

## **TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE NEW COLOMBIAN CINEMA MOVEMENT WORKING TOWARDS THE DECOLONISATION OF OTHERNESS?**

The overarching objective of the research is the evaluation of the success of 21<sup>st</sup> century Colombian cinema in decolonising thought around otherness. In order to achieve this objective the study will seek to address several other objectives. Firstly, it will be important to define the terms decolonisation and otherness and contextualise them within Colombia and the Latin American region. The research will then aim to critically analyse the representation of otherness and indigeneity in each of the four films: *El Abrazo de la Serpiente* (2015), *Pájaros de Verano* (2019), *El Vuelco del Cangrejo* (2009) and *Los Hongos* (2014). The research will then examine how the films were directed, produced, and disseminated and how this influences their success as part of a decolonising agenda. The final objective of the research will be the drawing together of film analyses and the film's background information in order to answer the research question.

This project will study four emblematic films directed by two key figures of the New Colombian Cinema movement, Ciro Guerra and Oscar Ruiz Navia. These four films are: Ciro Guerra's *El Abrazo de la Serpiente* (2015) and *Pájaros de Verano* (2019) and Oscar Ruiz Navia's *El Vuelco del Cangrejo* (2009) and *Los Hongos* (2014). Within these films, the representation of indigenous, Afro-Latina, and outsider identities are challenged and reimagined. However, this study aims to evaluate their relative success in decolonising otherness.

Primarily, this project will interrogate the terms decolonisation and otherness and what they mean on a global, regional, and national scale. For instance, the research will centre around the definition of decolonisation as the radical removal of political, economic and cultural vestiges of a colonial past. In this project, a specific political and cultural vestige imposed by colonialism is the theory of otherness, something defined as a social label used to subordinate a person or group deemed different from the central self. Several groups of people have suffered from and continue to suffer as a result of this pattern of thought such as the indigenous and Afro-Latina communities of Colombia. This can be attributed to the fact that Colombia is a nation whose current social, political, and economic realities have been informed by nearly 400 years of colonial rule. More recently, Colombia's decades-long armed conflict followed by current health and food insecurity challenges brought on by the global pandemic are disproportionately affecting marginalised communities. This project will assess how contemporary cinema influences the reimagining of the depiction of indigenous and otherness within the context of contemporary Colombian cinema.

Occurring at the cross section of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the New Colombian Cinema movement has become a point of global study. An important influence on this movement was Brecht's (1962) theory of alienation, a theory used in theatre or film that encourages the spectator to become acutely aware that they are in the process of watching a film rather than simply escaping reality. Through the use of an array of cinematographic techniques used to alienate the spectator, the New Colombia Cinema movement has aimed to educate and create counter-narratives to past and present social hierarchies. The cultural movement has also embraced a transnational approach to filmmaking and its dissemination. The transnational texture to the films in this study adds another layer to the evaluation of their success in decolonising otherness. According to Rawle (2018) transnational film production can be a weapon in global decolonisation efforts especially those surrounding otherness. It is by breaking down national boundaries and constraints these films are a force for deconstructing colonial narratives. However, by producing these films in a transnational manner, they can become dislocated from the indigenous and marginalised realities and therefore misrepresent these communities. Indeed, the dissemination of these films on platforms like Netflix and their success in Euro-centric film festivals such as Cannes can be problematic when it comes to the representation of specific local communities such as the Wayuu and Ocaina indigenous people of Colombia.

This research project will conclude by collating primary and secondary analyses and arguments in order to determine if these four films have contributed positively to the process of decolonisation and the reestablishment of indigenous and marginalised communities' agency.