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Sojourner cinema: global dialogues in contemporary Latvian film

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation has impacted on the structure of cinema production. Since the 1980s, scholars have been searching for a productive framework with which to examine increasingly transnational cinema industries. Sojourner cinema is one such concept, introduced by Jane Mills in 2014. This article further explores the newly developed sojourner concept through an examination of Latvian filmmaker, Māris Martinsons, and his films. It aims not only to bring light to Martinsons' work, but also to contribute to the growing scholarship on sojourner cinema more broadly.

KEYWORDS

Sojourner cinema; European cinema; Latvian cinema; Māris Martinsons; Kaori Momoi; cosmopolitanism; accented cinema

Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Iron Curtain in the 1980s exacerbated processes of globalisation in the post-industrial world. This led to an increase in transnational flows of culture and capital across and through national boundaries. This increased globalisation also impacted on the structure of cinema industries. The nature of film production within national film industries changed, as they became increasingly involved with global networks through pan-regional funding bodies, such as Eurimages, and co-production agreements between nation-states.

Since the 1980s, national cinema scholars have been trying to account for these transnational, cross-cultural and pan-regional influences apparent in almost all national film industries (Higson 1989; Hjort and MacKenzie 2000; Higbee and Lim 2010). It was no longer possible, they realised, to examine national cinemas as reflections of hermetically sealed national cultures. The current tendency in the discipline of film studies, therefore, is to analyse national cinemas through a transnational framework, exploring how globalisation is experienced and responded to in specific film industries (Schindler 2014; Nāripea 2015; Imre 2012; Elsaessar 2005).

Another key research area that has emerged due to the increasingly global nature of film production is that of exilic and diasporic cinema, often approached through Hamid Naficy's framework of 'accented cinema' (2001). Here, the increased migration facilitated through open borders is examined through a framework of displacement and dislocation.

While it is important to examine and interrogate the work of filmmakers who are in exile or belong to a diasporic group, the focus mostly on negative experiences of migration and displacement have left other film styles or practices under-theorised. Maria Rovisco, for example, states that cosmopolitan cinema, where mobility is not necessarily associated with exile and displacement, is largely ignored in scholarly discourse (2013, 149). This claim is further supported by Jane Mills who asserts that there are filmmakers who travel voluntarily across borders to produce and develop films, but for which there is no constructive paradigm (2014, 143). In response to this theoretical gap, Mills has introduced the concept of 'sojourner cinema'.

This article further explores the emerging sojourner concept through an examination of Latvian filmmaker, Māris Martinsons, and his films. In applying this concept to Martinsons' films, the paper aims to demonstrate how sojourner cinema differs from accented cinema, with which it shares many similarities. The current socio-political context in Latvia is argued to facilitate Martinsons' filmmaking practice, which is based in cross-cultural dialogues and partnerships. His films are unique in the Latvian cinemascape, as the exceptionally transnational production process in which they are created has led to the formation of multivocal and multifocal stylistics based in practices of cosmopolitanism.

Sojourner cinema

The term 'sojourner cinema' was introduced by Jane Mills in the spring 2014 issue of the journal, *Framework*. It is, as she states, a term that she is in the process of defining and refining, and that it is currently not a fixed category, but an emergent one (2015). Her motivation in developing this concept is to primarily explore what films can tell us about cosmopolitanism and hospitality (2015). While a concept in development, Mills' extensive analysis of films and filmmakers, such as Akira Kurosawa who travelled from Japan to the USSR to make *Dersu Uzala* (1975), Sofia Coppola who travelled from America to Japan for her film *Lost in Translation* (2003) and German Wim Wenders who travelled to America to film *Paris, Texas* (1984), has identified a number of common characteristics shared by most sojourner films (2014, 144). The initial characteristic is that the filmmaker travels to another country to shoot their film, returning to their homeland once the project is complete. The process of travel in the production of the films is reflected in the filmmaker's preoccupation with mobility in their work, but unlike diasporic or exilic filmmakers, their films are not inflected with a sense of homelessness or homesickness. Rather, central to these films is the relationship between the host and the guest, exploring how people from different cultures connect and learn from one another.

Sojourner filmmakers do not represent mobility from an experience of forced displacement; however, they still share many similarities with what Hamid Naficy has called the accented filmmaker. Naficy defines accented cinema not as a genre but as an 'emergent structure of feeling', grounded firmly in the production context of the filmmaker's 'profound experience of deterritorialisation' (2001, 26). This deterritorialisation manifests in accented films through particular stylistic and narrative approaches. They are often fragmented, nonlinear, dialogic, self-reflexive, multivocal, multifocal and multilingual (2001, 105, 135, 49). The employment of these techniques represents the in-betweenness of diasporic and exilic filmmakers, and the characters they create in film.

The sojourner filmmaker arguably also experiences an in-betweenness. Unlike the exilic or diasporic filmmaker, who is in-between multiple 'homes', the sojourner is at home in in-between spaces. John Di Stefano calls this a 'between-home-ness', and states that this is a new paradigm of home for the cosmopolitan where home is 'the routine and habitual practice of mobility itself' (2002, 41). Sojourner cinema is, therefore, similarly to accented cinema borne out of a specific production context. It differs, however, in that this context is one of privileged agency where travel is based on a cosmopolitan curiosity rather than a forced displacement. In this regard, there is arguably a class difference between accented and sojourner cinema, where accented cinema manifests from the world's 'precariat' (Mills 2015) and sojourner cinema belongs to the world's cosmopolitan class. To further understand this cosmopolitan class, it is important to examine the geo-critical theory of rooted cosmopolitanism; a theory that allows for the dialogic relationship between the local and global. In fact, Mills states that the idea of rooted cosmopolitanism is central to sojourner cinema (2014, 154).

The theory of rooted cosmopolitanism is often attributed to Kwame Anthony Appiah. It has also been developed by other scholars such as Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande. The theory of rooted cosmopolitanism allows for cultural difference in a globalised world. To be a rooted cosmopolitan is to understand the obligations of global citizenship within your own, and other's specific local and national contexts (Appiah 2006, xv). This, Appiah argues, encourages more openness to cultural difference based on the idea of common humanity. It is meant to generate cross-cultural communications based on a dialogue of difference, seeking similarities and differences, not engaging in the process of binary 'othering' (2006, xv).

Beck insists that rooted cosmopolitanism is not so much a choice as a product of the current interdependent state of the world, consolidated through the increasing flows of culture and capital across and between nation-states. Sovereign states now depend upon each other in a world where problems and threats are shared by national polities, such as the spread of fanatic violence through the global terrorist network 'Islamic State'. It is, Beck maintains, no longer possible to think through old binaries such as internal and external, national and international or us and them. It is necessary to acknowledge the dialogic relationship between the local and global through a 'both/and' paradigm (2006, 14).

Central to the theory of rooted cosmopolitanism is nationalism. Nationalism, Beck states, helps to ground cosmopolitanism and ensures that it does not become like universalism where 'cultural differences are overcome or excluded' (2006, 51). An integral aspect of rooted cosmopolitanism is the acceptance of foreign cultures as an enriching interaction, rather than something to be feared (Beck and Grande 2007, 14). This mirrors Beck's hypothesis of the cosmopolitan, who forms 'new concepts of integration and identity that enable and affirm coexistence across borders, without requiring that distinctiveness and difference be sacrificed on the altar of supposed (national) equality' (Beck and Grande 2007, 14). The national as a frame of reference in understanding identities remains important in the 'rooted' cosmopolitan outlook to avoid the homogenising trends of universalism (Beck 2006, 62). Rooted cosmopolitanism, Beck argues, is a combination of 'local loyalty, global openness and moral interdependence' (2006, 43).

This both/and paradigm, characterised by local loyalty and global openness, is developed in sojourner cinema through the interaction of the guest filmmaker with the host nation (Beck 2006, 154). The conversational nature of sojourner films and the sojourner filmmaking process develops from the multifocal perspectives, apparent in this host/guest

relationship, rather than from an experience of deterritorialisation where exilic and diasporic filmmakers try and reconcile the cultures and values of the home that they have left behind with those of their new home. The multivocal and multifocal nature of sojourner films is much more celebratory. The sojourner does not feel that their culture is under threat locally or globally.

Sojourner cinema is, similarly to accented cinema, what Raymond Williams would call an 'emergent structure of feeling' (Orram and Williams 1954) rather than a genre. The emergent structure of feeling is, however, more positive as sojourner filmmakers feel at home in in-between spaces, and embrace cross-cultural dialogues. This 'between-homeness', while a different experience of mobility than experienced by exilic or diasporic filmmakers, has led nevertheless to similar stylistic concerns in sojourner films. As Mills explains, sojourner cinema is multivocal, multifocal and dialogic (2014, 144–146). These characteristics are central to Martinsons' work.

Martinsons' sojourner cinema

Martinsons' films and filmmaking practice are highly dialogic, aligning him with the sojourner tendency. His films, *Amaya/Hong Kong Confidential* (2010), *Oki – Okeāna vidū/Oki – In the Middle of the Ocean* (2014) and *Maģiskais Kimono/Magic Kimono* (forthcoming), are all structured around guest/host interactions. They are punctuated with moments of cross-cultural communication and local/global tensions. In turn, the aesthetic of his films can be characterised as multifocal and multivocal, visually and sonically representing transnational global flows.

There are a number of colluding factors that have facilitated the development of Martinsons' sojourning practice. In the first instance, travel is central to Martinsons' career and work ethic. He was born in Latvia in 1960 and studied theatre directing at the Latvian Academy of Culture, graduating in 1989. He began his career directing music videos for Latvian bands in the 1990s. He did not stay and work in Latvia for long after this period. In 1994 he moved to Lithuania where he established a production company called ARTe&a. In Lithuania, he worked on projects for television until 2006 when he started to develop his first feature film, *Loss* (2008). He now lives in Latvia, re-emigrating in 2010, and journeys outside of Latvia whenever he begins work on another film. Since 2006, he has developed films in Ireland, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Lithuania, Portugal and Japan.

The opening of Latvia's borders and the globalisation of the Latvian film industry assisted Martinsons' mobility, and has allowed him to access production and funding resources external to the nation. This integration of Latvia and Latvian cinema into a broader global community was encouraged by the politicians who embraced a liberal internationalist discourse and who were invested in the development of a both/and identity paradigm for the Latvian people. To better understand how Martinsons' sojourner tendency developed in contemporary Latvian cinema, it is important to first rehearse the influence of the liberal internationalist discourse in Latvian society.

Latvian liberal internationalism and 'rooted' cosmopolitanism

The liberal internationalist discourse embraces transnational flows and the greater interdependencies between nation-states. The discourse first emerged in Latvia during the

nation's first period of independence from 1918 to 1940. Liberal internationalism was the dominant discourse of the nation at the beginning of this period, prior to being replaced by agrarian nationalism. As Katrina Z. S. Schwartz highlights, the founding fathers of the Latvian nation had fought for the liberation of Latvians from post-feudal penury and encouraged a discourse that shifted the image of the Latvian nation away from that of a peasant nation (2006, 8). To do so, some Latvians imagined themselves as 'cosmopolitan middlemen whose fortunes lay in exploiting their homeland's littoral geography of transit' (2006, 8). This helped to reposition Latvia as part of Western Europe, reminding Europe of the important place the Latvian capital Riga had played in the Hanseatic League from the thirteenth and seventeenth century.

The re-emergence of the liberal internationalist discourse in contemporary Latvia can be attributed to similar motivations to those of the nation's founding fathers. Many modern Latvians want to move away from, what they perceive to be, the backwardness associated with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, which the nation was part of for some 50 odd years. Māris Cepurītis and Rinalds Gulbis maintain that many Latvians thought the only way out of the 'pointless Soviet system' was with the help of Western Europe (2012, 51). This shift to the West of Europe is not unique to Latvia. The majority of post-communist countries engaged in some sort of rhetoric of 'returning to Europe' after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Stukuls Eglītis in Schwartz 2006, 9). This was particularly pronounced in the Baltic nations, especially Latvia and Estonia.

A broader identification with Europe was intertwined with Latvia's return to sovereignty. A number of scholars, including Schwartz, Holly Case and Maija Kūle, highlight the idea that the collapse of the Soviet Union not only returned sovereignty to post-communist nations, but also returned them to 'Europe'. Case contends that Eastern Europeans have always seen themselves as European, rather than Soviet or as part of the 'orientalised' east of Europe (2009, 114). As D. Berindei states, Eastern Europeans considered themselves as 'the last bastion of Western civilisation', 'sacrificing themselves on the altar of Europe' (Berindei in Case 2009, 113) trying to resist the Soviet culture and protect the rest of Europe from its further spread (Case 2009, 113). The collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as an opportunity to 'return to Europe' and many post-communist countries embraced becoming members of the EU. They saw it as a return to the national project that had begun, just as in Latvia, in the interwar period (Case 2009, 126).

Schwartz claims that the narrative of return was strongest in the Baltic States, primarily because they were seen by other Soviet states as the 'Soviet West' (2006, 10). This was largely due to their geographical positioning on the very Western edge of the Soviet Union (2006, 10), and also because the living standards in the Baltic States were higher than in other Soviet countries (Commercio 2010, 44). The Baltic States were also more westernised before the Soviets invaded and the nations had access to modern Western European technology that had not yet travelled to the far corners of the Soviet empire (2010, 44). The westernisation of the Baltic people between 1918 and 1940 also saw a western mind-set develop in the Baltic States. The Soviet occupation was experienced as a "clash of civilisations" inside the mind of every single individual' (Schwartz 2006, 10).

Latvia and Estonia, however, did not deny their Soviet past. Instead, as part of their 'return to Europe', they highlighted their nations as crossroads between East and West. They aimed to establish themselves as crucial players in the increasing transnational flows

of culture and capital between both sides of Europe, hence, finding a meaningful place in the neoliberal European geography.

The liberal internationalist narrative of the Latvian nation is centred on the image of Latvia as a 'bridge between East and West' (Schwartz 2006, 9). Since regaining independence in 1991, the majority of the political elites have focused their energy on Latvia's multicultural cities and ports as the new identifiers of Latvia, highlighting economic growth and global business. Others emphasised that Riga was very similar to other centres of globalist capitalism like Hong Kong, attempting to advertise Riga and Latvia as a 'multicultural transit hub' (2006, 10). Schwartz conjures the atmosphere in the late 1990s:

Riga had reclaimed its place among the cosmopolitan capitals of Europe, with its breathtakingly beautiful restored Jugendstil facades, luxury import boutiques, German tour buses, and armies of cellular phone-wielding business people, foreign diplomats, and young polyglot Latvian professionals. The free port of Ventspils on the northern Kurzeme coast, home to a booming transshipment facility for oil piped in from Russia, was Latvia's most notorious cash cow throughout the 1990s. (2006, 90–91)

Not only the political geography was changing, liberal political elites also emphasised the need to form more inclusive citizenship policies. During the years leading up to Latvia's accession to the EU in 2004, Latvia's political elite insisted that they were dedicated to the principles of human rights and would ensure that Latvia would become a state where cultural difference was embraced and the rights of minorities protected (Hanovs, Mihailovs, and Tēraudkalns 2006, 43). This move was no doubt encouraged by the numerous EU directives that Latvia had to meet in order to be able to join the European community (Cepuritis and Gulbis 2012, 51).

The parties elected to government since 1991 have remained largely conservative right-wing and populist to varying degrees. There has always been, however, an acknowledgment in Latvia of the need to integrate with Europe. Even extreme right-wing parties like the 'National Alliance' view European integration as important, if only out of the necessity to be able to oppose Russia (L'Hermine 2014). Scholar Daunis Auers elaborates stating that 'the governing Latvian parties have consistently placed Latvia's integration into the EU, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and other major western organisations at the heart of foreign and security policy, and Russia's annexation of Crimea has made them all the more pro-European' (Auers 2014). This overwhelmingly pro-European stance in Latvian politics arguably encourages the Latvian populace to adopt a cosmopolitan approach towards their national identification, one where they see themselves as belonging to a larger European community.

Latvian politicians and other public figures invested in 'returning to Europe' strive to establish an understanding amongst the nation that a national identity and European identity are not incompatible but can coexist. This is advocated by Latvian scholars who suggest that being European is not foreign to Latvians, and that indeed, it is possible to be both European and Latvian concurrently through the implementation of a both/and identity paradigm.

The rooted cosmopolitan approach is reflected in the work of various Latvian scholars who encourage the both/and identity paradigm for the Latvian nation. Ivars Ijabs, for example, reasons that it is important in the contemporary climate to integrate a Latvian identity into a European context (Ijabs in Cepuritis and Gulbis 2012, 49). Kūle maintains

that the foundation for Latvian culture is the same as many other Western European cultures, Christianity, and that the intellectual traditions of the Latvian nation have developed in line with those of Western Europe more greatly (1998, 29). Some scholars, such as Dagmāra Beitnere, stress that 'Latvianness' is synonymous with the sense of 'openness'. She argues that Latvians have always had a 'talent' for unifying Western and Eastern cultures and that cross-cultural communication should not be feared as it further enriches all that is already considered to be 'Latvian' (Beitnere in Cepurītis and Gulbis 2012, 40). Furthermore, Cepurītis and Gulbis contend that highlighting shared values between Latvia and the broader European community, establishes a greater sense of worth amongst the nation's people. Latvian culture is not only enriched by 'joining' Europe, but also protected as it forms an integral part of the European cultural landscape (2012, 52).

Whether or not Latvians embrace this identity discourse, it is evident that this context of openness, where intellectual elites and politicians encourage cross-cultural dialogues and position Latvia within larger global networks, has facilitated Martinsons' sojourner filmmaking.¹ He embraces the globalisation of Latvia and the opportunities it provides, acting as a 'cosmopolitan middleman', motivated to explore the connections between East and West. This is reflected in his artistic partnership with Japanese actress Kaori Momoi. Most of Martinsons' films have been developed in collaboration with Momoi, further explaining the dialogic nature of his work and its characteristic multivocal and multifocal aesthetics.

Martinsons' films and Momoi's artistic influence

Travel is key to Martinsons' filmmaking practice and mobility is a central theme in Martinsons' films. His 2010 film *Hong Kong Confidential*, for example, tells the story of four main characters, Paul, Amaya, Lori and Lang. Their lives collide in Hong Kong where they meet and negotiate new and past relationships. Travel and mobility is central to all four characters. Paul, a northern European man, has spent the past three years travelling the world, learning new massage techniques in different countries, after breaking up with his fiancée. Lori, Paul's ex-fiancée, visits Hong Kong with her new partner. She is unhappy with her relationship and seeks out adventure through her travels. Amaya yearns to travel to the seaside village where her son lives. She feels trapped in her marriage and the dull rhythms of the everyday massage parlour work. Lang has recently lost her job because a foreigner has taken over the company and made her redundant. The characters' ability or lack of ability to travel is central to their development and acts as a plot driver in the film, or in Lang's case, her life is changed drastically through interactions with mobile characters.

Similarly, mobility is central to his upcoming film *Magic Kimono*. In this film, traveling abroad will be central to the protagonist's development. The film, which Martinsons began filming in March 2015, is about a Japanese woman Keiko, who is doing some soul searching after the death of her husband (Kultūrasdiēna.lv 2014). She travels to Riga to be part of a Kimono show and due to unforeseen circumstances is given an opportunity to open a Japanese restaurant in Riga (Kultūrasdiēna.lv 2015).

The narratives of *Hong Kong Confidential* and *Magic Kimono* are all centred on a cosmopolitan protagonist who represent Di Stefano's idea of 'between-home-ness'. Paul, for example, has been living in hotel rooms for the past three years and his sense of home has been shaped by the transitory spaces he inhabits and his habitual journey around Asia.

Keiko, from *Magic Kimono*, travels to escape from her grief and finds a new home in a space that was meant to be only transitory. Furthermore, she decides to make a new home in Latvia, which is also considered a borderland between the East and West.

In each film, the rituals of travel either become a 'home' or lead to the characters finding new homes. Mobility is represented positively as it helps the protagonists find their place, this arguably aligns Martinsons' work further with the sojourner stylistic, rather than the accented, as mobility is not an experience of displacement but rather self-fulfilment.

Martinsons own mobility, which then becomes a central theme in his films, can be understood to have developed for two reasons. At first, Martinsons travelled outside of Latvia developing and producing films primarily for economic reasons. In an interview for Latvian chat show *Rampas Ugunis*, Martinsons emphasises his disdain for the funding system in Latvia. He states that he cannot understand Latvian directors who struggle for the minimal funding provided by the Latvian government, when there are so many opportunities outside of Latvia and its domestic funding system (*Rampas Ugunis* 2014). Martinsons embraces the global opportunities provided to him through transnational cinematic networks, facilitated by the contemporary government's predominantly liberal internationalist politics. Part of this rhetoric, as mentioned earlier, is the development of the narrative of Latvia as a bridge between East and West. This too seems to have influenced Martinsons' filmmaking practice of seeking out opportunities for distribution and production in Asia.

In seeking out opportunities in Asia, Martinsons met Japanese actress Kaori Momoi. It is this relationship that is arguably the second reason for the sojourner nature of Martinsons' films. Martinsons first met Momoi when he won the award for Best Director for his film *Loss* at the 11th Shanghai International Film Festival. Momoi was on the panel for the festival and was impressed by his work, so much that she approached Martinsons with the proposition that they should work together on a film project in the future (*Rampas Ugunis* 2014). Martinsons at the time did not have a script in development, nevertheless, as he states in an interview with the Latvian news portal *Delfi*, 'to not take advantage of Momoi's offer would be stupid' (Kalve 2010). The only connection or experience that he had with Japan or with the 'East' was his own experience of travelling in that part of the world learning massaging techniques (2010). He, therefore, used his own experience travelling in Asia to form the basis of the script for *Hong Kong Confidential*.

His other films developed similarly. *Oki – In the Middle of the Ocean* was first conceived during a conversation between Martinsons and Momoi in Riga. Both agreed that they wanted to work together again after *Hong Kong Confidential*. Martinsons recalls lamenting to Momoi that it would be hard to source funding for the project. According to Martinsons, Momoi refused to let financial problems stand in the way and persuaded Martinsons to fly over to Los Angeles where they could develop and produce their film in Momoi's home (*Rampas Ugunis* 2014). Martinsons had a vague idea for a script; however, the film was developed collaboratively between Martinsons and Momoi, as well as the other actors involved in the film including Australian Hannah Levien and Latvian Andris Bullis.

Magic Kimono developed through a similar conversation. Martinsons remembers that during the farewell dinner for the cast and crew of *Oki – In the Middle of the Ocean*, they began to talk of their next project together. Momoi expressed her interest in filming in

Riga, which she had grown fond of. It was during this conversation that they discussed developing a film where Momoi's character would begin her journey in Japan and further develop in Latvia (Kultūrasdiēna.lv 2014). Central to the development of these films were moments of cross-cultural dialogue between the two artists, further aligning Martinsons' practice with the tenets of rooted cosmopolitanism that inform the sojourning filmmaker's practice.

Martinsons' partnership with Momoi can be understood as a host/guest relationship. For his first two films, Momoi acted as 'host' to Martinsons. In *Hong Kong Confidential*, Martinsons was a 'guest' in the Asian film industry in which Momoi is famous. Even though *Oki – In the Middle of the Ocean* was filmed in a very different setting from *Hong Kong Confidential*, Los Angeles, here again Martinsons was Momoi's guest in whose house they developed and produced the film. In *Magic Kimono*, this dynamic changes slightly, with both Martinsons and Momoi sharing the roles of 'guest' and 'host'. First, Martinsons will be Momoi's guest while they are filming in Japan, and then Momoi will be Martinsons' guest when they film in Riga. This host/guest relationship has had considerable impact on the aesthetics and thematics of Martinsons' films.

Multifocality and multivocality in Martinsons' oeuvre

As a result of this collaboration, Martinsons' films are multifocal. Multifocality implies that a film has more than one point of focus. In Martinsons' oeuvre, multiple points of focus are created through the combination of numerous plot lines that meet at some point in the film. Quite literally mirroring Martinsons' and Momoi's partnership, Martinsons' films usually centre on two main narratives, one which is focused on a Japanese woman and one that is focused on a Western, usually northern European man. At some point, their lives meet, and then Martinsons explores the cross-cultural dialogues and experiences that form through this meeting. In *Hong Kong Confidential*, this occurs between Paul and Amaya, and in *Oki – In the Middle of the Ocean*, Oki and Robert (Figure 1).

Hong Kong Confidential is perhaps the most multifocal of Martinsons' films. Outside of the cross-cultural dialogues between Paul and Amaya, this film is punctuated with moments of misunderstanding. These misunderstandings often occur in Tao's massage parlour, which is owned by Amaya's brother-in-law. This serves as a central setting in the film where many of the characters' lives collide. Paul has signed up to a massage course that Tao is running. On the first day of class, Paul arrives before the course starts for a massage. Tao is not yet there and so Paul is led into a separate massage room by a colleague. When Tao arrives and finds out that someone has come in for a massage, he is furious as he instructed that no one should be allowed in for massages on the day that the course started. His concern is that 'the foreigner' with lots of money might come in and see the place in chaos and then walk straight out with all his money! Once Tao finds out that Paul is a 'foreigner' as well, he changes his mind and lets his colleague proceed with the massage. The course begins, although Paul's massage has not yet finished. Then another 'foreigner' walks in wanting a massage. Tao does not understand him, thinking that he is 'the foreigner' who has signed up for the course and forces him to sit and massage a client's foot (Figure 2). The foreigner is similarly confused, trying to stand up and clarify his reason for coming to the massage parlour; they cannot understand one another.



Figure 1. Martinsons' films mirror Martinsons' and Momoi's partnership, demonstrated by the characters Paul and Amaya in *Hong Kong Confidential*.

A comic routine ensues, with the foreigner trying to escape, and Tao forcing him to massage feet until Paul emerges from his massage and asks 'When does the course begin?'

Martinsons' and Momoi's partnership and the multifocality this creates in his films have arguably brought together two divergent, yet, not incompatible cinema traditions. As Martinsons' website states, his 'principle aim is to produce multicultural film productions connecting the cinema traditions of the West and East' (Krukfilms). The production of his films involves an international group of onscreen and offscreen professionals. *Hong*



Figure 2. Tao forces a client to massage feet assuming that he is the 'foreigner' taking his classes.

Kong Confidential, for example, was filmed in Hong Kong where he worked in collaboration with a local production company, October Pictures Limited. The cast consisted of actors from Japan, China, Latvia, Lithuania and England, who worked from scripts written in English, Japanese and Cantonese. Such an international cast meant that Martinsons had to marry different acting styles, which were specific to each country (Rampas Ugunis 2014). It also meant that, as a director, Martinsons had to mediate differences between his cultural approach to filmmaking with that of Hong Kong/China.

This mediation has led to the development of an East/West dialectic, which takes shape in Martinsons' films through multivocal stylistics. Multivocality refers to the combination of two or more perspectives within a text. In Martinsons' films, the two perspectives are that of Momoï and himself. The two artists come from different cultural contexts, and this creates a convergence of styles and aesthetic traditions in the films. It is important to note that here again Martinsons' cinematic style intersects with that of accented filmmakers, whose work is often also dialogic. In accented films, this dialectic forms between two clashing conceptions of home or identity, whereas, in Martinsons' films, the dialogue forms between different world views that are not in opposition to one another but whose differences are explored and combined as part of Martinsons' cosmopolitan curiosity. In his films, Martinsons combines stylistic traits from both the East and the West to visually and sonically represent this dialectic.

In *Hong Kong Confidential*, for example, the combination of the East and the West is represented visually through the setting. *Hong Kong Confidential* is filmed on location in Hong Kong, which is known as a city where the East and West merge (Figure 3). Once at the centre of a territorial dispute between Britain and China, the city has developed as a hybrid locale where British and Chinese cultures coexist. Martinsons highlights this hybridised setting during the opening credit sequence visually signifying the importance of cross-cultural dialogues in the film. Chinese sailing boats are shown to glide across the water in front of a landscape packed full of silver skyscrapers, typical of any city that is a



Figure 3. The hybrid locale of Hong Kong in the title sequence.

hub of commerce and politics in the globally interdependent world. Double decker trams travel amongst these towering buildings, remnants of the British colonial past. Chinese characters and English words are shown to coexist on billboards plastered all over the city's walls and buildings. This visually demonstrates the multivocal style of the film.

The East/West multivocality is further established through the auditory aspects of the film. The music for the film was composed by Lithuanian actor/musician Andrius Mamontovas, who was also cast as Paul in the film. The music is a combination of western pop music and traditional Chinese music. Neither is composed or performed according to tradition. The traditional Chinese music, for example, appears within Mamontovas compositions through suggestions of rhythms, timbres and tones that are reminiscent of traditional Chinese music. This further reinforces the multivocal nature of *Hong Kong Confidential* in that the two music styles do not appear separately, instead, they are woven together in a cross-cultural musical dialogue.

This sonic multivocality is continued in the diegetic soundtrack. There is of course the combination of languages heard in the film, English and Cantonese, with English being spoken in a multiplicity of accents, from American, British, English and Japanese. In one scene, English and Cantonese are spoken at the same time creating a cacophony of languages, generating a hybrid soundscape. This also highlights that Martinsons' films are not only multifocal and multivocal, but also multilingual.

Rooted cosmopolitan characters

While *Hong Kong Confidential* focuses on cross-cultural dialogues and misunderstandings between those from the 'East' and those from the 'West', Martinsons also engages with universal themes. Martinsons' exploration of cultural difference in combination with universal themes further aligns his filmmaking practice with the sojourner tradition. The acknowledgment of local specificities and universal commonalities is a key to the theory of rooted cosmopolitanism, examined earlier in the article and central to Mills' formulation of sojourner cinema.

The characters in his films may all come from different cultural backgrounds, but they are unified by a common goal or universal value. In *Hong Kong Confidential*, for example, the unifying theme in the film is love. Paul is running away from a painful breakup; Amaya is yearning for love and affection something which lacks in her marriage; Tao is in love with Amaya never settling down because Amaya married his brother Renshu and Tao was not able to fall in love with anyone else; Lang desires to find something more than the casual flings and one night stands that have dominated her love life.

It is also possible to examine Paul as a character that embodies the both/and identity model. Paul collects identities. This is suggested through his travel where he enrolls in massage courses, *collecting* different massaging techniques from around the world. The various techniques he collects can be viewed allegorically as identities, which he keeps and uses when he feels necessary. This is reflective of what Beck calls a 'Lego set of globally available identities', which cosmopolitan citizens can use to build an inclusive self-image (2006, 5). To access this 'Lego set' of identities, it is necessary to be curious about other cultures. As Appiah argues, it is important 'to be intrigued by alternative ways of thinking, feeling, and acting' (2006, 97).

This is perhaps most evident in the scene where Paul first meets Lori in Hong Kong. The scene begins with Paul ordering coffee in a generic coffee store similar to Starbucks, who have colonised the coffee trade through their global network of shops. He notices Lori, his ex-fiancée, with a teenage girl drinking coffee in the shop window. Both Lori and Paul pretend not to know one another. Paul decides to strike up a conversation anyway, continuing the ruse that he is only just meeting her for the first time. He approaches Lori and the girl, and tells them that he can tell they are not from Hong Kong. Lori asks why, and Paul states because they are watching the world go by through the window. People who live here act differently, he says, and points to a man reading Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. This highlights Paul's curiosity. The conversation then changes to what they like to read and what they are planning to do while they are in Hong Kong. It is during this conversation that Paul further reveals his curiosity about other cultures, naming various people and institutions from different places in the world. He mentions the LA Lakers, Wong Kar Wai and Bruce Lee, as well as talking about sites of cultural importance in Hong Kong such as the Big Buddha and the Avenue of Stars. Martinsons arguably attempts to establish Paul as a cosmopolitan, curious and knowledgeable about other cultures.

Intriguingly, when Paul points to the man reading Dickens in the coffee shop, the man is actually Martinsons himself. It is interesting to consider this Hitchcockian moment in *Hong Kong Confidential*, considering that the film is partly autobiographical. Martinsons is depicted as a local, someone who as Paul states in the film, comes into the coffee shop to recreate his western biosphere. This suggests Martinsons' position as a 'guest', who while willing to live in the 'East', in Hong Kong, still maintains his cultural difference, emphasised by him reading *Oliver Twist*. This scene can also be understood as a comment on Martinsons' own personal philosophy, which seems deeply connected to the rooted cosmopolitan both/and identity paradigm. Furthermore, it suggests that Martinsons is at ease in transitory spaces, such as the global conglomerate coffee shop, where he creates a sense of 'between-home-ness'. Paul can be viewed as an autobiographical character, mirroring the personal philosophy of director Martinsons, revealing further reasons for the development of the sojourner tendency in Martinsons' films. Martinsons' own development of the both/and identity can, in turn, be attributed to the liberal internationalist discourse, which encourages Latvians to identify themselves as belonging to a broader European community as well as the national one.

Conclusion

This paper applied the concept of sojourner cinema to the analysis of Māris Martinsons' oeuvre. Sojourner cinema forms from its production context, much like accented cinema. This context, however, greatly differs from that which has facilitated the development of accented filmmaking. Sojourner filmmakers belong to a cosmopolitan class, who hold a privileged position in society and whose mobility is not defined by exile or displacement, but rather through a cosmopolitan curiosity. This sojourner style is demonstrated in Martinsons' films, which has developed through a guest/host relationship and that testifies to Martinsons' own position as a cosmopolitan middleman, reflected in the films' multivocality and multifocality.

Note

1. There are a plethora of identity narratives within the Latvian social sphere, and the Latvian identity, as any other, is a complex phenomenon. The length of this paper does not allow for an in-depth exploration of the Latvian identity; however, the monograph 'Nature and National Identity after Communism: Globalizing the Ethnoscape' (Schwartz 2006) is highly recommended for those interested in gaining a further understanding.

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Notes on contributor

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