743), or the possibility of rethinking the universal by considering a diversity of logics and dynamics, especially from those who are in a marginal condition. The conception of cosmopolitanism adopted here also follows Nina Glick Schiller and Andrew Irving, who conceive it as an element rooted in territories and people and that is situated

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in particular contexts, which, according to Felicia Chan, in the case of film depends on its material conditions and social context.

In particular, the idea of cosmopolitan cinematic margins proposed in this article is constructed from the observation of a concrete situation in Colombian cinema, namely the gaze of urban directors who work with (and on) marginal or rural territories of the country, and the capacity of Colombian remote places and, by extension, the communities that inhabit them to gain visibility within international arenas of film appreciation and consumption.

The first part of the article looks at interdisciplinary theories of situated and critical cosmopolitanism in order to construct and introduce the concept of cosmopolitan cinematic margins. The question of cosmopolitan margins is developed as an original contribution to the current debates on cosmopolitan cinema, in which neglected film geographies, such as those of Colombian cinema, are gaining attention. This approach to cosmopolitan cinematic margins, then, implies a transition from exoticism (seen from the outside, as in the gaze of urban directors upon rural territories) to cosmopolitanism (the capacity of belonging everywhere, as in the capacity of the films to gain visibility at international festivals).[1] The concept, we contend, is in fact very useful on more than one level: not only to interpret a film's content, narrative and style but also, and more importantly, to shed light on the changing situation of Colombian contemporary cinema and its current position within the space of international film festivals. The second part of the article focuses on Ciro Guerra's works, tracing his journeys as an emergent director through the film festivals of San Sebastián and Cannes, and highlighting the importance of his depiction of remote locations and their exhibition in the film festival circuit. In this article, Cannes is presented as a dreamland and a space of legitimisation for emergent directors, that contributes to the national political goal of the construction of a positive image of Colombia in the world.

The article analyses different types or levels of margins in relation to cosmopolitanism. On one level, margins will be seen as territories: remote places at the edges of a nation that temporarily occupy a central space due to their representation in film and their visibility via international exhibition. On a second level, they will be seen in terms of their position within the global film market and culture as, historically, Colombian films have been marginal on account of their production within a small cinema, and peripheral in terms of their exhibition at international film festivals. In this sense, the margins of the country, urban and rural territories that are habitually forgotten (both socially and in terms of cinematic representation), are re-evaluated through the filter of an external global gaze cast upon artistic creations. In order to define the idea of cosmopolitan cinematic margins, the main questions to be addressed consist in how the margins of a nation are strategically screened within global arenas of film appreciation and consumption, and how they determine the construction of a cosmopolitan imaginary of a fragmented and centralised nation historically enclosed in its own borders.

Cosmopolitan Cinematic Margins

The perspectives of critical and situated cosmopolitanism help to contextualise the idea of cosmopolitan cinematic margins, exploring its potentialities as a tool of analysis. The development of this operational concept is useful to understand the appeal of remote locations

for international screenings. It also supports an understanding of how film's cosmopolitanism is being influenced by local or national production practices and by cultural policies. In this article, as mentioned, the analysis is exemplified by the case of Ciro Guerra, one of the most representative directors of a new Colombian cinema that, we argue, is focused on the making of new cosmopolitan spaces.

Critical cosmopolitanism, seen from the viewpoint of "cultural modes of mediation", emphasises "moments of world openness created out of the encounter of the local with the global" (Delanty 27). The approach of critical cosmopolitanism shows that the classical idea of cosmopolitanism can be linked to a colonial view of the "discovery" of the other, an issue that is also the main point of postcolonial theory's reaction to a homogeneous idea of modernity. The critique of a homogeneous modernity opens up the possibility of understanding cosmopolitanism in terms of a true "globalization from below", conceived from a "subaltern perspective", and that aims to construct "diversality" or "diversity as a universal project" (Mignolo 745, 743). Formulated in opposition to universality, this approach advocates the existence of diverse forms of cosmopolitanism that challenge the modern project of the Western world. Critical cosmopolitanism, thus, allows us to understand cosmopolitanism as a multidimensional concept—this is "border thinking, critical and dialogical" (Mignolo 744). Border thinking, according to Mignolo, is a "tool of critical cosmopolitanism" (736) which recognises the participation of subaltern agents that take an active role in the making of cosmopolitan projects. The question of how this dialogical concept can be applied to issues of representation, production and distribution in Colombian cinema is key to comprehend the making of cosmopolitanism from the perspective of a small cinema in transformation.

Recent studies on situated cosmopolitanism "recognize that people's actions are rooted in their corporeal being", which emphasises the materiality of its places and conditions (Glick Schiller and Irving 4). David Thompson, for instance, in his review of ethnographies of urban poverty of marginalised communities in different parts of Latin America, conceives cosmopolitanism as "a series of material identities and relationships that develop within the context of economic and social inequality in both local and global scales" (59). Connected to particular global imaginaries, situated cosmopolitanism in his study is addressed as the ability of marginal communities to inhabit the world from which they are excluded. Revisiting the theory of hybrid cultures and identities proposed by Néstor García Canclini, Thompson defines situated cosmopolitanism in Latin America as a "transgressive practice caught between local conflicts and global cosmopolitics" (73).[2] Along the same lines, a situated cosmopolitanism perspective within film festival research could observe how people move in different spaces, such as in film productions set in remote locations, or in the transnational spaces of film festivals. A situated cosmopolitanism will allow tracing distances and relationships between the inhabitants of remote or marginal communities and film directors as artists and distant observers.

Current sociological and cultural approaches to the concept of cosmopolitanism suggest that it would be more productive to study cosmopolitanism in a situated context, rather than as an abstract or global-neutral idea (Glick-Schiller and Irving). In film studies, Sean Cubitt addresses the cosmopolitan film as a type of film that is able to capture global audiences. Felicia Chan in her critique to Cubitt's perspective points out that one of the main problems of framing cosmopolitan cinema in a nonsituated form, such as global consumption, is that it undermines

cosmopolitanism's potential for cultural critique. Chan discusses the interpretation of cosmopolitan films as a "new form of universalism which accepts the totalizing drive of modernity", arguing in favour of the inclusion of its material dimensions:

> While cinema's imaginative possibilities enable the spectator to enter new "worlds", it is equally important to consider the industrial and commercial structures that make these crossings possible. The interpellation of both the affective and material dimensions of cinema allows us to explore the complex relationship between the materiality of cosmopolitan practice and its romantic aspirations. (188)

To understand the cosmopolitan film space in its material dimensions implies going beyond textual, narrative or representational approaches, by which films can be considered cosmopolitan only in terms of representation, characters or themes. Recent publications on cosmopolitanism and cinema point out the importance of the former as an analytical tool; however, their contribution still privileges narrative as the main category to access cosmopolitan manifestations in film. The analysis of Celestino Deleyto of "how films produce meaning in our globalized society" is an example of this focus on narrative (1). Also Maria Rovisco's suggestion that "more attention should be paid to visual representations of borders and mobility as one goes on to probe the category of cosmopolitan cinema" falls in this category (153). This article, on the contrary, by developing the concept of cosmopolitan cinematic margins aims to show that cosmopolitan cinema is much more than the subject of film storytelling. The concept, indeed, has the potential to be very productive in the analysis of film production, distribution and exhibition.

The "cartographies of communication and culture" perspective proposed by Jesús Martín-Barbero provides a useful starting point for a definition of the concept of cosmopolitan cinematic margins (292). It expresses the need to connect the margins between them, with the intention to highlight the social relevance of alternative spaces in a global context of communication and culture. As Martín-Barbero writes, "[t]his is what has been expressed in recent years by the tendency to ask questions that go beyond the 'diurnal logic' and deterritorialization. It implies taking the margins, not as a subject, but as a catalyst element" (292; authors' translation). In our interpretation, the expression "catalyst element" that Martín-Barbero uses to define the importance of margins highlights their relevance for Colombian cinema and society, not only as subjects of film textual analysis, but also because margins have the capacity to subvert power relations in the cultural system.

With reference to an interdisciplinary approach to film studies, Martín-Barbero's theory on the mediation of communication and culture clearly resonates with Michael Chanan's reflections on redefining the militant character of Third Cinema as a need for "a new geography" in which margins are interconnected globally (387). In both Martín-Barbero's and Chanan's perspectives, the relevance of margins as places of political signification reconfigures the view of territories—a view that, far from being neutral, highlights the importance of analysing the concrete spaces in which cinema and communication take place.

By focusing on a single filmmaker, Ciro Guerra, this article follows a methodological strategy that allows a detailed analysis of the trajectory of an emergent director at the Cannes Film Festival. A number of Colombian fiction films of the last decade shot in rural locations

were screened and received prizes at international festivals, including *Crab Trap* (*El vuelco del cangrejo*, Óscar Ruíz Navia, 2010), *Porfirio* (Alejandro Landes, 2011), *La Playa DC* (Juan Andrés Arango, 2012), *The Towrope* (*La sirga*, William Vega, 2012), and *Land and Shade* (*La tierra y la sombra*, César Acevedo, 2015), the latter being the first Colombian film to be awarded the Camera D'Or at Cannes Film Festival. These films are good examples of how rural margins and their characters, as depicted by young Colombian directors, have gained visibility at international screenings.

Recent research on coproductions in Latin America also focuses on ideas of new film geographies. For instance, Stephanie Dennison highlights the importance of the increasing volume of Latin American films that rely on coproduction as a financing mechanism. Deborah Shaw suggests studying coproductions as "transnational modes of production, distribution and exhibition" in a category that "clearly links financing with content" (52). Tamara Falicov refers to coproductions as a "technical artistic subcategory", focusing on the influential role of the fund Ibermedia in the construction of an Ibero-American transnational market ("Ibero-Latin" 71). Luisela Alvaray, in turn, analyses how the growing exchanges between the film industries of the United States, Europe and Latin America should be mapped as a new "transnational geography" ("Are We Global" 84). In a recent publication, Alvaray also points out the paradox of national cinema laws that promote coproduction "as they invite foreign investments to partake in the creation of local products" ("Transnational Network" 259). All in all, the recent scholarship in the subfield of how coproductions work in the Latin American region shows the usefulness of a perspective on critical and situated cosmopolitanism given the challenges that the concept of transnational cinema poses to the study of national cinemas.

Finally, the recent development of film festival studies as an interdisciplinary field of research has shown that the origin of film festivals is a cosmopolitan European invention (de Valck; Iordanova). This field of study includes new approaches to the internationalisation of small and emergent cinemas in Latin America, in which film festival funds are considered "cultural intermediaries" (Falicov, "Festival Film" 209). For example, Latin American countries, such as Chile and Colombia, today promote national policies to foster the transnational visibility of their cinemas. In the case of Colombia, the presence of several films in recent international and recognised European film festivals occurs within a changing media policy context, more specifically the implementation of cinema laws (814/2003 and 1156/2012) that encourage the internationalisation of Colombian cinema. All in all, the position of world cinema in film festivals contributes to a display of diversity (Chan) and, as the case of Ciro Guerra will show, might create new geographies of prestige around these cinemas.

A Cosmopolitan Route to Cannes: The Films of Ciro Guerra

Ciro Guerra's feature film productions are revealing cases of the transnationalisation of contemporary Colombian cinema (Luna). Previous studies of Colombian cinema culture provide the necessary backdrop to an interpretation of Colombian cinema as a small cinema within the conceptual framework of cosmopolitan cinematic margins. For instance, Juana Suárez's analysis of "capturing the margin" reflects on the representation of the other, "those who live in marginal urban areas, at the fringes of the law or at the edges of capitalist production" (69). Carolina

Sourdis and Andrés Pedraza in a recent article focused on *Wandering Shadows* discuss how marginal productions are being absorbed by official institutions. Our article extends this work and contributes to the analysis of Guerra's oeuvre by deconstructing the paradox of a cosmopolitan space produced in the (Colombian) margins to be exhibited in the (global) centres of world cinema, of which Cannes is a privileged space of exhibition.

The analysis proposed below is divided into two parts: the first, entitled "Colombia as Location", surveys the visual poetics of Guerra's films in relation to their place of production, while "Cannes as a Passport to the World Cinema Dreamland" explores the recent history of the Colombian presence in what is arguably the most prestigious European film festival. The locations generate a specific kind of storytelling connected to mysterious and magical places, but equally stimulate the generation of a state branding. Cultural institutions of the state, such as the Proimágenes Colombia and the Ministry of Culture of Colombia, promote a positive image of the country. Both cultural institutions display the quality of the films funded by public money in film festivals as an asset to attract foreign film investments.

Colombia as Location

We distinguish three major aspects of Guerra's films that establish a link between the space of production and the space of the storytelling: first, the visual poetics used by the director, which is based on the natural characteristics of real locations; second, the recurrent figure of the traveller, which functions as a connecting character; third, the remote locations depicted in the films, which we analyse as examples of cosmopolitan cinematic margins when screened at international film festivals.

The conditions of film production in remote or marginal places of Colombia, in both urban and rural settings, constitute challenges that inspire the spatial production of Guerra's cinematic discourse. The director carefully mixes natural and artificial light in the stylised photography of real places that characterises all his cinematography. The labyrinthine cities, lost swamps and endless rivers depicted in his films constitute a visual poetics of the margins. Spaces such as the deprived neighbourhood that still survives in the middle of Bogota in *Wandering Shadows*, the small hidden villages within the immense landscape of the swamps of Ciénaga Grande del Magdalena in *The Wind Journeys*, or the riversides of the Amazon Jungle that traces the routes of the explorers in *Embrace of the Serpent* all work as visual metaphors that contain a nostalgic element of "lost places". These elements, if interpreted according to Martín-Barbero's ideas, connect with the audience, depicting the margins "not only as a subject" but also as "a catalyst element" (292). In this sense, the aestheticised natural locations in Guerra's visual poetics can be interpreted as utopian projections in which the margins recover their importance. In this visual poetics, the margins are more than the subject of storytelling, as they also feed artistic expressions of a national cinematography that (temporarily) resituates marginal locations, following Serje, from geographical isolation to the imaginary of a centralised but fragmented nation.

At first sight, the two most recent films of Ciro Guerra could be interpreted as depicting exotic locations. The Caribbean swamps of *The Wind Journeys* or the Amazon Jungle of *Embrace of the Serpent* seem like postcard landscapes of Colombia. Nevertheless, in each of his

films the storytelling is also deeply connected to the real location and its inhabitants. For example, the films are multilingual as they include different languages spoken by Indigenous tribes. When these films are inserted into global spaces of exhibition, such as international film festivals, the remote locations become examples of cosmopolitan cinematic margins. In other words, the margins depicted in the films of Guerra undergo a process of transition from exoticism to cosmopolitanism. Exoticism is here understood as the cultural and aesthetic fascination of both urban directors and international audiences with remote locations, while cosmopolitanism represents the possibility of stimulating encounters between local and global cultural and geographical expressions. The presence of Guerra's oeuvre and of the films' protagonists in the film festival circuit is necessary for such transition to take place.

Following the ideas of Mignolo on diversality as opposed to universality, then, the centrality of Ciro Guerra to the spaces of world cinema in film festivals could be interpreted as a cosmopolitanism from below. In Guerra's films, the presence of the Indigenous language and the work with traditional communities (present in his films as nonprofessional actors) are central to the generation of cosmopolitan cinematic margins. Thus, this encounter of the local with the global generates interesting questions on the shifting geometries of power in which the margins are temporarily incorporated into cosmopolitan screenings.

Cannes: A Passport to the World Cinema Dreamland

When we use the concept of cosmopolitan margins at the level of spaces of funding and exhibition, film festivals are a crucial area for analysis. The regular presence of Colombia in the top tier European film festivals, particularly in Cannes, is recent and can be traced back to 2007, when Colombia was selected as one of the countries to represent Latin America in the 2009 section Tous les Cinémas du Monde (All the Cinemas in the World).[3] At this time, seven Colombian productions were exhibited in different sections, including *Wandering Shadows*, and the film project—then in progress—of *The Wind Journeys* was presented in L'Atelier section of the Cinéfondation. As Julián David Correa stated, the presence of Colombia in the section Tous les Cinémas du Monde goes beyond the "discovery" of a small cinema from a peripheral country. Rather, it was an interinstitutional effort, which involved governmental lobbies and coordinated strategies among cultural institutions from France and Colombia.

In the history of Colombian cinema, there have been some isolated cases of films selected for Cannes. Examples include *A Man of Principles* (*Cóndores no entierran todos los día*s, Francisco Norden, 1984), in competition for Un Certain Regard in 1984, when the prize was awarded to Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas* (1984), and *No Future* (*Rodrigo D: No futuro*, 1990) and *The Rose Seller* (*La vendedora de rosas, 1998*), two films by Víctor Gaviria. Gaviria was the only Colombian director twice selected for the official competition of the Palme d'Or, in 1990 and 1998, years in which *Wild at Heart* (David Lynch, 1990) and *Life is Beautiful* (*La vita è bella*, Roberto Begnini, 1998), two films produced within strong film industries, were the award winners.[4] In contrast, Gaviria's films are prime examples of small cinema, shot in the *Comunas* of Medellín, a place affected by different forms of urban violence, with nonprofessional actors, and produced within a precarious institutional film structure. Their presence in the official

Cannes competition was all the more relevant as remarkable examples of a Colombian cinematic tradition of representing the margins.

Despite the case of Gaviria, it is a challenge to trace a clear lineage in Colombian cinema due to its highly fragmented history.[5] The films of Ciro Guerra are a recent example of the potential of a cinema that originated in the margins. Guerra, who started as a student in film and media schools and who later obtained state support for the production of his second film under the Colombian Cinema Law (814/2003), opened a pioneering route to Cannes that later became common to other young filmmakers in Colombia, such as the directors of films for the Contravía production house.[6] This trajectory is partly the result of a state programme that supports the production and internationalisation of Colombian cinema and promotes the discovery, training and financial support of young talents, many of them educated in the public film and media schools of Colombia.

In fact, Guerra's opera prima was a student experiment, born in the classrooms of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, the oldest and most traditional film school in the country. The production of *Wandering Shadows* began without state support, before the renovation of Colombian cinema policies. Nevertheless, the project was presented in the Co-Production Forum at the San Sebastián Film Festival in Spain, and received the Cine en Construcción award, a very prestigious recognition in the Ibero-American world. The experimental black-and-white film also won the Audience Award at Cine Latino in Toulouse, after which it was screened at fifty-two film festivals around the world (Rueda). Even if in the beginning *Wandering Shadows* did not receive official support, the Ministry of Culture of Colombia included it as one of the main films in its 2007 showcase of the diversity of Colombian cinema in Cannes. Carolina Sourdis and Andrés Pedraza highlight the fact that the film, one of the most remarkable visual experiments in the national cinematography, results from a mode of production that started in the margins. Suárez, on the other hand, points to the recognition by national media that paradoxically related the film to the promulgation of the Cinema Law in 2003 (167). Even though it started as an outsider, the film was thus strategically reabsorbed as a prime example of emergent Colombian cinema, but only after gaining international recognition.

Two years after its screening at the Cinéfondation's Atelier in Cannes, *The Wind Journeys*, Guerra's second project, became the first major Colombian coproduction supported by the Cinema Law (814/2003).[7] Cofunded by Colombia, Germany, Argentina and the Netherlands,[8] the film was selected in the competitive section of Un Certain Regard.[9] The director's statement for the 62nd Cannes competition presented the film as "[a] journey towards the beginning, towards the spirit. Towards our soul. For centuries we asked ourselves: what keeps us apart, now it is time to ask what brings us together" ("Cinefoundation"). The director's speech in Cannes may be read in terms of a critical cosmopolitanism because it expresses both the need for diversality and a will to connect his stories to the sensibility of Western audiences—a cultural mediation in terms of Gerard Delanty. The film finally received a side prize in the festival: the award of the city of Rome for its "ability to give the audience an unprecedented journey of discovery and an initiation of [*sic*] Colombia's diversity" ("Los Viajes"). However, on a national level, the recognition of the first large-scale production of Ciudad Lunar in Cannes was framed as a successful example of the impact of the Cinema Law 814/2003. Colombia was

now able to produce high-quality films with which it entered the circuit of film festivals, with Cannes as the ultimate dreamland.

Embrace of the Serpent is the third production by Ciro Guerra. The Oscar-nominated film focusing on the stories of Indigenous communities from the viewpoint of Western explorers seemed to be one of the Cinema Development Fund's (Fondo de Desarrollo Cinematográfico–FDC) productions that could attract European coproduction funds. However, as in the previous experience of *Wandering Shadows*, the director undertook a riskier black-and-white experiment, this time a production in the Amazon Jungle. Guerra's idea of reproducing the light of the old pictures encountered in the diaries of the ethnographers of the nineteenth century in Colombia was a challenge that required a larger budget than his first independent production filmed in the centre of Bogota. Despite the success of *The Wind Journeys*, the new project did not easily obtain international support from European coproduction partners. The production house Ciudad Lunar then forged a Latin American coproduction between Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina. The film was also made in association with Caracol, one of the main private television channels in the country, and obtained the support of the Rotterdam Hubert Bals Fund, INCAA and Ibermedia. Although *Embrace of the Serpent* was not selected for the official competition at the Cannes Film Festival, it was part of the parallel section Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Director's Fortnight), organised in Cannes by the Societé du Réalisateurs de Films since 1969, where it received the Art Cinema Award.[10] The most important recognition arrived at the end of its festival tour, when *Embrace of the Serpent* became the first Colombian film ever nominated in the Academy Award competition for Foreign Language Films.

Thanks to the selection of his films by Cannes, and the nomination for the Academy Award in 2015, Ciro Guerra is probably the most internationally recognised Colombian director of the moment due to his presence in film festival circuits and his re-evaluation of situated histories of marginal communities. In the photos of the award ceremony, he wore a T-shirt with a feather print collar under his black jacket, perhaps as an ironic homage to traditional Indigenous cultures. Antonio Bolívar (Karamakate), on the other hand, one of the Indigenous protagonists of *Embrace of the Serpent*, wore an authentic Amazonian symbol on his head that accompanies his suit. Beyond the anecdote, the outfits are, of course, a reference to the filmic discourse, but they also allow an interpretation of the distance between the director and the nonprofessional actors—in this case, the people from the Indigenous communities of Colombian Amazonia that participated in the film. Antonio Bolívar (Tiapuyama, as he is known among the Ocaina Indigenous community) travelled to Los Angeles for the first time from his home in Leticia, the capital of the Amazon municipality in Colombia. During the moments prior to the ceremony, his words, in Spanish, were translated by the director for a seemingly moved global audience. In his ten-year film career, the director was successful in elaborating a discourse on the rescue of traditions and origins, such as in *The Wind Journeys*, in which he depicted the landscape and music of his native town, Riosucio, in the north of Colombia. However, in his latest film, he seems to be aware that these traditions are, to a great extent, as unknown to him as an urban director as they are to the audience that carefully listened to Tiapuyama, both in Cannes and at the Academy Award Ceremony. In this sense, a close reading of the scene is meaningful, because it clearly embodies two different levels of cosmopolitanism, one connecting urban directors with global audiences and another, even more interesting, revealing a cosmopolitanism from below that facilitates the presence of local communities in transnational spaces. The

question of how they could use a new space to strategically position their visibility and current struggles that are taking place in the margins of a global world should be a matter of further studies on cosmopolitan cinema.

Towards a Framework for Cosmopolitan Margins

From the perspective of critical and situated cosmopolitanism, a cosmopolitan perspective in film studies is best understood as interdisciplinary. Therefore, this kind of research asks for a contextual/situated approach that allows cosmopolitanism to be addressed in terms of the mediation of margins. In the analysis of new film geographies, cosmopolitanism deals with the transformations and challenges that affect national cinemas today, in an environment in which global exhibition adds a seal of prestige to cinemas that traditionally were invisible in the spaces of international film festivals or global competitions. Moreover, applying the concept of cosmopolitan cinematic margins to the study of small cinemas delivers more productive interpretations for contemporary issues such as coproductions, international training, international funding and national film policies related to the international circulation of cultural products. Coproductions can lead to the transformation of (national) film discourses. Thus, the choice of a filmmaker like Ciro Guerra implies a switch from a more experimental and urban mode of storytelling towards a strategy rooted in recounting local stories from within premodern or "lost" settings. This nostalgia for lost places can be critically interpreted as the creation of utopias that neutralise political discussion in strategic fields in Colombia, such as ecology or armed conflict issues. Nevertheless, the other side of the neutralisation opens the possibility of dialogues with diverse audiences and circuits that seem receptive of forms of alternative cosmopolitanism.

Colombian cinema as a peripheral film industry or small cinema has been traditionally excluded from the main film festival circuit. However, its current position is shifting, in particular due to a recent successful strategy of international exhibition, encouraged by new national cinema policies. Partly as a result of the implementation of a new cinema law, a peripheral cinema is now more present in the cosmopolitan spaces of the main international film festivals. In the end, these policies construct a discourse that redefines Colombian cinema as a new cinema that emerges from the margins and fulfils the expectations of world cinema critics and curators of European film festivals. Cosmopolitan cinematic margins at a national level are thus strategically occupying positions in the peripheries of the global system of film festivals; this international presence serves as a space for national legitimisation and is inevitably transforming the landscape of production of contemporary Colombian cinema.

A critical, situated cosmopolitanism, in this sense, stimulates an emergent film industry traditionally enclosed within its own borders. However, there remains a stark contrast between the lack of foreign contact and restricted mobility of the Colombian rural inhabitants represented in the films and the position of film directors and producers, who base most of their cultural prestige on international success. How can we explain that a Colombian cinema, beyond its national identity, defines itself on the basis of foreign/global recognition? What then is the meaning of a cosmopolitan film in a country with a history of spatial restrictions and immobility of the rural zones due to the armed conflict and social inequalities? The preliminary explorations

in this article point to a situated cosmopolitanism, materialised in the universalisation of local stories and the projection of marginal places, as a first step towards a broader framework for analysis of small cinemas in Latin America.

Notes

[1] A first discussion of these ideas was developed in Maria Luna's article "Los Viajes Transnacionales del Cine Colombiano", a reflection on the documentary impulse and the tensions between exoticism and cosmopolitanism present in the glocal character of new Colombian coproductions.

[2] The discussion of the term "cosmopolitics" to which Thompson briefly refers at the end of his text exceeds the scope of this article. See Latour for a fruitful discussion based on Stenberg's definition of the word, which takes the stronger meaning of cosmos (universal) and the stronger meanings of politics (pertaining to the polis/city-State) to argue that cosmopolitics indicates a hesitation on the meaning of belonging to a common world.

[3] This is a space created in 2005, as Benjamin Craig maintains, "to help showcase films from countries with a historically low cinematic output" (65), or to promote diversity in cinema from "countries with policies that support the national film industry", according to the archives of Proimágenes and the Presidency of Colombia (Proimágenes Colombia).

[4] Rodrigo García was the only Colombian director that in the year 2000 won the prize Un Certain Regard in Cannes, but his film *Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her* (2000), originally in English, is a US/German coproduction not classified as a Colombian film.

[5] As this article is focused on fiction films and their presence in Cannes, we will not make reference to documentary films, through which directors such as Luis Ospina and Marta Rodríguez have contributed to militant cinema and aesthetic innovation in the Colombian cinematography.

[6] This is the case of Ciudad Lunar, which produced *Wandering Shadows*, the opera prima of Ciro Guerra, when the director was a student of cinematography at Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Oscar Ruiz Navia, director of *Crab Trap* and founder of Contravía Films, and César Acevedo, director of *Land and Shade*, the first Colombian Caméra D'Or at Cannes, were also students of Universidad del Valle, the biggest public university in Cali.

[7] The Cinema Law 814/2003 (Ley de cine) introduced by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia encourages the activity of film production and film coproduction, particularly through the creation of the Cinema Development Fund (Fondo de Desarrollo Cinematográfico–FDC).

[8] *The Wind Journeys* was made in association with the television channels Arte, ZDF and RCN Cine, and with the support of international institutions such as the World Cinema Fund, Programa Ibermedia, the Hubert Bals Fund and the Rotterdam Film Fund. At the local level, it

received the support of Universidad Nacional de Colombia and the government of El Cesar, the municipality of Colombia in which it was filmed.

[9] Created in 1978 to absorb several ambiguous sidebars, Un Certain Regard is now, according to Craig, the main showcase section of the festival and is intended to be a "survey of current world cinema" (65). In recent years the festival has created the Prix Un Certain Regard to help the best film in the sidebar achieve distribution in France.

[10] "Created by the French Directors Guild in the wake of the events of May '68, the Directors' Fortnight seeks to aid filmmakers and contributes to their discovery by the critics and audiences alike. ... [I]t created a breeding ground where the Cannes Festival would regularly find its prestigious auteurs" ("Societé du Realisateurs du Films").

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