

THE TRANSMEMORIC PROCESS:  
THE JOURNEY OF ITALIAN-QUÉBÉCOIS ARTISTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the complex construct of multilayered social identities internalized by Italian-Québécois artists and how it is manifested in their artwork. These experiences find expression through various artistic forms, contents, and practices. Practitioners in theater, film, and musical production sectors are featured. Through video and audio excerpts captured during several encounters I examine how the political landscape and the subjects' parents' experience of immigration impinged on the artistic process and production. A video documentary constitutes the essential part of the research-creation approach, which the present written component complements.

The study demonstrates how artists connect their Italian ethnicity to a creative practice to achieve a sense of balance between family traditions, personal identity, and belonging. The artists' personal and artistic developments are marked by lived and imprinted memories. The transmemoric process is a method adopted by the artists that allows such memories to be mediated by the form of the creative practice into production of the works. How this negotiation informs, qualifies, and ultimately leads to a distinct artistic patrimony is examined.

## PREMISE

The following explores the distinctive creative process that Italian-Québécois artists of various disciplines undergo and how it is reflected in their work. This study explores the artistic expression of Italian-Québécois works to better understand how artists connect their Italian ethnicity to a creative practice. The investigation is centred on a distinctive political, social, linguistic, and exceptionally pluriethnic climate that prevailed following the province of Quebec's quest for self-determination.

To further an understanding of the Italian community living in Quebec and accentuate its social relevance, this study aims to interrogate how the prevalence of Quebec's nation-state ideology obliged artists of Italian heritage born in Quebec to explore, affirm, and establish an artistic style, genre, identity, and sense of place. These artists articulated narratives that speak to these intricate political, social, and cultural transitions. An original identity emerges from these passages, shaping and distinguishing their artistic productions from other oeuvres.

The artists defy notions that qualify Quebec's specific language, culture, and territory as fixed precursors toward the formation of an authentic Québécois identity. Their work expands previous connotations associated with such specificity and contributes to the emergence of an Italian and Québécois identity that has yet to be named. It allows for the elaboration of a discourse that explores the artistic expression of Italian-Québécois artists as it evolves within the context of Quebec. I use the French-accented spelling of "Québécois" instead of the English translation of "Quebecer" to affirm a difference in the seemingly equivalent terms. The self-identification of Québécois surfaced in the 1960s during the period of political affirmation mentioned here and connotes an underlying identification to the sovereign plight of the province of Quebec.

Given this premise, the hyphenated term *Italian-Québécois* refers to the first generation born in Quebec from Italian immigrants who generally settled in Montreal during the last significant immigration phase, which began in the mid-1960s and ended in 1971. This cohort grew up in the late 1960s and early 1970s and experienced Quebec's significant political crisis over self-determination. The Quiet Revolution, the election of a separatist government, and the adoption of Quebec's language law, Bill 101, were turning points in Quebec politics. These events polarized both the Francophone and Anglophone communities and left the immigrant minorities disconcerted. This study formulates a terminology to describe the conceptualization of Italian-Québécois artwork. It advances the theory that such work possesses individual cultural dimensions that are in marked contrast with the ones inculcated through Quebec's national political landscape.

Chapter 1, "Personal Narrative," describes how oeuvres produced by Montreal-born artists of Italian heritage inspired my documentary filmmaking and the present academic research. Chapter 2, "Methodologies Past and Present," illustrates how the investigation tactics undertaken in my professional experience were stepping stones in developing specific research-creation methodologies refined within the present academic framework. Chapter 3, "Literature and Media Review," expands on literary and media references that have informed my research on and queries about the creative processes of Italian-Québécois artists. Chapter 4, "The Journey of Italian Immigrants: The Impact on Quebec's Linguistic and Cultural Debates," examines how the linguistic and political crisis in Quebec impacted the Italian community of Montreal. An historical backdrop of the Italian immigration experience is exposed. It reveals models of social and linguistic integration adopted by Italian immigrants prior to and during the rise of Quebec nationalism, shedding light on a community's pivotal participation in the debate. Chapter 5, "The Defining Markers: Ethnicity, Identity, and Quebec Nationalism," revisits

notions of ethnicity, identity, language, and translation, and their importance in the creative development of artists considered ethnic. Chapter 6, "Seven Case Studies: Reflections and Testimonies of Italian-Québécois Artists and their Creative Work," presents case studies of artists and demonstrates how their work enables a rationalization of identity and a sense of belonging. Chapter 7, "The Transmemoric Process: An Artist's Counteraction to Established Cultural Norms," illustrates how Italian-Québécois artwork contests established cultural norms. The *transmemoric process* is an adjunct to multiculturalism, interculturalism, and transculturation, and the more recent ideology of pluralism. The function of *imprinted* and *lived* memories within the *transmemoric process* is introduced. Chapter 8, "Conclusions," offers final observations, suggestions, and conclusions.

## CHAPTER I

### PERSONAL NARRATIVE

My professional experience as a documentary filmmaker, researcher, and cultural correspondent for ethnic media enabled me to interact with various artists from Montreal. As co-host of *Arte Mondo*, a trilingual arts and entertainment show featuring emerging artists from various cultural backgrounds, I became acquainted with creators of different ethnicities and was able to showcase their work. These first-time meetings triggered the initial conversations with the artists about the intricate interplay between their immigrant journey and their original artistic practices.

The conversations were laced by a sense of loss as well as sentiments of physical, cultural, and linguistic displacement. In cases where individuals decided to pursue their calling in a creative practice, the act of internalizing such emotions propelled the artist into a creative response that transmuted into a play, film, musical opus, or other alternative cultural production.

“To write is to remember, it is a memorandum of what you do to a language physically”  
(D’Alfonso, “The Loss of a Culture” p.197)

This quote by Antonio D’Alfonso can be applied to various creative practices. Artists construct alternative means of communication to translate a diegetic understanding of their reality into their creative environment. The work expresses a collective consciousness that defies traditional family expectations as well as those disseminated by an imposed dominant culture in Quebec, which are often in opposition with each other.

The questions I posed to these artists contrasted those of mainstream media and confronted the artists' regarding their chosen artistic profession and their motivation for going against the current, a current that is driven by implicit pressures to live up to traditional cultural expectations dictated by both their native and dominant Québécois communities. The artists felt increasingly suffocated by those norms. Their films, sculptures, paintings, and musical compositions revealed the complexities of identity and intensity of such oppositional currents that inspired the ethnic-artists living in Quebec. As the present research-creation process advanced, I realized that artists and their testimonies are the aggregates to this investigation. The visual research project is a trajectory that will help engage with all elements that have shaped my Italian-Québécois identity.

This process of investigation began with my own self-questioning as a woman of Italian heritage living in Quebec. My parents arrived in Montreal in May 1970. It was a period marked by the initial stages in Quebec's desire for modernization and liberation from Catholic religious domination in all social spheres, including education. Along with the province's desire for self-affirmation came the isolation of the communities and individuals who did not belong to the central Francophone culture. This emphasis provoked a sense of exclusion among many.

My professional practice awakened my memory of being a member of the first cohort of children sent to French school due to Bill 101. My Italian heritage was disturbed by the political landscape of Quebec. The legislation, also known as the Charter of the French Language, was adopted on August 26, 1977, and made French the official language of business, signage, and public instruction. The latter aspect of the law is considered the most significant. The law stipulates that all children must attend French language public school unless one parent was educated in a Canadian English

elementary school. Contrary to popular belief, Bill 101 does not apply only to newly arrived immigrant children, but stands for all citizens.

The documentary *Les enfants de la loi 101*, which I wrote and directed, examined the impact on the first cohort of children. The years following the adoption of the bill destabilized the politics of admissions in elementary schools, particularly in Montreal and its surrounding urban regions and among teaching staffs and the first generation of children who became instrumental in Quebec's intention to preserve national French language and culture. My involuntary participation in Quebec's scholastic and linguistic reform informs the present investigation and contributed to my artistic development as a filmmaker and scholar.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGIES PAST AND PRESENT

The study focuses on three major artistic sectors in Montreal: cinema, theatre production, and musical composition. In total, seven artists were interviewed. The methods of research include quantitative research, qualitative research, ethnographic observation, and journaling. Video and audio recording of the artist interviews were also undertaken. The written component elaborates a corpus based on those findings. It includes historical and statistical data, a theoretical framework, and a case study on the artists. A 50-minute video documentary frames this process of investigation and introspection into the creative journey of Italian-Québécois author, composer, and musician Marco Calliari, who best exemplifies and corroborates the theories raised.

The research-creation methodologies chosen for this study were inspired by my previous professional filmmaking work. My first independent documentary film, *Straniera Come Donna (A Woman a Stranger)*, is the first of my three-part research-creation process. It explores how women of Italian origin born in Montreal negotiate their identity, womanhood, and motherhood, as well as their sense of belonging to a place. The film takes on an autobiographical slant the moment I visit my parents' native village and meet the women I could have been. Voice is given to women, including myself, who are determined to achieve an impossible equilibrium between fidelity to their heritage and a desire to feel rooted in a province whose cultural and societal visions interfere with those transmitted by family. The next chapter of the research-creation phase occurred during the making of the documentary film *Les enfants de la loi 101*. The film analyses how Quebec's Charter of the French Language, Bill 101, impacted the first cohort of children who were steered into the French system, 30 years after its adoption in August 1977. These two films served as stepping-stones toward a formal theoretical analysis on the

artistic phenomenon that develops when individuals of diverse backgrounds are confronted with an imposing national Québécois culture. The productions of Italian-Québécois artists are reflexive of the cultural and political intercession between individual identity and Québécois nationalism. This finding motivated the fundamental third iteration of my research-creation, now situated in an academic framework.

The video ethnographic approach initially proposed for visual academic documentation developed into a cinematic expression in the making. During the process, a familiarity was gradually established between Marco Calliari and myself. We came to understand that we were both engaged in the same creative journey of affirming our identities as Italian-Québécois artists. This provided a freedom to engage in an unconditioned portrayal of Marco's musical evolution.

More than recording data and images, the research-creation approach captured the unconditioned transformation of Marco's creative journey. During the first filmed encounter, Marco was at a loss for words when explaining his creative impulse and musical genre. He spontaneously grasped his guitar and sang to communicate what could not be stated in words and instinctively responded in Italian as though the words to express his feelings existed only in Italian. Moments that inspired Marco to draft lyrics, melodies, and choruses were caught live. Many times the camera freely recorded episodes of disarray, public mishaps, and excitement that left Marco exhilarated but emotionally exhausted. Marco delved into his past works to rediscover an unfinished creative universe that would have not surfaced without my line of questioning.

CHAPTER III  
LITERATURE AND MEDIA REVIEW

Several scholars of Italian origin in Quebec and across Canada have studied the question of Italian ethnicity. Most define the Italian-Canadian experience, identity, and immigration using scientific and quantitative methodologies of research that tend to categorize rather than distinguish the numerous factors that shape Italian artistic expression within Quebec. Acknowledging the effect of Quebec's constant redefining of Québécois identity is key to the trajectory my research undertakes.

Current works examined by the scholarship are mostly autobiographical fictions, collections of short stories, and poems that do address the difficulties, contradictions, and personal reflections that surface when one juggles different cultural environments, teachings, and traditions. Examples of such works from scholars Pasquale Verdicchio, Antonio D'Alfonso, Fulvio Caccia, and Lamberto Tassinari explore matters regarding ethnicity, identity, nationalism, culture, and artistic patrimony in relation to being of Italian descent. The most critical works of Pasquale Verdicchio, *Devils in Paradise: Writing on Post-Emigrant Culture* (1997) and *Bound by Distance: Rethinking Nationalism through the Italian Diaspora* (1997), use literary genres to study questions of Italian ethnicity.

According to author, filmmaker, and publisher Antonio D'Alfonso, ethnic literature is a means to initiate a collective social movement that leads to a continuous redefinition of culture, even though there is no consensus about what it actually means to be ethnic. In his work *En Italiques*, D'Alfonso defines "ethnic" as a conscious identity, a personal choice that is not linked to any territorial nationality or linguistic affiliation. He coined the term "Italic" to encompass all Italians living outside of Italy. In *Gambling With Failure*, D'Alfonso studies how ethnic writers' intimate connection to their culture of origin is weakened when they are caught in the mainstream, formatted, box-office ideology.

D'Alfonso claims that "Italian-Québécois" or "Italian-Canadian" is not accepted as a Canadian or Québécois phenomenon because in Canada there are only two officially recognized cultures. Therefore, it is problematic for universities to differentiate Italian-Québécois-accented works because no official denomination or process of classification exists for such a distinction.

Although identity, ethnicity, and nationalism have been repeatedly examined, they are seldom expanded through the lens of Italian ethnicity within Quebec's complex social environment and its attendant artistic expression. Often ignored are the distinct linguistic, social, and political influences particular to Quebec society, which are determining factors in ethnic artistic creation. Research about the gradual development of the linguistic and cultural debate in which the Italian community is a vital participant is explicitly divulged in the book *Le débat linguistique au Québec: la communauté italienne et la langue d'enseignement* by Donat J. Taddeo and Raymond C. Taras. Currently out of print, the book provides a thorough quantitative analysis of the linguistic dynamics of immigrant communities, focusing on the undercurrents of the Italian immigrants from the 1900s to the post-WWII period, marking the height of the immigration phase in Quebec. The book sums up grounding evidence that underpins the linguistics debate. It sheds light on the Italian community's influence toward the prevalent linguistic dilemmas the schools boards were facing prior to the linguistics crisis of the 1970s. It draws on statistical data to counter assumptions about immigrant integration patterns specific to Italian Montrealers and illustrates unprecedented evidence about their economic needs and subsequent choices in matters of language instruction.

Fulvio Caccia's *Sous le signe du Phénix: entretiens avec quinze créateurs Italo-québécois* (1985) and *The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing* (1998) are literary works that investigate how creative expressions of Italian ethnicity are viable content, rather than considering Italian ethnicity as simply a trait qualifying the work. In other

words, the ethnicity of the artist impacts and modifies the content. Poet, novelist, and essayist Mary Di Michele explores issues of Italian identity, ethnicity, women artists, and immigration in her book *Mimosa and Other Poems* (1981).

*Duologue: On Culture and Identity*, by Antonio D'Alfonso and Pasquale Verdicchio, is a candid conversation between two Italian-Canadian scholars in which important reflections about the Italian immigrant voice, experience, and interaction with Québécois and Canadian cultural and ideological influences surface. Both D'Alfonso and Verdicchio examine the ethnic-Italian literary journey and the perspective of Italian-Canadian writers by questioning the influence of Canadian and Québécois identity on the production of written works. *ViceVersa*, a cultural magazine founded in the 1980s by Italian-Québécois intellectuals, examined the tumultuous experiences of Italians living in Quebec. Fulvio Caccia, Lamberto Tassinari, and Antonio D'Alfonso were pioneers in the discussions raised about nationalism, deterritoriality,<sup>1</sup> immigration, and transculture. The magazine was among the first intercultural publications that raised issues of cross-culture and language debates in Quebec in the 1980s, inciting minority voices to challenge the stagnant notions of culture transmission and adherence.

Most recently written as part of a collective work presented in 2007 at Concordia University, *La transculturation et ViceVersa* (1983–1996), edited by Caccia, reflects on the pivotal role this unique Montreal-based trilingual (Italian, French, English) magazine played in crystallizing notions of transculturation, migration, immigration, and identity within the Italian diaspora. Since 2014, an online version of the magazine has provided contemporary scholarly (and non-scholarly) contributions, remaining however loyal to *ViceVersa's* initial mandate. Francesca Del'Orfano's doctoral thesis, "Donne/Women: Canadian Film and Video Makers of Italian Heritage" (2008), explores how Italian

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<sup>1</sup> Deterritoriality means not to be bound by the language of the land nor the land itself. The connotation is political in nature.

women video makers in Canada raise questions about identity, and interpret and express it in their work as a personal narrative. This journal marks the first examination of artistic cinematic expression of women of Italian origin living in Canada. In their book *13 Conversations About Art and Cultural Race Politics* (2002), Monika Kin Gagnon and Richard Fung present testimonials of artists, critics, and curators who reflect upon issues of ethnicity and race as manifested in media arts. In her book *Us, Them, and Others: Pluralism and National Identities in Diverse Societies* (2011), Elke Winter studies the Canadian and Québécois paradox as well as the social relations and process of ethnicization.

Francophone intellectuals have recently designated the process as “la québécoitude,” defined as a set of beliefs and values that reflect a common way of being Québécois. This vision is discussed at length in the book *Du tricoté serré au métissé serré?: la culture commune au Québec en débats*, by co-writers Stephan Gervais, Dimitrios Karmis, and Diane Lamoureux. The book represents the writers’ desire to academically define a common and inclusive understanding of Québécois citizenry, and working in conjunction with this is a collection of studies by the Commission des États généraux sur la situation et l’avenir de la langue française au Québec. The Commission’s report (2001) calls for the promotion of the French language in all major spheres of civil society, especially in education and in the workplace, urging the artistic and mediated industries to promulgate a unilateral vision of belonging through using the French language.

### **Media Review**

A significant amount of media depicts the experiences of the Italian-Québécois of Montreal. The documentary film *Mediterraneo Sempre (Mediterranean Forever)* (2000) by filmmaker Nicola Zavaglia documents how Italian immigrants in Montreal recreate the

oasis of their homeland by cultivating and harvesting a vegetable garden in their backyard. Paul Tana, an Italian-born filmmaker and professor at UQÀM who has lived in Montreal since the early 1960s, was one of the first to illustrate cultural and identity dichotomies among the Italian immigrants in Montreal. His iconic documentary film *Caffè Italia Montréal* (1985) explored such sensitive matters as the ways in which Italians in Montreal negotiated their sense of “Italianess” amid a politically charged atmosphere. Tana’s homage to the Italian community, *Ricordati Di Noi! (Remember Us)* (2006), is a short documentary film made with footage retrieved during the head office move of Montreal’s legendary Italian-language television program *Tele-Domenica*. Parts of the footage date back to the stations’ debut in the 1960s. More than a decade after the final show aired, the footage provides a vivid record of the life of Montreal’s Italian community. The material consists of black-and-white footage of Italian immigrant life. It includes live recordings of greetings from families recently settled in Montreal. At the time, the medium was used to communicate with their relatives back in the old country. Other material includes all the Teledomenica TV shows and news broadcast reels. The documentary film as well as the original raw footage has been donated to Montreal’s Cinémathèque Québécoise in an effort to salvage, preserve, and archive part of Italian-Québécois patrimony. Along the same vein, Tana’s latest short documentary film *Marguerita* (2015) explores his identity by following the genealogy of the landmark bakery founded in Montreal’s Little Italy in 1910. *Enigmatico*, by Patricia Fogliato (1995), is a poignant, award-winning arts documentary that considered Italian artistic expression in the context of immigration. The film interweaves rare moments of art production of several prominent Italian-Canadian artist/scholars.

In the last 10 years many fictional TV series and other media works exploring the Italian presence in Montreal have also been created. *Il Duce Canadese* (2003), a four-part TV series created by Italian-born Québécois university professor and screenwriter

Bruno Ramirez, dramatized the internment of Italian-Canadians during WWII, an event largely ignored in Canadian and Québécois history books and just recently acknowledged by our government. During the height of WWII, Canadian men of Italian origin were considered fascists and therefore automatically enemies of the state by Canada, regardless of their culpability. Many men were illegally arrested and imprisoned in Camp Petawawa until the end of the war.

Actor and playwright Vittorio Rossi brings the tragedy about the internment of Italian-Canadians to light in his theatrical play *Paradise By the River* (1998). He has dedicated most of his career to creating works about the Italian presence in Montreal. His most ambitious work, *A Carpenter's Trilogy* (2009), is a collection of three plays inspired by the life of his late father. The three plays include *Hellfire Pass*, *Carmela's Table*, and *The Carpenter*. *Ciao Bella* (2005), a 13-part TV series by playwright, author, and screenwriter Steve Galluccio was the longest running television series about Italians in Canada. It featured a contemporary Italian-Québécois woman attempting to liberate herself from the restrictive conditions that her Italian tradition imposed. Galluccio's recent plays produced at Montreal's leading Anglophone theatre house, the Centaur—*Piazza San Domenico* (2009) and *The St-Leonard Chronicles* (2013)—feature quotidian realities of Italian immigrant families living in Montreal. Newly arrived on the scene, playwright Michaela Di Cesare explores sexuality among individuals of various cultural origins. Her successful one-woman theatrical piece, *8 Ways My Mother Was Conceived* (2010), and her debuting web-series, *Sex and Ethnicity* (2014), are strongly inspired by her Italian upbringing. Her latest play, *In Search of Mrs. Pirandello*, which highlights the hidden truth about Luigi Pirandello's mad wife, has earned acclaim at the 2015 Fringe Festival and is gradually making a statement among the Italian community theatre scene.

The media and literary touchstones that ground my theoretical slant are *ViceVersa* magazine and the cinematic works *Caffé Italia Montréal* (1985) and *Ricordati*

*Di Noi!* (2006) by Paul Tana, and *Enigmatico* (1995) by Patricia Fogliato. The literature elaborated in *ViceVersa* magazine and its contemporary analysis in the *La transculturation et ViceVersa* collection supports my research and enlightens my queries about Italian identity in Quebec. The works revolve around universal notions of race, ethnicity, identity, and politics, focusing their arguments on a sense of belonging to an Italian heritage manifested outside of Italy.

The language issue was debated as being one of the delineating factors in identity and culture. *ViceVersa* reflected a plurilingual reality by publishing in Italian, French, and English. This trilingual approach avoided any interference with authentic expression and encouraged broader points of view. This was a bold act of intellectual appropriation that concerned the Italian community and its scholars. It also claimed several linguistic sovereignties, forcing the mostly Francophone readers to be confronted with the divergent Italian-Québécois opinion. The authors proposed the notion of transculturation to counter the Canadian multicultural and Québécois intercultural model. Contrasting opinions within the publication team led to the end of *ViceVersa*'s publication in the early 1990s.

What *ViceVersa* depicted in literature, Paul Tana accentuated in his cinematic representations of the Italian community's relationship with Quebecers. Tana presented an ethnographic depiction of the cultural and ethnic realities of Italians living in Quebec. He combined archival and contemporary footage to provide an historical backdrop of the Italian community interrelating with Francophone and Anglophone communities. He captured determining moments that elucidated the act of mourning one's ethnicity and losing one's sense of "Italianess" in order to facilitate assimilation to the majority. Both the authors of *ViceVersa* and the filmmaker Paul Tana were integral participants in the elaboration of a more accurate depiction of the immigrant-Italian voice in Quebec.

*Enigmatico* is one of the few films that probe expressions of Italian-Canadian identity from an artistic point of view. The act of producing art is an unconventional demonstration of devotion and tribute to the Italian immigrant experience, from which the artist's childhood is significantly inspired. Exceptionally, the film examines the lives of children of Italian immigrant families and their struggles to cope with complex feelings of belonging through their artistic productions.

In *Enigmatico*, writers such as Filippo Salvatore and Nino Ricci explain what motivated their novels and scholarly work, while writer and filmmaker Antonio D'Alfonso exposes his disillusionment with Quebec politics, choosing to leave Montreal for Toronto. *Enigmatico* reveals how the act of making art can dislodge and disrupt profound areas of the artist's identity that otherwise would not have surfaced or had the opportunity to flourish. The film features artists from across Canada who transpose elements of their heritage into their work. Little about this artistic translation is related to Montreal or Quebec's complex socio-political context.

CHAPTER IV  
THE JOURNEY OF ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS:  
THE IMPACT ON QUEBEC'S LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DEBATES

The Italian community of Montreal is different. It diverges from the majority of immigrant Italians in Canada and in the Americas. Existing literature about Italian immigrants in Canada provides a substantial historical backdrop to their journey, but often paints an incoherent portrayal of the Italian community in Montreal. This chapter will clarify traits seldom considered when analyzing the footprint the Italians of Montreal have made. I will expound on their unique experience of immigration post-WWII, participation and integration in civic and social life, and implication in the midst of Quebec's identity and linguistic struggle.

The unification of Italy and its constitution as a modern state in 1870 propelled the emigration of its people. Initially, the aim was to fuse all regions to form a centralized Italian nation. Contemporary literature provides diverging arguments on the true intentions that led to the fusion. Prior to the merger, stories of oppression and pillage initiated by northern Italian states toward the southerners, surfaced. This situation weakened the position of the once powerful southern regions, bestowing an irrevocable vulnerability on its population. Unification was then posed as the ultimate solution to achieve economic and social equilibrium throughout the peninsula.

The creation of a modern Italian state accelerated the depravation of the southern areas of the peninsula, obliging its inhabitants to desert the lands they once ruled. A massive exodus followed, impoverishing the regions for more than a century, and forcing the population outside of its national borders for the first time. Approximately 21 million Italian citizens fled their villages and dispersed throughout the world. They left in two successive waves. The first was at the turn of the century and the other more

significant one was after WWII. The Italian diaspora is counted at over 60 million worldwide, surpassing the overall population of Italy. They constitute the fourth ethnic group in Canada. From the 800,000 that came to Canada, around 300,000 settled in Montreal. (Aprile, *Terroni*)

The impact of the unification of Italy on its southern citizens is complex and would necessitate a broader analysis. For the purpose of this study, focus will remain on the Italians of Montreal. The majority of Italian immigrants never travelled outside their village, spoke only a regional dialect (instead of a vernacular, “true” Italian that surfaced in the 1940s), and manifested an affinity to their hometown. Their attachment to their region rather than the nation is referred to as “southern regionalism.” (Verdicchio, *Bound by Distance*). This mentality prevailed among the Italian immigrants who settled in Montreal.

This ongoing mentality strengthened their identities within specific Montreal neighbourhoods, such as Ville-Émard, St-Leonard, Montreal-North, and Rivière des Prairies, which immigrants helped build and populate. The regional dialects aided comprehension between Italian immigrant groups and provided a sense of security. However, these groups also experienced a distorted relationship with the neighbourhood. On the one hand, the specific areas served as a reminder of their humble beginnings, their multilingual capacity, and the fruition of hard labour and successful integration in various social and economic strata of Quebec society. On the other, they evoked disdain for and detachment from what had also become a dysfunctional ghettoization. Those who lived in these neighbourhoods observed specific cultural norms and developed a dialectical lexicon as a result of the mixture of Italian, French-Québécois, and English, at times also responsible for creating a sense of inferiority.

Another characteristic of the Italian community is their linguistic comportment following their settlement in Quebec. Due to the prevalence of French in Montreal, the

linguistic negotiation was between three languages—Italian, English, and French—and qualified as “trinary”, (Verdicchio, *Devils in Paradise*), as opposed to binary (Italian and English), as it was for the Italians who settled outside Quebec. Studies indicate that, contrary to popular belief, many Italians arriving post-WWII chose French as their primary language of communication—11.9%, twice that of English (5.5%)—up until 1961. Prior to linguistic legislation adopted in the late 1960s, 44% of Italians were bilingual, 24% had knowledge of French, and 14% used English only. This data constitutes a unique phenomena and characteristic identified only with the Italian community of Montreal (Taddeo and Taras).

This tendency shifted dramatically in the 1960s. Eighty-six percent of parents sent their children to English schools. Many factors can be attributed to this behaviour. Two distinct doctoral studies commissioned by the Immigration Ministry of the time under the responsibility of Pro-Development Associations revealed four models of integration followed by Italians. They were categorized in the following ways: cultural (mostly linguistic), structural (their participation in organizations), economic (professional aspirations), and identification (development of a sense of belonging to the host society). The findings revealed that the Italian immigrants adopted French at the work place but opted to send their children to English schools. Their choices were mostly motivated by their attachment to the Italian language and family traditions and values, and their desire to raise their economic and social status.

The linguistic struggles of the 1960s and 1970s paradoxically helped Montreal Italians maintain their cultural heritage and Italian language, unlike any other Italian immigrant communities. Although children attended school in English, the parents chose to interact in French. The language of communication within the family remained Italian.

French Canadians had demonstrated little interest in involving the Italian immigrants in their educational system 20 years earlier, but nonetheless felt betrayed

when Italians now chose English schooling, and this fuelled in many ways the linguistic crisis that led to the adoption of controversial legislation.

“The pluricultural and plurilingual capacity of cultural minorities and especially the Italians revived the issues of the francophone minority within Canada.” (Caccia, *Interviews*)

Though both the Italian immigrants and Quebecers were Catholic and shared phonetically similar mother tongues, they did not feel invested in the proposed nationalist vision of Quebec. This divergence galvanized the divide and incomprehension between the groups. (Salvatore, *Panorama Magazine*)

In fact, during the initial stages of integration at that time, Quebec's school boards were segregated by religious confession and not by the language of instruction of their institutions. The English schools were part of Montreal's Protestant school board and the French board, the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many ethnic communities who were not Catholics were refused entry to French schools. The Italian immigrants, who were strongly Catholic, naturally gravitated toward French schools. Ironically, they were refused access because of their ethnicity. This aspect contributed to the Italians' inclination toward English language instruction.

The event that marked the beginning of tensions between the Italian community and the nationalist Québécois movement was the “Cries de St-Leonard.” The St-Leonard Crisis burst forth in 1968, and preceded the Quiet Revolution, which sought to modernize Quebec. St-Léonard was a neighbourhood in rapid expansion after WWII. The area gradually became populated by a significant percentage of Italian immigrant families. Schools in St-Leonard progressively incorporated bilingual classes (English and

French) in their French school system in response to the changing demographic needs of its citizens.

However, Francophone intellectuals were concerned about the fate of the French language and the amplitude that English was taking among Allophone communities, most significantly the Italian community, and urged for the situation to be rectified. The school commissioner at the time imposed French unilingual classes in an attempt to limit access to English language instruction. This measure caused disarray among the Italian community because not only was their fundamental right to choose the language of instruction for their children ignored but the action itself was illegal in that no legislative measures restricting access to English education had been adopted at the time.

The unease and deep sense of injustice regarding the growing linguistic divides and cultural incongruities among Quebecers manifested first among the Italian community. The Francophone community created the Mouvement pour l'intégration scolaire (MIS) to solidify the Catholic school board's position. The impositions of such measures were the first concrete signs of the emergence of Francophone nationalism and they further intensified the debate, leading to violent confrontations between Francophone and Italian parents. The subsequent failure of political parties to resolve the linguistic crisis electrified Quebec's drive for linguistic and cultural reform. From the downfall of the Parti National to the first election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 and the adoption of the controversial Bill 101 in August 1976, Quebec proclaimed cultural and linguistic sovereignty while it imposed its laws on minorities as well as all Quebecers.

The legislative methods adopted by provincial and federal governments, as well as methods adopted in public cultural and academic institutions, including the implementation of the French Language Charter, allowed the province to effectively manage the funnelling of its citizens into the national vision of Quebec.

“L’immigration est un facteur démographique vital, pour la sérénité de la Nation québécoise dans un contexte de concurrence linguistique permanente.” (Commission des états généraux, “Le français est une langue pour tout le monde” 184)

Quebec seized the reigns of immigration, normally a federal jurisdiction, in order to control the criteria of entry of its new citizens, making it the only Canadian province to gain control over immigration. Today, these mechanisms are still firmly in place and have been adapted to demographic realities. Primary focus remains on the use of the French language in all strata of Québécois life and among its citizens.

“Le français est une voie d’accès aux multiple savoirs technologiques, scientifique et culturels et artistique ... promotion dans toutes les sphères en particulier les médias, et le visage du Québec, le visage Français et de planifier une stratégie de communication qui valorise la réalité française.” (Commission des États généraux, “Le français est une langue pour tout le monde” 184)

Given the steady decline in Quebec’s birth rate since the 1960s, an influx of immigrants into the province has been necessary to maintain the workforce and demographic equilibrium.

A constant flow of immigrants in Quebec ensures a vital demographic leverage instrumental in protecting the Quebec nation in perpetual linguistic and cultural competition. Québécois identity is only expressed through the use of French, “la langue française comme l’expression de notre identité”—a controversial statement that confirms the underling belief that “true” Québécois identity is accessed through the use of French only, giving French a status of supremacy by nullifying other languages.

As a result, the Italian-Québécois artist who has experienced that period deflects not only from traditional expectations instigated by their Italian heritage but the incessant polarizing political views present in Quebec. Their work questions being an “Italian” outside of Italy, and more incisively being an Italian born in Quebec. How did the sensitive political implications of the term “Québécois” come to be perceived by the artists? Some artists refute the Italian-Québécois appellation, preferring Italian-Montrealer or at times Italian-Canadian or choosing to exclude the “Italian” prefix.

“Italianicity is to Italian culture what Gallicity is to French culture, a spirit. Italianicity is both the soul and the spirit of the Italian as a people, the past and the future. Moving between these two poles is the body-in-the-act-of-becoming.” (Caccia, *Interviews* 12)

To be called Italian is inaccurate, but manifesting one’s “italianicity,” to quote Caccia, is a spiritual state that goes through periodic transformations and is affected by cultural influences and variations. First-born Québécois artists of Italian origin experience periods of transformation during the creation process. A distinct performative approach is then articulated contributing to the construct of an evolving artistic Italian heritage that manifests itself outside of Italy. This conscious self-attribution asserts loyalty to a territory, be it Montreal, Quebec, or Canada, as a precursor to the artist’s sense of rootedness and political positioning regarding Quebec’s nationalism. The following chapter will examine concepts intrinsic to the construct of personal identity and cultural belonging manifested by the artists during the investigation.

CHAPTER V  
THE DEFINING MARKERS:  
ETHNICITY, IDENTITY, AND QUEBEC NATIONALISM

The term “ethnic” is complex and leads to contradictory definitions. Ethnicity, as stated by Fulvio Caccia in his *Interviews With the Phoenix*, can only be fully understood when considering its relationship to territory. In other words, one’s ethnicity is defined by the place of birth or the indirect tie to territory common with the immigrant experience.

According to D’Alfonso, to be an ethnic is a matter of choice. The “Italic” artists and their artistic productions consciously deflect from the established Québécois-legitimized cultures, defying them and constructing reference points that being an Italic provides. It is an affiliation to one’s identity resulting in the sum of many formative experiences that surface from the unconscious. In the Québécois context the designation “ethnic” refers to someone whose origins are not officially recognized in the British, French, or First Peoples’ cultures, regardless of whether they were born in Canada or not. The ethnic perspective is used here to make a distinction between those who belong to a cultural origin that differs from that of the majority in a certain territory, and the majority.

In light of this, the following chapter revisits notions of ethnicity, identity, language, and translation, and their importance in the creative development of artists considered ethnic. As a result, I observed defining markers common between the interviewees during my investigation process, from which I defined three major concepts and areas of inquiry.

The first concept is based on the Gramscian model of personal identity—that identity surfaces from the accumulated constructs of narratives from personal, intimate experiences as well as those transmitted from parents and our immediate surroundings.

A social construction of personal identity can be an Italian-Québécois identity.

The term “Italian-Québécois” combines English and French spellings to affirm my conviction that ethnicity cannot supersede nor negate the indisputable association with one’s birthplace. The participants of the study are Italian by virtue of their parents’ origin, but are also undeniably Québécois because they were born in the province of Quebec. The second concept is Italian-Québécois *ethnicity*, recognized here as an encounter of several cultural compositions and territorial influences that morph into an ethno-cultural phenomenon.

The first two concepts, which explore Italian ethnicity and social formation of identity in Québec, are contingent upon my next source of analysis—my third concept, Québécois nationalism. Italian-Québécois artists convey sentiments of heritage, history, and identity by destabilizing the notion of what may constitute a hegemonic consensus of Quebecois nationalism. The artist exteriorizes the characteristic of his cultural composition and challenges the way ethnic artistic production is introduced in contemporary Québécois society.

In Montreal, the primary usages of different national languages by artists in their work is intimately linked to how their mother tongue was transmitted and the importance placed on its usage with the family. The presence of Italian in most cases was dominant and a direct source of stimulus for their artistic practice. Though most speak only a form of Italian regional dialect, all artists agreed that the grammatical structures, phonetic intonation, inflexions, and expressions used in those dialects during their childhood shaped their bond to the Italian language.

The notion of translation surfaces in the work of all seven artists interviewed. Functionally trilingual, they are nonetheless aware of the constraints that surface when operating in one language and not the other. In choosing either French or English as their primary language of communication, mourning their native tongue is necessary

even though the thought process is often conceived in Italian. The material is then translated into an illustrative language in the making, which conventional language cannot convey. The translations performed by the artists go beyond the functions of a literal linguistic translation. It occurs on a subconscious level.

“Dans cette transition d’une culture à l’autre, ou les deux cultures de départ s’entrecroisent avant d’aboutir à une transformation identitaire, l’écrivain migrant doit accomplir un choix préliminaire concernant la langue d’écriture, choix essentiel pour celui qui vit des mots. Dans le cadre de la francophonie canadienne, un auteur migrant qui prend la plume, doit renoncer à une langue souvent sa langue maternelle pour rejoindre son public à travers le français ou l’anglais. Ainsi l’écrivain migrant est un transfuge de la langue maternelle qu’il a abandonnée, mais qui git toujours en lui comme un substrat sonore derrière le français dans lequel il écrit.” (Ferraro, *Écriture migrante et translinguisme au Québec* 14)

The artists are inspired by linguistic influences (English, French, and Italian) to speak of a condition that is expressed with specific linguistic codes that recall their language of origin, rather than make use of codes recognized as official languages of Canada. In Quebec, people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English are referred to as *Allophones*. The government’s incapacity to understand the normalcy of linguistic practices among immigrant families contributes to stigmatization and erroneous categorization of citizens based on whether their mother tongue is officially recognized by the government or not. The artists interviewed are therefore neither Anglophone nor Francophone but systematically labelled as Allophone.

### **Anglophone and Francophone Versus Allophone**

The terms Anglophone, Francophone, and Allophone surfaced in the 1960s during the rise of linguistic disputes that arose from the flow of immigrants whose linguistic allegiances were a challenge to identify. The more formal categorization of the term Francophone was used to describe the population with French-Canadian ethnicity and Anglophone the segment of the population of Anglo-Saxon and British descent. Labels were given to the children of immigrants speaking their parents' mother tongue, with little or no knowledge of English or French. The term Allophone was used to name those speakers of other languages.

These terms are still widely used to designate a significant portion of the population of Montreal and surrounding regions who are proficient in English and French. This discourse has initiated a debate among intellectuals about what it really means to be a "true" Francophone or Anglophone in Quebec today. Many agree that the traditional qualifications of being Québécois of French or British ethnicity are no longer relevant. For example, citizens who recently emigrated from North African countries belong to the "francophonie culture" and function primarily in French, even though their mother tongue is not. The same can be observed in immigrants from Anglo-Saxon countries whose mother tongue is not English yet who mostly function in English outside the family realm. Both are referred to as Allophones. Such designations are based on language patterns that no longer apply to the changing demographics of Canadian and Québécois society.

Quebec's demographic is constituted of people belonging to different cultural backgrounds who do not belong to the majority. In Montreal, only 20% of the population is considered to be of French-Canadian ethnicity, a smaller percentage than that considered British. The majority of Montreal's population is now of "ethnic" origin. This does not mean visible minority, whereby the difference appears as a physical trait, but rather a population that is identified by its cultural heritage. The Italian community of

Montreal falls into this category. An array of ethnic and cultural minorities is omitted from the loosely traditional English-“British” and French-“Québécois” categories, based on the false presumption that British and French national cultures are the only founders of Canada. An example of this omission is the historical negation of the Italian-born explorer working for the English, Giovanni Caboto. His journey to our shores occurred 40 years prior to Jacques Cartier’s proclaimed official discovery on France’s behalf in 1537. This factual discrepancy resulted from the idea that only a single nation could claim the land, furthering a one-sided nationhood premise, and heightening the Francophone influence.

Scholars, activists, and artists of diverse cultural backgrounds equate the lack of recognition of other founding peoples in Canada with a deliberate attempt to highlight a Franco-Anglo Canadian narrative, in which the multitudinous ethnic and cultural reality is grossly misrepresented in the public sphere. Several studies are underway that indicate such disconcerting trends, which irrefutably isolate minority voices from the mainstream. The cultural and linguistic tendencies unravelling in the urban setting of Montreal indicate that usage of such terms as Francophone, Anglophone, and Allophone have become obsolete. Their connotations no longer apply to today’s demographic reality. Yet the work produced by artist of Italian heritage falls under such qualifications.

CHAPTER VI  
SEVEN CASE STUDIES: REFLECTIONS AND TESTIMONIES  
OF ITALIAN-QUÉBÉCOIS ARTISTS AND THEIR CREATIVE WORK

These case studies present a glimpse into the creative process of Italian-Québécois artists. Paraphrased accounts of testimonies collected over a period of 18 months describe the commonalities between the practitioners.

In total, seven artists participated in the study. Playwright and actors Vittorio Rossi and Michaela Di Cesare, as well as documentary filmmaker, blogger, and writer Agata De Santis provided candid testimonies on video. Pop singer songwriter Luisa Pepe and emerging fiction filmmaker Sandra Coppola offered an audio-recorded commentary. Comedian Franco Taddeo agreed to submit written responses only.

Musician and composer Marco Calliari was filmed on several occasions and became the primary catalyst of this investigation. It plunged Marco into a period of self-questioning that extended the research-creation process for close to two years. In addition to the observations obtained during the filming process, Marco's candid delivery transformed simple video data for didactical use into exclusive footage about his creative universe.

**Vittorio Rossi: Playwright, Actor**

Vittorio Rossi was born on April 16, 1961, to Italian immigrants. He grew up in the industrial neighbourhood of Ville-Émard, and attended English school. Now a playwright, actor, and screenwriter, Rossi specialized in theatre performance at Concordia University and graduated in 1985 with a BFA. His plays have been produced in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, New York City, Boston, and Syracuse, and at the Stratford Festival in Ontario. His most ambitious work, *A Carpenter's Trilogy*, is a collection of

plays inspired by the life of his late father.

Vittorio's theatrical genre is immersed in realism. His work emulates the Italian family drama and childhood experiences of Montreal as well as the specific cultural habits he was exposed to. He develops an accented English language that mirrors the Italian-Montrealers' grammatical structure, which shares phrase constructions, syntax, and speech rhythms prevalent in southern Italian dialects. They are particular to those Italians in Montreal who are recognizable by many of his generation. He transforms Italian wordings and expressions into English to portray authentic characters and avoid falling into stereotypes. His style resonates with the Italian immigrant collective living in Montreal. At present, Vittorio is crowd funding to produce a cinematic adaptation of his most recent play, *The Envelope*, steering away from his Italian family drama-style setting to unveil the biases in the Canadian film industry.

### **Agata De Santis: Documentary Filmmaker, Producer, Blogger**

Agata De Santis is an award-winning producer, filmmaker, and writer. She is the founding president of Redhead Productions and the founding editor-in-chief of the online magazine *Italocanadese.com*. Agata's most recent documentary film, *Mal'occhio*, explores how the evil eye superstition was part of her Italian-Montreal upbringing. Her upcoming documentary, *In the Case of John Florio*, questions whether John Florio, a Londoner and son of Italian immigrants, might have authored several of Shakespeare's works. Agata naturally gravitates toward subject matters that explore her Italian heritage and produces innovative media platforms to highlight Italian-Canadian-Québécois endeavours.

Born in Montreal to Italian parents who immigrated to Montreal in 1965, Agata was raised in east-end Montreal, where she attended English school illegally by evading Bill 101. Her indirect experience with Bill 101 motivated her to study Quebec political

science in university. It provided an expanded knowledge of the political history of Quebec as well as confirmed her detachment from the Quebecois nationalist ideologies. Agata believes that continuous language debates, and adherence to a homogeneous Québécois identity, can become exclusionary.

### **Sandra Coppola: Filmmaker, Scriptwriter.**

Born in Montreal, Sandra Coppola is a 33-thirty-three year-old emerging filmmaker and a UQÀM film production graduate. Sandra directed several short films while fostering her talents in television, advertising, and web industries. Her mother is Francophone Québécoise and her father an Italian immigrant. Sandra attended French language schools under Bill 101. She felt estranged from the rest of her classmates and relatives from her Italian side who primarily attended English schools. Sandra was drawn to cinema and script writing as a means to escape the introverted tendencies that she developed due to generational and cultural contrasts, which surfaced during her tumultuous relationship with her father. Contrary to the rest of the artists interviewed, Sandra refuses to examine this conflicting dimension of her identity in her work. She fears it would legitimize it, forcing her to rationalize it.

In the summer of 2014, Sandra visited Italy for the first time with her father. He had not returned to his hometown since he left more than 50 years ago. Her difficulty communicating in Italian bore no importance as the connection to land and origin emerged with such force that it superseded any linguistic barrier. Her visit to her father's village became a source of inspiration and motivation to document a real-time spiritual journey on film. Unfortunately, Sandra has yet to summon the courage to undertake an in-depth exploration of her Italian roots through cinema.

**Luisa Pepe: Singer, Songwriter**

Luisa is a 43-year-old Montreal-born singer and songwriter of Italian origin. Her parents settled in east-end Montreal during the 1950s. They were educated in English, giving Luisa the right to English instruction. Luisa is married to a Francophone Québécois and is fiercely devoted to transmitting her Italian immigrant heritage to her three girls.

For years, Luisa wanted to give life to her childhood musical Italian icons and influences. Luisa followed in the footsteps of her father who had a musical career and sang backup in his bands on weekends. The goal for her first Italian album, titled *Farfalla*, was to express her “Italianess.” The album unravelled the experiences of a young woman growing in a family environment that celebrated being Italian.

In 2012, after a 15-year career, Luisa quit the music business to work as an accountant. She seldom tells people, so as not to burst her “stardom’s bubble”, that Quebec simply has no market for her musical genre. The music industry demanded she morph into something she is not. Regardless of her talent, her infinite attempts to modify and shape her linguistics accents, voice pitch, and sound into a more “Québécois sound” were not sufficient to convince the industry heads to give her more airplay in Quebec. Surprisingly, the US and Europe are more receptive to her work, yet her album was not deserving of recognition from Quebec’s artistic industry.

**Franco Taddeo: Comedian**

Franco was born in 1969. He grew up in the Villeray district of Montreal. He was educated in English, and pursued a sociology degree with a specialization in race and ethnic relations from McGill. He chose this field of study to refine his interest in cultural minorities and understand how he could fit into Québécois society. He is currently enrolled as a graduate student in the same discipline, but has put his studies on hold to

pursue his vocation in comedy. Franco intertwines the linguistic accents, expression, and experiences of being Italian-Montreal-Canadian in his material. His multilingual capacities enable Franco to tailor words and expressions, and to simulate accents and voice intonations according to what his audience is familiar with, challenging his public to go beyond the stereotype.

Through his experience of the 1970s in Montreal, Franco cultivated his desire to become a “liberal force” and avoid “tribalism”. He describes his approach as one that: “fosters openness and tolerance by disrupting conformity and reinforcing his otherness” in his comedic delivery. Comedy is for Franco a vehicle for rationalizing his own ethnic existence, by poking fun at all ethnic groups. He deplores the paranoid, divisive, and confrontational rhetoric to claim Quebec solidarity and challenges what a Quebecer is. He raises issues about such debates in English, French, and Italian. He exteriorizes the reality of linguistic barriers that comedians face and the solitude that characterizes Montreal living. His work creates interconnections among minorities in a Quebec that positions itself both as a majority and as a minority within Canada. His material translates the complexity of this state of being and provides credence to this state.

### **Michaela Di Cesare: Playwright, Actor**

Michaela Di Cesare is a 27 year old born to Italian immigrants and raised in St-Leonard, a suburb of Montreal. Having the necessary eligibility requirements, Michaela attended English school. She completed her master’s at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, and is a recipient of a MECCA Award for Best Text and the Launchpad Award for Emerging Artists.

Her academic education provided a strictly Anglo-Saxon and western exposure to literature and omitted many diverse cultural and gendered realities and points of view. Michaela questions this absence of perspective that could also be hers. Her work 8

*Ways My Mother Was Conceived* exposes taboos of women's sexuality in the strict Italian norms, revealing how guilt, fear, and ignorance transmitted to young women hinder their development. Michaela used her first piece as a way to normalize her experiences, and to encourage all women of her heritage to challenge expectations regarding their sexual or cultural identity. This is further explored in Michaela's first web series *Sex and Ethnicity*. The cultural pressures within the inner family circles and the underrepresentation of ethnically diverse female characters in mainstream media are central in this series. Her latest play, *In Search of Mrs. Pirandello*, explores the life of Luigi Pirandello's wife, Maria Antonietta, dismissed as mad in a mere footnote, and questions the systematic idolization of the male viewpoint. Her work aims to regain the power that was stolen from women who share her ethnic background. Michaela's self-reflective work represents the female immigrant experience and perspective that is triply marginalized, being immigrant, a woman, and an artist in a province that demands artwork reflect a Francophone Québécois character to be acknowledged by industry.

### **Marco Calliari: Author, Composer, Musician**

Forty-one-year-old Marco Calliari was born in Montreal on August 27, 1974. He grew up under the auspices of Bill 101 and was obliged to attend French public school. His direct experience of Quebec's linguistic reforms heightened his affinity with the Francophone Québécois while surprisingly strengthening his bond to his Italian roots. Formerly trained as a classical guitarist, Marco founded together with his classmates the only Francophone heavy metal band in North America, Anonymus, at age 14.

In 2003, Marco left the band to pursue a calling that allowed him the freedom to explore his Italian heritage artistically. Marco revisited Italian and Québécois classic songs and composed his own opus, singing in Italian. His first album *Che La Vita*, was written and composed by Marco in Italian. It sold over 25,000 copies and remains to this

day his best selling work. *Mia Dolce Vita* is a compilation of revisited popular Italian songs that widely aired across Canada, the US, and Europe. His third opus, *Al Faro Est*, reflects a greater musical maturity. He sought the collaboration of international artists of different musical and cultural origins and established a loyal collaboration with renowned musicians from Italy. A mixture of traditional Italian folk and jazz, Marco's music is recognized for its distinct sound and acclaimed by several industry greats as world music. His latest album, *Mi Ricordo*, released in 2014, is particularly significant. *Mi Ricordo* is a compilation of 11 French Québécois singles, translated into Italian. The title *Mi Ricordo* (*I Remember*, and in French, *Je me souviens*), strategically recalls Quebec's license plate motto, changed from "La belle province" by the Parti Québécois in the 1970s. The motto is meant to remind the Québécois people of their roots. From the album, three singles marked both the Québécois collective memories and resonate especially with Marco. The songs "Frederico" ("Frédérique"), "Se avessi una vespa" ("Si j'avais un char"), and "La Manic" ("La Manic") are ballads with universal themes, such as love, family, immigration, and existential journeys that transcend language or any attachment to territory or culture. The songs were originally written in jòual, a basilectal form of stigmatized French spoken in Quebec, associated with the French-Canadian working class. Jòual is now considered part of authentic Québécois linguistic patrimony. With the help of an Italian translator who has lived in Montreal for several years, Marco transposed meanings initially conceived by French Quebecers into his own accented Italian, foregrounding his cultural and political positioning.

In August 2014, I arranged a test screening of a video pilot recorded during the initial phases of research about Marco in front of an arbitrary audience in Montreal's Dante Park in Little Italy. Though there was a sense of appreciation, few reacted to the content. Marco shared an anecdote about his first performance at Quebec's St-Jean Baptist national day festivities on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014. There was an outburst by audience

members demanding he sing in French. Perplexed by the reaction, Marco later realized how misunderstood his work remained despite efforts to bridge the political, linguistic, and cultural gaps with his music. *Mi Ricordo* was conceived to express a powerful and personal adherence to Québécois identity. This direct homage to Québécois musical patrimony is a deliberate act of solidarity with Quebec nationalism. Because Marco literally performed it through the lens of his subjective relationship with his Italian roots and language, this act failed to earn him acceptance among the Québécois.

This telling realization is further confirmed by the way such marginal work is considered by the industry in Quebec. L'Adisque (the Quebec equivalent of the Juno Awards) classifies Marco's music as "World Music." Therefore, his albums are excluded from several categories because Marco omits singing in French. Aware of this frustrating contradiction, there still remains in Marco an intangible need to project his Italian heritage in his music.

Over the course of 20 months of filming, I perceived a change in Marco's demeanour. Marco refrained from laying blame for the unexpected poor sales of *Mi Ricordo*. He was visibly unsettled by the mainstream media's lassitude in promoting it. Though he is incessantly grateful to the Francophone media and fans who supported him in the past, Marco acknowledges that his *Mi Ricordo* had been kept from receiving the success he had anticipated.

In our final interview, Marco divulged his intention to write an all-French album. Somehow he feels compelled to prove that his musical and lyrical talents can be as good in French as in Italian. Although he affirms that his intentions were clear to him before writing *Mi Ricordo*, there is an undeniable need to carefully navigate between his convictions and what his loyal following is prepared to accept.

Marco's decision to shift gears from his career in heavy metal to focus on his solo vocation in Italian changed his status from a Francophone artist to a "world music"

performer. Marco's artistic evolution placed him as the *other* within Quebec. As opposed to his less-political albums, *Mi Ricordo* obliged him to step out of the exoticized category he was placed in by making an arresting political statement. Not only does his album promote Québécois culture and artistic patrimony across Canada and in Europe, but he also unintentionally jarred the general perception his fans and local media held of him both as an artist and individual daring to use Italian and not French to delivery his message.

Marco's experience with l'Adisque and the troubling occurrence during the St-Jean Baptist concert is indicative of the incongruence in qualifying anything as sufficiently Québécois or not. It also confirms that language is not the only vehicle through which cultural belonging and loyalty is transmitted. *Mi Ricordo* defied industry standards responsible for qualifying a work as rightfully Québécois, thus leaving it undefined. How an all-French album by Marco Calliari can earn him the privilege of being officially a part of the exclusive Québécois industry remains uncertain. He has jotted down notes, new lyrics, and refrains, but has yet to summon the courage to begin a formal recording session on a new album. Perhaps he will realize that any attempt at suppressing his embedded cultural and linguistic heritage from his artistic practice is impossible.

### **Common Traits**

Six characteristics consolidate the experience of the creators, regardless of their artistic discipline. Their identification to an Italian identity recalled during their first trip to Italy is one characteristic. Estranged by their surroundings but welcomed by unknown relatives, this visceral connection grounds them physically while provoking an undeniable psychological displacement. They come to the realization that Italy holds a

two-fold image in their minds. One is the Italy existing in the microcosm of their parents' village and the other is a peripheral portrayal of Italy as a place of artistry, style, and culture. Neither view accurately represents the artists' sense of "Italianess" unless it includes the realities of Montreal. This divergence marked a turning point in their creative development.

The polarizing political and social forces encountered during their schooling were woven into their artistic professions. The unique position the artists hold as a result of their experiences constitutes a second specificity. It is from this triangular circumstance that their creative works materialize. Vittorio and Franco experienced the political instability prior to the adoption of Bill 101. Both men recall the French schooling system as exclusionary and its environment a place where immigrant children formed strong links to their heritage to deal with the hostility they encountered. It drew a wedge between the immigrants and the Anglophone and Francophone Québécois communities. Agata, Luisa, and Marco experienced the reshuffling of the school system immediately following the adoption of the law in the late 1970s. Sandra and Michaela, the youngest of the group, understood that linguistic reforms were part of the fundamental constructs of Québécois society and saw them as an evitable fact to reckon with in their practice. Agatha, Luisa, and Michaela possessed language eligibility and therefore attended English school, while Marco and Sandra were obliged to enter the French public school system. The study reveals that the artists who were taught in French school in the 1970s faced questions of self-identity and belonging early in childhood. They indirectly participated in the institutionalization of Québécois culture and language and were compelled to integrate regardless of the hold their heritage had on them. The English school environment differed. Clusters of students of similar ethnic realities gravitated toward each other. Therefore the artists were less likely to question their cultural loyalty and identity until college or university.

The third characteristic reveals an eminent connection to the Italian language. The second and third generations of Italians have been adamant about maintaining knowledge of their mother tongue, emulating Quebec's need to sustain the French language. The artists absorbed a specific Italian-Montreal lexicon that typified their theatrical, cinematic, and musical authorial voice.

The fourth characteristic is the discrepancy that results when considering their work as fully meritorious of Québécois culture. They agree that their work remains nationless (considered neither Canadian nor Québécois), and disputably Italian by the Italian community. They deplore the feeble economic funding structures to support Italian-accented artistic production. Influential individuals and organizations run by affluent members of the Italian-Canadian community fail to implement economic and power structures to assure adequate support for artistic endeavours. The difficulty in obtaining financing in combination with the continuous political discomfort, which limits career possibilities, has disillusioned artists who, with the exception of Marco and Sandra, wish they had left Montreal.

The artists' unconscionable desire to pay homage to their family's journey in their work constitutes the fifth commonality. The use of Italian is thought of as an important element of the work but not all defining. Assuming that only language is connected to culture is inaccurate. With the exception of Sandra, who is still searching for a way to amalgamate her Italian "ness" in her work, the rest have created linguistic codes and lyrical and musical adaptations, both in English and in French, to let a subtext of their multifaceted cultural realities surface.

Lastly, with the exception of Marco, the artists distance themselves from the "Québécois" label, preferring to be defined as a Montrealer. Montreal is the nuclear centre to which many people of various cultural belongings tend to gravitate. It is a centre of attraction for voices viewed as marginal, as a place where they can be

articulated. Montreal's acceptance of marginality is limited, however. The artist of ethnic origin is not truly allowed to exist unless they find, paradoxically, refuge within the confines of Montreal a city, which sets itself in juxtaposition to the Québécois nationalist predicament.

The artists use their work to set the borders and delineate a space by expressing cultural attachments, sensitivities, and affinities that are not in line with the Quebec nationally accepted culture, making loyal attachment to "a place" difficult to attain. The disorder translates into a constructive defiance that serves as a way to root marginalized artists in Montreal in a way they could not anywhere else.

The province of Quebec is considered only a place of physical birth. It comes second to the spiritual attachment to a birthplace that arises from the nostalgic connection the artists' parents hold toward their native village, as well as the connection the artists feel to their parents' place of birth. An attachment to the land is both physical and spiritual. Montreal becomes a place where spiritual attachment and creative development is possible and where difference can be exteriorized. For the artists, being a Montrealer means their creative practices are allowed to flourish. Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that artists refrain from defining themselves as only one thing. For the artist who went to English school they are Italian-Canadian or a Canadian outside of Canada, but in Canada they are Italian-Montrealers or simply Montrealers. Sandra and Franco feel neither Italian nor Canadian but self-identify as Montrealers. Marco considers himself a militant of the Québécois culture and French language while maintaining an intimate link with his Italian heritage.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE TRANSMEMORIC PROCESS:

## AN ARTIST'S COUNTERACTION TO ESTABLISHED CULTURAL NORMS

I was inspired by the collective memories and the nostalgia and melancholy experienced by the immigrant and transmitted to their offspring, and pondered the way I had internalized these sentiments. Specific events determined both my personal and professional trajectory during the research-creation phase of this study. From this reflection, I discerned two distinct memories, the *imprinted* and the *lived* memory.

The imprinted memory is unconsciously absorbed. It refers to an event and an emotional response to that event that altered one's personal trajectory but cannot be recalled. The lived memory is conscious; it can be recalled. It can be, for example, an important day in school, family rituals, behaviours, or conversations. Both imprinted and lived memories contribute to unique constructs of distinct memories that significantly forge part of the self and identity.

I was born in Montreal during the biggest snowstorm of the century. Alone and with no family by her side, my mother was whisked away on a snowmobile heading to the nearest hospital to give birth to me. Throughout my childhood, I listened to endless stories about my birth. Only recently was I able to frame the traumatic amplitude this circumstance had on my family and myself. Though I cannot remember the event, it was permanently etched on me and qualifies as an imprinted memory. A second memory is one of a majestic and lush maple tree, hovering over me while I stood on the other side of the Maple Hill Elementary schoolyard, an English school. I was only six years old then, but the feelings of disappointment, fear, and uncertainty, knowing my entry to English school was refused, are still palpable today. This emotional moment qualifies as a lived memory. Both memories were formative as they strongly influenced how I self-identify.

The common imprinted memories identified in the artists I interviewed are recollections of their parents' immigrant journey to settle in a new territory. The divisive energies between the Anglophone and Francophone communities during the 1970s constitute the most revealing lived memories.

Vittorio Rossi's father was a military man, and a victim of abandonment and displacement. Vittorio's storytelling abilities echo the harshness of daily struggles and trepidations common to working class Italian immigrants in Montreal. Affected by his father's parenting style and past, Vittorio enacts his plays and performances through the lens of his father's perceptions. Vittorio absorbed a subconscious lexicon both in behaviour and use of language, creating an imprinted memory.

Vittorio's prominent lived memory was formed while growing up in the 1960s. During the segregation between the French and English clans, the "French kids" who mocked the immigrant Italian kids attending English language schools antagonized Vittorio. This deliberate exclusion impeded Vittorio's acceptance of the French Québécois realm as part his identity. Though he refrains from qualifying his work as partially Québécois, both his lived and imprinted memories triggered a theatrical authorial voice that he articulates in his work, forging a distinct style.

For Sandra Coppola, the Italian traditional mentality and cultural mores instilled in her by her father's expectations are intrinsic to both her imprinted and lived memories. Her lived memories include recollections of disagreements between her immigrant father and Québécoise mother regarding the transmission of cultural values and her passage in the Francophone schooling system. The choice contrasted with the scholastic paths of her Italian cousins who naturally gravitated toward the Anglophone system. Sandra's inclination toward her Québécois roots weakened ties between her father and his extended Italian family in Montreal. She strived to discover meaning and balance in the family setting by countering the plight of the Québécois minority crisis and the existential

one of the immigrant. Though not directly involved in those predicaments, an imprinted memory formed in Sandra nonetheless, moulding her personal and professional identity.

Michaela Di Cesare's strongest lived memories date back to when she was just a toddler during the 1995 Quebec referendum. She recalled the tension and uncertainty that reigned in her family. Michaela was confronted with the fear of being excluded, a sentiment she later rationalized as a teenager while working at her parent's deli in the heart of St-Leonard. Michaela observed the reaction of the French Canadian and Anglo-Saxon clients to her parents' physical traits and linguistic accents and became conscious of it as a marker of her ethnicity and identity.

The imprinted memories in Michaela are constructed by internalizing the weight carried by her mother and grandmother, the ethnic Italian women of past generations. Michaela's chosen profession stems from her upbringing in that predicament. Her first work, *8 Ways My Mother Was Conceived*, narrates the taboos of women's sexuality and procreation in the strict Italian cultural norms, and explores how notions of guilt, fear, and ignorance are perpetuated and transmitted to young women. The portrayal of the ways in which the quotidian life seemed to systematically exclude women voices, needs, and concerns is her attempt to articulate the interactions between her imprinted and lived memories.

This approach allowed Michaela to include different ethnicities and characters to show that we are all approaching life with personal and distinct cultural influences and baggage, which oblige young women to comply with cultural mores stemming from their parents experiences' of their native village, cultural mores that contrast with the more socially accepting norms of Montreal and Quebec. She has opened the conversation using a mainstream and web narrative to ensure greater visibility and access. Her work, expresses essential issues that have been silenced or wrongly categorized, and that are

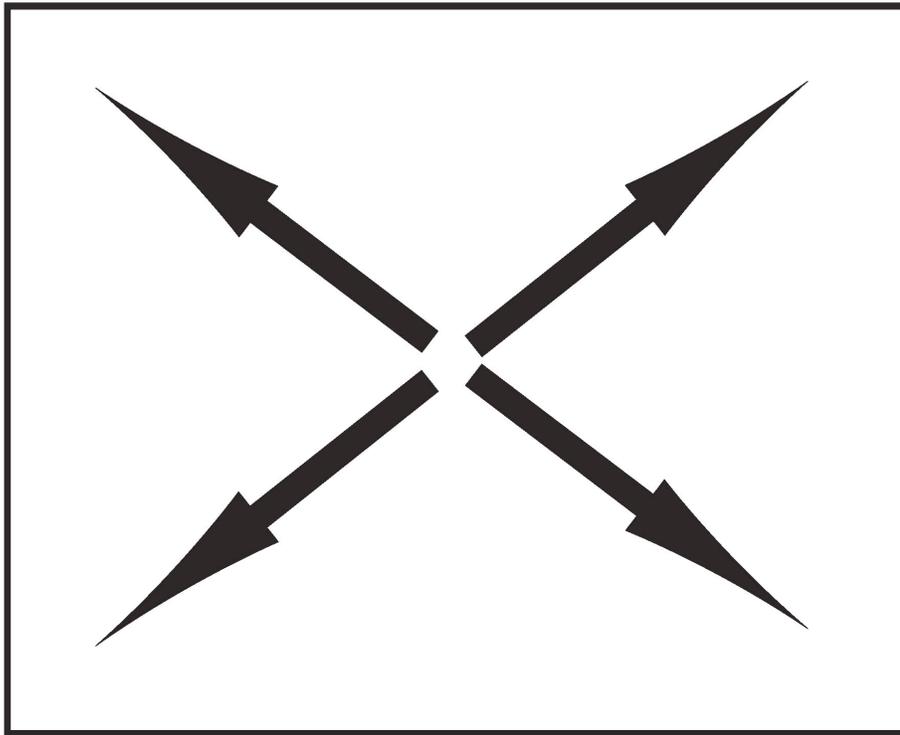
now found in Michaela's courageous aim to shed light on the historical experience of the marginalized and minoritized in this province.

Therefore memories that are constructed in specific instances inhabit the artist. They undeniably play a crucial role in the artist's work and are germane to the meaning that can be taken from those works. The unconscious transformation of multiple memories is indicative of an internal development that I define as the *transmemoric process*. For the term I borrowed the prefix *trans* from the words *transformation* and *translation*, connoting a passage from one concept into another. The high-tech industry uses the term *transmemory* to designate a tool that provides more storage for data that exceeds a given capacity.

I initially regarded the transmemoric process as an emotional phenomenon that occurs when lived and imprinted memories intersect. Such cognitive recollections remained devoid of a logical explanation. Nonetheless, the transmemoric process reveals patterns of thought. Inspired by the Traditional Square of Opposition founded in Aristotelian theory, which conceives of a diagram of four propositions that can logically relate and oppose one another and by an intellectual encounter with author Antonio D'Alfonso, I sketched a square illustrating how the different memories (lived and imprinted) interrelate, and included the opposites, non-memory and forgetfulness. I termed it the *memoric square*.

MEMORY

FORGETFULNESS



NON-FORGETFULNESS

NON-MEMORY

## THE MEMORIC SQUARE

The lived and imprinted memories contrast with non-memory or forgetfulness. The memories are in fact an act of non-forgetfulness. These elements create a square. If one chooses forgetfulness, one then lives in a state of “non-memory” and rejects inherent elements of self-identity. I suggest that memories defined as lived and imprinted lead to non-forgetfulness. They naturally collide into distinct fragments that interlace into one another and take shape. The action is comparable to knitting, which produces a shape or object. The pattern is repeated but is never the same, because the source of fibre is constantly different. The fibres refer to the different and endless memories. Such memoric interactions work at a subconscious level. The results of such subconscious

interactions appear and take shape in the artistic works. Situated at a higher epistemological level, the transmemoric process is a mechanism adopted by the artist to produce their work. The artist becomes conscious of interwoven imprinted and lived memories that are in constant opposition with forces that can lead to the eradication of those memories and instigate forgetfulness. Another way to understand such memories is to view them as waves navigating from the conscious to the unconscious. DownswEEP and upswEEP motions propel a forward movement through cultural, linguistic, and social differences, countering oppositional forces that collide with Québécois nationhood ideology. A space is then carved out in which to permit a distinct identity to form—in character and difficult to define in conventional language or codes, but only interpreted through these artistic works.

Several attempts at defining the limits of such interrelations have been made. Ever since the *Multicultural Act* was presented as policy in 1971 and made law in 1988 under the Conservative government, Canadian multiculturalism recognizes equality among the diversity of people within Canada. Diverse groups co-exist on equal footing with the culture of the majority. The province of Quebec refuses to be considered a cultural minority, evoking its majority status. Quebec advances an interculturalism ideology, apparently promotes cross-cultural dialogue, and avoids ghettoization within cultural minorities.

In Quebec, this notion precludes integration into the culture of the majority. Essentially, people of diverse linguistic expression, and religious and cultural beliefs must adhere to certain national Québécois-accepted ideology—an ideology that tends to funnel difference until it dissipates into the accepted cultural moulds dictated by the Québécois majority. More specifically, cultural and ethnic difference is acknowledged as a sort of birthmark on one's identity, not the ultimate identity one should aspire to attain. On the surface the intercultural model claims to allow difference to flourish and

inclusiveness only upon adherence to the common vision of being Québécois, termed as *la québécoité* in intellectual Francophone circles.

An alternative to both multiculturalism and interculturalism is transculturalism, discussed in *ViceVersa* publications. *Transculturalism* advocates a passage of native cultural identity that transposes or travels into another culture, resulting in a dual cultural influence. However, certain scholars feel that the cultural crossover by the transcultural process is toward the strongest culture, excluding the minority or marginal voice. Antonio D'Alfonso discusses this discordance at length in his works particularly *En Italiques*, promoting the notion of *pluriculturalism* as the viable solution to inclusion, respect of cultural difference, and defying the borders that tend to contain it.

D'Alfonso's premise of pluriculturalism can be used to suggest that ethnic artwork challenges the status quo and contests the multicultural and intercultural models of acceptance and pseudo inclusion. Living in a multicultural, intercultural, or transcultural framework can apply to Italian-Québécois artistic practice, in so far as a higher level of interrelation occurs than the ones the latter ideologies propose. The transmemoric process presents a renewed perspective that co-exists within the current models of cultural correlations in society challenging the exoticized categorization in which conventional terms tend to qualify Italian-Québécois artwork.

A telling example of the transmemoric process is the creative changes Marco Calliari undergoes over the course of his musical career. From his beginnings with the Francophone heavy metal band Anonymus to his Italian-only album venture, and finally his desire to compose for the first time an all-French album, the transmemoric process propels Marco into an unconscious engagement with the sources of his creativity in order to establish a unique sense of identity and belonging that is never truly attained.

Though all artists go through a process, the transmemoric process helps us understand the different levels of ethnic artistic experience. The transmemoric process

highlights the stages and dislodges contradictory spaces between them. This process can be applicable to other ethnic artists because of their positioning. The ethnic artists revolve around a centre where cross-cultural interferences and influences are constantly present and engage them in the dynamics of the memoric square. This unconscious participation allows for the production of artwork that is the result of the transmemoric process. Its parameters are defined by the particularities of the artistic ethnic experience and by their subsequent non-conformity to nation-state ideology or cultural beliefs of the majority. By introducing a determination that distinguishes an artistic process within the ethnic perspective, the viability and the truthfulness of artistic patrimonies are affirmed. The transmemoric process therefore legitimizes such processes and provides a barometer by which the artistic expression can be categorized.

## CHAPTER VIII

## CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrates how artists born in Quebec connect their Italian ethnicity to a creative practice. This results in the emergence of an artistic identity that is in marked contrast with the one inculcated through Quebec's national political landscape.

The process by which individuals divulge privileged information about their creative process is laborious and multifaceted. To understand its construct in relation to ethnic artistic expression in Québécois society is challenging. It is not simply an act of mirroring cultural hybridity in artwork. In Montreal and Quebec it is one of asserting a unique cultural vision and dimension that unconsciously counters the prevailing stereotypical or folkloric assumptions that qualify someone as ethnic.

To generate a corpus that defines Italian-Québécois artistic processes that are currently undefined, it was crucial to elucidate a portrait of the Italian community of Montreal beforehand. A chronological account of historical events that drove the first Italians to migrate en masse was essential. It allowed for an understanding of the Italian diaspora's behaviours, attachment to tradition, native language, and settlement trends, which contradicted myths about Italian-Montrealers' political affiliations and blind adherence to English language instruction. More importantly, it revealed how cultural and socio-linguistic crossings experienced by the immigrants' post-WWII and inevitably internalized by their children are seldom considered in the analysis of the artistic productions of the Italian community.

The study asserts that the intensity of allegiance to Quebec national identity is associated with the exposure received in the public educational system following the adoption of Bill 101. Regardless of whether this generation attended English or French school, their experience nonetheless tainted their views about Quebec nationalism and

strengthened their identification with their Italian heritage. The differentiating aspect appears in those who attended French school by law. For those people, self-questioning about identity, and cultural and social belonging surfaced earlier in their lives than for those who frequented the English school system.

Such findings confirm the initial theory proposed in my research. All seven artists interviewed struggled with their identities, and these conflicts are reflected in their work. The artists who attended French school, however, alluded to a premature process of self-interrogation, having grown up in a more multicultural and multilingual environment than those artists who attended English schools. Such indicative experiences are largely ignored when evaluating their artistic works, which results in misinterpretation, discussed by Marco Calliari, Michaela Di Cesare, and Vittorio Rossi in attempting to describe their work as Italian-Canadian, Italian-Québécois, or another denomination. Even more complex is the attempt by the artists to claim their identity as either Italian, Canadian, or Québécois, or a hyphenated combination of these, or none of them, by relating their sense of belonging to a territory (Montreal) and excluding another (Quebec or Canada).

This incomprehension about Italian-Québécois works manifests itself in the Italian community as in the majority Québécois Francophone and Anglophone communities. There is no common stance on how to define artistic expression. Oddly, the major consumers of the artistic works by those of Italian heritage do not belong to the Italian community. The artists are perplexed at the Italian community's disinterest and dismissal for their work, which continues to weaken their industry.

Unless creative and managerial heads of cultural entities and affluent persons of Italian heritage in Montreal support the representation of pluricultural realities and experiences, alternative creative initiatives will not have the means to flourish. The artists confess that their audience is composed mostly of English speaking communities of Anglo-Saxon descent for English film and theatre production. Marco's music mostly

cultivates a Québécois Francophone audience. With few exceptions, the consensus is that the material is understood as exotic culture. Quebecers appreciate his talent and artistry but ironically disqualify it from the enclosed “pure” Québécois realm. What was unsettling during the interviews with Marco was his need to rationalize and defend his identity as a Québécois as though it is a status to attain, yet it remains unattainable despite his repeated efforts.

The paradox emerges when ethnic artists of various disciplines produce artwork that is embedded with elements carrying distinct cultural compositions and *plurileveled* identities that do not conform to Québécois artistic industry standards, thus disqualifying Italian-Québécois artwork from being “true Québécois” art. An ethnic artist can express a calculated amount of cultural distinction and composition, so long as it does not supersede the norms of what it means to be Québécois. To expect an accurate and honest portrayal of the Italian community or other ethnic groups by the Anglophone and Francophone communities is unrealistic. The Italian-Québécois artistic community can be a model for other immigrant communities and minority voices. Their work imparts an artistic Québécois patrimony that offers a legacy of renewed visions of identity, culture, belonging, and citizenship.

It is therefore difficult to understand how those promoting a common vision of “québécoisité” or “Québécois,” terms intended to promote an inclusive model, decline to accept that this common set of values can be altered by the cultural and social contributions of diverse ethnic groups present in Quebec. If “la québécoisité” or any other term is to fulfill its mandate for inclusiveness and relevance in a modern Quebec, it must be acknowledged as a cultural phenomenon in continuous evolution and transmutation. To denominate a specific set of cultural values risks segregating individuals or groups that do not adhere to that cultural canon. To date, few scholarly works have investigated the impact of Quebec’s distinctive socio-political dimension on the development of

personal identity in those belonging to diverse ethnic backgrounds, certainly of the Italian-Québécois generation.

Part of the corpus initially mandated by this research is the conceptualization of the transmemoric process. Through the process of transmemoric the artists interweave their imprinted and lived memories and. The unconscious transformation and collision of such memories is indicative of an internal development that contest cultural norms. La québécoisité, which stipulates a specific canon of common visions and values, cannot work within those parameters because the transmemoric is based on the fluidity and the interchangeability of the memories and their subsequent influence on the development of identity. To say that all modes must belong within one filter in order for the artistic process to be validated is erroneous. That filter becomes exclusionary. Attempting to centre all artistic manifestation into one common vision is not viable.

Further analysis of the creative processes of Italian-Québécois artists is necessary through profound textual analysis of individual works, which goes beyond the mandate of this thesis. Coming to terms with this reality is a factor that many ethnic and Italian-Québécois artists must deal with—though each artist carries a moral conviction about their practice, it still remains a frail and susceptible vocation. Their connection to their artistic practice transformed from a young age into a vocation that was difficult to suppress. Their artwork is their true home. This explains in part why their creative impulses, initially shunned by family, persevered. Though not all artists were aware of their need to express their Italian heritage, they used their practice to express what their quotidian life would not allow them to explore. During their systematic creative evolution in writing, signing, or performing, the artists experienced a “temporary sensation of rootedness,” both on a psychological and a physical level. Each time, their desire for belonging grew.

The artists also projected their psychological discomfort when asserting their distinctiveness both in their identity and artistic profession. Perhaps an elaborate description would diminish the works' intended purpose and envenom the palpable divisions between the Anglophone, Francophone, and Allophone artistic industries in Quebec. That is a reality that an ethnic artist in Montreal is faced with. The film captures such vulnerabilities in Marco Calliari. He juggles between his transmitted past, his constructed present, and his desire to articulate both of these while composing music and lyrics. The film ends with a moving scene in which Marco digs up a composition he wrote in French, titled "Patria Mia" (My Nation) and gives an acoustic live performance of it. The single was initially to be included on his latest album *Mi Ricordo*, but after deliberation with his staff, Marco was advised against it. "Patria Mia" differed from his translated Québécois singles album. After reflection, Marco maintains he should have followed his instincts, as it was the only composition that spoke of his personal experience growing up in Quebec in an Italian immigrant family. It is a revelation that closes the film.

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