Introduction: Four Kinds of Minor Cinema (and Some Thoughts on a Fifth)

Jerry White
Dalhousie University

The term "minor cinema" is widely used among Film Studies practitioners, and not always with the greatest amount of precision. The situation with this term is very close to what Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie have argued is true of small nations: "Small nationhood figures mostly as a general intuition, rather than a clearly defined analytical tool, in the work of film scholars" (3). That is, of course, quite consistent with the way that the term "minor" is deployed in Cultural Studies writ large; in other words, with a sense that it means, in a vaguely deleuzo-guattarian way, "small and somehow kind of insurgent." I refer here to the pair's celebrated treatise *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure*, first published in 1975 and translated into English by film scholar Dana Polan in 1986. That theoretical conception of "minor" as "small and somehow insurgent" can be seen in recent film scholarship as varied in topics as Adam Szymanski's 2012 analysis of Thomas Vinterberg's *It's All About Love* or Wisam Abdul-Jabbar's 2015 article on Yousef Chahine's *Alexandria Why?* There is nothing necessarily wrong with the concept of "minor cinema" literally encompassing everything from Hollywood to Denmark to Egypt, but the fact that this sweep that can be evoked by only two recent articles does give some sense of the way in which the term could be seen as something of an inexact designator.

What I want to do here, then, is offer suggestions as to what a definition of "minor cinema" might look like, and how different kinds of minor cinema might connect with each other. In doing so, I am avoiding Deleuze and Guattari deliberately, in part because their sense of the term "minor" is explicitly linked to the literary. Kafka is minor for them precisely because of the way that he uses the German language, and how this connects, or more importantly, fails to connect, to a broader literary project of Euro-Modernism. That literary-linguistic sense of "minor" can be applied to cinema only by making significant conceptual stretches: not impossible, but not

Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée
CRCL SEPTEMBER 2018 SEPTEMBRE RCLC
0319–051x/18/45.3/357

necessarily desirable. I think it is more useful to try to approach the matter of "minor cinema" through the lens of world cinema.

One part of my strategy for this definition of "minor cinema" might seem eccentrically anachronistic: its privileging of relatively discrete national or cultural formations. I do not doubt that globalization, and the cultural movement and mixing that are so central to it, has rendered such distinctions more problematic than before. I am equally sympathetic to the idea that the populist-fuelled rise of exclusionary nationalism is one of the real crises of global politics. Just as I recognize, and indeed, very strongly identify with, some forms of populism such as the prairie-centred socialism of the CCF and later NDP that is such an important part of Canada's political heritage, I am not willing to throw out the cultural baby with the backward-looking chauvinistic bathwater. In what follows I draw upon many different forms of cultural belonging. Some of these are embedded in other forms, such as speakers of Irish Gaelic, the UK's Black population, or the residents of Telangana, and some are defined by an inherent heterogeneity, such as the coexistence of the Castilian and Catalan languages in Catalonia, or of Armenian and ethnic Georgian (Kartvelian) communities in Georgia, or of Indigenous nationalities that cross nation-state borders, as do the Inuit, the Mohawk, or the Métis. In short, I take a diversity-led view of what constitutes a cultural formation, and the majority of formations that I present here are not traditional nation-states. Nevertheless, nation-states *are* present, as are formations that, while diverse, can be named and identified with some confidence in their specificity. What I am trying to emphasize is that it does not follow from the kinds of diversity that I have evoked above that all cultures, like all nations, are infinitely mixed and thus infinitely variable and thus meaningless. "Irish-speakers," like "Catalans" or "Georgians," are definitely composite formulations, but they are no less meaningful or limited because of that composite nature. Édouard Glissant's famous formulation, offered in his short 1995 book *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, that "le monde se créolise" (15) is a justly famous key to our globalized experience, and I am cognizant of it. I think what follows here is in a Glissantian spirit, visible in how he talks about Quebec writers such as Gaston Miron in his truly foundational 1981 work *Le discours antillais*, in which he writes eloquently about "ce que j'appelle notre irruption dans la modernité" (330). We see this kind of modernity in much minor cinema, across a great variety of cultural formations.

In approaching the question of "the minor" led both by cinema and cultural or national formations, I am also strongly influenced by Paul Willemen, whose pioneering work from the 1970s until his death in 2012 was broadly committed to the kind of minor cinema that I am writing about here. Willemen is important because he saw the imperative for globalizing Film Studies, the imperative for making it, in a word, comparative. Furthermore, he saw national or similar structures as useful for organizing these considerations. He wrote in his 1993 essay "The National" that "it must be acknowledged that comparative studies in cinema do not as yet exist. What is worse, given the current insufferably ethnocentric bias of film theory, it may well be a

while before this urgently needed discipline of comparative cinema studies displaces the kind of film studies currently being inflicted university and college students" (207). Willemen had in mind here a Film Studies that would take into account the differences in film language that characterized various national cinemas in a way that was as rigorous as the ways in which Comparative Literature scholars analyze differences between literary texts from different language groups.

A 2013 issue of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, "Considering Comparative Film Studies: In Memory of Paul Willemen," took up this very concept, mostly via close examinations of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian cinema. Willemen saw the need for a genuinely comparative film studies because of the rise of a school of filmmaking characterized by "a way of inhabiting one's culture which is neither myopically nationalist nor evasively cosmopolitan" (*Looks and Frictions* 177). While I do think that this strain exists in both Korea and Japan, that is not really the subject of much of that special issue. Willemen had written in "The National" that "[t]he masters of this growing but still threatened current can be identified as [Brazil's] Nelson Pierra dos Santos, [Senegal's] Ousmane Sembene and [India's] Ritwik Ghatak," who he saw as "summing up and reformulating the encounter of diverse cultural traditions into new, politically as well as cinematically illuminating types of filmic discourse, critical of, yet firmly anchored in, their respective social-historical situations" (*Looks and Frictions* 177). His roll call of affiliated filmmakers is huge, and worth reproducing here in its annotated whole, purely to give some sense of the internationalist scope at work. He recalled his days organizing programmes at the Edinburgh Film Festival, which in the 1970s was doing pioneering work in film history and drawing attention to important emerging cinemas:

> The notion of Third Cinema (and most emphatically not Third World Cinema) was selected as a central concept in 1986, partly to re-pose the question of the relations between the cultural and the political, partially to discuss whether there is indeed a kind of international cinematic tradition which exceeds the limits of both the national-industrial cinemas and those of Euro-American as well as English cultural theories.
>
> The latter consideration is still very much a hypothesis relating to the emergence on an international scale of a kind of cinema to which the familiar realism *versus* modernism or post-modernism debates are simply irrelevant, at least in the forms to which Western critics have become accustomed. This trend is not unprecedented, but it appears to be gaining strength. One of its more readily noticeable characteristics seems to be the adaptation of a historically analytic, yet culturally specific, mode of cinematic discourse. It is best exemplified by, for instance, [Israeli] Amos Gitai's work, [the English workshop] Cinema Action's *Rocinante* (1986), [Greek Theo] Angelopoulos's *O Thiasos* (1975), the films of [Malian] Souleyman Cisse, [Ethiopian-American] Hailie Gerima and [Senegalese] Ousmane Sembene, [Indian] Kumar Shahani's *Maya Darpan* (1972) and *Tarang* (1984), [Germans Gerhard] Theuring and [Ingemo] Engström's *Fluchtweg Nach Marseille* (1977), the work of [Senegalese] Safi Faye, the recent films of [Egyptian] Yusif Chahine, [Taiwanese] Yang De-Chang's (Edward Yang's) *Taipei Story*, [Chinese] Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (1984), the work of [Hong Konger] Fong Yuk-Ping (Allen Fong), the two black British films *Handsworth Songs* (1986) and *The Passion of Remembrance* (1986) and the Brazilian films of Joaquim Perdo de Andrade and Carlos Reichenbach. (*Looks*

and Frictions 177)

This remains a useful framework for approaching the question of "minor cinema" for two reasons. One is broadly methodological: in one paragraph we can see Willemen's tendencies towards politically-inflected cultural history, and in the one that follows we can see his interest in *specific* filmmakers and *specific* films. The combination is a useful one, and for more than just analyses of minor cinema. Willemen's theoretical writings remain as durable as they do because, like the works of André Bazin, Gilles Deleuze (at least in his works *Cinéma 1* and *Cinéma 2*), and Laura Mulvey, it is very clearly linked to a broader practice that incorporated criticism and interpretation of specific films and filmmakers. Bazin's theoretical writings synchronize with his writing on Vittorio de Sica; Deleuze's sense of "l'image-temps" makes sense because of what he has to say about Pierre Perrault and Glauber Rocha; Laura Mulvey's conception of the fetishistic quality of the gaze is inseparable from her interpretations of Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* or Ousmane Sembene's *Xala*.

With this kind of micro-macro combination in mind, I want to offer four basic models for "minor cinema." The first is probably the closest to that deleuzo-guattarian sense of Kafka, a sub-national cinema; by way of example, it is useful to discuss Irish-language cinema, specifically the films of Bob Quinn. The second I would call sub-state (local) cinema, and it should not be confused with the first variety. The best contemporary example I know of here is Catalan cinema, and it is useful to point to films by Pere Portabella and José Luis Guerin. The third option is a small-country cinema, of which Georgian cinema is a useful example, with the films that Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Groß have made together serving as illustrative of the problems of a "minor" practice. The fourth exemplar that I want to explore is Indigenous cinema, something that is very much a global phenomenon, not only because we are talking about spaces from Greenland to Oceania, but also because in many of the key examples, filmmakers often balance culturally rooted engagements with broad, outward-looking kinds of commitments. These examples, certainly not meant to be encyclopedic or definitive, but rather suggestive and illustrative, demonstrate the sorts of things that minor cinema does.

1. Sub-National Cinemas: A Jurassian Cinema, or, The Telugu Model

The first example of "minor cinema" that I want to offer should make it clear that this is not *necessarily* the same thing as a "small national cinema," even though, as we will see in later sections, some small national cinemas are indeed minor cinemas. In terms of a political situation, *sub*-national cinemas are consistent with the experience of, say, the Jura separatism that reached a fever pitch in the 1970s. I refer to the movement on the part of what was once known as the Bernese Jura to break away, not

from Switzerland, but from the majority-German-speaking canton of Berne in order to form an officially francophone canton of Jura. The term to describe the movement in French is always "séparatiste," but to Canadian ears, and to others too, this will not sound quite right, since there was never the possibility of a new state. Indeed, much of the "séparatiste" rhetoric emphasized themes of Swiss patriotism and national identity, arguing in no small part that the essential quality of federalism for Swiss culture made it absolutely necessary for their cause to triumph. One particularly vigorous part of the movement was known as "Helvétisme." The "separatists," in essence, were trying to out-Swiss their fellow Swiss.

Something very similar occurs in the tradition of Irish-language filmmaking. Article 8.1 of the constitution of the Republic of Ireland reads in full, "The Irish language as the national language is the first official language." Despite this constitutional primacy, Irish Gaelic, which, following general practice in Ireland, I will hereafter just call Irish, is spoken as a genuine mother tongue by about 1% of the population, much of which is clustered in regions that are collectively known as the Gaeltacht. These are all small, rural communities, mostly on the western coast, that have been identified by the government as being at least 80% Irish-speaking and subsidized with the aim of keeping them that way. Despite this subsidy, most are severely deprived economically, owing in part to a long history of the structural underdevelopment of Ireland's fringes, something that was characteristic of the colonial period and has abated relatively little since independence. It is important to emphasize, however, that these regions are home to a distinctiveness that is strictly linguistic, not national. In Ireland, there is no widespread sense that one's nationality is "Gaelic" or "Gaeltacht" or "Connemarian," to invoke the name of the largest Gaeltacht area, Connemara, in the way that plenty of people consider their nationality as primarily Québécois or Catalan, to offer a preview of the next section. Indeed, very much in the manner of Helvétisme, the opposite tends to be the case. These Gaeltacht regions often appear throughout the rest of the country as the repositories of something important and central to *Irish* cultural identity. This is an essentialist argument, of course, and so it is no surprise that the post-1960s culture of the Gaeltacht has opposed itself very strongly to these kind of assessments. Yet, what often emerges from there is insurgent not only against rose-coloured, Dublin-led simplification, but also a particularly intense version of the kind of anti-imperialism and anticolonialism that has characterised much of the insurgent Irish culture of the last half-century.

The films of Bob Quinn, especially his first feature *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire* (*Lament For Art O'Leary*, 1975), are the best example of this. The film takes its title from a famous eighteenth-century poem in Irish, a staple of the national school system, but it is in fact set in the present day. Gaeltacht actors are staging a theatrical version of the poem, which features a "multimedia" component in the form of projected images, which form a kind of film within the film. Overall, it is a work of counter-cinema, similar to what Jean-Luc Godard was doing at the time, both in terms of its formal self-awareness and its vigorous, anticolonial politics. Those poli-

tics are twofold: anti-British on the one hand, and anticentralist on the other. Clearly, a big part of the film's importance lies in modernizing the image of the Gaeltacht, in showing that it is a twentieth-century place, not at all defined by the romanticism of the stoic gael that certainly persisted into the 1970s and arguably lasts into the present day. The actors' Irish is laced with profanities, some in English, some in Irish, and the lead character Art, played by Seán Bán Breathnach, is loud and difficult and not at all a poetic hero. That Breathnach would go on to some modest fame as an outrageous sports reporter on Irish-language radio is completely consistent with the new image of the Gaeltacht that Quinn was trying to create, one very much at odds with the image that Dublin-based nationalists would have been supporting. I believe this is what Muiris Ó Meara was alluding to when he placed Bob Quinn's filmmaking at the centre of his 2009 article on filmmaking in Irish, wherein he wrote of Quinn's next film, *Poitín* (1977), "Más ea, bhí tábhacht nach beag ag an scannán *Poitín* toisc gur léirigh sé amhras agus díchreideamh frith-heigeamaineach i leith grand narrative an náisiúnachais" (23).[1] Nationalist underminer and doubt-caster that Quinn may be, it is crucial to recall that in this earlier work, the chief "villain" is the arrogant British director who has been hired to stage the production, and is echoed in the "film within a film" as one of the colonial British authorities; this role is played by John Arden, well known as a Marxist and anti-imperialist. The film was supported in part by Official Sinn Féin, which emerged after the split in Sinn Féin of 1970 and which vigorously promoted Quinn's version of *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire*.[2] The original poem's subject matter concerns an Irish exile who returns from overseas and is killed by a British captain. One of the most irony-inflected lines of the entire film is what Arden, furious with his now-rebelling actors, shouts, "It is just a play! It has no relevance to anything that is going on today!" *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire* is clearly asserting a Gaeltacht distinctiveness, but it is just as clearly contributing to a broad anti-imperialism with British colonialism as its main target. It is, in the final analysis, clearly not separatist and in many ways nationalist.

If Irish-language cinema as a sub-national cinema embodies a Jurassian "non-separatism" at the level of politics, purely in terms of the structural organization of national cinemas, its closest cousin is Telugu cinema. I am being deliberately provocative here in offering a comparison between Irish-language cinema, which in a good year would mean maybe three features and in many years has simply no feature films, and Telugu cinema, which produces at least 300 features most years. While Telugu cinema is most definitely not part of Bollywood, it is not generally understood as a national cinema unto itself. Rather, it is part of Indian cinema as a whole, a national cinema that is best understood as a kind of "federation." This is opposed to more "republican" or national cinemas which, overall, tend towards unity both at the level of language, with little in the way of a sustained tradition of minority language production, and cultural identity, with little in the way of a sustained tradition of regional expression: Polish cinema, Cuban cinema, Japanese cinema, for example. Indian cinema, in addition to being famously led by Bollywood—a Mumbai-based,

Hindi-language film industry with highly reproducible narrative and musical patterns—includes many other film industries, of which the Telugu industry is only one of the largest. These include Tamil-language cinema, whose production also hovers around 300 films per year, Bengali cinema, whose production is closer to 100 films per year, and the country's vigorous "Parallel Cinema" of serious, non-musical narratives, centred in but not limited to West Bengal, most famous for Satyajit Ray, important to Paul Willemen for Ritwik Ghatak, and today important for filmmakers such as Buddhadeb Dasgupta.[3]

My point here is that none of these production centres—Telangana, Tamil Nadu, or West Bengal—is really the home of a *national* consciousness. There are varying levels of cultural distinctiveness at work for certain, and the recent movement to create a new state of Telangana, which formally broke from Andhra Pradesh in 2014, strongly recalls the 1979 moment when the Swiss canton of Jura was finally created, finalizing the break from the canton of Berne. But none of this is meaningfully separatist, at least not in the English sense of the word; the distinction between the concerned parties is largely a linguistic one, not a matter of nationality as such. I am strongly influenced here by the kinds of distinctions between rights-bearing groups that Will Kymlicka draws in his 1995 book *Multicultural Citizenship*. He reflects upon the experiences of minorities in polyethnic states to explain how the rights they claim differ from those of, say, groups in a federated state, such as the "self-government rights" that are an issue in Canada in terms of Quebec or indigenous communities. Using the example, among others, of exemptions sought by Sikh communities to be able to ride motorcycles or serve in uniformed services such as militaries or police forces while still wearing their religiously-mandated headgear, he writes that "[l]ike self-government rights, these polyethnic rights are not seen as temporary, because the cultural differences they protect are not something we seek to eliminate. But […] unlike self-government rights, polyethnic rights are usually intended to promote integration into the larger society, not self-government" (31). Following this model, we can see how Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak function as Bengali filmmakers, especially for the way that such a designation helps to place them within a long tradition of Calcutta-based intellectuals, a tradition that is certainly "minor" in the degree to which it stands apart from and is less nationally prominent than the dominant, Mumbai-based elite. For the most part, however, they can both be fruitfully seen, especially by viewers outside of India, as part of an Indian cinema that gives due recognition of difference and diversity, and which cannot be spoken of as though it was simply synonymous with "Bollywood." Similarly, Bob Quinn's work is inseparably linked to his experience of filming in Connemara and, moreover, doing so in the language of that community, and thus it is work that is "minor" as a result of its radical difference from the production of a Dublin-based elite. He nevertheless features, especially on the global level, as part of Irish cinema. In both cases, this is a reasonable assessment in large part because of the absence of meaningfully resonant aspirations towards self-government, aspirations that might or might not lead

to the establishment of a nation-state but which certainly lead to a distinct sense of *nationality*.

In a revised version of his essay published in 2006, Willemen emphasised the special importance of "the national" for cinema, although he did so in ways that have the potential to confuse the issue, especially in multicultural states such as India. In "The National Revisited," he states:

> [I]n Film Studies, the issue of specificity is primarily a national one: the boundaries of cultural specificity in cinema are established by governmental actions implemented through institutions such as the legal framework of censorship, industrial and financial measures at the economic level, the gearing of training institutions towards employment in national media, systems of licensing governed by aspects of corporate law, and so on. (33)

I certainly take the point here about institutions, but what we can see in many sub-national cinemas is an accommodation with these frameworks, which more often than not are linked to a *state* rather than a nation, especially in terms of legal frameworks such as censorship and licensing, that does not preclude an understanding that lies outside of them. Bob Quinn submitted to a censorship process and a process of support for international film festival circulation that would have been "national," that is to say encompassing the whole of the Republic of Ireland, and whose forms would have been double-printed in Irish and English. But those processes would have been managed by people who could not reliably read Irish, and therefore, English would be the language of such administration. There is no way one could fail to see that Quinn's films are implicated in the "national" processes that Willemen discusses, and he is obviously a key part of the structure we call "Irish cinema." But it is not enough to simply call *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire* part of Irish cinema and leave it at that; it exists in a different linguistic and ultimately cultural space, one whose difference falls short of what would generally be understood as separatism. Something very similar is true for a good deal of filmmaking in India: calling it part of Indian cinema is a must; calling it more than that is just as imperative.

This complexity around cultural vs. nation-state belonging can also be seen with Ghatak, whose most famous film, *The Cloud-Capped Star* (1960), centres on a family of refugees from East Pakistan. The basic conceit of the film is that they have become foreigners in their own country. They stand apart from mainstream Indian society, but Ghatak is clearly presenting this as unjust, and is in no way presenting affiliation to Pakistan as some sort of solution. The politics at work here strongly recall what Willemen has to say about the hybrid cultural belonging that can be seen in the films of the "Black British" workshops of the 1980s. Writing in "The National," he argues that "[c]ompared to US Black films, Black British films are strikingly British, yet in no way can they be construed as nationalistic. They are part of a British specificity, but not part of a British nationalism" (209). Similarly, *The Cloud-Capped Star* has a discernible *Indian* sensibility without being in any way nationalist. With its self-consciously modernist use of musical numbers—for example, in one sequence the

lead character, a failed poet, starts his song over and over again, complete with non-diegetic instrumental accompaniment, as he is interrupted by the real-world problems of his sister—it has a specificity that is unmistakeably linked to the aesthetic patterns of Bollywood cinema, even if it is an aesthetically challenging critique of those patterns. This notion of "national specificity," as Willemen puts it, is probably closer to what is going on *chez* Ghatak than what we see *chez* Quinn, which I think can be read as a kind of "critical nationalism," a case that is hard to make for *The Cloud-Capped Star* but is especially palatable in *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire*. Both films, like the work of their directors overall, embody this Willemenian sense of being "neither myopically nationalist nor evasively cosmopolitan." Such a sense of minor cinema and its connection to insurgent nationalism likewise surfaces in the anti-Apartheid films such as *Mapantsula* that Gilbert Motsaathebe discusses in his article in this cluster. *Mapantsula* seeks to *recover* South African culture, and state belonging along with it, not to secede from it. It is a lament for an unjustly denied version of South African belonging, not a rejection of the very idea of "South Africa." This Jurassian sense of "non-separatism," which I think we can see in filmmaking traditions as mind-blowingly different as Irish-language cinema and Telugu or Bengali cinema, is not always the case with cinematic formations that we call "minor cinemas."

2. Sub-State Cinemas: A Scottish Kind of Cinema, or, The Quebec Model

One example of such a cinematic formation that we can reasonably call "minor," and that is definitely possessed of a connection to some variant of separatist aspiration either in terms of the emergence of a new state or a distinct *nationality*, is the sub-state national cinema. The best examples of this worldwide are Catalonia and Quebec, both of which are home to longstanding traditions of a wide variety of filmmaking. These traditions justify the label "national cinemas" without necessarily implying an opinion on the viability of these separatist projects as such. My position here is strongly influenced by the framework of Bill Marshall's 2001 book *Quebec National Cinema*. Marshall introduces this book by stating, "My argument, that Quebec certainly is a nation and has a national cinema, and that these terms are still useful, whatever or rather because of the problematizing gloss I give them, does not, however, lead to any conclusion for or against the sovereignty process. Supporters of either side of that debate may find comfort from what is written here" (ix-x). I sketched out a similar position in a 2004 article, in which I argue that the term "national cinema" is appropriate for Quebec cinema because Quebec is a repository of a *national* identity, unlike the Gaeltacht. I also argued in 2004 that the term "national cinema" is further appropriate because Quebec has a sustained tradition of filmmaking across many forms, unlike, say, Puerto Rico or Kurdistan, both of which are the locations of a national identity but neither of which is the site of a sustained

and diverse tradition of filmmaking. Puerto Rican cinema, like Kurdish cinema, seems to me much closer to the kind of sub-national filmmaking that I described in the first section of this article, even though in both cases we *do* see the presence of a movement towards a distinct sense of nationality, as opposed to what we see in Jura or in the Gaeltacht. I can see the way that Puerto Rican identity stands clearly apart from American nationality, regardless of what passport one chooses to carry or not, just as I see how Kurdish identity stands clearly out of Turkish/Syrian/Iranian/Iraqi identity. But the *filmmaking* in these places is more usefully seen as close to what we discussed in the first section. Films by the Kurdish director Bahman Ghobadi, such as *In the Time of Drunken Horses* (2000), *Marooned in Iraq* (2002), or *Turtles Can Fly* (2004), are just as much part of Iranian cinema as *Caoindeadh Airt Uí Laoire* is of Irish cinema; specifically, discernibly but imperfectly so, clearly in need of some kind of special categorization, but one that falls short of "separate national cinema." "Minor cinema" as a term seems custom-made for such a purpose. To talk about Irish cinema without Bob Quinn is inherently incomplete, but to neglect the "minor" quality of a group of films made in Irish Gaelic is to provide a discussion of those films that is just as incomplete. Something very similar is true of Ghobadi and Iranian cinema. In short, in order for "national cinema" to be the right term, it needs to refer to a place that has both "national" and "cinema." The presence or absence of a state, with an army, an Olympic team, or a seat at the UN, for instance, does not truly figure into it, even if a widespread *aspiration* for such a state often does.

With this in mind, a key modern example of a small, sub-state national cinema, one that exists along the model of Quebec, which came to such international prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, is Catalan cinema. Here, we do find a sustained tradition of filmmaking that is materially different from what we see in Kurdistan, Puerto Rico, or the Gaeltacht, albeit one that was interrupted during the Franco period. The period of the Spanish Republic, though, was as vigorous for documentary filmmaking in Catalonia as the comparably formative early years of the National Film Board of Canada were for Quebec cinema. In his short 1978 book *Petita història del cinema de la Generalitat*,[4] Josep Maria Caparrós Lera paints this picture of the period:

> Que el període de més esplendor d'un cinema autènticament català fou el de la II República, és ben palès. Durant els anys 1931 a 1939—sobretot quan van "aparèixer" els partits i grups polítics o sindicals, a l'etapa de la Guerra Civil espanyola—s'estabIiren els fonaments de la primera indústria cinematogràfica seriosa en aquest país. Un veritable cinema nacional—que reflectia les diverses idiosincràsies de l'Estat espanyol—que restaria ferit de mort per culpa de la seva infraestructura tan feble, especialment al terme de la guerra fratricida. (13)[5]

What followed in the 1970s in the period immediately after Franco's death was a cinematic reconstruction that returned to these roots, that made a special space for documentaries of a political and often insurgent nature. The key figure in the "minor" emergence of this national cinema was Pere Portabella, who had already established a successful career as a producer. During the late Franco period he directed three

feature-length films—*Nocturne 29* (1968), *Cuadecuc Vampir* (1970), and *Umbracle* (1970)—that were strongly influenced by 1970s counter-cinema and which were also politically radical analyses of the state of the late-decadent Franco era. They are quite close in that way to *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire*. The film that was the fullest expression of this interventionist, insurgent sensibility was *Informe general sobre unas cuestiones de interés para una proyección pública* (1976), a very long documentary about the then-in-progress transition from fascism, much of which was devoted to the emergence of a Catalan identity that had been so long suppressed under the centralized, hispanophilic dictatorship. I have argued in another article, from 2013, that this film is a sort of "missing link" in the global history of Third Cinema, a peer of more famous films such as Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino's *La hora de los hornos* (1968) and Patricio Guzmán's *La batalla de Chile* (1975). *Informe general* certainly has the fondness for breathless montage sequences that characterizes those films, as well as an eye for visceral demonstration footage; where it departs from them somewhat is in its occasional use of fictional modes of address.

While it is still reasonable to think of Catalan cinema as "minor" because of its relatively marginal status on screens both inside and outside Catalonia, the national cinema is in the present day no way limited to the production of insurgent political documentaries. It is home to a fairly vigorous, semi-commercial popular cinema, as well as a host of innovative narrative and documentary films that have become well known on the international film festival circuit. One particularly recent example of this is *L'Accademia delle Muse* (2015), by José Luis Guerin. The title is in Italian because that is the language most spoken in the film, which is about a professor of philosophy at the University of Barcelona, originally from Italy, lecturing on creativity, especially in Dante, and who cultivates a diverse group of "muses" that eventually bands together against him. We also hear Spanish, Catalan, French, and Sardinian. This is another key element of these minor cinemas; they should not be confused with the "minor" languages that may be the majority languages of the territories with which they are connected. Guerin is a particularly useful example here because he is one of the most internationally acclaimed Catalan filmmakers, and most of his films are in a combination of Spanish and Catalan, in addition to work that he has made in English (*Innisfree*, 1990) and French (*Dans la ville de Sylvie*, 2007). Perhaps the more salient point is that films in Spanish made in Catalonia are still part of Catalan cinema, even though it is produced largely in Spanish, a language that, in the context of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as globally, can hardly be considered "minor." Much the same can be said of films made in English that still belong to Quebec cinema. Quebec cinema should not be confused with "French Canadian" cinema, a term that has never been in wide use, since the rise of the national cinema there coincided with the rise of the term "Québécois" to designate a *territorial* and therefore modern form of nationalism to replace the older, ethnic, and quasi-racialist one.

A similar dynamic has long been at work in Catalan cinema, where most observers agree that it would be churlishly nationalist to ignore work that is not *in Catalan*. This

hardly started with the success of José Luis Guerin, and indeed goes back to the very early days of the national cinema's emergence. Writing on the first waves of filmmaking there (and so going back to the "Barcelona School" of the 1960s, whose films were all in Spanish), Jean-Pierre Bertin-Maghit identified the issue for the readership of the magazine *Jeune Cinéma*:

> En outre, un film seulement en catalan, devrait négliger ce fait qu'en Catalogne aujourd'hui, on parle le catalan… *et* espagnol. Mais on double aussi des films étrangers en catalan. Résumons : le choix du catalan est un trait à prendre fortement en considération, mais il est encore, par la force des choses, des films catalans qui parlent espagnol. (34)[6]

Contemporary local observers have been keen to distinguish between "cinema català" and "cinema *en* català." They emphasize that the work is far from a simple exercise in linguistic revivalism or other *folklorique* pantomimes, but rather a modern and vibrant cinema that expresses itself not just at the level of spoken language, but also *at the level of cinema*. This is what Àngel Comas argues in his comprehensive 2010 book *Vint anys d'història del cinema a catalunya* (1990-2009), in which he points out: "L'opinió d'aquest autor és que la llengua és una forma de transmetre una cultura però que no és tota la cultura i molt menys en l'actual societat audiovisual, on les images tenen més valor i són més eficaces que les paraules" (21).[7]

It is important to note, then, that this second form of minor cinema, small sub-state national cinemas, are by no means restricted to "films about insurgent nationalism" or "films in a small nation's language." Rather, Catalan cinema, like Quebec cinema, is defined by a kind of inclusive nationalism, a nationalism that is inclusive precisely because it is *territorial*. Just as I proposed Jura as an ideological model for sub-national variety of minor cinema, the "small sub-state national cinema" form of minor cinema tends towards an approach to nationality along what I would call a Scottish model. Scottish nationalist discourse of the last ten years or so has been marked by its decidedly territorial quality, emphasized not only by the refusal of the SNP to countenance the idea of expatriate Scots voting in the 2014 referendum on independence but also by the relatively multicultural makeup of the party's supporters. This is the kind of distinct nationality that serves as the ideological backbone for Catalan cinema, and Quebec cinema along with it, and could for Scottish cinema too, although I am sceptical that there has been a sustained enough tradition there to really think of this as a national cinema. This is very different from the third distinct variant of minor cinema that I want to explain: the small-country national cinema.

3. Small-Country Cinemas: An Irish Kind of Cinema, or The Malian Model

To circle back a bit, I want to explain what I see as the third kind of minor cinema,

one whose ideological pattern follows not Jura or Scotland but rather Ireland, even though its cinematic pattern is distinct from the minor cinema described in the first section of this article, Irish-*language* cinema, being closer instead to a national cinema like that of Iran's, although not like the films made by Iranian Kurds such as Bahman Ghobadi. I am talking about the cinemas of small countries whose culture tends to be marginal on the global stage. In this way, I am trying to avoid the trap that Hjort and Petrie invoke when they write of the tendency of much recent film scholarship in terms of "blurring the distinction between the idea of a small country that produces films and the idea of a country that produces a small number of films" (3). I take the point there, but it is worth saying that what makes a cinema "minor" in this case is something of a combination of these two. Hjort and Petrie are rightly sceptical that India belongs in this kind of "small country cinema" unless we are talking about the silent era. For our purposes here, Indian cinema is equally out of place and for similar reasons. The global dominance of Bollywood makes it difficult to imagine the national cinema *as a whole* as "minor" in any meaningful way, even if, as I argue earlier in this article, it has sub-*national* components, such as Bengali or Telugu cinema, which are reasonably understood this way, even in the case of the latter, which is, *pace* Hjort and Petrie, not a place that produces a small number of films at all. Among the most interesting contemporary examples of such a minor cinema structure, of a small nation-state whose films are present but still marginalized on both the global and the local stage along the lines of how Hjort describes Danish cinema,[8] is Georgian cinema.

Georgian cinema began as an example of a sub-state national cinema. From the late 1950s to the 1980s, it was widely seen by cinephiles worldwide as the most exciting and innovative part of Soviet cinema. Derek Elley's 1977 article on the region in the influential magazine *Films and Filming*, "A Light in the Caucasus," stated that "Georgian cinema is perhaps the liveliest of all the various Russian [sic] republics' film industries, totally devoid of the frequent sluggishness which afflicts the common-or-garden Mosfilm or Lenfilm production, and frequently at odds with them politically" (16). This was the period in which Georgian filmmakers were frequent prizewinners at the Cannes Film Festival: Tengiz Abulazde and Rezo Chkeidze won Best Short for *Magdana's Donkey* (1956); Mikhail Kalatozov won the Palme d'or for *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957); and Otar Iosseliani won the FIPRESCI prize for *Falling Leaves* (1966). More Cannes prizewinners would follow a few years after Elley's article appeared: Tengiz Abuladze earned the FIPRESCI and Ecumenical prizes for *Repentance* (1984), and Sergei Parajanov won the Félix award for *Ashik Kerib* (1988). All these were ostensibly Soviet films, but only *The Cranes Are Flying* was originally made in Russian; by the 1960s, Georgian cinema had an internationally recognized distinct identity, similar to Quebec's or Catalonia's.

What changed, of course, was that Georgia became independent in 1991, in the wake of the breakup of the USSR. It has since become a model small national cinema, rather than having the prominence of a "major" small-country cinema as, for exam-

ple, in Iran or South Korea. Both Iran and Korea, for instance, enjoy substantial commercial film industries whose products are destined for local consumption, as well as a significant presence overseas, mostly in the film festival or "art et essai" sectors, but also in the form of local directors who contribute to major film industries, such as Bong Joon-ho in Hollywood or Ashgar Farhadi in French cinema. It is hard to think of these national cinemas as "minor" in the manner of Georgia, or of Mali.

The Malian example is illustrative because, like its Georgian counterpart, Malian cinema is very small in terms of the number of films produced, but some of its filmmakers have been and continue to be influential on a regional or global scale. Doris Hambuch's article in this cluster discerns this kind of significance in the context of Emirati cinema. The contribution by Ioannis Galanopoulos likewise emphasizes the importance of Emirati filmmaking for the cinematic mapping of a geographically small country. The Georgian filmmakers that I name above are all now dead, with the exception of Iosseliani, who has lived and worked in France since the early 1980s.

But as with Malian or Emirati cinema, there are Georgian filmmakers who continue to make important contributions to world cinema in general. Some of these include Giorgi Ovashvili's 2009 film *The Other Bank*, whose child-led take on the war in the breakaway region of Abkhazia is very strongly influenced by the films of Iranian master Abbas Kiarostami, and the husband-and-wife team of Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Groß, whose 2013 film *In Bloom* was also about refugees from the Abkhaz war, but whose 2016 work *My Happy Family* is very strongly connected to current Romanian cinema, especially in its use of elaborate hand-held long takes and its close engagement with the painful dynamics of family life under post-Communism. All of this strongly recalls the experience of Malian cinema, which cannot match the influence of major African cinema-producing nations such as Egypt, the veritable Hollywood of Africa, or Senegal, which can be seen as roughly comparable to France, but which has had produced several crucially important African filmmakers. I have here in mind Souleymane Cissé, whose 1987 film *Yeelen* announced the arrival of a new generation of African filmmakers influenced as strongly by oral tradition as by avant-garde developments in realism, which accounts for Paul Willemen's interest in his work, and Cheick Oumar Sissoko, whose 1995 film *Guimba* also engaged with the oral tradition in an avant-garde manner and was a follow-up to his more explicitly political 1989 film *Finzan*, which was about female genital mutilation.

This is all to say that Georgian cinema, like Malian cinema, and like the Emirati cinema that Doris Hambuch and Ioannis Galanopoulos discuss in their essays in this cluster, may seem to ostensibly possess the same geopolitical status as the national cinemas of France or India. But they are of course far smaller, in terms of both global and local visibility, than those examples, and perhaps more importantly they are less diverse, having produced a significant number of important works but never having been defined by a significant amount of commercial or documentary production. This is why "minor" is an appropriate descriptor. It is, however, important to recognize that they are not "minor" in quite the same way as Irish-language cinema or

Catalan cinema. They are "minor" in the manner of Irish cinema *as a whole*: important globally in some ways, most of which are connected to international aesthetic trends—for instance, the Irish filmmaker Pat Collins moves between realist and avant-garde strategies in ways that are not unrelated to what we see *chez* Souleymane Cissé, especially in his 2013 film *Silence*—but still quite small in comparison to major cinema-producing nations such as the UK or, until recently, Turkey.

4. The Global Importance of Indigenous Cinema

This complex sense of cultural and nation-state belonging moves us close to the territory of one of the major gaps in our dossier: Indigenous cinema. For a variety of reasons, we were unable to include an article-length contribution on these cinematic formations, and we can only beg our readers to trust us that it was not for lack of sustained effort. Although unlike Irish-language or Telugu filmmaking, Indigenous cinema practices do enunciate a sense of *national* distinctiveness, like these European or Asian examples, such cinema is generally difficult to see as wholly separate from state formations.

In Canada, the key example is the degree to which the National Film Board has supported Indigenous filmmaking for many decades. This began in earnest in the 1960s with the "Indian Film Crew" and the production of Mike Mitchell's film *You Are on Indian Land* (1969), which documented a protest at a part of the Canada-US border which ran through the Mohawk community of St. Regis (see Michelle Stewart's 2007 article on this seminal experience). This institutional engagement continued sporadically, although the Edmonton-based Studio One, which was devoted to what was then generally known as Aboriginal cinema[9] and which existed between 1991-95, was an important initiative. The NFB also nurtured the emergence of several key auteurs such as the Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obsomsawin and the Métis filmmaker Gil Cardinal (who died in 2015), both of whom have had a major impact on Canadian cinema as a whole, as well as on the aesthetics of global political documentary, especially through films such as *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993) and *Foster Child* (1987), respectively. All of this activity is difficult to separate from Canada, as a glance southward at the comparatively tiny tradition of Indigenous filmmaking in the United States will make clear. And yet, it is also awkward to unqualifiedly include this work under the rubric of "Canadian cinema" or, in the case of Obomsawin *la montréalaise*, "Quebec cinema," inasmuch as it is so clearly part of a broader effort to recover and visualize Indigenous *nationality*. This is a serious problem in Indigenous Studies generally, as the imperative to recognize and proceed from the fact that many of these national communities exist across the borders of one or more nation-states clashes with the need to recognize that these nation-states have imposed very different legal frameworks under which these communities, justly or not, exist on a day-to-day basis.

The Mohawks whose reserves cross the border at Southern Ontario and upstate New York are one example, but the case *par excellence* here is the Inuit. In discussing the circumpolar existence of the Inuit we must invoke no fewer than four nation-states: Canada (Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon), the United States (Alaska), Russia (Siberia), and, in a manner of speaking, Denmark (Greenland). It should not diminish our recognition of this circumpolar, border-defying culture to say that no knowledgeable film scholar would wonder for an instant in which nation-state a film such as Zacharias Kunuk's *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (2001) was produced. Kunuk is Igloolik-born and bred, but his emergence as a filmmaker was led by a failed experience with the NFB's Challenge for Change programme, which had supported the Mitchell-led Indian Film Crew two decades earlier, and an at-first successful and then-failed experience with the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, which was formed in 1981 as a byproduct of ongoing land-claim negotiations and as the result of Canada's launching of the Anik communications satellites, which allowed television signals to be received in the Arctic and which led to much concern about language maintenance on the part of Inuit communities (see Laura Marks's 1991 article for a succinct history). His full emergence as an artist is a story about the world of 1990s video art,[10] very much part of a transnationally-linked Canadian scene in terms of funding agencies or galleries, even though he never produced anything that had a word of either one of Canada's official languages: all of Kunuk's work is in Inuktitut. This success helped him and his partners establish an Igloolik-based infrastructure of production companies and community workshops that have no equal in Greenland, Alaska, or Siberia. Even at his most transnational, as in a film such as *From Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (2006), which moves across the "invisible" border of sea ice between Nunavut and Greenland, is difficult to separate an understanding of the work from that Canadian aesthetic heritage. Even more so than *Atanarjuat*, that later film bears the strong mark of video art, which is hardly surprising since it was co-directed by long-time Kunuk collaborator Norman Cohn, a New Yorker by birth who first built his career as a video artist on Prince Edward Island. There is some Danish money in *From Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, but there is no "Danish" film from either Copenhagen or Nuuk that looks quite like it. Something very similar is true of Sámi cinema; these communities exist across Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Russia, but as with Inuit filmmaking in Canada, the situation is far more developed in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, roughly in that order, than in Russia (for a survey of this terrain, see Monica Kim Mecsei's 2015 chapter).

These kinds of border-crossing issues are somewhat less complicated in the other important nexus of Indigenous filmmaking, Australia and New Zealand, inasmuch as these are both island states. In both places, Indigenous filmmaking has been similarly enabled by state or semi-state bodies such as Screen Australia, which established an Indigenous Department in 1993, or the New Zealand Film Commission, whose He Ara Development Fund supports the work of Māori filmmakers and also collaborates widely in the Pacific region, and in the last twenty years or so, both places

have seen something of a renaissance on this front. This has been signalled particularly forcefully in Australia via the Cannes Film Festival. In 2006 Rolf de Heer and Peter Djirr's film *Ten Canoes* won the Special Jury Prize before morphing in 2009 into the multi-media project *Twelve Canoes,* which has unmissable similarities to Kunuk and Cohn's multi-media work with Igloolik Isuma Productions and more recently Isuma.tv. Warwick Thornton's uncompromisingly brutal film *Samson and Delilah* was awarded the 2009 Caméra d'or (the prize for best first feature film, which went to Kunuk's *Atanarjuat* in 2001). At the global level, discourse around this "new wave" obscures to some extent the importance of veterans such as Merata Mita, whose politically radical and sometimes avant-garde work dates back to the 1970s, and which provided a genuinely globalized model for both Māori and other Indigenous filmmakers. That was especially true of films such as *Te Pito o te Henua: Rapa Nui* (1999), an impressionistic, essayistic, and thoroughly *engagé* treatment of the Chilean territory that many readers will know as Easter Island, or *Patu!* (1983), which dealt with the New Zealand response to the tour of the Apartheid-era South African rugby team, and which can be very read very fruitfully through some of the concerns that Motsaathebe raises in his essay on South African cinema. Both films engaged with the world outside of the South and North Islands, but both did so in a way that centralized the worldview of the Māori and gave voice to their broad political commitments. Emiel Martens's 2012 article provides a very useful overview of this New Zealand situation, and we vigorously encourage readers to consult it.

One contemporary development with which Martens's article deals in great detail is Barry Barclay's work, especially his theoretical formulation of Fourth Cinema, and it is not for nothing that I mean Indigenous cinema as my "fourth example" of minor cinemas. This is a concept that builds on Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's celebrated 1969 manifesto "Hacer un tercer cine" or "Towards a Third Cinema," linked to their aforementioned film *La hora de los hornos* and very widely read in the 1960s and 1970s. Like Solanas and Getino, Barclay is a theorist and a filmmaker; Stuart Murray's 2008 book is a comprehensive study of his filmmaking work, and part of the goal of his 2003 manifesto "Celebrating Fourth Cinema" is to put his own practice into a global context. But he is also dealing with problems very close to our considerations here, especially when he argues that "Indigenous cultures are outside the national orthodoxy" (9), by which he seems to mean the *idée reçu* that the survival of nations is coterminous with the existence of nation states. Barclay rejects this, even as he sees some of the most *engagé* of filmmakers tacitly accepting it. Critiquing the Hollywood/arthouse/radical triad of the Solanas and Getino manifesto, he notes, "First, Second and Third cinemas are all Cinemas of the Modern Nation State. From the Indigenous place of standing, these are all invader cinemas" (10). What Barclay is looking for is thus not easily found in any of Solanas and Getino's theory of the three cinemas, or in the three minor cinemas that we have discussed so far, although it integrates elements of each. From our first model, the Jurassian/Telugu model, we can see in Fourth Cinema and in Indigenous cinema generally a complex relation-

ship with the nation-state, one that does not really move in the direction of political separatism as such. And yet, like the Quebeco-Catalan model of our second section, we can see this cinema contributing to a discernable sense of *nationality*, where Inuit/Canadian is as recognizably distinct as Catalan/Spanish, or to take a more complex case Māori/New Zealand are as inarguably distinguishable although not necessarily separable as Québécois/Canadian; we may recall the 2006, *Conservative*-government-led motion that "les Québécoises et les Québécois forment une nation au sein d'un Canada uni." And we can also see shades of our Irish-Malian-Georgian third model, in which small nation-states whose culture tends to be swamped by that of bigger countries, of which Australia or New Zealand could serve as fine examples, struggle to build sustainable cinematic infrastructures and substantial traditions that will hopefully suit them as the world rushes towards a cinema-led globalization. None of these models fully satisfy, however. Indeed, it is Indigenous cinema that shows us the inadequacies of these somewhat older models, and the possibilities that come from genuinely moving forward.

5. A Brief Note on Transnationalism and Diaspora

I am not trying to suggest that these three schemas are the only ways in which "minor cinema" can be discussed, that in order to use the term to discuss a film it needs to be placeable into category 1 or 2 or 3 or 4. What I am trying to do is lay out the main ways in which films that are usefully described as "minor" tend to emerge, and to distinguish between those main streams of emergence. In cinema, that emergence is not just linked to the nation-state, but it is generally connectable to cultures which are solid enough to, by way of another Glissantian formulation, to form part of "la chair du monde." I refer again to *Le discours antillais*, in which he points out, "On ne peut se faire trinidadien ni québécois, si on ne l'est pas; mais il est désormais vrai que si la Trinidad ou le Québec n'existaient pas comme composantes acceptées du Divers, il manquerait quelque chose à la chair du monde" (327).[11] One of the dangers of transnationalism is a blithe assumption that since cultural identities are infinitely diverse and malleable, that only old-school sectarians could disagree with that, and so we may as well ignore fixed cultural identities since the real source of such infinite diversity is obviously planetary rather than connected to such old-timey formulations as "Trinidad" or "Quebec." To adopt such a pattern wholesale would indeed mean that something would be missing from what I would prefer to translate as the flesh of the world, and that is why this article is organized around examples of specific, nameable cultures: Jurassian, Catalan, Malian, and Māori.

Diaspora cinemas certainly pose a challenge to this. Kaby Wing-Sze Kung's article in this cluster on "pan-Chinese" films is an interesting example. I am inclined to place these films in the first category, as linguistically distinctive works that are best

seen as part of a minorly expanded view of American cinema, much as Bob Quinn demands of our view of Irish cinema and Ritwik Ghatak demands of our view of Indian cinema. To return to the Will Kymlicka formulation I offered in the first section, the discrimination and stereotyping that are problematized in Stanley Kwan's *Full Moon in China*, Sylvia Chang's *Siao Yu*, and Xiaolu Xue's *Finding Mr. Right* seem pitched to "promote integration into the larger society, not self-government." The difficulty of the former in the face of ongoing discrimination against Asian-Americans does not make these films somehow connectable to a widespread desire for the latter. Furthermore, this trio of films actually pose a transnational problem. Kwan is from Hong Kong and emerged as a filmmaker during its period as a British colony, especially with the seminal films *Rouge* (1987) and *Center Stage* (1992), the latter a key work of politically rigorous meta-cinema; Chang is from Taiwan; and Xue is from mainland China. In terms of national cinemas and the institutions that define them, such as the possibilities for finance, funding agencies, and government censorship, it is hard to imagine three more radically different contexts. What allows us to see them *together* is, arguably, understanding them as a variant of our first model; in other words, as a minor component of American cinema, where all three were shot, partially financed, distributed, and found a significant audience.

The real "hard case" is Yiddish cinema. This was once a significant part of world cinema, with J. Hoberman's book-length history *Bridge of Light* placing its golden age in the period from 1935 to 1939. He memorably stated in that work, "In terms of audience support, the fall of 1939 was the most successful period in the history of Yiddish cinema. It was as if Jews found their solidarity at the movies" (311). Hoberman also calls Yiddish cinema "a national cinema without a nation-state" (5),[12] something that is also true, of course, of Palestinian cinema, although the presence of a national consciousness, as opposed to a minoritarian one, would lead me to place Palestinian cinema within our second model, alongside the non-state national cinemas one finds in Catalonia or Quebec. Yiddish cinema as an entity cannot be so understood but must instead be seen together with Poland, Germany, Ukraine, and the US; it is a diasporic, transnational phenomenon *par extraordinaire*. The transnational element makes it tempting to place it in our fourth model, as a sort of Indigenous cinema crowded out by domineering cultural forces such as Russian or Polish, but the indispensable *diasporic* quality of Yiddish cinema, as with Yiddish culture in general, makes this something of a non-starter. One thing Indigenous cinema definitely is not is diasporic.[13] It is also tempting to see Yiddish cinema in similar terms as the "race movies" produced by and for African-Americans between the 1920s and 1940s, as a kind of parallel cinema that existed alongside the major American films of the day, and thus as an example of our first model. But the non-American quality of Yiddish cinema, produced as it was in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, in addition to New York and New Jersey, simply cannot be ignored, just as it is unimaginable to set aside the American quality of the Black cinema that is its rough contemporary. Indeed, it is *Poland* that was actually the centre of production, and Hoberman traces the begin-

ning of Yiddish cinema's golden age to "the rejuvenation of the Polish film industry in 1935." But in the next sentence he notes that "[t]he first Polish-Yiddish talkies stimulated talks between American producers and initiated a dialogue between Warsaw and New York that continued up until the severing of the Yiddish markets with World War II" (5). For all of our current talk of transnationalism and the dissolution of national borders and so forth, it is difficult to think of another such *sustained tradition* of filmmaking in this context.

I am not talking here about the rise of co-productions, which are often a matter of finances and little else. Much of what I have just said about Yiddish cinema could also be said of "runaway productions," such as what we see in US-Canadian cinematic relations, or the rise of "Studio Cities" in places such as Dubai. There are interesting analyses to be made of the production conditions of films such as *Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed* or *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol*, but to say they are both part of a transnational Canadian cinema or a transnational Emirati cinema feels at best incomplete, and at any rate, quite incoherent with the kind of analysis with which we are engaging in this cluster. We do not hold that kind of analysis to be superior to the economic-production-led sort, but we also do not believe it to be somehow antiquated or useless in our brave new globalized world. Moreover, I would argue that it would still be difficult to write a history that argued for a coherent *tradition* of Euro-Bollywood cinema, and not just a few examples of international co-production arrangements, in the manner that Hoberman does indeed write a very coherent history of Yiddish filmmaking. That may not always be the case, but presently, it is. Mark Betz's book *Beyond the Subtitle* makes the case for this kind of approach to European cinema, seeing the explosion of omnibus films in the 1960s as exemplary of a transnational/continental experience that confounds the prevailing tendency to see the cinema of that period as a series of discrete "new waves." I am sympathetic to this argument, and would tend to file this kind of filmmaking along with the Yiddish example as "exceptions to the broad tendencies."

Conclusion

My task here has been to lay out the broad tendencies of "minor cinema" that exist globally, and this is not meant to imply that these four models are some cinematic equivalent of a geometry axiom or a law of physics. Rather, I have used these models to illustrate the degree to which the descriptor "minor," in terms of cinema, has a different valence than what it does in literature, and moreover manifests itself in enough different ways to warrant some elaboration of what exactly is minor about a cinema that is so described. I have done so using European examples as my primary texts intentionally; I also want to show the degree to which "minor cinema" is not simply synonymous with "the cinema of what we used to call the Third World." Again, Willemen's 2006 essay "The National Revisited" would seem to contradict

this, as he cautions:

> [S]cholars formed within the paradigm of Euro-American Film Studies are rushing to plan their flags on the territory of, for instance, Chinese, Japanese, or Indian Film Studies. In that respect, those scholars and departments are actively delaying the advent of a genuinely comparative Film Studies by trying to impose the paradigms of Euro-American films and aesthetic theories upon non Euro-American cultural practices. In the process, the very questions concerning the production of specific socio-cultural formations mentioned earlier are marginalised or ignored. (34)

As before, I take the point here, and my goal in using European examples has not been to impose Euro-American frameworks, but rather to demonstrate that marginal cinema is a truly global affair, and to talk about it is not synonymous with moving into the realm of postcolonial studies, even though there is much overlap. In terms of conceptual frameworks, one of the goals of this essay has been to move the theoretical scaffolding away from Deleuze-Guattari and towards Glissant, a figure who seems to me much more useful for understanding our present experience of internationalism. Having said all of that, I have also made a point of using examples from Africa, Asia, which are obviously of crucial importance for discussions of cultural marginality and are integrated into each section, in addition to engaging with the Indigenous world. The argument I have been making is about world cinema, broadly conceived. Many of its manifestations are marginalized enough for the term "minor" to clearly be a useful descriptor, but they are not always marginal or minor in the same way. The term "minor cinema" is still a useful one, but as is often the case with such terms, it is most useful when the critic using it is able to qualify it in a more specific way.

Notes

1. "However, *Poitín* was of considerable importance because it cast doubt and anti-hegemonic disbelief on the nationalist 'grand narrative.'" All translations in this paper, except for those from Glissant's *Le discours antillais* (which is available in a published translation), are my own.

2. In 1970 Sinn Féin, long acknowledged to be the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, experienced a split over the relative importance of socialism and traditional Irish nationalism. What emerged was "Official Sinn Féin," which was the more socialist wing, and "Provisional Sinn Féin," which was more committed to nationalist goals. The latter, in both the IRA and Sinn Féin manifestations, was widely nicknamed "the provos," and is more or less the Sinn Féin that we have today, and the IRA we had until 2005, when it officially disarmed. In 1982, "Official Sinn Féin" became the Workers' Party.

3. The essential starting place on the national cinema as a whole, at least in terms of English-language texts, is the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*. Willemen edited this book with Ashish Rajadhyaksha in 1994, but in terms of overall structural analyses and key historical figures, I find that it is still very durable indeed.

4. The autonomous Catalan parliament is known as the Generalitat. It claims to date back to the thirteenth century, and was abolished in the first decade of the eighteenth century as the territories of the

Catalan-speaking Kingdom of Aragon were absorbed into Spain and France. It was re-established in 1932 as part of the Second Spanish Republic; following the fascist victory during the Civil War, it was abolished along with the other autonomous institutions of that Republic. It was re-established during the period of 1977-78, as Spain made its transition back to democracy in the wake of Franco's death.

5. "It's well known that the best period for an authentically Catalan cinema was that of the Second Republic. From 1931 to 1939—especially when political parties and groups, unions, etc., started to appear at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War—the fundamental characteristic of the first film industry for our country were established. A real national cinema—that reflected the diverse idiosyncrasies of the State—which suffered a mortal blow because of the weak infrastructure, especially at the end of the 'war between brothers.'"

6. "Furthermore, a film that is only in Catalan would be ignoring the fact that in Catalonia today, we speak Catalan… *and* Spanish. But we also dub foreign films into Catalan. So let's sum up: the choice of Catalan is a trait that you really need to take into consideration, but there are still, simply because of how things are, Catalan films in Spanish."

7. "The opinion of this author is that language is a form of transmitting a culture but that it's not the entire culture, much less in the current audiovisual sector, where images hold more value and are more effective than words."

8. I have in mind here her 2005 book on Danish cinema as well as articles from 1996 and 2010.

9. The term "Indigenous" has largely replaced "Aboriginal" in Canadian English because in 2016, the federal government changed to this terminology in order to synchronize with the vocabulary used by the United Nations, especially when engaging their 2007 *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. In Canadian French, the term "Autochtone" remains current, in no small part because that is still the term in use by the United Nations: the official French title of the same document, for instance, is the *Déclaration des Nations Unis sur les droits des peuples autochtones*.

10. Laura U. Marks's 1998 essay for the now-defunct art magazine *Fuse* convers some of this territory, as does Sally Berger's 1996 article for *Inuit Art Quarterly*, which was originally published in the US avant-garde journal *Felix*, and which followed on work she had done as a curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

11. "You cannot become Trinidadian or Quebecois, if you are not; but from now on it is true that if Trinidad and Quebec did not exist as accepted components of diversity, something would be missing from the body of the world" (*Caribbean Discourse* 98).

12. What he actually writes is "this was not just a national cinema without a nation-state, but a national cinema that, with every presentation, created its own ephemeral nation-state. […] Yiddish was not just a language and a folk culture but an entire Jewish world, a '*Yiddishland*'" (5).

13. Having said that, Daniel Coleman's 2016 article is an exploration of what he calls the "strategic binarism" that can evoke the relationship between diasporic and Indigenous perspectives.

Works Cited

Abdul-Jabbar, Wisam. "Towards a Minor Cinema: A Deleuzian Reflection on Chahine's *Alexandria Why?* (1978)." *Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2015, pp. 159-71.

Barclay, Barry. "Celebrating Fourth Cinema." *Illusions*, vol. 35, 2003, pp. 7-11.

Berger, Sally. "Time Travellers." *Inuit Art Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1996, pp. 4-11.

Bertin-Maghit, Jean-Pierre. "L'identité du cinéma catalan." *Jeune cinéma*, vol. 337, 1982, pp. 32-36.

Betz, Mark. *Beyond the Subtitle: Remapping European Art Cinema*. U of Minnesota P, 2009.

Coleman, Daniel. "Indigenous Place and Diaspora Space: Of Literalism and Abstraction." *Settler Colonial Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2016, pp. 61-76.

Caparrós Lera, Josep Maria. *Petita història del cinema de la Generalitat*. Robrenyo, 1978.

Comas, Àngel. *Vint anys d'història del cinema a catalunya (1990-2009)*. Laertes, 2010.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinéma 2. L'image-temps*. Minuit, 1985.

---. *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*. Translated by Dana Polan, U of Minnesota P, 1986.

---, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure*. Minuit, 1975.

Elley, Derek. "Light in the Caucasus." *Films and Filming*, February 1977, pp. 16-18.

Glissant, Édouard. *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Translated by J. Michael Dash, UP of Virginia, 1989.

---. *Le discours antillais*. 1981. Gallimard, 1997.

---. *Introduction à une poétique du divers*. 1995. Gallimard, 1996.

Hoberman, J. *Bridge of Light: Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds*. Museum of Modern Art/Schocken, 1991.

Hjort, Mette. "Affinitive and Milieu-Building Transnationalism: The Advance Party Initiative." *Cinema at the Periphery*, edited by Dina Iordanova, David Martin-Jones, and Belén Vidal, Wayne State UP, 2010, pp. 46-66.

---. "Danish Cinema and the Politics of Recognition." *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, edited by David Bordwell and Noël Caroll, U of Wisconsin P, 1996, pp. 520-32.

---. *Small Nation, Global Cinema*. U of Minnesota P, 2005.

---, and Duncan Petrie. "Introduction." *The Cinema of Small Nations*, edited by Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie, Edinburgh UP, 2007, pp. 1-19.

Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford UP, 1995.

Marks, Laura U. "Reconfigured Nationhood: A Partisan History of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation." *Afterimage*, vol. 8, 1994, pp. 5-7.

---. "Inuit Auteurs and Arctic Airways." *Fuse*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1998, pp. 13-17.

Marshall, Bill. *Quebec National Cinema*. McGill-Queen's UP, 2001.

Martens, Emiel. "Maori on the Silver Screen: The Evolution of Indigenous Feature Filmmaking in Aotearoa/New Zealand." *International Journal of Critical*

Indigenous Studies, vol. 5, no. 1, 2012, pp. 2-30.

Mecsei, Monica Kim. "Cultural Stereotypes and Negotiations in Sámi Cinema." *Films on Ice: Cinemas of the Arctic*, edited by Scott MacKenzie and Anna Westerstål Stenport, Edinburgh UP, 2015, pp. 72-83.

Murray, Stewart. *Images of Dignity: Barry Barclay and Fourth Cinema*. Huia, 2008.

Ó Meara, Muiris. "Súil ar Scannánaíocht na Gaeilge." *Comhar*, May 2009, pp. 15-23.

Solanas, Fernando, and Octavio Getino. "Hacia un tercer cine. Apuntes y experiencias para el desarrollo de un cine de liberación en el Tercer Mundo." *Hojas de cine: testimonios y documentos del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano*, Fundación Mexicana de Cineastas, 1988, pp. 29-62.

---. "Towards a Third Cinema." *Twenty-Five Years of The New Latin American Cinema*, edited by Michael Chanan, translated by Michael Chanan and Julianne Burton, Channel 4/British Film Institute, 1983, pp. 17-27.

Stewart, Michelle. "The Indian Film Crews of Challenge for Change." *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2007, pp. 49-81.

Szymanski, Adam. "It's All About Love: Félix Guattari's Minor Cinema." *Kinephanos: Revue d'études des médias et de culture populaire*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2012. www.kinephanos.ca/Revue_files/2012-szymanski.pdf.

Willemen, Paul. *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory*. British Film Institute, 1994.

---. "The National Revisited." *Theorising National Cinema*, edited by Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen, British Film Institute, 2006, pp. 29-43.

---, and Ashish Rajadhyaksha. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*. British Film Institute/Oxford UP, 1994.