Camera of Dignity: Defying Colonial Climate Injustice Through an Ecocentric Representation of Eanan in Sámi Fourth Cinema

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Camera of Dignity:
Defying Colonial Climate Injustice Through an Ecocentric Representation of *Eanan* in Sámi Fourth Cinema

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This thesis is in dedication to Earth.
May she sustain us for many generations to come as we relearn to treat her with respect.

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Abstract

Using a framework of Fourth Cinema, first constructed by Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay, this thesis explores the (historical) identity politics of the Sámi and employs an eco-critical approach to trace a bridge to climate politics. Fourth Cinema is a movement which empowers Indigenous people to take back control of their narrative and invites its audiences to envision an alternative to the Ecological Exotic Other constructed by Western colonial accounts. Whereas the roots of Fourth Cinema were first theorized in the 90s to strengthen Indigenous identity politics, it is now unquestionably intertwined with climate politics in the case of the Sámi. The cultural identity of the Sámi is so closely tied to their land that the increased threat of global warming is a direct assault on their social distinctiveness. Time and again the Sámi are at the forefront of climate change in the North. Consequently, Fourth Cinema meets ecocinema in the effort by Indigenous peoples to transmit their ways of knowing to a larger audience. Fourth Cinema is a space where the Sámi have the authority to voice their outlooks on environmental issues from the perspective of their values and traditional ways of knowing. At the core of this thesis is a study into the dialogue between ecocriticism and Fourth Cinema in Sámi film. The thesis's focal hypothesis is that an eco-critical study of Sámi Fourth Cinema offers alternative outlooks to contemporary Nordic climate discussions and crises while simultaneously empowering cultural sovereignty to Sámi communities oppressed by colonial mechanisms of Othering.

Our life
is like a ski track
on the white open plains
The wind erases it
before morning dawns

Paulus Utsi (Dubois, Coppélie 38)

Introduction

Preface

Colonialism and imperialism are concepts we learn in school. They are presented to us as notions of the past, as part of the history books. Would we be confronted with the idea that colonialism is a reality in the 21st century, the initial reaction of a person who has gone through a Western school system may be one of rejection. Now what if we add the claim that colonial policy is still occurring on European soil? Our astonishment may grow. It is this thought, combined with a personal captivation of the Arctic, that made me want to know more about both the history and current situation of the indigenous population of Northern Europe: the Sámi.

As I grew older, my longing to connect with nature grew. Growing up in an urban environment, a new world was revealed to me as I started travelling during my undergrad years. Fast forward ten years and I have spent extended periods of time emerged in the Arctic landscapes of Norway and Iceland. Never do I feel more alive as when I'm surrounded by the desolate landscape of the Icelandic highlands or the staggering peaks of the Northern Norwegian fjords. My mind stops racing when the Arctic air reaches my lungs, and my worries disappear when there is no sign of human impact as far as the eye can reach. I feel a connection to the world around me that I cannot experience between the concrete walls of urban modernity. Having been exposed to the stereotypical western paradigm that Indigenous peoples live in harmony with nature, I wanted to explore the true meaning of Indigenous values in relation to nature.

As humans we spend so much of our lives in control. We have designed our world so that we are at the centre of it. We are the masters of our daily schedules, the temperature in our houses, the food we put in our bodies, the way we move those bodies, the manner in which we commute to work, the list goes on and on. However, what if something we thought we had under control, turns out to be beyond our manipulation? What if that something is due to our own actions and desires to structure every aspect of our human experience? What if it turns out we are not the centre of the universe but at much at the mercy of Mother Earth as every other species part of the ecosystem? These are the strands of thoughts, that combined, have led me down the path of formulating this thesis at the intersection of my curiosities. Which brings me to:

Relevance

The years from the late 90s onwards have been defined by a growing awareness of human temporality in the face of climate change. Global warming became common knowledge in the early 2000s and along with it the reality that minorities were often the first to experience its effects first-hand. We are now well into what has been referred to as the Anthropocene, an epoch defined by significant human impact on Earth's geology, and participants from all strands of society have increasingly begun to question what the future holds (Monani, Adamson 1). Indigenous communities have been involved in climate activism for several decades advocating for their way of life which has sustained and preserved their land from year to year for many centuries (Kääpä 2017 136), yet environmental changes and catastrophes continue to increase due to the actions of (Western) nation states and large (international) corporations.

The North is at the forefront of climate change. Specifically Indigenous Sámi communities living near and above the Arctic Circle are among the first to experience the effects of the current climate emergency. Traditional ways of living are threatened by the disappearance of land ice, the rising sea temperature, and the increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. Sámi livelihoods built on the cycle of the seasons are in danger and cultural values are at risk of disappearing forever. Unless policy change is on the horizon is it only a matter of time before age old traditions are lost forever. Simultaneously, unless the decision makers of the world's largest polluters, both nations and multinationals, truly commit to reducing their footprint, global warming will exponentially result in the escalation of environmental disasters. Climate activists have been on a mission for several decades and their movement is growing, due in part to the increased opportunities to connect and share their stories globally through new technologies and media.

Historically, one of the truest expressions of any communities' beliefs is always its art. Over the past hundred and fifty years we have seen an astonishing development of technology leading to new forms of self-expression. The invention of photography in the 19th century revolutionized humanities' means of visual communication. Nearly two decades down the line, film and photography are an indispensable part of our lives, our jobs, our relationships, and our activism. Particularly moving image and the power of film carry huge promise in terms of speaking up against injustices. Although fictional stories hold enormous potential in shedding light on true violations, documentary holds a unique storytelling capability and an ability to grant full sovereignty to its (Indigenous) creator. As the media tells us that humanity is now facing its biggest challenge yet, the constant bombardment of dooming narratives leaves most individuals feeling either overwhelmed, guilty and anxious or in denial and stuck in passivity. Trying to solve climate change can be like staring into the abyss. However, film can help its audience to tackle one piece of the puzzle at a time. Films can digest and focus our attention. Through film, each story contributes to a larger global understanding foundational to continuous action and activism. Furthermore, films have the potential to not only create awareness, but also concrete impact on a communal, regional, national, or international scale.

Combining these narratives, Indigenous Sámi filmmakers have the power to use their voices to influence the global climate debate and change behaviour and policy while simultaneously reclaiming their cultural heritage wrecked by colonialism. To continue to grasp the dynamics at work in Sámi cinema and its wisdoms for global Fourth Cinema, it is essential to devote further academic study to the Indigenous films of the North. Although a handful of scholars have written in depth about Sámi moving image[1], the literary body is modest in comparison to the exploration of Fourth Cinema in North America and Oceania. However, Sámi cinema's close correlation to ecocinema is worth an extended investigation and can assist a further understanding of global Fourth Cinema due to the Sámi's remarkable connection between identity and climate politics. This thesis aims to contribute to this quest and stimulate curiosity for additional academic interest in Sámi cinema both for its own sake and for global significance.

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[1] Amongst others Christensen 2012, Dubois and Cocq 2020, Gaski 2013, Kääpä 2014, Kalvig 2020, MacKenzie and Stenport 2015, Skardhamar 2018, Stenport and Olav Lunde 2019.

Hypothesis

I use a framework of Fourth Cinema, first constructed by Maori filmmaker Barry Barclay, to explore the (historical) identity politics of the Sámi and employ an eco-critical approach to trace a bridge to climate politics. Fourth Cinema is a movement which empowers Indigenous people to take back control of their narrative and invites its audiences to envision an alternative to the Ecological Exotic Other constructed by Western colonial accounts. Whereas the roots of Fourth Cinema were first theorized in the 90s to strengthen Indigenous identity politics, it is now unquestionably intertwined with climate politics. In most indigenous cultures, land and identity are thoroughly interconnected, even more so under the threat of modernity and climate change. Consequently, Fourth Cinema meets ecocinema in the effort by Indigenous peoples to transmit their ways of knowing to a larger audience. Parallel to Fourth Cinema, ecocinema also originates from the mid-90s when film scholars increasingly begun to analytically question film's ecological elements (Rust, Monani, Cubitt 2).

At the core of this thesis is a study into the dialogue between ecocriticism and Fourth Cinema in Sámi film. The thesis's focal hypothesis is that an eco-critical study of Sámi Fourth Cinema offers alternative outlooks to contemporary Nordic climate discussions and crises while simultaneously empowering cultural sovereignty to Sámi communities oppressed by colonial mechanisms of Othering. As such, Fourth Cinema is a space where the Sámi have the authority to voice their outlooks on environmental issues from the perspective of their values and traditional ways of knowing. The increased emphasis of Sámi film on climate politics is not a deliberate move by the filmmakers. Climate politics are not replacing identity politics in Sámi cinema. In fact, climate politics are identity politics. The cultural identity of the Sámi is so closely tied to their land that the increased threat of global warming is a direct assault on their social distinctiveness. Time and again the Sámi are at the forefront of climate change in the North, whether due to increased temperatures, amplified extreme weather patterns or initiatives meant to combat the growing crisis, such as the establishment of large-scale wind farms obstructing traditional herding routes (Visser).

It is worth taking a closer look at the wind farm example referred to above. The wind park in question is located in the North of Norway and is part of the government's "greenification" strategy. The developer of the initiative offers a solution to the Sámi herders: to transport the 2000 reindeer through the wind farm area by trucks. However, this is not an option to the

Sámi herder Nils-Anders as it would have no connection to traditional herding (Visser). His statement shows that land *is* culture and that land issues *are* cultural matters.

It is safe to say that the Sámi are dealing with a changing environment due to a variety of reasons, as are Indigenous peoples around the world. It is crucial to point out that these changes did not set off due to climate change as we refer to it in the West. The Indigenous definition of climate change is must broader than the Western conception of industrial-induced global warming and is directly tied to the commencement of colonialism (White 7). Indigenous scholar Kyle Powys White has written extensively on the bond between climate injustice and colonialism. We will further explore his work in chapter 4, but for now it is important to note that calls for climate justice in Sámi films remain closely connected to their ongoing fight for further decolonization. The essential connection between climate change and colonialism extends far beyond Sápmi and adds an important dimension to Fourth Cinema from around the globe.

Methodology and Chapter Outline

Through a combination of theoretical discussion and close visual analysis I examine the relationship between Fourth Cinema and ecocriticism, between climate change and colonialism, and between Sámi identity politics and climate politics. A critical dialogue based on Barry Barclay's theory of Fourth Cinema and Stuart Hall's theory of the Spectacle of the Other lays a foundation to understand Sámi films from a postcolonial perspective and helps trace the bridge to the remarkable role of ecocinema in contemporary Indigenous cinema. To truly comprehend these dynamics in Sámi cinema, I employ a close visual analysis to three recent documentary films by Sámi creators. Each of these films adds a distinctive layer to the relationship between Fourth Cinema and ecocritism, while simultaneously all addressing the overarching themes which give Sámi films its significant role in Fourth Cinema. Although fiction will be referred to in the historical account of Sámi cinema, documentary is the focus of my own visual analysis.

The following chapters will first lay out the (historical) contexts of Fourth Cinema and the Othering of the Sámi to explore the ecological dialogue at the heart of Sámi cinema: *Eanan*. Earth. By understanding the potential to study Sámi film from an eco-critical perspective, a door opens to revive transnational Fourth Cinema, three decades after its initial conceptualization.

Chapter one dives into the theoretical foundations of Fourth Cinema, conceptualized by Barry Barclay, and its interaction with the debate on essentialism. I pay attention particularly to the distinction between essentialism and strategic essentialism within the global fight for rights by Indigenous peoples. Chapter two outlines the history of colonialization in the North, an understanding of which is vital is we want to truly comprehend the current situation of the Sámi living under the rule of the Nordic nation states. Chapter three focuses on the colonial mechanisms of Othering through a theoretical discussion of Stuart Hall's notion of The Spectacle of the Other, and its workings in the Nordic context. Chapter four combines all previous chapters by turning our gaze to Sámi cinema and its core value: *Eanan*. I produce an eco-critical understanding of Sámi film to point out its potential in contemporary environmental debates through a close visual analysis of three case studies of Sámi documentary filmmaking. I employ an eco-critical discussion centred on *Eanan* and traditional ways of knowing and managing natural resources. My chosen case studies are *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest* by Katja Gauriloff, *Eatnameamet: Our Silent Struggle* by Suvi West and *EALÁT* by Elle Márjá Eira.

Finally, I conclude with a hopeful discussion on the contribution of Fourth Cinema in the context of contemporary climate change and Indigenous rights. Although this thesis focuses on the Sámi, the connection between Fourth Cinema and ecocinema, and the correlation between climate justice and decolonisation, invites further study on a global scale and raises questions with universal value.

We are stroking, caressing the spine
of the land.
We are massaging the ricked
back of the land
with our sore but ever-loving feet:
hell, she loves it!
Squirming, the land wriggles
In delight
We love her.

Hone Tuwhare, Deep River Talk: Collected Poems, Auckland: Godwit Press 1993, p.126

1. Indigenous With a Capital “I”

1.1 Dignity in the Land of the Long White Cloud

Before we focus our attention North, let us dive into the theoretical foundations of Indigenous cinema to construct a strong and functional framework to view Sámi film productions. Our story begins on the other side of the world, in the settler state of New Zealand. In the early 2000s Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay (1944-2008) coined the term Fourth Cinema as an addition to the already defined First-Second-Third Cinema framework[2]. Barclay grounded his conceptualization in his belief that Indigenous Peoples are outside the national outlook by definition. The term Indigenous (with a capital “I”) refers specifically to remnant cultures enduring within the modern nation state (Barclay). Barclay argues that the ancient roots of Indigenous Peoples has resulted in an ancient outlook that persists outside the modern national outlook (Barclay 2003 7). Consequently, films created by Indigenous filmmakers cannot possibly fit within the existing theoretical structure of cinemas, nor will they be properly understood by a non-indigenous audience, according to Barclay (Milligan 349). Simply put, Barclay deems that the Indigenous camera always sees differently and frames differently (Milligan 349). He defined Fourth Cinema as a way for First Nations to control their own image and image-making (Milligan 348). By privileging the Indigenous gaze, filmmakers of native communities can take part in cultural self-representation, instead of being subjected to the gaze of the settler nation's media production. As such, "Fourth Cinema re-envisions the act of colonization from an Indigenous point of view, upsetting the traditional hierarchy of the gaze", as cleverly phrased by Jennifer Gauthier (Gauthier 284).

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[2] First cinema is the dominant Hollywood product, characterized by spectacle. Second cinema, also known as Auteurist cinema includes the French new wave and Brazilian Cinema Novo. These filmmakers attempt to find a new language but ultimately find themselves ‘trapped inside the fortress’. Third cinema aims to fight the system and considers itself a tool in the collective struggle against capitalism and racism. Third cinema is known as a cinema of liberation (Solanas, Getino 1).

The origins of Barclay's conception of Fourth Cinema can be found in his book *Our Own Image* (1990), in which he philosophizes how he can take the camera into his (Māori) community with dignity (Milligan 349). Dignity is essential to Barclay's values regarding filmmaking and rooted in the power of community. To legitimize the Indigenous gaze with dignity, the filmmaker must work in line with the communities' morals and principles (Milligan 349), both with regards to the content of the work and the manner of production. In other words, Fourth Cinema is founded in the idea of a communally made film, to do justice to the community being filmed (Murray 3).

Films by indigenous creators undoubtedly invite a primarily cultural reading with particular focus on identity and authenticity. It dominates the way these works are seen and valued and places them in their own category immediately. Discussing films in the context of Fourth Cinema only reinforces these practices. Add to that the fact that many native filmmakers indeed use their work to express their outlook on their ancestral beliefs in modern times. After decades of being subjected to cultural othering by anthropologists and ethnographers of settler states, indigenous filmmakers have taken back control of their image by picking up the camera themselves. Understandably, their prime objective is to represent themselves and to do so they turn their gaze to their own community and their cultural values. As long as there is an awareness regarding these viewing parameters, it should not obstruct a balanced reading of native art. Barclay himself clearly engages with activist activity and self-representation through his films. In his detailed analysis of Barclay's work Images of Dignity: Barry Barclay and Fourth Cinema, Stuart Murray explains that "it is the question and debates his [Barclay's] films unlock in their detail that are really substantial" resulting in a "mobilisation of foundational thoughts and ideas in the audiences that experience his films" (Murray 7). Barclay and his (international) colleagues wage their fight for global Indigenous agency and cultural self-determination through their cinematic works. The phrase cultural self-determination refers to the rights of Indigenous peoples to control, maintain and develop their cultural values as the agents of their own culture. Fourth cinema and cultural self-determination are closely linked because both adhere strongly to diversity and aim to create an equal and inclusive society (Erdeghem 60). As I shall argue in chapter 4, besides a cultural reading, Fourth Cinema also invites an eco-critical reading, due to the shared connection Indigenous peoples have with their lands.

1.2 The Trap of the Iceberg

Fourth Cinema can easily be misunderstood as simply the production of films by Indigenous filmmakers. However, if one were to adhere to such a definition, one risks giving into the temptation of looking only at the surface characteristics of Indigenous cultures. Natively produced films often include appearances of children, elders, families, rituals, and spirituality. However, these features are not what makes Fourth Cinema, according to Barclay's conceptualization. More so, such "surface features" are frequently presented as spectacles of Indigeneity, contributing to the damage done to Indigenous communities by ethnographic impulses and colonial ruling (Murray 17/18). As we shall see through the discussion of examples of (Sámi) Fourth Cinema throughout this thesis, including "surface spectacles" in their work is a fine line to walk for any Indigenous filmmaker. In some cases, the produced effect is a positive one of reclaiming cultural icons and rejecting stereotyping. However, in other instances an emphasis on mysticism and other stereotypical icons of Indigeneity counterproductively plays into the (heritage of) colonial politics of othering and further enables the construction of the Ecological Other as outside the hegemonic nation state (Kääpä 2014). Chapter three expands further on the spectacularization of the Other, in this case the Ecological Sámi, and the call on Indigenous peoples in general to perform difference.

To avoid such traps, Barclay advocates for a cinema guided at the conceptual level by the reworking of ancient core values of Indigenous cultures. He applies his theory to his own culture when he states: "My very strong hunch is that if we as Māori look closely enough and through the right pair of spectacles, we will find examples at every turn of how the old principles have been reworked to give vitality and richness to the way we conceive, develop, manufacture and present our films" (Barclay 2003 10). The term "reworked" is essential here and points to the way indigeneity simultaneously adapts to and resists the policies of the modern nation state. It is a grave misconception to claim that Indigenous communities are stuck in the past. Indigeneity at its core is about living in a way that is sustainable for many generations to come: a highly progressive mind-set. Traditional does not equal conservative; quite the opposite. In the age of climate change, traditional Indigenous knowledge of land use has the potential to be the way of the future. As history has shown, Indigenous communities have been master adaptors for thousands of years. The dynamic between adaptability and tradition is most evident in Sámi Fourth Cinema, as we shall see.

1.3 Let’s Talk About (Strategic) Essentialism

Although Barclay works from a Māori perspective within the mainstream New Zealand film industry, he defines Fourth Cinema as an umbrella term which can serve an international purpose. He believes the concept can offer both guidance in outlining a global indigeneity and space for the particulars of individual cultural communities (Murray 2). Looking at any aspect of indigeneity through a global lens is both necessary and extremely complex and opens the door for essentialist debate. Necessary because strength can be found in numbers and a sense of global indigeneity can reinforce an individual communities’ battle for their rights. However, anyone attempting to uncover similarities across such a diverse range of cultures and their beliefs and values, will inevitably run into controversial issues (Murray 2). Any discussion about indigeneity inevitably invites a discussion on essentialism.

Fourth Cinema is grounded in Barclay’s belief that Māori culture is not a uniform concept (Murray 5). We shall see later that it is this aspect particularly which makes it such a relevant framework for the Sámi context. Barclay is no cultural essentialist. Based on Barclay understanding of culture, I also adopt a non-essentialist view towards Sámi visual expression. As will be evident through a close viewing of several works of Sámi filmmakers, the cultural identity of the native inhabitants of Europe’s northern region is anything but homogenous. Especially through artistic expression the Sámi demonstrate their cultural fluidity and rich diversity. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Sámi identity is dependent on an essence without which it would lose its “Sáminess”.

However, the obvious benefits of a global Indigenous movement open a door to strategic essentialism. Classic essentialism is, in the words of Corinn Columpar, “a reductive presentation of identity” (Columpar 13). It is easy to reject essentialism based on the core values of diversity, individuality, and cultural self-determination, but strategic essentialism is more complicated: whereas essentialism has been classified as a tool of colonial suppression, *strategic* essentialism plays a role in the Indigenous struggle for recognition as a result of historical and ongoing marginalization.

Strategic essentialism embraces an Indigenous essence and promotes Indigenous unity in favour of a common cause. A shared identity is temporarily adopted to achieve political goals.

The reality of (post-)colonialism is that Indigenous people are often forced to reduce their individuality to a simplified stereotype of shared Indigeneity to have their voices heard. As is the case with reclaiming stereotypical icons in Fourth Cinema, it is crucial to be warry of the risks. Darren Ranco has rightly so pointed out the danger of strategic essentialism: “the fact that Indians have to use a stereotype rooted in colonial desires for this type of recognition is tragic, not only because these stereotypes are misleading, but because they potentially fulfil the colonial fantasies of disappearance” (Monani 230). In similar fashion, Kääpä combines Spivak’s work with Monani and Columpar’s in his statement that “the representation of traditional worldviews are, on the one hand, useful to the politics of recognition, but on the other hand, because they are distinct from hegemonic culture, they can be interpreted in ways that other and further marginalize Indigenous people” (Kääpä 145). Columpar points out the dilemma of the essentialist debate when she writes “abandoning essence, then, entails abandoning claims to sovereignty” (Columpar 14). Her observation underlines the complex problematic nature of essence. She refers to Avtar Brah to make sense of the contraposition between essentialist conceptions and postmodern mobility. Brah adds nuance to the discussion by arguing in favour of an understanding of homing desires while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins (Columpar 10).

1.4 The Global Fight for Rights

Barclay’s call for a global sense of Fourth Cinema can be seen as a cultural equivalent to the political unison of Indigenous communities from around the world. Whilst the world became more connected throughout the 20th century, the globalisation of Indigenous protest was a result of the obvious advantages of acting in unison (Murray 11). At the same time when individual states were increasingly adopting Indigenous rights into their legislation, new organisational bodies were established globally.

In 1975 the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) came into existence followed by the UN’s Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982 (Murray 12). The seventies saw Indigenous protests taking place in all corners of the world, from North America to New Zealand and from Australia to South-East Asia (Murray 12). Encouraged by a sense of a shared world view, Indigenous communities felt strengthened in their call for rights. Through the conception of the Fourth World Indigenous peoples claimed their legitimacy to co-exist both parallel to and within the modern nation state. Their claim is founded in the belief that the lived experiences of Indigenous lives are fundamentally different from their non-native counterparts. Such differences go beyond history and ancestry, and are rooted in cultural notions of family, community, land use and cosmology (Murray 13). Again, it is important to distinguish these shared experiences from essentialist claims of Indignity. Whereas the former allows space for the diversity and indefiniteness of an Indigenous identity, the latter purely reduces native people to their indigeneity and simplifies native presence within the nation state. Similarly, although Barclay's view of the Māori identity is rooted in key shared values such as whanau and iwi, he does not consider these concepts the essence of Māori indigeneity, nor does an underpinning of communal principles automatically lead to a static and inflexible conception of an Indigenous society (Murray 15).

Organisations such as the WCIP have themselves struggled with the challenge described above: how to incorporate the wide variety of communities into a single representative structure. The global Indigenous fight for rights is a constant balancing act between the need for unity and the danger of generalization. Here, again, Barclay's thoughts provide useful. He has contended that it is a shared sense of exclusion and feeling of sorrow due to historical injustice which lays the groundwork for worldwide cooperation, allowing space for wide-ranging cultural differences (Murray 16/17).

Whether or not the benefits of strategic essentialism outweigh the negative consequences, the distinction between strategic essentialism and essentialism remains crucial. Through the analysis of several Sámi films in chapter 4, I consider classic essentialism as a tool of colonial Othering but explore strategic essentialism as a tool of identity politics rooted in a shared Indigenous worldview and fundamental values. As identity and climate politics have blended, strategic essentialism has become part of Indigenous climate activism.

How I respect Sápmi
and the Sámi life
but what can I do
what
I hide in the depths
in the hiding places of the tundras
to watch silently
how my land is destroyed
our Sápmi
like lemmings in a flock
they spread everywhere
I blink

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, Trekways of the Wind

2. Sámi Through Time: Colonisation and Resistance

2.1 Homeland Glory

To comprehend the colonial mechanism of cultural othering both in general and specifically in the construction of the Ecological Sámi, we must first familiarize ourselves with the history of the Sámi's place in Nordic society and their fight for their right to exist parallel to the nation states. Knowledge of Sámi history is also extremely valuable when one starts to critically view Sámi Fourth Cinema, as we will do in chapter 4. Contemporary Sámi cinema makes many references to the past and without a base knowledge of historical events and oppression, meaning will be lost. The pain of injustice is a present-day reality for many Sámi (filmmakers), not only rooted in the past, but also due to the current minority politics in the Nordic countries. What follows is a brief account of the Sámi marginalization and their struggle to maintain their identity while oppressed by colonial rule.

Span across the northern regions of four nation states lies Sápmi: the homeland of the Sámi. The Sámi are the Indigenous people of the north of Europe. This means they were the original inhabitants before the arrival of people of different ethnic origins, often colonizers (Kuhn ix). The International Labour Organization defined Indigenous peoples in 1989 as "peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their decent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some of all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions".[3] Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia share a region where the descendants of the original inhabitants constitute only a small percentage of the contemporary residents. As the European nation states expanded their territory and claimed possession of the resource rich grounds up north, Sámi people lost their land and their nomadic way of life was put under pressure. It wasn't until the 1980s that the term Sámi became generally used in non-Sámi languages. As the support for Indigenous rights grew, it was accepted as the chosen term of Sámi self-identification. Prior, Lapp was the common term used, and still is to some degree nowadays. Lap/lapp, however, has patronizing connotations and is considered a racial slut (Kuhn xi).

2.2 A Brief and Incomplete Guide to Sámi Culture

As is the case with the majority of first nation people, the Sámi are a culturally and linguistically diverse group of Finno-Ugric decent (Ramnarine 240), originating from an area further East. North Sámi is spoken by the majority of Sámi speakers, but the total of 11 dialects includes South- Sámi, Lule Sámi and Skolt Sámi (Kuhn xvii). Other dialects such as Kemi Sámi and Akkala Sámi are already considered extinct (Kuhn 6). With an estimated population of 60.000-100.000 (the largest share living in Norway), the Sámi are subject to the laws of four different countries. Some Sámi consider themselves citizens of their nation state an as much Swedish or Norwegian as they do Sámi, others don't deem themselves part of the majority society they exist in (Kuhn 3). The number on the exact amount of Sámi is vague because there are no official statistics. The most common prerequisites are 1) to self-identify as Sámi and 2) to have at least one grandparent that was a Sámi speaker: this will allow you to vote for the Sámi parliament (Kuhn 2). It is essential to note that not all Sámi are Sámi speakers, a direct consequence of decades of language suppression by the colonial states. In fact, the majority of Sámi don't speak the language, despite revival strategies resulting in Sámi television programs, publications, schools, and language classes (Kuhn 6, Peterson 299).

It seems impossible to discuss the construction of the Sámi identity without mentioning reindeer. As we shall see, the reindeer became almost interchangeable with the cultural identity of the Sámi seen through the eyes of the non-indigenous Other. However, reindeer-herders make up less than 10 percent of those identifying as Sámi. Nowadays there are about 6000 Sámi engaging in the herding of half a million reindeer. Also, traditionally, not all Sámi were involved in reindeer herding, a practice not introduced on a larger scale until the 16th century (Kuhn 6). A majority share of the Sámi has always survived off fishing and was never involved in herding. Today the majority of Sámi live in urban areas and hold jobs no different from the rest of the population of the Nordic nation states (Kuhn 4).

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[3] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169

2.3 From BC to Beset

It is believed the Sámi arrived in the North of Europe around 2000BC and established a nomadic lifestyle revolving around hunting and fishing (Kuhn 5/6). During the early middle-ages the Sámi were a respected people who traded fur and handicrafts with outsiders visiting the coastal areas. It wasn't until the late middle-ages that their position and reputation shifted (Kuhn 6). In the early 17th century, a silver mine was established in the north of Sweden. This was the beginning of the arrival of businessmen and settlers from the South and Sámi were driven from their homes. Resistance was met with physical torture resulting in fleeing and displacement. However, it was the "cultural genocide" that has had the biggest lasting impact on the Sámi (Kuhn 8).

The settlers from the South considered the Sámi and their nomadic way of life as out and comparable to "primitive" peoples in European colonies. Such a lifestyle had no place in Europe. Therefore, (the predecessors of) the Nordic and Russian states began an assimilation process pressuring the Sámi to replace their ancient traditions and customs with a life centred around agriculture and set residence. Firstly, farming communities were established up north as the Sámi had no official ownership of the lands they used. Settlers were lured up north with promises of free land (Kuhn 9). Secondly, through educational and social policies the states tried to bring an end to Sámi language and culture. Supported by Darwinist claims, the nation states considered the Sámi as racially inferior and strived for a "natural vanishing" similar to that of the Native Americans (Dubois, Cocq 40). Christianity also played a role and was at odds with traditional Sámi spirituality and animism leading many Sámi to lead a double religious life. Forced to appear as Christian, they would attend church services while continuing to practice their own devotion in secret (Kuhn 10).

2.4 Rebellion is the New Shame

Local forms of Sámi activism, resistance, and cultural preservation date back to the 19th century. Several Sámi leaders and teachers in Norway and Sweden strived to sustain Sámi literacy amongst children and attempted to instil in the young generation a sense of pride in their native culture. They sought to activate their community and convince their fellow Sámi to work together to fight for universal rights with regards to land use, voting rights and education. Some called for a centralized government for the entire Sámi population. It was not an easy task. Not only were these activists fighting the "Norwegianization" policies of the state, but they also had to convince part of their own community.

Cocq and Dubois explain that it is common in postcolonial contexts for Indigenous activists to not only have to convert cultural outsiders of the value of their native culture, but cultural insiders as well. Generations of Sámi were exposed to cultural shaming and accusations of inferiority, leaving them to doubt their own ancestry and adhere to the practices of assimilation. Consequently, there is a division in the Sámi community that lives on till this day between activists who promote a decolonizing discourse and between Sámi that regard their language and traditions as obstacles to flourish in Scandinavian society (Dubois, Cocq 42/43). This clash also came to light because of the (in)famous Kautokeino uprising in 1852.

On November 8 a group of Sámi journeyed to Kautokeino and clashed with the inhabitants. They killed a Swedish merchant and local police chief before they were suppressed and arrested by other Sámi. In the decades that followed this act of resistance was framed as a result of "spiritual arrogance among a primitive and emotionally unstable nature people" (Christensen 59) and became a source of shame for the Sámi. The event has since been reframed, mostly notably by Nils Gaup's film *The Kautokeino Rebellion* (2008), because of the colonial and socio-economic conditions the Sámi had to endure. However, there remains a division amongst Sámi between those that consider it an act of appropriate resistance and those that remain embarrassed by the acts of their ancestors (Christensen 59).

Such divisions, however, do not discredit the injustice the Sámi have to endure as a people, even if they disagree on how to handle that unfairness. Kuhn rightly remarks that there seems to be an unfair assumption about conflicts among minorities, as opposed to majorities. He explains: "What is celebrated as "democracy," "diversity," and "critical thinking in majority culture is discredited as "turmoil," "chaos," and "immaturity" among minorities. Different Sámi have different opinions on things: that is perfectly normal" (Kuhn ix). I continue to stress the importance of diversity because it is foundational to understanding Fourth Cinema and Indigenous self-representation.

2.5 “Tyrann skall vara tyrann”

The 20th century brought to the North the borders of the nation states as we know them today. The rise of the Iron Curtain cut off the Russian Sámi for many decades. Sweden shifted its policy of assimilation to a strategy based on the phrase “lapp skall vara lapp” (Sámi shall be Sámi).[4] The Swedish government began to isolate the Sámi away from the majority population. Special schools were established for Sámi children, excluding a new generation from mainstream society. A policy of racial biology was also implemented at these schools and throughout Sápmi. Sámi were forced to undergo medical screenings and skull and bone measurements. Students had to undress in front of their peers and teachers and pose for photos (Kuhn 12). These Swedish practices are one of the main themes of the film *Sámi Blood* (2016), the most well-known film by a Sámi director produced in recent years (Tavares). Filmmaker Amanda Kernell shines a light on a fairly unknown side of Swedish society in the 1930s. The policy was short lived and abandoned in the 1940s, but with a lasting impact. Norway also established special schools for Sámi children, but in contrast to Sweden, never deviated from a policy of assimilation. Young Sámi were forced to attend boarding schools where they were not allowed to speak Sámi and were taught to become “good citizens” of the modern nation state (Kuhn 19).

To battle the various strategies of the Nordic states, the Sámi began increasingly to organise themselves across the national borders. The first Sámi congress was held on February 6 in 1917 in Trondheim, Norway[5]. Gradually a pan-Sámi movement emerged leading to the establishment of various post-war national and international organisations such as the Sámii Litto (1945, Finland), the Norske Reindriftsamers Landsforbund (1947, Norway), the Svenska Samernas Riksförbund (1950, Sweden) and the Sámi Council (1956, transnational) (Kuhn 22). The Sámi Council’s primary aim is to strive for and maintain “the cultural, political, economic and social rights of the Sámi in the legislation of the four states and in agreements between states and Sámi representative organizations”.[6] The Council played a large role in the creation of the national Sámi parliaments in Finland (1973), Norway (1989), Sweden (1993), and Russia (2010) (Kuhn 23). To understand the role of these parliaments within the nation state, one must keep two things in mind. First of all, the Sámi parliaments are advisory bodies only. Sápmi remains under the rule of the national governments of the four states (Kuhn 23). Secondly, its policies have never been aimed at the formation of a separate Sámi state. Logically and economically impossible, the lack of demand for a unified Sápmi nation raises questions and adds complexity with regards to Sámi self-determination until this day (Kuhn 40).

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[4] The political outlook based on “lapp skall vara lapp” has seen a revival in recent years with the rise of the Far Right in the Nordic countries. Far rights politicians holding office in the national parliaments of Norway, Sweden and Finland express sympathy, rooted in their own nationalistic attitude, for the Sámi’s right to their own culture as long as it’s kept separate from majority society (Kuhn 36).

[5] February 6 is celebrated as the Sámi’s official national day, as decided at the Sámi Conference in 1992 (Kuhn 30).

[6] https://www.saamicouncil.net/en/the-saami-council

2.6 Toto, We're Not in Kautokeino Anymore

After decades of slow but gradual process while suffering widespread structural discrimination, the Sámi civil rights struggle finally gained momentum due to the Alta Conflict of the late 70s. The Norwegian government desired to build a hydroelectric power station in the Alta River, sparking a resistance movement which changed the reputation of Sámi activism from passive and nearly invisible to pro-active and confident. The Alta power station was built regardless, even after several series of protests and hunger strikes by Sámi activists, but the globally generated attention for the Sámi plight led to a new phase of Sámification (Kuhn 24-29). In the words of Sámi artist Synnøve Persen, member of the former Máze Group[7] and participant in the 1979 hunger strike: "The week of the hunger strike in 1979 was one of the weeks when everything changed. Most importantly, it began to dawn on the people of Norway what was actually happening in Sápmi. They didn't know, and the authorities didn't want them to know. Many Norwegians hardly knew that Sámi existed outside of museums; they had no concept of us as living people. This was a week of revelation" (Kuhn 47). Encouraged by newfound support and sympathy from non-Indigenous allies, a Sámi art movement grew and thrived. Because the fight for rights had always been closely connected to the preservation of culture, art and politics were already strongly intertwined. A new generation of artists and activists proud of their cultural heritage and language led to the creation of a Sámi newspaper, artist collective, music festival, anthem, and flag (Kuhn 28-31).

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[7] The Máze Group was an Sami art collective founded in 1978 and played an important role in the Alta conflict (Kuhn 48-49).

2.7 Struggling to Survive in the Anthropocene

However, despite the cultural and political progress of the last hundred years, Sámi still face racism and disputes of land use on a regular base. Artists and activists Niillas Holmberg and Jenni Laiti wrote in 2015:

“Sápmi, our homeland, has been colonized and exploited. We, the Saami people, have been dislocated and disconnected from the land and from each other. We are struggling to hold on to the remains of our self-determination, our territorial and cultural rights. Without having the rights to exist and determine our future, we are unable to live as a distinct society. […] our Indigenous rights remain unrecognized and the Saami issues are still not taken seriously on national political agendas. A result of this situation is that we are not living; we struggle to survive.” (The Saami Manifesto via Dubois, Cocq 213)

Their language clearly illustrates the pain that many Sámi carry with them today and the need for continued exposure and consideration of Indigenous rights up north. As a powerful visual instrument, Fourth Cinema has the potential to benefit the Sámi cause and struggle for cultural and political self-determination. It can support the preservation of the Sámi language and educate the non-Indigenous society of the injustices committed, both historically and contemporary. Additionally, as global warming has permanently implanted itself in human dialogue, Fourth Cinema has also increasingly incorporated aspects of climate advocacy. Many Indigenous communities, among whom the Sámi, are experiencing first-hand the effects of Anthropogenic climate change, after they previously sustained and cared for their land for centuries without damaging impact. Fourth Cinema thus also invites an eco-critical reading in today’s landscape of environmental change.

Before we turn to the promising mechanisms of Fourth Cinema in the Sámi context, let us explore the ways in which Sámi indigeneity was represented as a Spectacle of Otherness by the colonizing states and society at large.

Let us poem a place where you cannot erase us into white space.
Let us dig to remind ourselves our roots are ancestral
and there is nothing deeper
than these sacred, dirt-covered hands.

Tanaya Winder, "Missing More Than a Word" Poetry June 2018

3. **The Spectacle of the Other**

3.1 Conceptualizing Othering: Colonial Habit or Inherently Eco-centric Human Practice?

The debate regarding the depiction of Indigenous cultures often brings up the idea of the Other, referring to representational practices of stereotyping by the dominant society. In contrast, in the context of New Zealand, Barclay designates the descendants of the European settlers as the Other (Barclay 2003 3), reminding us that othering is not a Western invention or monopoly. Othering and visual representation are closely intertwined as the Other is primarily constructed and reinforced through images, whether cinematic, photographic, or illustrated.

This chapter will dive into the mechanisms of Othering, explore its characteristically human nature, and examine its workings in a colonial context. To fully understand the contemporary situation and challenges facing Indigenous visual (self-)representation is it necessary to study the historical and theoretical underpinnings of colonial ethnographic custom and the process of Othering. To demonstrate its legacy in contemporary Indigenous representation and Sámi society, the current chapter will first examine the conceptualization of Othering with the help of the work cultural theorist Stuart Hall, followed by a discussion of its (historical) workings visual oppression of the Sámi.

For as long as we have kept historical records, humanity has been fascinated by difference, by those living "exotic" lives far removed from our own conception of normalcy. What is it about "difference" that intrigues people to the extent that it consumes our minds and dominates popular culture? What is the mysterious appeal of "otherness"? These are the questions Stuart Hall asked himself as he developed his notion of the Spectacle of the Other (Hall 225). Othering is closely related to the common practice of stereotyping to which native peoples have been subjected to for centuries: to be reduced to a few shared, simplified characteristics as a mechanism of control. To understand which strategies and methods contemporary Indigenous filmmakers are using to break the stereotype, it is important to grasp why we engage in the practice so extensively.

Hall's analysis of our obsession with difference consists of several explanations, all relating to meaning. He takes from Saussure when he lays out the foundational argument that "difference matters because it is essential to meaning: without it, meaning could not exist" (Hall, 234). Meaning is relational and to assign meaning to anything there needs to be an opposite component. For example, just as being Swedish means *something* because it is not being Spanish, it draws its significance in part from not being Sámi. Difference finds delight in the designation of the Other and is fundamental to the constitution of the self, as argued based on the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Lacan (Hall 236/237). In other words, our obsession with the Other is a by-product of our obsession with ourselves. For the ego to survive, it convinces the consciousness that there is no self without the Other. Thus, stereotyping is not automatically a negative thing, we need it to make sense of the world. However, it becomes an issue when used for defending racial discriminations (Lehtelä 2).

Othering is often associated with Orientalism, a discourse developed by Edward Said referring to the simplified portrayal of the East by Europe through which they were able to exert political and military power. Reducing a native population to a few simple characteristics through othering and stereotyping creates an imagined homogenous minority that is far easier to control than the reality of a diverse and scattered Indigenous population. Control and power play explain why Othering is an integrated part of colonial policy. However, widespread colonial resistance all over the world has demonstrated that the invented illusion of marginal uniformity crumbles as Indigenous peoples reclaim(ed) their voices and their land.

3.2 A Spectacle is Born

To maintain the value of the self-justified in the difference of the Other, a Spectacle[8] is born. It is through constant visual confirmation that the Other is preserved. The Spectacle of the

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[8] The idea of Spectacle was originally conceptualized by Guy Debord in 1967 and has since been utilized in myriad aspects of capitalist industrial society. Its connotations have shifted and evolved, and its relevance has been questioned. Debord's fundamental work on the Spectacle argues that in modern society the increased focus and obsession on images had led to an accumulation of spectacles, turning life into mere representation:

Other was truly established when cinema was invented during the height of imperialism. Film became a way for the Western nation states to allow their inhabitants to participate in their colonial ventures without them ever crossing physical borders. In line with the psychological mechanisms explained above, many citizens of the early 20th century were fascinated by their countries' overseas undertakings and were delighted to be offered a glimpse into a life culturally different from their own. Cinema was presented as a means of virtual travel (Columpar 1/2). French cinema, for example, was used as a tool by the French state to fight anticolonial resistance. Before the first World War, France possessed an empire stretching into Africa, Asia and the Pacific. To hold onto this major source of profit as popular support was falling, French cinema increasingly began offering its viewers fictional stories set in North Africa. Films such as Henri Fescourt's *La Maison du Maltais* (1927) and Jean Renoir's *Le Bled* (1929) were all about adventure and exoticism, never touching upon political or social topics (Sherzer 3/4). Movies produced throughout the 1930s reinforced stereotypes of North Africa with images of the desert and camels. French men were portrayed as the heroes and the Other as dangerous. Such films "contributed to the colonial spirit and temperament of conquest and to the construction of White identity and hegemony" (Sherzer 4). French cinema is a powerful example of how film, colonialism and othering are all intertwined.

Anthropology, "which provided colonialism with its alleged rationale" – according to Corinn Columpar – also embraced film with open arms (Columpar 3). Similar to photography, anthropologists considered film a perfect means to document other races. Somewhere between colonialism and anthropology, the ethnographic film was born. The precise definition of an ethnographic film is still up for debate. Some deem it as a sub-category of the documentary genre, whereas others include fictional examples (Columpar 4). A well-known example is Robert J. Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), often considered to be the first documentary film. What all ethnographic films of the colonial era have in common is that they reduce their subject to a racial type for a white spectator to enjoy. Consequently, the white identity is strengthened in terms of what the native is not, and difference is amplified measured against the white body as the norm (Columpar 4).

"everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation". The Spectacle is dominated by images, but it refers specifically to the social relation between people. In other words, it is the society that has come into being due to the increased materialisation of the visual world.[8] Mass production and circulation of spectacular images haves caused a separation between that which is recorded and the consumer of the image. Within capitalist society reality is increasingly "mediated through consumption of representations that are distant from that which is represented". (Debord 7)

Hall noted that people different from the majority are often represented through polarized extremes such as good ánd bad (Hall 229). This binary form of representation is especially true for Indigenous peoples who are expected to be both the hero and the villain. Early ethnographic records often painted a picture of the "happy savage". A primitive, uncivilized being, inferior to the refined inhabitant of the late 19th century nation state, but simultaneously admired for his/her romanticized unity with nature. As early as 1760, Scottish intellectual Hugh Blair wrote: "Surely, among the wild Laplanders, if anywhere, barbarity is in its most perfect state" (Dubois, Cocq 37). As we shall see in further analysis of Sámi representation, binary portrayals are especially susceptible to simplification.

3.3 Indigeneity for Sale

As nation states granted more rights to their Indigenous populations and began to (partially) repair the damage of the past, they also placed certain expectations upon their minorities. Elizabeth Povinelli comments on the Australian context: "as the nation stretches out its hands to ancient Aboriginal laws, indigenous subjects are called on to perform an authentic difference in exchange for the good feeling of the nation and the reparative legislation of the state" (Povinelli 6). In other words, a performance based on fixed ideas of authenticity and belonging is required in exchange for legal existence within the homeland. The outward visual expression of this compulsory difference may manifest into the surface spectacles that Barclay rejects in Fourth Cinema. A legacy of the ethnographic tendency of the 19th and early 20th century, such visual displays reinforce the colonial culture of othering and threatens the representation of Indigenous peoples with commodification (Murray 17-19). How can we possibly grant true justice and equality to Indigenous minorities if we cannot stop exoticizing them and placing monetary value on their difference? The rise of global tourism certainly hasn't helped in this respect and national tourist boards are guilty of advertising their Indigenous populations as a spectacle to attract more visitors. We certainly see this in the case of the Sámi. A quick google search yields thousands of results for "Sámi Experiences", "Sámi Tours", "Sámi Cultural Excursions" and includes offerings on the official website of the Norwegian tourist association. Although some of these experiences are created ethically and in collaboration with the Indigenous community and provides a stream of income for the Sámi, we must be extremely wary of those that are not. We should also question whether the financial payoff is worth the added pressure to perform difference and what the consequences are for the communities' authentic culture, both short and long term. Such questions deserve to be examined in more depth in a separate study but are important to note here regardless.

Commodification is further lurking due to the financial funding structures in place across nation states. Indigenous makers are often dependent on national film funds and therefore competing with their non-Indigenous colleagues. Film is an international commercial medium and inevitably leads to commodification of its images (Murray 19). The International Sámi Film Institute aims to tackle these issues, but Sámi filmmakers remain partly dependent on the film funds of Norway, Sweden and Finland. Additionally, the reality that many Sámi don't speak the Sámi language complicates their film industry as the ISFI only grants funding to projects that are designed exclusively in one of the Sámi languages and that are connected to Sámi culture with a Sámi theme.[9] This closes the door for Sámi filmmakers who aim to tell stories which focus less explicit on their cultural traditions or are outside their own experiences altogether. Simultaneously, Sámi filmmakers are notoriously overlooked by the national film institutes of Norway, Sweden and Finland. Consequently, these structures complicate Sámi Fourth Cinema. Whereas Barclay specifically argues that Fourth Cinema has many faces, the commodification of cinema narrows the range for Sámi filmmakers.

In other words, a combination of commodification mechanisms due to tourism and funding structures can reinforce historical othering and undermine the cultural complexity of Indigeneity Barclay is advocating for. Despite being challenged by these factors, Fourth Cinema has the potential to tackle these issues and offer an authentic response in an ever-globalized industry. In the next session we shall examine the workings of the Spectacle of the Other in the Sámi context and then, in the next chapter, we shall examine films by Sámi filmmakers which act as a counter movement to the Spectacle created by (the heritage of) the colonial gaze and the rise of commodification.

3.4 The Tale of the Noble Savage

The first historical images of the Sámi have been traced back to the 16th century. In 1539 the *Carta Marina* was published, the first detailed map of the Nordic countries, followed by the illustrated companion *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the Nordic People) in 1955 (Dubois 577-580). The work of Olaus Magnus, both map and book contain distinct visual references to an Artic people living in nature (Mecsei 73). Featuring hunters, fisherman, reindeer and skiers, the northern half of the Carta Marina looks noticeably different from the southern half, which is characterized by kings, knights, weapons, and ships. Magnus wrote about a nomadic people living there where the snow does not melt: “Since they have erected no towns or walls, each man carries his house with him; their foot-soldiers are archers, and they live not on bread but on fish and by hunting wild creatures. As houses they have wagons and tents, with either the tanned hides of animals or the bark of trees for a covering.” (Magnus 198)

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[9] https://isfi.no/services/

Accompanied by several illustrations of a hunting people, these works lay the foundation for the construction of a Sámi iconography by outsiders (Mecsei 73). Other literary works from the modern era repeatedly featured images of hunting, nomadism, Sámi tents, snow-covered landscapes, reindeer herding and skiers. Produced for a European audience, this early version of the Spectacle of the Other established the stereotypical visual features that we nowadays still associate with the Sámi. It is important to note that Magnus based his illustrations on an already existing literary narrative. Especially after the arrival of Christianity in the North around the year 1000, Nordic and European writers increasingly began to describe the Sámi and their pagan traditions as primitive and untrustworthy. A long tradition of Othering in literary works stretches all the way from Cornelius Tactitus mention of the Fenni in 98 A.D. to Shakespeare’s reference to “Lapland sorcerers” in the late 16th century (Dubois, Cocq 39). As visual representation emerged, it simply followed the prevalent views.

The first accounts of Sámi characters in fiction films date back to the 1920s such as *Growth of the Soil* (1921) and *Laila* (1929) (Mecsei 73, Skardhamar 294). The binary manner of representation common for Indigenous peoples is immediately evident when one compares these two works. *Growth of the Soil* features the Sámi character Os-Anders: he is portrayed in a negative way contrasting the Norwegian main role. *Laila*, on the other hand, offers the viewer a romanticized depiction of “noble savages” living in harmony with nature (Erdeghem 58, Skardhamar 294). Despite their differences both films adhere to the practices of othering and stereotyping reflecting the national attitude towards the Sámi (Mescei 74), one by villainizing, the other by romanticizing. In the interwar period the Sámi identity was subject to cultural commodification and the rise of the touristic gaze as described in the previous section. Through occasional demonizing the notion of the Other was maintained while simultaneously the imagined Sámi identity was constructed as wild, exotic, and romantic (Mescei 74). The 70s saw a gradual turn towards a more compassionate representation acknowledging the assimilation policies the Sámi had had to endure. Although they still adhered to a primitivist discourse, new films emerged as a result of the social movements calling for Sámi rights that had begun to rise. However, none of them were Sámi productions, they were all created from an outsider perspective (Mescei 74). The next chapter will see a change in such as Sámi filmmakers reached for the camera themselves to tell their stories first-hand.

"We wander across the lands that our ancestors have wandered. Traditionally, we should live in such a way that this earth will carry and feed the future generations too. But these lands and waters are no longer in our possession. Other people decide to gets to use them."[10]
Suvi West

4. Frozen Fourth Cinema

4.1 An Invitation

What follows is an eco-critical discussion of Sámi Fourth Cinema based on three recent non-fiction works by Sámi creators: *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest*, *Eatnameamet: Our Silent Struggle* and *EALÁT*. By situating them in transnational Fourth Cinema and recognizing their ecocentric features, these films are a strong statement against anthropocentric climate policy and in favour of embracing Indigenous knowledge in (inter)national decision making. As I carefully examine these works of Fourth Cinema, I invite the reader to keep the following question by Scott McDonald in mind: "Is it not possible that the expanded use of [these films] […] might play a small but useful role in helping viewers become more mindful of the implications of their conventional cinematic experiences, and more patient not only in their engagements with the environment, but in their efforts to guide inevitable environmental change in directions that nurture a more healthy planet?" (Rust, Monani, Cubitt 41) Building upon McDonald's general plea for a more eco-conscious viewing experience, I encourage the reader to also pay specific attention to the essential relationship between identity and climate politics grounded in *Eanan*: what does the link between culture and land, between self and environment, tell us about the evolution of Fourth Cinema, both on a Nordic and Global scale? What role does Fourth Cinema play, or has the potential to play, in the global climate debate? Such considerations will inevitably lead to further inquiries, a selection of which will be raised in the conclusion.

4.2 The Pathfinder Reclaims the Past

It wasn't until the late 1980s that Sámi filmmakers picked up the camera themselves and joined the Nordic film industry. In 1987, *Pathfinder* (*Olefas*) premiered in Norwegian cinemas. This film by Sámi director Nils Gaup is often referred to as the first Sámi feature film and has been highly praised. Other films such as *Minister of State* (Paul-Anders Simma, 1997), *Bázo* (Lars Göran Pettersson, 2003) and *The Kautokeino Rebellion* (Nils Gaup, 2008) have received similar acclaim regarding their success to address the complexity and variety of the Sámi identity (Mescei 75). Just as there is not one homogenous Sámi community, there is also not one form of Sámi film that is considered part of Fourth Cinema. Fourth Cinema can both emphasize, and thereby reclaim, traditional indigenous principles such as nomadism, or reject such customs in favour of a more modern, often urban, portrayal of Sámi life. Both are authentic representations of indigeneity when created by a Sámi filmmaker as a form of cultural self-determination (Moffat, 4).

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[10] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 27:05

Pathfinder is deemed a turning point in Sámi film history and a substantial influence on the Sámi cultural renaissance and collective identity, after decades of suppression by the Nordic nation states. Monica Kim Mecsei's chapter "Cultural Stereotypes and Negotiations in Sámi Cinema" in the collected work *Films on Ice* explains the significance of Gaup's works as follows: *Pathfinder* and *The Kautokeino Rebellion* present voices from inside a minority and create a discourse of authentic self-representation by reclaiming sovereignty of sacred stereotypical icons and instilling them with positivity (Mescei 77, Ramnarine 240). She argues that "Gaup's Sámi films arguably recontextualise cultural stereotypes from a negative and simplistic understanding to one that is a self-empowering and revitalising force" (Mescei 77).

Mescei's analysis is in line with the main scholarly body on Sámi cinema, but it doesn't consider Gaup's works in the context of global indigenous cinema, nor does she address the ancient core values of Sáminess that Barclay considers the core of Fourth Cinema. She recognizes that the "surface features" presented in Gaup's films ironically align with the national and touristic gaze and reinforce the ideas of the Sámi culture as homogeneous and different from Norwegian culture. In other words, they are also part of the problem they seek to criticize (Kääpä 2014) and therefore a paradox has emerged: *Pathfinder* and *The Kautokeino Rebellion* are simultaneously considered insider works of cultural self-representation and affirmative of stereotypes conceptualized by outsiders. Specifically, *The Kautokeino Rebellion* invites further critical reflection because it focuses solely on injustices of the past. An historical epoch as such, in this case with support from national official funding, becomes complicit in the nation's effort of global self-promotion of anticolonial politics and compensation for past mistakes. Framing of this nature puts colonialism firmly in the past and doesn't address contemporary injustices. Clearly both films invite multiple ways of viewing and contrasting opinions.

4.3 *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest*

4.3.1 The Question and the Answer

At the time of release *Pathfinder* and *The Kautokeino Rebellion* were considerably significant due to their contribution to the reclaiming of Indigenous icons and the reframing of colonial history, but their relevance has diminished due to both continued inequality in the North and global climate change. The current situation demands attention to contemporary injustices from an eco-critical perspective. Also considering that Gaup's work has been discussed extensively, I have chosen to focus on contemporary works of non-fiction instead.

As we dive into the first case study, *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest* by Katja Gauriloff, let us consider the particularities of Sámi Fourth Cinema and focus on the aspects that invite an eco-critical approach. To discuss and understand Sámi films through the lens of Fourth Cinema we must ask ourselves which values are at the root of Sáminess. In his conceptualization of Fourth Cinema Barclay considers the core values of Maori life essential. He speaks of principles such as whanaungatanga (kinship), mana (spiritual power/authority), manaakitanga (hospitality), aroha (love/empathy) and, most importantly, community (Milligan 348-354). Travelling across the globe to Sápmi, we find that Sámi society is ultimately rooted in the idea of *Eanan*: earth, land, mother. The Sámi Manifesto explains Eanan as follows: "*Eanan* is the base for everything. *Eanan* is the question and the answer. Nothing defines us better than her. Our survival depends on her. It is our responsibility to protect, respect and take care of our mother, so that we, and all the generations to come, can live as one with her. Reconnected." (Kuhn 169) She. Not it. In this context *Eanan* is a living, breathing entity. In 2010, communities from all around the world gathered in Bolivia for the *World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth*. Indigenous communities contributed substantially to the formulation of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, of which the first article states: "Mother Earth is a living being."[11] The declaration challenges the ruling anthropocentric worldview by focusing on the rights of Earth as opposed to human rights. As we will see through the visual analysis of *Kaisa's Enchanted*

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[11] https://pwccc.wordpress.com/programa/

Forest, the distinction between an anthropocentric and ecocentric outlook plays a vital role in understanding Sámi Fourth Cinema.

4.3.2 Skolts

Kaisa's Enchanted Forest is a 2016 documentary by Katja Gauriloff tracing the story of the friendship between Kaisa Gauriloff, the filmmaker's great-grandmother, and Swiss writer Robert Crottet. Katja Gauriloff was born to a Finnish father and Skolt Sámi mother. The Skolt Sámi are a Sámi minority mostly living in a small pocket of northern Finland. Contemporary figures estimate only about 700 Skolt Sámi remain. Not all of them speak their traditional language: Skolt Sámi. Before the second World War the Skolts were spread across northern Finland from Lake Inari all the way into Russia to the present-day site of Murmansk. However, the Skolts on the Russian side of the border were relocated from their homeland after WWII and settled in the villages around Inari. Very few Skolts remain in Russia nowadays.

I have chosen a film by a Skolt Sámi maker for several reasons. Firstly, it underlines a very important principle of Fourth Cinema: the recognition of diversity within Indigenous communities. *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest* is a prime example of a film that gives "space for the particulars of [an] individual cultural communities"[12]. Secondly, the Skolts are deemed one of the more traditional Sámi reindeer herding and fishermen communities, meaning their livelihood is highly dependent on their environment and thus they are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Throughout the film we are exposed to old video recordings of the landscape of northern Finland and its inhabitants: sweeping glaciers, forests engulfed in snow, frozen lakes used by the Skolt children for ice skating and by the adults for fishing, and intimate encounters with reindeer. During the coldest months (early December to Easter), the Skolt Sámi lived in their winter villages where the children went to school and communal events were held. The rest of the year the families lived on their own familial lands, in harmony with the surrounding wilderness. The Skolt Sámi had lived a semi-nomadic life for thousands of years, sustaining their land for the next generation. The Skolts story is a painful one and they lost everything when they were evacuated as the Lapland war broke out[13]: their homes, lands, and reindeer. "No other people in Finland had suffered as much from the war as the Skolts. They lost everything."[14] When they were resettled after the war, a strong period of 'Finlandization' began: no new winter village was built, and the old way of life was lost.

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[12] See p,2

[13] The Lapland War consisted of fighting between Finland and Nazi Germany from September to November 1944 in the norh of Finland: Lapland.

The resettlement is a form of environmental change as referred to by Kyle Powys Whyte which the Skolts had to endure and were forced to adapt to long before climate change became part of Western vocabulary. Colonialism and climate injustice go hand in hand, according to Indigenous scholar Kyle Powys Whyte, and climate justice is fundamentally about decolonisation. He argues that climate change is not a new phenomenon according to an Indigenous outlook. Whereas the Western world considers climate change to be an issue of the past few decades, slowly initiated since the industrial revolution, Indigenous voices often link environmental change to the commencement of colonialism. I have already briefly touched upon the adaptability of Indigenous peoples, which is most evident when it comes to adapting to environmental change. Traditionally Indigenous peoples have a long history of adapting to the seasonal changes throughout the year, resulting in a way of life that doesn't pressure the environment to sustain all life on Earth. When the settlers arrived, they were forced to adapt to anthropogenic environmental change inflicted by the colonizers, such as deforestation, water pollution, land loss for large scale agriculture or resettlement. Environmental impacts have been felt by Indigenous peoples ever since the settler states began to form. Whyte considers climate change, as referred to be the West, to fit succinctly within this pattern and yet another episode of colonialism inflicting anthropogenic environmental change on Indigenous peoples (Whyte 7). Fourth Cinema's sustainable call for action therefore remains deeply connected to processes of decolonization.

Gauriloff's work illustrates and underlines Whyte's theory which argues that contemporary climate change is "colonial déjà vu" for many Indigenous peoples. He maintains that "climate change impacts and drivers represent another form of inflicted anthropogenic environmental change" and "for many Indigenous peoples, these rapid changes are experienced as a continuation of settler colonialism and other forms of colonialism that they have endured for many years" (Whyte 8). To further understand the correlation between climate change and colonialism, let's briefly return to the practice of Othering and its relationship to *Eanan*.

The Sámi's deep connection to their land hadn't not gone unnoticed and early cinematic depictions by non-Indigenous filmmakers played into the role of nature in Indigenous lives and with the aim to differentiate from the increasingly urbanized and modernized citizens of the Nordic nation states, whether by romanticizing (noble savage) or villainizing (animistic and violent) Sámi existence. Scholar Pietari Kääpä argues that "in such narratives, the Sámis' environmental immersion acts as the ultimate tool of othering" (Kääpä 2017 138), in line with the general mechanisms of othering, difference and meaning discussed previously[15]. Without its explicit mention, *Eanan* has been exploited repeatedly as a political tool by the colonial states of the North to maintain their grip on their territories. Kääpä argues that this exploitation enacts slow violence, a form of violence coined by Rob Nixon and referring to injustice inflicted through environmental disasters such as loggings, deforestation and climate change that is viewed too slow and thus invisible to call for widespread political or ethical awareness (Kääpä 2017 138). Keeping this in mind, let's dive further into Kaisa's story.

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[14] Kaisa's Enchanted Forest 48:55

4.3.3 Kaisa

Kaisa's Enchanted Forest opens with an air of mysticism. Spiritualistic bells and music accompany the first lines of the voice-over. Straight of the back, Gauriloff employs the introductory scene to take back sovereignty of this specific aspect of Sámi identity. The inclusion of mystic elements complicates the stereotypical Othering imposed on the Sámi by non-Indigenous voices. Kääpä observed similar mechanisms in films such as the classic Sámi epoch *The Pathfinder* and the short film *The Tale of Arctic Love*[16]. He explained it as follows: "Instead of Othering, the mystical angle works inclusively, blending contemporary lifestyles and means of representation with traditional worldviews" (Kääpä 145). Mysticism in Fourth Cinema reverses the process of stereotyping and instead reinforces authority of Indigenous culture.

The connection to the Earth, to *Eanan*, is introduced within the first minutes. Kaisa's receives a guest, and instead of offering coffee, she serves a drink with "ingredient picked from the veins of the Earth. It is the blood of the Earth. It gives live to all things."[17] We immediately get to know Kaisa as a woman with deep connections to the Earth, and a strong believe in the cycle of life and death. Cyclicality, as opposed to linearity, is presented as a theme early on: "In the veins of the earth, life and death flow side by side."[18]

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[15] Further emphazied by Kääpa in his statement: "the naturalization of minority cultures conceptualizes these peoples as more closely attached to nature than the hegemonic populations, and thus, as inherently different from the norm, an other" (Kääpä 2014 164)

[16] Dir. Paul Anders Simmons

[17] Kaisa's Enchanted Forest 00:28 – 00:40

[18] Kaisa's Enchanted Forest 00:58

Intimately connected to *Eanan*, is the Sámi's concept of temporality. Traditionally, the Sámi adhere to a distinctly cyclical approach to time and nature. Aligned with an ecocentric worldview, the Sámi's conception of the cycle of life includes humanity, all other life forms and all Earth's natural resources. A lifestyle aligned with the seasons is most evident amongst reindeer herders who take their herds to the mountains in summer and the forests in autumn, but present throughout Sámi culture and "considered integral to the Sámis' self-conceptualization of their place in the world" (Kääpä 2017 137). A cyclic conception of time is diametrically opposed to a linear one. Mainstream society favours a linear mode of time which is primarily concerned with increasing human production and consumption (Kääpä 2017 137). The way *Eanan* is infused in Kaisa's story offers an alternative perspective on time and human productivity.

4.3.4 Robert

The viewer is then introduced to Robert Crottet through a passage from his book *The Enchanted Forest*. Crottet describes the Skolts as a people that still live in a golden era, a dream of a time without wars of violence.[19] In reality he refers to the 1930s, a time very much defined by the impending second World War and on the verge of the forced relocation of the Skolts from Russia to Finland. Crottet implies that despite hardship, the Skolt Sámi live in harmony with all that surrounds them, both places and peoples. It is an interesting choice Gauriloff made: an Indigenous maker telling the story of her indigenous ancestor through the eyes of a non-Indigenous western writer and filmmaker. The effect is a direct challenge to the curious logic of hegemonic power and an illustration of Kääpä observation that Sámi Fourth Cinema often blurs the disputes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous norms (Kääpä 2017 142). Again, similar to Gaup and Simma's films (*The Pathfinder* and *The Tale of Arctic Love*, referred to above), Gauriloff's work can be considered a statement against a binary distinction of worlds and values (Kääpä 2017 145).

The case against a binary black and white worldview is further build when the audience is given a peak into Crotett's past. Born to a Russian mother and Swiss father, Crotett flew from Russia to Switserland with his grandmother at the age of 10, as the Russian revolution commenced. At 25, he was diagnosed with Tuberculosis, causing him to experience feverish dreams of "little bright-eyed creatures. They seemed to belong to the Tribe of Lapland. But they spoke Russian. They said I needed to go to them. They would be waiting.[20] By assigning a mystical spiritual experience of a vision dream to a non-Indigenous character, Gauriloff continues to distort the binary divide between the "rational Western man" and the "Exotic Other". Crotett's spirituality is further infused by Mahatma Gandhi, who visits and lectures at the asylum where he is being treated. Words of peace, pacifism and love, ideals that could have protected the world from war, had the world been ready to listen, were forever instilled in his mind. A parallel can be drawn here to the argument that Indigenous knowledge could have prevented the world from climate change, had the leaders of nation states not been controlled by colonial urges, but by compassion and openness to cooperation instead.

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[19] Kaisa's Enchanted Forest 01:46 – 02:12

Before ever having set foot in Sápmi, Crotett felt like he had found his true home up north. He speaks of a connection to the land so strong, not unlike that typically ascribed to Indigenous peoples. After recovering from tuberculosis and losing his grandmother, he began his long journey by boat, train and, eventually, sled. As Europe prepares for war, Crotett follows the irresistible call of the north. A researcher he met in Helsinki tells him about the Skolt Sámi, a community with a remarkable similarity to the people of his dreams. Up north, he meets Kaisa.

4.3.5 When Robert Met Kaisa

Robert Crotett clearly holds the utmost respect for the Skolt Sámi, he came to view Kaisa as his mother, but he also resembles the early colonial explorers in many ways. He speaks of a romantic fantasy and the image of the north instilled in him by his dreams reeks of exoticism and wildness, not unlike the dominant stereotypes of both past and present. He decides to follow his vision to "the end of Europe"[21] because he is fed up with "the world on the verge of paying for the expensive fruits of civilization."[22] Which lends the question: what sets him apart and why does he deserve to be the narrator of Kaisa's story? Why did Gauriloff choose him? Is it her intention to tell the true story of her Indigenous ancestors through the eyes of a non-Indigenous "intruder"? By choosing Crotett, Gauriloff creates the effect of an invitation to the non-Indigenous viewer to join him in his investigation. Is she granting him authority to tell this story on behalf of her great-grandmother? It seems Crotett is there to be identified with so that the viewer can learn and be educated on the story of the Sámi Skolt at the same pace as the narrator. He asks himself: “But could I depict their relationship to nature and animals? Could I depict their innocence and above all their natural way of living side by side without arguing so as not to fall ill or awaken the sleeping evil spirits?”[23]

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[20] Kaisa's Enchanted Forest 17:59 – 18:15
[21] Kaisa's Enchanted Forest 24:38
[22] Kaisa's Enchanted Forest 22:05

The film is guided by Crotett’s desire to learn from the Sámi Skolt and their way of living close to nature. The stereotypical roles are reversed by Crotett’s observations that is the “civilized” nations that become engulfed by war and the “savages” that live in a childlike harmony in the so-called golden age. Upon arriving in Suenjel[24] and after a warm welcome, Crotett first observations of the Skolt Sámi was their close connection to nature and their humanely approach of everything they did.[25] Kaisa had a way with words which Gauriloff was able to share with the world through audio and video recordings made by Crotett. In her “own language of imagery”[26], Kaisa tells the legends and tales of the Skolts. Gauriloff revives her great-grandmothers stories through hauntingly beautiful animations, creating a poetic account of age-old myths of birch trees turning into women, buried bones turning into houses and the origins of the Northern Lights.

Kaisa’s Enchanted Forest is a poetic and aesthetic piece of Fourth Cinema not only illustrating the Sámi cyclicality of *Eanan*, but also making a strong argument in favour of traditional ways of knowing. The film demonstrates that the Skolts have been adapting to anthropogenic environmental change for decades. By depicting Crotett’s journey in his own words – the journey of a Western man studying and adapting to the ways of the Sámi – Gauriloff’s work declares that there is indeed a lot to be learned from the Sámi’s way of living in harmony with nature and simultaneously it challenges a binary division of the world. Though set in the past, the themes and conflicts with the Finnish government are still remarkably present today, as illustrated through the next case study: *Eatnameamet: Our Silent Struggle*.

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[23] Kaisa’s Enchanted Forest 32:31 – 32:45

[24] Skolt village – 223 inhabitants / 30 families in 1938.

[25] Kaisa’s Enchanted Forest 28:50

[26] Kaisa’s Enchanted Forest 03:48

4.4 *Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle*

4.4.1 All Hail Ecocinema

So far, we have established that whereas Barclay's cinema was rooted in community, Sámi film is fundamentally grounded in *Eanan*. Kaisa's story has shown us that more than a word or a concept, *Eanan* represents a worldview, a core value to which all other values and actions can be traced. Similar to Māori culture, community plays a vital role in Sápmi. The importance of *Eanan* points to the value of the community in Sámi society because it literally concerns the survival of that community. The Sámi adhere to a life connected to *Eanan* to preserve their existence on Earth for the next generation. Under the threat of climate change, it seems that the old-age values of the Sámi are finally gaining ground among the peoples of the Western world (Kuhn 109). The idea that the earth has endless resources has long been shattered and more people and companies have adopted increasingly sustainable habits and company policies to variable degree aligned with Indigenous respect for nature and all its inhabitants. Evidently, it hasn't been enough, and we are still heading towards a climate disaster that could become reality within the next few decades. This concern has given rise to a cinematic movement that extends beyond Indigenous film: ecocinema.

Ecocinema is a relatively new area of studies within film studies and there is not one consensual definition on which scholars agree. Generally speaking, ecocinema refers to films that induce its audience to (re)consider the pressing state of our natural surroundings and humanities' relationship with its environment. Ecocinema commonly calls attention to current environmental crises, such as global warming, deforestation, loss of wildness and biodiversity, rising sea levels and melting glaciers. Scholars largely agree that ecocinematic viewing can be applied to all films, not merely a specific genre or style (Rust, Monani, Cubitt 3). By incorporating an eco-critical analysis in our viewing of Fourth Cinema, we can respond to the inherent link between identity and climate politics so prominent in Sámi film. Ultimately, ecocinema studies allows for alternative "ways of seeing the world other than through the narrow perspective of the anthropocentric gaze that situates individual human desires at the center of the moral universe" (Rust, Monani, Cubitt 11). Such reasoning is a helpful point of departure for our close analysis of *Eatnameamet*.

4.4.2 From the Earth

Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle (2021) is a political documentary by Sámi filmmaker Suvi West portraying the contemporary struggle of the Sámi in Finland to fight for their existence and maintain their land. Fourth Cinema is by definition a political movement and the very act of picking up the camera as an Indigenous filmmaker is a political one because it constitutes a deed of self-representation of a minority culture within a majority society. West takes the camera into her community, giving a voice to a wide range of actors advocating for Indigenous rights and climate justice up north.

As with *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest*, the film begins and ends with *Eanan*. While the screen is still black, West's voice-over whispers: "Our story begins from the earth. We, the Sámi people, have inhabited the Sápmi region from time immemorial. Long before states or other people. Now we live oppressed under colonialist states. We are not the Sámi people of Finland. We are our own people in four different states. And we fight for our future."[27] The old age connection to the land is emphasized through a first-person perspective, adding urgency and authority to the claims. West herself is clearly a part of the community represented in.

The film supports the notion that it is through beliefs and shared worldviews that a communal connection to a place has defied time and extreme external pressure. Whereas essentialism is grounded in an ontological essence[28], Indigenous communities are preserved through cultural roots. The connection to the land is linked to cultural identity. Intrinsically intertwined for millenniums, culture and land have become mutually reinforcing pillars of Sáminess. As the leader of the Sámi Youth Movement explains in the film "I can't see a future for the Sámi culture as an indigenous culture, if we don't own our lands and waters."[29] *Eatnameamet* demonstrates the intrinsic link between culture and climate and shows how *Eanan* is tradition and the need to preserve their own lands is a cultural value within Sámi identity.

4.4.3 Back to the Present

The introductory scene of the film purposely bombards the viewer with a brief overview of the injustices done to the Sámi people by the Finnish state through colonialism. Important to note is that these injustices are not merely of the past. The film starts off with a direct claim that colonialism is still very much a reality in northern Finland today. The language of colonialism has the tendency to be associated with the past as academic study has moved to post colonialism as a framework to define and understand the power relations between nations, minorities, and peoples. *Eatnameamet* carries colonialism into the present day as the truth for the Sámi today.

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[27] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 00:32 – 01:05

[28] Ontological refers to a state of being: characteristics so intwined with a being's essence that without them the meaning of the being seizes to exist.

[29] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 02:34

Where *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest* ended *Eatnameamet* continues. Through a policy of assimilation driven by boarding schools, a new generation of Sámi is now advocating for the language and the rights their parents lost: "The connection to the earth and to our ancestors in is our language."[30] The film follows the initial happenings in the so-called Truth and Reconciliation process, initiated by the Finnish Prime Minister's office, to shed light on the historical injustices done to Sámi people and ask the question: "but what about the wrongdoings that are taking place today?"[31] The concept of reconciliation assumes forgiveness, but it becomes immediately evident that the Sámi's trauma runs deep and that forgiveness is not apparent. "The real aim has to be that the process will induce action. Its only purpose cannot be to make us sad about our experience."[32] Whereas the government focuses on healing pain inflicted on past generations, the Sámi are calling for action in the present day.

4.4.4 The Right to Exist

Through its different chapters (The Truth, Language, Hatred, Ownership, Earth, Power and The Powers) *Eatnameamet* shines a light on the consequences of decades of Finlandization. West mixes an observational style with elements of a classic talking heads documentary, countered by a poetic thread throughout the film. Each chapter sets off with a personal musing by the director, accompanied by sweeping visuals of forests and rivers, stimulating a deeper connection to the natural world, before diving into a variety of aspects of present-day injustices. By including many fly-on-the-wall scenes she follows Fourth Cinema's tendency to reject a binary worldview. The film is clearly a tool to tell the Sámi point of view, but it leaves space for a wide range of characters to share their story, such as the representative of the government appointed to lead the hearings. Through her cinematic style, West also definitely rejects any visual representation that could contribute to the practice of othering: “I wanted to focus on the activism, the politics, not showing Sámi people with their reindeer doing a joik”.[33]

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[30] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 10:12
[31] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 03:43
[32] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 07:59

The film calls attention to the knowledge of indigenous people in the face of climate change and the reality that their voices are often ignored. West muses and asks the viewer: “The screams of others drown our voices. When we try to say that we also have the right to exist, we are cursed to be silent. Are we valuable only when something can be taken from us?”[34] The right to exist, the right to livelihood and therefore the ability to exist is threatened by global warming in the Arctic. West takes the viewer to a demonstration against climate change in Helsinki. Indigenous representatives are present, and the president of the Sámi Youth Association gives a speech on the steps of the Helsinki Cathedral: “The livelihood and culture of the indigenous people depends on the conditions of our lands and waters. And as the arctic indigenous people, the Sámi are the first to feel the impact of global warming. Research shows that the know-how of the indigenous people about our lands is key to preventing global warming on those areas. So, by involving indigenous people in decision-making, the politicians can make more sustainable decisions.”[35] There is no mention of an “Ecological Sámi”, but a call to seize the opportunity to avert the threat of global warming by including Indigenous voices in decision making processes.

4.4.5 Ecocentric Activism in an Anthropogenic World

As the film continues and a wide variety of Sámi are given a voice, the familiar values rooted in *Eanan*, those of temporality and cyclic time, can be found in West’s documentary. *Eanan* distinguishes an ecocentric worldview from an anthropocentric worldview. Anthropocentricism is currently dominant across the world and refers to a way of thinking that centralizes human experience over other parts of the ecosystem (Kääpä 2014). Human welfare is the objective and human experience is not questioned as the decisive authority of knowledge (Kääpä 2014). A new wave of environmental films may seem to be concerned with the welfare of the planet but is ultimately consistent with the leading anthropocentric outlook. Climate change is a threat to humankind and thus the concern for the Earth is at the end of the day a concern for humanity. Since Al Gore’s (in)famous *An Inconvenient Truth* a wide range of films by filmmakers and celebrities alike have attempted to deal with the climate issue from an anthropocentric perspective. Ecocentric approaches, on the contrary, appeal for a rethinking of humanity's centrality and call for an approach that considers humanity as part of the ecosystem, on par with all the other components that make up the network of existence on Earth (Kääpä 2014).

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[33] https://businessdoceurope.com/hot-docs-interview-Sámi-filmmaker-suvi-west-on-eatnameamet/

[34] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 14.15

[35] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 25:18

The Sámi have by tradition adhered to an ecocentric worldview and this hasn't changed in the face of climate change. Ecocentric values were passed down through the generations and are infused both in everyday life and in creative expression. Whereas mainstream cinema is generally anthropocentric, Sámi film is grounded in ecocentrism and thus fundamentally different from a non-Indigenous perspective. As discussed before, Barclay's conceptualization of Fourth Cinema is rooted in the idea that the Indigenous experience is forever unlike the non-Indigenous experience. Within Sámi culture this difference can be more specifically traced to the ecocentric worldview of *Eanan*.

Ecocentrism if deeply infused in West's documentary. Every Sámi person that gets a say in *Eatnameamet* does so from an ecocentric worldview. We learn that ownership was a foreign concept to the old Sámi. Instead, they spoke of borrowing their lands.[36] Before the nation state there was no need for ownership, as land was simply used by each generation and passed on to the next, emphasizing the Sámi's understanding of their own temporarily and their role as part of the ecosystem. Now the land is owned by the state and the Sámi must pay rent to the State Forest Enterprise for their usage. A member of the Sámi Parliament explains it as follows: "The more the Finns from the south own lands here up north and the more power they get over their lands, the more the focus will turn to how the Finns' position could be improved."[37] His description of the Finns adheres to a linear view of time – as opposed to the Sámi's cyclic conception of time. The aim of Finnish ownership of land is to grow Finnish prosperity, an anthropocentric aim.

Eatnameamet not only confronts the viewer with the reality of present-day colonialism, it also serves as a strong example of Fourth Cinema's potential to take up space in the environmental debate. It illustrates the relevance of Indigenous film to global climate issues. The film offers an alternative to the hegemonic narrative of post-colonialism and Western climate policy. It has the potential to contribute to a growing awareness of environmental justice rooted in

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[36] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 33:20

[37] Eatnameamet - Our Silent Struggle 34:45

Indigenous rights. I finish this analysis by pointing out that if we follow Whyte's argument of climate change as a continuation of anthropogenic environmental change, the activists portrayed in the film shouldn't automatically be classified as environmentalists. The act of speaking up at a climate protest should instead be seen as a part of the ongoing battle to defend Sámi lands and resources and continuing call for self-determination.

4.5 *EALÁT*

4.5.1 Pandora

Although opinions are divided, the Nordic states claim to be postcolonial and have implemented laws to compensate for the injustice done to the Sámi. West's *Eatnameamet* shows the ways the Finnish government is still controlling its Sámi population through land disputes. While *Eanan* still seems to be a mechanism of "colonial" control (at least in the Finnish context), another usage of Indigenous peoples' connection to their land has emerged over the past few decades (as Western climate change developed). As early as the 1970s the "ecological Indian" appeared in the United States in the context of environmental campaigning followed by similar representations in other parts of the world (Mathisen 18). Indigenous and environmental causes often align, and hence non-Indigenous environmentalists have noticed the importance of Indigenous knowledge and the strategic value of joining forces (Mathisen 18). Mathisen has noted, however, that "this partnership is created on the basis of a Western, hegemonic construction of indigenous populations, and not necessarily on how these indigenous people see themselves" (Mathisen, 18).

From the previously mentioned *Nanook of the North* to the well-known blockbuster *Avatar* (2009), this prototypical character, most often associated with Indian Indigeneity, continues to make an appearance in mainstream cinema as a popular symbol of eco-purity (Monani 229). In many of such cases, the Ecological Indian is employed to satisfy the Euro-American desire to escape from modernity, rather than as a tool of environmentalism (Monani 229). Not only does the construction of the Ecological Indian contribute to the ongoing process of Othering, but it also takes away Indigenous peoples' right to cultural self-expression by taking non-Indigenous ownership of their relation to nature.

Thus, on the one hand we have an ongoing stereotypical depiction of the Ecological prototype as the exotic other and, on the other hand, a growing climate crisis in an anthropocentric world. Which brings us to our final visual analysis: the short film *EALÁT* by Sámi artist Elle Márjá Eira.

4.5.2 Never Alone in Nature

EALÁT depicts the contemporary reality of reindeer husbandry in a deeply personal work. Eira is from a reindeer herding family in Kautokeino[38] and documents her return home amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Eira narrates the film with her own voice. The film opens with slow music as she says: "In my heart, I carry with me the knowledge and skills gifted upon me by my ancestors."[39]. It is immediately evident that Eira places enormous value on the knowledge of previous generations. Her words are accompanied by a close-up shot of her eyes, followed by a close-up of a reindeer's eye: signifying the unique bond between human and reindeer.

EALÁT (eng: pastures) is a visually stunning work: scenes of reindeer drifting in circles shot from above are mesmerizing and poetic. Images of the frozen landscape feel otherworldly and mystical. Joik[40] accompanies the images and further enchants the viewer and draws us into Eira's world. Stereotypical imagery of reindeers, lavvu[41] and desolate landscapes are used but don't feel stereotypical due to the effortless blending of handheld observational and sweeping stylistic shots. It feels real, instilled with authority by the filmmaker through her tranquil voiceover and lived experiences. By instilling her work with an air of casual reportage mixed with intentional prose, the viewer gets the impression that he/she/they is simultaneous watching a true account on the struggles of the Sámi in the face of climate change on the 8 'o clock news and attending a carefully curated art exhibition portraying the realities of modern Sámi culture. *EALÁT* exudes authentic confidence and refuses to be placed in any preconceived box of performativity. Eira is doing what other Indigenous filmmakers have done before her: she takes back sovereignty by using icons that were once used as tools of othering. She reclaims the markers of her identity, an identity inseparable from her environment. Her connection to her families' craft and her homeland can be *felt* through the screen. "Never alone in nature. Reindeer is my life. This is my home."[42] Eira's work can be considered a direct counter move against Western (colonial) films which depict the

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[38] https://www.ellemarja.com/about

[39] EALÁT 00:26

[40] Joik (yoik) is a traditional form of Sámi singing and music.

[41] Lavvu is a traditional nomadic tent used by the Sámi.

[42] EALÁT 01:08

"Ecological Indian/Sámi". She reclaims ownership of her relation to nature and thereby defies the Western demand to perform a certain way for the satisfaction of Euro-American desire.

4.5.3 Balance

EALÁT offers a unique look into the practicalities of reindeer herding. It doesn't put on a show to fit into outsider's expectations. It portrays reindeer herding as both a traditional craft and a modern profession. It blends the everyday aspects with age-old beliefs in a natural, effortless, way. *EALÁT* does an excellent job in depicting the reality of a lifestyle where tradition and modernity meet. Modern snowmobiles shoot through a landscape untouched by humanity. Traditional belts and scarfs are worn over high tech outdoor gear. Teeth are brushed with a plastic toothbrush after spending the night in a lavvu. Phones are mindlessly scrolled on while warming up by the fire or used to look for signal on top of a mountain.

Contemporary Sámi cinema is defined by its pursuit of balance between traditional and modern cultures (Kääpä 2017 139). Kääpä observes that "such cinema attempts to find both a space for vocalizing Sámi sovereignty alongside hegemonic political projects such as the United Nations Declarations of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (Kääpä 2017 139). The Sámi are, of course, a modern people living in a society ruled by linear time (Kääpä 2017 138). Strength can be found in the ways in which Sámi cinema blends its communities' modern needs with its old age values.

The Sámi's believe in temporality and cyclic time is evident in Eira's words: "Time does not pass, time comes."[43] These conceptions of time stem from the traditional nomadic way of live. The cyclicity of the seasons has guided the Sámi's movements for thousands of years and seeped into all other aspects of life. Temporality can be found stylistically as well. Each scene is a fleeting moment, a temporary peak into the lives of a family up north. *EALÁT* tells a coherent story through a compilation of independent moments and observations reminding the viewer that nothing is everlasting, and time continues to come. Temporality and ecocentrism are closely connected and both become abundantly clear when Eira says: "The abundance and beauty of nature is precious. In nature, I find peace. We could never get by without nature. Nature will get by without us."[44] Eira and her family adhere to an ecocentric worldview which has sustained the Earth for many generations before anthropocentrism took over on a global scale. Now, they are faced with yet another environmental threat to their way of life: global warming.

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[43] EALÁT 04:30
[44] EALÁT 16:51

The changing climate is threatening reindeer herding, but not in the way one might immediately associate with temperatures rising. The reindeer are barely surviving because there is more snow than ever. They can't feed themselves through the thick layer of ice known as *čuokke*[45] (Roué 230).[46] *EALÁT* is a first-hand account of the struggle of Sámi reindeer herders in the face of unpredictable weather. The cyclicality of the seasons is no longer what it used to be: warm stretches in winter cause the snow to refreeze into solid ice crusts, making it impossible for the reindeer to reach the lichen through a layer of impenetrable ice. Eira also shows the viewer that the summer of 2020 witnessed more snow than ever seen before by her father, who has been herding for 50 years. She confronts the viewer with the fact that anthropogenic climate change has taken over from natural seasonal change and that there might be a limit to the Sámi's adaptability in the near future. A lifestyle which endured for many centuries, is now at the brick of extinction.

4.6 Trinity

A poetical historical documentary, a present-day political fight forgotten, and a deeply personal collection of musings and observations: each of these three stories carries a message clear as dawn: listen. If we do not listen, we risk losing more than an age-old culture. The earth as we know it will seize to exist, every single person around the world will be affected, if we do not change our ways. Through offering an understanding of the Sámi's relationship to nature both historically and contemporary, these films combined advocate for more than rectifying the injustices their protagonists endured. They invite viewers to evaluate their own connection to nature. They engage the audience both practically *and* philosophically. This raises the question of actionable impact. Do these films have a concrete impact in terms of audience behavioural change? Will a viewer vote, consume, act, or speak up in a different way after watching Sámi Fourth Cinema? My hypothesis is that is depends on the audience targeted. However, to test such a theory requires further empirical study, which I hope will be conducted soon. For now, we can conclude that these films have shown us that cinema presents an opportunity to not only set the record straight regarding romanticized and villainized notions of Sáminess, but it also offers its audience an imagining of ecological existentialism different from hegemonic concepts of modernity (Kääpä 2017 136). The answer to whether re-contemplation can be transformed into measurable action lies in the future.

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[45] Translates as 'ice-crust on pasture', the current most feared environmental challenge for herders (Roué 230, 241).

[46] EALÁT 07:16

Conclusion: Nature Will Get By Without Us

Sámi scholar Harald Gaski has noted a shift in mind-set: “What gives me hope is that people in the Western world begin to understand the importance of indigenous values: the connection to the land, the respect for nature and all its inhabitants. These values will be crucial if we want humankind to survive.” (Kuhn 109) Similar to Gaski, the filmmakers discussed in the previous chapter refer to Indigenous knowledge and its worth in an ecological context. What exactly is referred to when one speaks of Indigenous knowledge? Several definitions by scholars have in common an emphasize on the dynamic quality of information shaped by beliefs and practices and passed down from generation to generation (Axelsson-Linkowski et al. 482). The Anthropocene has created a unique situation where climate change has accelerated at such a pace that it has created an immense challenge for the otherwise adaptive nature of Indigenous land use and ecological knowledge. For thousands of years the Sámi have adjusted to natural seasonal and gradual changes and maintained a way of living that was sustainable for the generations to come. Until now. The current generation of reindeer herders, among those Eira’s family portrayed in *EALÁT*, suspect they might be the last. Studies have shown that the difficulty in predicting the weather is one of the main challenges facing reindeer herders today (Axelsson-Linkowski et al. 484).

Over the past 20 years the concept of climate change has become part of majority vocabulary triggering a slow shift in the ego of citizens of the nation state. While there is also still a movement of climate change deniers, the call to listen to those that have maintained the land for centuries is growing in intensity. The films discussed in the previous chapter contribute to the assurance that Indigenous voices are not once again overshadowed by their modern counterparts. Fourth Cinema has the potential to play an essential role in the climate discussion while simultaneously defying the ever-persisting colonial gaze. As colonialism and climate injustice are undoubtedly intertwined, any analysis of post-colonial Fourth Cinema will inevitably engage with its ecocritical aspects. Such an ecocritical may provide answers to some of the most pressing climate emergencies facing the Earth today. *Kaisa’s Enchanted Forest*, *Eatnameamet* and *EALÁT* all bring forth the ecocentric ideas of temporality and cyclicality if we view and analyse these works through an eco-critical perspective. They are a strong argument for the importance of Fourth Cinema in today’s discussion about and fight against climate change. These films are also an invitation to its audiences to reconsider their own relationship with nature and their connection to the natural landscape. In a time in modernity where many feel stressed out by the speed of life, these films are a gentle nudge to slow down and breathe in the knowing that we are all part of the same ecosystem. Such understanding and increased value assigned to nature has the potential to lead to more sustainable ways of life, whether expressed through personal lifestyle choices or through joining collective calls to action.

It is my hope to see many more Indigenous productions from across the world emerge in the coming years and decades so humanity can keep continue to learn from the age-old beliefs that have sustained and protected earth for thousands of years. Hopefully this thesis will contribute to increased interest in the field of eco-critical Indigenous film studies, specifically Sámi, allowing not only Indigenous filmmakers, but also Indigenous scholars to claim their sovereignty. In the end, it leaves us with the question: Can Fourth Cinema guide us through the perils of the Anthropocene? And if we are ever tempted by the heritage of colonial thought and temporarily forget about the value of Indigenous knowledge, let us come back again and again to the ultimate truth so accurately voiced by Elle Márjá Eira: "We could never get by without nature. Nature will get by without us."[47]

EANAN. EARTH. MOTHER.

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[47] EALÁT 16:51

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