India María: Ambivalent Reception under the Gaze of Indigenous University Students

La India María: recepciones ambivalentes bajo la mirada de los universitarios indígenas

JUAN ANTONIO
DONCEL DE LA COLINA[1]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7779-027X

CARLA MARÍA
MAEDA GONZÁLEZ[2]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0423-4053

From a qualitative perspective, we seek to analyze how indigenous students in higher education, who immigrated to Monterrey (capital of Nuevo León, Mexico) interpret and value, from their own ethnic identity, the audiovisual character of India María. We find that most of their critical readings lead to partial rejection of India María as a discriminatory representation; nevertheless, there is a certain ambivalence reflecting an identity conflict. The students still enjoy the antics of the character and can recognize some similarities between her and themselves.

KEYWORDS: Mass communication, ethnic discrimination, audience research, ethnic groups, identity.

Desde un enfoque cualitativo, buscamos analizar cómo los indígenas con estudios superiores emigrados a Monterrey (capital de Nuevo León, México) interpretan y valoran, desde su propia identidad étnica, al personaje audiovisual de la India María. Encontramos que aunque la mayoría de ellos realizan lecturas críticas que los llevan a rechazar parcialmente a la India María por considerarla una representación discriminatoria, existe en ellos una ambivalencia, de modo que también disfrutan del personaje, incluso reconociendo algunas similitudes entre ellos y este.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Comunicación de masas, discriminación étnica, estudios de audiencia, grupo étnico, identidad.

How to cite:

[1] Universidad Regiomontana, Mexico.
     jdoncel@u-erre.mx
[2] Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Mexico.
     carla.maedag@itesm.mx

INTRODUCTION

There has been an intense and growing influx of migrating indigenous people to the Mexican state of Nuevo León and, as a consequence, many problems have appeared from their insertion into the socio-educational spheres, especially higher education (Olvera, Doncel & Muñiz, 2014), this problematic motivated us to create a project to analyze how university students of indigenous origin, immigrants to the metropolitan zone of Monterrey (MZM), have redefined or reexamined their own ethnic identity. Lately, the triple intersection represented by their indigenous condition, urban migration, and university attendance has resulted in many academic products that these protagonists have researched with respect to their own community identity and, therefore, about themselves. Important research includes authors such as Bautista (2016), who concentrated on the recovery of the memory of oral narratives for the strengthening of ethnic identity; Senovio (2016), who reflects on the identity of Young Tepehuas in MZM; or Domínguez (2011) who rather than refer to the redefinition of identity, refers to its reproduction, in this case in the Zoque community in Guadalajara.

Domínguez Rueda with a rather static and homogenizing vision of identity, suggests that there has been a certain conservation of the Zoque identity, limited to the domestic environment, as a response to the migrant's resistance to the hostile environment of the society where they find themselves. In this way, supported by Rabasa's "affirmative deconstruction," Domínguez Rueda (2011) states that it is in the family nucleus where such identity is reproduced (p. 27) as a consequence of the dominant racism in the public sphere. He maintains that in this public sphere, a type of mimicking of identity takes place.

Domínguez Rueda separates his concept of identity from language and culture, referring more to changes in identity as a new phase in the process of cultural transfiguration, a process which does not mean total loss of the Chapultec identity (2011, p. 26). According to this author, then, there is a cultural transfiguration, but not a loss of identity: culture can change while identity remains (p. 139). At the same time, by referring exclusively to the Zoques of Chapultenango (Chiapas), like Senovio and the Tepehuas of Tlachichilco (Veracruz), these academics of indigenous origin, migrants, and students of the phenomenon that

they form a part of, allude to a community identity more than to an ethnic one. This vision is broadened by Martínez in her master's thesis about ethnic identity and Huastec students' expectations to return to their community of origin (Martínez, 2018). Her universe of study is circumscribed specifically to urban indigenous migrants with university studies, and she conceives ethnic identity as a flexible, negotiated, dynamic entity, always unfinished.

The relationship between ethnic identity and access to higher education is complex; there is evidence that completion of university studies is a positive factor for strengthening identity (Badillo, 2011), while social ascent into new urban contexts leads to loss of identity through negation (Pujadas, 1993). Because of this, our approach is a more dynamic and polyhedral concept of identity, as a construct with elements of the original culture which are selected by the subject to persist, as well as elements of urban globalized culture which are inserted. More in line with the new urban ethnic identify proposed by Hvostoff (cited by Domínguez Rueda, 2011), we accept, along with Giménez (2009) and Galán (2018), that "identity is constructed temporarily, but never separated from the culture… it is necessary to understand the concept of culture of the indigenous identities coming from moveable, dynamic, uncertain, and complex relationships" (pp. 175-176).

It becomes clear that the mass rural exodus of indigenous youth to the city implies that these young people will intensify their interethnic contacts in urban contexts, characterized by a more individualistic tone, in detriment to those with a more collective order who ultimately push towards a transformational process of ethnic identity. To this we should add what authors like Domínguez Rueda (2011) have observed: the racist discriminating view of indigenous people arriving to the city greatly influences their process of identity reconstruction, as well as their public face as indigenous. As recognized by Martínez (2018), in her work on university Huastecans, ethnic identity (inextricably linked to racial and tribal stigma)[3] is reconsidered and reevaluated when they

---

[3]   We are referring to the term proposed by Goffman: "tribal stigmas of race, nation and religion, susceptible to be transmitted by inheritance and contaminate all members of a family equally" (2008, p. 16).

perceive strange looks, but in their original communities, with more limited interethnic contacts, their ethnic identity is neither a problem nor to be questioned in everyday life.

Besides the intensification and diversification of everyday interaction in the urban milieu, mass communication media acquires different meanings, uses, and content than in the original communities. In previous work, we have analyzed how these indigenous university students change the meaning of the communication media they use as a support (Doncel, 2016a), as well as giving value to the content they consume as representations of indigenous cultures (Doncel, 2016b). Thus we wonder about the degree these students identify with specific media products, especially those that appear spontaneously with greater frequency in their speech during interviews: telenovelas and the character *India María*. We have previously analyzed the relationship between indigenous students and telenovelas (Doncel, 2017; Doncel & Miranda, 2017), and now wish to analyze how these students in higher education interpret and value the character of India María from their own ethnic identity. This character[4] does not represent an isolated event in Latin America; we know of other characters who portray stereotypes with respect to indigenous populations and that have become popular because of their diffusion by audiovisual communication media. In this sense, the Peruvian character of *Paisana Jacinta* is even more troubling, motivating a presentation to the UN by the Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú (CHIRAPAQ), in a pessimistic report condemning the reappearance of programs with this character:

> A woman of humble origin, from the southern mountains of Peru migrates to Lima, the capital, seeking better opportunities in life. The various plots developed in the episodes reinforce an array of stereotypes which insult many migrants with the same origins, who face the difficult challenge of building a better future in a city of nearly 8.5 million inhabitants (CHIRAPAQ, 2014, p. 6).

---

[4]   Performed by the mexican actress María Elena Velasco, who starred in several comedy films of Mexican cinema, mainly in the 70s, 80s and 90s. Her latest film "Moctezuma's daughter" was released in 2014. Although

The problem becomes worse when racist, sexist, and class stereotypes are interiorized by the audience, without their being recognized as such, according to Rivadeneyra (2014). Referring to the reinstatement of the character in the Peruvian program, he clarifies that, in fact, many people cannot even recognize the racism in Jorge Benavides' program, and that constitutes the main problem. In a society as racist as the Peruvian, Paisana Jacinta's portrayal is not considered racist. In other words, a racist cannot see the racism that he or she practices (par. 5). On the other hand, there is empiric evidence referring to the power of the media to project stereotyped images and generate prejudices against the indigenous population (Muñiz, 2013).

Here we are not focused on analysis of the triad stereotype-prejudice-discrimination (Sangrador, 1996) nor on the internalized racism in Latin American audiences in general; our objective is to better understand how these products are internalized specifically by the subjects being represented/stereotyped. We seek particularly to answer these questions: How do indigenous students with higher learning interpret the hegemonic meaning transmitted by India María? How do they deconstruct the stereotyped image of the indigenous woman projected by this character? How do they connect or contrast the result of this deconstruction with their own feelings and personality as an indigenous person?

METHODOLOGY

We proposed a qualitative methodology, taking into account that the subjective and intersubjective spheres are key to analyzing the values, interpretation, and definitely, the identification (or disidentification) processes. The methodological tool was in-depth interviews, with a script of broad questions related to consumption and preference for different media, including evaluation of the media content. All of this was related to the understanding of the subjects' own ethnic identify and the degree in which they identified with the media products consumed.

---

it is part of mexican popular culture, it has been critizcized for promoting racist and classist stereotypes.

We conducted 20 in-depth interviews with young people averaging 26.4 years of age. The sessions took place from the months of September to December, 2014.

The criteria for selecting the potential interviewees were: 1) to have studied at least one semester in a university in MZM; 2) to have emigrated as first or second generation from an indigenous community. Within this universe, we selected a diverse sample considering the following: university status (active students, graduates, or dropouts); gender; educational institutions (private or public); major; and ethnic group to which they belonged. As to the last variable, most students were Nahuatl and Tenek (both adding up to 76% of the total) which corresponded to the greatest prevalence of ethnic groups in the state (INEGI, 2010). Nevertheless, there was a heterogeneous representation of the ethnic groups in Nuevo León: Mixes, Mixtecs, Tzotziles, Totonacs, and Mazatecs.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

From the Cultural Studies perspective, Hall (1980) states that the messages produced by the media are mainly hegemonic since they defend the ideology of the elite. In other words: "the different areas of social life appear to be mapped out into discursive domains, hierarchically organized into dominant o preferred meanings" (1980, p. 172). Therefore, in this type of messages gender and racial stereotypes are promoted.

However, the author also mentions that even though the hegemonic media content dominates, there are also alternative meanings that criticize, denounce, or ridicule elite ideology, promoting positive images of minorities and rejecting stereotypes (Hall, 1980).

Based on this, we can state that if media content helps build the social reality of its spectators, audiences in contact with this type of messages will tend to identify indigenous people with characters such as the Indio Tizoc, María Candelaria, or India María (Nahmad, 2007).[5] Nevertheless, if it is true that the media is hegemonic, it is

---

[5] All indigenous characters of Mexican films (from the decades of the 40's, 50's and 70's, respectively), that promote stereotyped characteristics of the people belonging to these communities.

also polysemic; in other words, "a text can be interpreted in an infinite number of (individual) ways or the formalist tendency to suppose that texts determine meaning absolutley" (Morley, 1992, p. 78).

Active Audiences and Mediation

Culturists give importance to the production of the message itself, but they focus particularly on the way that spectators receive (or read) media content (Hall, 1980; Morley, 1992). Therefore, based on the premise that audiences are active, with the ability to interpret media messages in diverse ways, some authors (Hall, 1980; Michelle, 2007; Morley, 1992) have proposed models specifying the type of readings that the receivers can make when faced with hegemonic content.

In this sense, Michelle (2007), referring back to Hall (1980), proposes four principal modes in which the spectator can interpret a message, varying according to the critical capacity of the audience: transparent (the most naive), referential, mediated, and discursive (the most critical). For the results of our research, the referential and discursive modes are of greatest interest. In the referential mode, the spectator "makes conections between the fictional reality depicted on screen and the viewer's own knowledge and experience" (Michelle, 2007, p. 16).

When a spectator is making a referential reading, he or she is certainly able to identify the fictional content as a construct; however, this does not necessarily mean that the receiver can detect the dominant ideology present in the message.

The discursive mode, on the other hand, implies decodification of a media text which includes two elements: the analytical and the positional. In the first mode, the spectator receives the message in terms of the ideology being transmitted and understands that it corresponds to the interests of whoever produced it.

The second mode (positional) refers to what happens after the spectator identifies and analyzes the ideological content of a message. The interpretation is either acceptance of the hegemonic message transmitted; or negotiated, with acceptance of the abstract but not concrete content; or oppositional, in which the hegemonic message is rejected.

To understand the interpretive process that audiences use for messages in the media, it is important to remember the concept of mediation, defined by Martín-Barbero (1987) as the place where communication is given meaning (p. 234). Orozco Gómez (1997) also comments that some sources of mediation in the communicative process are ethnics, gender, social institutions that the audiences belong to, and civil institutions that they participate in. As far as ethnic and cultural origin, Fiske (1989) states that the audience members actively choose the content that they will express because from media material of international, regional, national, or local origin, spectators seek what has relevance or cultural proximity.

IDENTITY AND RACISM

Giménez (2009) mentions that even though the characteristics of a group or member of the group may change throughout time, this does not necessarily imply an alteration of identity. In the same line, Ribeil (1974) refers to two distinct processes, which he calls "transformation" and "mutation." The first is gradual and adaptive and does not affect the structure of the existing system. The second, mutation, supposes a qualitative alteration of the same subject; that is the original structure is abandoned and another one acquired.

On the other hand, whoever does not belong to a determined ethnic or social group attributes characteristics to its members, mainly derived from the categories of the individuals that make up the specific group; therefore, there is a tendency to stereotypes and social prejudices. When the stereotype is derogatory and discriminatory, it becomes a stigma for said groups (Giménez, 2009).

Racism, understood as the purist expression of stigmatization due to ethnic origin, has been defined by van Dijk (2010) as:

a social system of ethnic or "racial" domination, where domination is a form of power abuse of one group over another. It consists of two major subsystems: various kinds of discriminatory practices in all domains of social life, on the one hand, and underlying ideologically based ethnic prejudices as forms of socially shared (distributed) cognition on the other (p. 44).

This author maintains that in discourse related to minority groups, occurring generally in the media, ethnic minorities and migrants are categorized in three ways: 1) they're different; 2) they're perverse; 3) they're a threat (van Dijk, 2001).

As to the representation of indigenous people in the Mexican media, some research (CDI, 2006; Marañón & Muñiz, 2012) has found that although on occasion their historical greatness is extoled, usually there are stereotypes ridiculing indigenous people –for their way of dressing, speaking, or acting– converting them into an element for entertainment, to make the audience laugh.

The importance of this discourse, according to van Dijk (2010), is that it can become both a discriminatory racist practice, as well as the primary source for the acquisition of racial prejudice and ideology.

Racism appears when groups of whites subordinate people of darker skin tones. Chirix and Sajbin (2019), discussing the social order in times of the Colony in Mexico state that:

> society was divided into castes according to color with a system of evaluation based on dark or black skin which was characterized as dirty and obscure, while white symbolized purity, luminosity… social progress. These categories invented by the dominant classes and masculine white power served to humiliate and subordinate (p. 10.)

Thus, at this historic moment, a stereotype of the indigenous has been construed to categorize the people as barbarian, savage, lazy, and inferior to whites, and it still persists in today's society (Casaús, 1998).

At this point it is important to remember the concept of epistemic racism/sexism which, according to Grosfoguel (2011), is the oldest form of racism, as it places "non-westerners" as inferior to human, close to animality, with inferior intelligence and lack of rationality. This epistemic racism/sexism is part of the Eurocentric world vision, so elite masculine westerners fall into a privileged position, one excluding women and anyone who does not belong to the dominant group. This concept is particularly important to this research because the character being analyzed is feminine and also belongs to a marginalized group as an indigenous Mexican.

With respect to the previous analysis, the data from the module of intergenerational social mobility (MMSI) presented by the Mexican Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, (INEGI) found that the darker the skin color, the higher the percentage of people working at lower grade jobs (Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística [INEGI], 2016). In this sense, Vélez and Monroy (2018), analyzing the results from this institute, concluded that the data strengthens the premise that Mexico is a country that restricts opportunity to certain groups.

Although it is true that the categorization of people according to the color of their skin comes from the dominant white groups, Hall, based on Gramsci's discussions, mentions that one of the questions on racism that has not been studied much is "the subjection of the victims of racism to the mystifications of the very racist ideology which imprison and define them" (1986, p. 24). The author claims that within the topic of racism several contradictory ideological discourses can coexist, providing evidence of the ideological war within the phenomenon in question (1986).

Pyke (2010) takes up Hall's contribution (1986) and utilizes the concept of "internalized racism," defined as "individual inculcation of the racist stereotypes, values, images, and ideologies perpetuated by the White dominant society about one´s racial group, leading to feelings of self-doubt, disgust, and disrespect for one´s race and/or oneself" (p. 553). This type of racism is what we would like to emphasize in our analysis.

RESULTS: "INDIA MARÍA" INTERNALIZED BY INDIGENOUS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Like the perception of telenovelas (Doncel, 2017), well-reflected criticism appears again as a general tendency in the discourse of these university students interviewed who referred to the character of India María. Such is the case of Juan (a pseudonym, as was assigned to all informants), who personally does not identify with India María, and also believes that the rest of the students do not either. In this sense, we should recognize that this discourse is guided more by social

desirability than by empiric reality (it would seem that Juan wishes that the character be perceived negatively because his own perception is negative.) However, this negative influence cannot be generalized, as we shall observe later. In spite of this somewhat deformed perception of reality, what our interlocutor clearly expresses is that India María represents an antihero, characterized by anti-values such as clumsiness and ignorance, which finally leads to ridiculing indigenous people, so they should want to avoid the image as projected.

> For example, about India María: There's no way people identify; that's ridiculous… because of the way she's represented, like a person umm, a clumsy person, um, ignorant. So that's not it… I don't (identify with her). No way!… No, she doesn't influence my (my countrymen). Even worse (is) if she's used as a way to ridicule a person. In other words, it influences negatively in them… in indigenous people.

The fragment of the interview above shows that Juan is using critical reading; identifying the hegemonic message that usually ridicules an indigenous person to try to provoke laughter; therefore, he rejects this. In that way, we can appreciate how Juan adopts a positional discursive mode, defined by his opposition to the hegemonic ideology transmitted through the character of India María. In another example, Diana, like Juan, claims that she does not identify with India María, either:

> No, (I don't identify with India Maria)… I mean, I know she is indigenous, but uh… all that… what she reflects, her behavior, everything… no, I don't believe that is like us, like indigenous people. She distances herself or keeps reinforcing the perception that the audience (non-indigenous) has.

Diana, without realizing it, alludes to the concept of epistemic racism (Grosfoguel, 2011) when she refers to the image of the ignorant one projected and, indirectly, to the clumsiness (in the sense of social clumsiness, since the indigenous person is perceived in the interview as introverted and cautious, that is, unprepared in terms of social relationships).

But she distances herself a lot (with respect to us as indigenous people)… mmh… she reinforces that our intellectual level is low. That's what I mean. Yes, (what she represents) she's far away (from reality). We are more introverted and in that way, she's the opposite in the way that she acts there. But yes, it's that, she keeps showing that we're intellectually inferior.

In this way, Diana shows a high degree of awareness that this character reproduces negative stereotypes and that these are distant from the reality that she is familiar with. The recognition of this stereotype, on the other hand, speaks again of the ability of the person interviewed to abstract the message transmitted by the character, which is not in any way related to herself.

Nevertheless, in spite of the coincidences between both interlocutors, Diana's discourse shows a difference that we consider essential. Her interview shows a contradictory feeling; in spite of criticism of the character, she explicitly clarifies that she likes India María and she makes her laugh. Beyond the paradox, Diana ends the interview by finding points of connection or identification with the character (without negating her previous distancing and criticism). These connecting points refer more to characterization of the way of life or the elements of the original culture of the character (dress, work, etc.) without considering her personality or attitude:

No, (I don't feel India María as) alien. I feel… could it be like a rejection? I don't know. I feel related, yes she is an indigenous woman, the clothes she wears. I have seen people who wear those clothes… For example, going to fetch wood, the burro… all those things (are realistic). All that (the circumstances unrelated to her personality) yes, yes, yes I can identify. I mean, yes, you can see that they (the producers) have made an effort and gone there (to an indigenous community) to see how they work and all those things, yes… (they're realistic).

Contrary to the previous informant, in this transcript we can see that the she is making a critical effort, identifying that the character is loaded with negative stereotypes, also accepting part of the message because the informant perceives a similarity between her and what has

been fictionalized. In other words, the stereotype is built on familiar contextual elements, but it portrays a superficial image, so it cannot represent deeper attitudes or feelings, substantially characteristic of indigenous people.[6] Perhaps because of that, the interviewee seems "connected" with the character, but only up to a certain point.

The same criticism expressed by our previous informant –that India María represents a person alien to reality– appears in the interview with Tania. In this case, the criticism refers to the character being careless and even somewhat indecent in the way she gets on the burro. Moreover, there is again the paradoxical feeling expressed by the previous informant; Tania also admits that the character makes her laugh, but the paradox becomes more complex when she mentions that it bothers her that people will associate her with this character because she detects the racism targeting indigenous people in the city. In other words, after the migratory event, it appears that the interviewee realizes how indigenous people are perceived and discriminated against, but when she is in the midst of her community she was entertained by the character, without detecting malice.

> India María has bad manners… she supposedly wants to make people laugh but she is rowdy… But in the community, people aren't like that. It's improper that a woman… climbs on a burro in that manner… the way she grabs people… so, no. If I acted like that in my community… no. And in the case of this woman, when I watched the movie I couldn't stop laughing. I was watching something funny… but that it could happen in my community, no… that I could see someone like that, no.

This turning point for our informants comes after migration. We consider it very meaningful: the memory of life in their community with no need to question the problem of identity and discrimination such as

---

6   We do not delve into stereotypes and prejudices because, as we pointed out in the introduction, we are not interested on the construction of the stereo-type but on its decostruction by the stereotyped subject. On the other hand, in other works (Doncel, 2011, 2013, 2014) we have already theorized about that issue.

that in an urban reality marked by racism, exclusion, and the subsequent mistrust of the other and, perhaps, of themselves through processes of internalized racism (Hall, 1986; Pyke, 2010). This transformation in the perception of the world and themselves is reiterated by several of the informants who identified and were entertained by India María until they saw in the city how this character was treated disrespectfully and discriminated against. It would seem then that insertion into the urban media, acquiring social, cultural, and academic knowledge through higher education, allowed the informants to become aware that they formed part of a minority and characters like India María contributed to their stigmatization.

It appears clear that migration and the acquisition of higher learning caused the subjects to acquire a more critical attitude, more elaborate discourse, and a greater awareness of their position in society. In spite of this, Tania stated:

> It bothers me (that India María is associated with indigenous people). People with dark skin or the way they dress, that they are labeled like her. It bothers me a lot… No (I don't identify with her behavior), it makes me laugh. It's a type of comedy.

From the previous reflection, we can interpret that, in spite of the implicit racism in the character, Tania is able to ignore the feeling and recognize her ability to laugh at something that is upsetting. It could be that acceptance of the character assumed, to a certain extent, part of the process of urban mimicking that Domínguez Rueda referred to (2011).

Even though Tania admits at times to enjoying India María's movies, she also shows awareness of the stigma suffered by her social group of origin (Giménez, 2009), which causes her to reject the media content that she accepted and enjoyed before migrating to the city. This shows that there is a change in her perception of how indigenous people are represented in those films; in other words, she experiences a transformation such as Ribeil (1974) suggests.

However, not all discourse from the university students about India María indicates a criticism of what she represents, or a distancing of identify. Isabel shows awareness of the process of concealment and

the negation of herself to avoid discrimination, yet still emphasizes her identification with the characteristic speech and vocabulary: "yes (I identify with India María) because there are many words that are different, well, for example that they use more there and here they don't and if you use them, people will make fun of you". So we can assume that she enjoys outwardly expressing what she usually must repress after migration.

Positive evaluation of the character of India María is apparent in the perception of her as "an indigenous person… that doesn't give up, that goes here and there… That won't give in… like she isn't afraid. She goes and argues and everything and stands in front of people and everything". In other words, she is not submissive and has the courage to speak to everyone (in spite of being in a world that discriminates against her). From this we can detect that Isabel accepts alternative meanings (Hall, 1980; Morley, 1992) that attribute positive characteristics to the indigenous person, ones which contradict the generalized image of a submissive suppressed person. These ambivalences in the process of interpretation can partially be explained by messages that question the dominant ideology.

The next transcript from Pedro helps to consolidate some of the intersubjective domain that we have detected as particularly meaningful in the narratives of our informants. Specifically, we find here a return to a certain "age of innocence" that accepts the character without suspicion or a deeper interpretation. Even though the informant recalls liking the character more when she was a child, this affection seems less related with age than past community life. In any case, the image of India María is evoked in her community of origin, which is perceived as a past rural life that has been overcome: "Yes (she is related to us), there are many scenes where she is seen selling cactus and such, isn't she? and… her burro and all that… right? Yes, it has happened. And it still happens" (she refers to this happening to those who remained there, in a certain sense, anchored to the past). Another point of contact with the intersubjectivity of our educated informants is their identification with India María through circumstances unrelated to the character's personality –circumstances or customs such as selling cactus or using a burro as a means of transportation–.

To conclude, we will offer one more quotation from our interviews that highlights the ambivalence and conflict caused by this character because it refers to the memory of a fictional character that offered simple entertainment in more innocent times. After the informants' migration, India María became a symbol of the stigma and a reminder of the racism they have experienced every day in the city. In contrast with previous informants, who explicitly expressed this idea, we believe Natalia's inability to clearly express her feelings about this, paradoxically, reveals her inner confusion.

> Interviewer: Have you watched… India María's movies?
> Natalia: Yes, yes.
> Interviewer: And, what do you think about those movies?
> Natalia: Funny, but at the same time… I don't know… They make you laugh, but you say, "It's part of…" I don't know, at times…
> Interviewer: It's part of the show?
> Natalia: Yes (laughter). No, but, I don't know… it's funny, umm… and I think… I think it is, I know people, I mean…" Ay, yes, there are people like that" (laughter).
> Interviewer: And, Do you feel identified to a certain point?
> Natalia: Yes. About… I think that we all have that part of…) I don't know, crazy and… I don't know (laughter)… Yes, it's part of reality.
> Interviewer: Ah, okay, but, not the whole reality?
> Natalia: No, no, no… No, not with things like her braids standing up…that is… (laughter).

In this interview, we can see that Natalia is one of the few university students that seem to accept this rather negative image as her own, when she affirms:

Spanish: "todos tenemos esa parte de… locas".

English: "we all have that part of… crazy."

(*todos* = masculine gender in Spanish; *locas* = feminine gender in Spanish.)

The lack of gender concordance in this phrase makes us question whether the identification with this character suggests internalized racism once again (Pyke, 2010), or if we need an interpretation focused

on the variable of gender (such as in our article referring to soap operas), since it links India María particularly to women.

Finally, in spite of this identification, our interview ends making the image of India Maria totally eccentric and unreal ("things like her braids standing up") which is the finishing touch for this article, painting a picture of a character that causes laughter based on absurdity, but still mysteriously connects with the reality of these university students.

CONCLUSION

We began this work about the university students' evaluation of the indigenous audiovisual character India María, with an attempt to identify how they interpret the hegemonic meanings in the content of this media product from the perspective of their own ethnic identity. In this sense, the most marked tendency is of critical readings, with explicit identification of the hegemonic message, a message resting on the obvious ridiculing of the indigenous person in an urban context. This causes two possible emotional reactions: 1) an open and unequivocal rejection of the character (from a positional discursive mode facing ideological hegemony); or 2) an ambivalent position with recognition and criticism of the negative stereotypes of the indigenous person in this media character, and at the same time recognition of the similarity with the group they belong to. This last reaction, characterized by ambivalence and meaningfully reiterated among our interviewees, leads us to an awareness of the relativity of these types of readings for message interpretation as proposed by Michelle (2007). It is significant that we can appreciate how the same subject oscillates from discursive to referential-or even self-referential, by assimilation of the group to which the interviewee belongs.

This fictional indigenous media character has been received with ambivalence in practically all of our interviews. Here the informants' migratory event and their level of education play a decisive role in their interpretation. Both circumstances allow our subjects to have the level of critical analysis revealed in their discourse. To become aware of the stigma attached to that the group they belong to (Giménez, 2009) has required a vital educational journey that began in a community

where it was not necessary to question their own identity. There was no reason to associate this slapstick character with mocking of the indigenous person, the fruit of generalized systematic discrimination. The seemingly innocent entertainment provided by India Maria was altered when they discover, after migrating, the ridicule and structural discrimination that she represents. This they learn first-hand, in their daily city life, and the result is a manifestation of internalized racism (Pyke, 2010), causing them to hide, on many occasions, some elements of their own ethnic identify.

Bibliographic references

Badillo, J. (2011). El Programa de Apoyo a Estudiantes Indígenas en Instituciones de Educación Superior. Alcances, retos e impactos. *Reencuentro*, *61*, 25-33.

Bautista, J. (2016) El relato de lo cotidiano y la transmisión de la vida comunitaria. *Tema y Variaciones de Literatura*, *47*, 49-55. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/11191/5856

Casaús, A. (1998). *La metamorfosis del racismo en Guatemala*. Guatemala: Editorial Cholsamaj.

Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas-CDI. (2006). *Percepción de la imagen del indígena en Mexico. Diagnóstico cualitativo y cuantitativo* [Executive presentation]. Retrieved on February 25th, 2018 from http://www.cdi.gob.mx/dmdocuments/percepcion_imagen_indigena_mexico.pdf

CHIRAPAQ. (2014). *Discriminación racial en los medios de comunicación peruanos: El caso del programa humorístico "la Paisana Jacinta"* [Informe]. Retrieved on June 3rd, 2019 from https://alertacontraelracismo.pe/sites/default/files/CHIRAPAQ_Caso%20La%20Paisana%20Jacinta.pdf

Chirix, E. & Sajbin, V. (2019). *Estudio sobre racismo, discriminación y brechas de desigualdad en Guatemala*. Mexico: United Nations.

Domínguez Rueda, F. (2011). *Zoques en la ciudad de Guadalajara: la reproducción de una identidad étnica dispersa* (Masters thesis). CIESAS, Guadalajara, Mexico. Retrieved June, 3rd, 2019 from http://repositorio.ciesas.edu.mx/bitstream/handle/123456789/144/M482.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Doncel, J. (2011). Construcción de estereotipos y dinámicas sociales entre inmigrantes extranjeros en el Área Metropolitana de Monterrey. In J. Olvera & B. Vázquez (Coords.), *Procesos comunicativos en la migración: de la escuela a la feria popular* (pp. 135-164). Mexico: COLEF.

Doncel, J. (2013). El indígena imaginado. Estereotipos presentes en el discurso sobre la población indígena. In C. Muñiz (Coord.), *Medios de comunicación y prejuicio hacia los indígenas* (pp. 67-88). Mexico: Fontamara.

Doncel, J. (2014). Estereotipos nacionales y étnicos entre extranjeros en Monterrey: ¿factor de conocimiento erróneo o fuente de conocimiento verídico? In A. Pérez-Gavilán, H. Venegas & C. Recio (Coords.), *Miradas sobre la migración* (pp.171-184). Mexico: Atemporia.

Doncel, J. (2016a). Significaciones de mass media en preparatorianos y universitarios indígenas emigrados a Monterrey. *Estudios Fronterizos*, *17*(34), 137-158. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2016.34.a08

Doncel, J. (2016b). Identidad étnica de preparatorianos universitarios indígenas en Mexico ante las representaciones mediáticas de "lo indígena". *Corpus*, *6*(1). DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/corpusarchivos.1553

Doncel, J. (2017). Procesos de identificación a través del consumo de telenovelas por parte de preparatorianas y universitarias indígenas emigradas al Área Metropolitana de Monterrey. In E. Hernández (Comp.), *Fragmentario de la Comunicación Rupestre. Trump y otros retos* (pp. 125-150). Mexico: Elementum.

Doncel, J. & Miranda, O. (2017). Percepción y consumo de telenovelas e identidad étnica de universitarios y universitarias indígenas: el caso de Un refugio para el amor. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, *30*, 265-285. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v0i30.6506

Fiske, J. (1989). *Television culture*. London: Routledge.

Galán, F. (s.f.). La construcción histórica de la identidad híbrida de lo zoque/chol en estudiantes de la Universidad Intercultural en Tabasco. In B. Baronnet, G. Carlos Fregoso & F. Domínguez (Coords.), *Racismo, interculturalidad y Educación en Mexico* (pp. 171-198). Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana.

Giménez, G. (2009). *Identidades sociales*. Mexico: Instituto Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes/Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura.

Goffman, E. (2008) Estigma. La identidad deteriorada. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu.

Grosfoguel, R. (2011). Racismo epistémico, islamofobia epistémica y ciencias sociales coloniales. *Tabula Rosa*, *14*, 341-355. DOI: https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.431

Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/Decoding. In S. Hall, A. Lowe & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, media, language* (pp. 166-176). London: Hutchinson.

Hall, S. (1986). Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. *The Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *10*(2), 5-27. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000202

Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística-INEGI. (2010). *XIII Censo de población y vivienda 2010.* Tabulados básicos. Mexico: INEGI.

Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística-INEGI. (2016). Módulo de movilidad social intergeneracional. Retrieved on May 31st, 2019 from https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/programas/mmsi/2016/doc/nota_metodologica_mmsi_2016.pdf

Marañón, F. & Muñiz, C. (2012). Estereotipos mediáticos de los indígenas. Análisis de las representaciones en programas de ficción y entretenimiento de televisoras en Nuevo León. *Razón y Palabra*, *80*(23). Retrieved from http://www.razonypalabra.org.mx/N/N80/V80/20_MaranonMuniz_V80.pdf

Martín-Barbero, J. (1987). *De los medios a las mediaciones. Comunicación, cultura y hegemonía*. Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili.

Martínez, J. (2018) *Identidad étnica y expectativa del retorno a la comunidad de origen de los estudiantes huastecos de nivel superior emigrados a Monterrey* (Masters thesis). Universidad Regiomontana, Monterrey.

Michelle, C. (2007). Modes of reception: a consolidated analytical framework. *The Communication Review*, *10*(3), 181-222. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420701528057

Morley, D. (1992). *Television, audiences and cultural studies*. London: Routledge.

Muñiz, C. (Coord.). (2013). *Medios de comunicación y prejuicio hacia los indígenas*. Mexico: Fontamara.

Nahmad, A. (2007). Las representaciones indígenas y la pugna por las imágenes. México y Bolivia a través del cine y el video. *Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos*, *45*, 105-130.

Olvera, J., Doncel, J. & Muñiz, C. (2014). *Indígenas y Educación. Diagnóstico del nivel medios superior en Nuevo León*. Mexico: Fondo Editorial Nuevo León.

Orozco Gómez, G. (1997). Medios, audiencias y mediaciones. *Comunicar*, *8*, 25-30. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3916/C08-1997-06

Pujadas, J. (1993). *Etnicidad. Identidad cultural de los pueblos*. Madrid: Eudema.

Pyke, K. (2010). What is internalized racial oppression and why dont we study it? Acknowledging racism´s hidden injuries. *Sociological perspectives*, *53*, 551-572. DOI : https://doi.org/10.1525%2Fsop.2010.53.4.551

Ribeil, G. (1974). *Tensions et mutations sociales*. Paris: Preses Universitaires de France.

Rivadeneyra, D. (2014). La Paisana Jacinta, el personaje que ridiculiza a la mujer andina, volvió a la televisión e incluso se alista para el cine. Retrieved from http://red.pucp.edu.pe/ridei/noticias/la-paisana-jacinta-personaje-ridiculiza-la-mujer-andina-volvio-la-television-e-incluso-se-alista-cine/

Sangrador, J. (1996). *Identidades, actitudes y estereotipos en la España de las autonomías*. Madrid: CIS.

Senovio, P. (2016). *Migración y transición a la adultez. Las y los jóvenes tepehuas de Tlachichilco, Veracruz en el Área Metropolitana de Monterrey* (Masters thesis). CIESAS, Monterrey, Mexico. Retrieved on June 3rd, 2019 from https://ciesas.repositorioinstitucional.mx/jspui/bitstream/1015/323/1/TE%20S.A.%202016%20Pedro%20Senovio%20Aquino.pdf

van Dijk, T. (2001). Discurso y racismo. *Persona y sociedad*, número, 191-205.

van Dijk, T. (2010). Análisis del discurso racista. *CyE*, *3*, 65-94.

Vélez, R. & Monroy, L. (2017). Movilidad social en México: Hallazgos y pendientes. *Revista de Economía Mexicana*, *2*, 97-142.