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Table of Contents

[1](#_Toc111496344)

[**Part I: Abstract and Introductions** 6](#_Toc111496345)

[Formal Written Acknowledgement: 7](#_Toc111496346)

[Personal Acknowledgement 8](#_Toc111496347)

[Abstract: 9](#_Toc111496348)

[Introduction: Opening Statements on the Intended Research 9](#_Toc111496349)

[Central Thesis Question: 12](#_Toc111496350)

[Supplementary Questions: 13](#_Toc111496351)

[Methodology and Theoretical Framework: Examining Film Through A Perspective of Cultural Analysis 13](#_Toc111496352)

[Introduction: Intended Methodological Structure 13](#_Toc111496353)

[Theory and Literature Components: A Brief Overview of Some Fundamental Texts 14](#_Toc111496354)

[Overview of Chapters: A Thesis “Road Map” 17](#_Toc111496355)

[Notes on Terminology 19](#_Toc111496356)

[**Part II: A Survey on the Ahistorical Narrative in Ethnographic Film, and in Fictional Representations.** 22](#_Toc111496357)

[Chapter 1: 23](#_Toc111496358)

[Introduction: Establishing the Problem of Cinematic Taxidermy 23](#_Toc111496359)

[Ethnographic films: Indigenous Representation and Ethnographic Filmographies 28](#_Toc111496360)

[Indigenous Representation: Cinematic Taxidermy, Whitewashing, and Indigenous Bodies in Cinema 30](#_Toc111496361)

[Framing The Colonialist-Vision in Canada: Representations of Colonial Progress Through the Excavation of the Land and its Indigenous People 35](#_Toc111496362)

[The Canadian Melodrama: Patriarchy, the Bourgeois Imperial Efforts, and Enabling Invisibility of Canada’s Indigenous 41](#_Toc111496363)

[Canada’s Residential School System: Moulding and Cinematic Taxidermizing of Canada’s Indigenous Children, and the Notion of ‘Photo-Colonialism.’ 42](#_Toc111496364)

[Japanese Cinema, The Ainu, and the Ethics of Ethnography 44](#_Toc111496365)

[Hollywood Cinematic Code and The Influences of Ainu Representation 46](#_Toc111496366)

[Concluding Statements 48](#_Toc111496367)

[Chapter 2: 49](#_Toc111496368)

[Introduction: What is Resistance?: An Analysis on the concept of Resistance in Relation to Indigenous Identity (On) Screen 49](#_Toc111496369)

[In Pursuit of Change: Shifting Representations 51](#_Toc111496370)

[Going ‘Digital’: The positionality of the ‘Self’ in Ethnography 53](#_Toc111496371)

[Mini Conclusion 56](#_Toc111496372)

[Resistance and (Visual) Sovereignty: The Aesthetic Condition within the Cinematic- Environmental Space 56](#_Toc111496373)

[Analysis 1: *Ainu Mosir* 57](#_Toc111496374)

[Analysis 2: *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* 61](#_Toc111496375)

[Mini Conclusion: 63](#_Toc111496376)

[Resistance in Indigenous Fiction Film: The Connection Between Survivance and Active Resistance. 64](#_Toc111496377)

[Analysis 1: *Ainu Mosir* 65](#_Toc111496378)

[Concluding Statements 67](#_Toc111496379)

[**PART III: The Functions of Cinematic Realism, and its Position in the Fictional Depiction of Trauma** 69](#_Toc111496380)

[Chapter 3: 70](#_Toc111496381)

[Introduction 70](#_Toc111496382)

[Trauma and Multitudinous: The Variations of Trauma Narratives and their Connections Towards the Real 73](#_Toc111496383)

[Multitude Within Social Issues of Trauma 75](#_Toc111496384)

[Analysis 1: Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open 76](#_Toc111496385)

[Analysis 2: *Ainu Mosir* 79](#_Toc111496386)

[Mini Conclusion 81](#_Toc111496387)

[Trauma and Entanglement: Entangling Narratives as a Means of Expressing the Real 82](#_Toc111496388)

[An analysis of Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open and its Entangled Affairs with Past Trauma 83](#_Toc111496389)

[Entanglement and the Non-Performance: An Analysis of Ainu Mosir’s Entanglement via Collaborative Filmmaking 84](#_Toc111496390)

[Concluding Statements 86](#_Toc111496391)

[**Part IV: Conclusions** 89](#_Toc111496392)

[Chapter 4: 90](#_Toc111496393)

[Conclusion 90](#_Toc111496394)

[Bibliography 92](#_Toc111496395)

[Filmography 92](#_Toc111496396)

[References 92](#_Toc111496397)

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## **Part I: Abstract and Introductions**

## Formal Written Acknowledgement:

Land acknowledgements are now a customary at most Canadian institutions. At my undergraduate institution (The University of British Columbia), all presentations hosted on the campus requires a land acknowledgement for the Musqueam people. Land acknowledgements are a form of recognition, which highlight that presentations are on the unceded territory of Canada’s Indigenous people. This paper is written for a Master’s program that is situated in the Netherlands. However, I am writing on a topic which focuses on Indigenous identity and cinematic representation. Thus, it is my responsibility to provide an acknowledgement. I therefore would like to acknowledge that I am writing on topics associated with postcolonial and cinema studies, and that are in relation to: the Ainu, the Kwakwaka’wakw, the Blackfoot, and the Sámi people. Furthermore, I acknowledge that Indigenous people’s traditions and ancestries are marred by practices of imperialism and colonialism. In the context of postcolonial discourse, I further find it necessary to recognise my privilege, as a non-Indigenous person, to be writing on topics such as Indigenous Cinema.

## Personal Acknowledgement

There are so many great professors that I owe a deep depth of gratitude. From this list, I first would like to thank Dr. Evelyn Wan. A thesis advisor, in my opinion, should always be honest and supportive. Evelyn, as a supervisor, ticks those boxes and more. With that being said, Evelyn, thank you for your unwavering support, for healthily challenging me, for defusing my neurotic and anxious mind-set, and for helping me with my writing. Second, I would like to thank Dr. Frank Kessler. Thank you for your support as a second reader. In my first year, I suffered a severe case of imposter syndrome. With some guidance and encouragement from Frank, I toughened up, and problem solved. Frank, thank you for teaching me that failure is normal, and that the most important outcome is to learn how to remedy the undesirable results. Finally, I would like to thank the thesis committee for organising the thesis labs.

Writing a thesis, and navigating life within academia can be challenging. I cannot thank my MAPS peers enough for their unconditional kindness, and support. I would first like to thank peers such as Tara, Chris, Mary-Joy, and Danny who helped me flesh out ideas for my thesis, and did several peer reviews of this thesis and its proposal. Second, I would like to thank Mia, Nickie, and David. You three have been there for me through thick and thin; you let me call you when I am down, or when I want to celebrate something optimistic in my life.

Now onto my Canadian and Dutch family members. To Mom, Dad, and Alannah, and my UBC Film Studies classmates: thank you for always being patient, loving, and supportive. To Sarah and Taylor: thank you for all the support, and for encouraging me to write on the topic of Indigenous rights; you’re both such an inspiration to me. To Bas, Ingeborg, Martijn, Lotte, Rosa, Dan, Mau, Yvonne, Johannes, and the ‘Breesic 23 Crew,’ and the ‘Clam Group’: I cannot thank you enough for your hospitality and your support throughout my time in the Netherlands. Finally, I want to thank my partner Laurens. Lau, you are the line to my kite. Your support through all of this did not go unnoticed, and I am so glad you are with me through every endeavour.

## Abstract:

This paper looks the history of Indigenous Cinema, and it first explores the historical relationship of visual ethnography and its recording of Indigenous peoples. The following goal of this paper is to address how Indigenous Cinema handles the legacy tied to colonialism through visual ethnography. Here, I assess that Indigenous Cinema entails a process of reconciling these visual representations, while resisting them. Upon a discussion of resistance within Indigenous Cinema, this thesis aims to explore how resistance can be articulate. Here, I propose a closer look a the various sub-concepts within resistance, and how they correspond to non-cinematic principles of depicting a multitude, and entanglement. In doing so, I further focus on how resistance narratives often handle topics that relate to intergenerational trauma. As a result, this thesis explore a constellation of concepts within Indigenous Cinema.

## 

## Introduction: Opening Statements on the Intended Research

The start of cinema and the recording apparatus are entrenched in the history of colonialism (MacDougall, 2005). A consequence of this relationship is evident in the representation of Indigenous peoples. As a result, Indigenous people's representation signifies a process of *Othering.*In other words, a colonialist gaze (via film) is a reductive process of minimizing Indigenous presence to a representation of 'primitive beings' (MacDougall, 2005). Cinema's historical relations to colonialism are first associated with discussions on the analogue recording apparatus. However, the emergence of digital recording technologies catalyzes Indigenous participation in filmmaking (Pearson and Knabe, 2015).

Indigenous Cinema commonly refers to Indigenous created productions, which can also include collaborations with settlers. Indigenous Cinema is also a relatively recent institution of cinema, and it extends to different productions of filmmaking or film genres: documentary or experimental film, as well as fiction films (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Moreover, Indigenous Cinema is also known as Fourth (World) Cinema. The key difference between Indigenous/Fourth Cinema and other global cinematic systems[[1]](#footnote-1) is that Indigenous/Fourth Cinema[[2]](#footnote-2) is a process of negotiating Indigenous identity; while also discussing Indigenous representations within mainstream cinema (Herrington, 2011).

Central to academic discussion on Indigenous Cinema is the process of transcending prior cinematic representations. Most, if not all, Indigenous films contain an active process of resistance (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Resistance is not a direct or overt display of confrontation—towards past or present imperial or colonial representations (Herrington, 2011). Alternatively, resistance is more subtle and reveals a process of healing and acknowledging —past and present— issues within indigenous cultures (Barclay, 2003; Herrington, 2011). Thus, the purpose of this thesis is an exploratory assessment of Indigenous Cinema and resistance, and its argument focuses on how this concept transcends colonial legacies in filmmaking and their representations of Indigenous bodies on screen.

Indigenous films thematically manifest topics such as intergenerational (historical) trauma and identity in myriad ways (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). However, the thesis focuses on how one can articulate these thematic topics as a mode of resistance. Accordingly, the thesis further explores how cinematic concepts and visual aesthetics support the active process of resistance. There is a substantial amount of scholarly works and academic discussions on Indigenous methods of resistance. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to this discussion by uncovering how Indigenous Cinema's process of resistance points to the concept of non-cinema. Subsequently, this research intends to demonstrate how resistance, understood through the concept of non-cinema, creates a bridge to cinematic realism.

The conceptual framework of cinematic realism, in film theory, is a complex discussion. Film scholars such as Sergei Eisenstein[[3]](#footnote-3) (1929), Siegfried Kracauer [[4]](#footnote-4)(1974), or André Bazin[[5]](#footnote-5) (1960) offer varying opinions on the film’s impression of reality as a form of objectivity. However, recent scholarship on the concept of non-cinema propose a closer assessment of entanglement and the depiction of a multitude as ties to cinematic realism (Nagib, 2020; Brown, 2018). I therefore propose that the multitude fixates on a goal of opening the framework of a populous (Negri and Hardt 2004; Brown, 2018). In turn, the multitude suggests that while the populous shares a commonality, there is also a singularity (identity) that must be taken into account (Negri and Hardt, 2004; Brown, 2018). In discussing the multitude, I locate a discussion on how Indigenous Cinema considers the various experiential circumstances that expand across different Indigenous groups. Thus, while Indigenous peoples cinematically share a goal of resistance, their contributions can range in representation (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). For this reason, I consider how the multitude is multifarious in its depiction. As well, I analyse how the multitude is used in cinema as a means of projecting realism, because its process points to a dynamic of revealing the singularity within the plurality (Brown, 2018). With regard to entanglement, I address how it denies a cinematic projection of escapism or illusionism. Entanglement is thus a form of resistance, because it identifies the inseparability between the film world and our reality (Brown, 2018). I thus make a connection between Indigenous cinema’s use of resistance with entanglement, because both concepts deliver a method of revealing the traumatic consequences of settler infringement. Simply put, resistance and entanglement incentivise a responsibility of our position within the world.

 There is a limited range of Indigenous fiction films because Indigenous Cinema is a relatively recent cinematic institution (Pearson & Knabe, 2015). Indigenous Cinema does offer a few fiction films in its oeuvre. Therefore, the thesis brings forward two research materials (case studies) that facilitate an in-depth analysis of the mode of resistance in Indigenous Cinema. Thus, this thesis contributes an analysis of Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open (2019) and Ainu Mosir (2020). These films both incorporate indigenous non-actors, and they collaborate creatively with the filmed Indigenous groups. Both films focus on displaying credible narrations and are shot at real locations to highlight how the current socio-political affects Indigenous cultural identity and the embedded or systemic racism towards Indigenous people.Following previous scholarship, I provide a film analysis on the current presentation of Indigenous identity within these fictional Indigenous films.

The function of choosing two films from different geographic locations subsequently contributes to the discussion of multitudinous representations As Indigenous history, ideology, and cinema are not microscopic; by contrast, it is a phenomenon that points to shared grounds with colonisation, knowledge, and identity (Columpar, 2010). For instance,  Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open (2019) demonstrates the every-day issues that are prominent for Canada's Indigenous people. The film follows the narrative of two Indigenous women from different socio-economic backgrounds in Canada: Áila (Blackfoot and Sámi descent) rescues a young and pregnant Kwakwaka'wakw woman named Rose from her abusive boyfriend. Thus, the film focuses on navigating Indigenous identity within Canada and the political challenges Indigenous people endure with Canadian institutions (social welfare, aftermath of residential schools, and the police). Regarding Takeshi Fukunaga's Ainu Mosir (2020), the film follows Kanto, an Ainu teenager living in Hokkaido, Japan. In the summer before attending high school, Kanto struggles with his Ainu heritage due to the loss of his father. Although the film represents a coming-of-age story, it also reveals the realities of being Indigenous in Japan and negotiating Ainu identity and culture through the ritual Iomante (イヨマンテ). Iomante is a ritual of sending back. The ritual is commonly known as the 'Bear Festival.' However, in Ainu culture, the bear (along with all beings) is the embodiment of deity/Kamui (the bear spirit translates to the God of mountains)(Kindaichi and Minori, 1949). Thus, this thesis aims to illustrate how these films incorporate resistance through various cinematic modes (narrative and cinematography) or filmmaking procedures (production). As a result, the thesis then discusses how cinematic realism emerges through the filmmaker's decision to tackle topics of Indigenous identity concerning intergenerational trauma, settler relations, and Indigenous worldviews.

## Central Thesis Question:

1. What does a concept like cinematic taxidermy inform us about the relationship between the recording apparatus and Indigenous representation?
2. How does resistance and non cinema deal with the legacy of earlier depictions?
3. How is cinematic realism achieved in Indigenous Cinema?

## Supplementary Questions:

1. How does the research material demonstrate this aspect of cinematic realism?

## Methodology and Theoretical Framework: Examining Film Through A Perspective of Cultural Analysis

### Introduction: Intended Methodological Structure

This research is comprised of several elements, but the two most foundational are the historical components as well as the film analysis sections. By touching upon historical factors, I attempt to operate within the domain of cultural analysis. In other words, I focus on historical reports of settler involvement to first position the problems *historically* practiced within cinema. By positioning this problem, I then bring forward my film analysis to exemplify how Indigenous Cinema moves beyond prior representations. The secondary importance and relevance of a historical overview is that it provides a qualitative data on former cultural representations and practices. Moreover, the historical research addressed in this thesis also encompasses a vast amount of information on the Indigenous groups I discuss—this also includes an exorbitant amount of footnotes. My reason for including Indigenous historical perspectives is rather self-explanatory. Nevertheless, my reasons include a method of academically operating both in a respectful manner, which subsequently leads to a well rounded research. Therefore, this thesis focuses on Indigenous historical factors including various perceptions, representations, and worldviews. By discussing Indigenous cultures, ideologies, and histories, I further address the multitude of experiential factors embedded within different Indigenous communities.

By employing elements of cultural analysis, I then bring forward my analyses of the films. The structure of the film analyses will either focus on specific scenes where I incorporate dialogue to further my discussion on narrative resistance. Secondly, I contribute a film analysis that is based on the filmmaker’s incentive or motive of documentation. It is important to highlight the methods of filmmaking, because it furthers my discussion on the goal of incorporating resistance narrative in Indigenous Cinema. Consequently, the film analyses also enable a more in-depth discussion of cinematic realism. Again, both films *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* (2019) and *Ainu Mosir* (2020), I argue, exemplify approaches that target themes of intergenerational trauma, settler infringement, and Indigenous worldviews within a framework of resistance. In turn, I demonstrate how these films are understood as projecting a multitude, while they interplay the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction. Therefore, I analyse these films by drawing upon several authors within the fields of postcolonial and cinema studies. In then, create a bridge to film theories on non-cinema to discussion the notion of cinematic realism.

### Theory and Literature Components: A Brief Overview of Some Fundamental Texts

###### Cinematic Taxidermy

**“Realism, Presentation, Representation” in *World Cinema and the Ethics of Realism:***Lucia Nagib (2011) disentangles the relationship of realism within world cinema. In the section titled “Realism, Presentation, Representation,” Nagib writes on the various modes of filmmaking, such as the presentational versus the representational form. Here, Nagib constructs an argument situating on the ethics pertaining to the representational and presentational forms (Nagib, 2020). By analysing former academic debates, Nagib assesses that he presentational form is heavily valued as a means to discussing cinematic realism. However, Nagib challenges this perspective by offering another approach to cinematic realism, one that is built upon a positive ethics. Nagib’s text function as an opening argument to the various viewpoints on objectivity within ethnographic filmmaking. Following Nagib’s text, I also argue that the presentational form, in the history of ethnography, problematically validates their projections as a contingent to the real. Simply put, I illustrate how ethnographic filmmaking within the perspective of presentational objectivity is previously understood as a gateway to truth. However, I touch upon how this method or viewpoint instigates a problematic and racially insensitive understanding of Indigenous ethnographic documentation.

**“The Past in the Present: On Taxidermy, Zombies, Resistance, and Reappropriation” in *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context*:** Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe (2015) write on the division between ethnographic films and Indigenous fictional or contemporary films. On the one hand, ethnography referred to a process of documenting historical truth or objectivity. On the other hand, the historical lineage of ethnographic filmmaking developed under colonial institutions (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Under the sub-section “The Past in the Present: On Taxidermy, Zombies, Resistance, and Reappropriation,” the authors elaborate on the complications of treating ethnographic footage as an “indexical relationship to the truth” (3). Instead, the authors argue that credibility in ethnographic films leads to the taxidermizing Indigenous people; thus, ethnographic films from the past “produced Indigenous peoples as zombies, simultaneously dead and alive” (4). In this discussion on ethnographic films and the credibility of representation, I discuss how the concept of taxidermy opens the discussion to prior notions of realism in film.

***The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle:***Fatimah Tobing Rony’s (1996) book also contributes an understanding to the concept of cinematic taxidermy. Rony’s work examines the field of ethnography and its projection of Indigenous peoples. Here, Rony comments on the settler gaze and how this gaze thus positions Indigenous people into a state of vanished (Rony, 1966). In comparison with Pearson and Knabe, Rony therefore demonstrates the historical relationship associated with Western and Indigenous relations via the screen. In this thesis, I therefore connect Rony’s comments with Pearson and Knabe to further articulate the problematic environment created through the field of ethnography (Rony, 1966). Moreover, I focus on how the author defines the concept of cinematic taxidermy.

###### Modes of Resistance

***Reservation Reelism:*** Michelle H. Raheja (Seneca) (2010) examines the nature of sovereignty in Indigenous scholars. For Raheja (Seneca), sovereignty is often associated within a Western context or conceptual framework. However, the author agues that the notion of sovereignty has always been part of Indigenous cultures (Raheja, 2010). Thus, in this book, Raheja explores how Indigenous sovereignty fits into the scheme of present day settler society (Raheja, 2010). Moreover, Raheja then proposes how Indigenous sovereignty is inserted within cinema which challenges and changes the cinematic landscape(s) (Raheja, 2010). Following Raheja’s (Seneca) discussion, I propose that sovereignty is a sub-concept of resistance and I tackle how this concept can be analysed within Indigenous Cinema.

***Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance:*** In this academic memoir, Indigenous writer Gregory Vizenor (2009) focuses on the concept of survivance within Indigenous cultures, and how survivance’s features differ from Western knowledges and definitions (Vizenor, 2009). Survivance is an obscure concept, and rather difficult to grasp. However, Vizenor suggests that survivance is a fictional mode of resistance that persists and insists upon shifting an understanding of Indigenous worldviews (Vizenor, 2009). Moreover, survivance is about resisting the settler definition of Indigenous presence within all forms of art and literature (Vizenor, 2009). I employ Vizenor’s work to further grasp and articulate how survivance is a sub-concept to resistance. In turn, I demonstrate how *Ainu Mosir* incorporates a mode of resistance via the visuals of nature.

###### Cinematic Realism Through Non-Cinema

***Realist Cinema as World Cinema****:* In this book, Lucia Nagib focuses on “films and filmmakers committed to reality” (15). Nagib’s argumentation follows discussion on the relationship between cinematic realism and non-cinema. Here, Nagib proposes a close discussion of non-cinema’s ability to harness realism through its various modes of production. In other words, Nagib argues explores and defines the production mode of these films, which in turn, offers an intrepid proposal on cinematic realism. In turn, the full argumentation within Nagib’s book is that the term ‘world cinema’ warrants a semantic shift (Nagib, 2020). That being, ‘world cinema’ should be regarded under the conceptual framework of ‘realist cinema’ (Nagib, 2020). The book is comprised of several sections which address the various modes of realist filmmaking productions[[6]](#footnote-6). In line with this research, I focus on Nagib’s proposal of non-cinema and mise-en-abyme. Here, I refer to Nagib’s assessment of a mise-en-abyme as a form of self-referential index (Nagib, 2020). Through this discussion, I focus on how the mise-en-abyme reveals the entanglement between the film world and our reality.

***Non-Cinema: Global Digital Film-making and the Multitude:*** In this book, William Brown (2018) explores the concept of non-cinema within digital filmmaking. For Brown, non-cinema encompasses a process of revealing what is hidden within mainstream cinema (Brown, 2018). While the exploratory nature of this book is expansive, two foundational components are central to Brown’s argumentation. That being, the sub-concepts of multitudinous and entanglement. By positioning debates from various scholars in the humanities and social sciences, Brown poses that the multitude in non-cinema is about opening representations (Brown, 2018). In turn, Brown’s argumentation focuses on how a multitude of representations pushes the boundaries of mainstream cinema and genre. For this reason, a multitudinous approach acknowledges and presents the various foundations and feelings tied to human complexities (Brown, 2018). I employ Brown’s framework towards multitudinous to argue how Indigenous cinema, and its methods of resistance, function within the same manner. In terms of entanglement, Brown details how non-cinema reveals and operates on an initiative of entanglement. That being, it positions its spectators as part of the film: the diegetic spectator. As well, Brown discusses how non-cinematic entanglement is present in the process of filmmaking that then complicates the position of the film as separate from our reality (Brown, 2018). Thus, I follow Brown’s premise of non-cinematic entanglement to show how resistance complicates the environment of the spectator.

### Overview of Chapters: A Thesis “Road Map”

In the first chapter, I open with a historical account on the relationship between indigenous representation and cinema. In doing so, I answer the following question: What does a concept like cinematic taxidermy inform us about the relationship between the recording apparatus and Indigenous representation? Methodologically, this chapter is about establishing the former conflicts of Indigenous representation in film. I address the historical problems proposed on framing Indigenous people. In turn, I address how problematic representations of Indigenous people became a catalyst for the movement of Indigenous Cinema. This section slightly extends the margins of this research. However, it is important to note the history of ethnographic films, and how they previously operated as a form of objective documentation. Moreover, it is important to highlight former documentations of Indigenous people within the context of colonialist practices. To solidify my inquiries, I investigate the concept of ‘cinematic taxidermy’ explored in Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe (2015)’s anthology, *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context,* and Fatihmah Tobing Rony’s (1996) *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle.*

The second and third chapter are blended in function. Both chapters serve as my theoretical framework for this research, and I also incorporate my methodology— film analysis. In the second chapter, I respond to the research question: how Indigenous filmmaking practices move beyond the legacy of prior representations? In this chapter, I first focus on the relationship between the advent of the digital recording apparatus, and how ‘going-digital’ opens an economic accessibility for Indigenous participation in film; that, in turn, results in Indigenous filmmaking practices like resistance (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Thus, I contribute an answer towards the central question with analysis on the concept of resistance. Resistance, within Indigenous Cinema, encompasses a wide degree of sub-concepts. Thereafter, I focus on the sub-concepts of (visual sovereignty) and Indigenous views on survivance.

Both visual sovereignty and Indigenous survivance locate a discussion on authority of representation, and self-determination within fictional and nonfictional literary and mediated art forms. In turn, these sub-concepts correlate to the concept resistance based on their initiative to confront prior colonial representations of Indigenous people. Within the discussion of visual sovereignty and Indigenous survivance, I contribute my film analyses. In the case of (visual) sovereignty, I outline how *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* (2019) uses shots of the landscape of Vancouver to establish issues of the endangered space. Sovereignty in relation to *Ainu Mosir* discusses how Ainu sovereignty intersects with Japan’s legislation. Moreover, I discuss how the film uses sovereignty as a means to demonstrate Ainu cultural values towards such ritual practices like Iomante. In the discussion of survivance within Indigenous fictional forms, I provide a film analysis on *Ainu Mosir.* In discussing survivance and *Ainu Mosir,* I direct a focus relevant issues that are constructed through the use of survivance. For instance, I focus on the display of animals and nature as a means of Indigenous self-expression and internal emotions. By providing a film analyses, I demonstrate how sovereignty and survivance incentivise a resistance and representational control over Indigenous knowledge values.

Thereafter, the final section of chapter 3 is my film analyses of the case studies in relation to non-cinema, which I effectively connect to the theoretical framework of resistance. In this chapter, I answer the question: How is cinematic realism, in the context of non-cinema, constructed in Indigenous Cinema? To establish cinematic realism within a non-cinematic production, I draw upon William Brown (2018) and Lúcia Nagib’s (2020) works to define the sub-concepts of multitudinous and entanglement. In the analysis on *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* (2019) I highlight how a multitudinous approach enables the filmmakers to capture the various circumstances of being an Indigenous woman in Canada. In this analysis, I point out the myriad of issues of social and economic inequalities that are influenced by the circumstances of intergenerational trauma. On the analysis of *Ainu Mosir,* I similarly point out the differences of Ainu values within the community. Specifically, this section features the generational relationship within the Ainu community. Here, I focus on how the older Ainu generation strive to return back and value their Ainu heritage. Whereas, the younger generation are positioned within a liminal complex scenario. That being, the youth find different ways of valuing their Ainu heritage, which we can assess as a subtle recognition. On the analyses with entanglement, here I illustrate how both filmmakers use non-actors, improvisation, and the mise-en-abyme to refract the binary of film world versus reality.

## Notes on Terminology

The bulk of this thesis discusses the rights and violations of Indigenous groups in all parts of the world. I provide an extensive analysis on the historical issues of cinematic documentation of Indigenous people, and I discuss their relationship with settlers, and their representation by cinematic means. For this reason, there are certain terminologies that need to be clarified, and other terminology that need to be recognised as both factually untrue and entirely inappropriate. In this thesis, I therefore refuse to use terms such as, ‘savage,’ ‘American Indian,’ ‘[Native] American’ or “Eskimo.” These term, while historically used, do not signify any facet of truth. In “What We Want to Be Called: Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives on Racial and Ethnic Identity Labels,” Michael Yellow Bird (1999) states that the Indigenous people in:

In the United State and Canada have not regarded themselves as one monolithic racial society. While Indigenous Peoples have, in the past and the present, found common ground in their experiences and dealings with European American colonizers, they also often viewed one another as diverse peoples, distinguishable according to language, behavior, dress, geography, foods, technologies, creation stories, and numerous other characteristics (2-3).

Bird further addresses that the terms such as “Indian” or “Native” are loaded in historically oppressive descriptions of Indigenous peoples (Bird, 1999). Moreover, within Canada the term ‘First Nations’ is only one category within Canada’s Indigenous groups; the other two sub-categories, are the Inuit and the Métis. In an effort to be both respectful, politically correct, and a proper ally, I only refer to the derogative terms based on quoted descriptions in research written by other scholars, and these racially oppressive terms are not indicative of my perspectives, feelings, or attitudes towards Indigenous people. Instead, I choose to implement these terms within the context of citations which reveal the socially repugnant descriptions made through colonialist attitudes. Moreover, I attempt to refrain from generalisations in my discussion of various Indigenous groups. For example, when discussing a specific Indigenous tribe, I refer to them based on their designated tribal name. However, in discussions on the wider phenomenon of colonialism and various Indigenous groups, I will use the general term of ‘Indigenous.’

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## **Part II: A Survey on the Ahistorical Narrative in Ethnographic Film, and in Fictional Representations.**

# Chapter 1:

## Introduction: Establishing the Problem of Cinematic Taxidermy

The key difference between the presentational and representational form starts with a filmmaker’s intention (Nagib, 2020) . In other words, what does a filmmaker intend to document? Or what ideological, social, political, or even emotional avenues featured within the film? Filming within a presentational framework entails a goal of objectivity. Whereas the representational form focuses on creating an impression of reality. In *World Cinema and the Ethics of Realism,* Lucia Nagib (2020) disentangles the relationship of realism within world cinema. What Nagib constructs is an argument on the presentational ethics in filmmaking versus the representational filmmaking form. Under the sub-section “Realism, Presentation, Representation,” Nagib makes a distinction between the presentational and representational film forms by analysing other film scholar’s perceptions on cinematic realism. For instance, in Nagib’s assessment of Noel Burch’s (1979) *The Distant Observer,* the difference between the presentational and representational is evident in Hollywood’s institutional goals:

What would be the actual difference between ‘representational’ and ‘presentational’ cinemas for Burch? Basically, the fact that ‘representational’ cinema was directed towards producing an ‘impression of reality’, whereas ‘presentational’ cinema was quite at ease in acknowledging its own artifice (4).

For Nagib, presentational cinema does not advocate for representation or mimicry; this perspective is repeated through Nagib’s following analysis of Tom Gunning’s “Cinema of Attractions,” where the goal of cinema is to ‘show’ as opposed to creating an impression of the object or subject (Nagib, 2020). Moreover, Nagib further proposes that the linguistic or semantics of presentational cinema is well articulated through Andre Gaudreault’s (1997) analysis; where Gaudreault understands the presentational form as a combining mode of “narrative communication: narration and monstration” (Gaudreault 1997, 73. Cited in Nagib, 2020, 5). The term monstration stems from the French verb, ‘montrer,’ which translates to the English verbs ‘to show’ or ‘to present’ (Nagib, 2020). For this reason, the presentational mode within cinema is considered adjacent to objective documentation.

Therefore, the opening chapter for this thesis starts by establishing the historical role of cinematic documentation in relation to Indigenous people. I start with an extensive historical account on the cinematic modes presented within the field of visual anthropology—ethnographic films—, and in film institutions like Hollywood Cinema. The standard definition for ethnography or ethnographic films details a process of recording objectively. However, as this chapter progresses, I point out the complexities of claiming ethnography as factual or credible evidence of documentation, or of documenting other cultures. The conception of ethnographic documentation, and of the recording apparatus is embedded within colonialism (MacDougall, 2005). The influence of colonialist practices in ethnographic films, in turn, bleed into or are simulated in the portrayal of Indigenous people in fictional films within Hollywood Cinema.

The main function of this chapter is to establish how ethnographic realism is not indexical to the notion of the Real. I point out the complexities of claiming visual ethnography as a gateway to realism. Instead, I propose an assessment on the production (filmmaking) of ethnographic films and early Hollywood cinema. By focussing on the production of these films, and the recorded Indigenous people, I demonstrate that these films are in a representational mode of cinema as opposed to the presentational form. For this reason, I discuss how the assumption that ethnographic films, from the 18th to 19,th are presentational is problematic; these films do not signify a realist account of Indigenous people, rather the presentational mode is only evident through its showcasing of colonialist biases and attitudes towards the documented Indigenous people. Therefore, the overall structure for this chapter starts with the historical development of the field of visual ethnography, and its transition or interactions with the production of Hollywood’s fictional adaptations of Indigenous identity. Moreover, the scope of Indigenous cinematic representation is expansive. Indigenous issues within a colonial and postcolonial environment are not minute, and they geographically range from North and South America, the continents from Oceania and to Asia. Thus, this chapter has its limitations in terms of addressing the local[[7]](#footnote-7) relations with colonialism. Nevertheless, this chapter discusses the phenomenon of colonialism in relation to Indigenous representation. I therefore address how prior Indigenous representation, follows a colonialist agenda. The consequences of developing and advertising a false visual of Indigenous people ultimately results in what scholars such as Fatima Tobing Rony (196) coins as a process of cinematic taxidermy.

The term taxidermy refers to an art form, where animals are preserved through the stuffing of materials like cotton, and their skin is remounted onto the body. The etymology of taxidermy stems from the Greek word táxis (to order, or arrange), and the French word *dérma* (skin) (Merriam-Webster, 2022). In short, taxidermy is the ordering or arranging of skin. Ergo, cinematic taxidermy renders a similar description of preservation: where the recording apparatus is used to arrange bodies (skin) in a particular order. This particular concept defines a process of constraint. Cinematic taxidermy, is thus, a process of ‘zombification’: like the taxidermized animal, the figure is seen as both dead, but uncannily alive; it is an exercise of en-framing or capturing the subject within a given era (Rony, 1996). Born into the colonial discourse, the former role of ethnographic cinema further insinuated Indigenous people as a footnote in the colonizer’s visions of the past. In *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context*, Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe (2015) emphasize this point by introducing the connections between former Indigenous representation and the ‘cinematic taxidermy.’ The concept reveals an intention to remove the possibility of transcendence, or to reconceptualise the representation of the recorded figure (Rony, 1996). Seminal contributions discuss facets of cinematic taxidermy. For this reason, I subsequently start by assessing and corroborating with their perceptions through the use of film vignettes. My use of film vignettes are not full case studies. Instead, they are samples of films which demonstrate the process of cinematically taxidermizing Indigenous people.

The extent at which I discuss Indigenous representation in relation to colonialism and cinematic taxidermy covers the representation of Indigenous peoples within North America. In the first few sections of this chapter, I will discuss the relationship between colonialism, the recording apparatus, and Indigenous peoples from the United States; then, I follow with sections on the cinematic and colonialist relations with Canada’s Indigenous people. I choose this particular order based on the chronology of colonial interactions within North America; as the United States *gained* their independence from the British colonies in 1700s; whereas, the Canada Act was enacted by 1867. Moreover, the cinematically documented relationship between the United States and their Indigenous people influenced the cinematic orientation of Canada’s Indigenous people. For this reason, my goal for the sections on the United State’s relationship with their Indigenous people focuses on the ethnographic and Hollywood cinematic developments within the country; how the portrayal of Indigenous people across North America creates a homogenised effect on Indigenous representation and identity. Consequently, the sections on Canada’s Indigenous people highlights a similar pattern of representation; where the Canadian immigration films documented Canada’s indigenous as part of the passive terrain, and a expendable resource for empire-building (Gittings, 2001). Consequently, the sections on Canada’s indigenous representations in both the melodrama and the immigration films illustrates how the representational form projects a display of binaries, or an epistemic hierarchy of knowledge.

Moreover, this chapter also develops and features the Ainu in relation to cinematic taxidermy within Japanese and global cinema. Japanese films are rarely attribute to the Indigenous Cinema; this is in part due to previously conceived notions on Japan’s society as ethnically and culturally monolithic[[8]](#footnote-8). However, Japan’s history of colonising the Ainu is in many ways similar to former European practices in colonialism. The insistence to associate all civilians, in Japan, as part of a homogenous society causes tensions between the Wajin (Japanese Society) and the Ainu; as the Ainu’s cultural practices and beliefs are dissimilar to the Wajin. For this reason, the emergence of prejudice towards the Ainu produced a rapid decline in their population, and the perceptions towards their culture were regarded as “primitive and uncivilized, as well as labeling Ainu people as barbarians” (Sato et al, 2009: 2). From the Meiji period (1868-1912), also known as the enlightenment movement, the Japanese government imposed regulations and customs such as the ‘uncultivated customs’ (Sato et al, 2009). In turn, these customs prohibited Ainu practices of rituals, female tattooing, or speaking the Ainu language (Sato et al, 2009). Moreover, the immense immigration of Wajin to the Ainu region of Hokkaido further affected the cultural lifestyle and livelihood of the Ainu. Subsequently, systems of land ownership restricted “the territories that the Ainu could use for hunting, fishing, and gather, as well as the prohibition of hunting and fishing, eventually impoverished [the Ainu]” (Sato et al, 2009: 14). Both the vast immigration of the Wajin, as well as the restrictions and prohibiting of Ainu cultural practices are principal factors of forced assimilation.

Upon the Meiji Period, and the modernity of Japan, there were attempts to restore Ainu culture. The Ainu rituals such as “icharupa (memorial services for ancestors), iomante (brown bear sacrifice) and ashiricheppunomi (ceremony of receiving the first salmon of the season)” (Sato et al, 2009: 15) are successfully restored. By the Heisei Period (1989-2019), measures centered on cultural promotion, allowed the Ainu to teach and learn their language (Sato et al, 2009). Despite motives to restore cultural practices, however, the materials for the Ainu to practice their culture were not accessible or attainable[[9]](#footnote-9). In turn, the promotional initiatives focus solely on the aspects of: language, performance and rituals, and craftwork. However, Ainu cultural practices, through these promotions, remain in Hokkaido; thus, the knowledge of Ainu culture does not expand to all parts of Japan. Another issue towards Ainu cultural incentive is that they do not enable the opportunity for Ainu people to successfully run Ainu businesses, or to gain employment (Sato et al, 2009).

By the 21st century, 2009, Japanese legislation recognised the Ainu[[10]](#footnote-10)—along with the Okinawans— as Indigenous groups within Japan by adopting the non-binding resolutions passed through the United Nations: UNDRIP.[[11]](#footnote-11) The adoption UNDRIP, offered some form of reconciliation and resolutions. Nevertheless, the Japanese Government “does not recognise the unconditional right to self-determination” (Uzawa and Gayman, 2020: 269). Therefore, Ainu rituals and cultural practices like salmon fishing and tattooing are under the control of the Japanese government. By providing a section on Japan’s cinematic illustration of the Ainu, I discuss how their representation is comparable to the cinematic representation of Indigenous people in areas such as North and South America. In the sections where I discuss the relationship between the Ainu and the recording apparatus are shorter in length; this is in part due to the lower proportion of distributed films on the Ainu.. Nevertheless, these sections act as a precursor to the problematic display of Japanese ideologies (homogeneity). This section also illustrates the growing historical and current issues towards Indigenous relations in a colonial and postcolonial environment.

## Ethnographic films: Indigenous Representation and Ethnographic Filmographies

Ethnography and ethnographic films stem from research within the field of visual anthropology. A particular challenge of the ethnographic film is in its purpose and defining features. Historically, individuals from Indigenous cultural backgrounds were transported to Western Institutions[[12]](#footnote-12) as part of different expositions; however, this operation proved to be difficult in regards to the visual credibility of the individual’s culture (MacDougall, 2005). In other words, the process of transferring minority groups to the exposition stage suspended the belief of their cultural reality. Thus, the ethnographic film served as a solution to the conundrum of validity. From the 19th century, the ethnographic film emerged as a form of scientific documentation that is harboured under a colonialist rhetoric. For instance, in the book, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses,* Doug MacDougall (2005) refers to the pioneering filmmaking practices with the following statement:

As anthropology developed in the colonial context, the visual had further primacy as a way of organising society by types. Like the collecting of artifacts and botanical samples, photography provided a new way of creating human models, against which further examples could be compared and classified. For administrative purposes it was often more important to identify someone as a member of a group than to know much about the group itself (215).

Evidently, the ethnographic film prioritised a goal to document and reveal cultures outside of Western cultures. (De Bridgard, 2003) However, this process did not focus on comparing and contrasting different cultural values, or recognising other cultural practices as equal to Western ideologies.

Instead, the visual fields of anthropology took a hierarchal approach in their analysis. MacDougall asserts that:

“a general public imbued with ideas of social Darwinism, the visual appearance of exotic peoples was the most obvious way of placing them on a scale between civilized man and animal” (214).

The crucial points, elaborated by MacDougall, clarifies the historical complexities of the ethnographic films. Subsequently, MacDougall’s assessment demonstrates how ethnographic filmmaking is difficult to define as a credible source of documentation. Under the persuasion of philosophical influences by Social Darwinism, public and institutional attitudes towards non-Western cultures entailed a process of binary classifications. Thus, a priori knowledge of Western cultures as the most civilized leads to non-Western cultures in the role of primitive, exotic, or beneath Western traditions and ancestry.

With the advent of ethnographic films, Western expansions in North America surfaced an increased fascination of the Artic regions and its indigenous peoples: The Inuit and the Yupik. While various colonial ventures sought to stage the Arctic’s Indigenous people, the more prominent documentation is Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922). Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* attempts to illustrate the culture of the Inuit people within the Arctic regions of Canada. In particular, *Nanook* follows one Inuit family, and documents the family’s daily endeavours of hunting, fishing, and migrations. To this day, Flaherty’s documentation is considered a pivotal point of influence in anthropological documentation. However, *Nanook,* is a film that does not encompass full authenticity. By contrast, Flaherty’s documentation is also met with controversy for his efforts in staging events. In turn, Flaherty’s visual staging of the Arctic’s Indigenous people produced an enframent of stereotypes. As Shari M. Huhndorf (2015) suggests in *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* that:

Nanook became a watershed, after which no imagining of the Far North could free itself from the panoply of stereotypes born in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and brought to fruition in Flaherty’s work (79).

Thereafter, Flaherty’s works immensely influenced a stream Hollywood studio films featuring the Indigenous Inuit[[13]](#footnote-13) and Yupi’k[[14]](#footnote-14), often with titles that referred to the derogatory term, ‘Eskimo’[[15]](#footnote-15) (Huhndorf, 2015). In turn, the surge of expeditionary or ethnographic films in the Arctic, along with the stereotypical staging of the Inuit and Yupik results in mimetic dilemma: Indigenous representations is preserved in the cultural imaginings of the colonialist vision.

Authenticity and believability are often features of truth-telling or realistic-accounts, and they can be central concerns in any genre or category of film. However, the intended framework of ethnographic films is stringent on the goal for objective documentation (Heider, 2006). Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* is generally revered or disputed for its authentic ethnographic documentation (Huhndorf, 2015). Nevertheless, the critical point on authenticity, that I propose, is in the choice of shots that are documented. To elaborate, if ethnography focuses on the objective documentation of a society or culture, why do films like *Nanook of the North* only provide a focus on the Indigenous bodies? By comparison, Huhndorf also proposes a similar perspective; as Huhndorf states that films like *Nanook of the North* “deflect historical and political questions about the relationships between the Arctic and the West” (80). Thus, authenticity in films like *Nanook of the North* reveal a contentious relationship between the subjected body, the recording apparatus, and the filmmakers: a manipulation via the notion of ‘authentic’ narration, and by creating ambiguity towards the filmmaking process as complicit to colonialist biases (Hundorf, 2015).

## Indigenous Representation: Cinematic Taxidermy, Whitewashing, and Indigenous Bodies in Cinema

From the 19th century and well into the 20th  century, the treatment of Indigenous cultures as primitive or *othered* ensued the eradication of Indigenous peoples[[16]](#footnote-16). Born into the colonial discourse, the former role of ethnographic cinema further insinuated Indigenous people as a footnote in the colonizer’s visions of the past. In *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context,* Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe (2015) emphasize this point by introducing the connections between former Indigenous representation and the ‘cinematic taxidermy.’ Following Fatimah Tobing Rony’s (1996) perceptions on *Nanook of the North,* the authors determine the concept of taxidermy as:

At its most negative, ethnographic film might be said to produce Indigenous peoples as zombies, simultaneously dead and alive (reflecting as well the spirit of taxidermy, which is to make the dead object look alive), or perhaps alive despite having been declared dead (4).

In short, cinematic taxidermy renders the subject to be encased within a particular framework of thought or perception. For Fatihmah Tobing Rony, taxidermizing Indigenous peoples proposed the assumption that Indigenous-being is enveloped in a pre-historic era (Rony, 1996). In turn, such assumptions enables alternative representations as truthful documentation: “since Indigenous peoples were assumed to be already dying if not dead, the ethnographic ‘taxidermist’ turned to artifice, seeking an image more true to the posited original” (Rony, 1996: 102. Cited in Pearson and Knabe, 2015: 4). In the case of Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North,* Rony further addresses in *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle,* that “Flaherty himself explained, he did not want to show the Inuit as they were […] but as (he thought) they had been” (100). Both narrative and cinematographic initiative, are thusly, intertwined in mechanical orientation and manipulation of the Western visual ideation of Inuit cultures. Such liberties to both re-orientate, re-imagine, and taxidermize Indigenous cultures and people also bleed into the Hollywood cinematic domain.

Along with the ethnographic film, Hollywood representations of Indigenous peoples marginalised them into stereotypical other, and ‘zombified’ their identity. Moreover, Hollywood Cinema also plays a role in the process of eradicating factual Indigenous identity through the delegation of Western constructs. For Jill Doerfler (2013), the film *The Vanishing American* (Sietz, 1925) attempts to convey the conflicts surrounding the relationships and portrayal of American Indigenous people and the European settlers. In the anthology, *Seeing Red: Hollywood's Pixeled Skins,* Doerfler posits that films like *The Vanishing American:*

reflects early twentieth century anthropological views of race and human development […] Biological determinism is a major underlying theme […] the American Indians will be doing the “vanishing” and the European Americans will be assuming control of our lands (3).

While the film, according to Doerfler, offers a sympathetic approach to the Indigenous people of the United States, it also projects an ambiguity to Indigenous identity (Doerfler, 2013). In connection with theoretical proposals on cinematic taxidermy, Hollywood cinematic approaches to Indigenous identity reveals a fascination towards the end results of colonialist practices (Doerfler, 2013). The vanishing act through cinematic taxidermy reveals a process where Indigenous representation is falsely preserved into a thematic framework. In other words, Indigenous identity is dominated by the racially motivated assumption of primitive society. Thus, Indigenous identity cannot dissipate from the Western idealised vision. At the same time, however, the role of the indigenous person cannot transcend former Western ideologies.

Notions of cinematic taxidermy or zombification are evident in Hollywood cinema’s implementation of non-Indigenous actors in Indigenous roles—whitewashing. In the case of Indigenous representation, ‘whitewashing’ entails both a process of non-Indigenous actors playing the role of an Indigenous person, while also maintaining the historically false racial stereotypes administered[[17]](#footnote-17). Again, for Doerfler, this is most prominent in the character ‘Nophaie’ from *The Vanishing American.* Nophaie is depicted as “the noble tribal leader,” (4) and played by Richard Dix (a non-Indigenous actor). Throughout Richard Dix’s career in the 1920s, he played several Indigenous roles in Hollywood Cinema; Doerfler admits that this was most likely possible, because real Indigenous people “had already vanished by the 1920s” (4). Between the thematic structure and title of the film, as well as the film’s production, *The Vanishing American* becomes a self-reflexive environment on the conditions of Indigenous people in North America, and on the screen: as non-Indigenous actors and non-Indigenous story-tellers replace Indigenous bodies and cultures, which renders a process of diminishing the factual presence of Indigenous people. Films such as *The Vanishing American* are from the ‘Roaring Twenties era’ of Hollywood cinema. However, Hollywood Cinema’s contributions to ‘whitewashing’ Indigenous roles still maintains relevance in more recent films[[18]](#footnote-18).

While ‘whitewashing,’ generally refers to non-actors playing the positions of minority roles, the term also constitutes the narrativization of minority figures depicted through a colonialist frame of thought. ‘Whitewashing’ Indigenous identity continued in film genres like the Western or animation features, and they further complicate the realistic account of Indigenous relations with colonizers. For instance, *The Searchers* (Ford, 1956) illustrates the portrayal of Indigenous ideology’s as abhorrent and a threat to the ‘Western frontier.’ Likewise, thematic contexts in animation films such as Disney’s *Pocahontas* (Goldberg & Gabriel, 1995) and its adaptation *The New World* (Malick, 2005) promote ahistorical descriptions on the relationship between colonizers and Indigenous people as: a depiction of enlightening the Indigenous within the ‘un-civilised’ or wild frontier (Buescher & Ono, 1996). In “Disney's *Pocahontas:* Reproduction of Gender, Orientalism, and the Strategic Construction of Racial Harmony in the Disney Empire,” Kutsuzawa Kiyomi (2000) links Disney’s multicultural incentives to tensions within America during the 1990s. Kutsuzawa further emphasizes that the Disney production of *Pocahontas* “is one such attempt by it to show its progressive approach to the issue of inter-racial, inter-ethnic relations” (47). For Kutsuzawa, however, Disney’s *Pocahontas* and their vision for multiculturalism discloses a process of erasure:

Disney is able to present this world only through silencing or erasing history and conflicts among ethnic relationships. The heterogeneity of existence displaced in the attraction is domesticated and leveled into homogeneous desire, hope, and happiness. The uniform act of singing and the synchrony of representing all nations within the same space leads one to forget the histories that gave rise to the diversity and heterogeneity of each ethnic existence. More critically, the presentation is divorced from daily experience, imputing an image of ethnic relationships free of conflict, inequality, poverty (43).

Kutsuzawa later remarks that these attempts are initiated for financial purposes, as opposed to motivating a multicultural program for the purpose of social progress (Kutsuzawa, 2000). The author’s remarks also reiterate that the commitment to project a multiculturalist image is orientated within a visual that does not comply with historical accuracy, but of colonial subjectivities. Thus, the (neo)colonial rhetoric of stories such as *Pocahontas* are sutured into Western folklore, and further adaptations do not consider the factuality.

Regarding recent adaptations, Terrence Mallick’s adaptation *The New world* attempts to depicts a less harmonious multicultural interpretation; still, colonialist aggression and coercion are at a disavowal. Moreover, re-visiting Western folkloric tales of Pocahontas refers back to the discussion of cinematic taxidermy. In ““There Was a Veil Upon You, Pocahontas": The Pocahontas Story as a Myth of American Heterogeneity in the Liberal Western,” JK Savage (2018) writes on the development of the Western Imaginary in American folklore and mythology. For Savage, the inclination for films to project colonialist themes requires an exploration on the historical and fictional developments in the ‘Pocahontas Story.’ In the case of *The New World,* the author offers a critique that follows other scholarship and reviews written on this film. Through the extensive review of Mallick’s *The New World,*  Savage draws the conclusion that the film offers an accord of mutuality or consent that does not differ from former fictional interpretations (Savage, 2018). Thus, Mallick’s *The New World* still emphasizes a Western-utopic agenda (Savage, 2018). Without the historical veracity of Pocahontas[[19]](#footnote-19), films such as *The New World* emphasize the colonial participation of subjugating the Indigenous Powhatan/Algonquin as a positive experience (Savage, 2018). In turn, Savage proposes “the question then, becomes why should this story be re-told [?]” (18). Savage’s inquiries prompts the discussion on the ethical parameters of re-distributing ahistorical stories— and in particular that of *Pocahontas*. In conjunction with the author’s perspectives, Mallick’s adaptation is central to debates on cinematic taxidermy. Hollywood Cinema’s depiction of colonial conquests, re-distributes and continues to frame Indigenous people into a taxidermized role. These roles do not show the current conditions of the various Indigenous people. They also do not concentrate on producing a viable account of Pocahontas/Matoaka.In short, re-circulating fictionally ahistorical stories, through film— and to a larger extent all media— encloses depiction of Indigenous people into stereotypes that are driven by a singular narrative. Accordingly, the singular narrative, produced through colonialist perceptions, intimates Indigeneity as existing while concurrently extinct due to settler occupation.

## Framing The Colonialist-Vision in Canada: Representations of Colonial Progress Through the Excavation of the Land and its Indigenous People

Up to this point, the discussion of Indigenous representation and the colonial gaze centers on the filmic endeavours within North America, and specifically within the United States. Thus, the topic of Canada’s Indigenous people and their cinematic representation, so far, are not entirely explicit for a few reasons. First, Hollywood Cinema is the most dominant film industry within North America—despite the immense geographic range between Canada and the United States. Therefore, fictional representations of Indigenous people are generally focussed on Hollywood adaptations that are distributed abroad. Thus, fictional representations of Indigenous people, to some capacity, start within Hollywood Cinema[[20]](#footnote-20)—based on the Hollywood’s economic resources, as well as the immense scholarship on Hollywood cinemas history of representation. Moreover, the discussion of Indigenous people within the Arctic requires some clarification. The Arctic region encompasses a wide area that includes Scandinavian countries — like Finland, Iceland, and Norway—, Canada and the United States. The state of Alaska is landlocked between the province of British Columbia and the Yukon territory. Between the three territories, there are several Indigenous groups. Despite their cultural differences, colonialist endeavours sought to associate the Arctic Indigenous groups with the pejorative term ‘Eskimo.’ In turn, the colonialist attitude of identifying all Arctic or North American Indigenous via a singular narrative indicates a process of homogenizing identities. However, my goal for this section is to demonstrate the colonialist gaze, within Canada, more explicitly. Specifically, this section details the role of film or cinema in accordance with Canadian Indigenous representation. As well, this section identifies the stringent narrative of imperial dominance with values towards ‘whiteness’ through the recordings of immigration within Canada.

By the late 19th century, Canada’s first cinematic and photographic images were in the form of the immigration reel (Gittings, 2001). The use of the immigration film/reel is for an economic or marketing purpose; with the intent that these films feature Canada’s landscape as a real estate opportunity (Gittings, 2001). The most prominent immigration films are by James S. Freer (1855-1933) who created films such as *Ten Years in Manitoba* (1989) (Gittings, 2001). In *Canadian National Cinema*, Chris Gittings (2001) writes on the development of the colonialist vision within Canadian Cinema. On the topic of Freer’s immigration films, Gittings recounts that the tour of these films were:

A great success and revealed the power of the motion picture as an ‘emigration agent’ (Morris, 1978, 20). Both the CPR and Canadian government realised the potential of film to act as an agent for the settlement of the West. Many more films were produced to create a desire for emigration to Canada, but a very specific emigration revolving around the matter of whiteness and the furthering of the British Empire. At this time Canadian nation-building occurred within the British Empire, and was tantamount to empire-building (Gittings, 8).

Thus, the exposé of Freer’s films feature an opportunistic goal of monopolizing the Canadian landscapes. Nevertheless, Gittings addresses that these films project an emigration-agenda that subjects Canada’s Indigenous population into a non-existent status. In other words, Canada’s cinematic orientation, documented by filmmakers like Freer, represents Canada as an unceded environment that is pending colonial conquest (Gittings, 2001).

The motivation to distinguish Canada’s landscape as unrestricted, in effect, reduces and defines Indigenous presence as part of the nation’s uninhibited resources. For Gittings, immigration films such as the *Wonders of Canada* (English Charles Urban Trading Co, 1906) depict Canada’s Indigenous as a commodity (Gittings, 2001); where Gittings writes:

The shots of white men harnessing the resources of the land are interrupted by a Native powwow and a shot of a First Nations chief smoking a pipe in a canoe. The jump cut from a white nation-building that revolves around a harvesting of the environment to images of First Nations cultural practice creates a narrative rupture in which the ideology driving the narrative becomes visible (Gittings, 9).

Gittings further elaborates that the imagery or shots within *Wonders of Canada* illustrates a juxtaposition between the recorded settlers and the Indigenous people of Canada (Gittings, 2001). For Gittings, the position of the settler is portrayed as a subject of imperial dominance, as well as a marker for the progress of building and using the resources of the land; whereas the Indigenous people are portrayed as part of Canada’s environmental landscape; subsequently positioning Indigenous identity as the representation of the Other (Gittings, 2001). By positioning Canada’s Indigenous population into a position of Other is a reductive process, which ultimately entails the condescending assumption that Canadian indigenous’ presence is neither an advocate, nor a participant in the effort of nation building. For this reason, the visual iconography, within immigration reels like *Wonders of Canada,* demonstrate the process of vanishing Indigenous culture and identity; as settler-ideology, through cinematic means, positions Indigenous identity as an expendable resource.

The narrative strategy, in *Wonders of Canada,*  juxtaposes a cultural difference between settlers and Canada’s Indigenous. In turn, the cinematic documentation reduces Indigenous principles and practices; this process of narrative reduction further compliments the settler imaginary of Canada’s Indigenous identity as primitive. For Gittings, the portrayal suggests the success of the settler’s settlements, while the Indigenous are recorded:

“as non-producers[…]Through the technology of cinema, [Canada’s Indigenous] are commodified, ‘produced’ for a domestic and international market. The chain of signification initiated by the harvesting sequences of devastated forests, and geometric fields of wheat, works to deny [Canada’s Indigenous] subjectivity, structuring them as part of a disappearing wilderness”(9-10).

The ideological goal of representing Canada’s Indigenous as ‘non-producers’ legitimates the authority for settler excavations of the land (Gittings, 2001). Consequently, the constructed narrative initiates “the ‘fact of Canada as a white nation of male producers and fixes the Aboriginal other as an inert figure of another time on the margins of that nation” (10). Thus, by showcasing the settler expansion as a progressive process creates a false validity towards colonial endeavours within Canada.

Following Gittings’ remarks on Canada’s immigration films, the outcome of cinematic taxidermy is similar to other ethnographic and fictional films produced within the United States and in Europe. Moreover, the choice of narration and representation of Canada’s Indigenous as a resource equivalent to the Canadian landscape demonstrates a colonialist bias: an attitude or ideology based on creating binaries or dichotomous relations. The visual representation of settler relationships with Canada’s Indigenous illustrates two binaries that interrelate. First, there is the dynamic of power between settlers and indigenous. This dynamic is a feature of us versus them, or us versus the Other. Similar to the first binary, the dynamic of hierarchical powers is shown through a secondary binary of settler versus nature. Thus, the settler versus nature binary is a viewpoint of looking at humans having power over nature. Regarding the oeuvre of Canadian immigration films, Indigenous bodies are represented as part of the unceded and passive lands (Gittings, 2001). Thus, the narrative within immigration films like *Wonders of Canada* demonstrate a representation of Indigenous figures as stationary or within the binary of settlers versus the Other; as the Indigenous are documented as unprogressive, and they require guidance from settlers to progress within the nation. In other words, the projection of Canada’s Indigenous as nonprogressive amplifies the settler imaginary that Indigenous cultures are primitive. The secondary binary is the choice of suturing Indigenous identity as part of the Canadian landscape. Through the colonialist gaze, the representation of Canada’s Indigenous as embedded within the environment is process of denial; where Canada’s Indigenous are regarded as nonhumans. The incorporation of dualities enforces an epistemic hierarchy, and cinematic taxidermy is the tool which encapsulates Canada’s Indigenous within the structured binaries. From Gittings excerpts, it is evident that Canada’s Immigration films are equivalent to North American and European filmmaking initiatives to cinematically taxidermize Indigenous Bodies.

The dichotomy or binary of power has been previously discussed by academics such as Michel Foucault (1973). In *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* Foucault reflects on the notion of the gaze, and how factors such as language, space, and death influence or inform the act of seeing (Foucault, 1973). Before a distinguished medial apparatus, or institution, the act of seeing and the delivery of thought (spoken) were connected. The act of prescribing a medical diagnosis, for Foucault, prioritises the act of telling, which is influence by the medical practitioner’s observations; as Foucault writes:

Medical rationality plunges into the marvelous density of perception, offering the grain of things as the first face of truth, with their colours, their spots, their hardness, their adherence. The breadth of the experiment seems to be identified with the domain of the careful gaze, and of an empirical vigilance receptive only to the evidence of visible contents. The eye becomes the depositary and source of clarity; it has the power to bring a truth to light that it receives only to the extent that it has brought it to light; as it opens, the eye first opens the truth: a flexion that marks the transition from the world of classical clarity—from the ‘enlightenment’—to the nineteenth century (13).

Therefore, the observational gaze offers a detachment, and denies any interest in the patient’s experiences, senses, or feelings (Foucault, 1973). Foucault’s vision of the medical apparatus embarks on an analysis through the centuries of the medical apparatus; Foucault focuses on the development of the clinic and the notion of commentary, or how language infers the probable diagnosis of a patient. For Foucault, language, the gaze, and diagnosis are a “relationship of signifier to signified” (18), where the reliance of the medical practitioner’s gaze justified a conclusive result. Moreover, the interactions between the signifier and the signified, within the scenario of the clinic, cannot contend with the issue of subjectivities towards a patient’s symptoms (Foucault, 1973). By the end of the introduction to *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault asserts that he does not condone a scale of hierarchy towards the medical field and the wider practice of medicine. For Foucault it is an analysis on the development of the gaze, and the conception and prescription of truth. Foucault’s inquiry of the medical apparatus and the clinic is not a detailed account on the empirical or the technicalities of the scientific process: providing a prognosis for diseases. At its core, Foucault’s *The Birth of the Clinic* examines the cultural dynamics and the values of thought.

Foucault’s investigation into the medical apparatus further resonates with the larger historical and cultural developments within Western epistemologies. The notion of the ‘medical gaze,’ in turn, reveals a process of observing the subject or individual through a mind-body dualism; whereby the medical gaze separates the body and the mind of the patient (Hancock, 2018). In “Michel Foucault and the Problematics of Power: Theorizing DTCA and Medicalised Subjectivity,” Black Hawk Hancock (2018) refers to Foucault’s notion of the gaze is:

not an abstraction seeking hidden essences, but rather is practical and a concrete examining of the object before it. The gaze operates through a successive order of reading, it “records and totalizes” all information within its purview. The gaze, through which knowledge is produced, is able to penetrate the body, ascertain its true meanings, master its secrets, diagnose, and prescribe treatment. This is not limited to physical ailments, but to anything that falls under the physician’s gaze (444).

Indigenous representation and identity within the spectrum of colonialist ideology and framework also adhere to Foucault’s evaluations of the gaze. For Laurelyn Whitt (2009), the relationship between science, knowledge, colonialism and Indigenous people warrants a closer attention to the context of the term, ‘Biocolonialism.’ In *Science, Colonialism, and Indigenous Peoples: The Cultural Politics of Law and Knowledge,* Whitt addresses that the treatment of Indigenous knowledge is disregarded through colonial ideological interferences; In turn, imperial nation building are justified, along with the justification of viewing Indigenous peoples as “as *sine scientia*, without science, and, therefore, without genuine knowledge of the natural world” (27). For Whitt, the immersion of European or Western knowledge’s of the science, and their disregard for Indigenous knowledge systems of the world unfolded into policy-making[[21]](#footnote-21) (Whitt, 2009). Whitt’s comments further illustrate the domineering and hierarchal effect placed on knowledge systems. In connection with Foucault’s gaze theory, the notion of the medical gaze serves as an analogy or case study of the colonial hierarchal display of knowledge and power.

In comparison with the medical physician and their gaze, the cinematic and colonial gaze also ascertained a false symptomatic evaluation of Indigeneity. In *Decolonizing The Lens of Power,* Kerstin Knopf (2008) connects Foucault’s argumentation of the gaze with the history of ethnographic documentation, and Hollywood narrative films. For Knopf these two North American film forms operate on “the dominant mode of dramatic filmmaking” (5). In the case of ethnographic or the documentary form, Knopf reflects that these forms are particularly false in their representations of reality (Knopf, 2009). For Knopf, the difficulty of the ethnographic and documentary form is in their advertisement of depicting or presenting reality; as “truth is applied to its images, and thus the ‘truthfulness of documentary narrative is often not questioned” (5). Moreover, Knopf further writes:

This episteme abstracts the gaze to an invisible and unspecifiable presence of control. In ethnographic filmmaking and Western feature films, the director, camera operator, director of photography, and crew are the direct observers, and the viewers of these films are abstracted into a seeming absence, thus becoming indirect observers. Both groups ‘gaze’ at the object of knowledge and constitute the unspecifiable presence of control and the gaze of surveillance and power. The camera lens, operating on behalf of this gaze, is the Foucauldian lens of power (6-7).

Knopf’s perception of the use cinematic apparatus relates to Foucault’s assessment of the medical gaze, and the lens of power. In comparison to the relations, described by Foucault, between the medical practitioner and the patient, the ethnographic or documentary form asserts a position of being the highest form of cinematic truth-telling. In turn, both the active (filmmaker) and passive gaze (viewers) maintain an unprecedented control of the recorded subject. Due to the ethnographic or documentary film’s motive to present its role as a the form of truth results in any observer within the position of the medical practitioner. For this reason, the observer is able to produce, propose, assume or symptomize the observed or recorded subject.

## The Canadian Melodrama: Patriarchy, the Bourgeois Imperial Efforts, and Enabling Invisibility of Canada’s Indigenous

By the late 19th century and into the 20th century, the emergence of the Canadian melodrama offers insight on the imperial mind-set that Canada, as a nation, is a prosperous environment. As a result, Indigenous identity became increasingly absent in its representation. Moreover, within Canada, “the CPR’s Department of Colonization and Development” (Gittings, 2001, 12) incorporated narrative and ideological aspects of the immigration films to their melodrama features; with the aid of the Edison Company, the Canadian melodrama encouraged American settlers to travel to Western Canada (Alberta) (Gittings, 2001). For instance, the film *Unselfish Love* (Edison, 1910)illustrates Canada as a solution to maintain the patriarchal and bourgeois ideals towards topics such as gender, family (Gittings, 2001). *Unselfish Love* follows John, an American citizen in need of financial support in order to proceed with his engagement, and eventually, marriage to his girlfriend Mabel (Gittings, 2001). In turn, Canada becomes the space of opulence, an environment that enables John to pursue his marriage to Mable. For Gittings, *Unselfish Love* predicates an interest, through the melodrama form, to maintain bourgeois and patriarchal order (Gittings, 2001). As a result, the blend of patriarchal and gendered dominance also streams into the absent or lack of Indigenous representation; where Gittings writes:

The specific historic project represented in this film is the invasion and settlement of the prairies by whites; however, the narrative elides the colonizing project’s displacement of Aboriginal peoples in Alberta by pre-emptively absenting them from the terrain of settlement. Here, the imbrications of capitalism, imperialism and the bourgeois family in establishing dominance over Canada’s First Nations become visible in the narrative’s very rendering of First Nations as invisible (13-14).

Following these comments, Gittings argues that the CPR’s attempts to vanish Canada’s Indigenous within the melodrama legitimizes the attempts of colonialization; by removing or *extinguishing* Indigenous presence, *Unselfish Love* reveals its efforts of concealing imperial logics: the eradication and diasporic efforts of Canada’s Indigenous (Zizek, 1994 cited in Gittings, 2001). Thus, from the influences of the immigration reels, the early Canadian melodrama focusses more on the notion of the land as unoccupied and in need of imperial undertaking (Gittings, 2001).

## Canada’s Residential School System: Moulding and Cinematic Taxidermizing of Canada’s Indigenous Children, and the Notion of ‘Photo-Colonialism.’

Subsequently, by late 19th century, the Canadian government imposed the ‘Residential School System,’ which lasted until the late 1990s. The IRSS[[22]](#footnote-22) gained funding from the Canadian government, and its operations were headed by “church officials of varying Christian sects” (Hughes, 2016, 8) As an institution, the primary goal of these schools were to impose a forced assimilation of Canada’s Indigenous youth; which includes the groups from the First Nations, the Inuit, and the Metis. As a result, forced assimilation entailed a process of abducting Indigenous children from their families, forcibly denying rights to their cultures, rituals, speaking their tribe’s languages. Moreover, in recent years, the excavations of these schools, and the recounts of IRS survivors unconcealed the hidden truth’s about the institution’s environments. These truths include the covered reports of sexual and physical assaults, neglect, and the deaths of up to 4,120 students.

The most common documentation of the residential schools are in the form of photography. Photography does not encompass the notion of moving images, nevertheless, their form also entails a process of cinematic taxidermy. The function of these images illustrate two points. First, they highlight the intended colonial paradigm of displaying Indigenous cultures as vanishing. Second, while the images attempts to position the idea of the settler-savior complex of Euro-Canadian culture as a success. In “Truth and reconciliation cinema: an ethico-political study of residential school imagery in contemporary Indigenous film,” Tyson Stewart (2021) survey both the New Wave of Canadian Indigenous filmmaking (Stewart, 2021). The author also explore how the new cinematic wave also reflects on the residential school system within Canada: how the history and the archived images influence the efforts of Indigenous filmmakers in Canada to reclaim and retell their experiences through film. For Stewart, the photographed imagers of the First Nations, Inuit and the Metis children demonstrates the notion of photo-colonialism (Stewart, 2021). Photo-colonialism, in short, describes “the use of photography to collect evidence for and construct a colonial narrative” (Racette,2011 cited in Stewart, 2009, 167). Adding to Sherry Farrell Racette’s (2011) definition of photo-colonialism, Stewart further refers to photo-colonialism as the process of:

holding the subjects in place; to place them under the surveillance of the state apparatus that promises to assimilate the savage Indian within. Photographs in particular in this historical archive offer the illusion of transparent reality (167).

Thus, photo-colonialism reveals a process that similarly captivates the notion of cinematic taxidermy. As Stewart argues that photo-colonialism is a process of “holding the subjects in place” (167). By comparison, cinematic taxidermy also entails the process of ordering and maintaining a forced representational imagery of the recorded subject. In the case of the residential school system, the visual documentation of Indigenous youths reveals the forced assimilation and ordering of Indigenous representation; as the Indigenous youth — through the recording apparatus— are displayed as “looking orderly and productive and simultaneously submissive” (168). Thus, the images signify a marketing ploy; they accentuate the Church’s urge to show their effective involvement with the IRSS. Meanwhile, they also distribute the colonial rhetoric of settler-saviorism (Stewart, 2021).

## Japanese Cinema, The Ainu, and the Ethics of Ethnography

As stated in the introduction, the history between the Ainu and the Japanese (Wajin) is situated in conflicts of imperialism. During the Meiji Period, ethnographic films propagated false images of the Ainu (Centeno, 2017). The produced images of the Ainu convey conflict, exoticism, and distrust. Thus, the dominant iconography of the Ainu is the embodiment of ‘Otherness/tashasei’ (Centeno, 2017). The projection of the Ainu as Other is a loaded term, and hosts a constellation of stigmas. In “The Fight for Self-Representation: Ainu Imaginary, Ethnicity and Assimilation,” Marco P. Centeno Martín (2017) explains that the stigma of Otherness refers to the representation of the Ainu as either a primitive culture or:

savages in contrast to the sophisticated Japanese, a stigma that filmmakers simply imitated from the photographic patterns of representation of the late nineteenth century and earlier painted portrayal. (Almazán 2005; Cheung 1999; Kreiner 1993; Sasaki 1993. Cited in Centeno Martín, 2017:69)

At the same time, ethnographic cinema produced images of the Ainu that are indicative of exoticism. For Centeno, “both Japanese and foreign explorers” (69) exoticized the Ainu through the use of “mise en scene that imaged to project a romantic, mythical, poetic view of the Ainu” (Centeno, 2014. Cited in Centeno, 2017: 69). The fabricated image—through means of primitivizing or exoticizing— establishes the Ainu in a similar condition to other Indigenous groups. Thus, the historical ethnographic features of the Ainu utilise the ahistorical template (Centeno, 2017).

The affinity of vanishing the Ainu is comparable to other Indigenous groups in North and South America. Centeno makes this connection by pointing out the West’s influence of ethnographic films within Japan:

the concept of the Ainu as a “vanishing” people, due to their inability to adapt to the modern world, pervaded the mechanisms of representation at that time. Those early documentaries drew on scenes of small groups of between ten and twenty individuals depicted in an isolated village that was doomed to disappear. For instance, Brodsky introduced his Ainu sequence with the following intertitle: “The Ainus Village at Shiraoi. The Ainus were the original inhabitants of Japan, but like the American Indians they are now a fast vanishing race” (70)

Centeno remarks indicate the influences of the West, and their motives of advertising the Ainu as a group of people incapable of assimilating into the ‘modern’ world (Centeno, 2017). Evidently, the understanding of the Ainu as a ‘dying race’ (Centeno, 2017) is false. Nevertheless, these ethnographic films “reproduced the dominant Western discourses on ‘civilisation’” (70). By emphasizing Western discourses, the notion of the vanishing Ainu people were perceived as inevitable: a condition described under the context of social Darwinism (MacDougall, 2005). As a result, government policies on the forced assimilation of the Ainu (Edo period-Meiji Restoration) were concealed (Centeno 2017)[[23]](#footnote-23).

By the second world war, the ethnographic iconography of the Ainu transformed from the representation of primitive or exotic beings, or the Other within Japanese society (Centeno, 2017). This is in part due to the Nationalistic agenda of the Japanese government and emperor. For Centeno, ethnographic films display a shift in objective: as opposed to the initial form of documenting the Ainu, they are cinematically shown as fully integrated within Japanese society as part of a “propagandic” (71) initiatives. For Centeno, this shift is evident in *Kita no dōhō/Fellow Citizens of the North* ( Sakane, 1941). The overall vision for the film is to redistribute the ideology of ‘one nation, one people’ (Zhao, 2017). To maintain this ideology, the film features segments of youth Ainu soldiers in support of the Japanese war effort[[24]](#footnote-24). The images portrayed through the work of Tazuko Sakane illustrate “the Ainu as individuals living inside (uchi) civilisation” (Centeno, 2017: 71). As a direct translation, ‘uchi’ refers to the house/the home, by contrast, ‘soto’ refers to outside the home. The practice of uchi-soto are prominent within Japanese societal discourse. Moreover, these terms often refer to the performative nature within Japanese society. The dynamic of uchi-soto generally indicates a social structure of closeness between people. Therefore, the on-screen presence of Ainu as ‘uchi’ marks a shift away from the depiction of ‘Otherness’ (soto). Due to the efforts of displaying Nationalistic homogeneity to the world, the representation of the Ainu as ‘Other’ was temporarily paused.

## Hollywood Cinematic Code and The Influences of Ainu Representation

Prior to the allied occupation of Japan, Japanese film directors encountered censorship towards differing political thought. The implication of democracy in Japanese cinema was muted during the Meiji Restoration period onto the beginning of the Shōwa era (1926-1989) (Morrisseau, 2016). With the American occupation of Japan, former feudal censorship dissipated, and replaced by an anti-imperialist agenda (Morrisseau, 2016). The influences of Hollywood Cinema’s Western genre and the melodrama provided influence to the Japanese *Mukokuseki Egas—*films without a nationalist agenda (Centeno, 2017)*.* In “Genre and Gender, Culture and Ideology - The American Occupation of Japan and Japanese Mélodrame,” Jacqueline Morrisseau (2016) suggests that the American ideals of democracy are featured in the rebirth of Japanese fiction films. Morrisseau writes:

American melodramas offered a new type of male hero, like John Wayne, strong, reliable, but ready to fall in love without any loss of his virility. Gender equality implied emancipated women, and greater degrees of realism in the love scenes as well as a happy ending were preferred: double suicide (shinji) did not prove love (118).

American democracy and cinematic ideology entailed a huge process in changing prior Japanese films. The maintenance of democratising Japanese cinema, required the prohibition of segmented shots of discrimination. For Morrisseau, these included the discrimination of gender, and race, and democratisation enforced creative expression, and freedom of religion (Morrisseau, 2016). However, the main preoccupation appears to center on gender equality through the projection of heteronormative relationships. Love, and the kiss, become central to the censorship agreements in Japanese Cinema (Morrisseau, 2016).

However, Western and Hollywood cinematic democracy is paradoxical in relation to Indigenous representation. In turn, Western cinematic influences in documentary and in the entertainment aspect of films re-established prior depictions of the Ainu as ethnically exotic or primitive (Centeno, 2017). For instance, the representation of Indigenous people in *The Vanishing American (Sietz, 1925)* or *The Searchers (Ford, 1956)* are comparable to the Ainu’s representation in *Daisogen no Watari Dori/The Rambler Rides Again[[25]](#footnote-25)* (Saitō, 1960). While  *Diasogen no Watari Dori* utilises themes of sympathy towards Japan’s Indigenous, nevertheless, the intention to create sympathy does not correlate to the act of elevating the Ainu community. *Diasogen no Watari Dori* follows the character Taki (played by Akira Kobayashi), a lone wanderer who encounters the Ainu in Hokkaido. The extent of the plot demonstrates the structural stereotypes within the American Western genre: a heroic figure comes to the aid of a community who is endangered by an overwhelming antagonistic figures and their cronies. The whitewashing of Indigenous people in Hollywood Cinema prevails in *Daisogen no Watari Dori.* For Centeno, this film discloses the Ainu in the iconography of Otherness, and the Ainu are portrayed in a position of ‘soto’ (Centeno, 2017).Moreover, with the influence of Western cinema, the Ainu culture are ahistorical through the process of enmeshing their representation with other Indigenous cultures from North America. By combining Indigenous representations, the Ainu’s cinematic identity results in a “pseudo-ainu (giji ainu) image” (73). Consequently, the pseudo-ainu image “was simultaneously promoted by tourist agencies” (73). Although American cinematic influences encouraged democratisation of feudalism, Ainu culture and representation returned to the projection of ‘Otherness’ through means of establishing the Wajin within a position of heroism, and through their entangled representation with other Indigenous cultures.

## Concluding Statements

The primary goal for this chapter is to discuss the historical role of the recording apparatus and Indigenous presence on screen. The birth of the recording apparatus and subsequently the film photograph is entangled within the phenomenon of colonialism (MacDougall, 2005). Moreover, the role of the recording apparatus appears as a tool for authenticity and believability. However, in terms of colonialist efforts of cinematically documenting a sense of objectivity is problematic. As discussed in the sections, ethnographic documentation does not produce a an objective image (MacDougall, 2005). Instead, the role of the recording apparatus, through visual ethnographic ventures from the 18th century demonstrates a structured representation of Indigenous people: a representation of Othering, exoticisation, and of creating a hierarchical imbalance on the relationship between observer and observed. The second aim of this chapter is to discuss the aftermath of orientating Indigenous representation. Due to the colonialist gaze, Indigenous bodies undergo a process of being ‘vanished.’ I therefore employ the concept of cinematic taxidermy to demonstrate this process. Cinematic taxidermy is often prescribed to the relationship between the recording apparatus, the ethnographer or the filmmaker, and the subjected Indigenous figures (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Similar to the common process of taxidermy, cinematic taxidermy describes how an identity via the screen is frozen within a particular representation (Rony, 1996). For this reason, I highlight how the colonial gaze misrepresents Indigenous people, on screen. Here, I illustrate how, due to the colonialist gaze, Indigenous bodies are unable to transcend or remove former representation; which Pearson and Knabe (2015) refer to as an act of zombification (Pearson and Knabe 2015).

Cinematic taxidermy or the process of vanishing Indigenous bodies—through cinematic means—is not a conclusive or finalised result (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Moreover, this chapter focuses on the historical or birth of the recording apparatus as an analogue device: film photography and cinema. Coming into the following chapter, I focus on the shift of Indigenous identity through film and cinema. This is a leap forward in terms of chronology; as I move into the advent of the digital recording apparatus, and its ability to open cinematic documentation to the masses. As a result, the second chapter will focus on the relationship between the digital recording apparatus and the filmmaker’s ability to resist and transcend representations associated with concepts like cinematic taxidermy.

# Chapter 2:

## Introduction: What is Resistance?: An Analysis on the concept of Resistance in Relation to Indigenous Identity (On) Screen

“As long as [there] has been colonialism on our lands, there has been resistance.” Dr. Leanne Simpson[[26]](#footnote-26) “My name, maybe doesn’t have a romanticized, Hollywood Indian name, but my name has more meaning than that. My name means that my family survived. My family survived disease. My family survived Catholicism. My family survived settler colonialism, and my family, they survived. I survived. My existence is resistance.” (The New York Times in Conversation with Indigenous American Youth, 2018)

In this chapter, I analyse and answer the following question: How do Indigenous filmmaking practices and concepts handle the legacy of earlier Indigenous depictions? To answer this question, I bring forward an analysis on the concept of resistance. Defining resistance often brings forward the motive of confrontation. Moreover, in the field of sciences, resistance is utilised as a measurement: to calculate a component’s opposition to an electric current. By comparison, resistance within Indigenous Cinema also operates within a similar domain. In the “Eco-Fourth Cinema: Indigenous Rights and Environmental Crises,” Aline Freire de Carvalho Frey (2018) locates a discussion on Indigenous media within the context of environmental ecologies. In this dissertation, Frey expands on the notions of ‘Indigenous aesthetics,’ as a transcendence within mainstream media—and notably, Hollywood Cinema. For Frey, Indigenous aestheticism, in media, is an aesthetic which:

Prioritise[s] Indigenous media that are capable, simultaneously, of negotiating local and global meanings between different traditions while avoiding the unrestricted incorporation of mainstream aesthetics (14).

By building upon the works of Faye Ginsburg (2016) and Steven Leuthold (1998), Frey proposes that Indigenous aesthetics are prominent or focal to the framework of Indigenous Cinema (Frey, 2018). Thus, Indigenous aestheticism is a form of resistance that factors in Indigenous media sovereignty, and the visual projection of Indigenous landscape and space (Frey, 2018). These preliminary points, illustrated by Frey, are features that link specifically with Indigenous/Fourth Cinema. Indigenous Cinema, as recounted by Frey, is best defined by the Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay (Frey, 2018). In 2003, Barclay coined the term ‘Fourth Cinema,’ which defines Indigenous media and film as a form of resistance: a process in which Indigenous film productions contradict or contests former ahistorical narratives or depictions (Barclay, 2003. Cited in: Frey, 2018). Therefore, resistance, is not a process of rejection: Indigenous Cinema resists the continuation of past representations that is comparable to the scientific terminology of a component’s resistance to a flow of energy. It is a process of exposing hidden truths, and opposing the generic cinematic encodings enforced through colonialist rhetoric (Hearne, 2012).

Nevertheless, I propose that the procedures within documentary filmmaking influence the production of fictional films. Indigenous documentary films feature discussions on topics like settler relationships or intergenerational trauma. Amongst input from other film and Indigenous scholars, Pearson and Knabe (2015) propose that “virtually all Indigenous films reflect the ways in which the colonial past and […] present affect the lives and stories of Indigenous peoples” (10). Moreover, the authors note that the deployment of Indigenous historical concerns to settler involvement and knowledge systems are through the implementation of “documentary aesthetic that responds […] to this history of ethnographic filmmaking” (15)[[27]](#footnote-27). Thus, Indigenous fiction films do not promote a disavowal of historical or formerly conceived representations. For this reason, I start with documentary films to show its influences on fictional films.

Following the discussion on digitization within the documentary form of cinema, the second portion of this chapter focuses on the main research materials for this thesis. Methodologically, my focus on the two research materials consists of two film analyses on the concept of sovereignty. For instance, I first demonstrate how *Ainu Mosir* (2020) and in *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* (2019) activates the concept of resistance through its display of the film’s environment. Here, I demonstrate how the films incorporate (visual) sovereignty in terms of the visual landscape. I also touch upon the social and political environment and its infringement upon Indigenous knowledge practices. Following this discussion, I then bring forward the secondary sub-concept of survivance. Here, I focus on how *Ainu Mosir* demonstrates survivance through its visuals of nature. As a result, I address how the representation of survivance and nature in *Ainu Mosir* signify a values towards their knowledge/worldviews, and subsequently their rituals.

## In Pursuit of Change: Shifting Representations

The familiar phenomenon of treating Indigenous identity as primitive or exotic is found in the film documentation of the Amazonian Indigenous people within Brazil. In “Reenact, Reimagine: Performative Indigenous Documentaries of Bolivia and Brazil,” Amalia Córdova’s (2014) assesses the relationship between digital technologies and Amazonian Indigenous identity. The author starts by contextualising the history between between the Amazon’s Indigenous groups and the screen—both ethnographic and fictional films. Similar to Indigenous representations in North American, the historical representation of the Indigenous in the Amazon are portrayed through:

Archival footage of documentaries, newsreels, and fiction films about Brazilian [Indigenous] made by Brazilian and foreign filmmakers attest to how since the first images made in 1908 Brazilian [Indigenous] have been consistently depicted as clownish, violent, untrustworthy, unproductive, or exotic (Stam, 1997. cited in: Córdova, 2014: 125)

Brazil’s image of the Amazonian Indigenous peoples drew inspiration from Western and Eurocentric perspectives on framing Indigeneity (Córdova,2014). As a result, the influences of Ethnographic documentation accompanied by Indigenous imagery from Hollywood cinema inevitably hybridized and misrepresented Indigenous people within the Amazon.

However, the cinematic participation from Amazonian Indigenous groups, such as the Megkronoti tribe, exemplify a shift in the representation and preservation of cultural heritage and identity; their contributions towards documentary films display the ideologies of Amazonian Indigenous people in connection to the promotion of environmental conservation. By the 1970s, political tensions with Brazil’s dictatorship were causal to films on the environment that features Amazonian Indigenous tribes (Córdova, 2014). For instance, the documentary *Raoni* (Dutilleux and Saldanha, 1978) is a feature on the Megkronoti tribe’s head, Raoni, who advocates for environmental issues on the Amazon’s biosphere, and the deforestation of the lands—due to colonisation (Córdova, 2014). For Córdova, Indigenous “struggles garnered international attention as they became enfolded in overarching environmental crusades” (127). The suturing of Amazonian Indigenous representation to narratives on the environment enabled a cultural recognition and cinematic participation of the wider Amazonian Indigenous population. Thus, the visual representation of Amazonian Indigenous as either primitive or exotic changes. In turn, Amazonian Indigenous iconography focuses on the Indigenous values and positive contributions towards the environment.

Similar attempts to convey Indigenous representation with conservation or environmental imagery are present in advertisement from the United States. However, the attempts to advertise Indigenous environmental values are misconstrued and maintain an agenda of whitewashing. In 1971, the Ad Council launched a commercial for the ‘Keep America Beautiful’ campaign. The public service announcement intended to motivate American citizens to prevent pollution, and to become eco-conscious by picking up litter. The main feature of the commercial was the actor known as ‘Iron Eyes Cody.’ By featuring an Indigenous representative —along with the environmental issues— rapidly increased the synonymous association that Indigenous people as a symbol for the environment. Despite the positive outreach and awards given to the commercial, there are several issues with the Public Service announcement. First, the actor Iron Eyes Cody is not Indigenous. Instead, the actor is Italian-American — real name, Espera de Corti— who embodied Indigeneity in his real life and on screen (Dunaway, 2017). Thus, the portrayal of the Indigenous figure is not embedded in authenticity, and further amplifies the notion of whitewashing. Moreover, the use of the Indigenous figure in an advertisement for the environment is increasingly complicated via the campaign’s ideological and propagandic initiative. In “Commercial Indians: Authenticity, Nature, and Industrial Capitalism in Advertising at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” Kevin C Armitage (2003) writes on the ‘Keep America Beautiful’ campaign, and how its ideology towards the environment reveals “contradictory meanings to different aspects of the material world” (72). Armitage further explains that the commercial is quintessentially ironic, due to its aim of placing blame on the individual’s production of pollution or waste. Whereas, it denies any responsibility on Industrial waste by companies. In turn, the advertisement targets the individual consumer, rather than questioning the causal factor of socio-political systems within the United States (Armitage, 2003). For this reason, featuring Indigenous representation alongside environmental factors were merely an emotional tool that allowed for the process of industrialisation to disassociate from responsibility. In other words, Indigenous well-being, and their cultural and ancestral significance remain ambiguous.

## Going ‘Digital’: The positionality of the ‘Self’ in Ethnography

One can articulate a strategic resistance and decolonization of the cinematic lens through the development of digital technologies. As Pearson and Knabe propose that digitalising the medium of film grants the opportunity for Indigenous people to cinematically document their lives; unlike certain expensive film gear,[[28]](#footnote-28) digital technological advances provide accessibility to consumers in the “settler-colonial world”(Pearson and Knabe, 2015:8). The progression of digital technologies enabled Indigenous participation in filmmaking. In particular, the documentary form in relation to Indigenous cinematic practices was favourable; documentary filmmaking requires less economic expenses, because the camera and film software are the only equipment necessary (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). For Pearson and Knabe, the development of Indigenous Cinema through documentary form is evident in their case study of *From the Ikpeng Children to the World (2001):* A documentary film, created by four Ikpeng children, that follows their every-day routines. The initiative to create *From the Ikpeng Children to the World* is “in response to a video-letter from the children of Sierra Maestra [(Cuba)] […] who similarly documented everyday life in their village” (8). The authors view the interaction between the Ikpeng children and the children of Sierra Maestra as:

an extraordinary, breathtaking act of self-ethnography, one that preserves for these children and their future aspects of their own cultural heritage and evidence of their continuity as a people who are, indeed, threatened by settlers’ increasing incursions into Ikpeng lands (8).

The self-directed and documented lives of the Ikpeng children surpasses the framework of cinematic taxidermy. First, the Ikpeng children are in control of their on screen role which shifts the dynamic of observerd and observer, and observer and the colonialist gaze. Second, the Ikpeng children demonstrate their present conditions which transcends beyond the marker of primitivization. Instead, the children demonstrate how their community operates within the present. In relation to settler ethnographic-films, such as Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North, From the Ikpeng Children to the World* differs from the visual process of the settlers in several ways. The most evident difference—between the Ikpeng children’s ethnographic film and former ethnographic films— is the term ‘self.’ In the case of Indigenous identity in cinema, self-ethnography details a process— specified by Pearson and Knabe in the quote above— as a progression of controlling the narrative. By taking control of their visual presentation, the Ikpeng children demonstrate a resistance to prior representations of Indigenous cultural heritage and identity.

Another point to consider is how self-ethnography, in relation to the Ikpeng children’s documentation, focuses on settler relation; how their documentation expresses the conflicts associated with colonisation. The Ikpeng are an Indigenous group located by the Xingu River in Brazil. The severity of settler colonisation is conspicuous in the historical dynamics between the Ikpeng and other Indigenous groups. Interference from colonisation, sough to sought to pacify the Ikpeng; pacification resulted in both the transfer of the Ikpeng into the ‘Xingu Indian Park,’ as well as mending their relationships with other Indigenous groups. However, motives to pacify the Ikpeng resulted in further tensions with the other Indigenous groups within the park.[[29]](#footnote-29) The history between the Ikpeng with colonisers signifies the rupture between the Ikpeng with other Indigenous groups. *From the Ikpeng Children to the World* is part of the series ‘Video from the Villages,’ and the goal of this series is to elevate the recognition of the Indigenous groups within the Amazon. In “‘You see the World of the Other and You Look at Your Own’: The Evolution of the Video in the Villages Project,” Pat Aufderheide (2008) states that the goal of the series:

are united by the common thread of expressing, supporting, and strengthening the identity of Amazonian [Indigenous] as Amazonian [Indigenous]— Not only as members of a particular linguistic and cultural group but also as members of a collection of such groups, which share a common set of problems in the face of the Brazilian state and society (33).

Showcasing relations is remarkably different between the Ikpeng Children’s self-ethnograpic film and that of a film like Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North.* Turning back to comments made in the previous chapter by Fatihamah Tobing Rony (1996), Flaherty’s documentation style, amongst others, do not focus on the relations or causal concerns of the West with the Indigenous of the Arctic (Rony, 1996). Whereas, a film like *From the Ikpeng Children to the World* presents the aftermath of colonial relations. In particular, segments from the self-ethnographic, *From the Ikpeng Children to the World*  shows the generational values that are in contrast between the Elders and the youth. At the same time, the self-ethnographic feature highlights the current conditions of the Ikpeng in relation to settler engagements with their community—a self-reflexive depiction of then and now (Pearson and Knabe, 2015).

## Mini Conclusion

So far, this section provides more historical context to demonstrate the shift from analogue film to digital filmmaking practices. I demonstrate how the global shift to digital film enables a economic liberty and opportunity for Indigenous filmmakers to participate in cinema making. For this reason, digital filmmaking practices enable the concept of resistance to emerge, because Indigenous filmmaker can challenge former representations, while inserting their truths, representation, and presence on screen (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). The justification for inserting additional historical information is that Indigenous documentary aesthetics then bleed and influence the construction of Indigenous fictional filmmaking practices. These influences are shown through a motive of fictionalising circumstances that are actively present within our reality. Thus, the following sections dive deeper into how resistance is conceptualised within Indigenous fictional filmmaking practices. Here, I bring forward two sub-concepts, sovereignty and survivance. Both concepts encompass a form of resistance as they attempt to address Indigenous relation with settler involvement, while also addressing the differences in knowledge and cultural values.

## Resistance and (Visual) Sovereignty: The Aesthetic Condition within the Cinematic- Environmental Space

Therefore, I look at the sub-concept of sovereignty. In doing so, I demonstrate how sovereignty correlate to Indigenous practices of resistance. The approach of sovereignty in Indigenous artforms focuses on reconfiguring Indigenous representation (Raheja, 2010). In cinema and filmmaking, sovereignty is employed to transcend cinematic taxidermy. For André Dudemaine et al. (2020), Indigenous sovereignty indicates a movement that opposes prior representations that marginalise Indigenous voices (Dudemaine et al, 2020). Moreover, sovereignty, is also a process where Indigenous people:

“denounce the euphemisms that mark certain large-scale “reconciliation” processes that too often lead to the depoliticization and the exploitation of various Indigenous claims and affirmations” (44).

By comparison, Michelle H. Raheja (2010) (Seneca) describes Indigenous sovereignty within cinema as a method of respectfully presenting Indigenous cultures (Raheja, 2010). In *Reservation Reelism,* Raheja (Seneca)[[30]](#footnote-30) refers to sovereignty as an approach of inclusivity (Indigenous representation) that “locates Indigenous cinema in a particular historical and social context while privileging tribal specificity” (194). Thus, sovereignty is a sub-concept and approach within the context of resistance. Specifically, in Indigenous cinema, sovereignty grants an authoritative position for Indigenous groups to control their narrative (Raheja, 2010).

In the following analysis section, I therefore contribute two film analyses that demonstrate the performativity of sovereignty. I first focus on how *Ainu Mosir* employs sovereignty to demonstrate Ainu principles of knowledge and culture. Here, I analyse how the film reveals the political and economic circumstances of preserving knowledge and ritual. A discussion on Ainu presence, and preservation of culture then bleeds into another discussion on Ainu influences on the representation of nature and its environment. Simply put, I analyse how Ainu values of the ecosystem are injected within segments of the film’s narrative. Following the analysis on *Ainu Mosir*, I then discuss how *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* employs a visual sovereignty through shots of Vancouver’s urban environment (DTES). Specifically, I focus on visual means of sovereignty in relation to the depiction of social and political conflicts that emerge from neo-colonial power structures. I then focus on how these spaces are also visualised as a commentary on endangered spaces.

### Analysis 1: *Ainu Mosir*

*Ainu Mosir* employs sovereignty to demonstrate Ainu principles of knowledge and culture. In this analysis I demonstrate how the film focuses on the political and economic circumstances of the Ainu Kotan Village and its villagers. For this reason, I specifically focus on the film representation of Japan’s governance over Ainu culture; where I highlight how this circumstance creates an infringement to Ainu methods of practicing rituals and their preservation of culture. At an early stage, Fukunaga records one of the leading characters, Debo. In this scene, Debo (a village elder) wanders through the hidden green forests near the village. Transitioning into the next shot, we watch as Debo quietly sneaks to a cage where the bear cub, Chibi resides. We watch as Debo cares for the cub by providing it food and water. The shot then transitions to the inside of a community elder’s home, and we observe the Ainu elders gather for what appears to be a meeting. In this moment, the first line opens a discussion on the present conditions of being Ainu, and then the group proceed to discuss the opportunity of celebrating the Iomante:

**Elder 1:** We live in a different time

**Debo:** But, I already have the bear. What do I do?

**Elder 1:** And that’s why you want to do the Iomante? People outside would never accept this.

**Elder 2:** Can I ask about the Iomante? So raising the bear cub means we live with the god within the cub and sacrificing it after it grows up means we’re sending it to the world of gods?

**Debo:** What’s important is that we deeply care for it before sending it off. That’s the point. Then, when the god returns to its world, it tells the other gods how great the human world is. When the other gods hear that, they return as owls, bears, and other animals. And we receive them as gifts on Earth. That’s the core relationship between us Ainu, and the gods. So, without doing Iomante…I identify as Ainu but I can’t seem to grasp what that means. Something’s missing.

**Elder 1:** Talk is easy, but, I don’t have the heart to do it. I can’t kill a bear.

**Elder 3:** But we do it every day. We eat packaged meat that other people kill. Without appreciating those lives. If we do the Iomante based on our Ainu belief and properly return the gift of life we have received, it will deeply affect our everyday lives.

**Elder 4:** What do we do for a living? Tourism. We can’t afford a bad reputation.

**Debo:** Come on. Don’t we call this place “Ainu Village?” Or is it just in name?

**Elder 1:** You can’t compare us to our ancestors, who were hunter gatherers. People in society would never accept this

**Debo:** No one else needs to understand. This is about us. When will the time ever come? Or will we as Ainu change first?

(00:10:51-00:13:49)

Several comments within the scene’s discussion address the affects of cultural assimilation within Japan. Returning rituals in Ainu cosmology are historically contested by outsiders that claim “the Ainu simply invented the symbolism behind the festival for their own ends” (Cheung, 2003: 954); Whereas, the Ainu view rituals such as the Iomante as a harmonious gesture; as a ritual is focuses on the release of a spirit towards the supernatural world (Cheung, 2003). Thus, the discussion of assimilating to another culture further points out the hypocrisy of judging the Ainu’s ontological and cosmological values towards culture and resources. For instance, the elder who comments on the emotional indifference of consuming “packaged meat” as opposed to the Ainu traditions of honouring the food they consume. In turn, the elder’s comments further establish the positive values operated within the Ainu’s cosmological framework. By comparison, Dorothy Christian (2010) asserts that indigenous knowledge and values differ from Western thought (Christian, 2010). That being, Indigenous peoples ideologies center on a framework of the world as relational (Christian, 2010).

Christian further proposes that this framework also points to a relationship of reciprocity to the universe; whereas, neocolonial/Western frameworks imbue a sense of identifying the universe as inanimate (Christian, 2010, 84). For this reason, the scene exemplifies how sovereignty is used to identify the differences between Indigenous cultures and settler perceptions. To elaborate, the discussion amongst the elders reveals this complication, because they address how, on the one hand, their village has integrated Japanese core values into their mode of living. On the other hand, the elders reflect on this assimilation as a disdainful practice that infringes upon their worldviews. Therefore, sovereignty as a mode of resistance is important, because it allows for Indigenous participation in critiquing issues attributed to land, knowledge, and culture. This scene shows this form of resistance, because it details the conflicts of preserving Ainu heritage and values within a neocolonial/settler environment. That being, the scene shows the contrast between Ainu core values towards the ecosystem and rituals, and how present conditions within Japan attempt to dictate their manner of living.

*Ainu Mosir* provides a window into one aspect of Ainu culture[[31]](#footnote-31). Specifically, the film touches upon Ainu ideals towards the environment as the world and land as both sacred and relational. The film contributes Ainu cosmological and ecological values via its portrayal of seasons[[32]](#footnote-32). Throughout the film, scenes are often followed by long pan shots of the land/village. Nearing the film’s closing sequences, the shots of the village’s mountainous range shows the winter season within Hokkaido. In this shot, the camera positions itself by the edge of the villager’s lake. The water is calm in this scene, and we observe the clouds slowly push towards the snow covered mountain peaks. This shot is immediately disrupted, and the camera provides two additional shots of tree trunks, that are blanketed by a light bed of snow. What is striking about these scenes is that they both inform the mood of prior and upcoming sequences. Upon these shots of the land, the following segment shows the town preparing for the Iomante. At a close frame, we next observe the villagers prepare for the ritual. This includes glances of one villager carving branches into bows, as well as a group that prepare meals for the upcoming Iomante.

Thus, *Ainu Mosir’s* depiction of seasonal changes encompasses an Ainu worldview to temporal changes. The insertion of Ainu temporal structures is a visual form of sovereignty. According to Dorothy Christian (2010), sovereignty in the visual form allows for Indigenous cultures to picture their knowledge systems as something “that is sacred, that relationally binds us to both sentient and non-sentient beings” (84). For this reason, Fukunaga’s use of Ainu seasonal variations contrast the other (imperial/western/Japanese) perspectives attributed to seasons. For instance, in Western knowledge systems, we might consider the season of spring to signify rebirth. Whereas, the winter season could depict a sentiment of death. By contrast, *Ainu Mosir* challenges those visual signifiers, and asserts an Ainu perspective of seasons. For Sung and Sakoi, Ainu folklore depict life-cycles through seasons and in nature: both good and bad (Sung and Sakoi, 2017). This perception of life-cycles can represent a nonhierarchical judgment towards nature’s seasonal progression (Gaard, n.d: 327. Cited in Sung and Sakoi, 2017). As well, Sung and Sakoi suggest that Ainu values towards seasons “represent ecocritical attitude about connection, community, and interdependence” (4). By comparison, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1975) also suggests that seasons reflect Ainu settlement patterns (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1975). Moreover, Ainu visualise that the universe (year) is split into two distinct seasons: a cold and a warm season. Based on cultural practices, the cold (winter) season is when the Ainu perform various rituals, including the Iomante. As well, the cold (winter) season is when the Ainu perform various rituals, including the Iomante (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1975). Thus, *Ainu Mosir* projects an Ainu worldview; a visual of land and season that places precedence on changing with the seasons.

### Analysis 2: *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open*

Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open features the spatial conditions of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The shots of the DTES are significant in the reflection of the political and social issues. These are issues that relate to settler involvement within the area. In the film's opening scene, we follow Rosie (a pregnant Indigenous teenager from the Kwakwakaʼwakw nation) traveling through the various spaces of Vancouver's east side. On a crowded bus, we observe Rosie as she becomes engulfed and silenced by many traveller’s riding toward their destination. After sometime, Rosie pulls the lever and we follow her off the bus. With the natural sounds blurring from the urban environment, we (the spectators) can construct the specific parameters present within this geographic region. For instance, we follow Rosie as she wanders through a local high school's basketball court. In this segment, we can see a 'tag' of the Eastside's insignia. In the succeeding shots, we watch as Rosie walks through the 'Keefer Street Overpass' that is central to the DTES. Thus, these shots first establish a road map for the viewer. This road map designates the urban boundaries within Rosie's environment. Through the film’s mapping of Rosie’s setting, we can understand how Indigenous sovereignty comes into the fore. In *Global Indigenous Media Cultures, Poetics, and Politics,* Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart (2008) write that Indigenous visual arts show the present issues of a neocolonial environment, while also challenging the politics (Wilson & Stewart, 2008). Moreover, Wilson and Stewart further address that having control of Indigenous presence in media asserts a cultural and political sovereignty (Wilson & Stewart, 2008). By comparison, Randolph Lewis (2006) (while writing on Indigenous filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin) proposes that Indigenous control over a film’s work/visual equates to a sovereign gaze (Lewis, 2006; Christian,2010). The sovereign gaze involves “a practice of looking that comes out of Native experience and shapes the nature of the film itself” (Lewis 2006; Christian, 2010, 75).The visual mapping of Rosie’s environment signifies a mode of resisting through sovereignty, because it reveals neo-colonial power structure. As well, Tailfeathers’s creates an environment of sovereignty, because she performs a resistance towards settler activity by offering an Indigenous visual of the land.

The film also highlights an endangerment of space comparable to Raheja's discussion in the film Antanarjuat: The Fast Runner (Kunuk, 2001). For Raheja (Seneca), Antanarjuat employs sovereignty by establishing a visual of the Inuit and Arctic political and environmental conditions (Raheja, 2010). That being, Antanarjuat focuses on the endangered space through the local global warming concerns on Inuit culture and worldviews (Raheja, 2010). In a similar vein, Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open employs visual of Vancouver that is adjacent to how to normative representations of the city. The difference in Vancouver's visual display illustrates a movement to destabilise its environment. In an interview with 'The Seventh Row," Tailfeathers mentions how:

So often, the city of Vancouver is not really Vancouver in film. We don't really get to see Vancouver as it is on film, especially East Vancouver, and that was very important to us because it's a place where we both lived. Kathleen grew up in Vancouver, and I've lived in Vancouver for most of my life. East Vancouver is a very complicated place.

Vancouver, as a whole, is unceded territory. The local host nation's territory has been urbanized. There's also a really beautiful thriving urban Indigenous community with people from all over — and then the complexities of gentrification and where we are as artists in this site of gentrification. It's a very rapidly changing urban landscape, and we wanted to be able to include all of that — the richness and complexities of East Vancouver (Heeney, Tailfeathers and Hepburn, 2019)

The city of Vancouver often advertises itself as an admirable destination[[33]](#footnote-33). These features also include the projection of a location where nature and city intersect and a diverse populous. Therefore, a film such as Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼsʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open counters this visual orientation and reveals what the hidden conditions of Canada's poorest neighborhood: the 'Downtown Eastside.[[34]](#footnote-34) ' The film's real-time locations are around and within the DTES of Vancouver. For instance, when Rosie enters a building to do a drug deal, the camera moves from a closeup position, switches, and widens its frame. The act of widening the frame allows the audience to evaluate the interior environment of the decaying building. The camera captures what Peter Howell (2019) reviews as a story that "is all about reality, which is every bit as gritty as the 16mm cinematography by Norm Li" (Howell, 2019). Howell's address of the film's cinematography as 'gritty' further speaks to the aesthetic decision of the filmmakers, who maintain Vancouver's typical and realistic Pacific Northwest palette of grim grey hues. As well, the grittiness of the footage exemplifies a landscape that is uncinematic. Therefore, the imagery of Vancouver's landscape highlights this metropolitan region's unpolished and grim aspects. In other words, a myopic view of the city is under the subjection to visuals of its soft white underbelly.  Following Raheja’s (2010) (Seneca) discussion on *Antanarjuat,* Tailfeathers and Hepburn choose to establish the endangered space of Vancouver's DTES that reveals the grim conditions of being Indigenous, and more importantly an indigenous woman in Vancouver. Therefore, we see the aspect of sovereignty in the films visual that destabilize or reinterpret the city’s urban landscapes

## Mini Conclusion:

In this analysis section, I bring forward the sub-concept of sovereignty. In doing so, I demonstrate how Indigenous sovereignty is visually evident in the two films. My examination of *Ainu Mosir* focuses on sovereignty in relation to the representation of Ainu worldviews. Specifically, I locate a discussion on how Ainu cosmologies are employed throughout the film. As a result, I demonstrate how *Ainu Mosir* channels their ideologies that further demonstrates their views of human involvement within nature. Here, I focus on both a narrative function (dialogue) that conveys their issues of culture within Japanese society. In particular, I survey the complexities of food, and honouring food.I then discuss how *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* employs a visual sovereignty through shots of Vancouver’s urban environment (DTES). In analysing the visual environment associated with Rosie, I inspect how the DTES becomes an endangered space. Subsequently, this analysis also discusses visual sovereignty in relation to Raheja’s (2010) (Seneca) notion of Indigenous worldviews. Thus, I explore how the film focuses on an Indigenous perspective of the land. In turn, this focus reveals a positional change in the urban geography of Vancouver. In doing so, the film encompasses a visual sovereignty, because it grants control over a visual perspective. In full, both analysis point to how sovereignty is contextualised in Indigenous cinema, and how its method of revealing points to a mode of resistance.

In the following section, I first define the sub-concept of survivance. Survivance and sovereignty are both concepts encompass methods of Indigenous resistance. These sub-concepts are used to reconfigure the representation and presence of Indigenous bodies in all forms of art. For this reason, the two sub-concept interrelate in their motives. In other words, the two sub-concepts are used as a resistance towards Western interpretations.

## Resistance in Indigenous Fiction Film: The Connection Between Survivance and Active Resistance.

This section explores the secondary concept attributed to resistance: survivance. In *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance,*Indigenous writer Gerald Vizenor[[35]](#footnote-35) (2009) extensively writes on survivance within Indigenous cultures. Survivance is about presence; it is an active mode of resisting a process of vanishing Indigenous identity and bodies within the literature, art, and visual arts (film and media) (Vizenor, 2009, 2). As both a sub-concept and practice, it is hard to define survivance. However, Vizenor suggests that survivance is overtly present in Indigenous stories (Vizenor, 2009). For this reason, survivance creates resistance narratives that deny factors such as absence and victimry (Vizenor, 2009, 1). Moreover, Western historical influences previously posed a process of vanishing Indigenous presence and enforcing them to culturally assimilate. Stories of survivance were merely stories of Indigenous morals and values, the transmission of knowledge, and customs (Vizenor, 2009, 80). However, colonial infiltration rendered Indigenous peoples' stories to morph into the literature on survivance and sovereignty (Vizenor, 2009). Thus, survivance is used to move beyond that narrative and insert Indigenous worldviews (Vizenor, 2009).

The etymology of survivance (in academic debates) produces variant definitions. However, Vizenor's positions the term survivance differently; As the author responds to these debates by addressing the term concerning colonial involvement with Indigenous people (Vizenor, 2009). Again, survivance is used to intervene with typical victim narratives prescribed (by Western frameworks) to Indigenous peoples. Moreover, Western knowledge often visualise the binaries between human and nature. By contrast, Vizenor views survivance as a nonhierarchical worldview (Vizenor, 2009). Therefore, in this section I analyse survivance through the depiction of nature. Here, I specifically examine *Ainu Mosir.* In doing so, I again analyse how nature is perceived through Ainu cosmologies. The film’s use of Ainu worldviews renders a better understanding of survivance. Thus, I argue that survivance is apparent in the film, because it shifts the narrative of Ainu cultures, and moves beyond the framework of victimry and absence (Vizenor, 2009).

### Analysis 1: *Ainu Mosir*

The Iomante ritual is one of two main plots in *Ainu Mosir.* For this reason, survivance is apparent through the film’s discussion of Ainu ethics and morals towards the ritual. The film’s progression towards the Iomante illustrates the community’s incentive to care for the bear cub. The film further shows sequences where the villagers prepare gifts for the bear. Upon the sacrifice, the women of the village perform an Ainu chant that appears to be a blessing. Ainu worldview regard all nature as an embodiment of various deities. For instance, The bear is a deity which brings the success of hunting (Yamada, 2018). Upon the sacrifice of the bear cub, the film’s point of view switches between various perspectives. The most significant perspective is the one of the bear (kamui)[[36]](#footnote-36). In this segment of shots, the camera takes on the position of the kamui. With the use of some distortion effects, our visual orientation becomes minorly foggy. However, the effect emphasizes a degree of warmth in the surrounding environment. In “The Ainu Bear Ceremony and the Logic behind Hunting the Deified Bear,” Takako Yamada (2018) refers to this moment of the Iomante as the grand feast (Yamada, 2018). During the feast “the Ainu believed that the soul of the bear as kamui did not depart […] rather [the kamui] stayed on the head between his ears […] enjoying himself with Ainu prayers, offerings, songs, and dances” (Yamada, 2018, 41-42).Therefore, the film displays the Iomante ritual as both a means of maintain Ainu autonomy of worldview. Despite the prejudices towards the Iomante, the film goes to lengths to share how the Iomante is both a sacred ritual that focuses on a relationship of reciprocity with nature[[37]](#footnote-37) (Yamada, 2018).

The scene of the ‘grand feast’ thus changes the visual of the Iomante, and invites us to see the varying perspectives associated with Ainu cosmologies and ideologies. Specifically, this is addressed through camera’s embodiment of the Kamui/bear’s perspective. For this reason, this scene establishes a form of survivance that removes the hierarchical display of dominating nature. For Vizenor, Indigenous cultural views differ from Western understandings of survivance within nature (Vizenor, 2009). Writing on Western literature, Vizenor argues that Western survivance frameworks often prescribe a romanticised perspective, that treats the essence of nature as a tool for humans to dominate and warp (Vizenor, 2009). By contrast, Indigenous cultures visualise survivance and its ties to nature more positively, and they are willing to reveal the risks within the natural world (Vizenor, 2009). Here, I understand Vizenor’s perspective of ‘risk’ as something within a positive framework. That being, the approach of the natural world as a ‘risk’ seems to position nature as relational and equal to humanity. Including the ‘grand feast’ scene, several segments within the film showcase the Iomante within a positive frame. For instance, the film does not glorify the kamui’s sacrifice; as the film puts an emphasis on recording the events leading to the day of the festival. In turn, the film removes any opportunity for interpreting the Iomante as a hierarchical stance, between human and nature. As a result, *Ainu Mosir’s* approach to filming evokes the Ainu’s cosmological and relational ties to the world. Put differently, the film displays how the festival channels a method of reciprocity.

## Concluding Statements

The research question for this chapter is “how do Indigenous filmmaking practices and concepts handle the legacy of earlier Indigenous depictions?” In this chapter, I first provide a historical account on the advent of the digital recording apparatus. By explaining the historical shift from analogue to digital film, I demonstrate how this transition provides economic access and Indigenous filmmaking participation. This in turn, transcends concepts such as cinematic taxidermy, because there is now an ability for Indigenous control to represent their cultures, lifestyles, identities, and the realities of settler involvement (Pearson and Knabe, 2015).

Following this discussion, I then analyse the method of resistance in Indigenous fictional films, and how resistance is also an active tool or concept that disrupts former notions of Indigeneity. In discussing resistance, I bring forward to sub-concepts that are inexorably linked to resistance: (visual) sovereignty and survivance. Under the discussion of (visual) sovereignty, I propose that this concept enables Indigenous filmmakers towards a means of the authority or self-determination (Raheja, 2010). (Visual) sovereignty, in this chapter, focuses on the recording of landscapes and how recording these landscapes are a means of expressing the endangerment of the environment (Raheja, 2010). The discussion of environmental spaces is discusses in my analyses of *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open*. In the following analyses, I examine *Ainu Mosir’s* use of sovereignty to discuss the differences in cultural practices. In the final section of this chapter, I analyse the sub-concept of resistance. Following Gerald Vizenor’s (2009) work, I address the relationship between survivance and the depiction of nature. In this section, I then present a final analysis on *Ainu Mosir,* where I examine how Ainu knowledge and relationality to nature are represented.

In the following chapter, I now address the connections between the concept of resistance in relation to non-cinema. The following chapter thus continues a discussion on the conceptual framework of resistance, where I analyse how resistance within non-cinema can be perceived as a method of transcending mainstream cinematic methods of filmmaking.

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## **PART III: The Functions of Cinematic Realism, and its Position in the Fictional Depiction of Trauma**

# Chapter 3:

## Introduction

In the previous chapter, I answer the question: How do Indigenous filmmaking practices and concepts handle the legacy of earlier Indigenous depictions? Here, I explain that the advent of the digital recording apparatus enabled Indigenous groups to participate in the filmmaking process (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). The analogue recording devices were economically inaccessible, and historically, its affiliation towards colonialist endeavours renders an inability for consensual Indigenous representations in film (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). For these reasons, the digitalization of cinematic tools grants an opportunity for Indigenous creativity. As well, the digital recording apparatus enables Indigenous filmmakers to practice a form of resistance via the act of sharing their knowledge through film (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Following the remark on the advent of the digital, I further explore how Indigenous filmmaking practices enable a transcendence from the concept of cinematic taxidermy.

To properly convey this process, I analyse the concept of resistance. Resistance is a concept which aims to contest former representations through an exposure of what is hidden behind ahistorical narratives (Barclay 2003; Hearne, 2012). Through an extensive analysis, I focus on how resistance is understood through the dimensions of ‘visual sovereignty’ and ‘(Indigenous) survivance.’ Visual sovereignty and Indigenous survivance are means of visual re-orientation. Indigenous filmmakers and collaborators provide various avenues of utilising visual sovereignty and Indigenous survivance. However, both sub-concepts maintain an overarching goal: to insert Indigenous ideological values within a film’s narrative and within a film’s production. By employing a film with Indigenous aesthetics, ideologies, or cinematic framework, Indigenous films counter and transcend the cultural hegemonic representations embedded within cinematic taxidermy. Thus, the production and creation of Indigenous films address a process of countering mainstream or popular cinema and its prior representations of Indigenous bodies and beings.

By establishing the concept of resistance, the goal of this next chapter is to address the aspect of cinematic realism with the following research question, “how is cinematic realism achieved in the production of Indigenous Cinema?”, and subsequently, “how does the research material demonstrate this aspect of cinematic realism?” To answer this question, I propose a connection between the concept of resistance and non-cinema. In turn, I argue that the mode of resistance, in Indigenous filmmaking, creates a non-cinematic production. By linking these two concepts, I demonstrate how the conceptual practice of resistance engenders the representational aesthetics within a non-cinematic production. Both the concept of resistance and non-cinema initiate a similar process of revealing. As previously noted, resistance is a concept that enables a revealing of hidden truths, and about dismantling prior ahistorical narratives (Barclay, 2003). By comparison, non-cinema is also a concept that describes a process of revealing the invisible (Brown, 2018). The essence of non-cinema is what Dussel (1985) proposes of the non-being and the non-existent: “‘a philosophy of liberation is rising from the periphery, from the oppressed, from the shadow that the light of being has not been able to illumine” (Dussel 1985: 14 Cited in: Brown 2016: 109). Thus, non-cinematic films are what William Brown (2018) describes as films that both reveal what remains hidden by the cinematic qua within mainstream cinema (namely Hollywood). In other words, the employment and production of a non-cinematic production reveals what is hidden within mainstream cinema (Brown, 2018). Therefore, the incentive of revealing what is either hidden or invisible, I what I refer to as a contingent of cinematic realism.

In cinema history, the notion of realism is always contested, and achieving an essence of realism seems to refer to a matter of construction. However, I argue that Indigenous Cinema’s motive of documentation, through concepts such as resistance, leads to a zenith of realism. Again, previous scholarship within cinema and television studies argue that cinematic realism is built on a construction of realism. Thus, my argumentation on Indigenous cinematic practices and realism could to some contestation. However, my line of argument is not that Indigenous Cinema achieves a sort of apex of realism. Instead, I explore how Indigenous Cinema offers an alternative method of filmmaking that counters dominant representational modes of realism. To solidify these claims, I propose a closer look at how themes of trauma are depicted within the context of resistance. Subsequently, I further explore how these depictions of trauma are rendered through non-cinema’s components of multitudinous and entanglement. For brevity’s sake, multitudinous within non-cinema is a process of revealing what remains invisible within mainstream cinema (Brown, 2018). By employing a multitudinous approach, a filmmaker enlarges the range of identities that are often subtracted to one notion of populous (Brown, 2018). Moving on to entanglement, this term refers to a process of situating a person’s position within the world. In terms of non-cinema, entanglement is described as a disavowing process, where the spectator cannot separate the film’s world from their reality (Brown, 2018).

Turning now to themes of trauma within Indigenous cinema, I base my understanding on Pearson and Knabe’s (2015) argumentation on depictions of trauma within Indigenous fiction films. As a result, I analyse the connection between the method of depicting trauma and non-cinema’s multitudinous and entanglement. In the introduction to this thesis, I state that themes of trauma, within Indigenous Cinema, are depicted in a multifarious way (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). For Pearson and Knabe (2015) Indigenous Cinema’s projection of historical trauma operates as a mode of catharsis, that aims to “confront and “heal”” (11). Moreover, the consoling traumatic events does not acquire a revisiting or recreation of the colonial past. Instead, Pearson and Knabe assert that “some of the bestknown Indigenous films have contemporary settings, although they are arguably not without reference to the past and, particularly, to the historical encounter with colonialism” (13). Thus, Indigenous Cinema’s discussion of historical and colonial trauma focuses on the present realities of Indigenous peoples (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Moreover, the idea of sharing and readdressing trauma is not an unfamiliar method of processing past ordeals (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). For instance, in the field of psychotherapy, there is a therapy known as ‘abreaction’[[38]](#footnote-38). However, Indigenous Cinema presents issues of historical trauma based on the local and global effects of colonialism (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). For these reasons, the sharing of historical trauma ranges between varying representations of experiences. In other words, one specific Indigenous group share a different experience of colonialism to another Indigenous group; yet, the ability to locate a discussion of colonial infringement provides a cathartic intervention between all contemporary Indigenous livelihoods (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). Therefore, through my analysis of the research material, I aim to address how trauma is projected in a multitudinous manner. As well, I demonstrate how these depictions are entangled between cinematic representation and in every day life.

In terms of structure, the remaining portion of this chapter details how the factors of multitudinous and entanglement are present within the research material’s depictions of trauma. I therefore start my discussion on multitudinous, and then follow with a discussion of entanglement. In each section, I start by bringing forward an analysis of the research materials. Following a film analysis, I then untangle and analyse how the non-cinematic factors can be articulated within the scene. Again, my approach is to detail how these films produce a multitudinous and entanglement function in relation to themes of trauma. First, I start with how depictions of trauma are presented as a multitudinous, that in turn, strays from the homogeneity of Indigenous representations. Following this analysis, I then go on to discuss how the demonstration of historical trauma, in these films, are entangled within the realities of this form of trauma. In discussing these attributes within the concept of non-cinema, I further demonstrate how Indigenous cinema creates an apex of cinematic realism.

## Trauma and Multitudinous: The Variations of Trauma Narratives and their Connections Towards the Real

The concept of multitudinous is best described via Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s (2004) take on the social and political understanding of a ‘multitude.’ In *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire,* Negri and Hardt refer to the multitude as a “class concept” (103). Divisions of class struggle and its resistance toward a capitalist society results in a simplification or unification of the term proletariat. Within a capitalist society, there is a tendency to provide a characterisation based on a  binary of capital and labour (Negri and Hardt, 2004). However, it is also factual to consider that class and or society is based on a plethora of differences, such as “race, ethnicity, geography, gender, sexuality, and other factors” (103). Therefore, for Negri and Hardt, “the concept of multitude, then, is meant in one respect to demonstrate that a theory of economic class need not choose between unity and plurality” (105). Instead, the idea of a multitude will never be simplified. As the authors suggest that “the singular social difference that constitutes the multitude must always be expressed and can never be flattened into sameness, unity, identity, or indifference” (105). Thus, the concept of a multitude refers to a negation of conforming to a singular simplification of a populous. If then, the multitude focuses on a goal that strays from a goal of  unification, how can shared commonality prevail? For Negri and Hardt, the multitude is not a rejection of commonality. The definition of a  multitude focuses on  “singularities that act in common. The key to this definition is the fact that there is no conceptual or actual contradiction between singularity and commonality” (105). Thus, commonality is not an indicator of homogeneity (Negri and Hardt, 2004). In other words, singular experiences are not unified into a conglomerate. Instead, commonality within the multitude requires an understanding and collaboration towards a common goal (Negri and Hardt, 2004).

How does a multitude factor into non-cinema? How does this multitude contribute towards an apex of cinematic realism? First, non-cinema and its method of  a multitude/multitudinous is understood as a movement towards the disavowing homogenous expressions of a population, and subsequently this process then reveals what is invisible (Brown, 2018). As a result, the prior notions of social representations (unity) and its thematic pretexts are annulled. As Brown argues (on Afghanistan’s Cinematic Institutions), filmmakers who are from Afghanistan interpret ideas of a nation that counters dominant (Hollywood/Mainstream) notions of their country (Brown, 2018). Therefore, a singular reference of Afghanistan as a nation is enlarged, which refers to the multitude (Brown, 2018). Second, non-cinema’s efforts of engaging with the multitude, I argue, becomes an index towards cinematic realism. To solidify this statement, I consider Brown's argumentation of non-cinema’s efforts of rejecting cinema-capital. That being, through a multitudinous projection, hidden truths of plural identities and their cultural and collective memory are revealed (Brown, 2018). Similarly, Kamran Rastegar (2015) posits that the multitude in relation to cultural cinematic memory is “a phenomenon, cinematic memory remains a powerful cultural force in indexing an archive of images for the development of cultural memory” (210). Here, Rastengar refers to the emergence of  new cinematic forms from a social multitude. Cinematic memory is thus a communal driving force, and through a multitude, the commonalities (singular and plural) provide a diversification towards cultural memory (Rastengar, 2015). Therefore, a multitudinous approach addresses prior exclusions. For this reason, cinematic realism is then evident, because multitudinous serves to open the variables of narratives or character representations. In other words, multitudinous is a process of  enlarging or delivering a multi-dimensional sphere of understanding one’s background (Brown, 2018).

In the case of Indigenous cinema, Indigenous films embark on a method of resisting former interpretations or frameworks of being Indigenous. Consequently, Indigenous cinema offers an array of topics on culture, heritage, and trauma. As a result, the presentation of Indigenous environments surpasses the idea of a nation, and a singular cinematic representation. Thus, Indigenous cinema does not operate on borders of national distinction. Put differently, Indigenous cinema is fluid and touches upon commonalities of Indigenous experiences. Therefore, Indigenous cinema refers to a multiplicity of narratives that share a common collaboration of resistance towards issues of colonialism and imperialism (Barclay, 2003). Subsequently, these issues further focus on depictions of trauma that are handled in a variety of expressions. For Pearson and Knabe (2015) Indigenous cinematic depictions of trauma (intergenerational and historical) are numerous in their expression; what one Indigenous group experiences does not entirely relate to another group[[39]](#footnote-39) (Pearson and Knabe, 2015).

## Multitude Within Social Issues of Trauma

To inquire as to how Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open and Ainu Mosir convey trauma, this analysis section first focuses on how the characters and their narratives illustrate a multitude/multitudinous. Subsequently, the analysis section also demonstrates how trauma depictions in a multitude produce cinematic realism. Both films subscribe to a formula of addressing singularity and commonality within their recorded environments. In turn, the two films offer a negotiation between Indigenous identity within the internal (Indigenous community) and external (society).

For this reason, both films share certain commonalities of resistance toward former representations. However, both films also maintain their singularities towards experiences. For  Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open focuses on revealing the differing circumstances for Indigenous women within Canada. The discussion of trauma is central to the film's plot, and these topics extend to the concerns over social inequality, domestic abuse, and identity. In contrast, Ainu Mosir illustrates the urgency of maintaining Indigenous (Ainu) heritage and culture within Japan's Capitalist environment. Preserving culture within Ainu Mosir similarly shows a multitude and contrast between character backgrounds. However, the differentiation focuses on the generational values of Ainu culture.

### Analysis 1: Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open

In *Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open,* the characters Rosie andÁila stand in to demonstrate a juxtaposition or divide (economically and socially speaking) between Indigenous groups. Similarly, film critic Jeannette Catsoulis (2019) proposes that the film "brilliantly illuminates the experiential chasm between its two leads" (Catsoulis, 2019, pp.I). The circumstantial contrasts between the two characters are both explicit and implicit in their depictions. Through the use of a handheld camera, the slow and "one-shot" filming illustrates the following: while there are commonalities to being Indigenous, the experience factor ranges into a vast multiplicity of outcomes. The articulation of experiential multiplicity is prominent in the film's insight into the sociopolitical parameters for Indigenous people within Canada. The two characters' economic differences are the film's most apparent contrast. This projection of in/stability is evident by displaying the leading character's living conditions. The characters live in close geographic proximity (an area on the east side of Vancouver). Áila's residence is in an area of East Vancouver, where an increasing process of gentrification occurs[[40]](#footnote-40). At the same time, Rosie lives in a social housing apartment with her boyfriend and his mother.

Further comparisons between the two living situations does not fall short of geographical distinctions. Instead, the spectators can identify the substantial differences in cultivating and containing Indigenous heritage through the mise-en-scene. Áila's economic stability allows her to attain and adorn her residence with Indigenous artwork and literature. In contrast, Rosie's social housing apartment slightly expresses any form of Indigenous heritage. For this reason, Rosie symbolizes a depiction of cultural loss. Her conditions are thus best interpreted as transient, moving through and navigating a sense of self. Rosie's diasporic conditions are also reinforced through segmented shots of her traveling by bus, her brief encounter with Áila, and the safe house. Both characters share a commonality of being Indigenous within Canada. However, the characters contrast on premises such as social inequality, and in turn, demonstrates the divisions or plurality within Indigenous experiences.

The film addresses the issues of trauma that refer to the film's title. That being, the film's title directly references the poetic essay written by Indigenous author Billy-Ray Belcourt. In this essay, Belcourt writes on the Indigenous performative body within society and how the experiences of trauma emerge within Indigenous media and theatrical performances. Writing on trauma and affect, Belcourt writes:

To split at the seams is to be strained by a deluge of affects, where "affect" describes psychic and physiological responses to moments of profound instability—when the you -you [...] struggles but ultimately fails to persist in the wake of something that moves you, for better or for worse (Belcourt, 2017, pp 3)

Here, Belcourt writes on the affects of being Indigenous as a corporeal intensity of visceral misery (Belcourt, 2017). Following this track of thought, Belcourt raises the issues on how Indigenous people encounter a continuous negotiation of the self. Belcourt's perception of the connection between instability and Indigeneity translates into the relationship between Rosie and Áila. Both women struggle to grasp their sense of self. Most directly apparent is in character Áila, who embodies the responses of her instability of inserting her presence as an Indigenous women while trying to persistently help Rosie.

 Both leading characters employ trauma in a reticent and multitudinous manner. For Áila, the spectator only captures a glimpse of her issues, such as anxiety. At the same time, Rosie's outward circumstances of domestic abuse mask the inner traumas of her childhood. However, Rosie and Áila's past traumas are singular and yet pluralised. The dynamic between singular/plural is evident at the moment where the two leads argue in the cab ride towards the safe house. Following first in a close-up shot, Rosie demands the cab driver take a detour to another residence. As the destination approaches and Rosie exits the cab and into a building. Áila distrusts Rosie's incentive, and she secretly follows her into the building. Áila assumes that Rosie is buying drugs from an unknown dealer. Unbeknownst to Áila, Rosie sold Áila's stolen medication for money[[41]](#footnote-41). In the following segments within the cab, the pair silently fight, which results in Rosie accusing Áila of being patronising. In the end, Aila's efforts to reconcile lead to the following argument:

Áila: "look, I never said I was better than you."

Rosie: "You didn't have to. You think you're so fucking smart. You don't know shit. You're just a dumb white bitch."

(1:07:50- 1:08:06)

Following this statement, Rosie claims, "you don't know anything about me" (1:08:16). Moments later, the pair arrive at their destination, and the two remain reserved. Rosie's remark about Áila as a "dumb white bitch" can be interpreted as a response that outwardly points to the astronomically different circumstances of equality. Another understanding of this discussion leads to the topic of 'white-passing' within Indigenous cultures. Writing on Australian Indigenous issues[[42]](#footnote-42), Kelly Menzel (2021) defines passing as "a process by which a person can move from one cultural or racial group to another undetected" (54). Menzel concludes that the white-passing factor within Indigenous cultures relates to the "trauma of the legacy of colonisation means that some stereotypes still hold strong and I do not fit the stereotype perpetuated" (56). Following Darlene Johnson's (1993) notes on passing, Menzel contends that passing is a form of concealment of identity, a sort of safety that provides a privileged position (Johnson, 1993; Menzel, 2021). Rosie's comments overtly point to the dynamic of singular/plural. She demonstrates the multitude (difference) and rejects the unionising factor of the mutual experiences between her and Áila.

The singular/plural within the multitude is present through the two characters' eventual reconciliation. For Brown (2018), the singular/plural further refers to Jean Luc Nancy's (2000) idea of coming into 'being.' As Brown posits, "we are always with others, and can only be so for our 'being' or status as a subject to exist" (43). The multitude is our inseparability from the plural. However, our subjectivities (self) remain balanced within the plural (Brown, 2018). Therefore, the singular/plural is not a binary of singular versus other. Instead, we come into being when we transcend this boundary (Brown, 2018). At the film's end, the two characters part ways, acknowledging that they will both be good mothers in the future.

### Analysis 2: *Ainu Mosir*

By comparison, Ainu Mosir also delivers multitudinous experiences towards generational trauma issues. Similar to Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open, Ainu Mosir demonstrates a multitude through character dynamics. In particular, this is most prominent in Debo and Kanto's friendship. As the film progresses, the community aims to re-establish, reconnect, and preserve their Ainu heritage via the Iomante ritual. As analysed in the former chapter, there are several sequences where the Iomante challenges the community's sentiments. Most significantly, the value of sacrificing the bear (Chibi) is further apparent in the generational gap between Debo and Kanto. For Debo, the Iomante ritual is a means of finding what it means to be Ainu. Debo proclaims, "so without doing Iomante, I identify as Ainu, but I can't seem to grasp what that means. Something's missing" (00:10:51-00:13:49). At the same time, Debo is always Ainu, yet, the importance of reinstating the Iomante brings more meaning to his Indigenous identity. By contrast, Kanto enjoys raising Chibi, but he rejects the idea of a sacrificial process. For Kanto, the link of killing the bear can interpret as an unnecessary death tied to his yearning to meet with his father (who is dead).

Kanto represents the recent generation of Ainu in the village of Kotan. As opposed to Debo’s values of the Iomante, Kanto’s attempts to preserve and establish a connection to his Ainu heritage emerge with his love of music. Upon watching a live Ainu band perform, Kanto becomes inspired to create an original song. In the next scene, Kanto and his classmates discuss their upcoming music presentation, and the following conversation occurs:

Kanto: I want to write an original song

Student 1: Original?

Teacher: From Scratch? Interesting.

Student 2: What if we used Ainu instruments?

Student 3: But I'm not as good at Tonkori as you might think

Student 2: No one thinks that

Student 3: When I go into the city, everyone assumes I can play. I actually can't. It's a stereotype.

Student 4: I don't want to use Ainu instruments

Teacher: Why?

Student 4: We're playing freely. Do we have to do the Ainu stuff in the band too?

Kanto: Well, I get that, but whatever we do is Ainu

Student 4: We don't have to advertise it.

Student 5: It's all good, as long as we're cool

(00:37:26-00:38:34)

This scene demonstrates the younger Ainu generations beliefs towards their Ainu lineage. Even within the younger generation, being Ainu is both a commonality, as well as a singular feeling or experience. For some students, playing Ainu instruments is an optimistic proposal. For other students, incorporating Ainu instruments becomes an embellishment of their culture, where it allows Japanese society to proceed with stereotyping their identity. Kanto’s logic stands out in that he expresses that Ainu instruments never change the way in which Japanese society will perceive them. Therefore, the multitudinous expression emerges in the varying degrees of tackling identity both within the spectrum of self and the multitude.

Turning now to the production end of creating *Ainu Mosir*, the film illustrates an interplay between Ainu culture within Japanese society. Additionally, the film attempts to move beyond the perception of Ainu films as part of, or perceived as indexical to Japanese cinema. However, the significance of *Ainu Mosir*  is that attempts to demonstrate the multitude within Ainu and between varying Ainu groups. In a 2020 interview with director Isabel Sandoval, Takeshi Fukunaga asserts that:

When I first started the project, I just went to different parts of Hokkaido, and other parts in Japan to meet with [the] Ainu and then listen to them, and talk to them to really learn about them. After visiting different places, the village where I shot the movie, Akan, had so many elements to construct a story. Like how they run a tourism business to show us a version of themselves that’s Ainu for tourists, while living a more common, day to day, life behind the curtain, and there are wonderful people who are in the movie that are living in the town. By making this, as I say this is supposed to be the first film to have a proper representation of Ainu, I made it with the hope to make a step for better recognition and understanding about Ainu. This isn’t all about Ainu, of course, it’s just one story of these particular people in one film (Fukunaga and Sandoval, 2020: 00:05:30-00:07:00).

Thus, *Ainu Mosir* is a film which chooses to distinguish the multitude of experiences and perceptions. By employing a multitudinous approach, *Ainu Mosir* demonstrate one representation of Ainu presence on screen. Fukunaga’s acknowledgement that this is a film for Ainu people, and “it’s just one story of these particular people” further addresses that within Ainu communities they share a commonality, yet their experiences will always differ. In term of Indigenous cinema as non-cinema, *Ainu Mosir* thusly illustrates a resistance to address Indigenous cultures within a multitude.

## Mini Conclusion

In this section, I focus on how the concept of a multitude establishes the singular and pluralities within Indigenous cultures, and between Indigenous peoples. As previously noted, resistance is a concept that is tasked with rejecting prior notions cinematic representations (Barclay, 2003). By using a multitude in both film’s narratives, I focus on how this concept opens or reveals the many forms of Indigenous methods, viewpoints, and tactics towards resisting settler perceptions of their culture, and the impacts of trauma. In turn, the projection of a multitude initiates a form of cinematic realism, because it demonstrate the multifarious perspectives of Indigenous peoples realities. For Instance, Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open  I focus on the multitude in relation to the socioeconomic divisions between various Indigenous groups. Moreover, in Ainu Mosir, I analyse how intergenerational differences in Ainu values show different incentives of preserving and activating Ainu worldviews.

## Trauma and Entanglement: Entangling Narratives as a Means of Expressing the Real

In the previous section, I provide an analysis demonstrating the expression of a multitude within Indigenous cinema. Here, I focus on the context of many trauma themes within narratives. I analyse the representations of trauma within intergenerational values and the diversity of opinions towards Indigenous identity. As a result, the former section touches upon the multitude and its relation to Indigenous filmmaking methods of resistance. Simply put, I propose that the achievement of resistance is through the filmmaker's process of exemplifying the multitude. For this reason, the process of revealing such a vast set of singular perspectives within a commonality (being Indigenous) contributes to an apex of cinematic realism.

Addressing the different approaches between mainstream cinema and non-cinema enables an easier understanding of entanglement. Brown reflects on the nature of realism and the entanglement process by following Karen Barad's works (2007). In turn, Brown considers how entanglement, via Barad, refers to our position as "part of a universe in which there only entanglement and complementary, and which is always only ever coming into existence, or becoming" (Barad, 2007, cited in Brown, 2018, 62). Entanglement is, thus, an avenue of transcending the binaries that we construct, such as 'subject versus object.' (Brown, 2018). In other words, phenomena are always intra-acting; they are entanglement instead of inseparable (Barad, 2007; Brown, 2018). Therefore, in mainstream cinema there is always an attempt to create a separation from the real world or an illusion (Brown, 2018). However, cinema, in its totality, is not separate. Instead, there is always a constant entanglement between the filmmaker, the subject, and the diegetic spectator (Brown, 2018). Following Brown's proposal, non-cinema chooses to address the intimate nature between our world and the film's world (Brown, 2018). Through Brown's explanation, entanglement connects to Indigenous cinema because Indigenous films focus on a method of resistance. Resistance in Indigenous films focuses on interacting with and negotiating the multiplicity of realities encountered by Indigenous communities (Dudemaine et al., 2020). Moreover, resistance is a method employed by Indigenous filmmakers, and non-Indigenous collaborators aim to address concerns about Indigenous presence on and off screen (Dudemaine et al., 2020).

The following analysis section further explains the connections between Indigenous cinema's mode of resistance and non-cinema's entanglement method. Subsequently, this section demonstrates how cinematic realism emerges through the connection between resistance and entanglement. For this reason, I demonstrate how both films exemplify this idea of entanglement. Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open, conveys an entanglement through the self-reflexive experiences created by co-director and writer Tailfeathers. In this analysis, I focus on Lucia Nagib's (2020) proposal of a mise-en-abyme and how self-reflexivity refers to entanglement. Moreover, I finalise the analysis by focussing on how the film portrays Vancouver’s landscape as uncinematic. In the final analysis, I illustrate how Ainu Mosir approaches entanglement through director Fukunaga's connection and collaboration with the Ainu community.

### An analysis of Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open and its Entangled Affairs with Past Trauma

Malkʼwalaʼmida uḵwineʼ leʼołeʼ yax̱idixa̱nʼs ʼnalax̱// The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open results in a production of entanglement. In particular, entanglement, because the film is based on the authentic experience of co-director and writer Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers:

 "I encountered a young Indigenous woman who was pregnant and had just fled a domestic violence situation, and I naively didn't really know how to help" (00:00:45-00:03:02).

The cinematic reproduction of Tailfeather's experience thus demonstrates a process of entanglement that refers to the process of mise-en-abyme. For Lucia Nagib (2020), non-cinema films undergo a process of self-reflexivity and self-negation of the medium itself (Nagib, 2020). As a result, non-cinema films "recognise and expose this dilemma by striving for an identity with the phenomenological Real, an aim whose impossibility results in a bottomless mise-en-abyme" (46). Along with writing and co-directing the film, Tailfeathers also inserts herself into the film's narrative (in the role of Áila). The production of a mise-en-abyme is present in Tailfeather's decision to recreate her experience and her insertion within the film As a result, the film becomes a mirroring process, where "a subject of reflection becomes retroactively its object" (Dickmann, 2020, 13). . What I interpret from Tailfeather’s approach is an entanglement of reconciling with past traumatic experience. Thus, Indigenous cinema becomes a site for negotiating former issues related to Indigenous identity, or to reconcile with the past within the present. The film's mise-en-abyme therefore represents an entanglement, through the director’s self-reflexive storytelling.

### Entanglement and the Non-Performance: An Analysis of Ainu Mosir’s Entanglement via Collaborative Filmmaking

 In total, Ainu Mosir is a film that crosses the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction. The interplay between fiction and non-fiction illustrates the entanglement and inseparability between the film world and the real. The merge between film and the real world is evident when we examine Fukunaga's process of collaborating and producing this film. In the same interview with Sandoval, Fukunaga states the following:

Most of the actors are playing a version of themselves. Those non-actors are people that actually live in that town. And this is supposed to be the first film; the first narrative film about Ainu starring Ainu people. For me, I'm not Ainu, so for me to tell a story of Ainu, I tried to be very, very careful about how to honour their voices and then how to bring them into the process of making the film as much as possible. There was a script, of course, but half of the dialogue was improvised. That was one of the ways for me to bring as much of their natural selves into the film to avoid, like you say, certain images or imposing any preconceived ideas of notion on them (Fukunaga and Sandoval, 2020: 00:05:30-00:07:00)

There are a few significant points that stand out in this passage. First, the role of non-actors who play a version of themselves demonstrates this inseparability between the film's world and the real. We can understand this inseparability through Brown's proposal of non-cinema's ethics in filmmaking. Here, Brown suggests that this ethical filmmaking process "is not necessarily filmmaking that pursues on specific morality, but it is filmmaking that self-consciously and conscientiously engages with the world" (66). By comparison, Fukunaga does not infiltrate the production of Ainu identity. Instead, he allows for the non-actors to reveal their community values and insert them into their on-screen presence. Playing oneself thus mends the division between film and the real world, as Fukunaga encourages the non-actors to impose their positions and natural selves through improvised dialogue in reaction to circumstances proposed in the initial script. Second, Fukunaga's collaboration process also addresses the method of resistance within Indigenous filmmaking practices. Fukunaga states that dialogue/improvised dialogue and control of the script allowed the Ainu of this village to control their presence on screen. This factor reveals the method of resistance in Indigenous cinema. For Dudemaine et al. (2020) Indigenous participation in cinema/media "allows for a genuine Indigenization of content [...] one that goes beyond a simple integration of Indigenous voices into a neocolonial system" (32). For this reason, Fukunaga's collaboration process grants the villagers of Ainu Kotan to assert the right to self-determination and presence on screen. In doing so, the community of the Ainu Kotan village can insert an authenticity to the portrayal of their culture and heritage.

Entanglement in the non-cinematic production is evident in the construction of the film’s narrative. *Ainu Mosir is a fictional film, however, it is shot in real time. Therefore the film produces an entanglement by complicates or denies separation from the film world and the reality. For instance, this is evident in Fukunaga’s recording of actual visitors and villagers.* As presented within the film’s narrative, the village of Kotan relies economically on tourism. Lisa Hiwasaki (2000) explores in “Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the Shaping of Ainu Identity,” the relationship of ethnic tourism with the Ainu. The intent of this research is to identify possible positive aspects of ethnic tourism. While my ethical stance denies the very nature of positive relations towards ethnic tourism, Hiwasaki’s defining of what ethnic tourism entails, along with the historical relations of the Ainu within Japan are worth mentioning. For Hiwasaki, in the 2000s, the presence of Ainu are “virtually invisible in a country they have inhabited for hundreds if not thousands, of years” (394). Ethnic tourism is described as one feature of visibility for the Ainu, as the Japanese educational system does not mention Ainu origins (Hiwasaki, 2002). However, ethnic tourism is a form of:

“cultural exoticism of the host population and its “products,” such as clothing, music and dance, are the main attractions for tourists. Ethnic tourism leads to the formation of three main roles: (1) the tourist, who travels to seek an experience that cannot be duplicated in ordinary life; (2) […] the performer who modifies his or her behaviour to suit the tastes of the tourists for gain; and (3) the middleman, who mediates the two groups and profits by their interaction.” (395).

In several segments, director Takeshi Fukunaga documents actual tourists who come to visit the village; in these sequences, the shots show tourists taking pictures along side the Ainu and the village itself. The consumerist exploitation of the Ainu is further amplified in Takeshi’s documentation of the Ainu’s performances for the tourists. For instance, in one scene, the camera shows visitors entering the shop of Kanto’s mother. Here, the guests’ interactions with Kanto’s mother are banal, often broadcasting a disinterest to her personal experience, life, identity or culture. Instead, the guests are more concerned with the authenticity of the products she is selling: “is this Ainu made?” Understanding the roles of ethnic consumerism is further displayed in the commodification of performance and performativity; both in the actual live dance performances for the audience. As well, the performativity of staying within a consumerist “Ainu characterization” for the visitors of the village. In these segments, Fukunaga’s footage of visitors and villagers causes a rupture in viewing the film as an illusion. The film focuses on the issues of ethnic tourism as they occur within the present and within the film. Therefore, there is an inseparability between the film world and within our reality.

## Concluding Statements

The goal of this chapter is to contribute an assessment of how Indigenous Cinema and practices of resistance are imbedded within non-cinema. The goal of this chapter is to provide a response to the following questions, “how is cinematic realism achieved in Indigenous Cinema?” and subsequently “how does the research material demonstrate this aspect of cinematic realism?” To answer these questions, I focus on an assessment of how Indigenous Cinema and practices of resistance are imbedded within non-cinema. I therefore focus on non-cinematic aspects such as multitudinous that refer to a process of enlarging depictions such as trauma. Following this discussion, I bring forward the concept of entanglement to demonstrate how Indigenous Cinema self-referential narratives and fictionalising experiences. Here, I demonstrate how Tailfeather’s experience point to an entanglement, because she revisits a moment within her life through fictional reconciliation. Moreover, non-cinema within entanglement reveals a process of showing with/in the world. Where Hollywood or popular cinema offers an illusory detachment from the real, non-cinema emphasizes the entangled phenomenon between a film’s world within the real. Here, I choose to focus on this aspect of entanglement in relation to *Ainu Mosir,* because the film blurs the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction through its documentation.

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## **Part IV: Conclusions**

# Chapter 4:

## Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to assess the notion of Indigenous Cinema. The exploratory nature of this thesis requires a theoretical structure associated with research in cultural analysis and cinema studies. As a result, the thesis first showcases the issues of the colonialist/settler gaze. In particular, the research identifies that the colonial/settler gaze causes a visual misrepresentation of Indigenous presence/Indigeneity. In this section, the thesis outlines these historical factors by addressing the field of visual ethnography. Moreover, the thesis further examines the concept of cinematic taxidermy to outline how the colonial/settler gaze attempts to freeze and vanish Indigenous bodies via the screen.

Moving into the main component of this thesis, I assess how Indigenous filmmaking practices (Indigenous Cinema) handle the legacies of colonial/settler representations. Here, I start by addressing the economic accessibility of the recording apparatus. Thus, the transition from analogue to digital recording apparatus. In doing so, I address how the digitization of film grants Indigenous peoples to participate in the film. Following a discussion on the digital recording apparatus, I then contribute a closer analysis of the concept of resistance. Here, I look closely at two sub-concepts encompassing the terms resistance, sovereignty, and survivance. Both sub-concept thus entails a process of resisting prior representations of Indigenous peoples by inserting their Indigenous worldviews. Moreover, both sub-concepts also illustrate resistance by addressing and negotiating their former representations (Barclay, 2003). I assess both sub-concepts through a theoretical and film analysis.

Upon discussing Indigenous Cinema’s employment of resistance, I bring forward my final chapter. In this section, I examine how the resistance method correlates to the concept of non-cinema. Here, I discuss how non-cinematic conceptually counters mainstream cinematic qualities of illusionism and escapism (entanglement) (Brown, 2018). As well, non-cinema is a method of revealing what remains hidden within mainstream cinema and media (Brown, 2018). Moreover, this section further discusses non-cinema’s production of a multitude. In this section, I address how the multitude operates on a mode of singular/plural to represent the populous (Negri and Hardt, 2004; Brown 2018). In short, the multitude involves a process of enlarging the depictions of a populous. Upon discussing non-cinema and multitude, I contribute another film analysis of the research material. Here, I identify how the multitude functions to enlarge the multiplicity of values and circumstances associated with Indigenous peoples. The connection I make between resistance and multitude is that the multitude demonstrates the varying commonality and individual forms of resistance within Indigenous communities. Following this discussion, I then focus on entanglement. I thus explore how the research material uses entanglement to create an inseparability between the film world and the real world (Brown, 2018). As a result, the final section first evaluates how Indigenous Cinematic practices of resistance correlate to non-cinematic strategies of multitudinous and entanglement. In other words, by linking these two concepts, I demonstrate how the conceptual practice of resistance engenders the representational aesthetics within a non-cinematic production.

One limitation of this thesis is its exploratory nature. That being, the study is limited to cinema/film. Notwithstanding these limitations, this thesis contributes to cinema and media studies and postcolonial studies. Moreover, the thesis also touches upon topics associated with Asian and Japanese studies. Future research could address these topics about other visual mediated forms that Indigenous groups or people make. For instance, further research could focus on video game studies or social media applications (Tik Tok or Instagram). In particular, this discussion could expand into research areas that focus on Indigenous cosmologies and their representations through other mediated forms.

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1. Global Cinema is comprised of several forms of conceptual cinemas. Other terminologies or categories within Global Cinema include: First, Second, and Third Cinema. First Cinema is commonly known as the Hollywood framework of filming (creating entertainment for economic benefit). Second Cinema focuses on Art-House Cinema (Europe), and focuses on creating art. Third Cinema (Latin America, Africa, and Asia), however, challenges both First and Second Cinema. Conceptually, Third Cinema promotes a meaning that film is a collective and collaborative process, which promotes an argument of activism, of revealing colonialism (Allerix Films, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For the remainder of this thesis, I will continue to refer to Fourth Cinema as Indigenous Cinema [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eisenstein, Sergei, and Daniel Gerould. “Montage of Attractions: For ‘Enough Stupidity in Every Wiseman.’” *The Drama Review: TDR* 18, no. 1 (1974): 77–85. https://doi.org/10.2307/1144865. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Kracauer, Siegfried. Theory of Film. London: Oxford UP, 1974. Print. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bazin, André, and Hugh Gray. “The Ontology of the Photographic Image.” *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1960): 4–9. https://doi.org/10.2307/1210183. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This includes entries on non-cinema, intermedial passages, and total cinema. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I use the term ‘local’ to refer the relations between colonialism and the individual tribes. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Historically, and in the present, both the Japanese and foreigners consider Japan as a ‘unique’ society. Societal unique-ness extends to the representation of Japanese culture as ethnically homogenous. (Bestor, 2002) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “For example, weaving attusi, the ethnic traditional clothes of the Ainu, requires natural materials, including the fiber of the Manchurian elm. However, the Ainu face difficulty in obtaining these materials and the measures do not cover such a case” (Sato et al, 2009: 15). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The presence of the Ainu, in Japan, dates back to antiquity. Consistent with the historical and scientific findings in Hokkaido, the Ainu lineage is traced to both the Jomon era and the Paleolithic Age (Sato et al, 2009). Thereafter, the migration and settling of the Yayoi/Yamato in Japan caused tensions with the Ainu. By 18th century (Edo Period) to the present day, the history of imperialism rendered the Ainu population in a state of poverty (Sato et al, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. In 2009, Japan adopted the “UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” This movement forward would recognise the Ainu and the Okinawans as Indigenous groups within Japan (Sato et al, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. These include academic institutions, world fair’s, and colonial expositions. (MacDougall,2005) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In Canada, there are currently 9 groups of inuit peoples: Labradormiut (Labrador Inuit), Nunavimmiut (Nunavik/Ungava Inuit), Nunatsiarmiut (Baggin Island Inuit), Iglulingmiut (Iglulik Inuit), Kivallirmiut (Caribou Inuit), Nestilingmuit (Netsilik Inuit), Inuinnait (Copper Inuit), Qikirtamiut (Sanikiluaq Inuit), and Inuvialuit (Western Arctic/Mackenzie Delta Inuit). The reason for bringing this to attention is to further exemplify that the broad classification of Inuit hosts several Inuit groups with different cultural and ancestral backgrounds. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Geographically, Alaska is landlocked between Northern British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. Both the Yukon, Alaska, and British Columbia are the starting point of what is considered, the ‘Pacific Northwest.’ What is considered the Arctic, starts at the most Northern point of British Columbia (Kitimat regions), Alaska and the Yukon. There are several Alaskan Indigenous groups that speak the languages of Yupi’k. However, the Yuit group is generally associated with the Yupi’k language. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. For instance, the film *Eskimo* ( MGM Studios, 1934) (Hunhndorf, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For instance, Canada’s Residential School System entailed a process of forced assimilation. Raised by Christian churches, Indigenous children were taken away from their families, and were required to acclimate to Western culture and ideology. To this day, more evidence shows that around 4,118 children died at these schools, however, this toll does is not finalised. Moreover, reports via interviews and documentaries address the horrific abuse inflicted on these children. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Specific stereotypes include the racial and one-dimensional representation of Indigenous people as either the noble or evil savage (Boyd, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. By recent, I am referring to films in the 20th to the 21st century. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Pocahontas is the alias for Matoaka. It has been previously noted, that she met Captain John Smith at the age of eleven years. By 1619, written accounts suggest that Matoaka was kidnapped, and later sent to England. In England, she married John Rolfe; her name changed to Lady Rebecca Rolfe, and she later died at the age of 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. For Whitt, Indigenous knowledge systems differ from Western ideologies on knowledge. A substantial difference, for Whitt, is that Indigenous beliefs of the world are “tied to the natural world in very different ways […] Among Indigenous peoples […] the belief that knowledge and land are intimately bound to one another is widely shared” (29). Thus, Indigenous knowledge systems perceive a belief that all facets of the natural world obtain sentience (Whitt, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The ‘Indian Residential School System’ came to fruition due to the ‘Indian Act’ in 1876; this bill also sought to erase all Indigenous cultures, while it also enabled the Crown to determine what Indigenous people were constituted as “Indigenous.” In turn, this allowed the Crown to decide which First Nations groups had rights to certain parts of the land. Moreover, Indigenous groups such as the Metis and the Inuit were not considered viable candidates of the Indigenous status. However, both Metis and Inuit children were forced into the Residential School system (Biin et al., 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. By contrast, the Ainu population was relatively stable during the 1900s (Ishida 1998; Muñoz-González 2008: 107. Cited in Centeno, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. In *Women Film Pioneers Project:* “Tazuko Sakane,” Zhao Xinyi (2017) writes on Tazuko Sakane, a Japanese female director who created *Kita no dōhō.* In the article, Zhao reflects that the first creation of *Kita no dōhō* was rejected by the Japanese studios. Because the film did not meet the criteria of the studio(explicit displays that translate to the homogenous rhetoric), Sakane was forced to return to Hokkaido and film more footage for the studio’s propaganda war efforts (Zhao, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. This film is part of an installment of films known as the “Guitar Series.” [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Allison Hargreaves, Violence Against Indigenous Women, (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017), 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Representations of trauma will be discussed in the following chapter [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Film photography and film for recording is far more expensive. Moreover, camera equipment, common in digital filmmaking now is also a huge investment. However, Pearson and Knabe are referring to the emergence of digital technologies that are relatively inexpensive, in comparison to latter: digital recorders available to the public, smartphones, complimentary or cheap software provided by computer companies, or computer gadgets such as web-cameras (Pearson and Knabe, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. In the 1960s, the Ikpeng abducted two Indigenous girls—in the Park— from the Wauja tribe. In turn, the Ikpeng were unaware that the girls were carriers of a respiratory disease, which the Ikpeng later prescribed as the “White man diseases” — leading many of their members to be extremely ill, or leading them to death. After a decade, relation between the Ikpeng and other Amazonian Indigenous groups gradually resolved (I.S.A, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Following “A CINEMA OF SOVEREIGNTY‖: WORKING IN THE CULTURAL INTERFACE TO CREATE A MODEL FOR FOURTH WORLD FILM PRE-PRODUCTION AND AESTHETICS,” Dorothy Christian (2010) makes the clear distinction of Michelle Raheja’s Indigenous heritage, ‘Seneca.’ Seneca is a member of the Iroquoian people, and they are one of 5 nations that are part of the Iroquoian Confederacy, which is the unceded territory of upstate New York. Based on Christian’s use of recognising Raheja’s Indigenous heritage, I also find it necessary to write this distinction (in written form) as a formality. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. I write one aspect, because this is only one depiction of Ainu culture. This discussion will continue into the following chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This further speaks to an ideology that connects with discussion of ecocriticism. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Perhaps this is more knowledgeable from a Vancourite position. However, Vancouver takes pride on being ‘The Greenest City.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. This area of Vancouver is one of Canada's poorest neighborhoods; it accounts for "seventy percent of Vancouver's total [Indigenous] population, and [Indigenous] people make up nearly half (40 percent) of the urban ghetto's residents" (Benoit et al., 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. **Vizenor describes survivance in the form of a memoir. As a memoir, the author critiques the conditions of colonial infringment while he dedicates his Indigenous worldviews. Specifically, Vizenor attributes a worldview based on the Anishinaabe, Ojibwe or Chippewa, and other Indigenous groups within the United States (Vizenor, 2009).**  [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Kamuy means spirit/deity in Ainu [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Yamada accounts that the Iomante festival and its ceremonial practices was once banned due to Japanese activists who deemed the ritual as barbaric (Yamada, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. The term ‘abreaction’ refers to a patient reliving traumatic memories, and through this revisitation a purification or catharsis enables a sense of closure (Jemmer, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki filmmaker) documentary *Our People Will be Healed (2017);* the documentary focuses on the evolution of a former residential school that eventually turned into an Indigenous run primary/high school in Manitoba (Norway House). This documentary focuses on avenues of decolonisation in Canada’s education system. Subsequently,  Obomsawin also focuses on the history of the residential school system at Norway House, Manitoba. As a result, the film touches upon issues of Indigenous representationalism/depictions of Indigenous experience with historical trauma. In several interviews with the former residential school students, most confirmed that their experience at the school greatly differed from other residential school survivors. For instance, two interviewers remark that they did not experience any assault, and they were perplexed that such violence happened at other residential schools. However, they did experience tremendous trauma due to racial abuse from non-Indigenous residence within the town (00:45:00-00:53:01). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Vancouver’s metropolitan region. Upon crossing the bridge from Richmond (Vancouver’s airport location, otherwise known as YVR), I noticed several houses were sold to real estate developers. These, soon to-be apartments are mostly comprised of studio spaces or one bedroom apartments; with a starting price of $2,500 Canadian dollars. Vancouver, as of late, is considered one of the most expensive cities within Canada. The correlation between affordable housing and gentrification is that this urban renewal project caters to the affluent population within Canada, and of that population the majority is a white population (Fynes, 2013). Furthermore, gentrification is a process in which urban renewal interrogates areas of the population with a lower socioeconomic status; subsequently then, *revitalising* these spaces further amplifies the increase of real estate taxes and cost; thus creating an instability in affordable housing (Fynes, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Rosie sells Áila’s anxiety medication to provide some financial stability for her baby. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Menzel works focuses on issues of blood quantum justification that is similarly practiced within Canada. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)