

Transnational Cinematic Flows: World Cinema as World Music?

If one were to substitute the term ‘cinema’ for ‘music’, transferring with it some of the same foundational and conceptual ideas of world music one finds that the term does not exist in any official way in the realm of cinema. There are of course some very evident reasons why world cinema in this sense, does not exist. Nonetheless, there is a discernable contemporary cinematographic phenomenon that is not unlike that of world music. My intention is not to transfer a concept between different media as such, given the radical differences of financing, production, markets, distribution, reception, and so forth, it is rather, to better understand a particular contemporary cinematographic phenomenon by drawing on the history of world music.

Of particular interest are films made by directors who are categorised with nationalities of so-called developing or Third World countries. Within this terrain my interest is in north-south, independent co-production, and a cinema that can be linked in some ways to a heritage of Third cinema.¹ Third cinema is understood as a cinematographic movement, situated in time and space - the late sixties and early seventies - regrouping similar cinematographic developments in Argentina, Cuba and Brazil. Its aim was to link art and politics with liberating ideals. The movement also left traces in other regions of the world, particularly countries that gained their independence around that time. The link with Third cinema is important because as a film movement it was concerned with politics, identity and independence, issues which continue to hold relevance for many film directors linked to developing countries, and because these concerns are also among those given so much attention within the discourses of globalisation.

Given the north-south collaboration as a context for this cinema we need to take into account that histories of colonialism and other types of domination do not just disappear with a date, decree or new constitution. Furthermore, because the collaboration occurs between individuals from groups with unequal positions in a global hierarchy this collaboration does not necessarily lead to intercultural cooperation. Equally so, increased quantities of visibly diverse “content” – visual or musical – do not mean that there is a qualitative change in power relations and control of that “content.” We can agree that one of the main concerns about globalisation is the tension between cultural homogenisation and diversity. For globalisation to have any substantial meaning we need to look closely at its “processes and transactions.”² It is in this larger sense that the utility of exploring transnational cinematic flows in a more fine grain manner, takes its meaning.

While my emphasis is on north-south coproductions, the world cinema phenomenon I explore here is not necessarily limited to films made by directors from

¹ See for example: Jim Pines and Paul Willemsen, eds., *Questions of Third Cinema* (London: BFI, 1989) and Roy Armes, *Third World Film Making and the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

² I refer here to the article in which the political scientist David Sylvan has questioned the social science methodologies employed in the analysis of the term globalisation. David Sylvan, “Periphery, Centre, Mass: Alternative Histories of Europe’s Role in Globalisation” in *Europe and Globalization* edited by Henryk Kierszkowski (Basingstoke, Eng.: Palgrave, 2002).

these regions and one could probably find variations of this internationalising trend in other cinemas. We might consider, for example, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* by Ang Lee or some recent Bollywood films destined for Western audiences such as *Lagaan* by Ashuto Gowariker. Each of these examples suggests a different path of exploration within the more general realm of world cinema. These examples also differ from the category that I explore in this paper because they are made in countries where there is a long-standing, commercial film industry and history, where dependencies on non-national cinematographic infrastructures are non-existent or minimal. These are distinguishing factors separating the latter examples from the film world explored here. While some Latin American countries have industrial cinematographic traditions, they do not have the same historically sustained fiction film production existence as in parts of Asia and in India.

The films in question are coproductions, independent, feature length fiction films made with relatively low budgets, generally under US \$5 million. They are products of a north-south collaboration often made with public funding or related institutions, although some private televisions do invest in these productions. The films seldom have distribution contracts prior to completion and they usually circulate in international and alternative circuits, highly dependent on the recognition gained at international film festivals. They are often categorized in festivals and the markets in a national or regional way. When films made by these directors attain some more mainstream attention they are often attributed emblematic value, representing national and regional identities, becoming inscribed in an international politics of identity.

Mainstream is not used here *stricto sensu* but rather in the sense that the films are selected at the major international film festivals such as: Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto, Sundance, and more so when they obtain prizes in those festivals, or obtain distribution contracts. Likewise, in a formal sense to coproduce means to own part of the film negative. In a more loose use of the term, which I am using here, I refer to a practice where producers from two or more countries are involved in the financing and production of a film.

Given that these films are often attributed an emblematic identity value it is worth exploring how the representation of identity functions through them.³ Within the debate on cultural homogenisation and diversity there is, on the one hand, a congruent perception of cultural loss and on the other hand a reaction that consists of reasserting local, national and regional identities.⁴ If we agree that under global integration local identities and affiliations do not just disappear, and that within the two extremes of homogenisation and of retrenching identity, it is more interesting to see how various types of identity are reconfigured and transformed.⁵

Within this dialectic between the loss and the assertion of identity, attachments to place and space are being redefined. Spatial location of identity is fundamental to a current understanding of cultural politics. Internationalism and geographical displacement is a broadly shared experience by an increasingly wide range of people

³ The attribution of funding in Europe for such films made by directors from these countries has often linked to a manifestation of local, national, regional, cultural identity. See for example, T. Hoefert de Turégano, "FESPACO 1999: The Cultural politics of production and francophone West African cinema" *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2000, pp.146-165; or *France and Africa: The politics of cinema 1960-1995* (forthcoming).

⁴See for example Stuart Hall in Anthony King, ed. *Culture, Globalization and the World-System* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

⁵ Néstor García Canclini, "Will there be Latin American Cinema in the Year 2000? Visual Culture in a Postnational Era," in *Framing Latin American Cinema – Contemporary Critical Perspectives* Ed. Ann Marie Stock (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 256.

from immigrants to cosmopolitan nomads. Simultaneously, the nation state recedes as a source of identity and identification. Furthermore shared cultural space does not necessarily depend on shared geographical space and this contributes to making popular culture and increasingly important public sphere.⁶ Films, like music, have the ability to simultaneously undermine and reinforce our sense of place and cultural specificities become a market strategy used to attract consumers around the world.

For an individual, finding ways of feeling connected to a local or national space is a far more habitual exercise than finding similar mechanisms for feeling connected to global space. Fredric Jameson proposes an aesthetic of cognitive mapping and hopes for “a pedagogical political culture which seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system ... the new political art (if it is possible at all) will have to hold to the truth of ... the world space of multinational capital – at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion.”⁷ How then do these films participate in a global aesthetic?

Before turning to the music and the films let’s briefly look at some of the ways the term world cinema has been used. It is classically considered as a cinema d’auteur or art cinema, of filmmakers who have an international reputation. It is also sometimes understood as those cinemas from around the world, which developed in resistance to – but not necessarily or only in resistance to – or in any case, trying to assert themselves within the dominant forces of a global film market. Or it is simply a way to speak of the history of cinema as in the case of the Oxford history. Many books use the term in their title, for example: *The Oxford History of World Cinema*,⁸ *An Introduction to World Cinema*,⁹ or *World Cinema: Critical Approaches*.¹⁰ A similar trend occurs in the francophone realm with for example well-known film historians such as George Sadoul’s *L’Histoire du Cinéma Mondiale*. These books usually consecrate about 5–30% of their content to cinemas that are not in the Western European and American sphere. In *World Cinema: Critical Approaches* the ambiguity of the term world cinema is evident given that it is not only in the title of the book, but it is also used as a heading for a particular section which is sub-headed “cinemas of the world” and consists of chapters on Indian, Chinese, Hong Kong, Taiwanese, Japanese, African and South American cinema. The other sections of the book include critical and theoretical essays, a large section on European cinema and another on Anglophone national cinemas.

⁶ George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads - Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso, 1994), p.5.

⁷ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, the cultural logic of late capitalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), p. 54.

⁸ Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, ed. *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). This history of cinema has sections divided into silent, sound (1930-1960) and modern cinema (1960-1995) – in the first two sections there is chapter entitled national cinemas (the sub-chapters are all European except for Japan) – for sound this includes sub-chapters where India, China, Japan and Latin America are included. In the section modern cinema the term “national cinemas” is no longer used instead the title “cinemas of the world” is preferred. (half of these entries are European, the other half cover the rest of the world).

⁹ Aristides Gazetas, *An Introduction to World Cinema* (North Carolina: McFarland and Company Inc., Publishers, 2000).

¹⁰ John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, eds. *World Cinema: Critical Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

A search on the web gave the definition of world cinema as “foreign films, or international movies, or auteur cinema, or just about anything that’s not made in Hollywood.” I have yet to come across the term in a cinema dictionary. In a general way, one could say that world cinema in North America seems to mean everything outside of North America and even American films made outside of mainstream dominant structures. In Europe the notion of world cinema seems more attached to the classic definition of an international art or auteur cinema.

Numerous film festivals also have “world cinema” categories. At the Sundance film festival all cinema that is not dominant American cinema is considered world cinema. At the Toronto International Film Festival “Contemporary World Cinema” includes films from anywhere in the world, including the US, but which are not made in the mainstream or dominant circuits. At Cannes, the category *Un Certain Regard* suggests ‘the look of the Other’ and since it was created in 1978 it has offered many films made by directors from developing countries, and films which were less susceptible, than the main competition films, of finding a place in the market. At the Berlin Film Festival the category “International Forum of New Cinema” is defined as a section of the film festival “dedicated to innovative and experimental cinema... for independent and alternative films, for films from developing countries, for a cinema outside of established genres and independent of market considerations.”¹¹ In German *Weltkinematographie* seems to be used in the classical sense of an international art cinema.

Outside of the main European film festivals the term has been less used until recent years: The Cuban International Festival of New Latin American Film does not have a category of World cinema, preferring to use national categories. At FESPACO in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, categories include for example, “African,” “Diaspora,” “World.” Their “World” category includes films from anywhere in the world which are not made in mainstream, dominant structures. And, for example, Sithengi, the South African Film and TV market announced this year: “The aim of the Sithengi Film festival is to create a viable niche market for World Cinema in the way that a similar market has been created for World Music.”¹²

What is world music? In a very brief way one can say:

“What “world music” signifies for many is, quite simply and innocently, musical diversity. The idea is that musics originate from all world regions, cultures, and historical formations. “World music” thus circulates broadly in a liberal, relativist field of discourse, while in a more specific way it is an academic designation, the curricular antidote to the tacit synonymy of “music” with western European art music. In this latter sense the term is explicitly oppositional, markedly more polemical and political than in the former sense, contesting Eurocentrism and opposing it with musical plurality. But it is as a commercial marketing label that “world music” is now most commonly placed. In this context the term has come to refer to any commercially available music of non-Western origin and circulation, as well as to musics of dominated ethnic minorities within the Western world: music *of* the world to be sold *around* the world.”¹³

In the 1980s there was a notable trend in the music scene and in the development of new music genres such as, world music, world beat, world fusion, and so forth. It was also the time of a boom of interest in African music. The term world music most commonly used today has an explicit market orientation. In 1987, a

¹¹ Berlin International Film Festival web site (<http://www.berlinale.de>)

¹² *Africa Film & TV News Flash* Edition 167, 7 August 2002, p. 5.

¹³ Charles Keil and Steven Feld, *Music grooves: essays and dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 265-266.

group of representatives of independent record companies, concert promoters, broadcasters and others active in Britain, for promoting music from elsewhere, gathered to discuss the problems of distributing and selling this different music. One of the obstacles in promoting and persuading the music shop owners to sell it was that there was no category for them to place the music in and the music owners didn't know whether to call it "folk," "ethnic," "international," "tropical" ... The representatives decided to send a promotional tape and a "browser card" using the term world music to record shops hoping that they would make space for it in their racks. Within months the term was everywhere in the press and within the next couple of years it was in the regular mainstream music industry in Britain, northern Europe and the US. In 1990 *Billboard* established it in their charts confirming its official character.¹⁴

World music is well known as the result of collaboration between Western musicians and musicians from outside Europe and North America, for example, Ry Cooder and Ali Farka Touré, the Buena Vista Social Club, Paul Simon and Ladysmith Black Mambazo. It is also a label used to classify music by artists who are from non-European, non- (but tending toward) mainstream, non-North American regions, such as Salif Keita, Youssou N'Dour or Angélique Kidjo. In the realm of cinema we can find similar sorts of configurations, although more commonly it is the production structure as opposed to directorial work which is the result of north-south collaboration. In some ways Latin America musicians are more privileged than their African counterparts because they are sometimes also categorised through genre and nationality. For example, categories of genre – such as tango – and national categories – such as Brazilian or Cuban music – are commonplace although musicians like Gaetano Veloso, Arto Lindsay can still be found in the category of World Music.

Perhaps the essence of the parallel between world music and world cinema is that both promise agreeable, exotic diversion without relational complications. And this is precisely the major problem with the using such labels. According to Timothy Taylor *Billboard* introduced its World Music chart and its New Age chart under the heading Top Adult Alternative Albums with the same person managing both charts. It is "... designed to be music for grown-ups, music as wallpaper, music that does not, on its reasonably attractive and accessible surface, raise sticky problems about misogyny, racism, colonialism..."¹⁵ Under "World Music" on the FNAC web site we can find the following description: "Everything here is surprising: the beauty of the colours, the diversity of the rhythms and the authenticity of the instruments."¹⁶

Some spectators go to the cinema to see non-European films looking for something new, fresh, exotic, a diversion from daily life, something with rhythm, something mystical, some magical realism and so forth. In some ways this experience is just like going out for Chinese food or for an Indian curry: the food should be authentic, spicy but not too spicy so that it becomes inedible. The same applies to this cinema, in that it must remain accessible in its film language and contents. Consuming in this way, and asserting these personal tastes which are slightly outside of the norm, serve to connect and map spectators to other parts of the world, giving them a sense of place within a global space.

¹⁴ Timothy Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 2-3.

¹⁵ "Billboard Debuts World Music Album Chart" *Billboard* 102 (19 May 1990) quoted in T. Taylor (1997) p. 5.

¹⁶ Author's translation. "Tout ici est étonnement : la beauté des couleurs, la diversité des rythmiques et l'authenticité des instruments. » (www.fnac.com - Musique> Musique du monde...)

Within the categories of world music and world cinema both the musicians and the film makers are generally labeled by their ethnicity, rather than by genre, and then they are placed into the 'world' category. For example, when a Swiss film maker makes a film in an African country, his work will, under normal circumstances, be categorised as Swiss cinema and a particular genre – for example, documentary - but it is not likely to be classified as world cinema. Whereas, if a Burkinabè film maker, filming in France, with French actors, French funding, and so forth, the film is categorised as African, and then eventually as world cinema, but not for example as a genre – for example, melodrama. Certain artists are categorised through ethnicity rather than film genre or music, while other artists, usually Western European and North American, are first categorised through genre or music. Peter Gabriel, Paul Simon will be categorized under 'rock' or 'pop' whereas Youssou N'Dour is categorised under 'world music.'

Commenting on this process of categorising, Angelique Kidjo, a musician born in Benin, remarked that she could understand the use of the label for marketing purposes. The problem with the label is that there is a risk that it leaves the artists out of the mainstream and that they are not sold or marketed enough. Being categorised under world music and African means that Kidjo, like many other artists, must defend her appropriation and syncretism with Western music. She grew up hearing Western sounds and music from everywhere, just as she heard more traditional sounds; they are all part of her musical heritage, but she has to defend herself when she syncretises.¹⁷ European or Americans who draw on other cultural traditions or produce something more commercial are not criticised for lacking in authenticity.

In the cinematographic realm there is a similar occurrence. For example, a question of authenticity has long accompanied certain spheres of francophone West African film making. When there is talk about Western financing, automatic assumptions are made about Western influence on a film director which easily digress to assumptions about some lack of authenticity. Of course the metropolis and periphery and other simple binaries do not reflect contemporary cultural production, nor do concepts that only privilege "authentic" and non-commercial culture as the ultimate road to independence adequately reflect the complexities of culture and commerce in the contemporary world.

While Jameson is focussed on the world of multinational capital and not transnational capital, which is far more important to the sphere of world cinema explored here, his arguments on culture maintain their relevance in the sense that he suggests that to argue that culture is today no longer endowed with the relative autonomy it once enjoyed in earlier moments of capitalism is not necessarily to imply its disappearance or extinction.¹⁸ Jameson argues that there has been a fundamental mutation of the sphere of culture in the world of late capitalism, which includes a modification of its social function. Indeed, the world of north-south cinematic coproduction functions within a specific cultural sphere with a limited autonomy, however in lieu of a value judgement what is certain is that the social function of these films, in comparison to an earlier period of Third cinema, has changed. Today

¹⁷ Angelique Kidjo, during a World Music panel discussion organised by the Africana Studies Program, New York University, 30 November 2000.

¹⁸ He argues the contrary that this dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture is rather to be imagined in terms of an explosion: a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life – from economic value and state power to practise and to the very structure of the psyche itself – can be said to have become "cultural" in some original and yet untheorized sense.

these international north-south coproductions serve as international mapping devices in a more explicit way than the films linked to the Third cinema movement.

Let's turn now to the films. Some examples of the types of films that can be considered within this world cinema context are: *El viaje* (The voyage) (1991) by Fernando Solanas (Argentina/Spain/France); *Guantanamera* (1994) by Tomas Gutierrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabio (Cuba/Spain); *Fresa y chocolate* (Strawberry and Chocolate) (1993) by Tomas Gutierrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabio (Cuba/Spain); *Central do Brasil* (Central Station) (1998) by Walter Salles (Brazil/France/Switzerland); *Waati* (1995) by Souleymane Cissé (Mali/France); or *Samba Traoré* (1993) (Burkina Faso/France/Switzerland) by Idrissa Ouedraogo.

Each of these directors is well known internationally, labelled abroad as representatives of their national or regional identity. The films have achieved a comparatively high profile through attention at larger film festivals - each film was nominated to compete at one of the major festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Toronto, Sundance - or through international distribution. In the first instance, we find similar cinematographic contexts of production and infrastructures, as discussed above, which establish commonalities among such a diverse grouping. Second, we need to ask whether there is a particular transnational aesthetic among these cinematographic coproductions? By analysing the film form and content at three levels - film language, the representation of identity, and politics and ideology - it is possible to come to some conclusions regarding these films and a world cinema tendency.

Looking at these films from a formal perspective reveals certain similarities. In a general way, films of this world cinema tendency demonstrate accessible narrative evolution adhering more closely to the codes and conventions of a more classical mainstream film style. We often find narration structured around an idyllic order, followed by disorder and the final reestablishment of order; there is often continuity in the narrative evolution with closure in the end; we often find transparency in the editing; conversations are often filmed in a classical shot/counter-shot style; clear protagonists are portrayed; spectatorial identification is established and emotional engagement created. Nevertheless, within the common tendencies all is not homogenous and there are more alternative styles to be found.

In films like *El viaje*, *Guantanamera*, and *Central do Brasil* the road movie genre is clearly evident. For example, all the iconographic marks of the genre are present: the car, truck, bus, bicycle; the use of the tracking shot; going from point A to B in a particular space and chronological time; and ultimate self-discovery. But this does not mean that there are variations evident. *El viaje*, for example, uses a mixed film language with both alternative and more classical styles. Indeed, Solanas has remained quite faithful to his original Third cinema film aesthetic. In its opening sequences *Central do Brasil* uses a more documentary style with direct address to the spectator but then changes quite decidedly into a mainstream, classical language ending with what could be considered a Steven Spielberg inspired final sequence.

Are there similarities in representation of identity among the films in a world cinema tendency? There is often a retrenching of local, national or regional identities, such that they are given a clear and fixed identitary character. For example, in *Fresa y chocolate* there is an explicitly critical discourse viv-à-vis the Cuban government and their oppressive homosexual policy, and yet it is Diego the homosexual character in the film who is also the most "Cuban" of characters. He teaches David, the upright Party member, about Cuban poetry, literature, architecture, music, painting and so forth - in sum 'all' about Cuban culture. Cuban identity is essentialised and rendered

static in this film. Spectators are shown what it is and what it isn't. The irony is that it is the homosexual character, the one who does not fit into some supposed Cuban norm, who becomes the guarantor of this Cuban identity.

An awareness of "positive" representation seems to be an underlying characteristic of these films. There may be negative representations of a particular group, or nation, etc. but these are almost always compensated by positive representation. There seems to be an awareness that any negative behaviour of an 'outsider' group all too easily and quickly becomes generalized as typical of that entire group. This issue has been well-theorised in reference to marginalized or oppressed communities, where representations become allegorical, of some supposedly homogenous community, and the artist becomes weighted with the "burden of representation."¹⁹

In terms of the politics and ideology in these films there are also some common characteristics. These films tend to be ideologically mainstream – even the Cuban films. We might call them films with safe or unoffensive politics. While the films may be critical of local or Western power regimes, these films are generally conciliatory rather than violent or radical. Solanas is an exception in this respect, for his films continue to espouse a strong political resistance against local regimes and as well as the West, and yet the totalising position he takes does not carry a radical or contemporary revolutionary voice and seems out of touch with the concerns of contemporary Argentinean society.²⁰ In the Cuban films, for example, the spectators often find criticism of the regime in place but the criticism remains within the terms of Cuban revolution and tries to improve it. In *Guantanamera* (1994) the criticism of the regime is not made against the country, and as Georgina one of the protagonists remarks in the film: the people don't leave because of Western or capitalist ideas but because they can't express themselves in Cuba and talk about those ideas. In *Fresa y chocolate* (1993) there is a similar construction made around Cuban politics. Through his contact with Diego, David becomes a renewed, more tolerant representative of the Party. Diego, even though he is so badly treated, still loves his country, is totally patriotic and does not want to leave. These Cuban films are interesting examples because they are able to concede to both capitalist and socialist ideals, but even beyond these examples the films generally adhere to an ideologically mainstream politics.

I have drawn on some of the specific history of the term world music, in spite and because of its problematic character, hoping that it might shed light onto the neighbouring artistic space of film. Of course there are differences between these two fields, but our understanding of contemporary, transnational cinematographic processes can benefit from the historical experience in the realm of music. For numerous reasons, the commercialization of north-south musical collaboration has proceeded more rapidly than in the cinematographic realm, it is nevertheless a contemporary reality for cinema.

What we see in the world cinema addressed in this article is quite clearly that identities continue to exist, but they seem to be constituted in less complex and more

¹⁹ On the burden of representation, see for example, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism - Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York, London: Routledge, 1994) for their discussion of Michael Rogin and "surplus symbolic value" p.183; or, Kobena Mercer, "Black Art and the Burden of Representation" *Third Text* No. 10 Spring 1990, pp. 61 - 78.

²⁰ Reactions collected among participants of the Havana Film Festival 1998 and also deduced from Solanas' own comments and statistics about the decline of Argentinean spectatorship for his films since *Sur*.

totalizing ways, presumably so that their visual readings become accessible to larger numbers of spectators. At the same time we cannot say that these identities are only reductive, because they are not always or only reductive and they move beyond simply stereotypical representations. Both the politics and film language of these films veer in a quite evident ways toward more mainstream practices and discourses. The politics are less contestatory even though they can still be critical. The film language is clearly more classical although we can also find variations with alternative grammars entering the screen, in some cases more than in others.

I do not want to homogenize this entire category of film making for clearly one cannot do so. There are significant differences between a Solanas and a Salles film just as there are among a Sembene, Cissé or Sissoko film, just as there are among and within Argentinean and Senegalese films and so forth. But the directors which enter this international circuit are some of the principal film makers from non-Western countries representing cinematographic identities of non-Westerners, to the West. Outside of Hollywood's representations of the Other, it is this cinema that primarily mediates local identities to Western audiences.

These coproductions participate in creating an aesthetic of global mapping, helping spectators situate themselves into a global space. Under their specific conditions of production we find a processes of leveling – or shall I say attempts to 'perfect' - identity and a flattening of politics and film language, making the consumption of these films more palatable and more accessible for greater numbers of spectators. While it may at first seem contradictory, this leveling out, in terms of identity, does not work in the direction of homogenization but rather it has a predominant mode of fixing identity and thus zooming in on heterogeneity.

Finally, this world cinema has claimed a place among the world's film festivals, and even a minimal space, within film markets. The dynamics of this cinema shows us how one of the processes and transactions of a transnational and a globalised world functions. This cinema exists in a semi-autonomous world associated to a public politics of culture linked with market factors. Its social function has less of a liberatory value than one of a global mapping device. Nonetheless, and at the risk of optimism, what this type of world cinema certainly can do, in spite of its problematic of perfecting identity, is open a space for more, and more diverse, cinematographies within our film worlds.

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