Otherworldly Storytellers: The Supernatural, Orality and Postcolonial Melancholia in Non-Indigenous and Indigenous Films in Québec

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ABSTRACT

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To this day, Québec cinema bears the reputation of a national corpus that shuns the supernatural as means of narrative and formal expression. Indeed, documentary and realist models have long dominated this film tradition. However, surprising incursions of the supernatural have occurred with increasing frequency in Québec films since the late 20th century. While these occurrences might be understood to mirror the continued collective malaise linked to Québec's failure at achieving nation-statehood, more nuanced accounts can be gained from an approach that juxtaposes individual film texts authored by both non-Indigenous and Indigenous filmmakers. The current doctoral dissertation, as a collection of case studies drawn from previous publications and conference papers, uncovers textual and contextual explanations for the shift in emphasis that saw a more frequent foregrounding of the supernatural in Québec cinema since the 1990s. It also seeks to explicate the pronounced stress placed on interculturality as a theme associated with supernatural motifs. At the same time as it explores such stylistic change, the group of readings gathered here also considers reasons for the persistence of melancholia as sentiment that pervades much of Québec cinema. As such, this study asks whether the supernatural works subversively within this geopolitical context and, if so, against which dominant interests? Likewise, it asks whether orality, a storytelling framework that has been said to characterize Québec cinema throughout its history, can also offer oppositional potential. When these two traditionally compatible ideas, orality and the supernatural, combine in contemporary Québec cinema, how do their alleged resistant capacities trigger alternative understandings of

Québec society and nationhood? Through observations of cinematic frameworks for intercultural fantasies, gendered intergenerational religious traditions, encounters between radical Québec filmmaking and Indigenous practices, and the haunting provocations of Indigenous Cinema as an emergent means of contestation, this study seeks to understand the underlying colonial histories and structures that underpin manifestations of the supernatural and melancholia in Québec. Thus, this study helps to delineate an underexamined mode in Québec film studies, and re-inserts it into considerations of longstanding narrative devices. In addition, the project critiques Québec's underplayed colonial past, as well as its anxieties concerning immigration and propensity for identity appropriation, while nevertheless investigating Québec's potential for alliance with Indigenous efforts at decolonization and challenges to the nation-state paradigm.

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INTRODUCTION

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How Do Alterity, Orality, the Supernatural, and Melancholia Intersect in Québec Cinema? Summary

Since the 1990s, supernatural motifs, remarkably absent from the Québec cinematic tradition have become increasingly prevalent, occurring across genres as well as in predominantly realist texts. Indeed, Québec cinema had until then been dominated by documentary realism, the determining influence of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), and the legacy of Québec's most important contribution to world film history via the *cinéma direct* movement. Québec also possesses an earlier, equally memorable narrative tradition based in oral storytelling, which is noted for its deployment of supernatural motifs. However, until the 1990s, the overt supernaturalism of this tradition was not emphatically transposed to the cinema and its devices were obscured as possible means to engage in audio-visual narrative. At the same time, Québec cinema has been eminently preoccupied with questions of identity, and characterized by a prevailing melancholia.

As such, the present thesis assembles a heterogeneous set of essay chapters which together elucidate the context for shifts in emphasis regarding the supernatural in Québec national cinema across distinct but interconnected key problematics, including an increased preoccupation with interculturality and an ongoing expression of melancholia. Accordingly, this project adopts the manuscript-based thesis format defined as a collection of articles and/or book chapters published or submitted for publication, or in preparation. Because of the manuscript-collection nature of the thesis, some moments of repetition tend to intrude from one section to another. For this, I offer the reader my sincere apologies. Several of the case studies that make up

the first half of this work reflect on the functions of certain supernatural tropes in contemporary Québec film and thereby attempt to contribute towards understanding the reasons behind the resurgence of supernatural motifs near the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Due in part to the vastness of the supernatural as topic, and as a manuscript-based thesis, the current project does not aspire to provide a unified and comprehensive explanation for this phenomenon across the Québec corpus. Nevertheless, in its early sections especially, it supplies distinct yet interrelated arguments on how such tropes combine with dominant themes, which together, begin to shed light on sociopolitical and historical preoccupations in this geopolitical context. Then, using these discoveries in later sections, the project seeks to pinpoint possible ways in which Québec's particularities can serve local and global challenges to the hegemonic model of the nation-state.

Some of the case studies, especially in the latter sections of this collection, are less focussed on the theme and functions of the supernatural than on the intercultural relationships and melancholic predispositions that sub-tend and surface through cinematic texts. Indeed, though not categorically linear in its argumentation, this group of essays nevertheless insists on the primary assertion that supernatural tropes reflect the national imaginary's struggle to delineate relationships between historically dominant groups and more marginalized groups, including Indigenous peoples and immigrants, thus giving rise to advocacy based on class, gender, sexuality, race, ethinicity, religion, disability, and other categories. Through its initial

¹ My use of the term "national imaginary" follows Shohat and Stam's application of this concept, which itself draws on Benedict Anderson's very influential *Imagined Communities*. Shohat and Stam hold that although the nation "is not a desiring person but a fictive unity imposed on an aggregate of individuals, yet national histories are presented as if they displayed the continuity of the subject-writ-large" (101). These authors also infer that "[n]arrative models in film are not simply reflective microcosms of historical processes, then, they are also experiential grids or templates through which history can be written and national identity figured" (102). Thus, an imagined community influences the personal output of individual filmmakers in a significant way, just as directors themselves shape national identity through film, thereby implying a two-way process of mutual reinforcement concerning national identity. Even as Michael Walsh's critical analysis of the concept of national imaginary acknowledges, although

enquiry into supernatural tropes in Québec films and its subsequent exploration of the dominant themes uncovered by such analysis, this collection leads to a major recognition of how Indigenous representation and voices destabilize the premises of national and postcolonial film studies in Québec.

On the Rareness of the Supernatural in Québec Cinema

The current study began as a response to repeated assertions that Québec cinema rarely features the fantastic or otherworldly and as an acknowledgement of its increasingly frequent occurrence in more recent decades. One example among many, the DVD cover of *La belle empoisonneuse* (*The Beautiful Angel of Death*, Richard Jutras, 2008) lists an exclamation by Radio-Canada's Claude Deschênes: "A film that is not afraid of fantasy. That is a rare thing in Québec cinema. The result is hallucinating. Bravo!" The excitement for such narratives is palpable in Deschênes' statement and evidently mobilizes fantasy as a commercial incitement. In more scholarly contexts, recognition of the scarcity of supernatural film tales in Québec is just as common. Commenting on Kim Nguyen's début feature *Le marais* (*The Marsh*, 2002), which will be discussed in Chapter 1, Philippe Lemieux, Denis Bachand and Annie Lise Clément agree that this kind of tale is rare in Québec cinema, with Bachand and Clément also seeing the development of such narratives as a "sign of maturity" (Lemieux 75; Bachand and Clément 252). Pierre Véronneau aptly points out, however, that earlier examples of "[f]antasy films, a genre

national identity is evidently not equivalent to personal identity, it may be understood as analogous to it, and while these identities are not the same, they may be similar enough to draw useful conclusions as generalizations take on the force of conventions (Walsh 11-13). As such, the present thesis does not seek to claim an exact correlation between individual filmmakers' personal identities and a collective Québéccois identity, but rather, hopes to draw useful implications from recurring patterns that reflect sets of convictions about the way Québec perceives itself.

² Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the French are my own.
³ For French-language film titles, the English translations provided are the producers' own unless no such translation is available. In such cases, the English version is my own translation and appears in non-italicized font.

that takes spectators away from their everyday, logical world, destabilizes them, and throws them into an irrational universe, have also been produced [in Québec] since the late 1970s."

Véronneau goes on to acknowledge that these productions have for the most part "avoided the expensive special effects that characterize the genre in large film industries, using instead simple devices to represent an environment that defies the physical limitations of our concrete milieu."

Véronneau cites Gilles Carle's *L'Ange et la femme* (*The Angel and the Woman*, 1977) and *Fantastica* (1980) as two early and poorly-received instances of this genre in Québec ("Genres and Variations" 108).

In spite of the failure of Carle's films mentioned above, such early trials indicate that interest in various forms of supernatural storytelling is far from absent in Québec. Indeed, commenting on science-fiction, Amy Ransom highlights that even though Québec "offers a surprisingly rich and vibrant array of French-language sf," the connection between this genre and Quebec is "not naturally made." She adds that Québec's vibrant film production "does not yet extend to sf in visual media." Like Véronneau, Ransom attributes part of the reason for this to "the prohibitive cost of plausible special effects" and to the abiding influence of Québec's cinéma direct tradition (1). Éric Falardeau's research on the history of special effects in Québec confirms the longstanding desire to intiate such production, revealing attempts to deploy special effects in Québec as early as the 1970s by creative personnel who achieved more with less resources (11-17). Moreover, Falardeau also stresses the strong connection between the imperative to affirm national identity and representations of the real as an inhibiting factor. Indeed, while Véronneau partly blames critics' misunderstanding of genre approaches to reading films and to the dominant influence of the NFB, contemporaneous commentators on Carle's two early fantasy films accused this director of "turning his back on Quebec nationalism" ("Genres

and Variations" 108-109). As Véronneau states concerning Carle's genre experiments, some critics' attitude was that genre film represents a betrayal of Québec's documentary roots ("Genres and Variations" 118). Highlighting the same feelings of opposition and allegiance, Jim Leach's chapter on "The Canadian Fantastic" in *Film in Canada* notes the rise to prominence of imagination-based films since the mid-1990s, and opens with the assertion that:

...there can be no doubt that the realist tradition has been a major force in Canadian cinema or that the idea of realism has been especially important in the analysis of Canadian cinema. The influence of documentary realism is also apparent in many films whose allegiances seem to lie elsewhere (65).

Thus, reticence concerning representations of the supernatural can only be partly attributed to cost. Rather, this prohibition appears significantly linked to the notion that national identity is intertwined with fidelity to a realist national film tradition and its political implications.

Following Véronneau, subsequent scholars and filmmakers have emphasized both the paucity and the potency of the supernatural in the Québec corpus. For André Loiselle, occurrences of Satanism in Québec films are more unsettling because they are so rare ("Québecus Horibilis"), while Jean-Marc Vallée, director of the highly successful *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (2005), bemoans the fact that there is not enough fantasy in Québec cinema, suggesting that, in Québec cinema, the supernatural is more risky or subversive than politics or queerness (qtd. in Schwartzwald, "CRAZY" 264). Evidently sharing this sentiment, a younger generation represented by directors like Robin Aubert, who also disparagingly complains about the NFB's dominance in the DVD extras of his science fiction/horror film *Saints-Martyrs-des-Damnés* (*Saint Martyrs of the Damned*, 2005), has pushed this underlying fascination for the supernatural to culminating moments of triumph, including Aubert's own 2018 Gala Québec Cinéma awards-

winning zombie movie *Les affamés* (*Ravenous*, 2017). Considering these trends, and building on the above-mentioned scholars' explanations for the gradual shift towards a more frequent deployment of supernatural tropes from the 1990s onwards, my own intervention stresses this decade as a sociopolitical moment that reveals profound underlying unease connected to Québec's ongoing inter-ethnic tensions and historical foundations as a settler colonial state.

On the Importance of the Supernatural

Outwardly religious discourse continues to underpin and communicate major polarizations in world politics, while on the margins of hegemonic worldviews lie a myriad of belief systems with specific understandings of the supernatural world. As such, understanding representations of mystical, paranormal and magical occurrences expressed in narrative form remains of considerable importance if we are to properly understand the societies in which we live. In Québec, the influence of worldviews fundamentally based in supernatural beliefs has become manifest with the periodic resurfacing of debates surrounding reasonable accommodation, including the now defunct, PQ-driven,⁴ Québec Charter of Secularism and current, Liberal-endorsed, Bill 62.⁵ Links between religious systems and politics therefore pose too important and

⁴ The *Parti québécois (PQ)*, Québec's main sovereigntist political party, was founded by former Radio-Canada journalist and Liberal Minister René Lévesque in 1968. The party was initially formed when Lévesque's *Mouvement Souveraineté-Association (MSA)* absorbed the conservative *Ralliement national (RN)* and then integrated members from the leftist *Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN)* following its dissolution later that year.

⁵ The Parti Québécois' (PQ) Charter of Québec Values (Bill 60), later renamed *Charte de la laïcité* (Charter of

⁵ The Parti Québécois' (PQ) Charter of Québec Values (Bill 60), later renamed *Charte de la laïcité* (Charter of Secularism) proposed to legislate on the wearing of "ostentatious religious symbols" in the public sphere. Conceived by then minister responsible for Democratic Institutions and Active Citizenship, Bernard Drainville, it sparked a divisive debate across Québec and ultimately perhaps contributed to the defeat of the Parti Québécois in snap elections after only 19 months in power. Upon returning to government, the Liberal Party of Québec, headed by Philippe Couillard, proposed its own legislation, Bill 62, which affirms the religious neutrality of the state and regulates the wearing of religious symbols and clothing. Most notably, clause 10 of Bill 62 requires that individuals seeking or providing government-sponsored public service remove any facial coverings for the purpose of identification. Not seen as going far enough by both the opposition PQ and Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), this legislation nevertheless passed in October 2017. However, clause 10 was immediately challenged by the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and was suspended by a decision of the

consistent a connection to ignore and these connections motivate the current research project, informing several of the essays that compose this thesis.

Indeed, the supernatural, especially in its connection to haunting, has touched scholarly reflection in several fields and has taken on wider sociopolitical and theoretical relevance, particularly since the 1993 publication of Jacques Derrida's Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale, which propelled the "spectral turn" in cultural theory. Two decades later, Blanco and Peeren's voluminous Spectralities Reader testifies to the global application of this trend, consolidating a vast and varied scholarship. Spectrality also shares concerns with trauma studies, spearheaded by Cathy Caruth. As Blanco and Peeren point out, trauma and haunting, though not identical, nevertheless share the fundamental characteristic of possession, of being possessed, in the case of trauma studies, by a past event (11). In parallel, Avery Gordon's influential book Ghostly Matters broaches haunting as a mediation of the influence of social structures, as offering a different way of understanding these structures (18-19), and as prompting future action (xvi). Gordon's strategy acknowledges both the complexity of societal power structures and of personhood, and she positions herself as a scholarly investigator in the role of a storyteller, thereby suggesting a link to oral narrative antecedents (10). Thus, "spectral" approaches continue to be employed across disciplines as various ways of probing persistent and not wholly tangible sources of contemporary anxiety. The proliferation of such paradigms offers multiple and mutually enriching research tools that interconnect with one another. As such, my own deployment of the supernatural as a lens through which to investigate Québec cinema, though it does not foreground a direct engagement with Derrida's foundational

Superior Court of Québec which deemed that the application of this clause would infringe upon Muslim women's rights and freedoms.

theory on haunting, nevertheless draws from a network of consequent theoretical scholarship and likewise hopes to contribute creatively to this pool.

In cinema studies, the supernatural has long been an area of fascination for filmmakers, critics and theorists alike, what Bliss Cua Lim describes as "occult modes of thinking encoded in fantastic narratives" (2). By extension, genre concepts such as horror and the fantastic have enabled film scholars to examine national trauma and postcolonial temporalities. Linnie Blake, for instance, considers the possibilities horror cinema presents for healing and re-constructing identity in national contexts where traumatic events have taken place. Adam Lowenstein also looks at the convergence of horror cinema and national trauma, but challenges trauma studies paradigms that he sees as dependent on the good-bad Freudian binaries of mourning and melancholia. In parallel, for Lim, the fantastic in cinema offers an alternative temporal regime to homogeneous time, "a spectral time of haunting and return" (8).

Accordingly, the supernatural forms one of the key notions at the centre of this dissertation. It is understood here as an encompassing term that groups together different forms of non-realist tropes spread across most of my corpus and which, I argue, cause meaningful incursions into Québec cinema as a whole. The term itself has relevance in this context insofar as it has been applied by literary scholars to describe the proliferation of uncanny, magical, miraculous or paranormal phenomena in Québec's rich history of oral storytelling. Indeed, the disparity between the absence of the supernatural in Québec cinema and its significance in literature and orality constitutes a key problem that is not fully investigated within the parameters of this thesis, but which remains a driving question that the current project seeks to advance. Since my research deals in part with a symptomatic exploration of the perceived dichotomy between the supernatural and the everyday, and, in order to usefully contribute to the eventual

development of a more comprehensive understanding of the supernatural mode's function in Québec cinema, this thesis resists an overly narrow focus on one aspect of the supernatural. It therefore tackles films that might fit into or touch upon such subcategories as fantasy, magic, the folktale, horror, and the miraculous.

Québec literature scholars Claude Janelle and Aurélien Boivin both use the term "fantastic" (le fantastique) to circumscribe their own corpuses, but qualify this via the term "supernatural" (le surnaturel) which I have selected here. Indeed, the introduction to Boivin's reedited collection Les meilleurs contes fantastiques québécois du XIXe siècle identifies the supernatural as the most significant category of Québécois tales. My project follows Boivin's broader grouping, which unlike Janelle's, does not contradict Todorov's definition of the fantastic as founded on uncertainty concerning otherworldly occurrences (29). Rather, I incorporate Todorov's iteration of the fantastic into the supernatural, and therefore include texts where doubt exists about whether an occurrence can be qualified as supernatural or not. This qualification allows me to analyse films such as La vraie nature de Bernadette (The True Nature of Bernadette, Gilles Carle, 1972), Albédo (Albedo, Jacques Leduc, Renée Roy, 1982), Les filles du Roy (They Called Us 'Les Filles du Roy', Anne Claire Poirier, 1974), La neuvaine (The Novena, Bernard Émond, 2005), and others where acceptance of the supernatural is not imperative and yet forms an important avenue for meaning-making. This choice appears validated by analogous studies, such as Jim Leach's, which does not establish a single overarching term (or rather, doesn't believe one exists), and uses "the fantastic," while acknowledging the exclusions or problems this causes ("Film in Canada" 65).

Key Problematics, Research Questions, and Theoretical Framework

In keeping with the format of the manuscript-based thesis, the current project assembles previously published or forthcoming work addressing interconnected but independently-focussed sections. These interventions bring together four key problematics pertaining to and informing the overarching concerns of my doctoral research: alterity, orality, melancholia and Indigeneity. These central concerns do not correspond specifically to any given section presented in the body of this thesis, but rather, overlap across chapters, synthesize with one another, and vary in emphasis at various points in the research. As such, this thesis asks a combination of research questions that are enumerated here, but should not necessarily be understood sequentially. Firstly, the project asks whether there exists a meaningful connection between manifestations of the supernatural in Québec cinema and alterity, and what the nature of such a link might be. Secondly, it questions why an allegedly "oral" cinema occludes the supernatural when previous oral storytelling traditions have placed significant emphasis on supernatural tropes. Thirdly, it reflects on reasons for the prevalence of melancholia in Québec cinema, the possible connections of this sentiment to haunting and orality, and what sociopolitical elements these features point to. Finally, it considers how the first three problematics bear upon Québec's relationship with Indigenous peoples and how Indigenous cinema produced in Québec interacts with the preoccupations foregrounded via alterity, orality and melancholia. Beyond their thematic significance, the above-mentioned key problematics also shape the theoretical bases for the current research.

As the first main thread identified above, alterity describes this project's concern with relations dominance and maginalization occurring between hegemonic and subaltern or "Other" cultures and cultural groups in Québec. It also corresponds to important sub-themes within this

broad category. Although certain chapters tend to emphasize specific types of alterity, these subthemes are not always neatly divided according to each section and contain many ovelaps.

Important subcategories of this thematic vector relate to the relationship between Québec's Francophone majority and ethnic or racial minority groups. They also highlight marginalization through gender, social and economic disparities, physical disability and difference. Ultimately, however, the marginalized status of Indigenous peoples in Québec forms the central concern of this thesis and becomes the focus of later chapters in particular.

Like alterity, orality constitutes another key theme that connects with the supernatural. In this respect, Québec film scholar Germain Lacasse suggests that Québec cinema is characterized by what he describes as cinematic orality. For Lacasse, this stems from Québec's history as a formerly colonized nation ("Le bonimenteur" 36). I contend, however, that while Lacasse retraces with convincing detail and regularity the predominance and persistence of oral structures in Québec cinema, connections between this tendency and Québec's colonized status require further examination. In addition, despite evident links between tales of the supernatural in the Québécois tradition and the oral provenance of this corpus, scholarship has yet to seize upon the disparity between Québec cinema's oral nature and the late emergence of cinematic devices that represent the supernatural. I therefore put forward, building on Lacasse, that manifestations of the supernatural in contemporary Québec cinema not only align themselves with oral practices, but also tellingly reveal expressions of intercultural anxiety. Since cinema emerged as a key medium for asserting Québec's national identity during the ferment of the Quiet Revolution, ⁶ it

⁶ The Quiet Revolution was a period of intense modernization, secularization, national affirmation, and reform. It is generally understood to have begun in 1960 with the election of Jean Lesage's Liberal Party, following the death in 1959 of ultra-conservative Premier Maurice Duplessis, whose presence had dominated Québec politics since 1936. There is less agreement about the end of the Quiet Revolution, which is sometimes dated in 1966 with the defeat of the Liberal Party, or in 1970 with the October Crisis.

is logical to presume that a shift in the deployment of supernatural tropes consequently signals a corresponding shift in expressions of this national identity. Indeed, as unresolved questions in society and politics persist as to which models of collective identity Québec should adopt, supernatural expressions in Québec cinema have increased over time and are recurrently concerned with themes of interculturality, race, and intolerance, marking these as core preoccupations of Québécois nationhood.

My own delineation of orality differs from Lacasse's insofar as I refer back to Benjamin's celebrated essay "The Storyteller." Here, Benjamin describes storytelling as fundamentally akin to the fairy-tale (157), thereby suggesting the inseparability of the supernatural from orality. Moreover, Benjamin stresses the allegorical value of oral storytelling in contrast with journalistic information and its emphasis on plausibility (147-8). Benedict Anderson's development of these ideas to formulate his influential theory of nationalism justifies using Benjamin's essay as an underlying theoretical base. In contrast, theories of orality in Québec cinema tend not to correlate the supernatural with oral storytelling. A notable exception to this is Karine Bertrand, whose work specifically targets aspects of the sacred expressed via orality in Indigenous film and media ("Le cinéma inuit," "Doctoral Thesis"). In this respect, various sections of the current thesis work to complement Bertrand's approach by investigating orality's supernatural qualities in Québécois films in order to identify disavowed concerns about the relationship between Québec and Indigenous peoples.

As a more specific kind of supernatural expression, the notion of haunting is of particular importance to this investigation and enables the inclusion of texts which do not overtly display supernatural elements. Indeed, haunting connects intimately with melancholia, another central theoretical concept deployed here. Following the model put forward by postcolonial scholar

Ranjana Khanna, haunting is understood as a manifestation of melancholia, the latter being repeatedly acknowledged as pervasive in Québec cinema. In the current study, drawing on Khanna, I hypothesize that "incursions" of the supernatural correspond to haunting as a symptom of melancholia, an encrypted secret in danger of being divulged. In her book, Khanna tethers haunting to melancholia, a term that allows me to consider the historical context of colonialism in Québec and its ethical dimensions. Haunting, according to Khanna, stems from the postcolonial melancholia that formerly colonized societies suffer when they embrace the nation-state framework that had previously constituted the very means of their oppression (25). Although Québec has not fully achieved the nation-statehood that provokes this condition, and although it cannot be described as a decolonized nation in a straightforward way, an application of Khanna's theory is nevertheless justified in light of Québec's hesitant yet defining trajectory towards political autonomy, and of what Albert Memmi described in the 1970s as Québec's state of relative colonization (139).

At the same time, Khanna repurposes the notion of melancholia famously theorized by Freud in his 1917 essay "Mourning and Melancholia," which proposes these counterparts as healthy and pathological conditions respectively. Khanna appropriates melancholia as a positive affect that provokes ethical self-reflection. My own theoretical framework adopts Khanna's alignment of both haunting and melancholia with Benjamin's storytelling time, in opposition to the empty homogeneous time of the nation as described by Anderson (Khanna 15). Moreover, I supplement Khanna's understanding of melancholia with Paul Gilroy's idea of postcolonial melancholia. The construction of a theoretical framework from these two components provides a mechanism for comprehending why and how orality and the supernatural combine to arouse melancholia in Québec, and what this reveals about Québécois anxieties concerning otherness.

Looking at intercultural tensions in the British context, Paul Gilroy identifies a malaise that he labels "post-imperial melancholia." This can be summed up as the pathological inability to mourn the loss of empire and the concomitant disavowal of colonialism as part of national history. As such, Gilroy's model can be usefully extended to apply to all former colonial enterprises, including French imperialism, which underpins Québec history before 1760.

Following its engagement with the supernatural in Québec cinema and speculation on its underlying causes, this thesis turns its attention to the manner in which Indigenous cinema incites Québec society to recognize and act upon contradictions that are inherent to its national ideals of liberation. Thus, Indigeneity constitutes the final key theme for this study. In this respect, the work of Karine Bertrand highlights the oral and sacred underpinnings of Indigenous film narrative. Accordingly, the internal framework of my fourth chapter aims to complement Bertrand's approach by focusing instead on how Indigenous films produced in Québec tend to arouse entrenched feelings about Indigenous peoples expressed through the supernatural and melancholia in Québécois films. It therefore converses with other scholarly interventions emerging from different contexts, like Collen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush, who have pondered encounters between Indigenous and European supernaturalisms and confirm that these are central to grasping settler colonialism. It also draws upon work that stresses the appropriation of European supernaturalisms by Indigenous artists. For example, Renée Bergland's *The National Uncanny* investigates the relationship between US nation-building and the pervasiveness of Indigenous haunting in the American cultural imaginary as well as the counter-hegemonic ways in which Indigenous haunting, in the hands of Indigenous writers, contests Euro-American nationhood. In Film Studies more specifically, Michelle Raheja's view of haunting links the supernatural to prophecy and evokes a powerful Indigenous tradition that enables predictions

about the coming of European colonization and its effects, but also finds strength in fortelling of the survival of Indigenous people and their traditions of thought (145-189).

While the deployment of Western theoretical paradigms stemming from psychoanalysis and Benjaminian concepts provide a viable framework for investigating Québec, sections of my dissertation dealing with films by Indigenous filmmakers necessitate corresponding epistemological foundations. My intention is not to interpret Indigenous texts through Western structures of knowledge, but instead to place these two distinct traditions into conversation in order to evaluate how films made by Indigenous directors in Québec implicate non-Indigenous cinema and spectatorship. In this respect, Paula Gunn Allen's notion of achronicity or "Indian time," and Taiaiake Alfred's emphasis on Haudenosaunee condolence, while distinct from counter-hegemonic Western models, suggest overlaps and call for dialogue. Indeed, Allen's theory of Indigenous storytelling emphasizes the hybridity of Indigenous and Western traditions, and is described as "a sense of time that connects pain and praise through timely movement, knitting person and surroundings into one" (Emberly 150-1). Likewise, Taiaiake Alfred's influential book Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto draws upon Haudenosaunee condolence traditions, which, although markedly different from Western concepts, nevertheless share with Khanna's melancholia the capacity to engage with past suffering in a way that is productive for the future. Raheja's aforementioned view of Indigenous prophecy also allows me to combine Indigenous and Western ideas to produce parallel speculations on how Indigenous texts in Québec address Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences in ways that may provoke distinct, but interconnected effects. Thus, I combine Allen, Alfred and Raheja's theories so as to understand how the foundations of Indigenous texts overlap with Western epistemologies to question dominant temporalities and stimulate latent

melancholia, or provoke "the unworking of conformity" and "the critique of the status quo" (Khanna 23). In addition, the final section of this thesis applies Audra Simpson's concept of Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) "refusal" to illustrate how Tracey Deer's television series *Mohawk Girls* exposes Eurocentric stereotypes and misinformation concerning membership rules in Kahnawake.

Literature Review

Existing scholarship on Québec national cinema includes a number of historical approaches, including general overviews such as Yves Lever's general history, Michel Coulombe and Marcel Jean's Dictionnaire du cinéma québécois, Marcel Jean's Le cinéma québécois, and Janis Pallister's Masters in their own House. Meanwhile, other studies target specific historical periods such as early film history (Bélanger; Gaudreault et al.). Among early cinema historians, Lacasse is particularly important for the present thesis given his detailed examination of the bonimenteur, or early film lecturer, a figure which I relate to the supernatural and which becomes an organizing principle for my research. Other histories cover postwar filmmaking (Tremblay-Daviault; Véronneau) and the climate of censorship that accompanied this period (Lever "Anastasie"), but also the 1960s cinéma direct movement (Marsolais), the 1970s (Major), and the 1980s (Chabot et al.). From a more broadly Canadian perspective, Gary Evans's In the National Interest, Christopher Gittings's Canadian National Cinema, and Waugh et al.'s Challenge for Change elucidate the historical context for the development of cinema in Québec. Additionally, Éric Falardeau's recent history of special effects in Québec bears particular relevance given the natural affinities between such practices and representations of the supernatural on film.

Several auteurist or biographical studies focus on individual Québec filmmakers, including Maurice Proulx (Robert), Claude Jutra (Leach; Lever), Gilles Groulx (Beaucage), Michel Brault (A. Loiselle), Pierre Perrault (Clandfield; Garneau and Villeneuve), Denys Arcand (Bergeron; Coulombe; La Rochelle), Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (Harcourt), André Forcier (M.-C. Loiselle), Jean-Claude Lauzon (I. Hébert), Paul Tana (Salvatore and Gural-Migdal), and Robert Lepage (Dundjerovich). Léo Bonneville provides interviews that cover the work of several artists. Similarly, a long conversation between Bernard Émond and filmmaker/critic Simon Galiero appears in book form and provides an autobiographical perspective, as does Bernard Émond's and Micheline Lanctôt's books outlining their creative experiences and reflections on their work as filmmakers. Some of these auteur studies and interviews inform certain sections of my thesis, especially those on Lauzon, Émond and Groulx. In addition, collections of interviews with women filmmakers (Lepage) and an anthology emphasizing work by individual women filmmakers (Gobert and Lanlo) provide useful references and complementary information. More focussed studies on gender and women's representation (Carrière; Denault; Nadeau) and sexuality and queer studies (Schwartzwald, Waugh "Romance of Transgression") bear significantly on my second chapter's exploration of the intersection between spiritual forms of the supernatural, gender traditions, and sexuality.

Scott MacKenzie's 2004 book *Screening Québec: Québécois Moving Images, National Identity, and the Public Sphere* covers Québec film culture from its very beginnings in the early 20th century to the turn of the millennium. MacKenzie constructs a framework based on Miriam Hansen's alternative public sphere, itself elaborated from Habermas' bourgeois public sphere. MacKenzie employs this theory to explore moments of oppositional potential opened up by the

⁷ Lanctôt's book is specifically targeted at young emerging women filmmakers.

advent of the cinema and of film culture. The concept of community also forms the central focus of Marion Froger's monograph titled *Le cinéma à l'épreuve de la communauté. Le cinéma francophone de l'Office National du Film 1960-1985*. Published in 2009, this book draws on semiotics, literature, sociology, anthropology, Deleuze and Derrida to emphasize the search for community in the NFB corpus and to ask what the aesthetic character of a cinema that has social praxis as its main objective might be. Likewise, in Waugh's edited volume '*Show us Life'*: *Toward a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary*, Réal La Rochelle provides a detailed survey and analysis of commited documentary in Québec from the 1950s to the 1980s. This source and its lucid description of two competing strands of Québec documentary epitomized by Pierre Perrault and Gilles Groulx is particularly relevant to my own study of Groulx's *24 heures ou plus* in the first half of Chapter 3.

The current thesis converses with or complements Québec film scholarship addressing the supernatural, interculturality, orality, melancholia and Indigenous Studies. As might be expected given the historical paucity of supernatural tropes in Québec cinema, scholarship focusing on this context tends to ignore the supernatural as a significant dimension of its expression. André Loiselle, however, has provided several articles focusing on horror and the supernatural, building certain observations about adaptations of horror to the screen on the previous findings of Pierre Véronneau who analyses the emergence of genre cinema in Québec and links it to literary adaptation and historical drama (Freitag and Loiselle; Loiselle "Horreur et dépaysement"; Véronneau "Genres and Variations"). In parallel, Denis Bachand has stressed the emergence of interculturality in Québec cinema since the turn of the millennium and connected this theme to Littoral (Tideline, Wajdi Mouawad, 2004), Mémoires affectives (Looking for Alexander, Francis Leclerc, 2004), and Le marais, all films that display supernatural tropes ("Le

prisme"; Bachand and Clément). In addition, some have tackled haunting, religion and the sacred in Québec cinema, including Erin Manning, who analyses La turbulence des fluides (Chaos and Desire, Manon Briand, 2002) and what she describes as Québec's "post Quiet Revolution cinematic tradition of spiritual secularism or religious atheism" ("Fluid Relations"). In this text and one other ("Science of the Spirit"), Manning highlights the paradoxical incommensurability and mutual imbrication of religion and science in contemporary Québec. On the other hand, Étienne Beaulieu's book-length study of the sacred and of sacrifice stresses the tragic quality of this corpus and identifies tragic death as its basic paradigm (15-6). Beaulieu attributes this characteristic to the repressed presence of Catholic rituals of sacrifice that historically dominated Québec's survivance (17), a sombre pre-Quiet Revolution period of introspection driven by the desire to preserve national culture. Beaulieu's argument revolves around notions of community and sacrifice, which he associates with Québec cinema. Departing from Lacasse's position that the bonimenteur resists Hollywood hegemony, Beaulieu sees this figure instead as evidence of an introspection recalling survivance. Thus, for Beaulieu, the bonimenteur resists not only dominant forms of cinema, but all cinematic language, in favour of a closed community. Drawing on René Girard's theories on violence and the sacred, Beaulieu associates Deleuze's movement-image to a first cycle of violence in Québec followed by a second cycle associated with the sacred and the time-image. In contrast with Beaulieu, I tend to believe that the supernatural imbricated within the cinema of Québec goes beyond Christian tradition and has more profound spiritual roots expressed via storytelling, which can contest conservative religious ideas.

As mentioned above, my own project complements Bertrand's engagement with film scholarship addressing orality in Indigenous film and extends Lacasse's ideas on orality in Québec cinema. Thus, part of my dissertation builds on work by Lacasse particularly, but puts

greater pressure on the link between orality and the supernatural. The study as a whole connects this strand of inquiry with studies on intercultural relationships of power in Québec cinema. André Loiselle's work also deals with theatricality, an approach that contrasts with the orality proposed by Lacasse and yet appears consistent with it. Indeed, orality, theatricality and the supernatural seem to share potential as disruptors of dominant realist narratives in Québec cinema. But while orality and theatricality have been perceived as characteristic of Québec's cinematic tradition, the supernatural has not. Of all Québec film scholars, Loiselle deals most directly with supernatural tropes and, without explicitly referring to it, brings to the surface interesting links between orality and the theatricality that he perceives, as well as the common storytelling trope of the devil as an incursive presence in Québécois society ("Québécus Horribilis").

Several authors have commented on this national cinema's melancholic character.

Among these, Denis Bellemare has written a PhD thesis, "la mélancolie et le banal," drawing on psychoanalysis and semiotics, and guest edited a subsequent issue of *Cinémas*, also dedicated to melancholia. This issue features an intervention by Heinz Weinmann, whose earlier book deploying interpretive psychoanalysis, *Cinéma de l'imaginaire*, deals with the question of national identity by tracing the development of Québécois cinema and society via a series of selected texts, each emphasizing his claim that Québec is characterized by a Freudian family romance complex. Weinmann argues that Québec reacts to its post-conquest status like an abandoned child, turning from its "biological" parent, France, to its imagined true parent England, and then following further betrayal following the *Patriotes* Rebellions of 1837-8, to its "celestial" parent, the Church, during the period of *survivance*. Weinmann sees Québec as

⁸ Please note that, in his interpretation of the Québec family romance, Weinmann refers to England and not Britain as the adoptive parental figure.

progressively casting off this family romance paradigm, until a regression into "childhood" in the post-traumatic period of the 1980s following the first unsuccessful referendum. In addition, Christian Poirier's 2004 book *Le cinéma québécois : à la recherche d'une identité?* also characterizes Québec cinema as guided by a dominant melancholic and tragic view of national history, a vector which is nevertheless increasingly nuanced by a secondary narrative of enchantment. Poirier adopts a hermeneutical model based on Ricoeur to interpret Québec's national narrative via a large corpus of films ranging from the 1930s to the turn of the millennium. Poirier's study uncovers two prominent narrative strands, the first hegemonic one epitomized by Pierre Perrault, exhibiting a narrative of lack and tragedy, while a less dominant narrative of enchantment, dominated by Gilles Carle emerges and progressively challenges the hegemony of the first narrative.

Drawing particularly on applications of melancholia in postcolonial studies (Cheng, Gilroy, Khanna), I place these models in dialogue with specifically Indigenous thought (Alfred, Allen, E. Duran and B. Duran, Raheja, A. Simpson, Sioui), and investigate the coinciding effects of Québec's historical subjugation within Canada and its downplayed role as a colonizer vis-à-vis Indigenous peoples. Thus, I aim to determine how the suppression and re-emergence of supernatural tropes are tied to a melancholic malaise surrounding the assertion of national identity, the increasingly intercultural character of Québec society, and the parallel emergence of Indigenous-authored oeuvres that highlight Indigenous histories, presence and aspirations. Ultimately, I aim for this research to generate theoretical tools that inform decolonizing efforts in Québec and other settler colonial contexts. Unsurprisingly, much writing on Indigenous cinema in Québec centres on Alanis Obomsawin. Zuzanna Pick, has argued that Obomsawin validates

 $^{^9}$ In 1980 and 1995, Québec held unsuccessful referenda on political independence with the 'yes' campaign obtaining 40.44% and 49.42% respectively.

Indigenous historiography through her films by adapting a storytelling form that specifically reflects its Indigenous provenance ("Storytelling and Resistance," "This Land"). Randolph Lewis, in his book-length study on Obomsawin, also stresses Abenaki storytelling traditions at the root of her work (57-58), but diverges from Pick insofar as he underlines Obomsawin's strong authorial voice, thereby rejecting readings of her most important film, Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance (1993), as multivocal (96-97). For his part, Jerry White draws an interesting and unlikely parallel between Obomsawin and NFB founder John Grierson. White argues that Obomsawin's work effectively merges Griersonian utilitarianism with a radical critical assessment of Québec and Canadian nationalism to promote her own view of Indigenous nationhood ("Alanis Obomsawin"). In contrast, Bruno Cornellier's critical study of Indigenous representation in Québec and Canada centers on attempts, by governmental institutions such as the NFB and the media, to co-opt Obomsawin's "Indian-ness" in support of settler colonial state structures ("La chose"). Finally, Karine Bertrand dedicates important sections of her doctoral thesis to female-centered iterations of the sacred in Obomsawin's work. My own intervention on Obomsawin builds on the work put forward by the above authors, all of whom stress Obomsawin's attempt to establish balanced communicative channels between Indigenous and Western groups by reworking and mobilizing Indigenous cultural practices. My aim in also studying Obomsawin's Kanehsatake is to explore overlaps between Indigenous and Québécois practices, whether pre-existent or provoked through periods of historical exchange, to speculate on how these shared points of reference can interrogate and elucidate Québec's particular history of colonialism and its consequences. I am encouraged in this endeavour by a further essay on Obomsawin by Anthony Adah, who suggests that this filmmaker's Indigenous storytelling patterns might usefully be juxtaposed with Benjaminian principles (171).

In addition to the scholars noted above, Bill Marshall's comprehensive and densely engaging Ouebec National Cinema features important chapters on both Indigeneity and Immigration in Québec. Mobilizing Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature/minor cinema, Marshall addresses representations of Indigenous peoples by Québécois directors, and brings attention to the manner in which "Native questions challenge accounts of 'pure' identity in favour of *métissage* and hybridity" (240), particularly through the archetypal figure of the Indigenized French-Canadian adventurer, or coureur des bois. Marshall is careful to qualify the disruptive potential of hybridity by signalling the possible dangers of an identity appropriation that reinforces fixed ideals of past Québécois and Indigenous identities. He also usefully highlights the inherently gendered nature of the dominant trope of métissage embodied by the coureur des bois. Likewise, Marshall's exploration of the equally complex relationship between Québec cinema and immigrant groups likens this relation to a problematization of Québec's future, whereas Indigenous questions problematized its past (263). Indeed, Marshall pinpoints the similarities between Québec's respective relationships with either Indigenous or immigrant groups as evocations of the "unwanted destinies" of Quebecers (264), and aptly notes the practical obstacles immigrants pose to Québec sovereignty due to their significant numbers in contrast with the more principled obstacle Indigenous presence poses, in spite of much smaller demographics. My own intervention considers portrayals of and reactions to immigrant experience, but places Indigenous peoples and filmmakers at the heart of the overall discussion, arguing that contradictions concerning Québec's attitude to this group inhibit a full expression of Québécois national aspirations. This, for me, surfaces in the way supernatural incarnations of the figure of the early film lecturer, termed bonimenteur by Lacasse, communicate Québécois melancholia.

Contribution to the Field

Unlike previous interventions, this project uses an initial exploration into representations of the supernatural in Québec cinema as a catalyst to spur a consequent examination of its links to intercultural anxiety, Indigeneity and colonialism. As such, this study works peripherally to inform questions concerning the occlusion of the supernatural from this corpus through a connection to sociopolitical preoccupations, while maintaining those sociopolitical preoccupations as its primary concern. In addition, my project seeks to enrich existing and ongoing work on orality in Québec cinema by addressing correlations between cinematic orality in Québec and the supernatural. It is hoped that through these methods the current project will make a significant contribution to the construction of a groundwork from which to address the absence of a clear explanation for the exclusion of supernatural and genre tropes evoking magic, spectrality, science fiction and fantasy in a narrative medium that is nevertheless well predisposed towards it, and in a cultural context which is, on the surface, equally well inclined.

Generally speaking, few studies on orality and cinema in Québec address the double nature of Québec's colonial experience and history that my study tackles directly, though Bertrand's significant intervention speaks to orality from the perspective of Indigenous cinema itself. As such, there is yet room for substantial theoretical advances concerning cinematic representations of the supernatural in a cinema apparently dominated by orality, which may in turn provide tools to better understand Québec's complex relationship to Indigenous peoples and cultural minorities, as well as its failure to achieve full political autonomy, and this environment's global potential for triggering wider reconsiderations of the nation-state paradigm.

By focusing on interculturality, the current study contributes to an elucidation of the relationship between cinema in Québec and topics that have taken on central importance in Québec media, including reasonable accommodation, integration, secularity and pluralism—and, most recently, the ethical limits of artistic expression. Evidently, grasping these issues is crucial in a rapidly evolving society whose trajectory is marked by debates on collective national identity, independence and fundamental values. The intervention I seek to make is therefore timely and highly pertinent. My project also contemplates the obscure tension between nationalism and nation-statehood in Québec, and considers how this ambivalence potentially promotes modes of human association that parallel Indigenous epistemological, artistic, and political perspectives. It tackles the question of *métissage* as both opportunity and risk, and asks how the Eurocentric fear of miscegenation can be overcome without succumbing to identity appropriation. As such, while it aims to contribute to film scholarship reflecting on forms that go beyond dualist conceptions of the supernatural and the everyday, it also aspires to underline the importance and utility of grasping cinematic representation as symptomatic of wider social issues.

Research Methodology

This thesis focuses on film and media produced by Francophone Québécois and Indigenous filmmakers originating from or based in the territory now known as Québec. It links genre tropes to persistent intercultural anxieties concerning Québec's relationship to marginalized groups, particularly Indigenous peoples. As such, it does not include works by Anglophone Québécois filmmakers because its concern lies specifically in identifying and engaging with those anxieties that characterize Francophone Québec's fraught relationship with interculturality. This is not to

say that English-speaking Canada does not struggle with such issues to an equal degree, nor that English-language Québec films are not worth examining. My study simply admits that Québec's challenges have their own specificity which is inevitably tethered to the distinct historical and political experience of the French-speaking population, and therefore chooses to concentrate on corresponding texts. Through close textual analyses of key contemporary films and some of their antecedents, my research investigates the supernatural as a stylistic and narrative device in this political and historical context and considers how grasping the links between such developments might provide scholars across disciplines with useful tools for addressing fundamental social concerns. With this research, I aspire to generate a scholarly intervention that will contribute towards a better comprehension of intercultural tensions, not only for Québec, but for all national cinemas depicting plural societies caught between the exigencies of the nation-state and modern global population flows.

My approach stresses the single-film essay format and most of the chapters in this dissertation adopt this structure. This model strikes me as valid given that one of my project's aims is to contribute towards a groundwork for the study of the supernatural in Québec cinema across genres, a necessarily broad and eclectic set of concerns. In this respect, the structure chosen here provides several thorough examinations of key film texts that tackle a range of interconnected problematics. I complement these focussed analyses with a number of shorter readings of specific texts that seek to round out the issues raised by incursions of the supernatural in the Québec corpus. In some cases, and in line with the manuscript-thesis guidelines, additional material has been added to or cut from the original versions of published and presented work to ensure sufficient detail, clarity and coherence. The single-essay approach tends to divide the supernatural into multiple sub-categories, which is a desirable consequence at this early point in

the creation of knowledge around this mode in Québec cinema, given that it allows my investigation to usefully benefit from a less restrictive pattern of inquiry.

My research also emphasizes the use of interviews with creative personnel (whether conducted personally or obtained through indirect sources). This approach to the issue of national and postcolonial cinemas enables me to draw a more inclusive portrait of industry concerns as well as sociopolitical and aesthetic motivations by drawing on comments cited from key directors and producers like Yves Sioui Durand, director of the first Indigenous-authored feature in Québec; Manon Barbeau, co-founder of Wapikoni Mobile; Simon Lavoie, a young director whose work engages frontally with the Québécois imaginary and anxieties; Jeff Barnaby, one of the most innovative and incisive Indigenous directors of his generation; as well as Kevin Papatie and other key participants in Wapikoni. In this respect, there is ethical justification for considering authorial intentions in the case of Indigenous directors particularly, through interviews that seek to counterbalance and challenge my own settler viewpoint and assumptions.

My object of study loosely focuses on supernatural incursions in Québec films across genres, then moves to Indigenous productions and their anticolonial mobilization of ideas channelled through cinematic representations of the supernatural. This phenomenon evidently includes cinematic texts in the Québec corpus that deploy the conventions of horror, science fiction and fantasy, as well as magic realism, but it also includes realist films where supernatural moments are not expected or are more subtly presented. In this sense, religious faith, spirituality, dream, fantasy, allegory, hallucination and other more easily rationalized phenomena are also considered. It is my contention here that such incursions of ambiguous phenomena alongside fully assumed supernaturalism reveal historical and sociopolitical anxieties in Québec. To make

more manageable such broad inclusivity, and in keeping with my original interrogation on the contradictory nature of a purportedly oral cinema that eschews the supernatural, some case studies constitute examples of the supernatural occurring or intimated in selected films, which display the marks of orality alluded to by Lacasse. In this respect, my concern with films that correspond to this overlap is to identify the intercultural problematics that surface therein. More specifically, I aim to mine films that intersect orality and the supernatural, looking for latent or manifest expressions of intercultural tension, national anxiety, and postcolonial trauma.

The films included in this study were released within the last two and a half decades, but occasionally serve as entry points towards examples occurring in more historically distant texts. This is the case, for example, with *Maelström* (Denis Villeneuve, 2000) and Perrault's work, and with Le torrent (The Torrent, Simon Lavoie, 2012) and La petite Aurore, l'enfant martyre (Little Aurore's Tragedy, Jean-Yves Bigras, 1952), which are discussed in chapters 1 and 4 respectively. In this respect, the emergence of the supernatural in contemporary Québec films initiated in the 1990s justifies the periodization of texts within the last twenty-five years or so, but, as the above examples show, entry points to earlier productions help to map out a more complete picture of the Québec corpus's relationship to the supernatural. The start of this periodization also coincides with the failure of Québec's second referendum on political independence. Significantly, Heinz Weinmann associates Québec cinema's melancholia with post-referendum syndrome following the 1980 plebiscite ("à l'ombre" 36-38). I therefore engage substantially with Weinmann's hypotheses. In addition, I strive to explore the otherness of the bonimenteur as a supernatural figure from as many marginalized perspectives as possible, including gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, class, disability, age, religion, and nonhumanity. This approach provides a wide range of non-dominant points of view on Québec

cinema, while simultaneously enabling an analysis of the mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion operated through this medium.

Given my project's central concern with storytelling, it logically adopts a methodological structure based predominantly on narrative analysis. Throughout the articles included in this collection, I probe key cinematic texts, discussing their narrative patterns in contrast with one another and within their sociopolitical, historical and cultural contexts, aiming to uncover ideological assumptions and examining the ways in which these underlying reflections of the national imaginary become embedded within films. As such, my project intersects with different strands of enquiry in Québec Studies, beyond cinema. Thus, without purporting to offer a detailed or probing assessment of overlapping issues as they impact on other arts as well as in the political and social history of Québec, this study nevertheless draws usefully on such intersections.

Chapter Breakdown

Each of the four chapters that comprise this thesis emphasizes the different threads of continuity running throughout the collection, including the supernatural, alterity, orality, melancholia, and Indigeneity. The current project embraces the heterogeneity of this selection, of methodologies, objects and themes, which all pertain to key problematics assembled under the umbrella of Québec cinema. Chapter 1, titled "Fantasized Intercultural Spaces: Idealized and Marginalized Transnational Identities," first looks to briefly establish the link between contemporary Québec cinema and analogous oral storytelling antecedents originating in the Québécois folktale and *conteur* tradition by contrasting film adaptations of local tales by Québécois *conteur* Fred Pellerin with a more globally oriented film, namely Denis Villeneuve's *Maelström*. Reading this

film from within the parameters of Lacasse's theory, while also drawing on Benjamin's "The Storyteller" and Arjun Appadurai's work on globalization, I consider why and how in certain cases the bonimenteur becomes distanced from human incarnations to become supernatural or non-human, while in others this figure remains personified by "real" people who introduce supernatural features to the audience. Thus, I attempt to elucidate how both mechanisms communicate Québec to itself in oscillating and interconnected ways. This chapter then moves to speculate on the projection of national fantasies and anxieties through supernatural tropes of various kinds. It ponders Québec viewed from a global perspective, and in relation to the theme of interculturality. Through contrastive readings of the oeuvres of Kim Nguyen and André Forcier, one section evaluates how Nguyen challenges hegemonic attitudes by deploying orality and the supernatural, while Forcier's work and that of filmmakers like Jean-Claude Lauzon, whose Léolo (1992) forms a central focus for this chapter, offer fantasized views of global contexts. These two broad trends seem to push in opposite directions, but arguably complement one another. As such, using Hamid Naficy's concept of accented cinema, which focuses on the work of exilic and diasporic filmmakers, I compare Nguyen's work with that of a slightly older generation of Québec filmmakers who tend to "internationalize" Québec via the supernatural, and I interrogate the extent to which Nguyen, as a diasporic filmmaker, differs in his outlook on national and intercultural issues. In addition to its intercultural focus, further sections of this chapter tackle race and disability in relation to the supernatural.

The second chapter, titled "Intergenerational Religious Traditions: Melancholia and the Miraculous," focuses on Québec's religious traditions and their correlative supernatural belief systems. This group of essays examines spirituality and the miraculous and considers tensions between competing supernatural narratives and counter-narratives, which interconnect religious,

ethnic, social, gender and sexual ascendancy or opposition. This chapter tackles intergenerational spirituality and the supernatural in Québec cinema through an approach focused on distinct, but porous, gender-specific traditions. Here, I examine Gilles Carle's most direct engagement with Catholicism in La vraie nature de Bernadette. As an important precursor of the shift towards a more common inclusion of supernatural tropes as acceptable cinematic expression, and because of its allusion to the October Crisis as a key historical turning point, this analysis of *Bernadette* helps establish context for later examinations of the religious supernatural. The following section focuses on Jacques Leduc and Renée Roy's less well-known Albédo, which features an example of a figure closely akin to the supernatural bonimenteur. This short text deals with otherness in the form of socio-economic status, disability, and ethnic affiliation. The next film analyzed in this chapter, Bernard Émond's *La neuvaine*, is more contemporary and foregrounds polarizations between the everyday and the supernatural. As well as adopting a symmetrical structure, I argue, Emond places the narrative of his film within an oral framework. Thus, *La neuvaine* emphasizes the incommensurability of the material and the spiritual, but remains paradoxically committed to both these possibilities. The final section of the second chapter draws inspiration from Chantal Nadeau's identification of an intergenerational trajectory traced by Québec women filmmakers who carve out their own "dreamlike and fantasized female spaces" from within the maledomianted Québec film corpus (202). Using Nadeau's insight as a springboard, I situate Catherine Martin's work, with its ghostly maternal figures, along the trajectory initiated by these filmmakers, particularly Anne Claire Poirier. I thus build on Nadeau's observation of the parallel trajectories of national identity and representation in Québec women's cinema by addressing the topic of women's oral traditions, which is notably absent from the emblematic, speech-driven and yet profoundly androcentric work of Pierre Perrault (Carrière 78). This approach enables me

to explore the convergence of male and female-centered intergenerational vectors through the juxtaposition of Martin's work and Bernard Émond's thesis on the loss of patriarchal religious models in *La neuvaine*. This section extends its reflection to a more recent generation of women filmmakers via Anne Émond, and to the supernatural roots of the *bonimenteur* tradition in Québec via early film lecturer Alexandre Silvio. It concludes with a discussion of Micheline Lanctôt's *Pour l'amour de Dieu* (2010), a film by a woman filmmaker that seeks to recuperate elements of Québec's patriarchal Catholic tradition through the supernatural and orality.

Chapter 3, titled "Radical Québécois and Indigenous Cinemas" moves away from the supernatural to pinpoint potential bridges between radical Québécois filmmaking and its Indigenous counterparts before transitioning towards an Indigenous viewpoint that erases the contradictions assumed to exist between realist political documentary and the supernatural. This chapter acts as a bridge between earlier discussions of the supernatural in Québec films and later ones of Indigenous cinema in Québec. In this chapter, I examine two key film texts. I first establish Gilles Groulx's 24 heures ou plus (1973/77) as an exemplary Québécois Third Cinema text before moving on to Indigenous Fourth Cinema as conceived by Maori theorist and filmmaker Barry Barclay. To this end, I turn to Kanehsatake, Alanis Obomsawin's seminal documentary of the 1990 Oka Crisis as a text that forges communicative links with non-Indigenous audiences by emphasizing epistemological overlaps defying linear temporality. I consider whether the film triggers what Khanna describes as an ethical imperative associated with melancholia, simultaneously archiving this affective potential for subsequent Indigenous filmmakers.

Finally, Chapter 4, titled "Indigenous Cinema: Haunting Québec," turns more fully towards Indigenous epistemologies, the place of the supernatural within them, and their

deployment in films by Indigenous filmmakers. More specifically, this last chapter seeks to ascertain the degree to which Indigenous film narratives can prompt self-questioning and awareness in non-Indigenous Québec viewers. In doing so, it zones in on how supernatural tropes in Indigenous cinema challenge non-Indigenous Québec. Following the previous chapter's analysis of *Kanehsatake* as a starting point for prodding Québécois melancholia, I look at younger generations of Indigenous filmmakers in Québec such as Yves Sioui Durand, Jeff Barnaby, and artists emerging from Wapikoni. Thus, this chapter examines affective stimulations in Indigenous cinema that engage Québec by emphasizing oral storytelling forms and temporalities, and stresses overlaps that shed light on Québec's fundamental intercultural anxieties.

CHAPTER 1: FANTASIZED INTERCULTURAL SPACES: IDEALIZED AND MARGINALIZED TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES

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Section 1: Local/Global Storytellers: The Supernatural Bonimenteur in Québec

Foreword: This short section comprises work presented and developed as part of three public presentations. I was first invited to present this research by Joshua Neves, organizer of the Concordia Film Studies Colloquium Series in February 2015. This first exploration enabled me to test the theoretical framework and my ideas concerning supernatural representations in Québec cinema. Integrating the substantial feedback and criticism received during this talk, I prepared two subsequent revisions of the material for French and English-speaking academic audiences at the Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS) held at Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR) and the Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC) held at the University of Ottawa later that same year. These public interventions enabled me to refine the links that I try to establish here between orality and the supernatural, particularly connections concerning the figure of the bonimenteur theorized by Germain Lacasse. The most current version of this work, included below, forms the basis for expanding my examination of how intercultural preoccupations are revealed by supernatural motifs in certain Québec films, an inquiry which takes up most the first chapter of this dissertation and serves as a springboard for subsequent thematic moves in later chapters.

Introduction

Germain Lacasse has compellingly argued that Québec cinema is shaped by what he calls "oral cinema," the projection of films accompanied by verbal commentary of various kinds during the

silent era. For Lacasse, "oral practices" which ensue from this phenomenon occur across all periods of Québec film history ("Du cinéma oral" 8, 11; "L'accent aigu" 48, 50, 56). In this respect, Lacasse's viewpoint coheres with Québec's notable oral storytelling tradition. However, the common assumption that Québec cinema is anchored in documentary realism clashes with the supernatural tropes that typically pervade oral storytelling. This section explores the incongruity of a cinema apparently characterized by orality, but which simultaneously marginalizes the supernatural. For Lacasse, orality refers to cinematic practice marked by presence. The key figure here is the bonimenteur, or lecturer of early cinema, charged with translating, explaining and enhancing spectators' viewing experience. This figure, of course, is not exclusive to Québec and finds counterparts in several other national contexts. In contrast with written language, which effaces the presence of a storyteller to whom the spectator can respond directly, oral communication "situate[s] the presence and the performance of the enunciator," and counters the spectator's immersion in the narrative. Lacasse suggests that some culturally specific cinemas, including Québec's, remain characterized by oral narrative models well beyond the period of early cinema ("L'accent aigu" 48). In addition, the bonimenteur provides local inflections to texts from dominant centres of production projected in contexts where national culture has been marginalized ("L'accent aigu" 50). As a way of both interrogating and expanding on these conclusions, I take Lacasse's hypotheses as a premise from which to consider whether supernatural manifestations of the bonimenteur figure also modulate film texts on oppositional grounds in relation, not to what are perceived as externally hegemonic forces, but rather against more locally ascendant hegemonies. In other words, if Lacasse is correct in affirming the persistence of oral practices in Québec cinema, and if the bonimenteur asserts Québec identity against dominant cultural influences, could a ghostly or non-human form

of this figure permit a similar critique of a more influential contemporary Québécois national identity? To tackle this question, I first look at two contemporary films which foreground both the supernatural and storytelling, *Babine*, adapted in 2008 by Luc Picard from the oeuvre of contemporary Québécois storyteller Fred Pellerin, and *Maelström* directed by Denis Villeneuve in 2000. Reading these films through Lacasse's theory, I look to contrast Pellerin's and Villeneuve's local and global orientations and consider how the *bonimenteur* can depart from human incarnations.

Two Québec Conteurs: Grand-Louis Harvey and Fred Pellerin

Although Québec's emblematic *cinema direct* exhibits few references to the supernatural, the influential work of Pierre Perrault does feature several archetypally glib raconteurs who evoke precursors from the oral tradition. Foremost among these is Grand-Louis Harvey, who appears in Perrault's Isle-aux-Coudres trilogy and in *Un pays sans bon sens!* (A Ridiculous Kind of Country, 1970). Grand-Louis epitomizes what Anne Beaulieu defines as hors-norme speech, a quality that she links to "the eloquence of marginal figures as a recurring motif in the history of Québec cinema," and which corresponds to a character's capacity for non-conformist oral expression. For Beaulieu, these fundamentally anachronistic characters "present[] the irrational, show[] us another reality... [and] elude[] what is reasonable, or commonsensical" (253-4). Likewise, Fred Pellerin, a popular *conteur* from the small Québec village of Saint-Élie-de-Caxton has emerged as an artist corresponding to Beaulieu's definition of *hors-norme* speech. Indeed, Pellerin's eccentric vocal style, his accentuated and poetic *joual*, his creative use of hyperbole and humorous malapropisms, and his nostalgic evocation of anachronistic subjects ambiguously recall Grand-Louis's style and Perrault's linguistic creativity. Unlike Perrault, however, Pellerin's incursions into the cinema do not shun fiction, but seek to exploit the

rebellious supernatural underpinnings of orality, historically mistrusted by the 19th century clerical establishment (McCallum 42). As such, Pellerin deploys fantastical elements opposed to Church, State, empirical information, and time as a marker of progress.

Thus, *Babine* echoes Lacasse in asserting that orality resists modern Western temporality ("Le bonimenteur" 16). Pellerin's voice-over situates the plot in a distant past, emphasizing not only temporal distance, but also the qualitative difference of time. He begins: "The story that I'm about to tell you happened at a time when time, there was still plenty of it, forever time, for eternity, and even after that. That was in the old days. [...] It was a time when we still told stories." This uncannily echoes Walter Benjamin's nostalgia for the temporality of lost storytelling modes. For Benjamin, "the time is past in which time did not matter" ("The Storyteller" 150). As such, during Pellerin's prologue, visual effects announce a world where the supernatural mixes with the everyday and a calendar displays the elasticity of time beyond the numerical limits of each month.

However, the genuine existence of the village of St-Élie-de-Caxton, Pellerin's own association with this place, and his reliance on the histories of past inhabitants validate his preposterously magnified stories, the force of which rests not on plausibility, but rather, as Benjamin would have it, on their sustained emission over time in contrast with the rapid and ephemeral release of information ("The Storyteller" 147). In accordance with 19th century Québec storytelling tropes, a Manichean conflict governs *Babine*. But whereas Québécois tales commonly pit the heroic village priest against the Devil himself, in *Babine*, two priests embody a clash over time. Consequently, while he reasserts the rebellious qualities of the supernatural, Pellerin maintains an orthodox framework. On the one hand, the affable old village priest, *le vieux curé*, represents the social and temporal order at the start of the narrative, but when he dies,

a new priest, *le curé neuf*, exerts moral authority and persecutes Babine, the "village idiot." The new priest condemns Babine to death, but leaves him free to choose the means of his execution. Choosing death by time, Babine manages to survive until the age of 275, thus bringing the plotline into the present and allowing Pellerin himself to attend his funeral, joined by the film's entire cast.

Such an incursion by the makers of the film into an unabashedly fictionalized world remains consistent with Québec's typically hybridized cinema and with the self-reflexive strategies that Lacasse associates with oral practices ("Du cinema oral" 13). Thus, Pellerin seemingly mirrors the *bonimenteur*'s position on stage between film and spectator. Moreover, as a well-known performer, one tends to attribute the film's authorship to Pellerin, thereby recalling the popularity of *bonimenteurs* as star personalities. But when the success of authors like Perrault and Pellerin enable them to project popular or even emblematic images of Québécois identity, in other words, when the *bonimenteur* figure coincides with dominant views, what happens to its purportedly resistant capacity? Pellerin's work deploys a potentially subversive supernaturalism in opposition to a now impotent Church and an arguably weakened postnational-era State. Such a straw-man tactic apparently reveals the limits of the *bonimenteur*'s allegedly characteristic resistance and signals an arrival at a point of tension leading to crisis or compromise.





Figure 1 (left): Hunting the "shimmering beast." La bête lumineuse (Pierre Perrault, 1983).

Figure 2 (right): The arctic muskoxen protagonists of Cornouailles (Pierre Perrault, 1994).

From Perrault to the Fish Storyteller

Pierre Perrault's late films La bête lumineuse and Cornouailles seem to struggle with this same impasse, prescribing a certain national identity, yet moving away from the human, drifting from the emergent mainstream that this very cinema has constructed, and articulating poetry and legend through mystical beasts. Strangely, these films form an unlikely intergenerational bridge to Denis Villeneuve, a now globally successful filmmaker who has expressed admiration for La bête lumineuse and was a crew member on Cornouailles. In this, his last film, Perrault oddly emulates the *bonimenteur*, poetically interpreting the mating rituals of arctic muskoxen for a human audience. Perhaps not coincidentally then, Villeneuve's own *Maelström*, his second feature, presents the most perceptible supernatural storyteller in Québec cinema, a talking fish that explains the narrative to the audience. Whereas Pellerin communicates an anachronistic and supernatural world, Maelström instead features a magical bonimenteur that tells a story otherwise premised on realist conventions. The main plot depicts a wealthy young woman, Bibianne Champagne (Marie-Josée Croze), who undergoes an abortion, and then becomes caught in a vortex of alcohol abuse, causing her to accidentally kill a man. Throughout the film, however, the talking fish periodically interrupts and interprets the story from an unknown location where a grotesque "Infernal Fishmonger" continually decapitates him. As this silent, anonymous executioner pulls one fish after another from a tub, the fish-storyteller is reincarnated and picks up where he left off. Thus, the fish's own oral tale is interrupted and resumed each time we cut to and back from the main plot, to some extent mirroring the rhythms of editing.



Figure 3: The fish-storyteller on the gutting table. Maelström (Denis Villeneuve, 2000)

As the dying fish begins his story, we hear the metallic sound of the fishmonger's cleaver about to fall, and Villeneuve cuts to Bibianne's abortion. By ironically matching the cleaver with the film's inciting incident, *Maelström* equates this instrument to the editing process. Thus, the film brutally dramatizes what André Gaudreault has posited as the "two basic means of conveying a story," narration and monstration. For Gaudreault, scriptural narrative is expressed through narration, whereas theatrical narrative is inherently monstrative, and cinema combines these functions to present the here and now, while also intervening to edit and narrate events by manipulating time (29-31). Likewise, the fishmonger violently dissects and re-assembles the sequence of events presented orally by the fish, thus arguably personifying Villeneuve's own self-mocking alter ego. For Lacasse, orality keeps the viewer in distraction rather than contemplation, a disposition linked to the pre-narrativization period of early cinema and to its "system of monstrative attractions" as understood by Gaudreault and Tom Gunning ("Le bonimenteur" 17). The supernatural, which in Québec cinema has often occurred in brief incursions rather than in a substantial trend, also amounts to distraction or "pure spectacle." In the case of *Maelström* particularly, it offers no pretence to verisimilitude since it exceeds all representation of reality as plausible. The shock of a talking fish juxtaposed with a realist narrative impedes the viewer's full immersion in the text and thus echoes the bonimenteur's distanciation.

As such, whereas Pellerin inherits a storytelling style epitomised by Grand-Louis Harvey, *Maelström* strangely mutates this filiation, a shift foreshadowed in Perrault's *Un pays sans bon sens!*. In this film, Grand-Louis, in his typically exaggerative style, recounts how Québec lumberjacks slept in lice-infested cabins and relates an encounter with a monstrously massive louse. Likewise, Pellerin uses colourful and humorous hyperbole to expose the dire conditions of life prior to the Quiet Revolution. *Maelström*, however, depicts a completely different social context, that of Montreal's contemporary cosmopolitan affluence, where, in a strangely Kafkaesque turn, the monster is no longer simply the subject of the tale, but itself comments on Québec society.



Figure 4: Grand-Louis Harvey telling the story of his encounter with a monstrously huge louse.

Un pays sans bon sens! (Pierre Perrault, 1970).

The editing in *Un pays sans bon sens!* juxtaposes several global inquiries and manifests Perrault's impulse to tell stories not simply from a local standpoint, but via cultural and geographical distance. Indeed, Benjamin identifies two types of storytellers, those who travel far temporally, and those who travel far geographically, but emphasizes that "The actual extent of the realm of storytelling - its full historical breadth - is inconceivable without the closest

interpenetration of these two archaic types" ("The Storyteller" 144). Likewise, Lacasse's bonimenteur deals with both history and far-away places ("Le bonimenteur" 34), and also exhibits a protean quality in its historical development. Unsurprisingly then, in *Maelström*, the bonimenteur shape-shifts in order to present Québec to the viewer through global and non-human references.

Maelström accentuates its global dimensions through a range of oral devices, apparently invoked by the fish as storyteller. His own off-camera voice encroaches on the soundtrack to comment on crucial plot points, while unsubtitled dialogues in Norwegian and Chinese withhold the interpretative function normally carried out by the *bonimenteur*, deliberately supplying ironic mistranslations. Explicative intertitles in French and Norwegian also recall early cinema experiences. Thus, the film complicates the bonimenteur's locally accented subversions of foreign cultural influences in the context of globalization. For instance, while caught in traffic behind a delivery truck that has overturned fresh fish all over the road, Bibi watches a vehicle slowly squish a dead fish. This echoes the fish-narrator's recurrently violent fate, but also stresses the exchange-value of the fish as workers attempt to salvage their goods. Later on, Bibi runs over an old Norwegian fisherman while drunk-driving. Then, when she eats at a restaurant with her friend, the Chinese staff come to the fore only when the two women complain that the octopus is off. The staff argue in Chinese, and the owner and his supplier, both Allophones, have it out in accented French. Switching locales, the fish supplier realizes his fish is not fresh because the old Norwegian man who normally makes the selection is absent, prompting the discovery of his death following a hit-and-run incident. This sequence reveals Bibi's hand in shaping events that affect her own consumption of commodities, and exposes transnational connections invisible to alienated restaurant customers. The fish's commentary and the vulnerability of the storyteller

expose what Arjun Appadurai describes as production fetishism, a global production masked by a fetishized locality that alienates consumers from the transnational nature of production (41-42). And yet, although the fish gets consumed repeatedly, his reincarnation and the continuity of fish-storytellers evoke the intergenerational transmission of orality. As such, embedded within the film, itself a commercial production intended for viewer consumption, lies a transmission from one storyteller to the next that points to the tale itself as a commodity with its roots in pedagogy. *Maelström* thus re-ascribes a supernatural power to the fish as commodity, while endowing it with an oral function, and enabling it therefore to subtly critique the capitalist mode of production in which it participates.

This exploration suggests that if orality indeed bears an inherently resistant character, its counter-hegemonic workings are perpetually oscillatory and seek alternative incarnations when coinciding with ascendant hegemonies. Indeed, if mainstream forms appropriate oral patterns, these seemingly resurface in unlikely places. Given the connections between orality and the supernatural considered here, as well as their links to precursor texts in both cinema and literature, one is tempted to ascribe the marginalization of the supernatural in Québécois cinema to a periodic latency consistent with the protean nature of the *bonimenteur*'s sociopolitical unruliness, a hypothesis that might also intimate its more historically continuous presence in Québec cinema.

Section 2: *Léolo*'s Fantasized Italy: Family Romance and Accented Cinema Foreword:

The following section constitutes an article published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies in January 2017. It explores Jean-Claude Lauzon's Léolo (1992) by combining Hamid Naficy's theory of accented cinema with the film's status as Freudian family romance. In so doing, the article juxtaposes Léolo with Paul Tana's Caffè Italia Montréal (1985), a film that epitomizes accentedness in the context of Québec's Italian community. Although directed by a Francophone Québécois filmmaker with no Italian background, Léolo presents a cinematic treatment of Italy that emulates patterns displayed by diasporic films corresponding to Naficy's model and is implicitly complicated by Lauzon's own part-Abenaki background. Léolo also recasts the family romance fantasy, which Heinz Weinmann highlights as central to Québec cinema. Commentators have stressed the deeply political dimensions of Léolo despite Lauzon's disavowal of any nationalist intent. Consequently, this film provides insights into the ambivalent role of Italians in Québec's struggle to confront both the challenges posed by immigration and Québec society's own historical role in colonization. This section thus proposes a reading of Léolo that reveals how a cinematically unasserted Indigenous influence intertwined with an overtly hyperbolized Italianness complicates Lauzon's position on national identity. By extension, it comes to stress the importance that Indigenous presence bears on the relationship between settlers and new immigrants, and thereby illustrates how accentedness can be reconsidered in settler colonial contexts to highlight the centrality of Indigenous concerns for grasping intercultural relationships whether formed through colonialism or contemporary immigration.

Introduction

The Italian-Québécois diaspora constitutes one of the most important examples of immigration and intercultural integration in this region, with Italian Quebecers negotiating complex diasporic identities at the interstices of Anglophone and Francophone communities and illuminating the language politics that have historically marked relations between these settler colonial groups in Québec. Indeed, one of Québec's most notable films, Jean-Claude Lauzon's Léolo, foregrounds Italy and Italianness as idealized cultural models. In this film, Lauzon famously chooses Italy as his young protagonist's fantasized homeland, a flight of the imagination that allows this character to temporarily escape from the poverty, madness, family dysfunction, and cultural marginalization he associates with being French-Canadian. Meanwhile, Italian immigration to Québec has also given rise to films made by filmmakers born in Italy that speak directly to the experience of migration. Among these, Paul Tana's Caffè Italia Montréal, co-scripted by fellow Italian Quebecer and historian Bruno Ramirez, marks one of the earliest and most important cinematic interventions about the Québec Italian experience. However, beyond the individual perspectives on Italian immigration that these two films propose, when considered together, Léolo and Caffè Italia also provide fundamental clues about the relationship between settler society, immigrant populations and a disavowed Indigenous presence.

The current section therefore explores the way in which Italy and Italianness are imagined in Québec through a reading of *Léolo* that juxtaposes this acclaimed text with *Caffè Italia*. It argues that even though *Léolo*'s vision is merely a fantasy, this film also warrants consideration as a text that adheres to Hamid Naficy's understanding of exile. In this respect, my study extends Naficy's concept of accented cinema to examine the commonalities between experiences of settler colonialism and contemporary immigration. To this end, I here combine

the psychoanalytic concept of the family romance with Naficy's theory of accented cinema. The former has exercised significant influence on Québec film analysis, notably in the work of Heinz Weinmann ("Cinéma de l'imaginaire"). Naficy's theory, on the other hand, has impacted film studies as a tool to better grasp the stylistic patterns of films made by exilic, diasporic, and postcolonial ethnic filmmakers. As such, a framework merging these approaches enables a deeper examination of the predominant family romance model in light of the cultural impact of Italian immigration by introducing Naficy's theory into conventional Freudian understandings of Québec national cinema.

While *Léolo* constitutes the primary focus of this segment, bringing into play Tana's historically inspired expression of Montreal's Italian community in *Caffè Italia*, as a more straightforwardly accented film, helps to probe Lauzon's openly fanciful appropriation of Italianness and points to *Léolo*'s own accented characteristics. In turn, this underlines Québec's own roots in migration as well as the relativity of its status as a "host" society. These two films therefore inform my study as portrayals of Italianness from contrasting authorial vantage points, both immigrant and non-immigrant, while, in parallel, the two theoretical approaches I set alongside one another pertain to ways in which Québec film has been understood and can be described. By prompting a dialogue between these two texts and approaches, I hope to bring out overlaps that might elude non-contrastive, non-combinatory methods and thereby isolate the qualities attributed to Italy that reveal certain needs, anxieties and aspirations present in Québec society more generally.



Figure 5: Léo's mother Falls into a cartful of contaminated Italian tomatoes.

Léolo (Jean-Claude Lauzon, 1992).

Léolo as Family Romance, as Accented Cinema

Lauzon and others have described *Léolo* as a fundamentally autobiographical film (Turan 1992). In this story, Lauzon's alter ego, a twelve-year-old boy named Léo Lozeau (Maxime Collin) refuses to believe that his French-Canadian father is really his biological parent. Instead, he conjures an outrageous scenario whereby his mother becomes pregnant after falling into a cartful of tomatoes imported from Sicily, fruit upon which a Sicilian farm labourer had previously ejaculated while voyeuristically admiring a woman working in a field nearby. Significantly, Léo's adult self invokes a cinematic representation of such past events through a poetic first-person voice-over which includes the recurring and variously inflected leitmotif "Because I dream, I am not," a premise that Léo finds inscribed in a copy of Réjean Ducharme's 1966 novel *L'avalée des avalés* (*The Swallower Swallowed*). By slanting the Cartesian cogito in this way, the narration captures Léo's existential crisis as well as his precarious oscillation between the positive and beautiful dream of Italy and the squalid madness of his family life in Montreal's working-class Mile End district where Lauzon himself grew up. Strangely, the adult Léo utters his voice-over in the present tense even though the film concludes with his irremediable fall into

a catatonic state while still barely an adolescent, with no signs that this condition will abate in adulthood. As such, the voice-over comes across as ambiguously echoing the inner thoughts of the adult Léo, evoking his past while still trapped within a catatonic body, and simultaneously suggests Lauzon's own authorial voice.¹⁰

Concurrently, Tana's Caffè Italia, a hybrid docufiction, groups together various gender, age, linguistic, and sociopolitical perspectives on the Italian immigrant experience in Montreal and fits logically into Naficy's model of accented cinema. Indeed, Caffè Italia features interviews with Italian immigrants and their descendants, dramatic reconstructions, archival footage, epistolary voice-overs, still images of newspaper clippings, and personal testimonials by the two main actors, Pierre Curzi and Tony Nardi, the former being the son of an Italian immigrant and the latter, born in Italy, but having adopted Québec as his home. Léolo, however, directed by a French-speaking Québécois filmmaker, and featuring a young character who merely fantasizes that he is Italian, also surprisingly shares several accented characteristics with Tana's film. Of these traits, the epistolary form, emphasized through Léo's writings, which are communicated by voice-over, as well as the clear autobiographical element, comprise defining features of Léolo. As such, and since accented cinema stresses the exilic, diasporic, or ethnic status of filmmakers, the following analysis considers Lauzon's own background in accordance with Naficy's auteurist emphasis. Thus, I move between biographical details of Lauzon's life and his autobiographical film to find connections between this director's exilic status and that of his fictional characters and their stories, comparing these as necessary with Caffè Italia, which documents the experiences of exile and diaspora encountered by actual Italian Quebecers.

¹⁰ Thank you to Julie Ravary for sharing her own reflections on the function of the voice-over in *Léolo*.

Léo's dysfunctional family share a genetic predisposition for psychological instability, which at first seems to spare him, but eventually contributes to his own mental breakdown. This family includes Léo's excrement-obsessed factory-working father (Roland Blouin), his lascivious and irascible paternal grandfather (Julien Guiomar), his body-building, but fear-wracked and intellectually challenged entrepreneurial brother (Yves Montmarquette), his two sisters (Marie-Hélène Montpetit and Geneviève Samson), one of whom bears the trauma of having had a child taken from her, and the other whose mental illness is only assuaged by Léo's calming bug collection. Only Léo's overweight, strong-willed and loving mother (Ginette Reno) escapes this hereditary family psychosis passed down through the paternal line. Léo's family milieu contrasts with the boy's vision of a beautiful Sicilian neighbour, Bianca (Giuditta Del Vecchio), who, though only a few years older than him and living right next door, remains unreachable and comes to personify all that he admires about Italy. In addition, the story features the mysterious figure of the Word Tamer (Pierre Bourgault), a vagabond who goes through the family's garbage to collect Léo's discarded writings, which reveal a precocious literary talent and sensibility. Despite having Bianca as his muse and the Word Tamer as his mentor, Léo's art only transcends the social disadvantages set against him and enables him to communicate his ideal love for Bianca insofar as it merges with the boy's ability to dream. Otherwise following a less romantic pattern of sexual awakening that converges with the activities of his neighbourhood peers, Léo's actual sexual encounters involve various forms of masturbation, voyeurism, and bestiality. These activities contrast with Léo's fantasy and eventually inhibit his ability to dream or to reach Bianca, thereby engendering his own psychosis and withdrawal into permanent catatonia.



Figure 6: Bianca, Léo's Beautiful Sicilian Neighbour. Léolo (Jean-Claude Lauzon, 1992).

On the surface, the fact that several of the aforementioned sexual themes are foreshadowed in Lauzon's earlier work, including his first and only other feature *Un zoo la nuit* (1987),¹¹ seemingly corroborates Henry Garrity's dismissal of what he recognizes as superficial differences between *Un zoo* and *Léolo*, and gives credence to his claim that these films both express "a personalized fusion of fiction and fact" (80). However, Alain Chouinard's astute analysis of the manner in which *Léolo* queers and effectively inverts earlier representations of hetero-masculinity in *Un zoo* contradicts any straightforward continuity between these films. Indeed, Thomas Waugh's intervention focusing on an under-analyzed scene, where a neighbourhood boy is goaded by his peers into raping a neighbour's cat, confirms the queer, and qualitively different, possibilities of *Léolo* (253-5). Likewise, apparent points of convergence between *Léolo* and *Un zoo* do not account for the attitudinal disjuncture in the treatment of Italianness in both films. Understandings of the relationship between Francophone and Italian

¹¹ Lauzon died on a fishing trip at the age of 43, when the aircraft that he was piloting crashed into a mountain in Northern Québec.

communities as antagonistic in *Un zoo* do not extend readily to the elevation of Italy as an ideal in *Léolo*. On the other hand, Garrity's rejection of Lauzon's emphatic denial of any nationalist political intent in his work does strike one as logical (81). To be sure, the casting of Pierre Bourgault, a well-known left-wing sovereigntist political figure and Lauzon's real-life mentor, who plays the key role of the Word Tamer, seemingly instils the film with explicit political purpose.

Moreover, the recurring presence of the Italian community in Lauzon's work ostensibly endorses Garrity's view of the implicitly political nature of these films through their evocation of the Saint-Léonard conflict, a late-1960s crisis pitting the Italian community against Québec school authorities. These tensions arose when it became clear that a huge proportion of Italian immigrants were choosing English language instruction for their children and peaked in 1969 after the Catholic school commission attempted to institute obligatory French instruction for Allophones. The issue took on much wider and divisive proportions that persisted at least until 1977, when, after a series of unpopular compromises by both the *Union nationale* and Québec Liberal governments, the sovereigntist *Parti Québécois* was swept to power and introduced the Québec French Language Charter, thus denying access to English school for children whose parents had not been educated in English (Gossage 266-268).

Italianness in Lauzon's work might therefore be seen to highlight the national implications of intercultural hostility between these groups. Notwithstanding Garrity's compelling argument about the political dimension of Lauzon's oeuvre, however, an approach based on accented cinema reveals the value of not entirely dismissing the filmmaker's profession of indifference to Québec nationalism, a denial corroborated by Bourgault himself (I. Hébert 31). In fact, Lauzon's deployment of the family romance as a critique of Québec necessarily depends

on an idealization of the very Italian society that sometimes finds itself positioned against rising and mutating forms of Québec nationalism. Lauzon's narrative strategy then, along with his public declarations, immediately suggests more complex kinds of national and identity affiliations that warrant closer scrutiny.

In his own reading of *Léolo*, Heinz Weinmann sees this film as an example of Québécois melancholia, a condition that he traces back to Quebec's unconscious desire to painfully maintain the dream of independence following the traumatic defeat of the 1980 referendum on sovereignty-association ("À l'ombre" 36-38). This interpretation extends Weinmann's earlier focus on the prominence in Québec cinema of the family romance, a purportedly pathological condition whereby a subject prolongs into adulthood the childhood fantasies of having biological parents other than one's own. Indeed, as mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the most sustained use of this idea to analyse Québec cinema occurs in Weinmann's 1990 book-length study, which understands Québec as a child abandoned successively by its biological parent (France), aristocratic parent (England), and celestial parent (the Catholic Church). According to this author, Québec eventually manages to cast off both its dependence and the family romance only to regress once again into childhood (and melancholia) with the failure of the 1980 referendum ("Cinéma de l'imaginaire" 23). To make this argument, Weinmann traces manifestations of this psychological pattern across nine films from La petite Aurore, l'enfant martyre (Bigras, 1952) to Jésus de Montréal (Jesus of Montreal, Denys Arcand, 1989), a corpus that also includes Lauzon's *Un zoo*. Although *Léolo* was released two years after the publication of Weinmann's book, this film's innovative take on the family romance appears to reinforce Weinmann's point. Not surprisingly then, in his later intervention associating Léolo with Québécois melancholia, Weinmann parenthetically alludes to this film as an example of the

family romance and posits that in *Léolo* the self-deprecation inherent to melancholia reaches its peak, where "humanity cohabits with the lowest forms of animals (insects and rats), its principal activity being the production of faecal matter" ("À l'ombre" 45).

Weinmann's assessment of the self-deprecating symptoms of melancholia accurately describes *Léolo*'s portrayal of Québec in opposition to a poetically beautiful and utopian Italy. However, the claustrophobic setting to which Weinmann refers also corresponds to the dystopian conditions of exile that Naficy observes in accented films (189-221). In addition, as Bill Marshall highlights, Weinmann's emphasis on the negative portrayal of Québec overlooks the paradoxical function of the family romance, which is to recuperate the subject's biological parents (111). Thus, by engaging with Weinmann's ideas while heeding Marshall's corrective, and by considering Léolo's environment as not only melancholic, but also simultaneously accented, overlaps between the elaborate fantasy presented in *Léolo* and Freud's model become more profoundly revealing. Indeed, for Marshall, "it is the force of Freud's argument that the child's fantasies are precisely a way of retaining affection for the parent, in particular the father" (111). Concentrating specifically on this overlooked dimension of Freud's text proves worthwhile because, as will become clear over the course of my own analysis, the ultimate goal of restoring value to the subject's real parent pinpoints, through a fantasized Italy, those underlying aspects of Québec culture that are implicitly valued by Lauzon in an otherwise pessimistic critique of his home environment. In other words, since "[t]he process of debasement and idealization are forever, and subtly, linked" (Marshall 111), what does it mean for Quebec that Lauzon's debased portrayal of this society chooses Italy as its idealized alternative?



Figure 7: Léo in his beautiful fantasized Italy. Léolo (Jean-Claude Lauzon, 1992).

Appropriating Italy's Aesthetic Capital

Picking up on Marshall's equally pertinent emphasis of *Léolo* as a working-class family romance rather than simply a longing for more affluent or powerful lineage (116), I consider the possible implications of *Léolo*'s fantasy as situated in Italy and Italianness and argue that *Léolo*'s family romance reveals a specific desire for a perceived and idealized vitality and resilient beauty associated with Italy. While not clearly or consistently situated in terms of historical period, Lauzon's narrative is assumed to take place in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Lauzon himself was born in 1953), 12 but longs for and elevates a rural Sicilian context that displays no signs of Italy's post-war economic miracle. Confronted with challenges analogous with those of French-Canadian migrants who moved from rural parts of Québec to populate the working class districts of Montreal, Lauzon's dream Italy intimates that Italian migrants living in districts adjacent to his own draw not only on a rich accumulation of cultural history, but perpetuate an aesthetic sensibility that endures through periods of economic necessity and forced displacement, an outlook perceived and reinforced most evidently through Bianca's beautiful singing as she

¹² Typical of the film's disregard for strict chronology and of Lauzon's highly fluid use of autobiographical information, the book that inspires Léo, Ducharme's *L'avalée des avalés*, was not published until 1966, presumably after the events depicted in *Léolo*.

performs her daily chores. In contrast, as George Toles observes, Léo, who has suffered much less than Bianca, remains incapable of such joyful resilience (299).

For Lauzon, it seems, this buoyant attitude comes to significantly inflect the workingclass Montreal of his youth. Historical research conducted by Caffè Italia co-screenwriter, Bruno Ramirez, outlines the harsh economic and social realities experienced by the Italian population of neighbourhoods such as the one that emerged around the Mile End district (5). In Montreal, migration had already contributed to the formation of Italian neighbourhoods earlier in the twentieth century, in areas "characterized by low-cost housing and proximity to the commercial centre." According to Ramirez, these workers performed "labour-intensive and seasonal" work, "adapt[ing] to the low pay and harsh conditions imposed on them" (22). After World War I however, later waves of Italian immigration could already rely on more stable connections in emerging Italian neighbourhoods, resourcefully maintaining distinct traditions and supporting families by cultivating unused land on the city outskirts, including around Mile End (Ramirez 19-23). These conditions parallel the socio-economic challenges portrayed in *Léolo* which affected many Québec Francophones up until the 1960s. Thus, by depicting Italian characters that contend with realities akin to those experienced historically by French Canadians and by stressing the geographical juxtaposition of these two groups, Lauzon enables a comparison that brings into focus their differing reactions to social and economic marginalization. Whether such juxtapositions take the form of an oxymoronically supportive rivalry in *Un zoo*, or make Italianness the object of an idyllic daydream in Léolo, Lauzon betrays a mixed sense of envy and admiration for the manner in which Italian immigrant communities successfully manage such adversity. In Léolo particularly, Lauzon points to Italy's poetic beauty to highlight a deep-rooted void experienced by Léo. Thus, beyond the film's ostensibly defeatist and self-critical

representation of Québec, *Léolo* underscores the importance for this society of accumulating its own aesthetic capital.

Taking into account Lauzon's childhood in the Mile End district of Montreal, it therefore seems logical to surmise that the filmmaker's contact with Italian family and community structures prompted him to view these traditions as generating a social environment superior to his own working-class Québécois milieu. Indeed, reminding us that in the early sixties Italian-Quebecers were still being described as "the only group to perform worse economically than the French-speaking Québécois," Lee Parpart stresses the anxiety expressed in *Un zoo*'s depiction of an Italian community in the process of overtaking its Francophone counterpart (182-183). Importantly, these advantages become ethnically coded in Lauzon's work and generally coincide with Freud's belief that children's perception shifts from an initial appreciation of their parents' faultlessness to a more candid assessment of their flaws, which becomes apparent as the child progressively compares their own family to those of others. As alluded to above, for Freud, this leads to a situation whereby children fantasize that their parents are not their biological progenitors, but that they are actually the offspring of much more desirable parents ("Family Romances" 237-239). Moreover, the seemingly harsh treatment of the subject's biological parents really serves to reinstate their former grandeur in the child's eyes, a state of idealistic faith in their omnipotence that the child nostalgically longs to return to after being disappointed by the parents' inevitable imperfections ("Family Romances" 240-241). Thus, accounting for the underlying function of the family romance as a means of rescuing the biological parents reveals that *Léolo* does not point to France as Québec's "biological parent," as Weinmann would have it, but simply exhibits a longing for an alternative model of Québec to which one can adhere wholeheartedly. This modified interpretative framework uncovers in *Léolo* a film that reinstates

value to Québec and avoids the parental entities identified by Weinmann (France, England, the Catholic Church), instead favouring Italy as an idealized surrogate more readily associated with immigration and diaspora than with imperialism and colonization.

In this way, Léo's daydream Italy palliates the shortcomings he feels insofar as it epitomises his idea of creative expression, beauty and love, all of which are either catalysed or personified by his Sicilian neighbour Bianca. As such, Léo repeatedly condenses his vision of Bianca into the phrases "Bianca my love," "my beautiful love," or "my Italy." A slum-dweller like Léo, Bianca's social status corroborates Marshall's observation of *Léolo* as a "working-class fantasy" (116). Here, the ideal father does not provide pretentions to higher social position as one might typically expect of the family romance, where daydreams replace biological parents with parents of higher standing ("Family Romances" 239). Léo's fantasized father is portrayed not as wealthy or powerful, but as an oversexed Sicilian farm worker. In *Léolo*, the imagined father therefore enhances Léo's social situation only in terms of nationality and does not directly address the crushing poverty that Léo suffers in his environment. Rather, this fantasy tackles the painful frustration towards a specific outcome of the social marginalization experienced by Francophone Quebecers, one felt by Lauzon as a lack of cultural vitality, aesthetic beauty and love. This viewpoint allows Lauzon, like the Italian slum inhabitants and lustful peasant farmer he conceives and elevates, to turn squalor, lower-class realities, and physical desire into poetry. In this sense, Léo's imagined father, no more affluent or powerful than his biological one, yet provides access to a culture seen as vibrant and beautiful in spite of the modest conditions that frame his existence. This man's humorously carnal reaction to such dire conditions of life, his declaration that he is "giving life to [the] tomatoes" as he masturbates onto them, echoes

Lauzon's own energy, irreverence and poetic aspiration to generate art based on the raw personal and social circumstances from which he draws his inspiration.

Moreover, Lauzon's poetic manoeuvre allows *Léolo* to accede explicitly to the functions of accented cinema normally characteristic of immigrant directors such as Tana. Indeed, Léolo's appropriation of the mechanisms of accented cinema proper to immigrant experiences complicates this model by introducing the family romance to express Léolo's own psychologically exilic experience. As we have seen, in spite of its apparent negativity towards its home environment, Lauzon's film harbours a submerged optimism inherent to the family romance. It thus remains paradoxically future-oriented, and, by drawing usefully on the exile's fixation on a distant homeland, calls for dreaming as a springboard and foundation for the development of valuable forms of Québec culture and identity. Significantly, while Lauzon appropriates an immigrant identity to access the mechanisms of accented cinema, his decision to do so via Italy further enables him to bypass France as the logical "motherland" of the Québécois, a strategy that re-centres emphasis on Québec's precarious rootedness in North America, and serves to avoid perceptions of inferiority vis-à-vis its metropolitan origins. Furthermore, the deployment of the family romance structure in *Léolo* intersects with the autobiographical nature of the film, a feature central to accented cinema. As with accented authors, Lauzon is "engaged in a performance of the self" (Naficy 35). Indeed, in Léolo the narrative appears generated by the omniscient first-person narrator's memory or imagination, a disembodied presence whose adult voice-over is strongly associated with Lauzon himself. In this respect, the story represented in the film follows the structure of the family romance as observed by Freud, but also tends to reflexively suggest that Lauzon himself is engaged in the creation of a family romance fantasy via his filmmaking practice. As such, Garrity is right in stressing the

oxymoronically fictional truth of *Léolo* (80). Lauzon's public assertion that the film is a portrayal of his own life, an elaborate lie framed in truth (I. Hébert 17), confirms his exertion of an effort similar to Léo's, who contrives the verisimilitude of his story while foregrounding its magical elements. And while Lauzon's merely fantasized expression of dislocation from Italy appears to disqualify him from status as an accented filmmaker, Naficy also cites the possibility of an "authoring structure within a text [that] is one not of direct parentage but of convoluted performance" (34). As such, Léo's exile from Italy, taken figuratively, may reflect another form of lived exile connected to Lauzon's own group identity. Again, such reasoning corroborates Garrity's view that *Léolo* communicates Lauzon's perspective on Québec politics, but does not specify what the filmmaker's precise position on these matters might be.

Nevertheless, the double fantasy engendered by compounding the narrator/filmmaker's autobiographical mythmaking with the dramatization of a similar process carried out by the main character, reinforces the very sociopolitical import of the film. Immediately after the opening credits, the film depicts Léo affirming his Italianness as we see the young boy first peeing off a balcony at night, and then shouting his assumed Italian name across the neighbourhood after being called in by his given name. "Léolo! Léolo Lauzone!" He retorts defiantly. This first assertion of Italianess by the diegetic protagonist occurs alongside a pubescent masculine assertion of (national) territory through urination, thereby portraying Lauzon's contradictory denial of his origins and their simultaneous recognition through autobiography.

Léolo's National (Af)filiations

Another aspect of the Freudian family romance, the proliferation of maternal infidelity scenarios, sheds further light on the precise nature of the relationship between Québec and Italy as these

national identities are imagined and deployed in *Léolo*. For Freud, the second stage of the family romance sees children coming to understand procreation and becoming sexually curious about their mother, most specifically via fantasies of her infidelity to the father ("Family Romances" 239). A flashback scene of Léo as a baby foreshadows his curiosity when a point-of-view shot following his gaze zooms in between his mother's legs as she sits on the toilet encouraging him to excrete, while later narrative developments suggest fantasies of Léo's French-Canadian father being cuckolded. Indeed, just as Léo approaches the threshold of adolescence and discovers sex, the film's narrative implies his mother's infidelity beyond her impregnation by a contaminated Sicilian tomato and offers two opposing visions pointing to alternative explanations of Léo's paternal origins.

Firstly, the Word Tamer, played by Pierre Bourgault, comes to figure as Léo's intellectual father and combines Bourgault's real-life influence on Lauzon with that of another real-life father figure, NFB director André Petrowski (I. Hébert 21). Indeed, George Melnyk sees the Word Tamer as "the incarnation of an understanding father-figure (another version of Léo's dreamed and anonymous father, the Sicilian peasant), who does not exist in Léo's 'real' family" (63), while Marshall sees this character as a "good" father (116). Though there are no explicit signs of an affair between the Word Tamer and Léo's mother in the narrative, she welcomes him into the family kitchen when she is unusually alone and, at this moment, the Word Tamer intellectually "inseminates" the Lozeau household by planting a book under a table leg to stabilize it. The planted book, *L'avalée des avalés* by Réjean Ducharme, stands alongside Italy as a symbol of desired (literary or aesthetic) origins that complement Léo's national ideal.

Significantly, Léo is first seen reading the book at night, using an open fridge door as a source of light. Thus, the book simultaneously "nourishes" and "enlightens" Léo, whose voice-over

explains the key function of this object, an intertextual reference taken from Ducharme's novel itself: "All that I ask of a book is that it should inspire me [...] with energy and courage, tell me that there exists more life that I can encompass, remind me of the urgent need to act" (67). These lines are juxtaposed with the Arab-Israeli conflict in Ducharme's novel, and remain consistent with Lauzon's purported indifference to nationalist politics, distilling the political engagement and idealism represented by and contained within Bourgault's intellectual guidance, which ultimately instrumentalizes nationalism and relegates it to a secondary order so as to prioritize a social outlook that nurtures education, talent and artistic expression, and places particular weight on the aesthetic capacities of marginalized societies. For Lauzon it seems, this capacity remains largely latent in Québec, manifesting itself exceptionally in Ducharme's idiosyncratic novel. In this respect, Italy provides Lauzon with a model that demonstrates how national aesthetic capital can emanate across class divisions and through moments of socio-economic hardship, while Ducharme's book presents an exemplar for Québec. Through parallel fantasies of biological and intellectual origins, Léo's idealized father therefore emerges not just as a libidinous and defiant Italian peasant, but also as the sublimation of an energy that cannot be contained by hierarchical class structures and which insists rebelliously on expressing itself as art and culture.

In a more disturbing manifestation, however, the proliferation of maternal adultery scenarios typical of the family romance suggests yet another possible father figure, Léo's paternal grandfather, whose vigorous sex drive mirrors both Léo's and his alleged Sicilian progenitor's, particularly in its voyeuristic character. Given Léo's evident Oedipal fixation and his grandfather's attraction for Léo's Sicilian love ideal, Bianca, who is linked to Léo's mother as an embodiment of a "beautiful love" synonymous with Italy, it is also plausible to infer a desire shared by Léo and his grandfather not only for Bianca, but for Léo's mother. This fusion

of Italian and maternal symbols aligns with Lauzon's earlier depiction of Angelica, an overweight Italian woman who appears in *Un zoo*. In this film, Angelica greets the protagonist of Un zoo in a maternal embrace that closely resembles the way Léo hugs his mother in Léolo, both moments emphasizing the pleasure derived from tactile and olfactory contact with the mother or her (Italian) substitute. The direct link to the grandfather gains further credibility with the effacement of Léo's Québécois father and the completion of Léo's Oedipal trajectory through an attempt to murder not this man, but his grandfather. As Garrity notes, "Léo creates a fiction in which his father is doubled by his grandfather" (82). The multiplication of maternal infidelities associated with the family romance pushes this logic further still, and Léo's sudden decision to kill his grandfather "whom he quite liked" lies in his realisation that this man shares the same voyeuristic and masturbatory impulses as himself, those same impulses which also define his fantasized Italian progenitor. Upon identifying these traits in his grandfather, Léo is compelled to recognize this man as his real father. This powerful recognition thus shatters Léo's overt fantasy of an Italian tomato genesis and his claim to intellectual lineage with the Word Tamer. Having thus seen his elaborately fantasized attempts to eliminate his paternal line overwhelmed by a much more potent and viable possibility. Léo opts to destroy the source of this legacy through physical violence.

Thus, while *Léolo* vocally asserts an Italian genesis, the film also suggests two possible Québécois fathers in the Word Tamer and the paternal grandfather, and therefore implicitly emphasizes the very Québécois origins rejected by the fantasy it elaborates. Lauzon's family romance then, differs markedly from Weinmann's model insofar as it does not explicitly reject France as a "biological parent," but quite clearly targets Québec itself. And since, as Marshall reminds us, this rejection really conceals a desire to re-attribute value to the rejected parent, we

can surmise that it amounts in *Léolo* to a strategy that elevates Québec beyond its perceived inferiority. Indeed, this inferiority is most evidently felt, not simply towards England or English-speaking Canada with whom Québec society bears a more straightforwardly colonial relationship, but also and especially with regard to metropolitan France (Dumont 324; G. Bouchard, "The Making" 84).

Lauzon's rejection of Québécois identity can, on one level, be understood fundamentally as a way of reassigning value to Québec, and of eliminating France as a site of filiation or of affiliation. Rather than explicitly or aggressively rejecting France as would a family romance ultimately aimed at rescuing the colonial metropole and its failed ambitions in North America, Léolo instead criticizes and vociferously renounces Québec in the contradictory hope of reassigning to this community values distinct from those associated with the unsuccessful imperial objectives that underpin its history. In so doing, Léolo foregrounds Italy not simply to eliminate the connection between Québec and France as its corresponding European metropole, but also to encounter Québec in the context of its own economic migration and hardship, a history portrayed here as one of misfortune and resilience that invokes sympathy and inspiration rather than a threatening sense of inadequacy. As such, the fantasized Italy that Lauzon promulgates corresponds partly to a perceived interpersonal relationship of alliance and shared national experience with Québec, but also stems from Québec's uneasy relationship with its own heritage marked by colonial aspirations, military subjugation, and consequent self-deprecation as the aborted extension of French colonial power and influence.

Lauzon's association of negative Québécois characteristics with the paternal line, and of positive Italian ones with the mother become further complicated when we consider that the filmmaker's own mother was of mixed Abenaki background. Given these associations, it is

tempting to hypothesize a link between Lauzon's cinematically unasserted First Nations identity and the Italian identity that he openly appropriates in his films. As with Naficy's description of Atom Egoyan's progressively accented career, Lauzon's body of work also marks an "increased ethnicization" (37). In Lauzon's case, Italians ambiguously appear as a surrogate family and sometimes provide a haven in *Un zoo*, but emerge fully as an object of desire and appropriated identity in Léolo. Such a trend inevitably begs the question as to what Lauzon might have produced next had he not died prematurely. Interestingly, Lauzon's notes for a third feature suggest an increasingly direct engagement with his own Indigenous background. Lauzon's unrealized project, dealing with the recurring themes of sexual potency, birth, life-giving motherhood, fatherhood, and hunting, also introduces an overarching premise where a new incarnation of Léo defeats a voracious bear and captures the moon with his bow and arrows (I. Hébert 56). Although very preliminary, these notes suggest a typically personal and imaginative treatment by Lauzon of Algonquian creation stories evocative of the Innu hero Tshakapesh (Savard 29-41; Day 84). Moreover, Chouinard argues that Léo "attempts to mimic an American form of hetero-masculinity when he wears his cowboy hat, but can not [sic] embody it due to his inherently sensitive character" (2009). This observation tends to illustrate Léo's growing antithesis to the cowboy figure and might suggest his emerging affinity with Indigenous identities historically manipulated, vilified and submerged by American popular culture and by the Hollywood western in particular. Such thematic trends seem to validate the correlation between Italy and an unasserted Indigenous identity in Lauzon's films and underline Québec's preoccupation with its status as a non-Indigenous group occupying a territory that it attempts to define as its homeland.

Shared stylistic manifestations between Léolo and accented texts, also logically point to intrinsic affinities between Québec society and the patterns experienced by migrant groups, which do not preclude rivalries stemming from the competitive working-class environments in which they may be situated such as those portrayed in *Un zoo*. Indeed, Lacasse argues that Québec cinema "was oral and 'accented' from its very inception" ("L'accent aigu" 50). This intriguing claim finds particularly telling relevance when placed in the context of films made by directors such as Tana, who have immigrated to Québec and expressed their experience cinematically. When associated with Naficy's definition of accented cinema, Lacasse's statement reminds one of Québec's ambivalent struggle to wholly appropriate the territory it associates with its own nationhood, a hesitation perhaps triggered by a concurrent and deep-rooted recognition of the inappropriateness of claiming Indigenous lands, as well as the lasting effects of traumatic separation from France, and an equally ambivalent relationship to the European metropole as a lost homeland (Dumont 332-333). Indeed, Québec's "immigrant" status, combined with its unwillingness to identify with France, partly echoes the point of view of one of Tana's interviewees in Caffè Italia, who paradoxically refuses to be called an immigrant, but nevertheless clings to a distant Italy as his primary identity.

Of course, simplistically equating Francophone Quebecers with immigrant groups runs the risk of validating disingenuous multiculturalist views that effectively deny the national specificity of the Québécois, a logic within which federalist media attempted to frame *Caffè Italia* when the film was awarded the Ouimet-Molson prize at the *Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois* film festival (Gural-Migdal 110). Moreover, theories which view settler colonial states as "nations of immigrants" elide ongoing Indigenous struggles against settler colonialism by implying the closure of historical chapters marked by European migration as "settled" facts no

longer open for reconsideration or critique (Simpson 11). Bearing these dangers in mind, it is nevertheless fascinating to consider Québec's intermediary position between subsequent waves of human migration and the longstanding and continued occupation of this territory by Indigenous peoples. This also points to the significance of taking into account Lauzon's own First Nations origins, and his personal identification with the Abenaki maternal grandfather he never knew (I. Hébert 37). Such a dynamic necessarily nuances Lauzon's ambiguous public refutation of his own status as a Québécois artist and his turn towards Italy as a fantasized and utterly exilic identity.

Léolo and Exile

In his analysis of Caffè Italia, Olivier Nilsson-Julien holds this film up as exemplary in its attempt to get past the polarization of French and English in Québec. For Nilsson-Julien, Caffè Italia also succeeds in respecting the "socio-historical complexity" of Italian Quebecers where Léolo and several other Québec films fall short. These other texts, he argues, marginalize the "ethnic other," who remains "a stranger, someone exotic who is associated with dreams and escapism." In contrast, Caffè Italia "goes beyond the divisive tolerance of multiculturalism," and, through its concern with cinematic and thematic hybridity, places emphasis on acceptance rather than tolerance. Indeed, Léolo does simultaneously maintain a distance from Italy while revering it as an ideal. However, Léolo also deals with the self as stranger, as exile to Italy and to Québec. In fact, Léolo foregrounds the reassurance drawn from fixed national identities in such a hyperbolic manner that it comes to paradoxically undermine the Manichean underpinnings of such self-conceptions. In parallel, Italian-Quebecers as they are portrayed in Tana's work bear a liminal status that differentiates them from French or English settler colonial populations. Their

dislocation attaches them ambiguously to a "homeland" elsewhere. Tony Nardi's comments in *Caffè Italia* communicate his feeling that as an Italian who has lived in Québec, he is no longer Italian enough for Italians, a theme also present in Tana's first feature *Les grands enfants* (*Day by Day*, 1980), where Jeanne, a young Italian-born woman, complains that she is constantly perceived as an Italian in Québec and a Québécoise in Italy, ultimately resigning herself to being neither, or "nothing."

Such continuity with the "homeland," however vexed, is even less available to a vision of Québec that is itself unwilling to admit analogous connections to France and to its colonial history. Thus, Léolo also partakes in a bleak sentiment of non-identity and pushes it to absurd limits. Since he alone is convinced of his exile from Italy with neither his family nor his psychiatrist believing his fantasy, Léo's insistence effectively exiles him psychically from his own society. The film's recurrent leitmotif, "because I dream, I am not..." not only inflects the Cartesian cogito, but also inverts its earlier cinematic appropriation in Gilles Groulx's seminal Le chat dans le sac (The Cat in the Bag, 1964), where the protagonist utters: "I am French Canadian therefore I am looking for myself." In contrast, Léo's existential statement begins not with his identity, but with his action – to dream, thereby attributing greater power to the act of imaginative self-conception than to its desired outcome. As Christine Ramsay stresses, Léolo dramatizes an attempt to deal with internal otherness "through negation and the narcissistic fantasy of auto-representation" (25). Like the protagonists in Tana's films, Léo acknowledges a certain non-being, and unlike the protagonist in Groulx's film, a text widely acclaimed as emblematic of the emergence of modern Québec cinema, Léo is not searching for himself, but negates his Québécois identity thanks to a superior imaginative capacity. He claims to have already found his true identity in Italy. Léo thus suffers a double anxiety. On the one hand, his

powerfully imagined identity logically associates him with the Italian diaspora, a group that bears an ambivalently consensual and politically charged relationship to Québec. Yet on the other hand, he also feels the pain of an equally imagined separation from a homeland unrecognized by others as truly his. Like Bérénice Einberg, the precocious protagonist of Ducharme's novel from which *Léolo* is inspired, Léo feels exiled when he is *not* alone. As such, his very belonging to a Québécois family and society becomes a fundamental source of alienation and foreignness.

However, even though Léolo fixes Italianness into an ideal, the film's accented characteristics and framing fantasy enable it to experience migration in a manner analogous to second generation migrants' indirect experience of alienation from their "home" country, which Nilsson-Julien describes as taking place only "via" their parents, grandparents, community and environment. The feelings of exile foregrounded in Léolo, exacerbated by Léo's creative attempt to experience migration via a genuine immigrant group, enhance an impression of the protagonist's status as somehow analogous to those migrants. Oddly though, Léolo's alienation is so utterly complete that while it emulates the structures that generate the experience of alienation felt by the Italian diasporic community, its exclusion from this community precludes a shared experience of exile. Unlike the Italian immigrants portrayed in Tana's film, Léo belongs to no cultural diaspora and cannot gain access to the strong bonds that shape Montreal's Italian community, which are a marker of the very Italianness he seeks. His inability to communicate with Bianca dramatizes this failure and highlights not only Léo's self-exclusion from Québec, but also his outsider status with regard to the working-class Italian population that shares his neighbourhood. Strikingly, Léo has no contact with any Italian-Canadian characters other than Bianca, who always remains aloof and unreachable, and with whom he can only experience a

voyeuristic sexual relation that mirrors his fantasized conception of ethnicity. Indeed, as Matthew Ogonoski aptly points out, the dream Italy to which Léo finally escapes is "never occupied with Bianca at the same moment – or any other person for that matter." Instead, Léo's psychological exile from Québec society paradoxically sees him joining a psychically exilic diaspora, a diaspora of madness constituted by his family members who form a silent, non-communicating group within the asylum, where, as Garrity notes, he is "condemned to take his place beside his race" (84).

Thus, the expression of Léo's identity remains structurally more dualistic than plural, a tendency that corresponds more closely to what Naficy understands as exile than diaspora (14). Moreover, Léolo's double alienation intensifies what for Naficy remains the very basis for accented cinema's value as a cinematic trend. "All great authorship" he states, "is predicated on distance - banishment and exile of sorts - from the larger society" (12). "Banished" from a certain mainstream sense of belonging because of his antagonizing working-class bad-boy antics and iconoclasm, Lauzon, like Léo, steps outside of Québec through his film and into an imagined cultural ideal from which he gains the critical distance to comment on his own society. This vantage point correlates with Ramsay's view of *Léolo* as "not an overtly politically-charged nationalist film," and as one "concerned with, but also self-reflexively critical of, the culture it represents" (34). Through exile, Naficy argues, "the descent relations with the homeland and the consent relations with the host society are continually tested" (12). Thus, Léo is fixated on a single, if delusional, homeland which stands in for what an idealized Québec should aspire to be, and simultaneously critiques the Québécois society from which he has deliberately stepped back. According to Naficy, "exilic cinema is dominated by its focus on there and then in the homeland, diasporic cinema by its vertical relationship to the homeland and by its lateral relationship to the

diaspora communities and experiences, and postcolonial ethnic and identity cinema by the exigencies of life here and now in the country in which filmmakers reside" (15). As such, *Léolo* tends towards exile rather than diaspora, but doubles this tendency with certain postcolonial ethnic characteristics, while *Caffè Italia* seems most clearly, and unsurprisingly diasporic.

Léo's fantasy occurs in the past, fixating on an alleged homeland elsewhere, but

Lauzon's cinematic fantasy takes place in the local past of Québec. Therefore, its locality

corresponds in large part to postcolonial ethnic cinema, and its temporality to exilic cinema. On
the other hand, *Léolo* is not straightforwardly an ethnic and identity variant of accented cinema
that focuses on the "here and now" in Québec. Instead, *Léolo* concerns itself with a certain

Québec past, the past of Lauzon's youth specifically, and thus expresses its exile in relation to

Québec through Italy as an allegorical ideal. At the same time though, the underlying political
impulse that Garrity observes in this film does connect it to the "here and now" preoccupations
of postcolonial ethnic filmmakers insofar as it comments upon Québec's present and future
direction, merely displacing this concern to another locale and time as a means of underlining
local and contemporary issues. As such, *Léolo* moves creatively between the three broad
categories of accented cinema theorized by Naficy, who, in any case, stresses the porousness of
exilic, diasporic and postcolonial ethnic/identity cinemas (15).

The film displays clear signs of being exilic, and longs for the diaspora from which it is excluded, but shares postcolonial ethnic/identity cinema's focus on the tension between descent and consent relations. It thus manages to emphasize a merger of the usual patterns of exilic and ethnic/identity cinemas as a result of its family romance structure. By representing the "being" of descent relations as a fantasy, *Léolo* exposes these as ludicrous in their over-literal expression, and yet endorses them as important, useful and empowering in spite of their inherent limitations.

As such, the film renders descent relations valuable in their "consensual" self-made, performative, contestatory dimensions and possibilities, placing their stress on "becoming" (Naficy 15). At the same time, Léolo diverges from Naficy's observation that ethnic and identity films usually differ from diasporic and exilic films, with the latter categories focusing on elsewhere. Because Léolo constitutes an exilic film marked by fantasy, it too focuses on elsewhere, but because it is also fundamentally an ethnic identity film, its disavowed political concerns implicitly target the "now" with a foreign locale only standing in for the "here." As such, Léolo offsets the drawbacks of nationalism, stressing the usefulness of this ideology for counter-hegemonic resistance, just as it also undermines Manichean nationalist impulses by proposing a "becoming" hybrid in Quebec. Therefore, apart from drawing attention to the centrality of Indigenous concerns in discussing immigration in settler colonial contexts, the film appears to call for a literal reimagining (or dreaming) of Québécois identity as fluid and adaptable from the inside out, of "becoming" the immigrant population, rather than simply positioning itself in the passive expectation of an outside-in integration on the part of immigrant groups.

Conclusion

In *Léolo*, Lauzon's idea of the Italian-Québécois experience coincides partly with this filmmaker's own internal exile. It presents an immigrant experience that rhymes fundamentally with Quebecers' profound incapacity to take root completely in the territory now known as Québec. It is not surprising then, that the presence of Italian Quebecers evokes feelings of mutual understanding and complicity in spite of the historically traumatic and divisive tensions culminating with the Saint-Léonard conflict. Ironically, the very school system at stake in this

argument also forms the target of Lauzon's irony (Pallister 374). As *Léolo* seems to confirm then, Italy and Italianness can convincingly be pitched as an ideal identity in Québec, albeit in a fantasy mode.

Italians, as the main incoming immigrant group during Lauzon's formative years, form the ideological battle ground between the more influential French and English communities in Québec. Indeed, the Saint-Léonard conflict epitomises this tension, but in *Léolo*, Lauzon magically reverses the power dynamics of this battle and depicts Léo's contrary desire for assimilation into the Italian community to which Bianca belongs. Thus, as an underdog caught in the crossfire between the French and English, the Italian diaspora here forms Léolo's imaginative reference point. In Lauzon's reversal, Italy also implicitly evokes a necessary relationship with First Nations, with whom Lauzon bears actual ancestry, one from which he has been alienated. Curiously, through the Italian diasporic community with whom his protagonist unsuccessfully identifies, Lauzon finds a way of alluding to the First Nations identity that he does not yet address overtly in Léolo. Beyond obvious and significant differences between the marginalization of immigrant populations and the cultural genocide committed against Indigenous peoples in Canada, Lauzon arguably seizes upon certain points of common tension between these groups and mainstream Québec, most evidently perhaps, their exclusions as actors in the conflicts between English and French and their reduction to symbolic prizes in a political tug-of-war.

Lauzon's circuitous exploration of his Québec identity and of his own hesitant claim to Indigenous heritage may reflect cultural patterns that resonate beyond this individual filmmaker and more broadly across Québec society, and also perhaps into other contexts positioned in sociopolitically paradigmatic relationships. What *Léolo* tells us is that perhaps some of Québec's

deepest anxieties and aspirations expressed through foreignness are fundamentally a fear of its own foreignness, both as a settler nation tempted to minimize its role as a colonizer, and as a conception of nationhood that risks remaining fixed and of becoming alienated from external influences that are its very constituents. Situated unstably between an idealized immigrant population and an unacknowledged Indigenous presence, Québec culture seen through *Léolo*'s Italian lens demonstrates accented cinema's adaptability and wide-ranging applications, not limited to the categories that Naficy first identified. Moreover, its practical application can be put to work towards providing tools towards addressing deep-rooted historical trauma, and to accomplishing these objectives through an enriching self-critical stance driven by a desire to candidly confront the contradictions of settler colonial pasts and the challenges and opportunities of contemporary hybridity.

Seemingly then, *Léolo* proposes a view of Québec implicitly rehabilitated through its paradoxical identification or emulation of Italy as a model, and conveys the same disavowed aesthetic qualities about Québec that it overtly apposes upon Italy. Most significantly, in terms of interculturality, this validates migration as an enriching form of cultural reinvention and implies that if "Italy is too beautiful to belong only to Italians," as Léo argues, then participation in Québec's accruing aesthetic capital also cannot be restricted to ethnic criteria. A lack of imagination, or lack of dreaming, poses itself in *Léolo* as the only obstacle to this reality, thereby ultimately endorsing a welcoming perspective that promotes a shared space with marginalized cultures, and more importantly, a recognition of Indigenous presence as a key to the reconfiguration of relationships between all non-Indigenous groups.

Section 3: Kim Nguyen: Accented Cinema, Orality and the Supernatural

Foreword:

This short section was developed into a presentation delivered at the Society for Film and Media Studies (SCMS) Conference in Montreal in March 2015. This presentation enabled me to explore applications of Naficy's accented cinema on the Québec corpus, an approach which is more fully developed in the preceding section on Léolo. Nevertheless, my reading of Nguyen's work is here placed after Lauzon's since it combines the theme of orality addressed in the first section of this chapter and that of accented cinema tackled in the second. Moreover, Nguyen's work shares logical affinities with La peau blanche (White Skin, Daniel Roby, 2004), which forms the topic of the following section. In this respect, both Nguyen's work and La peau blanche mark a more emphatic preoccupation with intercultural intolerance. Thus, I aim in this section to elucidate the nature of Nguyen's attempts to question, understand, and change entrenched attitudes. As such, this inquiry seeks to make a contribution towards grasping the relationship between modes of representation and issues of ethnicity, nationalism, and pluralism.

Introduction

In 2013, Québec filmmaker Kim Nguyen became the focus of international attention when *Rebelle (War Witch)*, his fourth full-length film, was nominated for Best Foreign Language Feature at the Academy Awards.¹³ This film, like Nguyen's work more generally, exhibits a preoccupation with the violent outcomes of intolerance and colonialism. Likewise, Naficy

¹³ Rebelle's nomination in 2013 marked Québec cinema's third consecutive Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Feature (following Philippe Falardeau's *Monsieur Lazhar* in 2012 and Denis Villeneuve's *Incendies* in 2011). No Québec film has been nominated for this award since. Prior to this, Québec received a total three nominations for the same award, all for Denys Arcand films: *Le Déclin de l'empire Américain* (1986), *Jésus de Montréal* (1989), and finally *Les invasions barbares* which took home the prize in 2003.

At the same time, Naficy also underlines that many accented filmmakers "have their origin in societies that maintain side by side with print and electronic literacy a residual oral culture that influences the stories they tell and the manner in which they tell them" (120-1). This echoes Lacasse's contention that Québec cinema was marked early on by the *bonimenteur*, whose presence was comparatively prolonged in this and in certain other national contexts, a phenomenon that for Lacasse has shaped the persistently oral character of Québec cinema ("Pratiques Orales" 11). In light of an apparent convergence between accented cinema and orality, it is also interesting to note Naficy's observation that "there exists a unique relationship between voice, interiority, and identity, and it is perhaps because of this that voice and speech are always associated with potency and magical power" (121). However, this assertion contrasts with commentators' repeated emphasis on the lack of supernatural motifs in Québec film, and this, in spite of Québec's own oral storytelling tradition steeped in tales of the enchanted, ghostly, and miraculous.

Nevertheless, Nguyen stands alongside a few filmmakers who stand apart from Québec's realist cinema. Foremost among these is perhaps André Forcier, whose later work consistently deploys supernatural tropes, and who, like Nguyen, displays a strong tendency towards fantasized transnational settings. This section first attempts to establish elements of accented cinema present in Nguyen's films, then examines their relationship to orality, before concluding with a brief contrast drawn with Forcier's equally idiosyncratic oeuvre, the grounds of which are less ambiguously conceived by its filmmaker for whom it possesses "solid roots in Québec society" (qtd. in Leach 75). Thus, by placing Nguyen's work in parallel with other cinematic expressions of orality and the supernatural in Québec, I hope to further delineate accented

cinema's usefulness in questioning the fantasized intercultural spaces imagined by non-diasporic Québec filmmakers. Drawing alternately on both Naficy and Lacasse, I focus particularly on Nguyen's distinctive debut feature *Le marais* and propose that due to an affinity with accented style, Nguyen offers an important counterpoint to filmmakers less personally influenced by histories of displacement.

Nguyen as Accented Filmmaker

Kim Nguyen was born in Montreal, the son of a Vietnamese immigrant who arrived in Québec in 1963 thanks to a Colombo Plan student bursary. This scheme allowed the South Vietnamese government to select 40 students to study in Commonwealth countries. As a result, Kim's father met his mother, a Québécoise from Amqui, while they were both students at the University of Montreal (Alepin 89). Contrary to much accented cinema, there is no overt fixation in Nguyen's body of work on his father's homeland of Vietnam. However, an early attempt to portray Vietnamese culture and history occurs in his short film titled Soleil glacé (Frozen Sun, 1999), which specifically addresses the reconciliation between two brothers separated by opposing political allegiances during the Vietnam war. This echoes Naficy's view on allegorized family sagas as indicative of accented cinema, and also implies the dominant accented theme of the journey, undertaken in this case from East to West by the non-exiled sibling, rather than back to the East by the brother who has experienced exile in Québec. This orientation correlates with the predominance of Nguyen's dialogue with Québec rather than Vietnam, his work introducing broad global themes to the Québécois corpus. Indeed, in Soleil glacé, the younger brother, now a member of the communist establishment, provokes a rapprochement by journeying West, while stylistically, the film follows patterns observed by Naficy, such as "[the] return by means of

flashbacks, inscribing recollection or reimagination of the experiences of childhood and of homeland" (235).





Figure 8 (left): Two brothers as young boys in Vietnam. Soleil glacé (Kim Nguyen, 1999).

Figure 9 (right): Reunited years later in Montreal, but ideologically estranged.

Soleil glacé (Kim Nguyen, 1999).

Interestingly, Nguyen himself appears briefly in this short as a customer in a Montreal restaurant, where he speaks Vietnamese even though much of the dialogue is delivered in accented French by Vietnamese actors. Naficy notes that "[o]ne of the greatest deprivations of exile is the gradual deterioration in and potential loss of one's language, for language serves to shape not only individual identity but also regional and national identities prior to displacement" (24). At this early point in his career, Nguyen's self-inscription as a Vietnamese speaker in a scene that adds little if anything to the plot is revealing. When later questioned about why, even though he is considered a transnational filmmaker, he has never made a film in Asia, Nguyen responds:

I have made a short film about the reality of contemporary Vietnam. The film has its strengths and weaknesses. It is too naïve about the possibility of reconciliation.

[...] Also, I realised that it would be too difficult to make a film about Vietnam. I would be judged automatically... for favouring either the North or the South. [...]

Making a film about Vietnam is a huge Pandora's box. I haven't learned the language, I was born outside... (qtd. in Lanlo).

Nguyen elsewhere reiterates his reluctance to broach Vietnamese subjects given that he has not lived through this country's turbulent history (Lussier). This is striking from the director of *Rebelle*, a film about African child-soldiers, who speak a language completely unfamiliar to him, and which depicts an experience that Nguyen has not lived through personally, but which he does not feel inhibited in tackling. Thus, his willingness to discover complex global situations through cinema, and his avoidance of a similar process in the case of Vietnam suggests a disavowed preoccupation for a place that he doesn't feel qualified to call home. Indeed, Nguyen's work perhaps only half-executes what Naficy describes as "[a] dialogue with the home and host societies and their respective national cinemas" (6). Not engaging with issues specific to Vietnam, the thematic predispositions of Nguyen's texts coupled with their allegorical approach nevertheless engender a conversation with his father's "host" society from a standpoint that contrasts with non-diasporic Québécois filmmakers.

Le marais: Otherness, Orality and the Supernatural

Naficy describes accented filmmakers as both "situated but universal' figures working in the interstices of social formation and cinematic practice," adding that because of this interstitial position, "they are presumed to be prone to the tensions of marginality and difference" (10). Although Nguyen is one generation removed from the experience of relocation, his mixed cultural background, family history and the themes he addresses nonetheless point to a liminal position that his debut feature, *Le marais*, foregrounds most emphatically. Indeed, this supernatural fable deals explicitly with key issues stressed by Naficy: hybridity, exile, and

marginalization. Set vaguely in 19th century Eastern Europe, the cast of Le marais consists principally of Québécois actors speaking French with Eastern European accents, while the two main characters are played by actors whose own backgrounds suggest a familiarity with the experience of migration. Ukrainian actor Gregory Hlady, based in Montreal since the early 1990s, plays Alexandre, a nomadic exile from an unnamed homeland, while Paul Ahmarani, a Québécois of Lebanese extraction, plays his friend Ulysse, a physically deformed and ostracized youth. The story revolves around the mysterious circumstances of Ulysse's birth, which turns out to be the extraordinary result of a clandestine union between Pépé (Gabriel Gascon), the community's evil moralizing patriarch, and a goat. Ulysse's mythological birth thus explains his club foot and horned skull. Because of what Pépé qualifies as his "counter-natural" genesis, Ulysse is abandoned, but then rescued, and raised by Alexandre near a haunted marsh at the periphery of the village. When, at the beginning of the film, Pépé's wife Gilberte is accidentally killed by a neighbouring farmer, Alexandre finds her body, but, afraid of community prejudice, he deposits it in the marsh without telling anyone. In spite of this precaution, Ulysse later comes across Gilberte's body, which has resurfaced, and entertains regular "conversations" with it in the form of soliloquies. Meanwhile, Gilberte's disappearance arouses suspicions which inevitably fall upon Ulysse, literally the community scapegoat. The villagers finally punish Ulysse by cutting out his tongue. This proves significant given the ostensible oral character of Québec cinema and Québécois preoccupation with linguistic assimilation. Echoing Naficy, Lacasse similarly stresses the liminality of the bonimenteur, whose act he qualifies as a double or dialogical performance, where the presence of the actor who comments on the film and even sometimes mimes it is doubled by the audio-visual image, the materiality of which, itself constitutes another performance ("Le bonimenteur" 130).

Also, as an extension of his work on the *bonimenteur*, Lacasse has suggested the notion of "oral practices" as a formal outgrowth which reflects the lasting marks of orality beyond the silent era. For Lacasse, these practices foreground subjectivity, language, accent and dialogue. Indeed, several of these elements appear in *Le marais*, including perhaps the *bonimenteur*'s intermediary role, which "alternately scans the screen and the audience, practically orchestrating a dialogue between the film and the public" ("Le bonimenteur" 135). Ulysse, who is also a talented actor and puppeteer, similarly mediates between the everyday and the supernatural. Not only does his body itself signify hybridity between the human and non-human, but he is also privy to contact with elves, gnomes and sirens, and is generously predisposed to sharing his experience of the supernatural world through performance and conversation. As such, Ulysse's monologues to the dead Gilberte resemble theatrical soliloquies, but also come to mediate between the dead and the living. More importantly, this mediation is also directed at the audience in a scene where the mise-en-scène positions Ulysse as interlocutor between the spectator and Gilberte, whom he decorates and identifies as a siren, yet another hybrid creature and the loveideal about which he fantasizes. Ulysse warns the deceased Gilberte, implicitly cautioning the audience as well, that their relationship must be kept secret or they will make a monster out of her, just as they did to him. The camera frames him head on in a close-up. He never emphatically fixes either Gilberte or the camera with his gaze, but seems to hover around both in a manner reminiscent of Lacasse's bonimenteur. Thus, oral devices overlap with accented characteristics and liken Ulysse to an incarnation of the bonimenteur, a figure which here becomes "monstrous" or partially non-human.



Figure 10: Ulysse allows children to touch his horns. Le marais (Kim Nguyen, 2002).

Considering that Lacasse sees the *bonimenteur* as adapting films from dominant centres of production to local contexts like Québec where national culture has historically been marginalized ("L'accent aigu" 50), we may speculate on how supernatural incarnations of a *bonimenteur* figure might best be understood. Indeed, in *Le marais*, this phenomenon appears to further modulate the film text in relation, not to what are perceived as externally dominant cultural forces, but rather in favour of outside influences that have been kept at the margins. It therefore seems to act against an internal entrenchment of identity opposed to change prompted by global movement. In this respect perhaps, ghostly or supernatural commentators serve to challenge the formerly depreciated, but now more politically secure Québec spectatorship by unraveling the dangers of its own relative ascendancy.

Nguyen, Forcier and Self-mediation

To reach a better understanding of the meanings generated by combinations of orality and the supernatural in Québec cinema, it is useful to juxtapose this partial exploration of Nguyen's work with that of André Forcier, an iconoclastic filmmaker, who, like Nguyen, persistently mobilizes both orality and the supernatural. In Forcier's work, films such as *Les États-Unis d'Albert* (*The United States of Albert*, 2005) not only look back to cinema before the talkies, but

also subvert the common practice of portraying characters that speak in foreign languages with dialogue spoken in accented English. Instead, Forcier conjures a fantasized America where American characters are linguistically differentiated from the Québécois protagonist by their metropolitan French. Similarly, Forcier's subsequent film, Je me souviens (2009), features a Québécois fantasy of Ireland, where the Irish-speaking hero miraculously teaches a mute girl from Abitibi to speak, but only in Irish. Similarly, Forcier's earlier film Kalamazoo (1988) moves from Québec to the French islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, where the protagonist falls in love with a siren, whose speech is dubbed over by the protagonist's own male voice. These playful manipulations of accent in conjunction with fantasies of otherness appear to echo Nguyen's work. Indeed, in claiming that Québec cinema, "was oral and 'accented' from its very inception," Lacasse adds that this correlates with marginalized societies, where "the language and accent of a country were probably the principal methods of appropriation of a film" ("accent aigu" 50). In Forcier, a magical locale allows him to translate Québec society to itself by emulating the bonimenteur's exteriority to the film text. Indicatively, many of his films combine oral strategies with what Jim Leach describes as "a carnival atmosphere... turning the values and conventions of society upside-down" (77). Thus, Forcier mocks exoticism by displaying Québec through the lens of its own exotic fantasies, and via a supernatural geographic space that inflects Québec's consumption and re-production of foreign images.

In contrast to Forcier's rootedness, Nguyen's universalized foreign space acts not simply as a filter, but further hybridizes Québec cinema in an attempt to idealistically dissolve barriers. Where Forcier projects Québécois culture outwards, unabashedly marking foreign settings with its specificities, Nguyen looks to redefine Québécois identity and national cinema from the outside. Thus, Nguyen's work, which draws on community histories of exile, migration,

separation and the naïve hope of reconciliation, may usefully complement the way in which the supernatural serves imaginative and yet limited explorations of cultural difference in non-diasporic Québécois texts.

Section 4: Urban Vampires vs. Rural Ghosts, Clones and Zombies: Race, Identity, and Memory

Foreword:

The following section originates with work on Robin Aubert presented in March 2011 at the 32nd annual International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts (IAFA) conference. This director has demonstrated a consistent willingness to oppose entrenched traditions of realism in Québec cinema. His efforts finally led to mainstream recognition when he was awarded the Québec Cinema award for best feature film for Les affamés earlier in 2018. In parallel, my interest in La peau blanche goes back to the very start of my doctoral program. Indeed, this film's preoccupation with intolerance and its intriguing treatment of race contributed to my initial hypothesis about the existence of a link between the supernatural in Québec cinema and recurring intercultural anxieties.

Introduction

While Kim Ngyuyen's *Le marais* depicts an unnamed European fairy-tale world, and tackles ostracization and scapegoating, other Québec films produced over the same decade provide examples of young Québec directors who veer into representations of the supernatural, simultaneously expressing themes of interculturality and intolerance. Daniel Roby's *La peau blanche*, for example, a tale of female vampirism set in present-day Montreal, allegorically addresses race issues in the multicultural city. Conversely, Robin Aubert's inaugural feature *Saints-Martyrs-des-Damnés* forms an iconoclastic attempt to satirize cultural traditions, while also displaying contradictory, more conformist, tendencies. Likewise, Aubert's other works, *À l'origine d'un cri (Crying Out, 2010)* and *Les affamés*, embrace supernatural devices to deal with

Québec identity. While À l'origine d'un cri deploys haunting as incursions into a realist plot, Les affamés fully assumes the zombie film sub-genre and foregrounds family and rural life in a commentary on Québec's identity apocalypse.

Making Whiteness Strange in La peau blanche

In the opening paragraphs of *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*, Fatima Tobing Rony makes a brief, but provocative statement that encapsulates her concept of the "third eye" and its relation to the representation of race in ethnographic cinema. She writes simply: "I am the Bride of Kong." For Rony, the third eye entails the capacity people of colour possess for "sensibility to Subject and Object double consciousness" (207). This capacity sometimes expresses itself as parody directed back towards the ethnographic gaze of the white filmmaker/spectator (213-5), or as the implosion of the "Observer/Observed dichotomy," which occurs "when the Observer realizes that he or she is the Observed" (216). Rony's identification with the Bride of Kong leads her to the project of "pierc[ing] through the veil of the imagination of whiteness" in order to grasp the experience of the silenced performers of ethnographic cinema through their deployment of the third eye (17). She concludes that "[t]he third eye turns on a recognition: the Other perceives the veil, the process of being visualized as an object, but returns the glance" (213). On the other hand, in *White*, Richard Dyer investigates white representation by moving in an opposite direction, perhaps piercing the veil from the other side, and ultimately, like Rony, undoing its dualistic nature to undermine white privilege and racist assumptions. Just as Rony posits the third eye as an ability honed through exposure to discrimination and to one's visibility, Dyer notes the absence of such awareness for white people, arguing that the imagery of whiteness constructs it as "invisible" and "neutral" in contrast with all other racial categories,

consequently producing the taken-for-granted nature of white privilege. In parallel, Daniel Roby's bold and enigmatic film, *La peau blanche*, mirrors many of the formal strategies uncovered by Dyer, thus also "mak[ing] whiteness strange" (4).

La peau blanche opens with Thierry (Marc Paquet), an unassuming white Québécois man, and his more confident Haitian-Québécois friend, Henri (Frédéric Pierre), engrossed in an ironically toned conversation about race and colour. Henri interrogates issues that Dyer also tackles, pointing to the disparity between "white hues" and the "skin white" category (46-8), describing whites as "multicoloured," while affirming that black is rather an "absence of colour." In a tongue-in-cheek manner, these and later scenes in the film invert a number of assumptions that Dyer identifies, and brings them to the viewer's attention by positing blackness as "more human" against a deviant whiteness. While this last point runs counter to Rony's denunciation of ethnographic portrayals of non-European cultures as a "natural, more authentic humanity" (12), in La peau blanche, self-reflexive dialogue undercuts the film's racial premise with irony, citing preposterous "scientific" explanations about DNA and equally ridiculous evolutionary theories.

In "The Law of Genre," Jacques Derrida deconstructs generic purity in a way that parallels Dyer's focus on the paradoxical tensions at play within whiteness as a category. As Dyer and Derrida respectively suggest, whiteness and genres rely on intermixing for the reproduction of their inherent idea of purity, which itself precludes mixing (25). Thus, impurity is what makes genres pure. There is, as Derrida proposes, "lodged within the heart of the law itself, a law of impurity or a principle of contamination" (57). In discussing this imbrication, Derrida warns that "as soon as genre announces itself, one must not risk impurity, anomaly, or monstrosity" (57). This recalls Rony's claim about the transition from taxidermic purity to the miscegenation horror-fantasy of *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933),

which "is not only a film about a monster – the film itself is a monster, a hybrid of the scientific expedition and fantasy genres" (160). Similarly, Roby describes *La peau blanche*, with its succubi (vampiric pale-skinned red-haired women) as a composite of realism, mystery, fantasy, thriller, film noir, horror and even comedy. Despite this hybridity, the film defers genre mixing and proceeds in unexpected shifts, revealing retroactively the fantastical elements that are present throughout.

Vampiric horror, both human and utterly inhuman, also characterizes Dyer's notion of "white death," which counterpoints the hybrid monstrosity proposed by Rony. Indeed, Dyer understands whiteness as double, embodying death, but also bringing death (209). Likewise, Derrida says of the paradoxical nature of genre that it "[puts] to death the very thing that it engenders, it cuts a strange figure: a formless form, it remains nearly invisible" (65), thus closely evoking Dyer's colourless, deathlike whiteness (210). In La peau blanche, Thierry dislikes redhaired women because their extremely white, almost transparent, skin makes him nauseous, prompting Henri to tease him about his "racism," or prejudice based on colour. This seemingly innocuous accusation later proves remarkably prescient as Thierry does actually become complicit in racism, through his ability to tolerate the bigotry of his new girlfriend and her family. Indeed, Thierry's natural aversion to red-haired women (who are cast as succubi in the film) is thus equated to his natural aversion to racism. Thierry's passive betrayal of his natural inclinations might here be understood as a metaphor, not for all-out racism, but for the damaging compliance to social pressures that impels some individuals to tolerate more overt demonstrations of racism. Impelled supernaturally to overcome his aversion(s), Thierry becomes inexplicably attracted to Claire (Marianne Farley), a woman with red hair and pale skin. When the film exposes its supernatural qualities, we discover that she is a succubus, creatures that prey

on human, particularly Black victims. In her critique of white supremacist attitudes that underpin official histories tending to invisibilize and distort narratives of Black presence in Canada, Erin Manning, drawing on bell hooks and Paul Gilroy, equates white supremacy to "the horror of the cannibalistic gaze" ("Ephemeral Territories" 70-71). By mobilizing supernatural tropes from within the horror genre, *La peau blanche* literalizes this equivalence. Furthermore, the over-the-top sexual voracity of the succubi, especially directed at Henri because he is Black, coupled with their explicit racism, derides the fear of miscegenation, playing particularly on its gendered nature by inverting the trope of white men protecting white women from Black men (Shohat and Stam 156). In *La peau blanche*, it is the Black man, Henri (an insightful character reminiscent of the hero of George A. Romero's 1968 horror classic *Night of the Living Dead*), who is devoured by a supernaturally white woman while Thierry, his white friend, betrays him, looking on ineffectually.



Figure 11: Claire, Thierry's redheaded, pale-skinned succubus girlfriend.

La peau blanche (Daniel Roby, 2004).

These attacks occur at foiled moments of promised sexual encounters, just as Linda Williams notes regarding female victims in teen horror films (11). Indeed, Williams' schema of body genres acting sensationally on viewers via women's embodiment of powerful emotions nuances the gendered nature of monstrosity in *La peau blanche*. According to Williams, horror more so than other body genres reveals an oscillating sadomasochistic engagement with fear (6).

In *La peau blanche*, however, it is men's bodies that are "caught in the grip of intense, sensation or emotion" (4). Williams extends the sadomasochism present in horror to all body genres as a kind of "oscillat[ion] between powerlessness and power" (8). This further blurs generic specificities. Accordingly, *La peau blanche* blurs gender identification within each of its component genres, which are in turn blurred with each other cross-generically. The film foregrounds this in a final scene, which refuses to divulge the gender identity of the unborn child conceived by Thierry and Claire. Thus, the film's dystopian treatment of biological reproduction seizes on Derrida's view that in the "survival" of purity, in the very positing of genre itself rests the paradoxical birth of an apocalypse comprised within its inescapable impurity: "degenerescence has begun," he says, "the end begins" (66).

Identity and Memory in the Work of Robin Aubert

As Québec's most marking contribution to the evolution of film and the only international movement within which it has played a major role, *cinéma direct* emerged out of the turbulent moment in modern Québécois history known as the Quiet Revolution. The period of introspection and insularity immediately preceding this turning point, dominated in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s by the paternalistic figure of Premier Maurice Duplessis, and known popularly as *la grande noirceur*, or "the great darkness," had already begun to erode when a group of young, talented and idealistic filmmakers surfaced in the French section of the Montreal-based National Film Board of Canada with a new aesthetic of documentary filmmaking – *le direct*. This documentary style is generally understood to have first manifested itself in 1958 with, *Les raquetteurs* (*The Snowshoers*, 1958), a short film by Michel Brault and Gilles Groulx about an annual snowshoe festival. According to Gilles Marsolais, the atmosphere within the Film Board

during these years signalled "the start of a concerted revolt by the French team" (91). Marsolais also comments on the political and cultural situation, noting that "Québec was about to reject a despised conservative political regime, to radically turn the page on its past and on its folk traditions, in order to gain access to modernity" (84).

In contrast with this modernizing drive to banish the past through documentary realism, several filmmakers working in the early 21st century actively summon it by using supernatural forms. For example, Francis Leclerc's feature films consistently deal with the past. ¹⁴ Most notably, *Mémoires affectives* interweaves paranormal phenomena affecting the mind of a car accident victim (Roy Dupuis), whose recovery from amnesia engages the film explicitly with issues of individual and collective memory, linking these to notions of distant past traditions inhabiting the territory of Québec. As Bruno Cornellier aptly notes, this film engages with both the immigrant and the Indigenous other to the Québécois protagonist, but neither of these characters participates in Québec identity formation. Both remain exterior or dehistoricized facilitators in the nation-building project ("Je me souviens" 100-101). In this respect, Cornellier's observations that immigrant and Indigenous characters in this film take on fantastical, extra-diegetic, and explicatory qualities tends to correlate with both orality and the supernatural. In a sense, these characters are pushed to the outer limits of everyday reality, act as intermediaries to the narrative, and provide meaning, however tendentious, for what is occurring. Likewise, Leclerc's later film *Un été sans points ni coups sûrs (A No-Hit No-Run Summer*, 2008), inserts supernatural elements into an otherwise realist narrative to indulge in nostalgia

¹⁴ Leclerc's debut feature, *La jeune fille à la fenêtre* (2001), and his latest, *Pieds nus dans l'aube* (2017), are also set in the past. The former is set in 1920s Montreal and relates an interracial love story between an ailing white Francophone woman from the country and an English-speaking Black jazz musician. The latter film adapts the novel by Francis Leclerc's own father (legendary Québec folk singer Félix Leclerc) and takes place during the interwar years in Québec. It is worth noting that the screenplay for *Pieds nus* was co-written by Québec raconteur Fred Pellerin discussed in the first section of this chapter.

about the now defunct *Montreal Expos* baseball team. Set during the Expos' inaugural season during the summer of 1969 and reflecting the changing social context, this film touches, with varying degrees of emphasis, on women's liberation, homosexuality, immigration, and race. In each of these two films by Leclerc, ghostly intercultural bonimenteurs address the protagonist, and in their implicit address to the spectator, come to modulate the films. Mémoires affectives features the ghost of an Innu hunter (and the spirit of a dying deer), while in *Un été*, the ghost of the first Expos star, African-American athlete Mack Jones, appears repeatedly to counsel the young protagonist. 15 As Cornellier's incisive analysis shows, *Mémoires affectives* allegorically resolves tensions with Québec's undesirable colonial past, represented here by the ubiquitous figure of the malevolent father, by cathartically executing this figure and starting the national project afresh. Such strategic appropriation of the supernatural to disavow or dismiss the need for radical decolonization is contrary to Khanna's prescription that the critical agency of melancholia ought to be usefully maintained as a reminder of ethical obligations. Furthermore, as we shall see in Chapter 2 with Micheline Lanctôt's Pour l'amour de Dieu, the co-optation of the supernatural's subversive possibilites can also be performed with other forms of alterity, including those related to gender and sexuality.

The concept of memory, emblematic of Québécois society, has special political resonance in Quebec where it can be equated to survival and existence. Indeed, the national motto *Je me souviens* (I remember) encapsulates this sentiment with a powerful simplicity that cannot be underestimated, as historian Jocelyn Létourneau observes: "... anything related to memory and to forgetting [...] is extremely sensitive in this society that is constantly grappling

¹⁵ Mack Jones died in 2004, therefore making his ghostly presence in the 2008 film all the more poignant. In addition, the film features the ghost of Expos' first coach Gene Mauch, who appears to advise the young protagonist's father and coach of the parish children's baseball team played by Patrice Bergeron. The real Mauch also died in 2005, three years before the film's release.

with the inspiration, and sometimes the constraint, of its motto" (5). This enigmatic phrase has been interpreted in various ways and its simple, but ambiguous call to remember is answered by the filmic medium itself, which provides an audiovisual archive of the past from which a multiplicity of interpretations can be mined. Moreover, the motto's original meaning, though undetermined, is sometimes traced back to the Latin phrase *ne obliviscaris* or "do not forget," (Deschênes 15), a resistant aspect of the dictum that evokes the precariousness of Québec culture and its efforts to counter effacement. This paraphrase also complements the more militant "I remember" employed politically by the Parti Québécois in 1977, who, by placing the motto ubiquitously on Québec car license plates, prevented its own lapse from memory, a reappropriation echoing the political aspirations of cinema to either precipitate or prevent change.

As such, Robin Aubert's *Saints-Martyrs-des-Damnés*, released in 2005, exemplifies yet another attempt to address identity and memory in relation to the Québec experience, and deploys a plot interspersed with paranormal phenomena and imbued with deadpan surrealism. Framed within the protagonist's dream memory of his origins, at the heart of this film lies an impulse directed both against the cultural traditions of Québec and the aesthetics of *cinéma direct*, which itself, radically transformed previous traditions. Subject to the strange sensation of not fully knowing who he is or where he is, that everything around him doesn't really exist and even questioning his own existence, Flavien Juste (François Chénier), the main character, describes himself as being "the shadow of a dream, this dream that isn't even my own." These words, in the context of Québec, tend to allegorically suggest the province's failure to achieve the dream of political independence. Working for a sensationalist ufology publication, Flavien is dispatched to investigate strange disappearances in a small town in rural Québec. Paralleling the genre hybridity noted in *La peau blanche*, Aubert's film at times caricatures western genre

conventions, recalling influences also present in the work of Gilles Carle (discussed in Chapter 2), and situating Québec firmly in the context of what historian Gérard Bouchard calls *américanéité*, or American-ness rather than associating Québec culture with the model of France, with which it maintains strong, but ambivalent, historical, cultural and linguistic connections (61-63).

Flavien's assignment is quickly overtaken by his partner's abduction, the discovery of a cloning network and encounters with the ghostly presence of its victims over past generations. This bizarre and extremely complex narrative eventually reveals the origins of Flavien's own identity, while mocking symbols and figures from Québec's past. In one scene, Flavien is summoned by the corrupt Mayor of the town (Michel Forget) and forcibly escorted into the local Church, which serves as the town hall. This scene illustrates the irreverent mood of the film and is suggestive of Maurice Duplessis's pre-1960s Church-endorsed authoritarianism. Another example of this kind occurs later in the film when Flavien enters a remote and lawless biker bar. Set in a barn, with a snowmobile parked outside though it is clearly summertime, snowshoes nailed to the walls as decorations, and strange live entertainment spectacle accompanied by accordion, this scene again subverts stereotypical cultural symbols through absurd combinations. Moreover, the scene suggests a similarly ambiguous homage to the ironic treatment of snowshoeing and rural Québec in *Les raquetteurs*.

Such criticisms of Québec's past appear counterbalanced by an equal condemnation of a scientific future represented in the film by cloning. Aubert, however, depicts the motivation behind this technology as atavistic insofar as the story's evil scientist, who happens to be Flavien's genetic father, is driven in his maniacal scheme by a reaction against natural evolution and change, seeking to duplicate and preserve his own form eternally. This motivation, again

recalling the stagnation and xenophobia of the Duplessis regime, is contrasted with lyrical scenes of Flavien's affection for Titte-fille (Isabelle Blais), a down-to-earth woman, who lives on the periphery of the community and plays slide guitar. This relationship, signaled particularly by its musical and geographical allusions, reaffirms positive aspects of Québécois culture in relation to its North American identity.

Discovering that he is himself only one of several genetic duplicates, Flavien destroys his maker/father and another of his doubles, but remains aware of the existence of one more clone identical to himself. A song sung by Tite-Fille's young boy, Quentin (Alec Poirier), triggers a reference to the submerged memory that posed the film's initial interrogation of Flavien's identity, as well as the realization that Quentin is the final clone Flavien must eliminate in order to become unique and restore meaning to his life. In an act of self-sacrifice, Flavien instead chooses suicide, but not before reminding the boy of his individuality. In a final irony then, the film's dénouement inverts the national motto *Je me souviens* and its implication that cultural survival can only be ensured through memory. It is precisely by remembering that Flavien ceases to exist, while ensuring Quentin's survival and difference.

By taking his own life, the protagonist of *Saints-Martyrs* appears to abandon his struggle in the face of the absurd. However, given the self-sacrificial nature of his act, the film communicates a contradictory understanding of this notion. Flavien's sacrifice is made so that, Quentin, essentially a copy of himself, does not have to eventually confront the fact that he is merely a duplicate. Interestingly, though the film's epilogue attributes Flavien's damnation to the fact that he is not God's creature, by implication negating the existence of God as far as he is concerned, it is his inability to accept the absurdity of not being unique that provokes his death. That a meaningful existence can only occur in a context of distinctiveness is noteworthy in

Québec's specific identity as both Francophone and North American. Because of its final compromise, *Saints-Martyrs* displays a degree of orthodoxy. Flavien's suicide, negating his previous revolt in the face of a meaningless existence, removes the presence of paranormal phenomena, puts old ghosts to rest, and dissolves the absurd mood that is accompanied and enhanced by the non-conformism of these phenomena. However, since the idea of cloning in the film allegorizes both the assimilation perceived as a constant threat to the survival of Francophone Québec culture as well as the xenophobia wielded politically by the Duplessis administration, the protagonist's battle and victory against these forces can be seen as building on the vision of an evolving, diverse and intercultural identity heralded by the Quiet Revolution. This is underpinned in the film by Quentin's youth, symbolizing the nation's future hopes.

In light of this, *Saints-Martyrs* stands out as a bold attempt to raise questions of identity and memory through the supernatural mode in Québec cinema. While the cinematic realism of the 1960s and 1970s marked an overt criticism and redefinition of national identity consistent with its historical context, the more recent incursions of supernatural narratives as illustrated by films foregrounding interculturality and Québec's analogous relationship with other nations, brings attention to an ongoing questioning and development of these debates. Just as popular Québec comedies of the 1960s and 1970s seized the opportunity presented by the sudden relaxation of censors to mobilize humour in a more explicit political way, Aubert manages, in a contemporary context, to draw attention to unresolved tensions within Québec society through a darkly humorous atmosphere. More than a decade after Québec's second unsuccessful referendum on independence, issues such as cultural distinctiveness, assimilation and survival, it

seems, continue to haunt Québec cinema, less evidently, but perhaps in a more entrenched way, as these oblique expressions apparently suggest.

Williams recognizes near the end of her essay on body genres that her intervention acts as a trigger for the necessary and challenging work of "relating original fantasies to historical context, and specific generic history" (12). In this respect, survival, almost impossible to disassociate from the notion of *survivance* in the Québec context, lends itself perfectly to the allegorical potential of the zombie genre. Accordingly, survival, alongside the family, forms a key theme of Aubert's 2017 zombie film, *Les affamés*. Unsurprisingly, this reference is not lost on media commentators' evaluation of the film. As Chantal Guy writes in *La presse*:

From the late George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* to *The Walking Dead*, the zombie has always been a pretext for a fundamental theme: survivance. And, this theme having been an obsession of the Québec psyche for a long time, what can the character of the zombie, generally absent from a national cinema that is allergic to genre and non-mainstream film, bring? Nothing, except the beauty of surviving.



Figure 12: Vézina's last moments in Les affamés (Robin Aubert, 2017).

In this film, however, the thematic combination of survival and the family produces somewhat disturbing narrative outcomes. From an intercultural perspective, *Les affamés* includes one Black

character named Vézina played by Haitian-born Québec actor Didier Lucien. Unfortunately, Vézina acts merely as a sidekick for the central protagonist, Bonin (Marc-André Grondin), and dies early on (much like Henri in *La peau blanche*, with his white friend standing by ineffectually). Moreover, immediately after his hasty demise, a white woman from the city named Tania (Monia Chokri) replaces Vézina as Bonin's companion. Soon after this, the new couple is joined by a white orphaned girl (Charlotte St-Martin). From the onset, the Black character is shown to be peripheral and expendable, thus precluding any view of the standard family as non-heterosexual or interracial. Indeed, the sequence of events even seems to suggest the necessity of eliminating the Black friend in order for Bonin to finally form an all-white heterosexual family unit.



Figure 13: The post-apocalyptic white family of Les affamés (Robin Aubert, 2017).

Conclusion

Drawing on chaos theory, Celestino Deleyto considers how genres and films interact and what this interaction means. Deleyto sees individual texts acting as "strange attractors" that break down categories, constantly forming new ones. Whether *La peau blanche* fulfils this function in the context of Québec cinema is unclear, but interestingly, the succubi themselves who are

central to the film, possess a strange power of attraction, which lures Thierry towards their "kind." This feature suggests the possible extension of Deleyto's position on the relationship between genres and texts to an analogous interaction with characters or features within a text. Following Altman on genre mixing (123) and the influence of Derrida before him, Deleyto stresses Derrida's displacement of genre "belonging" towards genre "participation" (Deleyto 220-223; Derrida, "The Law of Genre" 65). Similarly, La peau blanche and Saints-Martyrs participate in rather than belong to any one genre. In interviews included in the DVD extras of their respective films, Roby labels *La peau blanche* simply as "a genre film," while Aubert describes Saints-Martyrs as "fantastic." This vagueness is consistent with Altman's view that film producers/makers seek broad audiences rather than adherence to generic categories. Taking Deleyto's chaotic push and pull between texts and genre as a "premise" for analysing moments of interaction (228), and as offering a translation of our world according to mediations with individual films, La peau blanche and Aubert's films are especially revealing. In Québec, the historic notion of white Francophone racial purity, formerly expressed as québécois pure laine (dyed-in-the-wool Quebecer), elevates whiteness. After the 1960s, massive drops in birth rates and the necessary integration of immigrants provoked anxieties around reproduction and ethnicity. Thus, La peau blanche, not unlike Dyer's book, unsettles the viewer's expectations of genre purity just as it challenges assumptions about race and undermines the logic of such anxieties. Saints-Martyrs also appears preoccupied with biological reproducibility and perpetuation in its treatment of cloning as a central theme. The critique of sameness put forward by the film appears to converge with a promotion of diversity, but the absence of non-white Francophone characters in the film suggests that its real concern is not diversity as much as distinctness, a notion more readily associated with Québec's ongoing struggle to maintain its

own maintream's distinction from Canada. Aubert appears to revise this tendency in *Les affamés*. However, unlike George A. Romero, to whom Aubert's film is dedicated (alongside his own parents), the structure of Aubert's narrative sacrifices the lone Black character early in the film and quickly eliminates any possibility of challenging the white purity of the utopian/dystopian family.

Section 5: Recasting Québec/France as Intercontinental Haunting: in Café de Flore

Foreword: Material from this section was first presented publicly at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) Conference in Atlanta in March 2016 as part of a panel alongside Fulvia Massimi (Concordia University), Julie Ravary (Université de Montréal) and Bill Marshall (University of London). The panel, titled "Perspectives on Québec Global Cinema," focussed on the recent growth of Québec cinema as a global, and perhaps post-national, phenomenon. The panel enabled a conversation with the two above-mentioned emerging Québec film scholars and the established and respected author of Quebec National Cinema, which contributed to further reflection on and revision of this piece.

Introduction

In his seminal work on Québec national cinema, Bill Marshall points out that Québec's ambivalent relationship to France epitomizes the fluidity of national-allegorical tension insofar as France itself acts as a malleable code through which to define Québec nationhood (75). Indeed, the malleability to which Marshall refers is readily apparent in Jean-Marc Vallée's 2011 film *Café de Flore*. This film depicts a French setting placed in a contrasting relationship with a Québécois counterpart, where the former is positioned temporally as a precursor to the latter in such a way as to suggest that France stands in for the ghosts of a deceased, socio-economically inferior, and more startlingly, disabled Québec past. As such, *Café de Flore* reveals much about the extent to which Québec's relationship with its former metropole can be moulded cinematically. Indeed, grasping the mutations of such a code may provide important clues as to why and how historically peripheral societies such as Québec develop narrative tactics to

overturn imbalances of power in an increasingly globalized world, and how in some cases, they may assimilate the very colonial impulses that perpetuate exclusionary patterns.

Aside from its focus on France, *Café de Flore* tellingly foregrounds melancholia, a dominant feature of Québec cinema connected to haunting (Khanna) and to the loss of a national ideal (Weinmann, "À l'ombre"; Poirier). This section examines *Café de Flore*'s deployment of haunting and this phenomenon's link to melancholia through a framework that mobilises this term as elaborated by Khanna, who, in opposition to Freud, sees melancholia not as pathological, but rather as an ethical imperative towards the future. To more adequately account for the types of orientations toward the future that are relevant to the thematic concerns of the film and to their correlation with melancholia, I also supplement this theoretical structure with Alison Kafer's view of the future from the perspective of disability studies and thus attempt to assess the film's manipulation of both the national narrative and marginality as a means of renegotiating Québec's rapport with its European origins.

As a "personal/Québécois" film and as a French co-production with an important Parisian subplot starring Vanessa Paradis, *Café de Flore* seems a logical step in the international trajectory of Jean-Marc Vallée's career. Indeed, Vallée has displayed a versatile ability to move between Québec, Hollywood, and Europe, as well as remarkable success in directing high-profile actors. Since his 2005 breakthrough with *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, Vallée has established himself solidly in Hollywood, directing Golden Globe nominee Emily Blunt in *The Young Victoria* (2008), Academy Award winners Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto in *Dallas Buyers Club* (2013), Academy-Award nominees Reese Witherspoon and Laura Dern in *Wild* (2014), Jake Gyllenhaal and Naomi Watts in *Demolition* (2016), and multiple high-profile Golden Globe winners and nominees in the successful televisions series *Big Little Lies* (2017-19). Within this corpus, *Café*

de Flore tells the story of Antoine Godin (Kevin Parent), a handsome and internationally successful Québécois DJ of mixed Francophone and Anglophone background, who, for no apparent reason, cannot find happiness, in spite of his perfect health, beautiful girlfriend (Hélène Florent), and his charming daughters.

The inexplicable tendency towards melancholia experienced by characters seemingly blessed with contentment is a recurring motif in Québec cinema. This gives rise to spectacular violence in the controversial Laurentie (Laurentia, Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie, 2011), but also features centrally in more recent films like Les Êtres chers (Our Loved Ones, Anne Émond, 2015) and Boris sans Béatrice (Boris Without Béatrice, Denis Côté, 2016). Laurentie, to which I will return briefly in chapters 3 and 4, features a protagonist (Emmanuel Schwartz) whose otherwise fulfilled existence is overwhelmed by a crushing and mysterious sadness when he becomes aware of the unambiguously comfortable life of his new Anglophone neighbour. Les *Êtres chers* spans several decades in the life of David Leblanc (Maxim Gaudette), who, though seemingly satisfied with his rural family life and artistic realisations, remains inhabited by a depressive and self-destructive impulse inherited from his father. Boris sans Béatrice, on the other hand, depicts the predicament of a more arrogantly successful and ethically flawed entrepreneur, Boris Malinovsky (James Hyndman), whose wife Béatrice (Simone-Élise Girard) has fallen into an almost catatonic melancholia. Despite having seemingly achieved all his life's ambitions, Boris is visited by a supernatural figure (Denis Lavant) who exposes his shortcomings and compels him to turn over a new leaf. Likewise, in *Café de Flore*, a haunting sadness permeates the otherwise "perfect" happiness of Antoine's life. Indeed, such ghostliness intrudes visually on the narrative of the film and ultimately frames the parallel intercontinental plotlines taking place in contemporary Québec and 1960s Paris. On the one hand, Antoine's story revolves around tensions in his family surrounding the break up of his marriage, and his intention to marry his new girlfriend (Evelyne Brochu). Both Antoine's oldest daughter and his father refuse to accept this new relationship, while his ex-wife also remains in denial, clinging to the conviction that hers and Antoine's futures are metaphysically connected by destiny.

On the other hand, the 1960s Paris subplot sees Vanessa Paradis as Jacqueline, a working-class single mother raising her child, Laurent (Marin Gerrier), who has been diagnosed with Down syndrome. Upon discovering the short life expectancy of individuals with this condition, Jacqueline strives doggedly to ensure her son's long-term survival and integration into mainstream school life. But when Laurent becomes infatuated with Véronique (Alice Dubois), a girl his age who also has Down syndrome, Jacqueline cannot bear the intensity of their affection for one another and eventually kills all three of them by driving her car deliberately into an oncoming vehicle. Meanwhile, in contemporary Québec, Antoine's ex-wife Carole suffers from sleepwalking and nightmares and decides to visit a medium who reveals that she is being haunted by "a little monster," who turns out to be Laurent's ghost. Thus, Carole concludes rather surprisingly that Laurent is actually Antoine's incarnation in a previous life, that she is herself the reincarnation of his possessive mother, and that Antoine's new girlfriend Rose is the reincarnation of Véronique, Laurent's sweetheart who also perished in the suicidal head-on collision. Realizing that she must let Antoine go, Carole finally accepts her ex-husband's new relationship and the two remain good friends, leaving Antoine free to remarry Rose, a somewhat disappointing and conventional plot resolution that conveniently dissipates Antoine's melancholic anxieties.



Figure 14: Carole's vision of the ghostly Laurent, reliving the car crash that ended his life.

Café de Flore (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2010).

Since Khanna describes haunting as a symptom of melancholia linked to postcolonial nationhood, ethical responsibility, and a reaction to the loss of an ideal, the presence of haunting is implicit in such films as *Laurentie*, which don't display overt supernatural manifestations. However, one might also note the explicit supernatural incursion of haunting, not only in *Café de Flore*, but also in the aforementioned *Boris sans Béatrice* and *Les Êtres chers*. These cases suggest a rather more deliberate deployment of haunting as a formal or thematic device. In this respect then, *Café de Flore* apparently betrays an active desire to engage with the haunting that stems from melancholia. Moreover, the film does so in an equally open engagement with both of Québec's colonial references, that is to say, not only France, but also England.

Indeed, *Café de Flore* introduces England into its haunting dynamic when Antoine, a recovered alcoholic, travels to London to perform in a show during which he is confronted by a fan assuming the ghostly appearance of a Yeomen Warder, or Beefeater, a symbol and reference to both his former dependence on the famous brand of Beefeater gin, but also to the safeguarding of British monarchical and military power, and to the commercialization of this tradition as a tourist attraction. Strangely, during a therapy session, Antoine realizes the ubiquity of bottles of Beefeater gin in photos from his teenage years and he couples this symbol with the equally ubiquitous presence of Carole in the very same photographs. As such, Antoine's struggle to

maintain his independence from alcohol points to a broader political attempt at independence from British power, but also to his lingering ties with his ex-wife, which, by analogy, also suggest a parallel political connection to France.

So, if melancholia is attributable to a loss that remains unidentifiable for those affected by its symptoms, what possible sources for this sentiment can we infer from the divergent French and British expressions of haunting in Café de Flore? The film encourages us to see Antoine's ex-wife Carole as a reincarnation of Laurent's mother, herself played by a legendary French cultural icon, Vanessa Paradis. Moreover, Carole remains haunted in the present by the ghost of Laurent because of her French counterpart's fatally over-possessive act which leads directly to Laurent's and Véronique's deaths as well as her own. This dreadful act also prevents Laurent's relationship with Véronique from developing beyond childhood. In this respect, the manner in which Vallée's film potentially undermines an identity centred on France towards one focussed on Québec reflects the tendencies Marshall observes in many post-Quiet Revolution nationalists, that is to say, an inclination to see "the maternal or feminine France [as] inappropriate to, or indeed holding back, the full development of a Québec national plenitude read as masculine" (76). At the same time, Antoine is haunted by his decision to leave his wife, which parallels Laurent's urge to move away from his mother and towards Véronique. Moreover, since Véronique comes from a middle-class family, a fact openly resented by Jacqueline, Antoine is also haunted by his and his precursor's move away from a position of working-class solidarity. At the same time, Antoine is haunted by the Beefeater, who represents, not only his own alcoholism, but also his father's, as well as British cultural dominance, which Antoine has embraced artistically and commercially. Thus, given the family's centrality as an organizing principle for this film, Antoine strives to break away from two embodiments of colonial

dependence, the maternal presence of France channelled via Carole and Jacqueline, and the paternal presence of England via the Beefeater and his own father.

But the film harbours another, perhaps more troubling kind of haunting, its recourse to the destruction of Laurent and the need for his reincarnation into a supremely "healthy" existence via Antoine. Thus, if both haunting and disability harbour any subversive, ethical, future-oriented potential, and if *Café de Flore* attempts to foreground this possibility, the film ultimately assimilates these hopes in its final resolution, which limits its definitive iteration to a healthy and wealthy white male vision. In this respect, the protagonist's artistic compromises, which engender a commercially successful career, seemingly mirror Vallée's own career choices. Indeed, the suggestion that *Café de Flore* may be Vallée's most personal film is reinforced by his own cameo as the protagonist's friend and neighbour who introduces Antoine to Rose, and by the casting of Vallée's own son, Émile Vallée as the young Antoine, whose physical resemblance to the director is striking.

A central characteristic of Khanna's discussion of melancholia, in opposition to Freud, lies in her insistence on the necessity *not* to assimilate melancholia into the superego or conscience, but to sustain this sentiment and thereby ensure a continuous ethical compulsion in the future. In parallel, Alison Kafer has suggested in her "politics of crip futurity" that "... people with disabilities find themselves denied ways to narrate viable futures" (qtd. in Mitchell 139). In a set of compounded intentional and perhaps unintentional ironies then, *Café de Flore* dramatizes a situation whereby at the very moment that Laurent's affection for Véronique foreshadows the possibility of an eventual sexual union, his controlling and jealous mother resorts to cutting short the existence of the son for whom she so desperately fought to ensure a "viable" future. This apparent critique put forward by the film is itself ironically echoed by the

narrative structure that Vallée outlines for his protagonist who can only achieve fulfilment once melancholia is put to rest and he is reincarnated, not only as a Quebecer, but as an able-bodied, wealthy, and successful one. On the other hand, Vallée underlines the ongoing presence, one might say the ubiquity, of disability in the contemporary context through an iconic shot of a crowd of people with Down syndrome walking through the airport in the opposite direction to Antoine. This suggests their movement towards Québec since Antoine is heading out to Europe. However, the slow-motion photography with which the crowd's movements are captured, and the Pink Floyd soundtrack which accompanies it, frames this group of travellers as anonymous, mute and dreamlike.

Highlighting these contradictions between the film's structure and its palpable desire to challenge stereotypes about disabled people, Jacqueline argues vehemently against popular opinion of Down syndrome as a fatality, and yet herself ends Laurent's life, while her Québécoise avatar Carole continues to describe Laurent's relationship with Véronique as "unhealthy." As such, there seems to exist a tension at play between *Café de Flore*'s overt acknowledgement and defence of disability in both past and present societies and the film's instrumentalization of disability as a metaphor serving a structural function that centres on and culminates in the life of an able-bodied protagonist. In this respect, Vallée's film strikes at the heart of Kafer's interrogation about why disability has been made into "a defining element of our imagined futures, such that a 'good' future is one without disability, while a 'bad' future is overrun by it" (10). In fairness to Vallée, his film does attempt to contest the notion that a "bad" future is overrun by disability, and yet the dénouement of Antoine's story absorbs disability into a healthy vision of the present and future at the same time as it puts to rest the haunting that had previously imbued the film. Thus, the film tends to co-opt the resistant possibilities of both

melancholia and disability. In contrast, Québec films like *Boris sans Béatrice* and *Les Êtres chers*, while proposing endings that suggest a certain optimism, also retain the spectre of melancholia as a latent emotion not completely resolved and always demanding accountability.

In spite of this, it does appear that *Café de Flore* produces what Bill Marshall has recently described as "a sustained sense of global connectedness" that nevertheless troubles hierarchies by suggesting a recalibration and perhaps even a supersession of the relationship between formerly dominant and peripheral geo-cultural contexts (Marshall, Dyer, Lafontaine, Massimi). This also corroborates and extends Marshall's prior claim that Québec cinema has indeed looked at the Québec/France relationship in "highly problematizing ways" (78). This is so even though Vallée's career emphasizes the predominance of Québec's relationship to the US, and indeed, perhaps as a result of his ability to use his Hollywood potential as leverage in his dealings with France. However, the manner in which, in *Café de Flore*, such reversals combine with representations that primarily foreclose upon non-mainstream futures remains awkward. Similarly, the film's co-optation of melancholia tends to shift the dynamics of past hegemonies into a Québécois guise that is no less problematic than its metropolitan predecessors, even if this Québécois iteration can now participate more emphatically in global cultural exchanges.

CHAPTER 2: INTERGENERATIONAL RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS: MELANCHOLIA AND THE MIRACULOUS

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Section 1: Miracles and Myths: La vraie nature de Bernadette

Foreword: This article first originated as a presentation for a colloquium titled "Québec and Ireland Under Observation: The Behaviour of Small Nations in Crisis Situations" held at the Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS) conference at the Université de Montréal in May 2010. It quickly developed into a full French-language article which would eventually be published as a chapter in a multi-disciplinary volume with Éditions du Septentrion, edited by Simon Jolivet, Linda Cardinal and Isabelle Matte, and titled Le Québec et l'Irlande: Culture, histoire, identité. The original piece comprised a comparative framework within which I dedicated as much analysis to Neil Jordan's The Butcher Boy (1997) as Gilles Carle's La vraie nature de Bernadette (1972). The segment dedicated to Butcher Boy being less relevant to the aims of the current thesis, I have here excised it and translated, reframed and updated my discussion of Carle's film.

Introduction

La vraie nature de Bernadette represents a pivotal film both in Gilles Carle's body of work and in Québec national cinema more generally. Through this parody of the miracles of Lourdes, Carle expresses the social upheaval taking place in Québec during the second half of the twentieth century. The current section demonstrates how Carle's treatment of the miraculous in Bernadette amounts to an appropriation of societal vectors that had previously served to perpetuate communicative and identificatory links between Church and community. Indeed, this film subverts and redefines the miraculous as an ideological vehicle for Catholicism in Québec.

By attacking the language of the miraculous through cinema and by substituting the reverent tone of divine affirmation with caustic irony, Carle manages to seize the figurative potential of the supernatural while evoking the gravity of a traumatic historical period for Québécois society. As such, *Bernadette* does not propose a rational or materialist critique of waning religious discourse, but rather attempts to disturb spiritual and cultural authority from within by usurping the communicative codes of a previously dominant worldview. Thus, Carle's film adapts elements of the miraculous to signify the abrupt and violent break with the past, thereby paradoxically maintaining and exploiting the very continuity of this religious mode of expression.

Produced soon after the October Crisis of 1970, ¹⁶ *Bernadette* tends to proliferate its own range of signifying possibilities following the collapse of clerical power in Québec. Most notably, its tone and content display palpable disappointment at the insufficient social changes brought about by the Quiet Revolution. My reading of this film highlights the way it expresses the language of the miraculous during this transitional moment in Québec society. This approach serves to understand how *Bernadette* acts as the basis for an emergent cinematic mode which, on the one hand systematically opposes conservative discourse around the miraculous, and on the other takes advantage of this model to stimulate reflection on the past and on the evolution of religious practice. Thus, I argue that its exploitation and exacerbation of tensions between shifting hegemonies serves as a counterpoint to the ostensibly more radical tendency of erasing a

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¹⁶ In October 1970, two cells from the paramilitary group, le *Front de libération du Québec (FLQ)*, abducted British diplomat James Richard Cross and Vice-Premier of Québec, Pierre Laporte. In response, the federal government mobilized the army and applied the War Measures Act. These events, the subsequent death of Laporte and hundreds of unjustified arrests triggered "a crisis situation without precedent" in Québec. See Linteau et al. (713). From Jean-François Cardin's point of view: "The October Crisis erupted during a period of agitation and contestation the origins of which go back to the middle of the 1960s, that is to say to the first signs of disillusionment and disenchantment, across several layers of society, vis-à-vis the hopes raised by the Quiet Revolution. […] October 1970 therefore represents the end of a period, an outcome, the spectacular and painful epilogue to several years of hardening of social relations brought about notably by the debate, at the heart of Québec society concerning the continuation or cessation of the reforms undertaken at the start of the decade." See Cardin p. 55.

conformist past through more direct and realist critique. While it elaborates a language founded on the very principles it is attacking, *Bernadette* celebrates self-criticism, and also attempts to avoid the edification of a new monolithic code. Thus, in spite of the compromise inherent to the adoption of a framework that overlaps with that of the established order, the film nevertheless clashes with certain traditional symbols and perturbs dominant systems of symbolic representation.

In Québec, Carle shares an influence comparable to Claude Jutra, Gilles Groulx, Pierre Perrault, Anne-Claire Poirier, and Michel Brault, all leading filmmakers of the same generation. However, Carle's original contribution to the Québec film corpus diverges from the influential cinema direct movement and exhibits a prolific output that consolidates a distinct stylistic strand within this national cinema. Working with commercial and genre cinema, Carle distinguishes himself through his willingness to explore magical and dreamlike subjects. Over the course of his career, he directed a significant number of television commercials as a parallel and symbiotic occupation designed to fund his auteurist features. In spite of his uninhibited and practical approach to commercial cinema, Carle's work remains almost exclusively Québécois in its production and thematic concerns. Indeed, Carle is significantly influenced by and invested in Québec national literature (Faucher and Houle 8-9), and has adapted iconic literary texts such as Les Plouffe (The Plouffe Family, 1981) and Maria Chapdelaine (1983). In the same vein, Carle co-founded les Éditions de l'Hexagone with Gaston Miron, Olivier Marchand, Louis Portugais and Hélène Pilote (Faucher and Houle 6), and wrote numerous screenplays (including the script for *Bernadette*), as well as poetry and novels (many of which remain unpublished).

In the context of Québec's October Crisis, *Bernadette* acts as a prelude to more concrete, realist and in-depth explorations of the same event in later films such as *Action: The October*

Crisis of 1970 (Robin Spry, 1974) and Les ordres (Orderers, Michel Brault, 1974). Released in the wake of traumatic national events, *Bernadette* is comparable in many ways to Neil Jordan's The Butcher Boy, 17 and its narrative actually alludes to the Irish context as a model. Carle's film (like Jordan's) fulfils a function analogous to that proposed by Ruth Barton in her book *Irish* National Cinema. For Barton, films like Butcher Boy and, most notably, The Magdalene Sisters (Peter Mullan, 2002)¹⁸ can be understood as having a role in historical pedagogy: "[...] a public function of enabling their viewers to work through the legacy of Irish history in its more traumatic formulations" (131). In this respect, like *Butcher Boy*, Carle opts for supernatural devices to address such national historical trauma, and, as with Jordan's film, Bernadette resists the temptation to categorically repudiate all religious and spiritual foundation. This film instead chooses to exploit the formal similarities between the language of the miraculous and that of cinema. The interpretative codes of these two communicative systems must contend here with a period of transition, modernization, and larger social changes. Thus, by maintaining a link with the Catholic heritage of Québec, Bernadette manages to harness and channel the severity of the trauma which accompanies this abrupt shift, ultimately expressing this shock through the representation of a violence that evokes the underlying, multifaceted and persistent effects of a colonial past.

In order to unpack the links between elements that act in favour of an alternative form of enunciation in *Bernadette*, I call upon a hybrid approach that draws significantly on semiotics. I will first evaluate the miracles portrayed in the film in relation to their correspondence to the idea

¹⁷ For a more detailed comparative study of *Bernadette* with *Butcher Boy* and the Irish context, see my chapter titled "Miracles, mythes, cinéma: *La vraie nature de Bernadette* et *The Butcher Boy*" published in *Le Québec et l'Irlande: Culture, histoire, identité*. Edited by Simon Jolivet, Linda Cardinal, Isabelle Matte. Éditions du Septentrion, pp. 166-196

¹⁸ Set in the 1960s, *The Magdalene Sisters* portrays the treatment of young women interned in Ireland's infamous Church-run Magdalen Asylums (or Magdalen Laundries), workhouses for "fallen" women.

of myth, understood as a system of communication in the manner formulated by Roland Barthes in his celebrated *Mythologies*. For Barthes, "Myth does not define itself by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters [this message]" (181). Taking this principle as a starting point, I will analyze certain miracles targeted by Carle while attempting to diagnose the traditional values carried by them. Secondly, I will call upon the notion of identification as proposed in Christian Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier* with a view to establishing points of convergence between the miraculous and the cinema as systems of signs. I thus aim to reveal how the overlap between the signifying mechanisms of the miraculous and of cinema can be exploited in order to produce a model that renders cinema indissociable from the miraculous and consequently compels the interdependence of these two modes of communication. In Bernadette, a critique of tradition is founded upon the recognition of this very same tradition, the emergence of a new hegemonic discourse potentially being obstructed by the irreverence which lies at the core of this volatile hybrid. Having thus explored the film through the lens of semiotics, my study will move to another methodological focus by considering questions of film genre and colonial legacy which subtend the sociopolitical context of the film's production. These last two variables will serve to elucidate the parallels between Québec and Ireland which Carle seeks to foreground.

Transitions

Let us first examine the way in which miracles manifest themselves in *Bernadette*. How do these phenomena reflect the Quiet Revolution as a key period in Québec history? Firstly, the protagonist of Carle's film, Bernadette Brown (whose maiden name is Bernadette Bonheur), a middle-class woman unsatisfied with urban life played by Micheline Lanctôt, leaves her lawyer

husband to start a new life for herself and her son in the countryside. Hoping to accede to the romantic rural ideal typical of 1960s counter-cultural movements, she is sorely disappointed to discover that country life is just as depraved as the city. The members of her new community (and later the media) credit her with performing two miracles: the cure of a mute orphan who cannot walk, and the return of spring water to a well that had run dry. These miracles are important for the micro-society that forms around Bernadette since they express the hopes and feelings of renewal that characterize 1960s Québec. The cured orphan, for example, suggests the power returned to youth, which verbally and physically catalyzes the spectacular changes of this decade. Similarly, the return of spring water to the well expresses the vitality that Bernadette brings to her new community. Its achievement is made possible thanks to the positive atmosphere that characterizes the commune which has become Bernadette's home and is highlighted more specifically by the reinvigorated sexual desire of a group of old male acolytes who have become her disciples.

The title, *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, foreshadows the symbolic importance of names in this film. By playfully imbuing the adjective "*vraie*" with irony, Carle highlights the consequently artificial quality of the word "*nature*," immediately evoking Bernadette's naivety towards country life and the equally naïve belief in the possibility of acting according to innate, fixed, or "natural," personality traits. Thus, Carle insists on the tension between truth and lies in order to critique essentialist conceptions of human nature and of the country itself. By combining notions of individual and territorial identity, Carle suggests a metaphoric representation of Québec identity through the character of Bernadette. Moreover, the Latin origin of the word *natura*, which signifies "the action of giving birth to," indicates that the film addresses a kind of renaissance. Metaphysically speaking, the etymology of this word suggests the embodiment of a

force that establishes the order of things,¹⁹ and thus promotes Bernadette as a Mother Nature figure cast in opposition to the established patriarchal Catholic deity. Carle, however, immediately throws doubt upon the meaning of the word "*vraie*," and thus invokes the complexity of the very idea of truth. Indeed, the humorous opening sequence of the film, during which Bernadette moves into her newly acquired country house, enables Carle to stress the diversity of signs within the film and their unreliability. A fixed shot of the beautifully upkept house fills the frame and stands in for Bernadette's point of view. However, the image turns out to be a photograph sent by the seller to Bernadette, and, as she lowers photo, it is replaced by another identically framed image of the "real" house in its actual derelict state. From the beginning of the film then, nature reveals itself to be treacherous. Moreover, the two contrasting images of the house recall the ontological connection between photography and cinema, simultaneously stressing the potential duplicity of these media, and consequently highlighting the fact that the perception of moving film images also depends on an illusion.

As a community forms around Bernadette, social changes coincide with the profanation of the miraculous. In this respect, *Bernadette* reflects a significant, indeed global, historical transition, the Second Vatican Council of 1964, which preceded the film's release by less than a decade. In his overview of the supernatural as a literary mode, Christian Chelebourg addresses the impact of Vatican II, and stresses its focus on miracles and the resurrection. According to Chelebourg, this event relativized the presence of the supernatural. Indeed, Chelebourg notes the diminution of the number of cures recognized as miraculous following Vatican II, and concludes that:

¹⁹ "Nature" in *Le Petit Robert de la langue française*. New edition. Web. Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2001. http://pr.bvdep.com/version-1/pr1.asp. Last consulted June 1st 2012.

The evolution of the theology of miracles is symptomatic of the uneasiness felt by the Church vis-à-vis phenomena the improbability of which evidently pose a problem to reason. It is interesting from the point of view of the sociology of the supernatural because it shows the efforts made to reconcile faith and developments in the knowledge of nature (104).

This awkwardness is also reflected in *Bernadette*, where a difficult social transition brings into opposition the same apparently contradictory tendencies.

The Myth of the Miraculous

An approach drawing on semiotics allows us to pinpoint the signs that structure *Bernadette* and its encroachment into the domain of the miraculous. In *Mythologies*, Barthes writes that the particularity of myth is "to transform meaning into form" (204). For him, myth is "not an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification" (181). Accordingly, Carle critiques the miraculous as myth in the way understood by Barthes. In his work, Barthes explains myth by taking Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic scheme of the sign as an interrelation between signifier and signified. Describing this interrelation as the expression of an initial semiotic chain, Barthes indicates that myth consists of a second semiotic chain acting parasitically on the first.

According to him, myth takes hold of semiotic language, whatever its form (whether oral, visual, body-language, etc.), and reduces it to a new signifier, the formal component of language. In this way, for Barthes, myth forms a "metalanguage" that grabs hold of the "object-language... to construct its own system" (187-8). Myth, which can only feed off of existing signs, seizes the sign of the initial language and empties it of its meaning while preserving its form. This form is

then filled again with the new meaning that myth apposes onto it, and thus conveys a concept bearing ideological value.

In Bernadette, the miraculous does not represent a holistic totality. This view, which Carle opposes, masks the historical dimension of the existence of Christ and the eclectic nature of his miracles. In the myth decreed by the Second Vatican Council, miracles are merged and thus reified into a single overarching phenomenon. Chelebourg summarizes that with this turn, the miracles of Christ "are no longer seen in isolation from the rest of his life; it is his whole career which is a miracle" (103). Thus, in contrast with Catholic doctrine, Carle presents a mixture of religious references that confidently invite and proliferate all the contradictions of the supernatural and of those individuals who interact with it. Bernadette's exile to the countryside satirizes the rural world and the hippy generation of the 1960s, but paradoxically, the film also attacks the idealization of rural life by the Church before the Quiet Revolution. Hence, the miracle of the spring water returning to the well not only foreshadows a new era represented by youth, but also a return to traditional origins. The comical and juvenile behaviour of the old men who court Bernadette exemplifies the absurdity of both visions, one ancestral and the other modern. This critique, which targets two opposing tendencies that share parallel features, seems founded on the association of the main protagonist, Bernadette Brown, with the simplicity of the historical Saint Bernadette Soubirous. Tellingly, Jacques Perrier, Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, draws the following portrait of Bernadette Soubirous:

Where does the currency of Bernadette come from? From her position as an outsider. She accumulates disadvantages: economic, educational, medical. The future seems blocked for the Soubirous. That is why young people recognize

themselves so easily in her, without perhaps realizing how much their situation is different from hers (9).

Yet, Bernadette Brown exhibits characteristics opposite to those described above. She is educated, urban and affluent. Though she is Francophone, her Anglophone married name "Brown" contrasts with her maiden name "Bonheur." This symbolism links her to a historically, politically and economically dominant group in Québec. However, when she leaves Montreal for the countryside, Bernadette's behaviour recalls Perrier's description of the naive identification with Bernadette Soubirous felt by young people. Bernadette is attracted to the simplicity of the countryside and even expresses the intention not to teach her son to read or count. Nevertheless, in spite of her nominal association with Bernadette Soubirous and her blue shawl, which visually evokes the Holy Virgin, Carle's character resembles Jesus Christ in the actions she takes. The miracles that arise during the film are not limited to passively witnessed apparitions. They are attributed to Bernadette's actions in conjunction with the small group of followers that forms around her. Carle's universe therefore offers a heterogeneous and inclusive vision of the miraculous. The film superimposes inconsistent religious references and supernatural phenomena like those told in the Gospels or in the stories of Bernadette Soubirous (F. Bouchard 119, 123), including cures and miracles linked to the forces of nature.

While the myth of Christ's life, sanctioned by doctrine, empties his existence of its historical meaning and iconoclastic power, Carle recuperates these qualities via the character of Bernadette as his intermediary, a character revealed as equally predisposed to defy social norms. Bernadette acts unconventionally through her interest in vegetarianism, free love, community as the family unit, the therapeutic application of fantasy, and an apparently contradictory mixture of

all these and other modes of living, including violence as a catalyst for social change.²⁰ Further, a scene during which Bernadette teaches biology to her son Yannick (Yannick Therrien), using fruit suspended to a tree on bits of string, recalls the New Testament parables in its creative didacticism. Like Jesus, Bernadette welcomes the most marginalized characters without judgement, most notably Madeleine (Claudette Delorimier), a single mother reduced to prostitution, whose disabled son Gilles (Gilles Lajoie), also nicknamed Napoléon, ostensibly benefits from Bernadette's "miraculous" cures.

Identification with the Thaumaturge

In order to counter the mythification of the Holy Virgin's image and the life of Christ, Carle illustrates the similarities between cinema and the miraculous, which, along with the historical conjuncture, enable such an appropriation. Among the several common aspects shared by cinema and the miraculous as communicative codes, one particular facet dominates their function: faith. Indeed, several theological explanations of the miraculous foreground the centrality of faith in its realization. Jean-Louis Souletie, for example, highlights the importance of this concept, which goes back to the critique of Saint Thomas Aquinas for whom "the miracle signifies nothing outside the life and the message of faith to which it is tethered" (29). Souletie adds that one cannot ever know the object of faith – Christ's resurrection – without faith. A person who seeks to understand resurrection objectively, as a historian might, without believing in it, would actually be "an unbeliever who does not want to recognize and inhabit this world as well as the world of God as preached by Jesus" (Souletie 31).

²⁰ Bernadette's violence recalls the story of the purification of the temple and anticipates the adaptation of this same biblical episode in *Jésus de Montréal* (Denys Arcand, 1989).

Likewise, cinema depends on the participation of the spectator in the cinematic illusion, which, though of a different order than the faith displayed by the believer in the miraculous, is no less necessary for its functioning. In his famous book on the semiotics of cinema, *The Imaginary Signifier*, Christian Metz highlights that in cinema:

It is understood that the public is not duped by the diegetic illusion, that it "knows" that the screen presents nothing other than a fiction. Nevertheless, it is of the utmost importance, for the proper unfolding of the spectacle that this pretense be scrupulously observed [...] Any spectator will object that they "do not believe it," but everything happens as if there was nonetheless someone to fool, someone who would really "believe it." (I would say that behind every fiction, there is a second one: the diegetic events are fictitious, that is the first fiction; but everyone pretends to believe them to be true, and that is the second fiction; we even find a third one: the general refusal to admit that, somewhere within oneself, one believes them to be really real) (98-99).

Metz explains that the spectator must accept the apparent contradiction between the presence of images projected, which simultaneously denote the absence of those very same objects in reality. In the case of miracles, the believer, excluding the thaumaturge, or person who performs the miracle, must also accept that the miraculous event is only accessible to them indirectly. However, miracles remain continuous and omnipresent through the ongoing benefits of their effects. In the case of cinema, Metz postulates that two types of identification exist, including one which he labels "primary cinematic identification" (79). This is the identification with the camera that Richard Rushton, in his analysis of Metz's thought, summarizes thus: "an identification with the process by which the camera makes a cinematic universe available to the

spectator" (270). According to Metz, the spectator identifies with the camera not only by receiving the projected images that he or she perceives, but also by acting towards these images through the "projection" of his or her imaginary in the production of meaning (Metz 72). In a manner that is not identical, and yet comparable, the miracle, which Souletie describes as "the concrete sign of invisible realities" (21), also depends on the active participation of a "spectator" who, through faith and by identifying with the thaumaturge, enables its visualization.



Figure 15: In a crucifixion-like stance, Bernadette moves the flowers like semaphore flags.

La vraie nature de Bernadette (Gilles Carle, 1972).

New Signs of the Miraculous

In Bernadette, the primary identification with the camera is amplified by a sustained secondary identification with the character of the thaumaturge, who intervenes to bring about the miracle. This character facilitates the appropriation of the semiotic system of the miraculous. In this film, miracles remain implicit and are directly connected to Bernadette's actions and to her entourage, thus distinguishing her as the thaumaturge. Moreover, Carle imbues certain words, notably surnames, with a polysemy that coincides with the plurivocal qualities of *Bernadette*. Indeed, surnames possess significant meaning in Carle's oeuvre and such a narrative strategy is consistent with this filmmaker's work as a whole. In this film, linguistic signs such as surnames add themselves to the iconography and thus play an important role in the narrative context, enriching the meaning of the supernatural and amplifying its power of suggestion. As such, Bernadette allies visual, narrative and verbal signs in quite an eclectic manner. Thus, the return of spring water to a dried out well and the healing of Gilles/Napoléon, Madeleine's disabled and mute child, are connected to the influence of Bernadette. Meanwhile, the relationship between actions and miracles complement the iconic capacities of the cinematic medium. The complementarity of the different types of signs is foregrounded during a lyrical and structuring montage sequence. Eloquently, this sequence begins with Bernadette holding dandelions with her arms extended out. As she moves the flowers like semaphore flags, her movements make the fluffy white seeds float off in the wind. The motion of her arms alludes to a gesture-based communication code that remains undecipherable, yet multiplies the signifying possibilities. Bernadette's crucifixion-like stance combines with the notion of fecundity carried by the seeds and is followed by a succession of images accompanied by angelic music. At the culminating point of this moment, the miraculous water springs from the forces of nature, a direct result, it

seems, of the harmony that reigns at the heart of Bernadette's community. Each member is called by name to witness the miracle and the group gathers around the well to marvel at the singular occurrence. In spite of the emphasis placed on the group, the miracle depends on the action of one Messianic figure, Bernadette herself. Indeed, during this series of images, one of the old men kneels painfully before her. Faith thus appears to play a crucial role in the realization of the miracle as "doubt," personified by the main male protagonist of (Saint) Thomas (Daniel Pilon), who puts an abrupt end to the sequence. Thomas matter-of-factly euthanizes Misère noire, his own father's sick old horse, by shooting the beast dead. This act evidently foreshadows the final execution of Rock (Reynald Bouchard), Bernadette's young disabled lover, but also designates Thomas's attempt to make a break with the past. The past he rejects opposes the free-spirited spiritual continuity represented by Bernadette and the regressive behaviour of the old men who form a group of disciples around her. Thomas's unemotional, pragmatic, perhaps even brutal killing of Misère noire symbolically puts to rest Québec's Duplessis era, ²¹ but also reveals a troubling ableism and an intransigent exigency towards physical perfection at play within the emergent regime. In this respect, it is significant that it is Thomas who finally recovers and carries Rock's body in his arms at the end of the film, thus signalling a redemption of sorts, and an acceptance of the pluralities this character had previously rejected.

Let us briefly consider the miracle cure of Napoléon, the boy whose real name is Gilles.

The son of Madeleine, a woman who was abused and now works as a prostitute, Napoléon/Gilles

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²¹ The state associated with the *Union nationale* government of Maurice Duplessis (1936-9 et 1944-59) was, according to Linteau, Durocher, Robert and Ricard "both the embodiment and defender of traditional nationalism." These authors also highlight that Duplessis "fiercely defended provincial autonomy," "created an official flag for Québec," "repressed militant trade unionism," "denounced reformist intellectuals," and "refused to begin controlling the Church's presence in the education and health systems." The authors also note that the link between this ideology, from an economic point of view, and "an old-school liberalism, still attached to the principles of laisserfaire and opposed to all forms of state intervention." See: P.-A. Linteau, R. Durocher, J.-C. Robert and F. Ricard, p. 348.

is abandoned by his mother and entrusted to Bernadette. Medical specialists in Montreal have confirmed that he will never walk. Following a scene during which Bernadette loses patience with her disciples for their lack of comprehension and refusal to adhere to the simple values that she tries to convey to them, Napoléon/Gilles responds to Bernadette's passionate sermon. He stands up and begins to talk when she commands him to do so. Once again, the miracle attributed to Bernadette presents itself as a sign engendered not only by the thaumaturge's commandment, but also by the active faith of the recipient. However, Bernadette's "miracles" are rapidly transformed into myth by adherents forming a cult around her. Given their shared first name, the plural and enigmatic identity of Napoléon/Gilles suggests a connection to (Gilles) Carle's own personal critical reflection. The sobriquet Napoléon treats French military ambitions with irony, an attitude that can perhaps be extended to the failed imperial dreams of Francophones in North America. And since it is presumed that Gilles/Napoléon is Thomas's son, Carle betrays a fragile filiation between his own reflection and that of Thomas, as a fundamentally sceptical character who complements the empathy aroused for Bernadette.

Through their protean and polysemic capacity, surnames in *Bernadette* enable the manipulation of female archetypes and the values attached to them throughout the film. Indeed, just as Bernadette's given name allows sardonic comparisons with the miracles of Lourdes, her surname adds telling interpretive clues that no doubt extend beyond the director's conscious intentions, and yet remain coherent with the work's overall meaning. At the beginning of the film, Bernadette Brown renounces her married name as she exiles herself from Montreal, going back to her maiden name, Bernadette Bonheur. Also at the very start, the film stresses the name of "Maître Georges Brown," which is later repeated at various intervals though this character never appears onscreen. Given the importance attributed to names, the stress placed on the

identity of Bernadette's absent husband evokes the historical figure of Anglophone Canadian politician George Brown, one of the fathers of the Canadian Confederation, who campaigned to separate Church and State in the 19th century, and became known for his opposition to French-Canadian Catholicism (Careless). Although the link may be accidental, Carle's cinema systematically and enthusiastically encourages the proliferation of meaning, and thus welcomes unintentional connotations. Thus, Bernadette's divorce, among its multiple potential significations and the double-meaning of the word "maître," both as an honorific for lawyers and as the common French word for "master," may suggest the rupture between Québec and the Canadian Confederation which rules over it. At the same time, the family name Brown positively affirms Québec's diverse legacies and the enrichment of its heritage, highlighting Anglophone Québec's cultural contribution represented by the surname.²²

Bernadette returns to her identity as a married woman when she feels the most pressure from the public at large, who sees her rather as a reincarnation of Bernadette Soubirous.

Intimidated by this responsibility, she declares: "I am not Bernadette Soubirous. I am Bernadette Brown." This temporary refuge in her married name betrays a fear of change, and the difficulty of fully undertaking both conjugal and national independence as an act of liberation. Though she is unable to deny that an utter change has taken place, Bernadette cannot return to her prior union with George(s) Brown. There is no going back. Bernadette must now forge a new identity for herself, which is neither the one she had before her marriage, nor her married identity. This development reflects Québec's own, unable to find happiness within Canadian federalism, but equally unable to return to its pre-conquest origins. The following comments by Christian Poirier

²² The surname "Brown" reappears in the work of Gilles Carle. It is held notably by the ecologist character "Euclide Brown" in *Fantastica* (1980).

about the work of Gilles Carle allow us to highlight his specificity within the identity-shaping narrative of Québec cinema:

The other narrative of identity, the new narrative, takes its source in the cinema of Gilles Carle. Having gone searching for the essence of a lost Québécois identity to be recovered (to be re-founded after the failures of the conquest and of the rebellions of 1837-1838) during the 1960s, G. Carle and a few other filmmakers quickly realise that this essence is absent (278).

According to Poirier, Carle's oeuvre is at the origin of an alternative conception of identity in Québec cinema. Imbued with humour rather than relentlessly tragic, it is somewhat anarchic and accepting of the ambiguities inherent to Quebecers' position as both Francophone and North American. Carle refuses to define a Québécois identity that is anchored in the past. He advocates for an alternative that can be perpetually reborn, and rejects all possibility of a Québécois essence, of *la québécité*. ²³ By usurping *la québécité*, Carle mythifies myth itself. He "produces an *artificial myth*" that contributes to the elaboration of a "true mythology," as Barthes writes (209).

Genre and Nation

In *Film/Genre*, Rick Altman shows that the concept of genre and that of the nation are processes that, far from disappearing, integrate themselves to change. Thus, "Nations, like genres, are born through a process that does not disappear with that birth. The imagining of community, like the genrification process, always operates dialectically, through the transformation of an already

²³ *Québécité* is used here in the sense of the Barthesian neologism, which indicates the concept signified by the myth. See: Barthes pp.193-194.

existing community/genre" (203).²⁴ Indeed, *Bernadette*, described sometimes as "a religious western," corresponds to a transitional moment in society. The multitude of symbols in the film, without always supplying a satisfying through-line or thematic vector, also indicates the diversity and complexity of factors involved in a moment of transition, and the need to adapt one's mode of communication constitutes both a catalyst and a consequence of this situation. Thus, instead of proposing a film that displays an abrupt fracture with Québec's Catholic heritage, Carle incorporates certain genre devices from the Hollywood western into the traditional themes of 1940s-50s Québec cinema, a corpus that conveys a heavy religious morality. In addition, Québec is strongly influenced by Hollywood due to the dissemination of American films in this region from the beginning of the 20th century. Carle proposes an adaptation of this model by developing a mode of cinematic communication that corresponds efficiently to Québec and which Quebecers can readily accept because of their cultural habits.

Not limited in any to an unconditional homage of the western, *Bernadette* hybridizes this genre to incorporate a through-line based on religion that also serves to severely critique both these fascinations. The two characters most clearly associated with the western, St-Marc and St-Luc, turn out to be violent bandits who infiltrate Bernadette's home. Their names written out on the back of their leather jackets blatantly mock their evangelist namesakes and clearly associate the Church with aggression. Similarly, Carle evokes colonialism through a reference to Indigenous peoples as the obvious recurrent target of racist stereotypes in the Hollywood western. When Bernadette insists that her cows be inseminated naturally, the bull she selects refuses to mate despite (or because of) the loud encouragements of Bernadette and her entourage from the sidelines. Desperate, she asks Thomas what the bull's name is in order to personalize

²⁴ Altman argues that, for genres and for nations, change in the community principally occurs via the combination of prior genre/national models. See Altman, p. 203.

her exhortations. Thomas, surprised at the thought of giving a name to a farm animal, respond caustically that he is called "Sitting Bull," an allusion to colonial attempts to dehumanize, invisibilize and disempower Indigenous cultures and peoples. The evocation of this sentiment regarding Indigenous peoples, in the Québec context and in parallel with Bernadette and Thomas' efforts to resist the duplicity of capitalist hegemony and found an alternative society, echoes the contradiction signified previously by the character of Gilles/Napoléon. This character's nickname not only ridicules French imperialism, but also complexifies the notion of a national struggle inspired by decolonization movements. By creating dissonance in terms of signs and thus risking interpretative coherence, Carle examines the paradoxical realities of Québec society and history (Leach 161-3). First as a colonizer, then subjected to the British regime, according to Carle's critique, this society evolves finally towards an economic system that revives and perpetuates prior colonial models, and thus betrays the idealistic promises of the Quiet Revolution.

In the postcolonial context evoked by the film, a cathartic violence closes the narrative. Bernadette's final reaction recalls Frantz Fanon who writes that violence "detoxifies" the individual and "rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their contemplative or desperate attitudes." Still referring to violence, Fanon adds: "It renders [the colonized] intrepid, rehabilitates them in their own eyes" (90). In *Bernadette*, this corresponds to an anger that evokes the October Crisis and other political models, including those of feminism, Black America and Ireland. The film's heroine rejects the reform of the Quiet Revolution and opts for an unequivocally revolutionary attitude. In the last scenes of the film, Bernadette, disgusted at the corruption of her ideals by her own followers, takes up arms to contest. She fires into a crowd that is hostile to the protest that her friend Thomas has organized to raise awareness about

economic problems in rural areas. At this moment, the film soundtrack, via a diegetic radio announcement, refers to Angela Davis's struggle in the United States and to the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry. These references imply a paradigmatic relationship between the claims of the Québec people, African Americans, and of the nationalist community of Northern Ireland, in close connection with the women's rights movement. In the last moments of the film, the main protagonist adopts a new identity model, once again suggested by her given name, Bernadette, that of the Northern Irish activist Bernadette Devlin who, along with Ireland itself, served as the initial inspiration for the film (Bourque 31). However, by shooting at the national group that she ostensibly represents, Bernadette reveals her ambiguous relationship with this people. Carle does not renounce the revolutionary impetus of the October Crisis, but instead challenges the ambivalent engagement of Quebecers through a comparison with the aforementioned global models of resistance. Bearing in mind the French imperialism intimated earlier and the underhanded capitalist aims marring Québec's past, present and future denounced by Bernadette, Carle encourages a collective self-critique that tends to nuance the influence of theories of decolonization popular in 1960s and 1970s Québec and their capacity to enable Quebecers to fully seize the contradictions and multiplicities of their own geopolitical reality. Ultimately, Bernadette seems to affirm that "the miracles" called for by the Québec people will need to be accomplished collectively and not through dependence on a Messianic thaumaturge.

The link that Altman traces between the way the concepts of genre and of nation evolve can therefore be likened to a supplanting of the miraculous by cinema in Québec. Carle outlines a novel path for Québec national cinema, one that complements open resistance to pre-existing religious hegemony. In this film, a negation paradoxically accompanies an appropriation, and is

followed by the logical continuity of a mode of cultural communication. Ultimately, this contradiction is foregrounded by the eventual gravity of the protagonist's final acts.

Conclusion

Bernadette rings the death-knell of dominant Catholic tradition. Not only through subversive irony, but because it appropriates the very function of the miraculous - the will to believe. Bernadette's final attack against the pilgrims who have come to implore her displays a revolt against a collective blindness before all forms of institutional religion. Consequently, Bernadette appears to be a profoundly anti-religious film. However, the filmmaker leaves us guessing about the supernatural aspect of the "miracles" performed by Bernadette, which remain unexplained. Rather, Carle takes issue with the fetishization of the supernatural. By encouraging an identification with the thaumaturge and a consequent participation in the realization of her miracles, Carle violently turns her influence against her own society, thus resisting Messianism, and instead puts emphasis on the necessity of acting as a group. The favourable portrayal of Thomas, with whom Bernadette aligns herself in the end, suggests the need to find a balance between faith and scepticism.

Bernadette, a culturally important and yet popular film, conveys a trenchant critique of institutionalized religion, while maintaining a link to it nonetheless, and argues for the inevitability of having to build new traditions based on older ones. In this film, the language of the miraculous evolves toward the elaboration of a specific articulation of a distinct national film language that is yet composed of elements from other semiotic systems. In this way, this national cinema becomes an ascendant marker of identity, which stems surprisingly from the language of the religious supernatural, a myth that it mythifies in turn by acting parasitically upon it. For

Carle, who leaves open the possibility of some other form of belief, this new faith draws its origins from the environmental and social "miracles" that supplant orthodox doctrines.

Nevertheless, he refrains from a complete rupture with the Church by admitting historical, cultural and spiritual links with this entity. Carle seeks to re-appropriate the life of the thaumaturge as a point of focus for an identity that represents a series of, sometimes contradictory, lived and interconnected events, and highlights the importance of participation in the accomplishment of the miraculous.

The ambiguous ending of *Bernadette* signals the necessity of taking one's destiny into one's own hands by refusing dependence on the miraculous. Bernadette's refusal to "cure" Rock's disabled leg anticipates her incapacity to miraculously resurrect him when he is killed. There is therefore no narrative miracle, no *deus ex machina*, that comes to resolve the multiple paths adopted by Carle. *Bernadette* admits its incapacity to completely overthrow the fixity promoted by the previous code of communication that depended on archetypal signs. Confronted by this impasse, Carle opts for a redefinition of the semiotic language that enables an incomplete self-critique and an incomplete redefinition of identity. Thus, he manages to reflect the limits and the obstacles that characterize this pivotal historical moment while seeking simultaneously to establish an open mode of communication that can contest its own shortcomings and echo the changes which subtend a given historical context.

Section 2: Photography, the Archive and Griffintown

Foreword: A French-language version of material from the following section was presented at another interdisciplinary colloquium on Québec and Ireland held as part of the Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS) conference at Bishop's University in May 2011. After subsequent revisions, this work was later presented to an English-speaking audience at the Canadian Association of Irish Studies (CAIS) held at Concordia in 2011. Sharing the CAIS panel with me was Jerry White (Dalhousie University), with whom I have enjoyed ongoing discussions on the topic of Québec, Irish and Indigenous film cultures. These conversations have informed this and other sections of the present thesis.

A hybrid fiction and documentary film, Albédo (Albedo, Jacques Leduc, Renée Roy, 1982) recounts the story and degradation of the Montreal neighbourhood of Griffintown through the photographs and diary of one of its inhabitants, the photographer and archivist David Wallace Marvin. Suffering from isolation as a result of his deafness, Marvin committed suicide in June 1975. This person's tragic story acts as a narrative through-line for the film and traces a parallel with this Irish quarter, also left to its regrettable decline. Since photography and cinema in and of themselves constitute forms of archival practice that permit a correspondence between the past and the present, the study of Albédo provides an opportunity to contribute to a new stage in this dialectical process initiated by the work of Marvin, and pursued by Albédo itself. Here, the archival mechanism takes on a haunting personal dimension while preserving a particular trace of history. An investigation of Leduc's film through an approach based on the archive offers insights into the history of Griffintown, which, despite effacement as a result of industrialization, remains emblematic of the identity and memory of an important Irish-Ouébécois community.

Introduction

In her study of the urban archive, anthropologist Vyjayanthi Rao asserts that "[a]s an evident, material archive, the built environment of the city reveals as much as it conceals about the political and historical processes to which cities are subjected through time" (377). In this respect, the 1982 film *Albédo* by Jacques Leduc and Renée Roy constitutes a unique means of viewing Montreal's historic Irish working-class district of Griffintown, and provides a valuable example of the manner in which the evolving archival character of the city can be accessed cinematically. Deploying the work of an earlier observer of Griffintown, the photographer and archivist David Wallace Marvin, *Albédo* engages in archival film practice, assembling and presenting Marvin's oeuvre, while employing the information provided by Marvin's observations of the city as a tool to "read" this urban area and its history, and to comment politically on its emblematic nature. Through this process, the film uncovers the allegorical potential of Griffintown as a particular expression of Québécois collective memory.



Figure 16: Jean-Pierre Saulnier as Griffintown flâneur David Marvin.

Albédo (Jacques Leduc and Renée Roy, 1982).

Albédo recounts Marvin's life and his connection to Griffintown, where he lived, based on his own photographs and writings, which retrace the history and document the transformation of the neighbourhood. The film is composed of several elements that complicate its categorization as either fiction or documentary and leave its relation to reality ambiguous. A series of dramatized and highly stylized scenes without dialogue, beginning with a depiction of Marvin's suicide in June 1975, form the narrative vector alongside a voice-over narration cited from Marvin's writings. Inserts of Marvin's own photographs of the district, older archival images and footage, and contemporary scenes of the area shot specifically for the film supplement the main narrative. In addition, this main storyline is interwoven with a sub-plot following a young couple, who, on the surface, bear no connection to Marvin's tale.

Marvin as Flâneur and Archivist

The first and most telling effect generated by the film's structure is an impression of the filmmakers' collaboration with Marvin. Indeed, the film's basis in Marvin's experiences and photographs, which conveys this sense of co-authorship, is accentuated by the use of voice-over narration, and emerges as the fundamental means enabling the film to explore the city as an archive through the person of Marvin himself. Alienated from society because of his deafness, Marvin's disability guides him towards two significant occupations. Firstly, he compensates for his inability to hear by developing an affinity for photography and wanders through Griffintown capturing its changing urban landscape. In addition, Marvin finds employment as an archivist, which further stimulates and feeds into his interest in the history of the neighbourhood. Marvin's alienation, his function as a photographer, and his allegorical connection to Griffintown liken him somewhat to the figure of the *flâneur*. As Susan Sontag declares in *On Photography*, "The

photographer is an armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitering, stalking, cruising the urban inferno, the voyeuristic stroller who discovers the city as a landscape of voluptuous extremes. Adept of the joys of watching, connoisseur of empathy, the *flâneur* finds the world 'picturesque'" (55). Marvin's wanderings are intimately connected to a second important activity, his eventual employment as an archivist. He muses, "I had for years paced along the streets of Griffintown. It was inevitable that they would lead me here." This work, one of the few satisfying professions accessible to him, complements his roaming photography and engages him in what he calls "a conversation with all these crumbly textured old papers that I had come to know by heart." Thus, the film's dialectical relationship with the past is established, as is Marvin's explicit allegorical link to the fate of the district, whose changes he witnesses, comments on, and suffers personally.

Stating that his own story resembles that of Griffintown, Marvin ambiguously adds that it begins with the birth of Montreal in 1642. At this point, the insertion of archival documentary footage of a human birth, and the ambiguous framing of the pronoun "it," which may refer either to Marvin's own personal history or to that of Griffintown itself, allows the film to link both of these pasts to that of Montreal, and metonymically, to Québec history as a whole. David Harvey's interpretation of the *flâneur* in *Paris: Capital of Modernity*, which analyzes Balzac's conception of this figure, enables us to better understand Marvin's resemblance to this model and his attempt in *Albédo* to lay bare superficial and exploitative views of Griffintown (54). Harvey contends that "Balzac's *flâneur* is more than an aesthete, wandering observer, he is also purposive, seeking to unravel the mysteries of social relations and of the city, seeking to penetrate the fetish" (56). This is also true of the film's depiction of Marvin, whose

purposiveness, however, is crushed as he falls into unemployment, hardship and depression, mirroring the neighbourhood's own decline.

By means of his archival research and photography, Marvin fulfills the role Harvey attributes to Balzac's *flâneur*, who "maps the city's terrain and evokes its living qualities." As Harvey elaborates, through this *flâneur*'s action, the city is rendered legible and perceived as a sentient being (56). Marvin's photography, which often features graffitied buildings and objects, literally enables us to seek meaning by "reading" the city. Furthermore, his own understanding of Griffintown as a sentient being extends to a view of the city as a living, but ailing body in his physical descriptions of the landscape. For example, Marvin portrays the railway built in 1847 as "a scar" to the north of Griffintown, and refers to the neighbourhood being ruthlessly divided by a new road as "an amputation." These references foreshadow later inserts of footage showing an ear operation, thus linking the dissection of Marvin's own body, and his disability, with that of the city. Richard Martineau's analysis of the film corroborates the idea of the city's anthropomorphism in *Albédo*, affirming that Leduc has "made the city into a character... [and] made characters into a context" (40).

Griffintown as Metonym

While mobilizing Marvin through his intimate association with the city, the film simultaneously rescues his photographic, literary and historical contributions, itself becoming an archive of Marvin's work and perpetuating dialectical possibilities between the different moments in time engendered through these interactions with Griffintown. Inserting archival images of historical maps of Montreal, *Albédo* sets up the cinematic dialogue between past and present on the subject of one of the film's dominant themes, the struggle of the working-class population of

Griffintown. Marvin evokes Jeanne Mance's acquisition of the fief Nazareth, or what came to be known as Griffintown, as compensation for the misuse of her funds intended for setting up the city's first hospital. At the same time, static, drawn or statuesque images of this benevolent figure are suddenly intercut with successive fast-moving tracking shots of various modern-day banking franchises. Thus, the film suggests the continuity of economic abuses inflicted upon this district up to the present. This montage culminates with the first insertion of one of Marvin's own photographs, perhaps his most well-known. This photograph depicts an unattractive wall with graffiti that reads: "Nous sommes les citoyens du Griffintown." As well as asserting Griffintown's status as an area with its own distinct urban identity, this image foregrounds the working-class affinity that existed between Francophone Quebecers and English-speaking Irish immigrants despite intermittent periods of competition between these groups.

Addressing Marvin's story to their own present, the filmmakers interweave the narrative with another, contemporary scenario, that of a couple, shot in documentary style, whose meanderings and discussions place them as counterparts to Marvin. The first line repeated by the woman (Paule Baillargeon) establishes the optimism conveyed by the lovers. She declares: "we are the living and sunlit elements of..." cutting off her sentence before naming the larger whole of which they are a part. This lack of definition suggests a fluid sense of belonging, and is consistent with the film's title *Albédo*, alluding to the amount of sunlight refracted from a given surface such as a district, city, nation, or the entire world. Repeating the mantric phrase again later, the woman accidentally substitutes the word *éléments* for *enfants*, a slip, which is noted and discussed with her lover (Pierre Foglia). They instinctively interpret the slip as referring to the children of Québec. These recurring attempts at metonymy situate the couple as positive inheritors of Marvin's relationship with Griffintown as well as the district's microcosmic

relationship to Montreal and to Québec more generally. Indeed, their presence offers a narrative supplement to the main plot's existing dialectical engagement with the moment represented by Marvin's photographs and writings. These two worlds converge at the end of the film when the couple wanders into a photograph exhibition at Galerie Optica, where Marvin's work was exposed posthumously, thus concretizing their link with the photographer through the concept of Albedo. The exhibition's white walls reflect a maximum amount of light onto the couple, an image further emphasized by the sun's rays penetrating the locale. In this way, their own and Marvin's historical moment are connected to each other and to Griffintown's more distant past through geographical setting, photography and their directionless meandering. Indeed, Walter Benjamin's understanding of *flânerie* also suggests this very potential for connections across epochs. He states: "we know that, in the course of flânerie, far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the present moment" ("Arcades Project" 419).



Figure 17: Paule Baillargeon and Pierre Foglia as Marvin's meandering counterparts.

Albédo (Jacques Leduc and Renée Roy, 1982).

Acting in this way as a link to Marvin and therefore also to the more distant past of Griffintown, the couple enables *Albédo* to evoke symbols and traces of the history of working-class experience in the district. Most notably, as the couple looks down onto the Lachine Canal, the man enigmatically expresses his dislike for water. This comment is associated with inserts of illustrations depicting Irish famine migrants' arrival in Montreal, stock footage of an immigrant

vessel and photographs of present-day streets of the area. Marvin's narration explains the construction of the factories, canal, port facilities, railway and Victoria Bridge by Irish migrant workers and highlights 1843 as the year Irish canal labourers went on strike, marking the start of a worker's movement, while Leduc's camera slowly pushes forward over the frozen canal. More drawings and photographs inserted later in the film similarly depict the devastation caused by water as spring regularly brought floods to Griffintown. Marvin's text also comments on the numerous factories established in the area because of the twin advantages of its proximity to the canal and its large pool of cheap labour. As he denounces the fact that many fortunes were built on the backs of these workers, the camera tracks quickly across a series of opulent Westmount homes on the hilltop away from the flooded lower city, safe from dangers associated with the destructive power of water.

These and other juxtapositions perform a task similar to what Catherine Russell sees as a possible function of found-footage filmmaking, which differentiates it from the codes of narrative and documentary cinema. She observes that "[b]y means of juxtaposition, fragmentation, and interruption, the archival film brings past, present, and future into a new nonlinear temporality" (264). Elements of archival film practice that distinguish *Albédo* from the cinematic categories of documentary and narrative fiction enable it to achieve this sense of nonlinear time. The film also exposes the wider resonance of Marvin's photographs and of other images employed in the film through an experimental approach that uses formal hybridization to highlight working-class Quebecers' everyday attempts to escape poverty. Thus, combined with its resistance to linear temporality, the effect of this hybridization maximizes the allegorical potential and range of the city as an archive.

A Fantasized Irish-Québécois Space?

Québec film scholar Michel Larouche characterizes *Albédo* as "a deconstruction of the dominant history that systematically ignores minority signs of the past." Larouche extends his analysis to equate Marvin's deafness with the deafness of history, and *Albédo* as depicting a "marginalized Montreal" (137). In spite of this marginalization, Griffintown has displayed remarkable endurance as an emblem of Montreal's Irish community. Matthew Barlow points out Griffintown's importance as an Irish-Catholic neighbourhood:

Griffintown was both the first and the last of Montreal's Irish neighbourhoods. It was central to the forging of an Irish-Catholic identity in Montreal in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a process that continued into the early twenty-first century. The identity was, in turn, based on the extensive memory work carried out, not by the elite of Irish-Catholic Montreal, but by the rank and file of the population, including Griffintown's working classes ("Griffintown" 11).

Accompanying this process, Barlow identifies the presence of a certain romanticizing of Griffintown despite its difficult past ("House of the Irish" 243). In contrast to this tendency, *Albédo* underscores the extension of the emblematic relationship between Griffintown and the Irish community to a wider association with Québécois working-class identity. The haunting photography of David Marvin, by scrutinizing the urban landscape of Griffintown, reveals not only the common plight of its English and French-speaking inhabitants (not to mention other linguistic and cultural groups), but also the source of their misery in commercial exploitation and detachment.

Exemplary of Marvin's sardonic sense of despair, a photograph of a graffitied wall with the defiant slogan "Québec Libre" is framed pathetically alongside a cheap hotdog stand. The

film effectively utilizes the irony emanating from Marvin's photographs, making a point of showing the pitiful state of the derelict houses and abandoned cars covered in blasphemous and irreverent graffiti. The retrieval of Marvin's personality and of his written and photographic insights expresses a resigned, bitter and ironic tone brought into play through a series of inserts of his work. In this way, *Albédo* eerily reanimates the demise of the district and of Marvin himself.

Section 3: Faith and Québec's Catholic Legacy in La neuvaine

Foreword: Material appearing in this section was first presented publicly at the Concordia Department of Religion Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference in March 2015. The tension between a secular view of nationhood and adherence to cultural traditions inevitably aligned to a specific set of religious beliefs continues to resurface as a topic of importance in Québec. This section takes one of Québec's most important contemporary filmmakers as a point of departure to explore the convergence of intergenerational expressions of Catholic tradition and underlying formal patterns. It thus seeks to examine the points of tension that underpin the cinematic representation of apparently irreconcilable perspectives. Émond's thesis on the loss of religious models in La neuvaine suggests itself as a conduit to retrace antecedent interventions bearing upon Québec's religious legacy and engagements with the supernatural. This section therefore stresses the oral components of La neuvaine, and attempts to elucidate the supernatural form of their expression.

Introduction

The first film in Bernard Émond's theological trilogy, *La neuvaine* (2005), explicitly foregrounds faith as its central theme,²⁵ bringing to light the tension between the everyday and the supernatural, and addressing the spiritual trajectory of Québec society, shaped historically by rigid Catholicism, and then marked by the rapid secularization of the Quiet Revolution. With *La neuvaine*, Émond endeavours to overcome modern estrangement from Québec's religious legacies, while following Québec cinema's tendency to remain within the bounds of realism. In

²⁵ Émond's next two films *Contre toute espérance* (*Summit Circle*, 2007) and *La donation* (*The Legacy*, 2009) address the themes of the other two theological virtues, hope and charity.

this respect, *La neuvaine* falls into line with a number of precursor texts, which, to varying degrees, allude to the miraculous without wholeheartedly depicting it.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, Lacasse has argued that Ouébec cinema is characterized by an orality dating back to the silent era, which is epitomized and personified by the bonimenteur of early cinema spectacle. For Lacasse, traces of "oral practices" endure up to the present day, and manifest themselves in all stages of Québec film history ("Du cinéma oral" 8, 11; "L'accent aigu" 48, 50, 56). However, just as many films drawing on Québec's Catholic legacy imply the presence of the supernatural while shunning its explicit treatment, Québec's ostensibly oral cinema has, until more recently, also largely occluded supernatural motifs, which are nonetheless foregrounded in the 19th century oral storytelling tradition that precedes it. Although the main plot of *La neuvaine* does not especially bear salient marks of orality, the film's framing device reveals an oral mechanism preoccupied not only with religious cultural heritage, but also with spiritual principles accessible only through faith. Within this framework, the main protagonist attempts to address the supernatural indirectly and expresses this endeavour in an oral commentary which modulates the main narrative. As such, the current section stresses the framing oral components of *La neuvaine*, and explores how these mechanisms function to filter meaning through faith. Thus, I argue that the compounded functions of orality and the supernatural enable *La neuvaine* to create a link that successfully brings attention to, but only temporarily alleviates, intergenerational problematics giving rise to anxieties about Québec national identity.

La neuvaine transposes its seemingly oxymoronic commitment to both cinematic realism and faith in the supernatural to an opposition between the film's main characters, a strategy which also parallels other important dichotomies in the film. Jeanne Dion (Élise Guilbault), a

middle-aged, middle-class, city-dwelling doctor is the film's central character, but the film is structured in a way that evenly counterbalances her actions with those of a second main protagonist, François Garon (Patrick Drolet), a young, simple man, living in a rural community with his ailing grandmother (Denise Gagnon). In fact, modifications at the editing stage resulted in a slightly greater emphasis on Jeanne's plot, but Émond's original script was built around the principle that these characters' two stories would share equal importance (68). An aspiration towards symmetry thus reflects the director's attempt to confront irreconcilable themes by treating their representatives as counterparts. Likewise, a structural dichotomy opposes the film's oral framework and the main narrative. This formal division intersects with the faith-atheism polarity through an encounter between Jeanne and a priest to whom she relates her tale in an audio flashback. Ostensibly, the priest stands in for François' religious perspective and signals Jeanne's eventual acceptance of the validity of spiritual beliefs. At the same time, the conversation between Jeanne and the priest frames the entire plot of the film and the oral emphasis of this exchange evokes a confession, thereby minimizing visual and physical contact. This oral framework contrasts with and comments on the more conventionally cinematic events that it encapsulates, addressing many of the metaphysical questions only implicitly presented in the body of the narrative. Thus, Jeanne's disembodied voice announces her tale to the priest as "une longue histoire," while, through his faith, the priest becomes Jeanne's conciliator with the supernatural, as well as her co-narrator, also inflecting the main narrative by grasping it in terms of spirituality. For Lacasse, the bonimenteur was born out of the collision between oral tradition and technological modernity ("Le bonimenteur" 20). This figure also served as intermediary between often culturally or linguistically unfamiliar film texts and local audiences. Echoing this, the oral component of *La neuvaine* interprets the main plot and is also born out of the clash

between Jeanne's modern, rational and scientific worldview and François's spiritual faith, in the end substituted literally for that of the priest. Thus, the oral framework in *La neuvaine*, like the *bonimenteur*, enables an interlocution. Through the priest's commentary on her story, Jeanne converses with a supernatural world inaccessible to her. At the same time, Jeanne is the character most closely identified with Émond himself, to whose generation, cultural background and social class she belongs, and with whom she shares a convinced atheism. This similarity suggests that further dialogue takes place between the audience and Émond himself, moderated by Jeanne.



Figure 18: Counterparts: Jeanne and François in La neuvaine (Bernard Émond, 2005).

Thematically, melancholia, loss and trauma dominate *La neuvaine* as they do much of Québec cinema. Jeanne's story tells of her fall into depression and inclination towards suicide after she witnesses a tragic and violent triple homicide that she believes she has provoked and was helpless to prevent. Exacerbating her condition, Jeanne is still dealing with the loss of her only child to disease only a few years earlier. Overwhelmed with dark thoughts, she drives away from her home until she reaches the Charlevoix region, heading Northeast along the St.

Lawrence river, where she stops, intending to drown herself. It is at this point that Jeanne encounters François, whose story parallels her own. François coaxes Jeanne away from suicide, and their unlikely relationship begins. An additional dichotomy foregrounding life and death

therefore dominates La neuvaine and echoes the multiple oppositions between Jeanne and François, whether in terms of gender, age, class, education, rural or urban affiliation, and especially, religious conviction. The film reveals five instances of death, the most salient of which are the deaths of a young family, a mother and child protected by Jeanne, and their abusive husband and father, who tracks them down and murders them before taking his own life. Running parallel to this, the imminent death of François's grandmother, announced early in the film, drives his own storyline. These two plots triggered by death set both Jeanne's and François' narratives in motion and eventually propel them towards one another. Additionally, the death of Jeanne's child haunts her, and this burden, compounded by the triple homicide, leads her to want to take her own life. Finally, a fifth instance of death, that of François' parents, takes place in a more distant back story, and has as a consequence that François has been brought up by his grandmother and still lives with her. Thus, La neuvaine emphasizes death as both the site of trauma and the barrier between two worlds. Jeanne's plans to commit suicide situate her in an unstable position almost literally oscillating between life and death. Her meeting with François at the very moment she seemingly has resolved to carry out this act, connects them. Jeanne's atheism, it seems, prevents her from coming to terms with death until she experiences faith indirectly through François, a devout Catholic carrying out a novena to save his grandmother. In La neuvaine, however, melancholia resonates not only with Jeanne's personal trauma, loss and self-destructive attitude, but also with a loss of connection to the past, an intergenerational trauma that points to the sudden religious rupture of the Quiet Revolution.

Lacasse describes the *bonimenteur* as an agent that puts different semantic fields, contexts, and fields of power into contact with one another. He describes this figure as a surface where opposing forces meet, where they blend through "a dynamic process of attraction and

repulsion" ("Le bonimenteur" 33). Indeed, this corresponds closely to the tension between reality and the supernatural in *La neuvaine*, which finally converges around the film's *bonimenteur*-priest. Émond's priest thus ambiguously recalls Québec's pioneering priest-filmmakers, known for their accompanying oral commentary, but tackles the intangibility of the supernatural with more candour and humility, admitting his own incapacity to grasp its mysteries. Similarly, Jeanne's initially sceptical attitude towards François' faith is consistent with the anticlericalism of her post-Quiet Revolution generation, which becomes more nuanced as the film advances. Indeed, she finally moves beyond her inability to accept death when she comes into contact with François' serene faith. This transition begins to unfold after Jeanne resuscitates a heart-attack victim in front of the Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré basilica.

The pivotal resuscitation scene suggests a channel between life and death and confirms, through point of view shots, the connection between Jeanne and François. Importantly, the survival or demise of the patient is left hanging, as though the gateway between life and death were left open. Adding to its significance, the resuscitation occurs in hallowed ground, thereby convincing François of its miraculous character. Consequently, François implores Jeanne to come and help his grandmother, believing her to be the bearer of thaumaturgic powers, a motif with antecedents in the history of Québec cinema, whether in Jacques Leduc's experimental treatment of the life of Frère André in *On est loin du soleil (Far from the Sun*, 1971), Carle's appropriation of St. Bernadette in *La vraie nature de Bernadette* (1972), or Arcand's modern-day Christ in *Jésus de Montréal* (1989). Like these filmmakers, Émond refuses to force either a material or spiritual interpretation and leaves the spectator free to accept or refuse the death of François' grandmother as a supernatural transition. Accordingly, the initial encounter between Jeanne and François can be read as a response triggered by the latter's prayer, which, though

meant for his grandmother, is answered by a call to save Jeanne. The joining of the two protagonists' journeys is summed up by Jeanne's confession in the final moments of the film where she admits to the priest that she does not believe, but where the priest reassures her that he can still pray for the dead on her behalf. This voice-over dialogue thus foregrounds orality's role as a device to circumvent Jeanne's atheism and provide her with access to faith via the priest who then intervenes as her co-storyteller.

At the same time, La neuvaine attempts to bridge the gap, not only between the everyday and the supernatural, but also between Québec's past and its present. Émond's film therefore also relates to the Quiet Revolution as a moment of historical and cultural rupture, inhibiting continuity. In the narrative, several fractures prevent characters from moving forward or looking back meaningfully. Jeanne, because of her urban lifestyle, intellectuality and workaholism, is completely disconnected from the world outside and particularly from her wider and more historically distant cultural heritage. Faith proves to be the concept that enables her to access this lost continuity and here recalls Ernest Renan's understanding of the will to nationhood, what Homi Bhabha sees as "the will that unifies historical memory and secures present-day consent" (229). For Bhabha, the nation simultaneously comprises a nationalist pedagogy centred on the past, and a living performative contemporaneity (208-9). Bhabha thus posits an internal splitting of identity provoked by the heterogeneous people of the nation. In *La neuvaine*, however, the internal splitting of identity between past tradition and contemporaneity is limited to a polarity between François and Jeanne and fails to attend to national heterogeneity beyond this ethnically homogeneous binary. François, in his naïve simplicity, helps Jeanne to gradually mend her break with tradition. At the same time, his only living relative who embodies the source of all his values is dying, threatening to also leave him isolated. Since his parents are deceased, his own

link to Québécois modernity is inexistent. In this way, Jeanne also fills a gap for François by personifying the absent generation that will enable him to let go of the past: "Death is just a passage," his grandmother tells him, associating death with the perpetuation of existence. Interestingly, the constant renegotiation of national identity, according to Bhabha, draws upon Renan's notion of "will" or "daily plebiscite," a notion that Renan himself compares to "a perpetual affirmation of life" (229). Thus, *La neuvaine* effectively reaffirms a living nationhood by equating "will" to "faith" in a context where the idea of religious faith as Québec's primary marker of identity has sharply declined since the Quiet Revolution.

As such, two bridging mechanisms are superimposed in *La neuvaine*. On the one hand, orality offers a mechanism that bridges the gap between the everyday and the supernatural. On the other, the supernatural acts as a link between the present and the past, providing access to the ghosts that collectively shape a cultural tradition and ensure its continuity. Indeed, Jeanne becomes able to connect with a geographical and cultural identity previously cut off from her in a crucial scene where, following François' recommendation, she goes to watch the geese at Cap Tourmente. As with the St. Lawrence River, which also features significantly in this film and is presented as a possible channel to the afterlife, the geese constitute a natural symbol of Québec. The magical effect generated by watching the geese is paradoxical: by emptying Jeanne's mind of all memories as François predicts, they allow her to tap into more distant memories. She temporarily forgets, and therefore learns to permanently accept the recent deaths that she could not prevent. The conscious attempt to forget made mysteriously possible by the geese again evokes Renan, who stresses nationhood's reliance on deliberate forgetting. Just as recent traumas and feelings of responsibility blocked her memory from deploying certain past cultural traditions, forgetting allows Jeanne to accept and reassign value to these as markers of identity.

Thus, in attempting to reconnect Québec with its past religious culture, Émond employs faith as a cementing metaphor and element of cohesion. In addition, he employs an oral framework that plays a crucial role in ensuring a conduit between the everyday and the supernatural, and consequently between the past and the present. As a result, faith is repurposed for a contemporary secularity that yet clings to its religious cultural heritage as a marker of national identity. But the melancholia at the heart of *La neuvaine* suggests that resolving the problem of national disconnection from religious heritage leaves traces of deeper sources of loss and their ethical implications. Indeed, by prioritizing the reconnection with Québec's religious past as necessary for national continuity without addressing Québec's own colonial role and the Church's centrality in this enterprise, *La neuvaine* conveniently overlooks these issues just as Renan's will deliberately chooses to forget. As such, within the parameters of this film at least, Émond ultimately falls short of directly attending to more significant disconnections resulting from the lost ideals of the Quiet Revolution. And yet, through melancholia, *La neuvaine* usefully points to the deep-rootedness of key Québécois anxieties.

Section 4: Women's Ghosts, Intergenerational Haunting, and Sexuality

Foreword: Work from this section originates with a presentation given at the 2017 Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC) conference in Toronto. Following the previous section on La neuvaine, this analysis tackles intergenerational spirituality and the supernatural in Québec cinema using a gender-specific approach. Focusing on haunting in two films by Anne Claire Poirier (Mother-to-Be, De mère en fille, 1968; Les filles du Roy, 1974) and two more by Catherine Martin (Mariages, 2000; Trois temps après la mort d'Anna, 2010), it first looks to identify an alternative, woman-centered Québec film tradition in contrast with the several interventions into Québec's Catholic heritage made by male directors such as Perrault, Carle, Leduc, Arcand and Émond. In a second instance, it seeks to understand strategic shifts in the deployment of orality with regard to non-heteronormative sexualities.

Introduction

In a book chapter published in 1999, Chantal Nadeau explores national identity and representation in Québec women's cinema. In this text, Nadeau retraces the separation in Québec films between gender and sexuality, on the one hand, and national identity on the other. This dichotomy leads her to posit a prototypical representation of the Québec woman originating in Gilles Groulx's landmark film *Le chat dans le sac* (1964). From this film onwards, Nadeau perceives successive metaphorical incarnations of Barbara, the female protagonist of *Le chat*, as an emblematic character to whom Québec women filmmakers have been responding ever since the pioneering works of Anne Claire Poirier. Although the current section does not take up Nadeau's proposition of a lineage expressed through the figure of Barbara, it nevertheless builds on Nadeau's identification of an alternative non-male vector of identity that runs through Québec

cinema from the 1960s and decades into the future. In her analysis, Nadeau also highlights what Louise Carrière has described as "a dialogue of the deaf" between certain male filmmakers and women directors, and goes on to identify works by some women filmmakers that do not care to attempt communication across genders, while others create a more conciliatory dialogue with conceptions of identity proposed by their male peers. Thus, considering the themes of the supernatural, orality and melancholia, which have informed this thesis so far, the following section attempts to retrace important contrasts highlighted by Québec women filmmakers vis-à-vis their male counterparts, and in particular, the male-centered Catholic spiritual traditions discussed in the previous section.

To pursue this investigation, I again draw on Lacasse, who reveals a parallel site of continuity in Québec cinema, that is to say, an ongoing tendency to foreground orality that dates back to the early twentieth century, and which, in Lacasse's view, continues to characterize Québec cinema into the present. Unsurprisingly, the work of Anne Claire Poirier also bears features of this orality. Indeed, the voice-overs of *De mère en fille* (1968) and *Les filles du Roy* (1974) tend to confirm this tendency. Thus, Poirier's films correspond to Lacasse's definition of orality as a cinematic practice marked by presence. But aside from their deployment of oral practices, Poirier's films also strikingly exhibit components that are implicitly suggestive of the supernatural. For instance, the voice-over of *De mère en fille* offers an uncanny counterpoint to images documenting a woman's pregnancy, while the narration of *Les filles du Roy* personifies the collective representation of Québec women throughout history. Both these monologues exhibit a decidedly haunting quality.

As I have tried to articulate elsewhere in this thesis, incursions of the supernatural in Québec cinema connect with Lacasse's understanding of orality as often fulfilling a counter-

hegemonic function. For Lacasse, oral practices fulfil the role of adapting texts that emanate from dominant centres of film production and of providing local inflections in contexts where national culture has been devalued ("L'accent aigu" 50). Building on this observation, I have posited that persistent supernatural manifestations of the *bonimenteur*, or lecturer of early cinema, also alter later film texts on oppositional grounds in relation, not to what are perceived as externally hegemonic forces, but rather against more locally ascendant hegemonies. If Lacasse's *bonimenteur* allows marginalized cinemas to affirm their identities against dominant outside cultural influences such as Hollywood, a supernatural *bonimenteur* stemming from this original impulse may theoretically permit a similar critique of consolidated notions of national identity that have become progressively entrenched in shifting sociopolitical contexts like Québec. Speculating on the presence within film texts of ghostly commentators that mediate and subversively challenge new paradigms, I have suggested that these counter-hegemonic trends are not limited to ethnic or national concerns but may pertain to other marginalized identities, including those determined by gender and sexuality.

Thus disassociating itself from dominant 1970s notions of Québec identity, the orality of Poirier's oeuvre might be said to shift away from realism and give rise to a kind of supernatural bonimentrice, or ghostly female film lecturer. Furthermore, given Nadeau's observations and Poirier's preoccupation with intergenerational transfer, this resistant form of orality might also be said to perpetuate itself in the work of Martin at the dawn of the 21st century. Indeed, Poirier's De mère en fille makes the notion of a female lineage explicit in its title. Similarly, and on a broader historical scale, Les filles du Roy suggests an alternative to patriarchy that carries on into the future. More recently, the work of Anne Émond also foregrounds intergenerational haunting and melancholia. Together, these three women filmmakers, Poirier, Martin, and Anne Émond,

provide a useful impression of the trajectory of Québec women filmmakers' engagement with the supernatural mode.

The Ghostly Bonimentrice in the Films of Anne Claire Poirier

In spite of Nadeau's focus on Groulx's *Le chat*, from the persepective of history and intergenerational continuity, Poirier's films might be said to react more clearly to other, more traditional male film models, like the work of Pierre Perrault, whose exploration of past traditions aims to find meaning for Québec's present and future. Indeed, Poirier's *Les filles du Roy* retraces the genealogy of *les Québécoises* with the firm objective of revealing the contemporary iteration of Québec women based on this lineage.²⁶ The film was produced in association with the *Société nouvelle* series titled *En tant que femmes* which was spearheaded by Poirier herself.²⁷ In addition to the female perspective constituting the project's raison-d'être, its creators, including Poirier, stress the mandatory subjectivity also required by the initiative. "The experience that will be proposed to other women must," they write, "at the same time, be lived in depth by the project's promotors" (Poirier et al. 28), a prescription that cannot fail to evoke (and respond to) Perrault's own doctrine of *cinéma vécu*, or lived cinema. Adhering to this imperative, *De mère en fille* and *Les filles du Roy* offer personal narratives that express a divergence from male-dominated nationalism and reflect the influence of feminism during Québec's sexual

²⁶ The "Filles du roi" or "King's Daughters" were young women recruited by French religious authorities between 1634 and 1663, and sponsored by the French monarchy to immigrate to New France in order to marry French settlers and redress the gender imbablance in the colony (Gingras 20).

²⁷ Société nouvelle is the French counterpart of the NFB's Challenge for Change program. This was a participatory filmmaking program conceived by NFB filmmaker Colin Low that ran from 1967 to 1980 and produced over 200 films and videos (Waugh et al. "Challenge for Change," 4, 6). Its main objectives were to address poverty through film and video making and exhibition, bring about social change through media, empower communities, test technological and aesthetic approaches, use film to generate local debate, give people a voice and editorial control, and provide access to people in power through film (Waugh et al. "Challenge for Change," 4; Low, "Grierson and Challenge for Change," 17).

revolution. Their aim consists in giving a voice to female characters representative of Québécois identity, notably through voice-over narration. As Joan Nicks notes, "the reflexivity and subjectivity of [Poirier's] formal aesthetic" characterizes her work. Nicks adds that "Poirier's formal aesthetic and assertion of an aestheticized feminine voice might be termed 'process art,' which reveals its methods, dialectically and in collaboration with other women as subjects and as spectators, and so departs from the 'masterful' artist (male-centred creator) of modernism" (226). Thus, Poirier flaunts and mobilizes her subjectivity, but fuses and enriches this perspective with the self-conscious responsibility of representing and communicating the collective experiences and grievances of Québec women in the face of patriarchal nationalist ideology.

Much as Gilles Groulx does in his experimental film *Entre tu et vous* (*Between You and You All*, 1969), Poirier highlights the determining effects of subject pronouns to demystify subjectivity in *Les filles du Roy*. And, as is particularly salient in Groulx's later documentary 24 heures ou plus (24 Hours or More, 1973/77) (discussed in Chapter 3), Poirier maintains a clearly subjective point of view. The first-person voice-over narrative of *Les filles du Roy* evokes the filmmaker's personal exploration, which leads to a plurality of women's identities, all belonging to the descendants of the so-called King's Daughters. Complicating the tension between the first person "je" and the collective "nous," Poirier's film not only extends its subjectivity to French-speaking Québec women as a whole, but also situates them within a symbolic heterosexual national couple by addressing the historical and contemporary Québécois man informally as "tu" throughout. Implicitly extending the second person singular pronoun to its representation of the collective male consciousness of Québec, Poirier suggests a collective "vous." Thus, in a manner reminiscent of *Entre tu et vous*, Poirier situates the feminine subject as literally caught between egocentric male individuality and collective androcentric ideology.

Poirier's "je" reflects her own authorship and, speaking on behalf of French-speaking Québec women, can be extended to a "nous" that represents Québec women as a group, while engendering a synthesized "nous" in the potential union of men and women within a collective national project. In this way, Les filles du Roy positions itself in accordance with nationalist objectives and, rather than renouncing national ambitions, expresses a sense of disappointment and betrayal regarding their outcomes. Conversely, the collective "nous" of Perrault's films remains almost exclusively male. Indeed, Poirier's Les filles du Roy seems to offer a response to the masculine adventure-seeking activities staged by Perrault from which women are largely excluded. This criticism, articulated by Louise Carrière, counters Perrault's treatment of women as "rejected by history." As such, the solitude of women that Poirier evokes contradicts

Perrault's view of women as belonging merely to the present (Carrière 80).

In Poirier's film, women's suffering, dissatisfaction and melancholia de-romanticize foundational myths about the role of the King's Daughters in the construction of Québec nationhood. This demystification echoes an unexpected intervention by Marie Tremblay in Perrault's own film *Le règne du jour* (*The Times That Are*, 1967), where this character surprises both her husband, Alexis Tremblay, and Perrault himself by complaining openly about her life's hardships and disappointements. Commenting on this, Carrière also makes the following general observation regarding Perrault's work: "[W]omen's discourse in Perrault's films is often a discourse that spreads slowly. [Women] are the ones that briefly recall events; they don't participate at all in the mythology of the reconstruction of the beautiful and noble Québec past" (78). *Les filles du Roy* reacts to this elision of women's experience generally, but also demonstrates the poetic and political potential in female-focussed cinematic language that Perrault misses. As Jerry White comments:

The opening sequence makes it clear that the film will speak the language of poetry, not of prose. *Les filles du Roy* may feel like an essay film, but really it is in the form of an elegy. And that elegy, rendered through an elliptical, highly visual structure. [...] *Les filles du Roy*'s political project is twofold: gender-based and nationalist. Really, though, they are one and the same political project (272).

When compared with Poirier's film, Perrault's own political project is revealed as incomplete. Les filles du Roy also expresses a poetic and nationalist argument, but through the primacy of visuals and a female viewpoint, foregrounding some of the very same symbols and methods favoured by Perrault, the landscape, the St. Lawrence River and a retracing of history. The elliptical form of its argument, astutely deciphered by White in his analysis, again contrasts with the limitations of Perrault's fixed perspective. What White sees as Poirier's fusion of gender-based and nationalist projects, one converging with the male-centered agenda and the other diverging dramatically from it, brings into focus the tensions between an emerging Québec hegemony and its internal marginalizations. As Québec inches closer to the possibility of nation-state formation, and as the vision for this new nation-state is decidedly patriarchal, Poirier's use of oral practices takes on a supernatural and haunting aspect.

Through voice-over, the ghostly intergenerational *bonimentrice* of *Les filles du Roy* modulates standard historical assumptions by exposing the rich historical relevance of women to Québec's national trajectory. At the same time, it leaves the future open-ended. By questioning future orientations conceived by men, the narrator beckons and directs the gaze of her male counterpart, as would an early cinema lecturer. The female voice impels the male viewer to "look at her," calling for retrospection, dialogue and a new start as the film re-appropriates Québec commercial cinema's watershed moment, when Denis Héroux's *Valérie* (1969) triggered

a whole series of sexploitation comedies by exhibiting the nude body of a Québec woman (Danielle Ouimet) for the first time. By re-staging a scene that undresses Danielle Ouimet, whose body Poirier herself gradually reveals, the film transforms the male viewer's reading of *Valérie* by returning the voyeuristic gaze and forcing this spectator to look upon Ouimet's body without objectifying it. In doing so, Poirier implicitly echoes Foucault's dismissal of the sexual revolution's anti-repressive function. For Foucault, the alleged taboo-breaking function of the sexual revolution ultimately proves ineffective. Instead, Foucault suggests, veiled power dynamics between men and women are perpetuated through the complicit deployment of sexuality. Likewise, Poirier seems to argue, whether in purportedly taboo-breaking films such as *Valérie*, or in purportedly progressive contemporaneous nationalist politics, changes in the power dynamics between men and women lack true substance and real "liberation."

The significant opening sequence of *Les filles du Roy* is worth scrutinizing for its attempt to compound the ghostly *bonimentrice* effect. Poirier's preoccupation with retracing the origins of Québec women claims a unity with the Indigenous women that preceded the King's Daughters in bearing children to early French settlers in Canada. As such, in this early sequence, the marginalized aspect of the ghostly female commentator appears doubled insofar as she is both female and Indigenous. Through this acknowledgement of Québec's hybrid origins, the French narrator empathizes with the Indigenous woman and declares the pride she feels when seeing this woman's physical traits in the features of her own children, that is to say, contemporary Quebecers. Albeit positive in its recognition and celebration of the biological and cultural impacts of First Nations on Québec society, this moment yet bears problematic elements. The Indigenous woman depicted in the film remains silent and is spoken for, rather than acting with agency to influence the meaning of the film text. As such, she is not given the opportunity to

fulfil the role of a *bonimentrice* in the same way as the Francophone narrator, and this, in spite of what Karine Bertrand has described as a predisposition in Indigenous cultures towards the capacity of audiovisual media to capture elements of the oral tradition ("Le cinéma inuit" 34). Unfortunately, other than in this initial sequence, set in Québec's distant past, the image of the Indigenous woman reappears only fleetingly in *Les filles du Roy*, and does not play a significant role in the film. Ironically, this repeats the voice-over's initial criticism that French settlers (both men and women) acted as if the Indigenous people just weren't there. As such, this invisibilization of Indigenous women in contemporary Québec, rather than truly promoting the viability of Québec's cultural and biological debt to Indigenous peoples, ultimately relegates Indigenous women to a pre-modern past.



Figure 19: The Indigenous woman remains silent. Les filles du Roy (Anne Claire Poirier, 1974).

Nevertheless, in spite of Poirier's elision of Indigenous voices, and without underplaying this significant shortcoming, her film may still be seen as prescribing a reconception of nationhood that advocates collaboration with Indigenous peoples. The idea of prescriptive reconception is immediately plausible in view of the clear emphasis Poirier places on childbirth in this opening sequence and elsewhere in her films. Indeed, as she tackles the void left by male-centered cinema in terms of gender experience, Poirier give a central place to the theme of

pregnancy and childbirth in both De mère en fille and Les filles du Roy. In De mère en fille, which follows the second pregnancy of Liette Desjardins, who meditates on her relationship to the child she is carrying and its inevitable change after "his" birth, Poirier graphically displays images of women in labour as well as a Caesarian section. This attention to detail contrasts with the equally graphic images of the killing and carving up of animals displayed in Perrault's work, hunting being one of the "two activities most commonly associated with the Québec national character in popular media and scholarly literature alike" (Waugh "Romance," 183). In Les filles du Roy, Poirier associates childbirth and femininity with an alternative national vision, one that yet remains overshadowed by the violence and death characterizing Perrault's male-centered symbols of national identity. And while both De mère en fille and Les filles du Roy generally remain tied to binary gender categories, the former film nonetheless highlights the linguistic constraint of the French masculine noun bébé and maintains an ambiguous possibility regarding the new baby's gender as Liette evokes potential male and female names. Thus, Poirier seeks intimacy through personal introspection and paradox. Scripted following Poirier's own second pregnancy, the protagonist's internal monologue oscillates between uncertainty and openness, tangible pleasure generated by affection for her child and fear of the pain of giving birth.

Coupled with the critique of the existing national model that thematizes *Les filles du Roy*, the entire framwork of the film describes the project of bringing European women to New France as one of giving birth to a people. In accordance with this theme, the film's expressed desire for Québec men and women to reconceive national identity based on a more egalitarian relationship is symbolized in a reverse shot of a woman giving birth, with the baby re-entering the womb. In addition, the French-speaking narrator of *Les filles du Roy* believes that it is "in their womb" that she and the Indigenous woman communicate and are related to one another.

Thus, Poirier's emphasis on childbirth and nation-building, and her allusions to Indigenous women as co-mothers of contemporary Québecers sets up expectations of an Indigenous-settler hybrid and gender-equal conception of nationhood. The fact that this is not accomplished (even within the parameters of the film itself) may go some way to explain why ghostly children feature so prominently in recent Québec films and continue to haunt the Québec imaginary.

Catherine Martin's Ghostly Bonimentrices

Shot only one year after the publication of Nadeau's essay, Catherine Martin's first feature *Mariages* (*Marriages*, 2001) marks the emergence of another key Québec woman filmmaker. Accordingly, I attempt here to situate Martin in relation to the trajectory initiated by Poirier and identified by Nadeau. I also consider Martin's dialogue with a concurrent male vision of Québec identity in the work of her contemporary, Bernard Émond, and ultimately assess the divergent and overlapping preoccupations of these two filmmakers. I want to suggest here that while Martin's work converges with Émond's in many respects, it privileges conversations between women across generations, and, unlike Émond, who is also concerned with Québec's past and traditions, Martin's films access this past through an uninhibited deployment of supernatural tropes.

Two of Martin's fictions include significant and explicit interactions with intergenerational haunting. In *Mariages*, set in Victorian-era Québec, a young woman named Yvonne (Marie-Ève Bertrand) lives under the strict guardianship of her older sister Hélène (Guylaine Tremblay) following the death of their mother Anastasie (Louise de Beaumont) two decades earlier. Their father (Raymond Cloutier) has since remarried Noémie (Markita Boies), a woman who is ailing and who wishes to fashion a wedding dress for her stepdaughter following

a visionary dream. Both Noémie and Yvonne are aided and advised by the older Maria (Hélène Loiselle), who clandestinely practices traditional healing. When one day Anastasie's body is exhumed for a public works project, observers discover that it has miraculously resisted decomposition. In this narrative, Anastasie's petrified body never speaks, and yet seems to comment on events. Sometimes Anastasie appears to Yvonne as a vision or dream, and sometimes her presence and commentary take the form of whispers in the countryside.

However, the meaning of Anastasie's return needs to be interpreted by the wise Maria, who also explains Noémie's visionary dream of a green wedding dress. Maria thus performs an explicative function analogous to that of a *bonimentrice*. In addition, knowledge about women's bodies is only reluctantly transferred by Yvonne's rigid older sister Hélène, who adheres zealously to patriarchal and clerical norms that dominate 19th century Québec. In a memorable scene, Hélène is confronted with her own daughter's first menstruation and views the unavoidable task of explaining this as profoundly distasteful. In contrast, Maria is called upon for secret knowledge about women's sexuality, performing a magic ritual to entrance Charles (David Boutin), the man Yvonne wishes to have for a lover and a husband, and then later preparing an herbal drink to provoke Yvonne's miscarriage following an unwanted pregnancy.

In Martin's third feature *Trois temps après la mort d'Anna (Mourning for Anna*, 2010), the task of commenting on narrative action shifts more fully to supernatural female entities. Françoise (Guylaine Tremblay), a middle-aged woman, loses her only daughter, Anna (Sheila Jaffe), who is assassinated in the opening moments of the film. Overwrought with grief and losing her own will to live, Françoise retreats to a family home in the countryside where she converses with Anna's ghost and is also visited by the ghosts of her own mother (Paule

Baillargeon) and grandmother (Denise Gagnon). Here, intergenerational haunting is more literal.

Each ghost advises Françoise and consequently interprets plot elements directly for the viewer.



Figure 20: Françoise identifies the body of her murdered daughter Anna.

Trois temps après la mort d'Anna (Catherine Martin, 2010).

In *Trois temps*, temporality is chronologically out of synch with the age of each woman. Françoise's own time is met by the ghost of her grandmother, and then of her mother. This highlights the reversibility or non-linearity of time in Martin's universe. Indeed, Lacasse has himself noted the rebelliousness of Martin's use of narrative time in her earlier film, *Mariages* ("La construction" 202). Likewise, in *Trois temps*, Françoise's grief is exacerbated by an initial unwillingness to accept a deviation from progressive time. She first refuses to accept that her daughter could die before she does. Each ghost works to convince Françoise to continue living in spite of her loss. Firstly, Anna's ghost simply protests when Françoise tries to wake her, "Let me sleep," the ghost says, "I am dead." Next, the ghost of Françoise's grandmother quietly comforts her as Françoise poses the question: "Grandma, why didn't I die first?" Later, Françoise's deceased mother comes to her with a notebook that once belonged to her grandmother. The ghost explains that this journal chronicles all the deaths of her grandmother's children, 8 out of 16 pregnancies. Connecting with her grandmother through reciprocal empathy around the pain of losing a child, this account also stresses a profound, lingering and inconsolable sadness felt by

the grandmother at the loss of one adolescent daughter in particular. This especially traumatic loss destroyed her grandmother's will to live just as Françoise also wants to die following Anna's murder.





Figure 21 (left): Françoise consoled by ghost of her grandmother. Trois temps après la mort d'Anna (Catherine Martin, 2010).

Figure 22 (right): Françoise consoled by ghost of her mother. Trois temps après la mort d'Anna (Catherine Martin, 2010).



Figure 23: Françoise consoled by ghost of her daughter Anna.

Trois temps après la mort d'Anna (Catherine Martin, 2010).

As discussed in the previous section, Bernard Émond's work, like Martin's, also attempts to make connections with a disappearing or lost past. But, in Émond's *La neuvaine*, the counter-hegemonic impulse embedded within orality does not seek to maintain a link with a perpetually marginalized, alternative or resistant film tradition. Rather, it looks to recapture a waning patriarchal Catholic hegemony that has given way to an emphatically secular and increasingly plural vision of national identity. As such, while Poirier and Martin maintain an intergenerational

connection with traditions focused on women, and while Martin represents the supernatural uninhibitedly, *La neuvaine* extends the focus on tensions between patriarchal Catholic legacies and modernity that can be traced through several male-authored films, including the aforementioned films by Leduc (*On est loin du soleil*), Carle (*La vraie nature de Bernadette*), and Arcand (*Jésus de Montréal*). Like these other male filmmakers, Émond only suggests the miraculous, but does not go so far as to represent its unambiguous manifestation visually. In contrast, Martin tends to blur binaries between the everyday and the supernatural, dream and reality, with elements of one world occurring indistinguishably from the other.

While the past traditions that each filmmaker attempts to reach and their approaches to reality and the supernatural prove markedly different, the films of Martin and Émond share an unmistakeable tendency for melancholia. Indeed, loss and trauma dominate their work as they do much of Québec cinema. In *Mariages*, Yvonne's deceased mother is said to be unable to rest because of her death by suicide following a depression. Grief and dark thoughts drive the plot of *Trois temps*. In *La neuvaine*, Jeanne falls into depression and contemplates suicide after losing her own child and witnessing a tragic and violent triple homicide that she is helpless to prevent. Émond associates melancholia not only with Jeanne's personal trauma, but also with a loss of connection to the past, an intergenerational trauma that points to the sudden religious rupture of the Quiet Revolution. Similarly, Martin reveals in *Trois temps* that the loss of Françoise's future, embodied in her daughter, is not the fundamental source of Françoise's haunting and debilitating grief. Stemming from an unknown loss, melancholia is ultimately associated with her disconnection from the loss experienced by her grandmother. Françoise only comes to terms with Anna's death once she has reacquainted herself with the past of her foremothers, the home of her

youth, and her first lover. Only after confronting these pasts can Françoise move forward with her life.

However, the persistent melancholia at the heart of *Mariages, Trois temps* and *La neuvaine* suggests even deeper sources of loss. As seen in the previous section, *La neuvaine* fails to fully confront the source of its melancholia by ignoring or minimizing the Church's central role in colonialism and by maximizing its status and importance as a marker of identity. Seeing Québec's Catholic tradition as a lost or dramatically receding and essential source of cultural and spiritual identity, Émond's film equates this tradition with Québec itself, priviledging it over other non-Catholic or non-orthodox traditions, including the spiritual practices of women portrayed in Martin's films. Nevertheless, through its concentration on melancholia, *La neuvaine* manages to pinpoint this sentiment as key to clarifying Québec's ongoing identity debates. In parallel, Martin's dialogue with the historical and cinematic past of Québec women signals an equally distant source of postcolonial melancholia, one foreshadowed at the start of Poirier's *Les filles du Roy* where the ghostly *bonimentrice*-narrator acknowledges the antecendent presence of Indigenous women on the territory now known as Québec.

Haunting Children, Sexuality, and the Bonimenteur as Devil (or God)

A brief look at the work of Anne Émond, a filmmaker one generation younger than Catherine Martin, provides further clarity regarding the continuities and developments of tropes identified with Poirier and Martin. Quickly becoming one of the foremost contemporary Québec directors, Anne Émond rose to prominence following her first feature, *Nuit #1* (2012), an intimate, dialogue-driven closed-room drama notable for its strong writing and actors' performances. However, it is in her next two features *Les Êtres chers* (2015) and *Nelly* (2017) that Émond's

work engages with the supernatural. Of these two films, *Les Êtres chers* is based more firmly in realism and features one family's intergenerational struggle with melancholia and suicide. Spanning several decades, the film centres on David, who as a very young man, comes home to learn that his father has died of a heart attack. Knowing David to be the sensitive type, his family decides to shield him from the fact that his father's death was actually due to suicide by hanging. David pursues his life, marries and has children of his own, when one day, his brother finally blurts out the family secret at a party. David thus becomes aware of the hereditary nature of his own propensity for dark thoughts and these bouts of depression become more frequent as he gets older. Meanwhile, David is particularly close to his daughter Laurence (Karelle Tremblay), who shares his sensitivity and potential for melancholy. After he finally hangs himself as his father did, David's mother implores her granddaughter Laurence to break this self-destructive cycle. As the film ends, Laurence walks along a beach and sees David, now a ghost, who walks alongside and looks on at her smiling, seemingly watching over her.

Though only brief, the supernatural in *Les Êtres chers* is notable for its intergenerational dimension and frontal engagment with melancholia as well as its location of the source of melancholia in childhood trauma. As this example attests, haunting introspections focusing on childhood in Québec cinema extend well beyond the work of Anne Claire Poirier. Indeed, the trope of the ghost-child has returned with increasing frequency in recent years. Many of the beings that haunt narratives otherwise anchored in everyday realism are the ghosts of wronged children. Catherine Martin's *Trois temps*, and Anne Émond's *Les Êtres chers*, due to trauma experienced in adolescence or young adulthood and exchanged through parent-child relationships, can certainly be counted among these narratives. But other examples are also worth highlighting. From an explicitly political and historical angle, the young, middle-class

Italian-Québécois protagonist of *Corbo* (Mathieu Denis, 2014) appears as a ghost to cast judgement on the circumstances that led him to sacrifice his life for the FLQ cause in 1967. On the other hand, *Origami* (Patrick Demers, 2017), interweaves time-travel with hallucinations caused by psychosis to tell the story of David (François Arnaud), a young father, who absent-mindedly causes his own four-year-old daughter's death by forgeting her in the back seat of his car before boarding an aircraft destined for Japan. Later visited by a mysterious Japanese writer who explains time-travel to him, David flips back and forth between time-travel sequences and a psychiatric hospital in an endeavour to go back and correct his past error to save his daughter. These examples apparently show Québec cinema's use of the supernatural to engage with past ethical mistakes concerning children. Given the emphasis placed by Poirier on the birthing of a nation and its original genesis in hybridity with Indigenous peoples, it is not unreasonable to ascribe allegorical meaning for these narratives of loss as expressing failed collective historical reponsibilities concerning the conception and development of Québec nationhood.

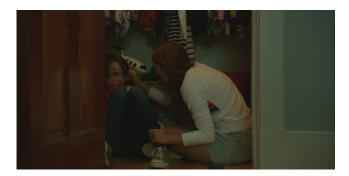


Figure 24: 10-year-old Félix, suffers from anxiety after experimenting sexually with a schoolmate. Les démons (Philippe Lesage, 2015).

In addition, many child-bonimenteur tropes revolve around sex and sexuality. Les démons (The Demons, Philippe Lesage, 2015), a story set in the 1980s with the AIDS epidemic as a backdrop deals in part with sexual awakening and orientation, and features the sexual experimentations of Félix (Édouard Tremblay-Grenier), a young boy whose family is facing the

traumatic threat of parental separation. A sub-plot featuring the ghost of an abducted, sexuallyabused and murdered child returns to haunt Félix, who comes to fear reprisals for playing doctor with his classmate. Similarly, and released in the same year, *Chorus* by François Delisle depicts the ordeal of a couple, now separated, whose child disappeared ten years earlier. The father, Christophe (Sébastien Ricard), has exiled himself to Mexico, but is still haunted by the ghost of his young boy, who appears after he has sex with his current girlfriend. When he receives word from his ex-partner Sylvie (Fanny Mallette) that an incarcerated pedophile has confessed to the abduction and murder of their child, at the same time revealing the location of the body's remains, Christophe returns to Québec. The estranged parents must then deal with overwhelming feelings of grief and complex emotional reactions, including self-blame, in an attempt to come to terms with their loss and its consequences. Likewise, in Les 7 jours du Talion (7 days, Podz, 2010), a once-gentle surgeon (Claude Legault) abducts his eight-year-old daughter's rapist and killer (Martin Dubreuil), and resorts to torture and mutilation as revenge for the crime. Significantly, the doctor and his wife (Fanny Mallette again) blame themselves for letting their daughter walk to school alone while they stayed in bed and had sex. It is only when the young girl's ghost (Rose-Marie Coallier) appears to her father after seven days of torture that he can move on and abandon his brutal revenge.

In Anne Émond's third film, *Nelly* (2016), based on the life of talented and controversial novelist Nelly Arcand, haunting is again associated with sexual taboo. Partly a biopic and partly based on Arcand's writings, the film tackles her life and work as a recently deceased artist in the prime of her life, who (like the protagonist of Anne Émond's earlier *Les Êtres chers*) commits suicide by hanging. Thus, as a real person, Nelly Arcand haunts the screen in *Nelly* in a manner somewhat reminiscent of David Marvin in *Albédo*. Moreover, an aura of national responsibility

hangs over the loss of Nelly Arcand who, two years before her death, had appeared on the popular chat show *Tout le monde en parle*, which is viewed by a huge section of the Québec public every Sunday evening. Arcand wrote about her humiliation during her experience on this show in a short text titled *La honte* (*Shame*) that was published posthumously. In this text she describes how the show's host, Guy A. Lepage, and co-panelists (all male) interrogate her on her lifestyle and physical appearance, making lewd comments, and steering the conversation towards the sexual content of her work rather than its literary value.



Figure 25: Nelly Arcand on the set of Tout le monde en parle in 2007 (Radio-Canada).

As such, combinations of the supernatural and orality serve in many cases to explore the limits of normative standards of sexuality. Indeed, heteronormativity has been challenged through oral practices and fantasy in films as distant in time from one another as *Wow* (Claude Jutra, 1969) and *Les amours imaginaires* (*Heartbeats*, Xavier Dolan, 2010), both of which use direct address to the camera to comment critically on narrative content. In other cases, it is through the embodiment of *bonimenteur* figures that orality manifests the supernatural. Indeed, such contestation of mainstream Québec mores appears to stretch back to the silent era itself and to the most prominent *bonimenteur* of Québec film history. In their book on Alexandre Silvio, Québec's most notable lecturer of early cinema, Germain Lacasse, Johanne Massé, and

Bethsabée Poirier, with reference to Silvio's own *revue d'actualité* titled *Le diable en ville*, ²⁸ allegorize this figure's resistance to clerical authority in the following manner: "Could the devil have managed to infiltrate himself into French-Canadian culture in spite of the vigilant surveillance of the Catholic clergy? It seems so. Alexandre Silvio might even be this devil in town" ("Le diable" 18). Thus, although Lacasse's work does not generally address the supernatural, with this devilish metaphor he and his collaborators tellingly acknowledge and tap into what constitutes by far the most prominent supernatural entity of the Québec oral storytelling tradition, and one consistently pit against the emblematic village priest as guardian of cultural and moral values. Following Silvio's self-styling as "the devil in town" through his own show, these authors stress this *bonimenteur*'s identification with the devil, while opposing him to domestic rather than foreign authority. Such a move supports my contention for the existence of an internally subversive supernatural *bonimenteur*. By describing this notorious *bonimenteur* in pseudo-supernatural terms, Lacasse and his collaborators implicitly confirm the link between the supernatural and oral narrative.

Furthermore, the move to pit a devilish Silvio against Québec's dominant clergy, coupled with Lacasse's claim that cinematic orality extends beyond the Quiet Revolution, evokes parallel arguments concerning the continuities that operate between formerly dominant clerical nationalism and newly emerging secular nationalist ideologies across this same moment of rupture. Indeed, contemporary Québec cinema and secular society are dominated by what Erin Manning describes as "the discourse of negative theology," where paradoxically, through the very insistance on God's absence, "God is reinscribed in the writing of the institution, political, technoscientific, cultural" (Science of Spirit). Clearly, the *bonimenteur*'s antagonistic

²⁸ Lacasse et al. describe *revues d'actualités* as "humorous shows composed of sketches, skits, monologues, and songs parodying the social and political life of the time" ("Le diable" 10).

relationship with Québécois clerical-nationalist authorities demonstrates that this figure's mediation does not limit itself to the foreign. As such, the supernatural can serve the bonimenteur's function of mediating ideas that emanate from its own cultural elites when they accede to greater influence, whether these elites describe themselves as religious or secular. In shifting sociopolitical contexts, rather than becoming redundant, the *bonimenteur* apparently develops an uncanny supernatural quality through its very belonging, however unorthodox or marginal, to the dominant culture. And given the ostensible continuities between pre and post-Quiet Revolution elites, we can deduce that contemporary subversions directed against mainstream Québec supernaturalize the bonimenteur in a way analogous to Silvio's figurative incarnation of the devil. Interestingly, near the end of their work on Silvio Lacasse and his fellow researchers discovered his gay identity, which was informally validated by Silvio's nephew. Given the sexually (and otherwise) repressive historical context in which Silvio lived, this component of his identity necessarily clashed with mainstream Québec society.²⁹ In light of this, viewing Silvio not only as a practitioner of oral cinema (which was later effectively appropriated by ultra-conservative Québec priest-filmmakers), but also as an embodiment of a subversive supernatural figure associated with sexual otherness, marks an important shift in the way the bonimenteur mobilizes orality, not only against external hegemonies, but to critically inflect Québec's own internally dominant attitudes.

²⁹ Silvio's nephew was the son of his brother, the Montreal-born painter Ivan Jobin. According to Silvio's nephew, Jobin exiled himself to Europe after being ostricized due to his relationship to Silvio. Lacasse speculates that Silvio himself must have therefore been subject to even worse discrimination, which he perhaps overcame only through his determination and a certain "devilish" ruse, a personal struggle to which the show *Le diable en ville* may be a metaphorical allusion. Personal communications with Germain Lacasse, 2017 and 2018.



Figure 26: Jesus as God-bonimenteur in Pour l'amour de Dieu (Micheline Lanctôt, 2010).

A contemporary inversion of the trope described above manifests itself in Micheline Lanctôt's Pour l'amour de Dieu. This film not only confirms continuities between codes of the miraculous and the supernatural exploited in Carle's La vraie nature de Bernadette in which Lanctôt plays the leading role, but also features a supernatural bonimenteur that modulates the dramatization of tensions between sexual desire and religion. In this case, Lanctôt's bonimenteur, however, is not the devil, but Christ himself. In Pour l'amour de Dieu, Lanctôt depicts Jesus (Rossif Sutherland) as a supernatural observer of and commentator on the main plot perceived by three separate characters: Léonie (Ariane Legault), an excessively pious young girl; Soeur Cécile (Madeleine Péloquin), a young nun who befriends Léonie; and Père Malachy (Victor Andres Turgeon-Trelles), a young Puerto Rican priest with whom both Léonie and Cécile become infatuated. Cécile and Malachy's sexual attraction for one another culminates with Cécile writing a passionate letter to the priest. Entrusted with the letter for Malachy, Léonie is visited by two more supernatural beings that sit on either side of her on the bus as she contemplates the envelope. The first, an elegant but ominous-looking man reminiscent of the devil in Québécois folktales, tempts Léonie to open the envelope and read its contents. The second, an angelic woman, tries to dissuade her, but fails. Léonie opens the letter and, struck by jealousy, destroys it. She then reveals the lovers' secret via the confessional, which leads to their

public humiliation, separation, and exile. In this narrative, Jesus as the God-bonimenteur counters orthodox doctrine and defends the physical love felt by his devotees. Although a supernatural being, he is perceptible through the senses, with Léonie even commenting on his odour of sheep. He holds Léonie's hand as he talks to her in church, touches Cécile's chin, bleeds drops of blood from his sacred heart onto Léonie, and even watches Cécile undressing seductively. Cécile sees her choice of vocation as similar to choosing a lover, and later understands her attraction to Père Malachy as an act of adultery against Jesus, who does not seem to judge her unfavourably for this. As such, Lanctôt's God-bonimenteur seemingly rescues Québec's Catholic tradition by reconciling it with contemporary heteronormative views about love and sexual relations. Thus, Lanctôt's film effectively demonstrates that even the combination of orality and the supernatural is not immune to mainstream appropriation. In this film, not only is the devilish bonimenteur usurped by the now sensual God-bonimenteur, the narrative also inverts the trope of the wronged child and casts two adults as the victims of a child's unhealthy jealousy.

CHAPTER 3: RADICAL QUÉBÉCOIS AND INDIGENOUS CINEMAS

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Section 1: "Against National Orthodoxy": 24 heures ou plus and Fourth Cinema

Foreword: This essay received the Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC) Student Writing Award in 2016. Unlike most other sections in this dissertation, it does not address the supernatural. However, it forms an important bridge in the thought process exploring relationships between Québec and Indigenous cinemas from the perspective of decolonization. Indeed, the most significant revisions since the first draft have involved a closer examination of the Indigenous component featured within 24 heures ou plus and an assessment of the links between Third and Fourth cinemas through a comparison with Alanis Obomsawin's Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance. This chapter therefore acts as a logical transition into the fourth and final chapter, which presents a more direct focus on Indigenous cinema and haunting.

Introduction

According to Mike Wayne, "squeezed between monopoly capital on the one hand and the state on the other, Third Cinema clearly exists within a very small space of opportunity" (79-80). Indeed, Wayne's observation on the "problematic necessity" of the state aptly characterizes Gilles Groulx's career at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), an association marked by tensions that this radical filmmaker pushed to breaking point just as he uncompromisingly pushed the principles of Third Cinema to their logical outcomes. Meanwhile, for Maori filmmaker and theorist Barry Barclay, Indigenous, or Fourth Cinema, exists "outside national orthodoxy," in contrast with First, Second and Third Cinemas, which he labels "invader cinemas." In a lecture given at the University of Auckland's Centre for Film, TV and Media

Studies in 2002, later published under the title "Celebrating Fourth Cinema," Barclay foregrounds cultural "interiority" as a foundation for Fourth Cinema in full awareness of Western scholars' likely aversion to this concept as essentialist. Nevertheless, the implications of Barclay's intervention come to the fore as Indigenous films now begin to proliferate and permeate settler colonial societies. In such contexts, the instrumentalization of the nation for anti-colonial liberation necessarily rubs against Indigenous peoples' vitally distinctive exteriority to nation-statehood, and points to apparent paradoxes at play within Third Cinema. In this respect, the current section posits Groulx's controversial film 24 heures ou plus (1973/1977) as a Third Cinema text that is paradigmatic in its commitment to and coherence with emancipatory principles beyond and, to a certain degree, against its own national impetus. Indeed, 24 heures ou plus demonstrates that for Third Cinema to remain useful in settler colonial contexts, it cannot afford to ignore Barclay's provocative view on the incommensurability of Indigenous cultures and the dominant idea of the nation-state; it must ultimately oppose the mainstream objectives of nationalism if not its visceral force or counter-hegemonic potential. 24 heures ou plus thus points to the necessity for Third Cinema to work in parallel with Fourth Cinema while respecting the distinctness of Indigenous worldviews.

Though it stands apart from the Latin American context where Third Cinema first emerged, Québec constitutes a settler colonial society that offers illuminating parallels through which to explore the encounter between Third Cinema and Indigenous alternatives. As a historically conquered nation, and as a settler society subjected to a history of colonialism that then acceded to mainstream affluence and increased political leverage, Québec remains alive to the idea of attaining freedom through political independence and thus affords unique opportunities to examine the seemingly oxymoronic notion of national liberation for settler

colonial societies. Moreover, Québec's most characteristic film movement, *cinéma direct*, was strongly linked to national affirmation from the early 1960s onwards, an impulse which in some manifestations evolved into committed documentary work propelled by left-wing liberation nationalism. In parallel, Indigenous cinema in Canada can be traced back to the NFB's "Indian crews" and *Challenge for Change* program. These initiatives were conceived as catalysts for social change, setting important precedents for Indigenous artists to produce their own politically charged work, and taking place just as Québec's radical cinematic contestations reached peak intensity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this context, *24 heures ou plus*, also produced by the NFB, represents a pivotal document testing the limits of Third Cinema principles and the ideals of Québec's Quiet Revolution.

To substantiate these claims, I begin by affirming the status of 24 heures ou plus as a Third Cinema text in accordance with the Latin American manifestos that launched this movement. I then examine how this film signals Groulx's move away from straightforward conceptions of the nation and his increasingly transnational outlook. This shift also exposes the temporal contradictions underpinning the nation-state model, which serve as a basis for generating later forms of revolutionary filmmaking. Finally, I juxtapose the outcome of Groulx's reasoning with subsequent films by Indigenous filmmakers in Québec and speculate on 24 heures ou plus as a text that generates renewed revolutionary possibilities, thereby reinvigorating Third Cinema through a dialogue with its Fourth Cinema counterpart. Overall, I discuss Groulx's film as one that challenges Third Cinema's relationship to the nation-state, while focusing on this filmmaker's engagement with the historical and sociopolitical moment of early 1970s Québec and the links his practice suggests with the Latin American contexts that generated Third Cinema theory. Thus, by reading 24 heures ou plus both formally and through a sociopolitical and

historical perspective, I attempt here to discern openings, which promote the reimagining of a contemporary radical film practice in Québec with potentially wide-ranging applications.

A Third Cinema Text in Québec

Intended for release in 1973, but censored by the NFB until 1977, 24 heures ou plus constitutes an almost two-hour long audio-visual dissection of events reported in Québec media over a period of two months, November and December 1971. The film creates a portrait of Québec society at this moment in time via a montage of interviews, archival and documentary footage, scenes of everyday life, and still images from various newspapers rearranged and juxtaposed so as to challenge their preconceived and intuitive interpretations. The film also features commentary by Groulx and his collaborator, Marxist political scientist Jean-Marc Piotte. Both of these men convey explanations directly to the viewer, their own images appearing periodically, enclosed within the film's visual frame. Together, the vignettes that Groulx imparts give the pulse of Québécois political dissatisfaction in the wake of the 1970 October Crisis, 30 and in the lead-up to Québec's only general strike in 1972. Overall, the images assembled contribute to an argument supporting the film's call for radical change and confirm its status as a Third Cinema text.

As one of Québec's most committed directors, whose body of work displays an increasingly sophisticated engagement with the political function of cinema, Groulx provides an appropriate reference for Québec cinema's relationship with politics. Once a protégé of

³⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the October Crisis of 1970 was an emergency situation provoked by the abductions of British Trade Commissioner James Cross and Québec labour minister Pierre Laporte by Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) paramilitaries, and by the Canadian government's disproportionate reaction to these events. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's uncompromising stance led to Canada's only peacetime recourse to the War Measures Act, the mobilization of armed forces and suspension of *habeas corpus*. During this period, nearly 500 suspected FLQ sympathizers were arrested and held without charge.

Automatiste painter Paul-Émile Borduas, and an inheritor of the revolutionary purpose of Borduas' seminal, avant-garde manifesto, *Refus global* (1948),³¹ Groulx was also a collaborator and peer of iconic Québécois filmmakers, Claude Jutra and Michel Brault, as well as an inspiration to the internationally successful Denys Arcand. Groulx's groundbreaking role in the genesis of modern Québec cinema thus raises him as an emblematic national figure even if such honours are more often attributed to Pierre Perrault. Clearly diverging from Perrault's work, Groulx represents a less easily assimilated, but no less defining strand of filmmaking in Québec. His monumental presence stretches back to his co-direction, with Brault, of *Les raquetteurs* (1958), heralding the advent of *cinéma direct* and Perrault's own methods. His first feature, *Le chat dans le sac* (1964), also denotes a key moment when, along with Perrault's *Pour la suite du monde* (*For the Ones to Come*, 1963) and Jutra's À *tout prendre* (*Take it All*, 1963),³² it marked what is commonly perceived as the birth of modern Québécois cinema. As such, his role in shaping the NFB's legendary French Unit understandably warrants his consecration as one of Québec's most important filmmakers.

24 heures ou plus marks a culminating point in Groulx's career trajectory and captures a pivotal moment in Québec politics and history. The structure of this film brings together numerous themes through its broad collation of contemporaneous events, and enables Groulx to synthesize subjects driving his filmmaking practice, which Jean-Pierre Bastien summarizes as always being "at the service of an illustration and of a denunciation of the society in which we live" (3). As such, the insertion of Groulx's own image at various points during 24 heures ou

³¹ *Refus global* is a radical anti-establishment, anti-clerical manifesto penned in 1948 by Québec painter Paul-Émile Borduas and signed by 14 other artists and intellectuals. Though its publication led to Borduas's exile to Europe, this document has since been hailed as a key precursor of Québec's Quiet Revolution.

³² Although this film title is commonly listed in English as *Take It All*, the French expression "À tout prendre" is more accurately translated in English as "All Things Considered."

plus literalizes the film's representativeness of his work. However, 24 heures ou plus also displays a paradoxical sense of self-effacement, of the author's subordination as mere messenger and unifier of a composite tale emerging from its own organic telling. Indeed, 24 heures ou plus represents an intersection where not only Groulx's philosophical and artistic paths integrate, but where the gauge of Québécois society and its mediation through cinema are also reflected upon and powerfully communicated.

From a broader historical and geographical perspective, the thirty-year period leading up to 1970, and therefore culminating just a few years before 24 heures ou plus, exhibits what historian Gérard Bouchard describes as the "patterns of disengagement" of Québécois intellectuals from metropolitan French artistic models. According to Bouchard, this period sees the culture of Québécois elites, for centuries split from the general population because of its attachment to old France, at this moment bringing itself closer to the popular culture of the majority, a tradition he describes as "... the culture of the common people, who were deeply immersed in the reality and dreams of the continent, both far and near" (80). Bouchard traces a cultural division in Québec between elites and the people, dating back to before the British conquest of 1760. He notes the demarcation between these two social groups on a number of cultural fronts, and especially in terms of the idiom employed by each of them. Bouchard states: "the already growing gulf between North American and European forms of speech prefigured the antinomy that would grow between a popular culture absorbed by the continent and an elite culture bound to the French model" (69). According to Bouchard, the rapprochement between these two socially stratified cultures in post-WWII Québec resulted in the Quiet Revolution, during which "a large part of the elite culture drew closer to popular culture and even undertook to legitimize the latter's features by integrating them into its discourse. The language of the

people, once so decried, was admitted into the novel, poetry, theatre, cinema, and television series" (128-9). This phenomenon, anticipated by popular sections of Québec society decades before the Quiet Revolution, finds relevance in Groulx's career and in the "new" cinema he helped inaugurate. It also manifests itself in *24 heures ou plus*, which combines Brechtian formal principles and Marxist dialectical reflection with penetrating interviews engaging working-class Montrealers, overlaid with a soundtrack penned by legendary Québécois rock band Offenbach.

Significantly, Bouchard's comparative study of Québécois and Latin American experiences on the continent reveals that the period noted above, culminating in 1970, marks a stage of considerably increased resemblance, one in which Québec's relationship with the idea of américanité, or Americanness, quickly catches up to a more gradual development of this phenomenon in Latin America. According to Bouchard, "the parallelism between the two narratives is striking: in its own way, and in abbreviated form, Quebec's recent history reproduces the broad trends of Latin America's past. This is evident in the disengagement from Europe that affected ideology, literature, and the arts..." (178). Using literature as an example, Bouchard notes that during this period in Québec, certain writers "displayed a technique of symbolic liberation that consisted in profaning the masterpieces of metropolitan culture through parody, by plastering them with the least *commendable*, and simultaneously the most authentic, elements of local culture," while for others "[a]n almost pedagogical intention urged the display of ugliness as a foil in order to provoke a reaction of self-censorship." Bouchard's inference of an analogous relationship between these practices and Brazilian cultural anthropophagy (130-1) evokes Roy Armes' description of the conflicting relationship with European traditions apparent in Glauber Rocha's work, "which, while drawing on Western source elements, inverts and distorts these same elements so as to produce meanings that are radically new" (257).

This suggests an extension of Bouchard's analogy to similarities between the cinemas of Québec and Latin America. Indeed, the aesthetics Rocha proposes, based in hunger and violence, are comparable in their will to subvert European models and to call attention to the particular brand of direct cinema practiced in Québec, foregrounding local speech and reflexively calling attention to itself. These features, in Bouchard's terms, fit into a "disengagement" from European metropoles. In accordance with these parallels, Mariano Mestman's research on the Rencontres internationales pour un nouveau cinéma, held in Montreal in 1974, has convincingly revealed the important transnational impact of this initiative and tends to confirm a certain convergence between Québec and Latin American radical filmmaking. Significantly, Groulx was an active participant in André Paquet's Comité d'Action Cinématographique and in the Rencontres which ensued from it. This event, organized by Paquet and attended by Espinosa, Solanas and other committed filmmakers and theorists from Latin America, Québec and elsewhere, occurred precisely during the five-year censorship ban imposed by the NFB on 24 heures ou plus. Clearly, the context of this film's production and its objectives echo a preoccupation with Third Cinema common to filmmakers in the Americas during the early 1970s.

Groulx's formal choices, juxtaposing close-ups of newspaper headlines, and offering interviews with everyday people, marginalized individuals, and public figures, establish his aim to probe beyond the surface of conventional media. This, and the fact that Groulx directly beckons the audience to engage in both criticism and action, aligns his film with the broad principles of Third Cinema. But it is the filmmaker's overt subjectivity that constitutes the most interesting and ambiguous marker of Third Cinema in 24 heures ou plus. Indeed, Groulx's fully assumed subjectivity brings out the contradictory nature of this issue in Third Cinema theory. It remains unclear whether 24 heures ou plus "show[s] the process, which generates the problems"

as Espinosa advocates in "For an Imperfect Cinema" (81), or whether it pronounces a verdict based on its own judgment. Through its lengthy final monologue enumerating the ills of Québécois society that surface throughout the film, 24 heures ou plus brings Groulx to conclude that: "Our life, our observations, these images that we have filmed, all convince us that the present structures are incompatible with a society where workers control their work, their production, and where economic development is directed according to the needs of mankind..." This statement creates a tension between the need for transparency and a frank unveiling of subjectivity on the one hand, and what Espinosa describes as "show[ing] the process of a problem... without commentary" (81). Though Groulx's commentary is intermittent and does not correspond to "a style of news reporting that puts more emphasis on the commentary than on the news item" (81), it is clear from Espinosa's standpoint, that Groulx's film struggles to place equal weight on transparent subjectivity and showing the process that leads to alienation. However, Groulx's subordination of his monologue to the revelatory power of the filmed images also draws the film close to Espinosa's overall vision of imperfect cinema. For Groulx, the few "short texts" read to the audience serve to "bring a few clarifications," and thus imply that the film's primary meaning lies within the images themselves rather than in supporting comments. Clearly, these images endeavour to show a process ignored by the kind of news reporting that Espinosa condemns, while inserted shots and juxtapositions of news headlines and article clippings underscore a desire for elucidation rather than interpretation.

Likewise, Groulx's probing analysis remains consistent with the impulse to show the process to the extent of dissecting his own subjectivity. Indeed, Groulx's dogged pursuit of demystifying strategies reflects the thoroughness of his practice, itself constantly under his own scrutiny. The incisive self-reflexion of his method echoes Solanas and Getino's comments that

"[t]he decolonization of the filmmaker and of films will be simultaneous acts to the extent that each contributes to collective decolonization. The battle begins without, against the enemy who attacks us, but also within, against the ideas and models of the enemy to be found inside each one of us" (56). As such, Groulx foregrounds his internal process as a decolonizing individual, an undertaking that he also solicits from viewers. Thus, as Groulx extends his exposition to both personal and collective instruments of control, he blurs their absolute separation, while simultaneously moving to bridge the objectivity-subjectivity problematic. This in turn extends to a blurring of the dichotomy between universalism and essentialism raised by Barclay. In 24 heures ou plus, Groulx's uncompromising self-critical stance provides checks on a vision driven nonetheless by an insider perspective not unlike Barclay's "interiority," but with specific origins and applications in Western tradition.

Evidently, Groulx's subjectivity goes beyond narcissism. Indeed, it serves precisely opposite ends and corresponds instead to Espinosa's advocacy of "the disappearance of the director as star" (82). The de-centring of both responsibility and recognition transpires immediately in Groulx's announcement of Piotte's co-authorship, visually impressed by an alternation between Piotte's framed image and his own, and in Groulx's acknowledgement of the crew's contribution, where he lists, one after another, the names of those constituting the film's small, but versatile team. Beyond these gestures, by sharing his personal opinions (and Piotte's), Groulx paradoxically lessens their weight and his status as auteur, placing his own perspective alongside the audience's and juxtaposing it with the facts revealed through the re-assembly of media images. As such, Groulx refrains from positioning himself as "the true interpreter of society" (Espinosa 73), and attempts to dissolve the gap between filmmaker and spectator. He places the burden of interpreting society on the group itself as a collective, but includes himself

within it and therefore expresses his opinion on a par with others. His individual take on the world combined with his insistence on collective interpretation mirrors the tendency remarked in Espinosa towards a simultaneous collectivism and individualism (77). These seemingly incommensurable concepts mirror the combination of subjectivity and objective judgement emphasized by the call to refrain from pronouncing a verdict, a dissolution of art made explicit by Espinosa, but echoed by Solanas and Getino who note that in their exhibition practices "[they] discovered a new facet of cinema: the *participation* of people who, until then, were considered *spectators*" (54).

Groulx achieves this communal participation precisely through the projection of his own image. The conversation-trigger, or "detonator" effect identified by Solanas and Getino (55), whereby the film is only a pretext for the spectator to begin the transition towards becoming a political actor, is built-in to 24 heures ou plus with Groulx's image framed concentrically within several shots. As a result, this strategy anticipates and attenuates his loss of control over distribution, ultimately held by the NFB. Along these lines, Marion Froger argues that the "nous" employed on screen by Piotte and Groulx foregrounds their complicity with one another and with the spectator, perceptible in the humble, yet candid tone in which they address the audience, thereby encouraging a sense of community ("Le documentaire québécois" 208-9). This attitude evidently overlaps with the principles guiding Cuban Revolutionary Cinema, which emphasize popular participation as a desirable aspect of filmmaking. "The new outlook for artistic culture is no longer that everyone must share the taste of a few," states Espinosa, "but that all can be creators of that culture" (76). Through indications of complicity then, Groulx and his collaborators explicitly invite the spectator to take part in collective political action, and implicitly involve viewers in the process of instilling meaning in the film, thereby accentuating

the creative contribution of crew members and viewers, a standpoint expressed in the opening statement: "This film is a suspense because its outcome depends on us all."

Groulx as Transnational Filmmaker

Notwithstanding its cultural specificity and active promotion of community, 24 heures ou plus does not refrain from attacking co-optations of national culture, however sacred and enshrined in the popular imagination. Thus, Groulx reminds spectators of the double-edged nature of nationalism and the danger of deviating from its use as revolutionary mechanism for genuine liberation. Indeed, 24 heures ou plus boldly strikes at the conformity engineered by local sports culture via the iconic Montreal Canadiens Hockey Club. Here, Groulx links a news item announcing the sale of the club from the Molson family to a consortium led by the Bronfman family, two commercial empires built on alcohol sales, to a still image of a caricature mocking well-known hockey heroes' professed ignorance of contemporary social problems. Meanwhile, Piotte sardonically reads a letter to a newspaper from a hockey fan defending the players' uncommitted stance. By scrutinizing the role of hockey alongside wider news events, Groulx exposes the depoliticization of potentially dangerous cultural forms. The System, Groulx argues, renders a hugely popular Québécois activity such as hockey apolitical, places it in the service of general apathy, and neutralizes its aptitude for insurrectionary expression. This capacity had already marked Québec history with the Maurice Richard riots of 1955, an irruption of violence reacting to discrimination against Francophone players widely perceived as anticipating the Quiet Revolution. Significantly, Groulx had previously included newsreel footage of this disturbance in his short film *Un jeu si simple* (1964), which was cut by the NFB (P. Hébert, Landry and Lever 296). In 24 heures ou plus, Groulx reminds viewers of the political history

associated with this sport in Québec by filming a rally of the three largest Québec trade unions at the legendary Montreal Forum, home of the *Canadiens*, a choice that Paul Beaucage describes as "a unifying strategy" (180). In this way, Groulx irreverently substitutes hockey with politics as the national pastime of the Québécois.

In spite of consistent formal experimentation, Groulx's work ultimately tends to subordinate form to content. This stylistic tendency culminates with 24 heures ou plus, and although Groulx stresses that the elucidatory capacity of this film lies not in the events portrayed, but in their presentation (Perreault & Tadros 35), he also acknowledges 24 heures ou plus as his most engaged film and attributes this to the quality of its subject matter (Bonneville 402). "With Groulx," Carol Faucher states, "ethics always seems to preside over the definition of cinematic aesthetics" (2). Groulx himself progressively ascribes less importance to aesthetics: "I am realizing that aesthetics is dependent on reality. In fact, it doesn't exist; it is a form of seduction" (qtd in Lafrance 154). In this respect, Groulx concurs with Jorge Sanjinés' view that "[r]evolutionary cinema must seek beauty not as an end but as a means." Like Sanjinés, Groulx also seeks the proper "dialectical interrelation between beauty and cinema's objectives, which must be aligned to produce effective work" (62). By extension, nationalism, for all its emotive impact, also functions in Groulx's work as an ideal that serves not as an end but as a political means to social liberation.

Accordingly, the two-month period covered by 24 heures ou plus doesn't simply focus on Québec, but coincides with noteworthy international events, including the Vietnam War, Salvador Allende's reforms in Chile, the Black Panther movement in the United States, and tensions in Northern Ireland. The decision to capture this period via newspaper headlines ensures an engagement with contemporary issues both local and global. The film covers a wide variety of

stories, accepting conventional media's proposal of what makes the news, but reacting creatively to it, and thereby showing both the surface and depth of political and cultural events governing this period. Though Groulx assembles a diversity of topics in order to communicate his own political viewpoint, he does not place items in any hierarchical order, but discovers surprising insights in apparently trivial observations. Thus, 24 heures ou plus exploits the parameters set by traditional media to reveal the deeper signification of news events, juxtaposing them based on their elucidating possibilities and on temporal simultaneity. In this sense, the film ostensibly adheres to the synchronic simultaneity upon which Benedict Anderson bases his famous conception of "imagined communities." However, instead of temporally unifying the nation, the coincidence of news information occurs along class lines and transnationally, thereby destabilizing common assumptions about nationhood.

Furthermore, 24 heures ou plus builds on its subversion of the synchronically aligned information generated by news media by also exposing the diachronic transnational history of workers' struggles. Most notably, the film captures a speech by legendary union leader and activist Michel Chartrand, who lists significant moments of repression in the history of labour movements worldwide, culminating in the death of a protester in Québec and praising the nationalization of copper mines in Chile by Salvador Allende. This history succinctly places the viewer in a wider geographical and historical context, while shedding light on the present specificity of events unfolding in Québec. Intercut with workers chanting ironically about recent police violence, images promising underground paramilitary action dispel any simplistic dismissal of radical options by revealing their antecedents. The workers' chant, combined with the evocation of retaliatory violence, reveals the determining effect of state repression, referencing Montreal's 1968 lundi de la matraque (Truncheon Monday), during which police

used indiscriminate force to control a crowd. Moreover, the transition from this scene to a freezeframed succession of still images that maintains the audio continuity of Chartrand's speech
evokes Walter Benjamin's Messianic time, where painful moments from the past are frozen into
a constellation with present ones, blasting open the continuum of time and thereby forming a
revolutionary opportunity. As such, the film as a whole demystifies the apparent randomness of
current events, and reveals profound interconnections across national spaces that follow
homogeneous and empty time, and yet seizes iconic political images to allude to a fusion, across
Messianic time, of past, present and future revolutionary moments.

In view of these connections, 24 heures ou plus, while continuing Groulx's career-long enquiry into Québécois society, marks a definite step towards an increasingly transnational outlook. Though Groulx's earlier productions display some of the first notable cinematic presentations of Québec's intercultural character, these early films tend to interrogate Québec introspectively. In contrast, 24 heures ou plus systematically begins the process of situating Québec globally, in a patterned relationship with other nations and stateless national movements. Thus, in an effort to underline contemporaneous international dissent, Groulx inserts footage connected to events such as demonstrations against nuclear tests carried out by Nixon, an anti-Vietnam war poetry reading, and a screening of *The Murder of Fred Hampton* (Howard Alk, 1971) at the Cinémathèque québécoise. Accompanied by text stressing that despite feelings of isolation, the Québécois share common objectives with other groups in the United States, these references situate Québec firmly within the Americas and serve to challenge what Bouchard calls the "false uniqueness" of Québec's situation. Such elements help explain the NFB's incapacity to tolerate Groulx's radical stance. Considering Sanjinés' observation that "[a]nti-imperialist films are especially persecuted where they are likely to bring about change" (66), the extension of

Groulx's political reflection on Québec beyond the conceptual frame of national borders and his orientation towards transnational revolutionary solidarity seemingly indicate the limit of tenable discourse within the NFB's institutional structure as Groulx exposes a powerful symbiosis between dominant economic systems and the state institution, prompting the latter to impose a five-year ban on the film.

Piotte's view, that censorship removed 24 heures ou plus from the relevance of its context, and thereby nullified the film's potency at the time of its intended release in 1973, undoubtedly constitutes an accurate assessment of the NFB's intentions and of the effects of their response. However, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, in another key Third Cinema text, "The Viewer's Dialectic," evokes the persistence of the revolutionary potential packed into re-viewing audiovisual material that depicts previous moments of insurgence. He observes that in times of crisis such as the Cuban revolution or fascist coup in Chile, documentary captures the extraordinary nature of events better than fiction, which, more appropriately, "penetrate[s] reality's essence" during less disturbed times (129-130). Although not comparable in amplitude to events in Cuba and Chile, on the scale of Québec's recent history, the 1970 October Crisis and its repercussions constitute an inherently critical moment. This further explains the power of 24 heures ou plus, which, as Yves Lever points out, enunciates no more explicitly radical a proposition than "to change the System" (243). Clearly, the images' connection to events occurring in the wake of the crisis, fuel the inflammatory potential of the film. Thus, Alea's contention that documentary is a more effective tool during moments of insurgence than fiction, which becomes more useful later, points to the imaginative potential of gaps in temporal continuity that augment mutually distant periods of revolt.

Indeed, Alea's comments indirectly prescribe the creation of historical markers from which future revolutionary instants might prophetically emerge to form the trans-temporal constellations that Benjamin describes. As such, Groulx's film combines its synchronic simultaneity with the promise of future texts interlocking with it in accordance with Benjamin's Messianic time and in opposition to the homogeneous and empty time of "progress" and the nation-state. Despite its eviction from the era of political disruption to which it belongs, 24 heures ou plus does not simply constitute a valuable document akin to what Alea recognizes in newsreels as "a body of material that is testimony to an epoch" (117). It also captures a controversial moment surrounding its own censorship and inscribes the repressions evoked in the film into a diachronic simultaneity that fuses with contemporary injustices affecting the present. This Benjaminian crystallization across time complements the film's concern for linking the struggles of marginalized peoples both locally and globally. In this way, 24 heures ou plus, in spite of and indeed partly as a result of its suppression, serves as a prototypical model for ongoing resistance in Québec cinema.

Commenting on the NFB ban, Groulx states: "they said I hadn't adhered to my initial project, and that instead of making a film that opens up onto hope, I made one that advocates the destruction of the capitalist system. But for me, destroying the system, that's what hope is" (Perreault & Tadros 35). Thus, while Groulx's earlier films might fit "within the alternatives that are still offered by the *second cinema*," *24 heures ou plus* clearly transgresses the economic system that underpins the NFB's mandate to uphold the Canadian nation-state. The film therefore fulfils Solanas and Getino's description of "a cinema outside and against the System" (42-43). Indeed, *24 heures ou plus* recalls the main Fanonian themes, which Robert Stam identifies in *The Hour of the Furnaces*: "the psychic stigmata of colonialism," "the therapeutic

value of anti-colonial violence," and especially "the urgent necessity of a new culture and a new human being" (31). The idea of radical cultural and social reinvention coupled with Groulx's transnational inclinations leads 24 heures ou plus logically and paradoxically beyond the nationstate paradigm in spite of Groulx's own nationalist impulses. Indeed, Groulx's existing relationship to the NFB foreshadows this paradox, since, as Réal La Rochelle observes, "[i]t would long remain one of the most contradictory historical facts that this boisterous birth of a 'national' Québécois cinema occurred inside a Canadian government apparatus, which never intended it and always renounced it" (284). But, more subtly, Groulx also harbours a paradoxical relationship to the idea of Québec nation-statehood. His attempt to rouse the Québécois people is unquestionably tied to the idea of a national struggle for independence. However, this aim does not exhibit factional loyalty and instead depends on a progressive conception of national culture that figures in a current La Rochelle describes as: "... our most significant explosion of political films and videotapes, the most important of which would be banned by political censorship, and which would touch upon practically all aspects of workers', community and cultural struggles, and those of nearly all social marginalities" (286).

The Encounter with Indigenous Cinema

For La Rochelle, an important schism at the heart of the NFB French-language documentary gives rise to another major tendency epitomized by Perrault, which he describes as "ultranationalist," first manifesting itself in films on Québécois folklore, then in "openly pro-PQ" political films (286). Criticizing their idea of a prototypical Québécois man, veneration of the past and of traditions, search for country and ancestors, view of the nation-state as a conscience for the masses, and ethnocentricity, La Rochelle considers these films to be subversive, but not

progressive (285). In contrast, Groulx's attacks on federalist politicians in 24 heures ou plus cannot be reduced to polarities encapsulated by traditional party politics in Québec and Canada. More complex, Groulx's defence of sovereignty is not limited to the Francophone majority. Indeed, his treatment of Cree dissatisfaction with the James Bay dam project shows his unhesitant positioning of Québec as colonizer. Moreover, Groulx does not limit himself to demonizing Robert Bourassa³³ and federalist liberals, but also addresses the emerging nationalist hegemony in Québec cinema represented onscreen by Perrault's appearance in 24 heures ou plus during a sequence filmed at the launch of the Recherches amérindiennes au Québec. Though ostensibly genuine, Perrault's sympathy for First Nations is submerged by his inability to deal with Québec's role as colonizer, an attitude that translates into a patronizing miscomprehension of Cree concerns. Thus, Groulx highlights the double role of Québec as colonizer and colonized. Inserting interviews and dialogues with Cree representatives, he documents their reactions to Bourassa's hydroelectric dam project and its environmental and social impact. Tellingly, Groulx here minimizes directorial commentary and limits his intervention to the arrangement of images, which comprise a freeze frame on Cree spokesperson, Philip Awashish, superimposed with the title: "This man has not been heard for 250 years. The time has come now for Amerindians to speak and for others to listen."

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³³ Liberal Premier of Québec from 1970 to 1976, and again from 1985 to 1994.



Figure 27: Pierre Perrault meets Cree delegates. 24 heures ou plus (Gilles Groulx, 1973/1977).

The freeze frame on Philip Awashish during the First Nations sequence of 24 heures ou plus echoes Groulx's earlier use of this device during Michel Chartrand's speech outlining the history of workers' struggles. This parallel therefore implies the importance of Indigenous peoples' own voices and histories alongside, but not reduced to, the social struggles of marginalized settler colonial populations. In this respect, Indigenous cinema forms its own references, and Alanis Obomsawin's Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance, which documents the 1990 Oka Crisis, 34 also marks an interesting parallel with 24 heures ou plus. Indeed, many elements render an analogy between Groulx and Obomsawin possible. Both their films treat pivotal periods of political unrest, centring on the 1970 October Crisis and the 1990 Oka Crisis respectively. Both directors emerge as organic intellectuals from marginalized groups on behalf of whom they advocate. In addition, Groulx and Obomsawin both assume their subjectivity via their presence onscreen and through oral commentary. Both films are motivated primarily by the

³⁴ The Oka Crisis occurred in the summer of 1990 when Mohawk activists at the village of *Kanehsatake* in Québec blocked a road to protest the extension of a golf course onto their sacred burial grounds. The situation escalated when the Québec police force attempted to use force against the Mohawks and Corporal Marcel Lemay, a member of the Québec police force, the *Sûreté du Québec (SQ)*, was killed in the ensuing crossfire. The Mohawks at the nearby reserve of *Kahnawake* also supported this protest by blocking the Mercier bridge which runs between their land and the island of Montreal. The Canadian armed forces were eventually called in to replace the *SQ* and the crisis drew worldwide attention for the Mohawk cause.

desire to demystify skewed media representation, notably concerning violence, and by a similar will to call on the history of antecedent injustices to explicate and endorse resistance. Also, Groulx and Obomsawin, through their positions as NFB filmmakers, share the predicament of dealing with its demands as a state institution. In Québec, the NFB represented the only viable option for Groulx as a Francophone filmmaker starting his career in the late 1950s. This constraint is all the more true of Obomsawin as the NFB's pathbreaking Indigenous filmmaker in the 1970s. Although their situation as resistant artists working within the state apparatus seems contradictory, the compromise inherent to such a position enabled their contestation of the NFB, a structure tested by both filmmakers. Stylistically, 24 heures ou plus and Kanehsatake both subordinate form to content, allow long takes to capture interviews uninterrupted, and spread points of view across multiple protagonists in spite of the directors' emphatic presence. On this last point, Randolph Lewis contests Zuzanna Pick's and Laura Marks' descriptions of Kanehsatake as an inclusive, multivocal text, and stresses instead Obomsawin's strong authorial voice (96-97), a divergence of opinion that actually evidences the simultaneous presence of a strong subjectivity and of a diffuse, collective point of view. This combination is also characteristic of Groulx, for whom 24 heures ou plus marks a departure from the earlier univocality of his first feature Le chat, and echoes Sanjinés' own decision to "[do] away with [an] individual protagonist" (65).

Also commenting on Obomsawin's work, Jerry White has proposed an unlikely lineage between her filmmaking practice and the didactic documentary methods favoured by NFB founder John Grierson in spite of their clearly opposed views on nationhood. Citing Anderson's notion of imagined community "as a deep horizontal comradeship," White illustrates how Obomsawin positions herself as an engaged advocate of pan-Indigenous solidarity and

consequently as an artist whose output "ha[s] the thematic consistency of a national cinema" with respect to First Nations. Emboldened by White's insightful analogy, but placing greater stress on Obomsawin's minority nationalist and activist objectives, we might draw a similar parallel between her work and Groulx's own national cinema as one that bears the potential for a shared resistance alongside Obomsawin's, but which remains steadfastly opposed to the federal nation-state or to a hypothetical Québec alternative equally constructed upon capitalist principles. Based on 24 heures ou plus, it is clear that Groulx's "horizontal comradeship" matures into a transnational idea. It reaches beyond borders to paradigmatic situations of inequality abroad, while within its own geographical context it strives to erase hierarchies based on markers of ethnic difference. Interestingly, this tendency is confirmed by Groulx's penultimate film, *Première question sur le bonheur* (First Question About Happiness, 1977) with which he returns to the NFB after the five-year ban imposed on 24 heures ou plus, and where he adopts a participatory filmmaking approach to document the struggle of Indigenous farmers against land owners in the Oaxaca region of Mexico.

Thus, in seeking an adequate non-Indigenous cinematic paradigm that can usefully parallel and perhaps complement the Fourth Cinema proposed by Barclay, one based on the ancient core principles of Indigenous peoples and stressing its existence "outside the national orthodoxy" (9-10), Third Cinema remains a plausible, if flawed, blueprint upon which to build. Groulx's innovative deployment of Third Cinema, which detaches it from a conventional sense of the nation and brings it closer to a transnational opposition between popular and dominant cultures, also permits a heterogeneity that respects the independence of an Indigenous outlook. Therefore, a Third Cinema moulded on Groulx's *24 heures ou plus* potentially also stands in contrast to national orthodoxy, although evidently not outside it in the way Barclay conceives of

Fourth Cinema. We can affirm, however, that Groulx's film stands *against* a national orthodoxy of which it is a part, and which his footage has revealed as socially inadequate and unacceptable. And while Third Cinema cannot deny its own status as an "invader cinema," it can redefine its relationship to the nation as a result of Fourth Cinema's influence. At the same time, just as Indigenous features stand on the shoulders of *Kanehsatake*, contemporary radical Québécois films potentially enter into a constellation of diachronic simultaneity with *24 heures ou plus*.

In this respect, Alea's comments on the importance of fiction in the years after the revolution prove interesting insofar as they interrogate how cinema should "cause the viewer to acquire a new socio-political awareness" (110), and logically suggest the equally important development of a heightened awareness of the nation's historical and ongoing colonial relationship with Indigenous peoples. Significantly, Barclay also understands Fourth Cinema as consisting of feature-length fictions. In this respect, Obomsawin's documentary sets up productive connections between First Nations history, contemporaneous events, and preoccupations that eventually drive Québec's inaugural Fourth Cinema texts: Yves Sioui Durand's *Mesnak* (2011), Jeff Barnaby's *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013), and Sonia Bonspille Boileau's *Le Dep* (2015). Moreover, as Alea recommends, these texts are open-ended and provide a "disturbance in the midst of daily reality" as well as "a bridge to reality so that viewers can return laden with [socially productive] experiences and stimulation" (123).

Evidently then, aside from addressing Indigenous peoples, Fourth Cinema potentially raises the awareness of non-Indigenous spectators. But responsibility in fulfilling these objectives lies increasingly with non-Indigenous peoples. As with Cuba, where "greater and greater responsibility falls on the masses" (Alea 109), settler directors and spectators also need to "develop ways of understanding problems, of strengthening their ideological coherence and of

reaffirming daily the principles which give life to the Revolution." In Québec's case, of course, this substitutes for the decolonizing ideals of the Quiet Revolution. And whereas Fourth Cinema operates according to Indigenous core principles, Québécois films do so more plausibly within Western frameworks, which correspond to their own cultural modes of communication. In this respect, Benjamin's notion of Messianic time offers a compatible structure linking present-day Québécois films with the radical aspirations of 24 heures ou plus as an exemplary forerunner. In addition, the dialectical relationship generated from such a connection, through its subversion of the nation-state in both synchronic and diachronic temporal realms, proposes a version of Third Cinema positively reconsidered via its convergence with Indigenous cinema's political aims. Such an approach proves more proximate to the oft-cited Indigenous principle of the two-row wampum, intended as a template for harmonious, non-hierarchical, non-encroaching, mutually enriching relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Conclusion

While commentators might be tempted to doubt the Indigenous specificity of the Fourth Cinema features produced thus far in Québec, it is important to remember Barclay's emphasis on "interiority." *Mesnak*, *Rhymes*, and *Le Dep* all reflect their directors' cultural history and familiarity with Indigenous references. This also applies analogically to Groulx's nationalism, which Barclay might have also understood as a kind of interiority, not as facile essentialism, but as an acknowledgement of a profound cultural specificity and awareness. Conversely, recognizing that he didn't possess the cultural interiority to engage with Indigenous topics adequately, Groulx respectfully chose to minimize his own voice at such moments, a tactic that has earned him unfair and oversimplifying criticism. Indeed, Beaucage condemns Groulx's

willingness to let the Indigenous villagers of Santa Gertrudis write their own script for *Première question sur le bonheur*, to develop the film as a tool for their own ends, for communication with adjacent communities, and to build solidarity against abusive landlords. In Beaucage's view, "[t]he residents of Santa Gertrudis have an exhaustive knowledge of their mode of life.

Conversely, they know little – except through a few vague cinematic intuitions – about the rules that are proper to the seventh art." He adds: "[Groulx] does a disservice to his habitual public and does not reach the new public he sought to attain" (216-7). This narrow and hierarchical understanding of what cinema can be, placing Western notions of cinematic aesthetics and leftwing nationalism above an intimate understanding of Indigenous life and its own priorities, inadvertently demonstrates the validity of Barclay's claim that reading Indigenous texts depends on a cultural access that is particular to Fourth Cinema and its filmmakers, and thereby confirms the necessity of such a practice in the face of continued Western hegemony and miscomprehension.

In sum, 24 heures ou plus exemplifies how Third Cinema in Québec today might, as Benjamin puts it, "blast open the continuum of history" ("On the Concept of History" 396), and seize a moment appropriate for social justice and (trans)national liberation that circumvents and opposes both monopoly capital and the nation-state, while channelling cultural interiorities not reducible to superficial essentialisms. Instead, this approach recognizes the particular worldviews of Indigenous peoples as distinct from groups contending with national hegemonies from within this apparatus. As the Québec context attests, Barclay rightly notes the smallness of the Fourth Cinema corpus, and its existence as an idea still taking shape. Conversely, a Third Cinema practice that productively considers the parallel influence of a distinctly Indigenous cinema may yet comprise an even smaller number of films. In spite of Groulx's speculative but inspiring

model, few Québec features frontally interrogate Québec's settler colonialism, and put into application Alea's reflections on the creation of a popular cinema that raises awareness, in this case, surrounding the persistence of colonial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Section 2: Melancholia, Québec Nationhood, and Archiving Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance

Foreword: This essay was first presented publicly at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) in Chicago in 2013 before undergoing further revisions in preparation for submission to academic journals. The paper addresses how shared perspectives on storytelling inform unsettled questions surrounding Québec's colonial past. In the essay, I argue that Obomsawin's Kanehsatake not only depicts the Oka crisis and its pivotal role in provoking a reassessment of relationships between Indigenous peoples and Quebecers, but also highlights Québécois postcolonial melancholia. Drawing on postcolonial theory and Indigenous scholarship, I put forward that a periodically reawakened melancholia compels Québec to face contradictions concerning the nature and course of its national aspirations, and bolsters efforts to overturn dominant views on these issues.

Introduction

As Bill Marshall points out "[t]he native peoples represent one of the key political challenges to the Québec sovereingnist project" (239). The 1990 Oka Crisis, triggered when plans to extend a luxury golf course led Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) protestors to resist encroachment on their lands and defy Québec police and the Canadian army, remains one of the most salient reminders of this situation. As such, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993), Alanis Obomsawin's account of the standoff, and undoubtedly the most celebrated cinematic text by an Indigenous filmmaker in Québec, necessarily offers insights into the ways Indigenous modes of expression engage with their non-Indigenous counterparts. Indeed, Obomsawin's oft-cited goals of creating a bridge to non-Indigenous peoples, educating about Native cultures and provoking political change (Lewis;

White, "Alanis Obomsawin"; Cornellier, "The Thing"), as well as *Kanehsatake*'s politically explosive subject matter suggest that deeply-rooted clues about Québec's core preoccupations lie encrypted within the film's thematic and formal approaches.

Of course, the centrality of Indigenous storytelling in Obomsawin's work has been widely noted. Zuzanna Pick has emphasized this aspect most forcefully, arguing that Obomsawin's films validate Indigenous historiography ("Storytelling and Resistance" 82-83), while highlighting their "circulation of affect between protagonist and viewer" ("Storytelling and Resistance" 77). Jerry White has also stressed the emotional component of Obomsawin's work, linking this to her subjectivity, and, as discussed in the previous section, claiming that a combination of Griersonian utilitarianism and a radical critique of Québec and Canadian nationalism enables Obomsawin to propose an alternative view of the nation responsive to Indigenous peoples ("Alanis Obomsawin" 368-9). Likewise, Randolph Lewis, following Pick, has posited that solidarity and empathy form characteristics at the heart of Obomsawin's documentary practice rooted in Abenaki storytelling traditions (57-58). The position that I seek to outline builds on these observations, which indicate the negotiation of specifically Indigenous epistemologies and hybrid forms as a means of reaching out across cultural lines. More specifically, I propose to uncover overlapping attitudes to storytelling, affective understanding, and archival mechanisms as they apply to the communication and contestation of unresolved colonial legacies in Québec. I will argue that in addition to its exposure of injustice and commemoration of a moment which brings into question the nature of intercultural relationships, Kanehsatake draws attention to and reinvigorates postcolonial melancholia, a particularly potent concept in the context of Québec cinema's recurrent attempts to address national identity. Returning again to Ranjana Khanna's reconceptualization of melancholia as a channel for selfcriticism and empowerment, I propose that this sentiment prompts periodic confrontations with assumptions about Québec nationhood and its direction, and consequently augments the film's effectiveness in upsetting hegemonic perceptions.

As discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, whereas psychoanalysis defines melancholia as pathological in contrast with the healthy function of mourning, Khanna appropriates melancholia as a positive concept for postcolonial theory. For Freud, melancholia differs from mourning in the unconscious nature of the loss that provokes its symptoms. Of these signs, a pronounced and uninhibited self-deprecation also distinguishes it from its counterpart ("Mourning and Melancholia"). Khanna, on the other hand, seeing melancholia as an affect that provokes ethical self-reflection, critically reassesses and inverts Freud's binary. But while this revision provides a viable framework for investigating Québec, the interpretation of a film by an Indigenous filmmaker within a frame derived from dominant Western paradigms remains problematic. This intervention does not seek to decipher Indigenous meaning-making through a psychoanalytic lens, but rather to elucidate how the rhetorical structure of the film coincides provocatively with non-Indigenous models.

Kanehsatake's consideration of non-Indigenous viewpoints alongside the primacy of Indigenous expression reveals strategic possibilities for rousing subversive energies. This approach is consistent with Obomsawin's long-term aims of educating Canadians on Indigenous issues and traditions. It also converges with certain prominent scholarly strategies, including Taiaiake Alfred's application of Haudenosaunee condolence traditions as a basis for opposing colonialism in *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*. Using a two-pronged approach that addresses an Indigenous readership while remaining accessible to non-Indigenous readers, Alfred describes his desire to "convey some of the wisdom inherent in [Indigenous]

cultures," in the hope that it will "help others as well to deal with dysfunctional aspects of their own societies and to live better lives, collectively and individually" (21-22). In this vein, both Alfred and Obomsawin, though privileging Indigenous audiences, encourage the surfacing of ideas through forms that remain intelligible within Western traditions, all the while introducing structural changes to dominant methods of knowledge production. These tendencies are confirmed by Paula Gunn Allen's view of storytelling hybridity. As Julia Emberley points out, "Allen emphasizes the possible intertwining of Western and Indigenous storytelling traditions in such a way that elements of Western literary traditions become *embedded* in Native storytelling traditions and elements of the oral traditions become *embedded* in the Western literary traditions" (151). In view of these standpoints, the intersection of cultural impulses in a landmark film by an Indigenous director living in the territory now known as Québec provides a sound basis from which to explore means of inciting productive responses from Québécois viewers.

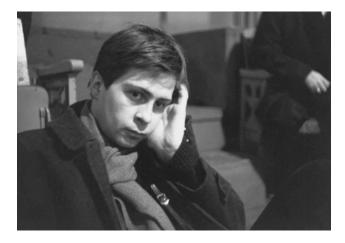


Figure 28: Claude: "Je suis Canadien français, donc je me cherche."

Le chat dans le sac (Gilles Groulx, 1964).

The specificity of Québec history provides a unique opportunity to reflect on the subversive potential of melancholia. The British conquest of New France in 1760 cut short French imperialist motives in North America and was followed by two centuries of English-

speaking minority domination until the rise of the modern Québec nationalist movement in the early 1960s. This history has encouraged Francophone Quebecers to see themselves ambiguously as both colonizer and colonized. Indeed, Albert Memmi, in the 1972 Québec edition of his famous study of these roles, addresses the question: "Les Canadiens français sont-ils des colonisés?" and posits a state of relative marginalization for Quebecers. A further example has La Presse editorialist Patrick Lagacé publish an article simply titled "Les colonisé(e)s," thereby invoking a popular insult to rebuke Quebecers who criticize their fellow nationals for insisting on being served in French in retail outlets and the service industry. These and other examples indicate the enduring currency of the label "colonisé" as both a despairing, self-critical admonition, and the subtle affirmation of national character. In Québec cinema, the question of identity dominates. Most famously, Gilles Groulx's protagonist in the 1964 prototypical text Le chat dans le sac declares matter-of-factly: "Je suis Canadien français, donc je me cherche" This theme, expressed more obliquely in recent years, returns with a vengeance in the controversial 2011 film Laurentie by Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie. Significantly, this film depicts a main character, whose search for identity is marked by an unfathomable, debilitating and ultimately violent melancholia, exacerbated by the arrival of an Anglophone neighbour. Indeed, the film's poster explicitly links this sadness to the national question, with the protagonist seen shedding a tear in the shape of a *fleur-de-lys*. Notwithstanding its frontal engagement with national anxiety, a memorable scene from Laurentie typifies Québécois melancholia as incommunicable, except perhaps through transcendental means. In this long and relentlessly intimate scene, it is only via the mysterious power of music that the protagonist and his two male friends manage to silently share their predicament. Thus, Laurentie suggests, a sense of loss connected to the

incompleteness of Québec's national status, notably through the failure of two sovereignty referenda in 1980 and 1995, remains internalized and takes on melancholic characteristics.



Figure 29: Incommunicable melancholy in Laurentie (Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie, 2011).

In her treatment, Khanna links melancholia to storytelling via Walter Benjamin. She posits that melancholia offers the means to "depar[t] from the idea of homogeneous and empty time," a sense of "synchronous simultaneity" which Benedict Anderson associates with nationstate formation and to the work of the journalist and novelist. In contrast, Khanna reminds us, Benjamin's storyteller is based on oral tradition and operates in Messianic time which implies a "diachronic simultaneity" between historical moments. For Khanna, melancholia's challenge to the temporal conditions that engender the nation-state is compounded by the haunting spectres of colonialism, which similarly create disjunctions in time, encouraging a search for justice in postcolonial contexts (15-16). Although colonial structures directed against Indigenous peoples persist across Canada, the postcolonial situation suggested by Khanna is ambiguously evocative of post-Quiet revolution Québec (from a non-Indigenous, Francophone perspective), thereby suggesting a predisposition for such positive invocations of melancholia. As such, the first lines of *Kanehsatake*, uttered via Obomsawin's voice-over, "The story you will see takes place near Montreal in Kanehsatake, a Mohawk village near the town of Oka...," which, as Pick demonstrates, frame events in Indigenous storytelling traditions, also evoke parallel Benjaminian notions of storytelling.³⁵ Indeed, Obomsawin's work shares several features with Benjamin's storyteller including a concern for usefulness, applicable wisdom, common values, instruction, and the capacity for multiple tellings handed down through generations ("The Storyteller" 145-6). To these overlaps, *Kanehsatake* adds a deep respect for the authority of the dead and an openended narrative. Messianic time, for Benjamin, relates to the idea of "appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger" ("On the Concept of History" 391). It occurs when, at a point of tension, thoughts freeze into a constellation between the present and a moment in the past, and these separate instants become clearly defined as a single unit. Here, Benjamin identifies "a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past" ("On the Concept of History" 396), where fusion with a historical moment gives the present a sense of urgency. Interestingly, Allen characterizes Indigenous novels as achronological to explain their impenetrability to non-Indigenous readers. Using examples from N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, and her own work, she observes that in these stories:

... events are structured in a way that emphasizes the motion inherent in the interplay of person and event. In them the protagonist wanders through a series of events that might have happened years before or that might not have happened to him or her personally, but that nevertheless have immediate bearing on the situation and the protagonist's understanding of it ("Sacred Hoop" 148).

In accord with Allen's general description, Abenaki stories specific to Obomsawin's background are traditionally passed down through the generations with each teller recounting the event as if she were witnessing it herself (Bruchac). For Allen, "[a]chronicity is the kind of time in which the individual and the universe are 'tight.' The sense of time that the term refers to is

³⁵ Anthony Adah also alludes to the similarity of *Kanehsatake* to Benjaminian storytelling in terms of its layering effect. See Adah, p. 171.

not ignorant of the future any more than it is unconscious of the past. It is a sense of time that connects pain and praise through timely movement, knitting person and surroundings into one" ("Sacred Hoop" 150). Thus, without simply equating Indigenous forms to Benjaminian conceptions of historical and storytelling time, we nevertheless find a shared resistance to chronology that challenges the Western reader, and which might be understood as counter-hegemonic. Pointing out that *Kanehsatake* follows a generally discernable chronology, both Pick and White nonetheless stress deviations that disrupt linearity and carry unmistakeable significance (Pick, "This Land" 184; White, "Alanis Obomsawin" 367). Allen's analysis confirms this pattern in Indigenous literature, citing Mourning Dove as an Indigenous writer who employs hybrid temporal structures that interrupt chronology "for sociopolitical ruminations" ("Sacred Hoop" 151).

In addition to storytelling, Khanna links the Gramscian notion of the organic intellectual to the work of melancholia. Intuitively, Western viewers may find in Obomsawin herself and the situation at Oka certain qualities of the organic intellectual and the historic conditions for her emergence. Khanna describes Gramsci's understanding of this figure as arising "from the people, possibly from the proletariat with an already constituted class consciousness, but possibly also from a subaltern group" (18-19). Obomsawin's personal experience of racism (Lewis 5-13), and her advocacy on behalf of Indigenous peoples, likens her to Gramsci's organic intellectual.

Conversely, this role appears at odds with Obomsawin's relationship to state hegemony within the NFB and her ambivalent defence of this institution (Lewis 49, 53; Cornellier, "The Thing" 9), a contradiction which Bruno Cornellier has incisively investigated, demonstrating the cooptation of Obomsawin's image by the federal institution and mainstream media. On the other hand, significant figures in Québécois cinema such as Gilles Groulx indicate the possibility of

radical filmmakers operating influentially from within this context. Indeed, Pick, citing Thomas Waugh, evokes Obomsawin's "full awareness of the contradictions at play" in her committed documentary practice ("Storytelling and Resistance" 77).

Notwithstanding the appropriateness of associating Obomsawin with the role of organic intellectual, Khanna imagines alternate spectral origins for this figure that link in with the haunting work of melancholia. She argues that "the organic intellectual emerges not only 'from the people', but also from what James Joyce's Hamlet, Stephen Dedalus, called *limbo patrum*, the limbo of the fathers." For Khanna, *limbo patrum* can be thought of as "the filiations and affiliations that haunt, and the affective iterations to which this haunting gives rise." As such Khanna sees it as "giving face to the dead or figure to the absent" (18). This emergence echoes the manner in which Obomsawin presents invisible forces in Kanehsatake. Following the opening prologue, Obomsawin's camera, accompanied by Kanien'kehá:ka chanting on the soundtrack, glides down the threatened pine trees until it frames the cemetery's gravestones, not only stressing the site's sacredness, but also evoking the presence of deceased ancestors, and underlining the film's historical charge made explicit by the subtitle "270 Years of Resistance." This almost prophetically foreshadows the film's most salient departure from chronology. Eloquently complementing symbols of physical and spiritual dispossessions at the heart of the colonial enterprise, the filmmaker flashes back to the historical origins of the dispute just as a military helicopter lands at the local Sulpicians's church. The insertion of still images at this point appropriately reinforces the suggestion of suspended time, and thereby establishes simultaneity across epochs in what Benjamin would describe as Messianic time. Importantly, Benjamin stresses "the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time takes a stand [einsteht] and has come to a stop" ("On the Concept of History," 396). In this respect,

Obomsawin's freeze-framing of the Oka crisis underscores the significance of the historical moment in a way that conjugates the objectives of storytelling and those of a revolutionary approach to history.

This idea converges with other empowering strategies employed by Indigenous artists and scholars, including Loretta Todd's documentary *The Learning Path* (1991), which reappropriates residential school experiences, and Alfred's understanding of the political need to deploy historical suffering to regenerate the present ("Peace, Power, Righteousness" 53). Moreover, Obomsawin's focus on an emblematic protagonist, Chief Sosé Onasakenrat, whose betrayal remains without retribution, lends weight to her argument in a manner akin to haunting via the spectral antecedents of the organic intellectual. The subsequent flash-forward, which returns the spectator to the contemporary crisis at the point of Chief Onasakenrat's incarceration, labels these precedents as a "sad legacy" and thereby highlights a sense of melancholic ingestion, distinct from the assimilation and a "coming to terms" of mourning. This offers further possibility for grasping images through their correspondence with Messianic time and its mining of power from "the image of enslaved ancestors rather than by the ideal of liberated grandchildren" ("On the Concept of History" 394). Thus, the film compounds and activates figures from the past, giving them a voice that imbues Obomsawin's denunciation with an ancestral power that complements melancholia. The structure and content of Kanehsatake reflect an Indigenous worldview as observed by Allen, who stresses the intrinsic connection of stories to "what has been experienced over the ages mystically and communally," as well as the dominance and extension of kinship to supernatural relationships ("Spider Woman" 4, 8, 25). But, as an upshot of these formal imperatives, Obomsawin does not assuage the affect of melancholia. Instead, she fuels its inherent critical agency, which Khanna sees as a self-critical

and ethical obligation towards the future that needs to be productively maintained. Thus, the non-Indigenous spectator, confronted with incontrovertible evidence of injustice, is also encouraged to revisit the roots of Québécois melancholia, adopt attitudes more receptive to Indigenous worldviews, and continuously strive towards more just conceptions of Québec's relationship with Indigenous peoples.

In Kanehsatake, the deployment of structures compatible with Messianic time and the spectral origins of the organic intellectual come together to direct empathy not only toward current events but also simultaneously towards different moments in the past. Moreover, the archiving of these affective mechanisms ensures their continuing effectiveness in forming further constellations with present and future moments. The inclusion of traditional media sources alongside Obomsawin's own interviews and footage underlines the contemporary application of Pick's claim that "[i]n Obomsawin's films, archival materials and found footage signify the historical conflict between the knowledge that First Nations people hold about themselves and the knowledge that others have constructed about Natives" ("Storytelling and Resistance" 83). Featuring prominently within the flashback narrative, the wampum belt that denotes agreements made between European settlers and the Kanien'kehá:ka people shows the contemporary legitimacy of Kanien'kehá:ka claims and marks a specific moment in time. The wampum belt itself belies assumptions about the absence of Indigenous archival technologies, and invalidates similar ideas concerning the incompatibility of oral traditions and their recording through various forms of graphic, sound and video publishing, suppositions which Allen characterizes as yet another way of marginalizing Indigenous aesthetic and cultural expression ("Sacred Hoop" 3). Significantly, the image of the wampum belt is explained through voice-over dramatization ascribed to another leader, Chief Augnita, and is closely juxtaposed with Chief Onasakenrat's

denunciation of the Sulpicians's treachery. By compounding static symbols from the past, activating them visually, and giving them a voice, Obomsawin creates synergy with the affective dimension of testimony in the manner alluded to by Khanna. Obomsawin's insertion of a voice-over for Chief Onasakenrat interrupting her own narration unifies past, present, and future struggles via the film's testimonial component, which Pick describes as complexly bound to personal and communal experiences linked to viewer empathy ("Storytelling and Resistance" 78-79). Crucially, the voice restored to Chief Onasakenrat explicitly articulates testimony's cumulative spiritual and communal impact, link to the land, and future intercultural consequence when he declares: "We will die on the soil of our fathers, and our bleaching skeletons shall be a witness to nations yet unborn." Chief Joseph's voice comes to inhabit Obomsawin's, extending across time and physicality. The film's pronounced spiritual influence is thereby interwoven into non-Indigenous memory via Obomsawin's mediation and the film's incorporation into the NFB canon. This consecrates it as a public document and renders explicit Derrida's sentiment that the archive is simultaneously revolutionary and traditional ("Archive Fever" 7).



Figure 30: Betrayed Kanien'kehá:ka Leader, Chief Joseph Onasakenrat.

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance (Alanis Obomsawin, 1993).

Pick has noted symbolic evidence of Obomsawin's influence in shifting regimes of knowledge at the NFB, describing concessions like the incorporation of Indigenous visual and aural motifs into the institution's logo as "transaction[s]" ("Storytelling and Resistance" 89). More substantially, the indelible inclusion of the wampum belt in the filmed representation of the crisis inscribes the film itself with the wampum's own value as a commemorative, binding and communicative tool. Thus, distant and more recent historical events, the wampum, the film, and the NFB archive itself become inscribed one upon the other. The colonizers' failure to completely repress the wampum belt's evidence has meant that it remains present and proffers the seeds of more potent opposition, which Obomsawin captures and amplifies by distilling, superimposing and commemorating moments of insurgency. Moreover, since both the wampum belt and the oral storytelling form itself constitute archival practices that differ from the state's, their incorporation into the state-sponsored archive inevitably alters the archive itself, with equally inevitable social reverberations. As Derrida advances: "[W]hat is no longer archived in the same way is no longer lived in the same way. Archivable meaning is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives" ("Archive Fever" 18) Thus, Obomsawin provides what for Derrida constitutes a precondition to "political power" and "effective democratization," that is to say, "the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation" ("Archive Fever" 4). The continuation and effects of the Kanien'kehá:ka struggle are underlined in several comments on the open-endedness of the confrontation, and in Brian Mike Myers' prediction that "the face of Canada will be politically, socially, economically and spiritually changed" by its outcome. Moreover, the feeling that the behaviour of the Kanien'kehá:ka and that of their antagonists has been recorded and is available for judgement by history extends forward and back in time evoking the revision of existing historical evidence and

perception of intercultural relationships. Significantly, Obomsawin repeats Chief Onasakenrat's voice-over as she shows images of a commemorative march one year after the events. Her own voice-over again interweaves with this repetition to stress the deferral of any resolution of the issues at stake, while her tribute to "The General," a Warrior who died during the interval between the actual event and the film's completion, stratifies yet more spectral intensity upon the incidents portrayed.

Why then, does the intersection between *Kanehsatake*'s Indigenous storytelling structure, its propensity to arouse a sense of melancholia, and its archiving become especially pertinent in Québec? Paul Gilroy's interpretation of postcolonial melancholia in the British context provides one possible answer. Gilroy qualifies Britain's own version of this intercultural malaise as one of "post-imperial melancholia," namely, a condition resulting from the inability to mourn Britain's loss of empire and the disavowal of its colonial legacy. As Obomsawin's political films candidly visualize, French imperialism underpins Québec history. In addition, according to Amelia Kalant, the Oka Crisis itself disrupted "Québécois pretensions to being the native/colonized to English Canada—a status that has been created in part in central Canadian History" (22). Québec's fascination with being colonized overshadows its historically more distant colonial ambitions in ways analogous to Britain's focus on World War II victory over Nazi Germany to obscure a less flattering past. This observation is consistent with sociologist Fernand Dumont's contention that Québec's lasting attachment to France, following British conquest, has been marked by pain and nostalgia (332). The self-critical aspect of this loss correlates with Québec's historically ambivalent identification with France. Moreover, in spite of the decolonizing impetus of the Quiet Revolution, the Québec national project has largely evolved towards creating another settler colonial state in North America (Alfred, "L'avenir des relations" 12;

Cornellier, "The Thing" 16). The repeated failure of this endeavour perhaps reflects Quebecers' profound recognition of this paradigm's inadequacy and of the need for fundamental readjustment. Certainly, continued suspicion of federalist Canadian politics, combined with a refusal to adhere wholeheartedly to Québec independence seems to support this claim.

Clearly, the strongly emphasized social purpose of Indigenous storytelling complements the emancipating potential of melancholia. As Emberley stresses, the relationship between storyteller and listener entails particular responsibilities, and listening actively to extract useful life lessons is constitutive of Indigenous storytelling (148). While overrun by commercial and ideological imperatives in mainstream cinema particularly, this concept is not inconceivably accessed through non-Indigenous worldviews when motivated by guileless empathy. Indeed, as the previous section outlines, Gilles Groulx, an emblematic Québec filmmaker, recognizes the need to listen unreservedly to Indigenous points of view and integrates this with his interest in Québécois self-assertion in the controversial 24 heures ou plus, initially banned by the NFB, but now also part of its canon. In the wake of Québec's October Crisis, this documentary advocates a complete dismantling of the structure within which society is constrained. Here, Groulx signals the need to listen by suspending his own voice-over narration and freeze-framing on Cree spokesperson Philip Awashish. Groulx overlays Awashish's image with a title that stresses the centuries-long failure to hear Indigenous voices before moving on to commentaries by Awashish himself and other Indigenous representatives. In the case of Kanehsatake, one strand of the film's political message is evidently directed at Québec, but goes beyond simply recording and disseminating the inconsistencies exposed by the Oka Crisis. In its archiving of a trigger for melancholia, the film acts as a periodic jab to this sentiment, inducing recurrent selfexamination, and contributing to fulfill what Cornellier describes as the need to ceaselessly "deal

with" national anxieties surfacing at Oka ("The Thing" 19-20). Indeed, the film's canonical place at the NFB and in film studies syllabi means that it is constantly being "listened to" by future generations of filmmakers and scholars, whether Indigenous, Québécois, or from another cultural group. And yet, while the 2008 Bouchard-Taylor report on reasonable accommodation praises Québec's aptitude for progressive change and lauds the originality of the Quiet Revolution's neo-nationalism for combining an identity struggle with social equality and the protection of rights (119), the exclusion of Indigenous peoples living in Québec from the report's mandate, and its assumption, however reluctant, that Québec's intercultural anxieties can be tackled in isolation from colonial legacies, point to the challenge of envisaging creative and just reconceptualizations of national objectives that prioritize Indigenous aspirations.

How then does the cinematic expression of melancholia serve an intercultural turn earnestly directed towards the problematic foundations of Québec nationhood? *Laurentie*, following the Bouchard-Taylor commission, boldly confronts the idea of a national malaise predicated on intolerance and pinpoints melancholia as a key to this impasse. The intellectual calibre of this production and its audacious examination of Québec's persistent malaise provide an indication of the scope of Québécois melancholia, bringing this theme to the surface even though the origin of such symptoms in the failure of empire and concomitant moral loss stemming from historical participation in colonialism remains beyond its consideration. Writing in 2001, Bill Marshall remarked that no feature fiction had yet been directed by an Indigenous person in Québec (260). The first French-language Québec feature by an Indigenous director, Yves Sioui Durand's *Mesnak* was finally released in 2011, the same year as *Laurentie*. Tellingly, *Mesnak* bases its storyline on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the Western canon's melancholic text *par excellence*. This formal decision alone suggests certain expectations invested in the evocative

potential of melancholia in Québec. With the continued increase in Indigenous productions, it is tantalizing to speculate on whether and how these films will engage melancholia and respond to its preceding iterations. Peter Steven has asserted that Obomsawin's films "live beyond their original context [...] largely because of the strong emotions she generates on the screen" (qtd. in Pick, "Storytelling and Resistance" 78). In Québec more specifically, the unassimilable affective character of melancholia and its purposeful sustainment in *Kanehsatake* describe its critical possibilities, which, as Khanna explains, lie in its very persistence. In this way, *Kanehsatake* is not simply a film content with exposing and commemorating an occurrence, but instigates the resurfacing of melancholia, which in turn shapes the film's ability to rouse beyond the immediacy of its activism. In sum, rather than simply dismissing collective feelings of unincorporated historical loss expressed as melancholia in Québec cinema, Obomsawin's film disseminates and foreshadows the future symptoms of melancholia, while redefining, recontextualizing, and renewing its ghostly intensity.

CHAPTER 4: INDIGENOUS CINEMA: HAUNTING QUÉBEC

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Section 1: Indigenous Cinema, Hamlet and Québécois Melancholia

Foreword: The material for this article was first developed for a presentation for an interdisciplinary conference titled "In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization" led by Helen Gilbert at Royal Holloway, University of London in October 2013. Following this event, organizers put together an edited volume published by Liverpool University Press and selected my proposal for inclusion in this anthology. Building on the previous section focused on Obomsawin's Kanehsatake, the current section investigates Yves Sioui-Durand's Mesnak with a view to understanding its narrative and stylistic choices and their significance for communication with non-Indigenous Québec viewers. It seeks to grasp what this film can tell us about the role of haunting, melancholia and the supernatural in mediating such exchanges.

Introduction

In 2011, Huron-Wendat playwright and filmmaker Yves Sioui Durand released *Mesnak*, the first feature by an Indigenous director in Québec. Deploying a narrative based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the Western canon's most exemplary portrayal of melancholia, this film follows a young Innu-born actor who is rehearsing to play Hamlet but finds his own life mirroring that of his stage persona. Alienated from his community since childhood, he returns to discover his mother about to marry his murdered father's rival, meets an ill-fated Indigenous Ophelia and witnesses the social disintegration that threatens his people. *Mesnak*'s source text, the 2004 play *Hamlet-le-Malécite* by Sioui Durand and Jean-Frédéric Messier, like several other adaptations, uses Shakespeare's work "to bring attention to the stories of First Nations peoples" (Drouin 16–17).

However, Sioui Durand's cinematic appropriation of *Hamlet* is distinctive for the ways in which it illuminates the persistently melancholic character of Québécois cinema, a trait manifest in selfvictimizing representations of identity (Poirier 70–71) and linked to Québec's failure to attain political independence (Weinmann, "À l'ombre" 36–38). Indeed, Québec's singular historical trajectory makes it a fertile setting in which to ponder melancholia and Indigenous responses to it. France's colonial interests in this region succumbed to British conquest in 1760, and the desire to assimilate the French-speaking population quickly followed (Dumont 123). This intent became manifest after the repression of the *Patriotes* Rebellions of 1837–1838, which called for more democratic representation. Lord Durham's infamous 1839 report on the causes of these uprisings describes French Canadians as "an uneducated and unprogressive people," asserts the anachronistic character and inevitable doom of their culture, and recommends that they be assimilated into English society so as to "elevate them from that inferiority" (Durham 94). This complex settler colonial history places Indigenous peoples living in what is now known as Québec in a distinctive situation, while instilling Québécois society with an ambivalent sense of being at once colonizer and colonized. In light of this ambivalence, I contend that Québécois melancholia is attributable not simply to the damaging effects of conquest, assimilation and failed attempts to achieve sovereignty, but also in considerable measure to repressed anxieties surrounding the legitimacy of constructing an independent settler state on traditional Indigenous territory.

My reading of *Mesnak* aims to elucidate the performative (and in this instance cross-cultural) function of haunting, a phenomenon important to both Indigenous epistemologies and Québécois melancholia, and one that the film deploys in opposition to the global hegemony of Western culture and worldviews, which tend to overshadow and appropriate other cultural

symbols and histories. Indeed, haunting has specifically Indigenous functions, notably in the potential for prophecy outlined by Michelle Raheja (145–89), who demonstrates that images of ghosts portrayed by Indigenous filmmakers act not only as reminders of a history of colonial brutality, but also "as a means of drawing attention to the embodied present and future" (146). At the same time, haunting is associated with the Western notion of melancholia. This condition, as I discuss in earlier sections of this thesis, was famously pathologized by Freud in opposition to the healthy process of mourning. Freud attributes melancholia to a failure to assimilate loss that causes the ego to identify narcissistically with the idealized lost object. The melancholic subject reacts to this loss by turning from admiration to uninhibited criticism of the lost object, now identified as the self, thus giving rise to overt expressions of self-reproach.

As we have seen in previous analyses, Khanna understands haunting as emanating from melancholia and, contra Freud, seizes this latter concept as a positive condition that triggers ethical self-reflection. While critiquing the colonial underpinnings of psychoanalysis, Khanna acknowledges its potential anti-colonial applications and reassigns value to melancholia over the assimilative tendency of mourning (23). Haunting, she argues, emerges from melancholia in formerly colonized societies that adopt the nation-state framework they had previously experienced as oppressive (25). These insights are particularly useful for grasping the predominance of melancholia in Québécois cinema, given Québec's strong self-perception as a colonized society and as a region of Canada that has ambiguously moved towards nation-statehood. In this respect, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) scholar Taiaiake Alfred notes a historical convergence between Indigenous and Québécois nationalisms, which he understands as "two parallel reactions to the nationalism of the Canadian state, that is to say to Anglo-European hegemony." In spite of this overlap, however, Alfred stresses the divergence of Québécois

nationalism from its decolonizing impulse following concessions on linguistic and cultural autonomy accorded to Québec by the federal government since the 1960s. These gains, according to Alfred, render untenable the rationale linking sovereignty to cultural survival ("L'avenir des relations" 13). As discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation, a significant flashpoint that illustrates both the shifting alignments of Canadian and Québécois colonialisms and their common denial of First Nations' rights was the 1990 Oka Crisis, which saw Kanien'kehá:ka protestors stand fast against municipal plans to expand a luxury golf course onto their cemetery. With non-Indigenous interests backed by the Québec provincial police and then the Canadian army, this violent, highly mediatised land dispute shattered Québec's selfperception as the victim of colonization (Kalant 16). In light of such divisions, we can posit haunting in Indigenous films as prompting separate, but synergetic experiences. On the one hand, for Indigenous viewers, it invites recognition of ongoing Indigenous presence as well as past colonial injustices, both of which have been suppressed in settler texts by what Raheja describes as "historical uses of the ghostly effect" (146). On the other hand, for non-Indigenous Quebecers, haunting works to trouble a framework for national liberation that excludes Indigenous peoples' unconditional independence and territorial rights through a privileging of Québec's own colonized status. Ultimately then, Indigenous haunting in Québec provokes a latent melancholia that acts not to inspire guilt, but rather, as Khanna would have it, to foster an ethical imperative towards the future (23).

In this section, I place Raheja's understanding of haunting in conversation with Khanna's to show how *Mesnak* defiantly and effectively deploys this powerful trope. Whereas Indigenous ghosts have been used for centuries in literature and for decades in film to conceptually bolster settler dominance, Sioui Durand, like other Indigenous performance makers, harnesses ghostly

images for anticolonial resistance. By appropriating a key European symbol of haunting and containing it within Indigenous epistemologies, the film demonstrates how a living Indigenous spiritual tradition can "swallow up" within the conditions of its own system an emblematic Western text such as *Hamlet*, hailed for capturing the dilemmas of Europe's passage into the early modern period and its concurrent transition towards the nation-state as the dominant unit of political organisation. This filmic challenge to the global hegemony of the Western canon overturns the purported limits of Indigeneity, intuitively perceived by settler populations worldwide as confined within nation-statehood, and instead engulfs the nation-state within Indigeneity. Mesnak thus helps to "undermin[e] the premise of the state as the highest and most liberating form of human association," a process already catalysed in the era of globalization by the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Anaya 9). Certainly, Hamlet's global resonance signals the broad interconnecting ambitions of the film, but Sioui Durand's most striking innovation, which gives the film its title, transposes the ghost of Hamlet's father into the figure of Mesnak, an Innu animal spirit represented as a snapping turtle.³⁶ Through Mesnak, "an intermediary between material and spiritual worlds [...] that reminds men and women that they must live in harmony with nature" ("Mesnak: Dossier de presse" 13), the film foregrounds haunting, suggests the ongoing presence of an embattled Indigenous spiritual tradition, and highlights the ethical imperative that should underlie mainstream Québécois society's necessary revision of its own political choices.

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³⁶ The name of the Innu master of aquatic animals is often spelled "Missinak" (where the superscript "u" indicates pronunciation of the "k" with a puff of air after it), as is the Innu word for turtle. See http://www.innu-aimun.ca and http://www.native-languages.org/montagnais_guide.htm (accessed 3 March 2017). The spelling used in this essay reflects that employed in Sioui Durand's film.

Indigenous Cinema in Québec

Although *Mesnak* represents his first foray into cinema, Sioui Durand has worked in theatre since 1985, as co-founder of the first professional First Nations company in Québec, Ondinnok,³⁷ which, tellingly, was "born of the urgency to repatriate a cultural world that has been swallowed up" (Ondinnok website). Much of this company's work exhibits the desire to repurpose Indigenous performance traditions from across the Americas for contemporary audiences. By contrast, the play on which Mesnak is based, Hamlet-le-Malécite, explicitly broaches the immediate context of reserve life via a non-Indigenous source text.³⁸ While carving out a space for resolutely Indigenous drama, Sioui Durand has collaborated with luminary settler figures in Québec theatre, including Robert Lepage and the late Jean-Pierre Ronfard, who directed Sioui Durand's *La conquête de Mexico* in 1991. This play constitutes a particularly powerful example of Sioui Durand's endeavour to "re-emphasize the Amerindian narrative over the Euro-American one, to reinsert Euro-American history inside Amerindian continentality and temporality" (L'Hérault 117). One year after his collaboration with Ronfard, Sioui Durand appeared in Robert Lepage and Marianne Ackerman's Alanienouidet, based on the exile from London of controversial Shakespearean actor Edmund Kean, who was honoured by the Huron-Wendat nation with the name that gives the play its title. Alaneinouidet mixes dramatized historical material with references to *Hamlet* and highlights the cultural encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous characters. Sioui Durand also acted as the production's consultant on Huron-Wendat culture and history (Lafon 166). His more recent collaboration to write the screenplay for Mesnak, working with celebrated Québec independent filmmaker Robert Morin and award-

³⁷ Ondinnok is a Huron-Wendat word meaning "secret desire of the soul."

³⁸ Ondinnok's interest in Shakespeare is signalled early on, however, in the conception of its 1996 production, *Sakipitcikan*, as an Atikamekw *Romeo and Juliet*.

winning novelist Louis Hamelin, continued to trace a path for uniquely Indigenous expression amid Québec's dramatic, literary and cinematic traditions.

Mesnak was developed alongside other significant Indigenous cinematic initiatives in Québec. Indeed, the film's conception coincided with the launch in 2004 of Wapikoni Mobile project ("Mesnak: Dossier de presse" 2), co-founded by documentary filmmaker Manon Barbeau, the Council of the Atikamekw First Nation, and the First Nations of Québec and Labrador Youth Network. Initially using two campervans converted into mobile filmmaking studios, staff working on this project travel to Indigenous communities across Québec, providing youth with filmmaking tools and training. Within its first ten years, Wapikoni Mobile produced over 600 short films, expanded to four campervans, and multiplied the variety and scope of its activities, offering exchange and training opportunities worldwide and contributing to the development of transnational Indigenous media networks. Karine Bertrand suggests that the success of Wapikoni Mobile favoured Sioui Durand's efforts to secure funding for his feature project ("Doctoral Thesis" 229). Conversely, Barbeau herself speculates that the success of Wapikoni in Québec may be attributable to the convergence of multiple factors and cites the completion of Mesnak as an important milestone (interview with author).

In this context, the parallel development of *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013) by Jeff Barnaby (Mi'kmaq) as an English-language feature constitutes another important iteration of Indigenous cinema in Québec. Such breakthroughs inevitably look back to celebrated documentary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki),³⁹ whose *Kanehsatake* works to archive melancholia through an affective evocation of deceased Kanien'kehá:ka leaders and images of a cemetery under threat from commercial development during the Oka crisis. This documentary

³⁹ A third Indigenous-authored feature produced in Québec, Sonia Bonspille Boileau's *Le Dep*, came out in 2010.

provides an audiovisual foundation which subsequent Indigenous films build upon to periodically incite Québec's engagement with the haunting effects of loss. Barnaby in particular has expressed his debt to Obomsawin in spite of his vastly different style, which favours horror and science fiction. 40 In this respect, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* tackles the pernicious abuses of colonialism allegorically as it tells the story of a strong, independent and resourceful teenage girl's battle with the nearby residential school and sadistic Indian agent. The film focuses particularly on the protagonist's bonds with her dead mother and an inspiring grandmother-figure. Just as a deceased female character haunts Barnaby's story, the untimely death and emblematic memorialization of Wapikoni Awashish, a vibrant 20-year-old woman and community role model, prompted the Wapikoni Mobile project's creation and conceptually focuses its objectives. The ghosts in Sioui Durand's film, with this text's evocation of melancholia, also parallel the stimulation of this sentiment through haunting figures in Obomsawin's account of the Oka Crisis.

Indigenizing *Hamlet*

Mesnak tells the story of Dave Brodeur, adopted into a Québécois family at the age of three after his father's murder and his mother's descent into alcoholism. Though Dave is cut off from Innu culture, sepia-toned flashbacks suggest the resurgence of incomplete but traumatic memories, which remain cryptic until the final dénouement. When Dave receives a photograph of his biological mother, Gertrude McKenzie, he travels to the (fictitious) reserve of Kinogamish to shed light on his past. Meanwhile, Gertrude is engaged to Claude St-Onge, suspected of killing

⁴⁰ "Alanis is the reason that I'm a filmmaker. ... I think her doing a kind of politically charged film (*Incident at Restigouche*) about my reserve really kicked off my film career in my brain." Jeff Barnaby quoted in "'Big Year' for First Nations Films at TIFF," http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/big-year-for-first-nations-films-at-tiff-1.1344791 (accessed 19 July 2014).

Dave's father during a hunting trip twenty years earlier. Claude is now Chief of the community and advocates an unsavoury collaboration with a logging company seeking to exploit the land around the economically deprived reserve. In parallel, Dave begins an affair with Osalic, a young woman interested in reconnecting with Indigenous traditions, as evidenced by her photographs of ancestors, her respect for Mesnak, her burning of sacred herbs as a purification ceremony, and her desire to travel into Innu traditional territory. However, Osalic remains caught in an incestuous relationship with her half-brother and is ultimately incapable of mitigating the damage caused to her family and community. While the film offers a bleak view of First Nations society, and while Dave resembles Hamlet, a quintessentially Western figure, Sioui Durand Indigenizes the ghost of Hamlet's father, representing him as Mesnak, the master spirit of aquatic animals and one of the most important in Innu taxonomy (Bouchard and Mailhot 64; Armitage 8). Thus, the film weaves the theme of First Nations acculturation into a powerful Indigenous counter-narrative that dismantles the authority of the canonical text.



Figure 31: Ghostly flashback of Dave's childhood hunting trip with his father and uncles.

Mesnak (Yves Sioui Durand, 2011).

Sioui Durand establishes this interlocking structure by enclosing the main plot within poetic wide shots of an imposing river and extra-diegetic close-ups of the snapping turtle. After the title credit, the camera pushes in towards the open mouth of the turtle as it hisses, announcing a transition to the first sepia-toned flashback of Dave's original trauma. This image shows the young Dave on the fateful hunting trip with his father, accompanied by Claude and his blind uncle Sapatesh, the only other witness to his father's death. Since we have yet to encounter the adult Dave, the turtle spirit seen previously appears to actively summon the memory-image that holds the key to his childhood trauma. As these ghostly characters fade from view, we first meet the adult Dave mid-rehearsal, delivering a speech from *Hamlet*. A play within a film, this excerpt evokes Shakespeare's own use of the device whereby Hamlet attempts to "catch the conscience of the King." Indeed, in Sioui Durand and Messier's earlier stage adaptation, Dave exposes the theatre-going audience to ghostly video images of American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier, whom he associates with his father, as he delivers Hamlet's speech describing the ruse to provoke Claudius. In *Mesnak*, the scene of Dave's rehearsal commandeers *Hamlet* as a device to "entrap" the film's (non-Indigenous) spectators as we are lured into a familiar dramatic structure that ultimately forces a recognition of settler privilege and its consequences for Indigenous communities. Among its multiple functions in Sioui Durand's film, Hamlet fulfils a metatheatrical role analogous to *The Murder of Gonzago* in Shakespeare's drama, but instead of provoking fictional characters as it does in Shakespeare, the embedded play here acts directly on the film audience. Just as memory is configured as not fully controlled by human will but rather deliberately governed by a spiritual entity, so the provocation *Mesnak* orchestrates through Hamlet intimates the working presence of elements, including film images, deployed to haunt the viewer's psyche.

At the film's outset, Dave's drama teacher critiques his performance as one-dimensional, driven only by vengeance, and adds that Hamlet is stirred by "a quest for redemption roused by pain." This premise then underpins Dave's journey to expose his father's murderer and recover his own lost identity, but also nuances the principles that guide a parallel non-Indigenous journey. While Dave's character is aligned with Indigenous people forcibly alienated from their cultures, non-Indigenous viewers are implicated in his dilemma, thereby encouraging a difficult interrogation of national identity and memory. Thus, Dave's narrative recounts a turbulent reconnection with Indigeneity, but leaves room for analogous reflection on Québec's as yet oversimplified search for political redress following a history of colonial subjugation. By accentuating Dave's non-Indigenous upbringing and situating the plot within a Western dramatic structure, Sioui Durand disarms mainstream spectators and leads them on a journey that unsettles received notions about Québec's decolonizing objectives. The construction of Dave's character (an Innu actor, played by Peruvian-Québécois actor Victor Andrés Trelles Turgeon, who then plays a Danish prince) works to trouble ethnic categories, and simultaneously allows Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewers to follow mutually enriching yet distinct narrative arcs with distinct, but interrelated goals.

In spite of Québec's still incomplete struggle for political autonomy, Khanna's notion of a haunting proper to decolonized nations finds appropriate instance here. Khanna argues that in "the context of new formerly colonized nation-states, the critical response to nation-statehood arises from the secret embedded in nation-state formation: that the concept of nation-statehood was constituted through the colonial relation, and needs to be radically re-shaped if it is to survive without colonies, or without a concealed (colonial) other" (25). During the 1960s, Québécois nationalism adopted the discourse of left-wing struggles and worldwide

decolonization movements, but failed to sustain an application of its principles in solidarity with First Nations. Decades later, although political independence remains unrealized, Québec enjoys a degree of autonomy similar to other postcolonial nations, and nationalist discourse has progressively shifted towards the consolidation of Québec state authority. This proximity to nation-statehood therefore complicates Heinz Weinmann's attribution of Québécois melancholia to "post-referendum syndrome," or the loss endured by the failure to achieve independence (36). In its drive towards independence, Québec failed to radically re-shape the concept of nationstatehood or to fully address the fundamental contradictions this model poses. As Daniel Salée notes, Québec's 1985 legislation on the distinct character of Indigenous peoples goes further than any other Canadian jurisdiction in recognizing Indigenous identity or endorsing selfdetermination, but such recognitions seem "more rhetorical than authentic" when confronted with Québec's uncompromising affirmation of territorial integrity ("L'évolution des rapports" 331). This position is inevitably tethered to the goal of nation-statehood and consequent refusal to unconditionally recognize Indigenous sovereignty. Although it is tempting to attribute melancholia simply to the incompleteness of the nation-statehood that has eluded Québec, more profoundly, Québécois melancholia points to the incompleteness of the social aims of 1960s nationalism, the unwitting loss of its decolonizing ideals and the demotion of the parallel aspirations of Indigenous peoples, which together provoke melancholic self-criticism in Québec cinema. As Dave's drama teacher points out, Hamlet's quest is a complex one. Thus, the fragmentary nature of Dave's identity, and of the character he seeks to construct, also echoes, for the non-Indigenous viewer, the deficiency of Québec's political identity as a decolonized nation.

Raheja connects Indigenous haunting to prophecy and an apocalyptic vision that predicts not only the coming of colonizers but also the end of Western domination and the survival of

Indigenous worldviews (182–84). Certainly, the stark portrayal of reserve life in Sioui Durand's film reads as apocalyptic, and a regenerative dimension surfaces through Dave's final reunion with Gertrude. In parallel, Osalic's imminent drowning calls forth Western pictorial representations of Ophelia's famous destiny. But, by leaving this suicide pending as Osalic drifts downstream, Sioui Durand hangs her fate in the balance. If one reads this image as apocalyptic, it tends to predict the death of Western symbols as unilaterally dominant. In this final scene, where Osalic wears a powwow dress that she has fashioned herself, Western theatrical imagery is interlocked with Indigenous elements, including Osalic's own body, to announce a precariously joined fate in epistemological, political and environmental terms: the impossibility of non-Indigenous survival separate from the flourishing of Indigenous counterparts. At the same time, Osalic's decision to end her life in this way echoes Anne Anlin Cheng's observation, in reference to the traumatic history of racism in the United States, that suicide, for the powerless, encompasses a potentially rebellious choice. For Cheng, "racial melancholia [...] has always existed for raced subjects both as a sign of rejection and as a psychic strategy in response to that of rejection" (20). Thus, Osalic's fate does not diminish her purpose or agency, which are signalled by the ceremonial manner of her act, notably through her attire and disappearance into the river that has served as her ancestors' pathway to identity-defining practices.

While Hamlet's objective is to ensnare the King's conscience, and while Freud also likens the "critical agency" of melancholia to a kind of conscience (Khanna 23), this trope seems inappropriate for reading *Mesnak*. Conscience evokes settler guilt, which, as Raheja points out, "does not serve contemporary Indigenous communities invested in visual technologies that reflect the creative, robust vitality of a living people" (146–47). Moreover, Huron-Wendat historian Georges Sioui views guilt as serving only to divide Euro-Americans and Amerindians

("Autohistoire" 3), while Renée Bergland indicts settler guilt as working perversely to justify the usurpation of Indigenous lands and identities. Native American ghosts, Bergland argues, differ from the spectres of other groups in American fiction because, although they cause feelings of guilt over the treatment of Indigenous peoples, they also provide pleasure through settler possession of the spirit of the land (19). Avoiding melancholia's association with guilt-driven conscience allows us to see it instead as an ethical imperative to respond to the epistemological violence that accompanies nation-statehood in postcolonial contexts (Khanna 25). In this respect, *Mesnak* constructively channels the pain that drives Dave's "performance" of Hamlet in his own life, and acts on the non-Indigenous spectator's ethical sense of critical agency rather than on feelings of national guilt.

The film connects two aspects of haunting, Dave's memories and the turtle, but, contrary to popular literature and cinema featuring Indigenous ghosts, does not work to invisibilize the Innu or render them as abstract entities. Rather, haunting memories, seemingly conjured by Mesnak, provoke Dave's journey to Kinogamish, which brings us into contact with the stark representation, by a predominantly Innu cast, of contemporary reserve life and its colonial underpinnings. Thus, memory fulfils the purpose observed by Khanna: "[w]hen official narratives show that the state has chosen to forget the uncomfortable past of those it claims to represent, the political use of memory is to right a wrong, make visible the invisible, or give knowledge where ignorance reigned" (13). In *Mesnak*, the ghost of Dave's father, represented visually as the memory of trauma, becomes not only the impulse that drives Dave, but also the audiovisual evidence he needs to carry out justice and reveal the truth about his own past and that of his community. When, during a struggle with Osalic's brother near the end of the film, a gunshot accidentally rings out in Dave's ears, the sepia-toned images reappear and his memories

of the gunshot that killed his father become clear. Memory aligns with the retributive violence of the gun, which then falls into Dave's hands and is used to right a wrong, to correct a lie by Claude, the community's leader. Extended to Québec and Canada, the film's use of memory, expressed audio-visually as a ghostly remainder, suggests Indigenous cinema's potential for unsettling the state's pretentions to fairness and mutual enrichment, thereby making visible the deliberate structure of colonialism.

According to Sioui Durand, the turtle is a messenger that represents the origins of the Earth and its memory ("Mesnak: Dossier de presse" 13). Thus, not unlike melancholia, Mesnak is deployed as a traditional and ecological imperative to act ethically. The social disintegration portrayed in the film through scenes of corruption, violence, drug abuse and incest allows Sioui Durand to criticize the rupture from tradition in Indigenous communities, but in a more damning allusion *Mesnak* links the turtle/ghost's haunting to the political direction taken by mainstream Québec society. When Claude stops to look at Mesnak crossing a road, a truck full of lumber drives behind him, distracting him momentarily. When he turns back, the turtle has vanished. Claude's position between, on the one hand, the turtle representing moral obligation as well as the spectre of his past deeds, and on the other, the exploitative capitalist forces to which he has sold out his community, not only pulls Claude himself in opposite directions, but also draws attention to the destructive activity taking place in northern Québec for the benefit of non-Indigenous consumers in the south.

Swallowing *Hamlet*'s Ghost

Mesnak does not stop at interlocking Indigenous and non-Indigenous haunting, but goes on to invert the centuries-old practice of erasing Indigenous peoples through their portrayal in ghost

stories. As Bergland writes on haunting's potential for toppling a contradictory national ideology, "[g]hostly Indians present us with the possibility of vanishing ourselves, being swallowed up into another's discourse, another's imagination" (5). Sioui Durand deploys Indigenous ghosts according to Raheja's model, signifying an embodied presence, but also realizes Bergland's premise by enclosing a famous Western ghost within a living Indigenous spirit. "In telling ghost stories to the colonizer," Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush argue, "Indigenous writers claim one of the most powerful North American narrative tropes and use it for their own ends, replacing settler guilt with Indigenous mourning, and imagined spectral ancestries with actual genealogies embedded in the land" (xx). With *Mesnak*, Sioui Durand indeed reclaims the Indigenous ghost story, but also appropriates the powerful Western narrative trope of the European ghost encompassed within *Hamlet*.

In contrast with Boyd and Thrush's "Indigenous mourning," which designates the positive outcome of the re-appropriation of Indigenous ghost stories, melancholia describes an alternative response to loss and the potential for resistance through a repurposing of past suffering. Indeed, Eric Wolfe's analysis of William Apess's *Eulogy on King Philip* demonstrates that melancholia acts to counter a settler mourning that enables feigned sympathy for and dissolution of the memory of injustices visited upon Indigenous peoples (14). Wolfe notes that in "rewriting the past of King Philip, the direction of the *Eulogy* is toward the future. Apess reopens a dialogue with loss, the past, and history in order to imagine a different relationship to and within the present" (19). The idea of reopening the past is central to *Mesnak* and through its grim treatment of contemporary issues the film points warningly ahead. Both Dave's memories and Osalic's attraction to traditional ways evoke the past's persistence in the present and beyond. Osalic's rapport with the river and contemplation of suicide focus the film around *Hamlet*'s

celebrated "to be, or not to be" speech, and she insists that it is only in the traditional territories situated upriver that one can *be* an Innu. The word "Innu" itself means "human" in the Innu language, thereby further inflecting Osalic's dilemma. Her implicit "to be, or not to be *an Innu*" engulfs Québec's melancholic relationship to national identity through its emphasis on inclusivity and the global reach of Hamlet's existential question. Thus, Osalic's reflection on cultural loss both encapsulates the interconnected nature of contemporary human destinies and questions the future of humanity in a world dominated by Western epistemological traditions and capitalist ambitions.

Like Apess, however, Sioui Durand risks representing Indigenous peoples in ways that play into the colonizer's hands. Wolfe notes Apess's gamble in seemingly drawing on the "sympathetic mourning" of colonial discourse (3). But, as with Apess, melancholia allows Sioui Durand to reawaken past losses while simultaneously resisting comfortable closure. In his discussion of Apess, Wolfe evokes Gerald Vizenor's "survivance" as a concept that rejects tragedy. In contrast, Sioui Durand affirms the film's subversion of Shakespeare's canonical authority, but insists on *Mesnak*'s tragic nature ("Interview with author"). His version of tragedy, however, like other Western devices appropriated by the film, is enclosed within and ultimately subordinated to an Indigenous conceptual design. Certainly, the closing image announces Osalic's "beautiful" death, but this moment remains off-screen. The camera overtakes Osalic who slips out of frame giving way to a shot of the rapids ahead, the site of her impending destruction. Not allowing her to float back into view, the film cuts to the credits. This final, slow, upward tilting shot of Osalic drifting ceremonially downriver signals her tragic failure to return to the territory of her ancestors upriver, to where one can be an Innu, but Sioui Durand's final image remains ambiguous. He boldly treats suicide through Western iconography, yet cuts early,

depriving the audience of the expected Shakespearean trope of the doomed heroine's death. While this strategy flirts dangerously with discourses that keep Indigenous peoples always "on the verge of disappearing" (Wolfe 8–9), Sioui Durand checks that threat precisely through an appropriation of Western imagery. Thus, Osalic's immediate local future embodies Ophelia's globally recognized and aesthetically reified destiny. Their predicaments, joined in this way, evoke the threat of apocalypse for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the face of Western ideology's continued global political and economic domination, but refrain from totally obliterating the hope of collaborative renewal.

Despite its harsh representation of reserve life, Mesnak counteracts negative views of Indigenous society by participating in what Raheja conceives as the "virtual reservation," "a site that displays Indigenous knowledges and practices in sharp relief against competing colonial discourses" (149). On the surface, Kinogamish apparently fits the stereotype of a dysfunctional community whose Indigenous culture is disappearing. However, the dystopian world Sioui Durand creates, like those in Jeff Barnaby's fictions, offers the "possibility and renewal" Raheja also associates with versions of the virtual reservation as "offering counternarratives that reveal the often dismal and depressing aspect of inhabiting homelands that are still colonized in an otherwise seemingly postcolonial world" (153–55). Mesnak's reserve therefore constrains the non-Indigenous viewer just as the turtle contains the ghost of Shakespeare's King Hamlet. Aside from the opening scenes, all of the film's action takes place in Kinogamish, which grows increasingly claustrophobic and impossible to escape, suggesting Québec's own entrapment within (neo)colonial space and consequent obligation to confront the structural inequalities historically undergirding settler colonialism. As Julie Burelle argues, *Mesnak* "challenge[s] Québec's amnesic identity discourse by holding a mirror to the reserve and demanding that

audiences truly contemplate the oppressive nature of this space as an enclave of exclusion, tortured filiation and violence created and maintained by Canada and Québec as settler colonial forces" (60). Sioui Durand draws the spectator onto the reserve and exposes its degradation, synechdocally suggesting the "rottenness" that underpins the structure of Québec's territorial hierarchies, and invoking feelings of entrapment that potentially strike a nerve with Quebecers besieged in Anglophone North America.

Containment within spiritual and physical boundaries paradoxically presents opportunities for empowerment in *Mesnak*. Trapped within the living manifestation of an Innu master spirit, the ghost of King Hamlet relinquishes its Western form and makes alternative perspectives available to non-Indigenous viewers. As Dave holds a turtle skull contemplatively in an obvious reference to *Hamlet*'s gravediggers' scene, the skull evokes both his murdered father and Yorick, Hamlet's childhood fool. Here, the implicit line, "he hath borne me on his back a thousand times," signals the turtle's significance in Indigenous creation stories, including Sioui Durand's own Huron-Wendat heritage, where the North American continent takes shape on the back of a turtle (Sioui, "Huron-Wendat" 16). Thus, through a subverted reference to Hamlet's graveside monologue about Yorick's decayed body, the film acknowledges the Earth's support of human life and deplores its environmental putrefaction. Haunting in *Mesnak* therefore moves progressively towards diffuse incarnations that ultimately reach planetary dimensions, seemingly looking to redress sociopolitical and ecological equilibrium via the interconnectedness and mutual envelopment of human and other beings.



Figure 32: Dave holds a turtle skull contemplatively.

Mesnak (Yves Sioui Durand, 2011).

Conclusion

In moving from the interpenetrations that link *Hamlet* and *Mesnak* towards the Indigenous film's englobement of its Shakesperean ur-text, I have intimated that this process has global ramifications. In this respect, my analysis finds potential transnational applications converging towards a position consistent with Georges Sioui's argument, in *Amerindian Autohistory*, that Indigenous worldviews generate global intercultural understanding (50). Sioui posits that Indigenous thought "recognizes the universal interdependence of all beings (physical and spiritual), [and] seeks by all means possible to establish intellectual and emotional contact between these so as to ensure ... abundance, equality, and therefore peace" (3). Although he notes that Amerindian ideas disseminate beyond the North American continent and that their influence is pervasive globally, he does not see Indigenous epistemology as seeking to efface the Other, but rather as demonstrating a complementary imbrication. With *Mesnak*, Yves Sioui Durand offers a representation of this process: Indigenous haunting "swallows up" its non-

Indigenous counterpart precisely as it is being overwhelmed by Western views and systems. In addition, *Mesnak* entangles the supernatural world of spirits and contemporary realities. Indeed, the film's "swallowing up" of a global narrative that emanates from a dominant culture tending to absorb marginalized views and practices also stresses the interdependence that exists between humans, between ghosts, and between humans and the spiritual world.

In stressing the emotional component of universal interdependence, Georges Sioui targets the weakness of guilt as a divisive tool for the enforcement of power. He recognizes humankind as now "unified at the planetary scale," and argues that to return Indigenous epistemologies to prominence for the benefit of the whole world, one must proceed by stimulating the emotions first to generate clarity of thought ("Autohistoire" 9), an approach inspired by Iroquois condolence rituals and seemingly consistent with the stimulation of melancholia towards developing a clear ethical path forward. The intensity with which *Mesnak* exposes viewers to negative aspects of Indigenous life that is estranged from tradition seemingly inhibits the film's potential to illustrate the broad relevance of Indigenous thought. However, the narrative and cinematic treatment of haunting via the spirits of deceased family members and those of the living natural world nevertheless communicates the relational aspect of all things, which is at the heart of Indigenous epistemologies. The film thus realizes Sioui's proposal that the Amerindian become "the unlikely guide" of settler society towards an Indigenous culture that "has slowly, but without interruption transformed, and continues to transform, views and attitudes of all other civilizations." For Sioui, this potential for positive influence lies in Indigenous culture's acute refinement of interdependence as an idea applicable to humans and other beings alike ("Autohistoire" 52–53). Equally, Yves Sioui Durand sees in *Hamlet* characteristics which speak not only to Western cultures, but hold true for Indigenous understandings of the supernatural as

well. In *Mesnak*, he uses *Hamlet* to echo issues central to Indigenous societies grappling with the violent imposition of Eurocentric ways of life, but also to facilitate the journey of non-Indigenous spectators into a setting where the supernatural and the everyday can coexist, where their relationship to one another is both possible and logical.

Section 2: Landscape, Trauma, and Identity in *Le torrent*

Foreword: This essay was developed as a chapter for the volume A Cinema of Pain: Essays on Quebec's Nostalgic Screen edited by Liz Czach (University of Alberta) and André Loiselle (St. Thomas University) for Wilfrid Laurier Press. Overall, this section explores the relationship between nostalgia and melancholia, and seeks to shed light on how their deployment in Québec cinema intersects with cultural and geopolitical identities to provide clues about the profound nature of relationships between Québécois and Indigenous peoples. It thus looks to supply tools for re-conceptualizing intercultural relationships and non-Indigenous attitudes to territory. In addition, it tackles the cultural and historical roots of recurring tropes in the Québécois corpus, and pinpoints the specificities of settler colonial society in Québec for wider extrapolations in other paradigmatic settings.

Introduction

Simon Lavoie's 2012 period drama, *Le torrent*, displays evident reverence for the Anne Hébert story from which it is adapted. This tale recounts the violent childhood of François, rendered deaf after a severe beating by his zealously Catholic mother, an injury that paradoxically attunes him to the sound of a powerful stream. But *Le torrent* departs from its literary source in one striking way. Lavoie ascribes an Innu identity to the mysterious Amica, who comes to live with François after his mother's death. Further, Lavoie fuses Indigenous and Québécois identities by casting Laurence Leboeuf in the roles of both Amica and of François's mother as a younger woman. The film thus seemingly forges a kind of cultural hybridization that Bertrand and MacKenzie see in the recent Québec documentaries *Québékoisie* (Mélanie Carrier and Olivier Higgins, 2014) and *L'empreinte* (Carole Poliquin and Yvan Dubuc, 2015). In parallel, and within

its Oedipal framework, *Le torrent* creates an ambiguous tension between the appropriation of Indigenous identity and the Québécois character's inability to fully own, or "return home" to the land that he associated with his past, which instead comes to haunt and possess him.



Figure 33: Laurence Leboeuf as Amica in Le Torrent (Simon Lavoie, 2012).

Arguably, *Le torrent* oscillates between what Svetlana Boym (2001) sees as the contradictory manifestations, or reflexive and restorative forms of nostalgia, the longing or empathy of *algia* and the return home of *nostos*. This section therefore explores this film's deployment of nostalgia and seeks to ascertain whether this feature obscures colonial relationships or points to Québec's necessary reconfiguration of nationhood. To be sure, Lavoie's portrayal of Amica recalls Boym's description of historically romantic nostalgia, where "[a] young and beautiful girl [...] buried somewhere in the native soil; blond and meek or dark and wild," embodies nature (13). At the same time, *Le torrent* mirrors Anthony Vidler's observation that "the uncanny has been interpreted as a dominant constituent of modern nostalgia," which Freud linked to "the impossible desire to return to the womb" (x). Indeed, the landscape epitomized by the stream in *Le torrent* becomes associated with François's birth, while his mother's double is nominally Indigenized. As such, given Québec's status as a settler colonial society that was in turn colonized, and one whose impossible return to France was marked by a painful and "tenacious nostalgia for origins" (Dumont 332), Lavoie here appears to

imagine an Indigenous presence that potentially inhibits Québec's totalizing reappropriation of territory and instead generates a more reflective longing.

In parallel, other films help to elucidate Québec cinema's propensity to foreground nostalgia for the period in which Le torrent is set as well as Québec's relationship with Indigenous peoples. For instance, the infamous Québec postwar melodrama La petite Aurore, l'enfant martyre (Jean-Yves Bigras, 1953) highlights themes that overlap with Lavoie's film and, most importantly, offers a tangible temporal path across the Quiet Revolution as a significant point of demarcation in modern Québec history. Indeed, many recent cinematic portrayals of Québec before the Quiet Revolution, though often lingering on the hardship and marginalization experienced by French Canadians, 41 tend paradoxically to romanticize pre-1960s Québec and implicitly emblematize the Quiet Revolution as a point of rupture. This cinematic propensity illuminates how nostalgia operates in Québec. In addition, the work of Jeff Barnaby, a Mi'kmaq filmmaker from Listuguj, also looks to the past and stresses concerns with assimilation and colonialism, while emphasizing violence against children, a theme that underpins both Le torrent and La petite Aurore. Through bodily mutilations and inscriptions, Barnaby's work evokes Indigenous worldviews that see humans as morally determined by language and the land as a sentient being (Basso 41-42, Sable and Francis 42). Moreover, just as Le torrent complicates chronology by conflating past and present, Barnaby deploys speculative genre tropes to explore historical trauma. Thus, while *Le torrent* depicts the struggle to grasp memory and territory, Barnaby portrays post-apocalyptic suffering and enforced alienation from past, present and future notions of home.

⁴¹ For more on this, see Liz Czach's forthcoming chapter on Québec heritage films.

In light of these examples, I here propose an analysis of *Le torrent* that comprises a partially comparative approach. I focus primarily on Lavoie's text, its various expressions of nostalgia, and its representation of Indigenous characters. I consider *Le torrent* vis-à-vis other nostalgic representations of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec and other contemporary cinematic examples that engage with the collision between Indigenous and Québécois cultures. I also contemplate this film's relationship to *Laurentie*, a film mentioned briefly in previous sections that exhibits a crushing sense of sadness and loss, which Lavoie developed (and co-directed with Mathieu Denis) in parallel with *Le torrent*. Finally, I juxtapose these analyses with Barnaby's oeuvre in order to highlight views of algios and nostos that are either convergent or irreconcilable with Indigenous understandings of homeland. Thus, by grasping how representations of suffering in Barnaby's work that are either convergent or clash with Québec's painful longing for home, I attempt to unpack the multiple functions of nostalgia in *Le torrent*. To frame this research, I draw primarily on Boym's theorization of this concept, and complement her perspective with further theoretical work on melancholia, a theme which, as discussed throughout this dissertation, is also pervasive in Québec cinema, and which Boym understands as constituent of nostalgia (55). Elements ascribed to nostalgia potentially implicate Québec ethically, and seemingly resonate with postcolonial approaches to loss, which I attempt to untangle here. In addition, I draw on Indigenous scholarship, including Mi'kmaq history and thought, conceptions of time, and studies on historical trauma. Overall, this section seeks to shed light on how representations of pain in Québec cinema intersect with cultural and geopolitical identities, provide clues about the profound nature of relationships between Québécois and Indigenous peoples, and supply tools for re-conceptualizing intercultural relationships and non-Indigenous attitudes to territory.

Le torrent: Nostalgia or Melancholia?

Set in 1920s rural Québec, *Le torrent* tells the story of François, a young man brought up on an isolated farm by Claudine, his abusive and obsessively religious mother. After Claudine is trampled to death by an unruly horse which François admires and with which he identifies, François pieces together the years of abuse he has endured at the hands of his mother, completely cut off from the world. During the process of reconstructing his life, and of attempting to understand the reasons for his mistreatment through his own memories and the clues he finds in his mother's possessions, he meets and begins to live with Amica, the daughter of a peddler that he catches trespassing on his land. From memory-images accompanied by internal monologue, we learn how François came to be deaf after a blow sustained from his mother when he finally stood up to her, refusing to complete her lifelong plan for him to become a priest. Paradoxically, François' deafness sensitizes him to the land and especially to a powerful stream into which the young Claudine, an unmarried mother exiled from her community, had once contemplated throwing him as an infant. Thus, François' origins are intimately tied to the land that surrounds him, but also intertwine with an original "sin" that haunts and defines both his and his mother's lives. Complicating these events and bringing them to the surface is the presence of Amica, whom François demands from the peddler in exchange for money and as compensation for squatting on his land. In contrast with the Anne Hébert novella, Amica and her father are here portrayed as Indigenous (Innu) people. This explicit insertion of an Indigenous element comes to significantly inflect the film's main themes of longing for a lost childhood and (in)ability to fully connect with the spirit of the land.



Figure 34: Laurence Leboeuf as the young Claudine. Le torrent (Simon Lavoie, 2012).

In his introduction to a symposium on nostalgia and colonial melancholia, Rob McQueen asserts that nostalgia can act as a framework for colonialism. Indeed, nostalgia appears to persist in settler states' contemporary longing for a past uncomplicated by Indigenous demands. In this respect, McQueen's understanding of nostalgia correlates with Paul Gilroy's notion of postimperial melancholia. As mentioned previously, for Gilroy, nations which had hitherto enjoyed the prestige and other benefits of ruling over vast empires find themselves confronted with a loss of both their empires and its attendant prestige in contemporary postcolonial contexts where such histories have become unambiguously discreditable. McQueen's discussion of Gilroy's work in the context of a symposium focussed on nostalgia concords with Boym's suggestion that a correlation exists between these two concepts (5). At the same time, Boym's concern with the forward-looking orientation and ethical potential of nostalgia echoes Khanna's take on melancholia which she understands as acting as an ethical imperative towards the future (Khanna 25). As discussed in previous chapters, my own contention holds that Québec persistently struggles with its particular post-imperial melancholic disavowal, and that this results in an overemphasis, in Québec national cinema, on its status as a colonized nation rather than as a colonizing one. Given this argumentative position, the similarities and differences between manifestations of melancholia and nostalgia help to nuance the way important preoccupations confronting the Québec collective imaginary are represented in *Le torrent*.

For Boym, nostalgia differs from melancholia insofar as it is a collective phenomenon. She states that "[u]nlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (xvi). This claim's exclusion of melancholia as a sentiment capable of generating collective meaning contradicts observations by scholars such as Khanna, Gilroy and Cheng, who employ melancholia as a framework precisely for the purpose of probing deeply entrenched national loss and anxiety. Where Boym sees nostalgia as more democratic, these scholars' compelling mobilization of melancholia as a conceptual key to help grasp the anxieties of national groups prompts a closer scrutiny of nostalgia's specifically collective appeal. In fact, while Boym sees melancholic loss as linked only to personal history, it seems probable that boundaries between personal and collective loss are fluid. Indeed, it appears more likely that nostalgia's propensity for populism merely gives it an aura of democracy and inclusiveness rather than a more fundamentally egalitarian basis.

My skepticism about nostalgia's democratic credentials is consistent with Boym's own outline of its double-edged nature. Seeing nostalgia as made up of two components, one restorative and one reflective, Boym proposes that the former "attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home," adding that it "does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition," and that "[r]estorative nostalgia is at the core of recent national and religious revivals; it knows two main plots – the return to origins and the conspiracy" (xviii). This reactionary aspect of nostalgia, because it stifles critical thinking about the underlying processes of democracy, vested interests and imbalances of power, cannot be said to truly align itself with democratic principles insofar as these imply autonomy, equality and self-rule. Instead, restorative

nostalgia superficially exploits the mechanisms of democracy. In contrast, Boym describes reflective nostalgia as longing itself, as a delayed homecoming that "dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity" (xviii). "At best," she adds, "reflective nostalgia can present an ethical and creative challenge, not merely a pretext for midnight melancholias" (xviii). In fact, the appeal of such openendedness is also found in Khanna's theorization of melancholia despite Boym's intimation that nostalgia is superior due to its capacity to transcend the usual justifications for melancholic symptoms.

Boym characterizes modern nostalgia as a longing for a past world marked by absolutes that never existed and to which one cannot return (8). In this respect, the reified vision of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec conjures images of Francophones as more clearly defined by their colonized status. Although contemporary Québec undoubtedly still exhibits the aftershocks of its historically marginalized status, it cannot realistically "hope" to return to the perceived pre-Quiet Revolution absolutes that label it as a colonized society. Further, following Boym's definition, one can suppose that the "absolute" nature of Québec's colonized status, even during the postconquest period of marked disenfranchisement that lasted at least up until the 1960s, though founded on unquestionably significant inequalities that characterize colonial structures, remains a profoundly relative, impure condition. Indeed, the historical origins of Francophone culture in North America necessarily imply that an unavoidable element of Québec identity is constituted by its lost and then underplayed role as a colonizer. Thus, as Boym reminds us, melancholia is linked to the loss of an unidentifiable ideal, whereas nostalgia mourns for something that can be identified, but which never existed, an imaginary and idealized past. Given its hyperbolic and unconcealed nature, nostalgia flirts with an admission of the impossibility of its idealized object.

By the same token, it serves to remind us what that ideal actually was, and how it feasibly coincides with the lost ideal of melancholia, which, in contrast, remains concealed. In this respect, nostalgia and melancholia can be posited as acting dialogically, with nostalgic sentiments pointing to and thereby sharpening the melancholic's ethical engagement with his or her lost ideal. Such an ideal might intuitively correspond to a nation, but for Khanna, in post-colonial contexts it relates to the formerly colonized nation's espousal of the nation-state as a model (25). On the other hand, for Gilroy, melancholia exhibits a pain at the loss of empire and the loss of the prestige of being a colonizer. Given its complex colonial history, it seems apparent that Québec may attribute its own melancholia to an entangled combination of these factors. Working in dialogue, however, melancholia and nostalgia may help provide clarification. Indeed, citing Kant's positive assessment of the synergy between the two concepts, Boym admits that this thinker sees "in the combination of melancholy, nostalgia and self-awareness a unique aesthetic sense that did not objectify the past but rather heightened one's sensitivity to the dilemmas of life and moral freedom" (Boym 13).

Nostalgia for La petite Aurore

As Liz Czach explains, the contemporary Québec film industry has tended to look back nostalgically to the pre-Quiet Revolution period through what she identifies as Québec's own particular form of heritage film. Likewise, in a presentation delivered at the *Society for Cinema and Media Studies* annual conference in 2016, Julie Ravary also observed these productions which she terms "historical" epics. Ravary points to "an unpreceded wave" of these films during the early 2000s, noting the release of three similarly structured "blockbusters" in less than four years: *Séraphin, un homme et son péché* (Charles Binamé, 2001), *Nouvelle-France* (Jean

Beaudin, 2004), and *Le survenant* (Érik Canuel, 2005). Although these films yielded dramatically different box-office results, Ravary notes comparable narrative elements that include nationally specific themes such as "Québec's colonial past, the control of the Catholic church on the social and sexual emancipation of women, and the poor economic conditions of the French-Canadian colonies." One salient example of this type of commercially oriented, nostalgic, historical and/or literary film appearing in the last two decades is Luc Dionne's remake of the postwar *La petite Aurore*, retitled simply *Aurore* (2005). As Czach aptly stresses, *Aurore* garnered spectacular earnings at the Québec box-office. With its focus on sustained and relentless parental violence directed towards a young child, *La petite Aurore* comes across as a strange and revealing object for a remake, and its renewed success thus highlights the appeal of coupling the theme of violence towards children with nostalgia for Québec's period of historical oppression, a combination foregrounded again in *Le torrent*.

Indeed, Heinz Weinmann ("Cinéma de l'imaginaire") has highlighted the significance of *La petite Aurore* as an indicator of Québec's deep-rooted preoccupations and includes this disturbing film in his delineation of Québécois identity across a selection of other key texts.

Reading *La petite Aurore* as an aborted attempt to assert Québec independence, Weinmann sees this impulse revived more successfully in Francis Mankiewicz's *Les bons débarras* (1980), which he dubs "the revenge of Aurore." For Weinmann, *Les bons débarras* constitutes the first (ultimately foiled) culmination of a process whereby the nation finally rejects its family romance complex where the colonizing stepmother in *La petite Aurore* stands in for England and Aurore herself represents the scapegoat that French Canada sacrifices in order for Québec to "germinate" into a subsequent post-Quiet Revolution incarnation (43). Although Weinmann

⁴² For another example of the contemporary reworking of the Aurore trope, see Czach's reading of Daniel Roby's 2013 biopic *Louis Cyr* in her forthcoming chapter on Québec heritage films.

argues his point "rather contortedly" (Marshall 110), viewing *La petite Aurore* as a futile attempt to trouble Québec's postwar hegemony is undoubtedly plausible. Without question, the stifling clerical nationalism and neo-colonial dependence of Québec's "great darkness" transpires in this film. Indeed, Scott MacKenzie has strikingly described the self-sacrificial masochism and helplessness at the heart of this film, while André Loiselle pointedly associates the abuse portrayed in *La petite Aurore* with Québec's oppression as a linguistically marginalized group. Likewise, Christiane Tremblay-Daviault's sociologically inflected history of post-war Québec cinema appears to support the premises underpinning *La petite Aurore* as a foiled attempt at resistance. Tremblay-Daviault highlights the failure of family, rural community, and clergy to intervene on behalf of Aurore, exacerbating her agony rather than relieving it, and describes *La petite Aurore* as encapsulating an environment of silencing duplicity, self-destructive sadomasochistic interdiction, sexual repression, and brutally oppressive injustice (213-8).

Given its historical setting, *Le torrent* again inevitably depicts the yoke of religious oppression, which forms one of its central themes. Yet as an auteur film, *Le torrent* expresses a more nuanced, less Manichean, and more ambiguous relationship with the past than the clearly nostalgic and overtly sentimental "blockbuster" melodramas highlighted by Ravary. Indeed, Lavoie's film refuses to offer the "retreat to a knowable identity and stable past" that Czach fittingly associates with the heritage film genre in Québec. Nevertheless, *Le torrent* echoes the violent abuse meted out to a young child (male this time) that *La petite Aurore* dwells on so memorably. The persistence of this motif and its association with pre-Quiet Revolution Québec is unmistakeable. Boym suggests that the vivid portrayal of pain is linked to the fixation in *nostos* on a perfect imagined past that never existed. This aspect of nostalgia, she claims, "is not merely a lost Eden but a place of sacrifice and glory, of past suffering" (15). Although *nostos*

partially accounts for the interest in violence against children in both *La petite Aurore* and *Le torrent*, it does not fully explain the persistence of this theme across texts with such fundamentally different commercial and artistic objectives. If *nostos* adequately corresponds to the populism of Québec heritage films, the undeniable precedence of artistic imperatives in *Le torrent* points to a more complex manifestation of nostalgia, one that is collective, but not merely populist, one that perhaps converges with melancholia.

In contrast with Lavoie's efforts to faithfully transpose Hébert's novella, the decision to depict Amica as an Indigenous woman departs markedly from the original literary text, and thus cannot fail to echo contemporary anxieties about Québec's colonial relationship with Indigenous peoples. In addition, this divergence engenders another, potentially more problematic one. Indeed, the film's amalgamation of Amica and Claudine via Laurence Leboeuf, a non-Indigenous actress who takes on the role of both these women, strikes uncomfortably as identity appropriation.⁴³ At first glance, we might perceive in *Le torrent* the recurrence of a fetishized view of *métissage*, which underpins recent Québec documentaries such as *Québékoisie* and L'empreinte. Indeed, without denying the historical basis or productive possibilities of cultural exchange and mixing between Indigenous peoples and Québécois that these films focus on and which Bertrand and MacKenzie analyze in more detail, we can nevertheless assert that both documentaries, to varying degrees, deploy and rely upon the idea of biological and cultural hybridity as a means of solving historical antagonisms and of encouraging the parallel resolution of current sociopolitical discord. In spite of their uncritical approach to métissage and the attendant danger of identity appropriation, as well as the reassuring conclusions of both these films, it should be acknowledged that *Québékoisie* in particular ventures into some unsettling

⁴³ In contrast, Amica's father, the peddler, is played by Innu actor, Marco Bacon.

subject areas that take considerable steps towards confronting Québec's colonial past. L'empreinte, however, relies more heavily on métissage as a defining characteristic of contemporary Québécois identity and casts Québec as fundamentally different (and more progressive) than other settler societies. It thus reveals the existence in Québec not only of a nostalgia for pre-Quiet Revolution hardship, but also for an idealized hybridity with First Nations that stems from Québec's distant origins. In parallel, despite its casting of Laurence Leboeuf as an Indigenous Amica, Le torrent engages with nostalgia in such a way as to complicate the impact of this sentiment by introducing the appropriation of Indigenous identity, not simply as a "solution" that reassuringly resolves Québec anxieties about its colonial history, but as a troubling representation of Québec's relationship to Otherness.⁴⁴ Consequently, Lavoie's film, while ostensibly partaking in what Bertrand and MacKenzie usefully retrace as Québec cinema's deployment of Indigenous figures as "a mirror for the fraught identity of the pure laine or old stock Québécois, whose homesickness can only be cured by forging a hybrid identity that will allow them to ground themselves in a contemporary multicultural landscape," also comments on this process and depicts a haunting outcome that continues to impede and challenge the

For Boym, national awareness comes from outside the community. The romantic traveller brings this perspective. She writes: "The nostalgic is never a native but a displaced person who mediates between the local and the universal" (12). This perspective occurs in *Québékoisie*, where the filmmakers recount their experience of foreign travel and its role in

protagonist's ability to seize the land wholeheartedly.

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⁴⁴ Questioned on this topic, Lavoie expresses doubts regarding facile claims to *métissage* and, in contrast, stresses the historical introspectiveness and insularity of Québécois society. He explains his intention of presenting Amica, not as an Indigenous character played straightforwardly by a non-Indigenous actress, but rather as an obvious construct formed in the protagonist's mind, a vision of his mother as a young woman conflated with an idea of Otherness. Lavoie describes *Le torrent* as partly seeking to tackle Québec's troubled relationship to Otherness and as engaging with Québec's collective imaginary, collective neuroses, and the longstanding references that are present in its historical conscience (personal interview with author, July 2017).

prompting a recognition of their ignorance about First Nations in Québec. This young couple then travels "outside" mainstream society to visit several First Nations communities in Québec. Outsider status also applies to François and Claudine, who are exiled from their French-Canadian community. At the same time, Amica and her father have also been displaced from Indigenous land and François' violent attempt to eject them from his property vividly reminds us of this situation. In this respect, Laurence Leboeuf's hybridized role as Amica/Claudine highlights the point of tension between insider and outsider, and recommends her as an especially keen observer of the community/nation. Her sympathetic portrayal contrasts markedly with the older Claudine's, a dissimilarity paradoxically emphasized by pitching these characters as alter egos. Such tropes seem to indicate the film's desire to introduce into its nostalgic framework the idea that Indigenous presence productively informs us about the nature of Québec's malaise. Thus, although we may discern in Le torrent another apparent attempt to validate a Québécois occupation of Indigenous land by calling on Québec's mythical Indigenous origins, the film's gaze towards the past differs from a manifest manoeuvre of this kind insofar as it remains openended and ambiguous. Both the past and the future proposed in *Le torrent* fail to translate into comfortable optimism, and this important nuance partially aligns it with Boym's account of algia or reflective nostalgia.

Incompleteness and Delayed Homecoming: Beyond the Quiet Revolution

Bill Marshall describes Québec's modernization during the Quiet Revolution as a "destabilizing," "uneven," and "incomplete" process "closely bound up with an identity to be built and fought over." This highlights a central particularity of this period of rapid social, economic and political change, which coincides intimately with important and lasting formations

in Québec national identity (49). Indeed, correlations between the Quiet Revolution and Québécois identity obscure perceptions of the past beyond this moment, and the consequent vagueness of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec in the popular imagination render it favourable to the mechanisms of nostalgia. Tellingly, the periodization of Marshall's book-length study on Québec national cinema situates what the author describes as "Foundational Fictions" at the beginning of the 1960s, thereby reinforcing the commonplace exclusion of the dozen or so clericalconservative melodramas of the post-war era, while recognizing nonetheless that "the most significant films of that epoch, such as La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre, directed by Jean-Yves Bigras in 1951, form part of Quebec's film memory" (18). As such, Marshall's larger corpus is consistent with his position that the Quiet Revolution constitutes not only an important period of change, but also a national myth that further complicates the effects of modernization. In parallel, Boym's notion of reflective nostalgia as a longing that "delays homecoming" appears to converge with the "incompleteness" that Marshall attributes to the constant re-imagining of Québec identity through cinema. Just as Boym sees reflective nostalgia as the positive aspect of this concept, the "incompleteness" of Québec nationhood that Marshall alludes to also surfaces as a site of opportunity rather than as an obstacle, despite the intuitive response to see incompleteness as something to be overcome. Boym's notion of delayed homecoming implies an ongoing movement towards home, the outcome of which has been deferred. As such, algia or longing itself is not static, but continuously open-ended and interrogative. For Marshall, however, the Quiet Revolution is seen as not only modernizing, but also as originating. As such, although permeable and contestable, the myth of modern Québec nationhood and of modern Québec cinema's emergence during this period constitutes a formidable temporal boundary nonetheless.

Stressing a heterogeneity that belies the founding myth of the Quiet Revolution as a unified experience, Marshall proposes a constantly fluid identity that is also compatible with Homi Bhabha's view of the nation, which relies paradoxically on the discourse of its inherent modernity and at the same time on that of its distant origins, even as the two can never be reconciled temporally into the national narrative (203). As discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to La neuvaine, Bhabha states that the nation must be told in "double-time," that of a nationalist pedagogy centred on the past, and of living performative contemporaneity. Telling the nation, for Bhabha, is thus simultaneously accumulative and recursive (208-9). Going beyond an external search for identity on the basis of the "otherness of other nations," Bhabha posits an internal splitting of identity provoked by the heterogeneous people of the nation. As such, Bhabha's model mirrors Boym's splitting of nostalgia into its restorative (nostos) and reflective (algia) counterparts, its retrospective and prospective capacities (xvi). Moreover, Bhabha calls upon Ernest Renan's notion of "will" or "daily plebiscite" to bind his iterative grasp of national narrative (229-230), a move which overlaps with Boym's understanding of the nostos of a nation, where "individual longing is transformed into a collective belonging that relies on past sufferings that transcend individual memories" (15).

Even though Marshall describes 1960s Québec identity, represented emblematically in Gilles Groulx's *Le chat dans le sac*, as "ungraspable" because "in the throes of contradiction, emergence, and elaboration," he nevertheless deems that it successfully proposes a model for a future hegemony that coincides with viewer identification, while rejecting state technocracy and violence (55-56). However, the recurrence of ungraspable identity in a brutal form in Lavoie's work throws the absolute rejection of violence into doubt. Indeed, his second feature, *Laurentie*, released only one year before *Le torrent*, depicts a protagonist whose unstable national identity

leads to a sense of belonging limited to white, male, Francophone homosociality. In light of Marshall's assertion about the identity parameters taking shape in 1960s Québec, *Laurentie* either presents us with shocking residual elements of phallocentric national priorities, or points to a more profound malaise than anticipated in Marshall's analysis. Again, Bhabha's suggestion that the time of the nation's representation is both double and split offers a way of understanding this anomaly. As Bhabha points out, Frantz Fanon warns against the reification of the nationstate while maintaining a struggle for national culture (Bhabha 218). Marshall observes the emergence of a new nationalist hegemony in 1960s Québec cinema, but Laurentie depicts a protagonist unsatisfied with the perpetual incompleteness of this identity. Thus, Lavoie's second feature portrays a reification of the nation-state and a disparaged abandonment of political struggle – precisely the opposite of the outcome prescribed by Fanon in Les damnés de la terre. The protagonist of *Laurentie* is literally split according to the temporalities of nationalist pedagogy and performance. On one hand he exhibits violent frustration toward Anglophones and fetishizes canonical Québécois authors, including Anne Hébert. At the same time, he desires the urbane cosmopolitanism and self-confident worldly identity of his English-speaking neighbour. The protagonist of *Laurentie* rejects the underlying oscillation between "then" and "now" that Bhabha exposes in the nation's storyline and this psychic refusal becomes violently unhinged.

Bhabha's emphases on loss and on non-homogeneous temporality also echo Khanna's view of melancholia. Indeed, *Laurentie*'s combination of a violent fear of the Other with inexplicable and insufferable melancholia on one level suggests a link between this condition and an unclear, insecure identity, the result of the unassimilated loss of nationhood, a failure to attain national completeness. Khanna posits that a haunting associated with melancholia frames the temporality of postcolonial nations and provokes an ethical demand on the future (15). This

haunting provocation results from the contradictory adoption of (or aspiration to) the very nation-state structure that such decolonizing entities had once resisted (25). Considering this, the excessive melancholia of Laurentie's protagonist points not to incomplete nation-statehood, but rather the lost/incomplete decolonizing ideals of the Quiet Revolution. Laurentie's confrontation of Québec's residual malaise also uncovers a bridge between pre-Quiet Revolution nationalism and its contemporary reiterations, which undermines the popular conflation of the latter with 1960s liberation ideals. The film thereby enables incursions into the past, pointing logically to French colonialism, inadvertently highlighting an Indigenous presence omitted from its rationale, and insisting on an investigation of past trauma. Continuing this reflection on Otherness in Le torrent, Lavoie sought to cinematically render the figures of Amica and of the peddler. Perceiving these characters as romanticized Romani-like outsiders in the Anne Hébert novella, and attributing this trope to European literary influences, Lavoie deemed their close reproduction to be incongruous in a contemporary Québécois film narrative calling for socio-cultural and historical plausibility. As such, the director explains his choice to recast Amica and the peddler as Indigenous characters as one aimed at capturing the marginalized status of the figures in the literary source as closely as possible (personal interview with author). As a result, this deviation from the original story introduces Indigenous presence into Le torrent, an element that is utterly lacking in *Laurentie*'s critique of xenophobia.

Implicating Québec: Historical Trauma and the Films of Jeff Barnaby

In light of the difficulty posed in looking past the Quiet Revolution as constitutive of modern Québécois identity, Adam Lowenstein's book *Shocking Representations* provides useful theoretical tools for investigating national historical trauma. The work of Mi'kmaq filmmaker

Jeff Barnaby also helps elucidate the nature of Québec nostalgia through themes common to Indigenous and non-Indigenous filmmakers in Québec. Indeed, Lowenstein's focus on horror cinema converges with Barnaby's own predilection for this genre. Exploring the relation between horror cinema and historical trauma, Lowenstein challenges trends in trauma studies that preclude the representation of traumatic events in national history. For Lowenstein, this interdiction, though based in caution and respect, instead silences victims' experience of trauma. He aims to shatter this unproductive impasse by valuing what he terms the "allegorical moment." Drawing on Benjamin's Messianic time, Lowenstein understands allegory as an instance of cinematic representation that unites the spectator with the historical event in a "shocking collision" that fuses experiences across time and space, and brings past and present together (2). Interestingly, Lowenstein's analysis of Georges Franju's work stresses a "brutality [...] characterized by a rage aimed at 'breaking all that stifles'" (20), a description evocative both of the brutality present in La petite Aurore and the constriction of the Duplessiste era in which it was produced. The propensity to shock in *La petite Aurore*, and its correspondence with Lowenstein's focus on representations of transitional, transformational states, can be considered in conversation with more contemporary provocations looking onto past trauma like those portrayed in *Le torrent* and in Jeff Barnaby's work.

Each chapter in Lowenstein's book focuses on the national trauma of a colonial power or settler colonial nation, stressing the determining effect of such wounds on national identity. Indeed, Lowenstein's glib phrase, "I am traumatized, therefore I am" (10), which encapsulates contemporary fascination with horror, also echoes the iconic phrase in Groulx's *Le chat*, where the protagonist summarizes the incomplete transformation of Quiet Revolution Québec by declaring "I am French Canadian, therefore I am searching for myself." Paradoxically cementing

Québec's identification with the Quiet Revolution, Groulx's existential call to explore trauma encourages a glance back into history and beyond the boundary that symbolically separates the *grande noirceur* from the 1960s. Applied to Québec, Lowenstein's model reveals other layers of complexity due to Québec's ambiguous history as both colonizer and colonized. Indeed, an emergent Indigenous cinema expresses historical trauma most powerfully, particularly in light of Indian Residential School abuses. In this respect, Barnaby's *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* deploys the motifs of horror, abjectness, and violence inflicted upon children that correlate with the kind of risk-taking, but rousing cinematic texts Lowenstein proposes. Without straightforwardly superimposing Lowenstein's Western framework onto an Indigenous text, his model, applied to *La petite Aurore* anachronistically and in response to the themes brought forward, not only in *Le torrent*, but also by *Rhymes*, reveals surprising correlations that inevitably entangle the Québécois viewer.

These juxtapositions interrogate the selective amnesia, or "strange forgetting" of the violent means employed in founding the nation, which Bhabha reminds us is linked to Renan's "will" (229). Ironically, "remembering to forget" inhibits unsettling recollection beyond the barrier of the Quiet Revolution, a proscription ambiguously contradicted by Québec's national motto "Je me souviens," the visibility of which was promoted by the first Parti Québécois government in the 1970s. ⁴⁵ Thus, Renan's "remembering to forget" can be likened to nostalgia insofar as the latter represents a skewed remembering or idealizing of Québec's tragic past.

Lowenstein's approach, applied to a somewhat distant and disturbing text like La petite Aurore opens up Québec's cinematic past for critical scrutiny and validates Weinmann's intent to connect films that are temporally situated on the other side of the Quiet Revolution. La petite

⁴⁵ This motto, its shifting connotations for new generations of Quebecers, and its relationship to nostalgia is discussed more extensively with specific contemporary examples by Bertrand and MacKenzie.

Aurore's theme of an abused child returns in *Le torrent* and associates this motif with Québec before the Quiet Revolution. However, Barnaby's *Rhymes*, which portrays the genocidal Indian Residential School trauma, and which, indirectly implies Québec's participation in this federally-implemented system, counterpoints Weinmann's tendentious reading of Aurore as the victim of colonial injustice.



Figure 35: Genocidal Indian Residential School trauma.

Rhymes for Young Ghouls (Jeff Barnaby, 2013).

In spite of Barnaby's hard-hitting, iconoclastic style, his oeuvre displays a marked absence of overt criticism about Québec's colonial aspirations. In contrast, his personal interview comments on the subject of language are more scathing:

This is what kind of blows my mind about growing up in Québec. We have the language laws here, and everything that they're saying - we want to preserve our culture, we want to preserve our language, we want to protect our land - is exactly what Native people have been saying for the past... well since the French got here. And for the life of me I just don't understand why it is that they maintain a kind of ethnocentric view of the culture in Québec rather than [...] embrace and maybe even work together with the Native people (Barnaby, Dudemaine interview n.p.).

Barnaby's public presence then, seems to form the first site of implication. Unlike his celebrated Abenaki precursor, Alanis Obomsawin, Barnaby's work doesn't exhibit politically explosive events such as Restigouche and Oka, which oppose Indigenous and settler forces in Québec. Instead, Barnaby allegorizes the pervasiveness of colonial processes designed to carry out linguistic and cultural effacement. Indeed, Barnaby's style could not appear in starker contrast with Obomsawin's NFB documentary realism, drawing instead on horror, fantasy and dystopian fiction. Barnaby's engagement with cinema nevertheless bears a significant link to Obomsawin via her 1984 film *Incident at Restigouche*, which documents a Québec police raid on his home reserve of Listuguj, and which he credits for instigating his own career (Barnaby, CBC inteview, n.p.).

As Jerry White compellingly argues, Obomsawin's work cannot be reduced to an indictment of Québec sovereigntist hypocrisy in the face of Indigenous claims. White aptly points out that Obomsawin's *Kanehsatake* primarily condemns federalist political forces, even if this filmmaker has not shied away from also critiquing sovereigntist politicians, most notably in *Incident at Restigouche*, which occurs during a Parti Québécois mandate (373). Nevertheless, in spite of their denunciation of federalist leaders, Obomsawin's Oka films cannot fail to implicate Québec as well. As I argued in Chapter 3 of the present thesis, in *Kanehsatake*, Obomsawin activates and archives a sense of Québécois postcolonial melancholia, which, calling upon shared aspirations, acts as an ethical imperative towards the future. Given the history of relations between French Canadians and Mi'kmaq, this affirmation perhaps carries even more weight with regard to *Incident at Restigouche*, which pits the Québec government against the Mi'kmaq, an Indigenous nation, whose century-long alliance with French-speaking Acadians was, according to Mi'kmaw historian Daniel N. Paul, "... based on mutual admiration and respect for each

other's culture and friendship" (73). Thus, by acknowledging Obomsawin's influence, Barnaby rekindles the memory of her vivid on-screen confrontation with Québec fisheries minister Lucien Lessard and his denial of Mi'kmaq sovereignty on the grounds that "to have sovereignty, one must have one's own culture, language and land." This evocation not only questions Québec's claim to comparatively good relations with Indigenous peoples, but also stimulates its postcolonial melancholia for the political loss of Acadia and New-France, the loss of integrity in the treatment of its Mi'kmaq allies, and a similar loss present in Québec's failure to follow through with the decolonization project of the Quiet Revolution by fully applying its ideals to all nations. How the statically different style, Barnaby builds cumulatively on Obomsawin's presence in Québec film history, and complements her twofold approach by stirring Québécois empathy concerning the consequences of assimilation, while implicitly bringing to attention Québec's non-Indigenous, settler status and historical responsibilities.

⁴⁶ The sequence of events and comments made by government actors provides a few insights into René Lévesque's personal convictions concerning the contradictions of the Listugui attacks by a government defending its own sovereign rights. Two raids took place in Listuguj on June 12 and 20, 1981. Most newspaper reports of the period highlight Lucien Lessard as the main government figure involved in events. Lessard gave an ultimatum to the Mi'kmaq and ordered the eventual raids on the Listuguj community. An article in La Presse on June 23 highlights Lessard's incompetence in this case and in two other important dossiers under his control. The same article acknowledges, however, that Marc-André Bédard, as Minister of Justice, should be held accountable for the excessive use of force during police raids. Lévesque's first pronouncement on the matter came on June 23. Quoted in Le Soleil, Lévesque reacts to involvement by federal Minister for Indian Affairs, John Munro, who suggested that Ottawa reclaim jurisdiction over negotiations with the Mi'kmaq, by stating that Munro should "stay home and shut up." In the same article, Lévesque deplores the arrests of 11 Mi'kmaq during the raids but reaffirms the government's position to limit their fishing activities and does not rule out another raid. On June 24, Lessard quits the case after a final disappointing and failed negotiation with Mi'kmaq leaders, leaving the dossier in Lévesque's hands (La Presse, Le Devoir). On June 25, Lévesque promises that the provincial police will not re-enter the Listuguj community and describes the use of massive force as "a very debatable decision" by police officials (The Record). A piece in Le Devoir on June 26, elaborates on Lévesque's comments. In this report, Lévesque calls on the Mi'kmag to negotiate, adds that the media have dramatized the situation, and responds to criticism by saying that Québec's is the only government in Canada to have signed a territorial agreement (James Bay) with First Nations and the only one not to differentiate between status and non-status Indians. He argues that the fact Québec is negotiating special agreements confirms its recognition of First Nations as distinct peoples as well as their historic and hereditary Indigenous rights.

These two contrasting ways of implicating Québec generate discomfort and selfreflection, but also possibility. Indeed, both Obomsawin and Barnaby appear to reach out to Québec, subtly highlighting opportunities for solidarity. These opportunities are facilitated by overlaps between Indigenous and certain Western conceptions of time that have different rapports with melancholia and nostalgia. Khanna establishes the temporal nature of melancholia by associating it with Benjamin's Messianic Time, where the present freezes into a constellation with a historical moment, forming a unity, and presenting a revolutionary opportunity (Khanna 15, Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" 396). For Quebecers, such pairings conceivably include the coupling of outrage at Lord Durham's 1840 Report explicitly recommending assimilation with twentieth-century Québécois struggles to address linguistic and cultural preservation. Similarly, the latent power of Obomsawin's intervention in Listugui as a catalyst for Barnaby's emergent career decades later suggests that analogous conceptions of time, historical trauma and resistance manifest themselves in Indigenous art and culture in ways that can be placed in parallel with Messianic Time. Indeed, the notion of Indigenous narrative achronicity described by Paula Gunn Allen ("Sacred Hoop" 148), in which characters enter a past that has strong bearing on the present, displays similarities with the temporal aspect of melancholia and reveals key differences with Boym's view of restorative nostalgia, or nostos.

Significantly, such non-linear narrative patterns occur in Barnaby's *From Cherry English* (2004). In this short film, an Indigenous protagonist named Traylor, following a sexual encounter with Lilith, a mysterious white woman, not only literally loses his tongue, but is then pulled into a scene where he meets figures from his past, his deceased grandmother and uncle. This scene's blending of different time periods corresponds to Allen's Indigenous achronicity and shares with Messianic time an incompatibility with the temporal regime that governs *nostos*. Indeed, for

Boym, the illusion of *nostos* is shattered when two temporal moments are brought together. As Boym determines at the outset of her book: "Nostalgic love can only survive in a long-distance relationship. A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double-exposure, or a superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface" (xiii-xiv). *From Cherry English* opposes the illusion of *nostos*, undermining Traylor's superficial display of Indigenous symbols, precisely by combining two moments into one.

Similarly, the narrative of *Le torrent* shatters François' illusion about his past. Lavoie deploys a non-linear chronology that minimizes the visibility of its movements between three stages in its protagonist's life, that is to say, François as a young man, a young boy and a newborn baby. In this respect, the film's "flashbacks" are signalled by the adult François observing himself at a younger age, but appear within the same scene or shot. In the first encounter with his past, François sees himself as a young boy entering the frame with no cuts or transitions to help distinguish between the moments in which two of his selves appear. The scene simply shifts temporality without cutting, continuing the plot in an earlier epoch. Consistently treating time in this way, the film promotes a feeling that different temporal moments meld into one, fused together by memory and locale in a manner consistent with Messianic time and compatible with Allen's achronicity. As François goes through his deceased mother's belongings, he pieces together not just memories of her violent cruelty towards him, but also her own tortured hopes for him to become a priest as a means of redeeming her illegitimate pregnancy and consequent exile. The seamless flashbacks pointing to François' painful origins and childhood are accentuated formally by graphic matches, sound bridges, and by the doubling up of actors to play different roles across generations. A subtle use of this device features Victor

Trelles Turgeon playing both François and the priest who fathers him, but a more obvious amalgamation is the aforementioned portrayal by Laurence Leboeuf of both Amica and Claudine as a young woman.

Aside from its relationship to time, Boym's assertion about nostalgia precludes the combination of home and abroad, but also of the dream world and everyday life. In further contrast with nostos, the dream motif in From Cherry English becomes difficult to distinguish from the everyday. For Bonnie and Eduardo Duran, whose work combines Jungian principles and traditional Indigenous worldviews, dreams are an important vehicle for "healing and the integration of world cosmologies" (45), and enable the freer discussion of inhibitive issues (150). Cinema, particularly in the allegorical form espoused by Barnaby, also offers a vector for intercultural communication. In From Cherry English, Traylor's grandmother speaks to him in Mi'kmag as she proceeds to sew back his dislodged tongue, but since her dialogue is not subtitled, non-Indigenous viewers find themselves in the same position as Traylor, unable to decipher her advice. Traylor is left instead with the words of his uncle who blurts out, "you wanna speak Indian? Get drunk and speak bad English." From Cherry English ends with Traylor reaching for a glass of alcohol after he wakes. His failure to heed his grandmother's instructions thus underpins the connection between dreams and the Mi'kmaw language as vehicles for understanding and healing, and his incapacity is extended to non-Indigenous viewers, who also realize their inability to grasp the language or its cultural and epistemological possibilities. Barnaby thus highlights the irony that non-Indigenous Québec cannot understand the language of the Indigenous society that initially welcomed it, thereby signalling Québec's own failure to properly integrate to the language of prior occupiers, precisely the commitment that Québec expects from immigrants.

Barnaby's film thus prods an underlying source of linguistic anxiety and contradiction at the heart of Québec's ongoing identity debates. This provocation is further stressed by the analogous effects of the punchline of Barnaby's film and the ironic denunciation of colonial linguistic marginalization found in Michèle Lalonde's emblematic 1968 poem "Speak White," which alludes to the 1840 Durham Report. Notably, contemporary nostalgia for this poem was recently channelled for the Québec stage by Robert Lepage in his 2016 play 887, which looks back on Lepage's youth growing up in Québec City. By making Lalonde's poem "Speak White" and its appropriation of non-White colonized identity its central motif, Lepage's play, like the wave of Québec period films mentioned earlier in this essay, betrays an ongoing nostalgia for a lost time when Quebecers could credibly assert their colonized status as a means of anti-colonial rebellion and righteousness. Indeed, as David Austin points out, Black identity appropriation in contestatory texts like Lalonde's poem or, more famously perhaps, Pierre Vallières' Nègres blancs d'Amérique, have their roots in the genuinely comparable socio-economic situations of African Americans and French Canadians in the early 1960s (51). The repurposing of racial epithets into such expressions as nègres blancs and negritude blanche to describe the struggle of Francophone Quebecers even prompted such figures as Édouard Glissant to draw comparisons between the two groups (Austin 58-59). However, while Vallières' intent, like Lalonde's, was one of alignment and solidarity with decolonization movements, the simultaneous elision of Black presence in Québec history seriously undermines their actions. As Austin highlights, Québec possesses an unacknowledged history of Black enslavement by the French.⁴⁷ Moreover, the ongoing redeployment of 1960s texts through contemporary productions like Lepage's, at a moment when the power dynamics for Francophone Quebecers have changed greatly, but when

⁴⁷ Marquise Lepage's docu-fiction *Le Rouge et le Noir... au service du Blanc!* (2005) also recounts this little-known aspect of Québec history.

Black presence and marginalization remain largely unacknowledged, inevitably warps the impetus of such moves, leaving only their more problematic implications.⁴⁸

In parallel, while Barnaby's films tend to implicitly stress the implications of Québec's settler status, they directly target English as the colonizing language, thereby fostering empathy between Québécois and Indigenous struggles. Indeed, some commentators cite the relative superiority within Canada of the Québec record on certain Indigenous issues, including language preservation (Morse, Axtell, Dickason, Delâge cited in Marshall 239-241; Beavon and Cooke cited in Salée "L'État québécois" 117-8). However, relative merits do not adequately address the roots of the Québécois malaise directly or indirectly probed by Indigenous artists like Obomsawin and Barnaby, and cannot therefore put to rest contradictions inherent to Québec's national aspirations without the fundamental reconceptualization of such objectives. In this respect, Barnaby's Rhymes, which tackles the subject of Indian residential schools, again targets English-speaking agents and Canadian policy, but cannot fail to evoke collective responsibility for similar abuses committed in Québec, nor for the assimilation of Indigenous children into Francophone culture. As such, if Barnaby's films echo the linguistic concerns of Quebecers, they simultaneously undermine the principles upon which contemporary mainstream Québec nationalism is founded, notably through candid portrayals of the destruction of Indigenous bodies, which ultimately constitute visceral attacks on settler colonialism. Indeed, Barnaby's films denounce the processes that ensure the integration of colonial brutality against Indigenous

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⁴⁸ The recent controversy surrounding Robert Lepage's 2018 theatre production, *SLÂV*, and the aborted development of another project, *Kanata*, perhaps represents the culmination of this tendency in Lepage's work. *SLÂV* repurposes the songs of African American slaves, sung in this production by a group composed mainly of white performers. The show was eventually stopped by the Montreal International Jazz Festival in response to public protests. Meanwhile, *Kanata* purported to deal with the history of relations between Indigenous peoples and European settlers in Canada, but featured only European artists. *Kanata* was cancelled following the withdrawal of funding from coproducers after Indigenous artists, community leaders and activists published an open letter in *Le Devoir* criticizing the production for the absence of Indigenous participants. In a further turn of events, Lepage announced that arrangements to go ahead with the show had been reached between himself and the *Théâtre du soleil* in Paris.

masochism in *From Cherry English*, self-amputation in *The Colony* (2007), or through the "voluntary" skin graft operation of *File Under Miscellaneous* (2010). The association of linguistic assimilation, epistemic violence and bodily torture, whether sexual or otherwise, is repeatedly emphasized in Barnaby's work. This concurs with the Mi'kmaq perspective on the inseparability of language and worldview, and with Duran and Duran's parallel contention that in Indigenous thought, "mind, spirit and body do not function separately, but are seen as a totality" (15). The sexualized infliction of pain also links language to the land as a sentient being via the inscription of hieroglyphs on the protagonists' bodies. As such, the protagonist's body in *File Under Miscellaneous* evokes the land being carved up with scientific precision, thus mirroring the dissection of the political map according to the ideal of nation-statehood to which Québécois nationalism yet adheres and aspires.

Conclusion

The violent tropes examined in this section coincide with themes in Québécois cinema that express real or imagined consequences of a dark national history, perhaps resulting from colonial marginalization or the distressing failure to genuinely decolonize Québec for all peoples. Most notoriously, the sadistic treatment of the body in *La petite Aurore* recounts the disturbing torture of a young girl by her stepmother under the impotent gaze of the clergy, but *Le Torrent* exemplifies the irrepressible nature of this legacy and goes so far as to boldly intertwine the identities of Indigenous and Québécois characters, while also complicating chronology by confounding past and present. The protagonist's deafness, caused by severe physical abuse in the name of Catholic zeal, paradoxically attunes him to the landscape's power over him and creates

an ambiguous tension between the appropriation of Indigenous identity and the inability of Québécois characters to fully possess the land, which instead comes to haunt them and seemingly overrides Western religious imperatives. This echo of the Indigenous worldview that human behaviour is morally determined by the interdependence of language and landscape (Basso 41-42, Sable and Francis 42) also suggests the ethical demand of melancholia put forward by Khanna complemented by *algia*'s critical potential for "narrat[ing] the relationship between past, present and future" (Boym 50). And such interlocking concepts provide a glimpse of intercommunicative cinematic propensities in Québec.

Lavoie's decision to make Amica Indigenous and then to amalgamate her with Claudine is unquestionably a controversial move, but one that surprisingly does not satisfy the common purpose of appropriating Indigenous identity, that is to say of providing "comfort" or "relief" to the settler for the wrongdoing perpetrated through colonialism. Instead, the film points to the ongoing discomfort, unresolved tensions, and impasses set up by colonialism. Viewed in light of Barnaby's overlapping thematic concerns, Le torrent rather reveals and highlights the contradictions at play in Québec's relationship to the land and to Indigenous peoples. For François, the sound of the powerful stream that clarifies his surroundings "is like the blood raging in (his) veins." This blood, according to the convoluted familial representations in the film, suggests both identity appropriation and *métissage*. Thus, Indigenous presence seemingly holds the key to understanding François' and by extension Québec's relationship to the land. Indeed, in spite of the film's amalgamation of Indigenous and Québécois identities, Indigenous presence ultimately still influences this relationship and cannot be effaced. As François observes, he is like "a child dispossessed of the world, ruled by a will before his own" (my emphasis). These thoughts might refer in Hébert to the legacy of the *Duplessiste* era, and in Lavoie, to the

consequences of decisions taken to bring Québec out of this period and into modernity, decisions that perhaps include a loss of solidarity with First Nations. Additionally, although they may be seen as an echo of tropes that situate Indigenous peoples as anachronistic or in a fixed past, these thoughts may also intimate that a will which precedes settler presence yet remains present and constrains Québec's ability to move forward until that will is suitably satisfied. Certainly, Barnaby's work draws centrally on the presence of deceased family members to drive its narratives, and indirectly challenges Québec's deep-rooted anxieties and contradictions by provoking fundamental questions in terms of its position as a colonizing and colonized nation. Linguistic assimilation, so central a preoccupation in Québec, is repeatedly foregrounded in Barnaby's work, especially in *From Cherry English*. As an Indigenous filmmaker originating from the territory now known as Québec, and through his treatment of time, of the distinction between the real and the imaginary, and of the body, Barnaby not only creates a space for mutual empathy, but also insistently recalls the nature of relationships between Indigenous and Québécois peoples, thereby serving to demystify dominant conceptions of nationhood.

Section 3: A Transportable/Transnational Cinema: Wapikoni Mobile

Foreword: This section is drawn from research carried out for a project that received the Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC) Gerald Pratley Award in 2014. This prize funded the development of the project for one year and enabled me to present my findings at the annual FSAC conference held at Brock University. I have since continued to develop and further revise this material, and have been invited to present it in several undergraduate and graduate seminars at Concordia and Université de Montréal. In addition, this work has led to a partnership between Concordia University and Wapikoni Mobile initiated through the Concordia Documentary Centre (CDC) and carried out in collaboration with Professor Liz Miller (Communication Studies).

First inspired by Haidee Wasson's emphasis on portability in film history, the section below considers the Wapikoni's conditions of production, exhibition, and cinematic culture formation through the cognate lens of transportability. Evoking larger loads, material and cultural exchange, and the movement of people by the apparatus, this term also suggests an attachment to a particular location combined with the nomadic ability to move within and out of that space of activity. In contrast with technological mobility's association with convenience and geographical precision, being transported intimates a crossing over or going through and adds an emotional dimension to physical implications. Transportation conjures images of mainstream culture's penetrating and polluting effects, while conversely, the flow of Indigenous media and cultural perspectives from their sites of origin generates dialectical counter-incursions that echo the Faustian dilemma described by visual anthropologist Faye Ginsberg. Wapikoni engages with transportation from multiple perspectives, inducing shifts in representation, perception and communication that fundamentally redefine intercultural relationships. Even in this era of

transnational cinemas, as Philip Rosen argues, nation-states and borders yet remain concrete experiences. This section hypothesizes that Wapikoni significantly challenges this paradigm via practical and thematic approaches to transportability. In this respect, the geopolitical context of Québec is notable. Its historical ambiguity as a conquered settler nation predisposes it to postcolonial and psychoanalytic frameworks. At the same time, Québec cinema reaches back to genealogical markers of mobility, through Challenge for Change, cinéma direct, and pioneer priest-filmmakers. This section combines archival research, social history and close readings of key texts in a three-part analysis that compares Wapikoni operations with historical precursors, looks at consequent global Indigenous interconnections, and complements these inquiries with analyses of films that specifically address transportability, travel and exchange. Thus, my research speculates on how Wapikoni influences impressions of national space, borders, and land, interrogating whether this initiative builds on earlier Indigenous cinematic provocations, or creates synergy with contemporary political and cultural movements towards radical reconceptualizations of nationhood.⁴⁹

Introduction

Wapikoni Mobile, gets its name from a young woman named Wapikoni Awashish, who was tragically killed in a road accident in 2002. Only 20 years old, Wapikoni Awashish had been an energetic leader among the youth of Wemotaci Atikamekw community and a collaborator of Québec documentary filmmaker Manon Barbeau. Deeply troubled by Wapikoni's death and by

⁴⁹ It should be noted that although this section explores Wapikoni Mobile in the Québec context, this initiative is not entirely unique and other similar film production projects based on mobility exist elsewhere in the world. In Brazil, for instance, Video in the Villages has existed since the late 1980s (see Pat Aufderheide, "You See the World"; Vídeo nas Aldeias website, "Presentation"). In Western Africa, the Cinomade project was created in the late 1990s and works to raise awareness and generate debate about HIV/AIDS through cinema (see Vincent Bouchard "Cinomade"; Africine website, "Cinomade").

the high levels of youth suicide in this community, Barbeau began to imagine a mobile film production studio as a means of empowering Indigenous youth (Barbeau, "Du Wapikoni mobile" 22). Co-founded in 2004 by Barbeau herself, the Council of the Atikamekw First Nation, and the First Nations of Québec and Labrador Youth Network, with the assistance of the NFB, this project has converted four Recreational Vehicles into mobile studios, which make month-long stops in various communities, enabling young people to conceive, produce, edit, and exhibit their own films. To date, the project counts more than 4600 participants, who have created over 1000 short films, 719 musical recordings, and garnered 160 prizes and honorable mentions in prestigious festivals. It has visited 70 different communities (42 across Canada, 28 internationally) from 25 different Indigenous nations (14 in Canada and 11 internationally), and was active in 8 different countries in 2017. In addition, Wapikoni films are distributed widely in festivals and accessible online ("Annual Report 2017" 6).

From its very inception, the Wapikoni project proposes an alternative understanding of transportation. Wapikoni Awashish's story is frequently cited and her image is displayed in the mobile studios. The name Wapikoni literally means "flower" in the Atikamekw language and acts as a powerful symbol that contrasts with the haulage of natural resources by multinationals. Indeed, Wapikoni Awashish was killed when her car drove head on into a truck carrying lumber, illegally parked along the road to her community. As such, Wapikoni positions itself in contradistinction with the historical and ongoing deployment of transportation as an exploitative endeavour. Instead, it bears the intent of social change through artistic practice, cultural exchange, and political engagement.

This section is divided into three sub-sections. The first briefly signposts a current traced by transportation in Québec history, cinema and culture. The second examines Wapikoni's

incursion into this context, and the third ponders its possible consequences. My research builds on the work of Catherine Laurent Sédillot, Antonin Serpereau, Stéphane Guimont Marceau, and Karine Bertrand, who respectively consider the Wapikoni's social impact as intra and inter cultural mediation, its distribution as alternative media practice, its effects on notions of citizenship, and the renewal of the sacred through Indigenous cinema. My own intervention seeks to understand how Wapikoni provokes a re-evaluation of national space by diverting Québec's symbolic investment in a national narrative which foregrounds transportation. It interrogates the singularities of this subversion, considering the specificity of intercultural relations in Québec, a settler colonial society marked simultaneously by its own subjugation and strong self-perception as a colonized nation. I want to argue here that Wapikoni, through its conception, its activities, and the thematic concerns of its output, re-appropriates the evocative power of transportation from national hegemonies by initiating a sequence of temporal and spatial interpenetrations. To this end, I attempt to place Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives into conversation, using the political and cinematic history of Québec, media articles, annual reports, participant interviews, and the Wapikoni films themselves in order to critically examine Québec's relationship with Indigenous peoples, and illustrate how Wapikoni brings together both the physical and emotional dimensions of transportation in ways that capture the popular imagination.

The Current

In his book, *Le pays renversé (Bitter Feast)*, historian Denys Delâge shows how complex communication networks shaped the history of the northeastern American continent prior to the arrival of Europeans, and how the Huron-Wendat people of Georgian Bay managed a vast

system across this region, interconnecting numerous Indigenous peoples via waterways and trade routes. From the Great Lakes, he writes, "it was possible to travel by water over the whole continent - from the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Rockies" (54). For Delâge, unequal relations of exchange and market capitalism superimposed onto existing structures destroyed the balance of social and interethnic relationships in the 17th century (173), an economic penetration inextricably linked with the missionary enterprise, where "the Hurons were faced not only with a commercial monopoly, but with a religious monopoly as well" (166). As Europeans gained control over transportation, Indigenous movement became increasingly constrained, culminating in repressive reserve and education systems put in place by Canada's Indian Act of 1876.

In parallel, the cinema consolidated emerging national myths shaped by transportation. Christopher Gittings, for example, describes the railway, as "the master narrative of Canadian nation, par excellence" (236). Indeed, the Canadian Pacific Railway's early use of film to promote land settlement in Western Canada (Morris 29-39), is later followed by NFB documentaries such as Stanley Hawes' 1944 Trans-Canada Express, which proclaims the railway's inauguration of a geographically complete nation. In contrast, Colin Low's 1952 Oscar-nominated short The Romance of Transportation in Canada, in Thomas Waugh's words, "implants a rather campy spirit in its animated riff on the epic subject matter of portage canoes, corduroy roads, steamships, continental railways, and bush pilots" ("Romance of Transgression" 18). Low's remarkably prescient film thus reveals cinema's potential for undermining the celebration of Euro-Canadian dominance over all stretches of the landscape.

In Québec, transportation is particularly mythologized via the liminal figure of the *coureur des bois*, situated symbolically between French Canadian and Indigenous worlds

(Marshall 240), and at times portrayed in NFB shorts like *Les voyageurs* (Bernard Devlin, 1964) and Coureurs des bois (1978) as a romanticized adventurer, whose desire for wealth and westward exploration led to the birth of the Canadian nation and traced the paths of its modern roads and heritage. Indeed, the *coureur* runs through Québec history, storytelling, and literature, notably in La chasse-galerie, Québec's most iconic oral tale, where coureur-type characters defy religious dogma and travel by magic canoe, thus memorably combining Indigenous tradition with physical, emotional, and supernatural transportation. The *coureur* lives on in such literary classics as Louis Hémond's Maria Chapdelaine (1913) and Félix-Antoine Savard's Menaud, maître draveur (1937), where literature scholar Aurélien Boivin notes an eternal dilemma, the need to occupy and possess the land to ensure the survival of the French-Canadian race, counterbalanced by the desire for liberty personified by the coureur des bois ("Présentation" 8). Gillian Helfield's analysis of folk influences on Québec cinema corroborates this dichotomy between two basic archetypes: the coureur des bois and the agriculteur (15). In this regard, the pioneering travel and tourism propaganda of Québec priest-filmmaker Maurice Proulx, endorsed nationally by the Duplessis regime, romanticizes exploration even as it favours an agriculteur vision. And although historically, Catholic missionaries had frowned on the *coureur*'s hybridity, in Les routes du Québec (1951), Proulx neutralizes the coureur's liberating and pluralistic potential to celebrate a notion of travel that validates territorial possession.



Figure 36: Romanticized adventurers. Coureurs des bois (NFB, 1978).

In Helfield's analysis, the emergence of *cinéma direct* during the Quiet Revolution, in spite of its "overriding emphasis on the processes of movement and change" (13), nevertheless continued to reaffirm pastoral values (22). Following this, the *Société nouvelle/Challenge for Change* program inaugurated in 1967, continued to emphasize portability, but, as Marion Froger contends, also displayed a fascination for migrating populations after the failure of agricultural colonization, and played out the "libertarian escape" of the *coureurs des bois* ("Le cinéma à l'épreuve" 29). At the same time, the creation of the NFB's Indian team, which challenged dominant narratives, foreshadowed elements of Wapikoni, including pan-Indigenous collaboration and community screenings (Starblanket 39). Indeed, Wapikoni has been described as an inheritor of *Challenge for Change* (Serpereau 57), but as this brief overview suggests, a more far-reaching lineage retraces the enduring sequence of transportation and its iterations via cinematic, literary, historical and other narrative moments.

Deviation: Global Indigenous Interconnectors

Having suggested a thread that emphasizes transportation in Québec cinema, I now look at how Wapikoni literally merges transportation with audiovisual communication, embeds itself within the narrative linking transportation to nationhood, and then redirects this current. While the penetration of electronic media into immobilized communities has raised concerns about cultural assimilation, a number of scholars have considered the reversal of these influences.⁵⁰ Karine Bertrand echoes these views and alludes to the capacity of Indigenous cinema in Québec to

⁵⁰ See Shohat & Stam (7, 31); Faye Ginsburg; and Michelle Raheja (190-220). Also, Lorna Roth demonstrates that Indigenous media initiatives have exercised significant influence on Canadian Broadcasting structures (14-15). Freya Schiwy claims that Indigenous video-making in South America is "an example of how indigenous movements in the region are transforming dominant socioeconomic and political structures and largely hegemonic epistemologies," (13).

Indigenize Western media practices ("Doctoral Thesis" 2). To be sure, Wapikoni transports technology and skills to communities to facilitate the outward flow of ideas, art, opinions, and worldviews. One significant way it achieves this is by appropriating and inverting Indigenous peoples' historical and mythical relationship with the *coureur des bois*, whose mediation of Indigenous knowledge ambiguously facilitated colonial expansion. Indeed, one of Wapikoni's most notable successes, Canouk Newashish's *Coureurs de nuit* (*Night Runner*, 2005), warps the *coureur* myth to fit modern reserve realities, thereby forcing the Québécois spectator to absorb a sardonic critique of the stereotypical Indigenized French adventurer and storyteller. Thus, this short film undermines popular settler conceptions of the *coureur*, effectively following Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) scholar Taiaiake Alfred, who insists that "contemporary indigenous peoples' nationhood" intrude into the colonial state's mythology, and thereby deny this state's ability to "maintain its own legitimacy" ("Peace, Power, Righteousness" 83).



Figure 37: Warped coureur myth. Coueurs de nuit (Canouk Newashish, 2005).

⁵¹ It is important to note that Wapikoni does not explicitly identify itself as engaging with the *coureur* archetype. However, during an interview, Manon Barbeau explained that the RV's conception and metaphorical fascination probably stemmed from and conjures a number of different non-, or anti-institutional influences including notably punk counter-culture, the carnivalesque, and nomadism. As such, the link I am drawing here between the RV's effect on the popular imaginary and the *coureur* seems pertinent given the *coureur*'s evocation of liminality, unorthodoxy, non-conformism, and mobility as defining traits.

Québécois *coureur* stories perform an exoticizing function akin to what Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith has denounced as "travellers' tales," misshaping Western understandings of the Other (81). Wapikoni, however, reworks this model and instead features Indigenous participants as storyteller-travellers who provide counter-narratives to pervasive clichés. Also, Wapikoni does not simply superimpose itself onto Western cultural structures, but rather, evokes antecedent Indigenous practices of transportation and exchange (Delâge 93-94), which validate its basis in transportability. Indeed, Delâge, whose observations mirror Shohat and Stam's perspective on Eurocentrism in the media (Shohat and Stam 31), stresses that it was not trade itself, but rather the unequal nature of exchanges, which overturned the social equilibrium in place before European arrival (Delâge 89). Centuries later, Wapikoni attempts to redress economic, communicational and political balance by affixing itself onto European networks of transportation imagined as the successors of those routes previously traced by Indigenous ancestors.

Wapikoni tackles transportation flows in three main ways. These include the transgenerational current within communities, communication from Indigenous to non-Indigenous peoples, and finally, pan-Indigenous connections through participant collaborations, public meetings, and other worldwide exchanges ("Annual Report 2005" 6). In the first instance, Wapikoni confronts a caesura in the temporal trajectory of communities by emphasizing a reconnection across imposed generational barriers. Thus, Wapikoni responds to the severed continuum between elders and youth enacted by Church-run Indian Residential Schools and counters the missionary impulse reproduced cinematically by Maurice Proulx. Instead, the

⁵² Sédillot notes that several participants express the hope that technology will "foster[] better dialogue between generations" (74). Bertrand also discusses the mending of intergenerational links through Wapikoni projects, focusing more closely on the theme of the sacred in Chapter 4 of her doctoral thesis (178-230).

structure of Wapikoni stopovers targets the restoration of intra-community interaction via participatory filmmaking, which culminates in end-of-visit screenings that create a space for group encounters and dialogue.

Thematically, intergenerational communication and healing are often expressed as journeys in Wapikoni films, many of which allude to nomadism or other traditional activities foregrounding mobility. For example, *Coeurs nomades* (Nomad Hearts, 2013) by Joyce Grégoire deals with homelessness within her community in a poignant testimony that features her own father's struggle with this predicament. The plural title of the film clearly implies a communal trauma that extends beyond the film's protagonist and holds accountable the breakdown of social structures. Likewise, Charlotte Poucachiche's *Le voyage* (The Journey, 2011) posits healing as a lifelong journey, associating traditional Anishnabe principles with an image of a canoe to suggest both their continuity and movement. *Ka Kushpian* (*My Journey*, 2001) by Tshiuetin Vollant frames the ancestral nature of a month-long canoe trip to Shefferville within a contemporary maturation ritual that asserts a nomadic presence on a vast traditional Innu territory, and reconnects with past generations, thus bursting the boundaries of an 8 km square reserve.

Such appeals to the past challenge dominant geographical assumptions in the present.

Debby Flamand's *Meskano* (*The Path*, 2012) links healing with movement, but focuses on future generations. Flamand and her daughter tackle the latter's depression together by undertaking a 120 km snowshoe journey that connects the Atikamekw communities of Manawan and Wemotaci with a group organized by Dr. Stanley Vollant, Québec's first Indigenous surgeon.

Thus, Flamand's film valorizes traditional practices as well as contemporary achievements, emphasizing the link between generations as a means to fight internal difficulties, while expressing territorial presence to non-Indigenous society. Other films, such as *Anmani mak Kum*

(Anmani and Kum, Collective Project, 2012) and *Kokom Déménage* (*Kokom on the Move*, Evelyne Papatie, Vince Papatie, 2006) stress the persistence and fragility of nomadic activities and rituals performed by elders. Likewise, Mélanie Kistabish's *Le lac Abitibi* (*Lake Abitibi*, 2005), retraces a history of forced sedentarization, leading to the concomitant loss of nomadic practices and of Anishnabeg land. Kistabish's enquiry isolates the key moments of reserve and residential school legislation as determining ruptures, while her use of archival footage of sedentarized school children waiving Québec flags clearly implicates Québec and shatters its perception as a colonized society.

Merging intra-community communication with external conduits, Wapikoni aims to "rebuild[] bridges between people, generations and cultures." Indeed, Barbeau's own hopes in this respect are telling: "If they renew with their roots and their history, while opening onto the world," she predicts, "they will create a link with us that will bring us something extremely precious (Le Devoir 2004)." Similarly, multiple aspects of transportation are present in the work of long-time Wapikonian Kevin Papatie, who asserts that "to transport oneself through cinema means transporting one's ideas, one's culture, towards another culture. So, we are talking about a path then. It means creating paths, intercultural bridges through cinema, which would then bring about an understanding of who we are" (Personal Interview. My translation). In keeping with this, some films deploy travel or its inhibition as didactic devices. For instance, Wigwas (2013) by Karl Chevrier articulates the traditional fabrication of a bark canoe as a metaphor for alternative directions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike, affirming the hope that the film itself has helped us on "our journey." Chevrier thus equates travel to the filmmaking process, not only as mediation between cultures, but literally as a vehicle that carries us forward towards the resolution of cultural and political differences. From a more overtly political

perspective, *Atikuat nimeteut (*The Caribou Trail, 2013) by Pishu Pierre Pilot, links the caribou trail, a train journey and the camera itself in order to outline the notion of voyage as a narrative of resistance opposing the government's forced immobilization of Caribou herds, while conversely, Réal Junior Leblanc's *Blocus 138 – Innu Resistance* (2012) documents a roadblock protesting Québec's Plan Nord project to further exploit natural resources on Innu territory.

Finally, interconnections between participants across nations contest the isolating structures of the reserve system. Participants take part in these initiatives whether as film collaborators, or through meetings at festivals, forums, and other events. These connections encourage the reconceptualization of territory as not only occupied by an Indigenous presence, but also as travelled across and interwoven with networks. This augments political and cultural clout and influences how national communities continue to be imagined (Marceau 566). In Québec, artists from different nations work together to assert Indigenous presence in ways that undermine mainstream notions of national space. Wapikoni has systematically sought to generate such alliances. Opportunities include ongoing collaborations with UQÀM and Concordia University, where filmmakers are often partnered with members of other communities to create short films. *Indian Taxi* (2011) for instance, directed jointly by Kevin Papatie and Abraham Côté, both Anishnabeg, but coming from Francophone and Anglophone communities respectively, emerges as an ironic view of transportation somewhat reminiscent of Colin Low's *The Romance of Transportation in Canada*.



Figure 38: Ironic view of transportation. Indian Taxi (Abraham Coté, Kevin Papatie, 2011).

Wapikoni extends well beyond Québec's borders. The first stopover in Ontario took place in Wikwemakong in October 2013, and now Wapikoni is present all across Canada. The project's desire to uncover suppressed commonalities across provincial borders is also expressed cinematically. *Vers Vancouver* (Towards Vancouver, 2013), by Bradley Brazeau and Evelyne Papatie, mirrors the spirit of Wapikoni itself and its desire to produce counter-narratives through the appropriation of roadways. Four Anishnabeg youth undertake a month-long cycle trip, leaving from Val D'Or then bifurcating north to visit Indigenous communities on their way to Vancouver. Participants recount stopovers where, in spite of divergent linguistic assimilation into French or English, they can communicate across a continent populated by Algonkian peoples with cognate languages. The exclamation, "we are everywhere in Canada, it's just that we aren't on the map" responds to films such as *Trans-Canada Express*, which bind the completeness of Canada to the rail connection, but either invisibilize or co-opt Indigenous presence and identity.



Figure 39: Appropriation of roadways.

Vers Vancouver (Bradlev Brazeau, Evelvne Papatie, 2013).

Political dimensions apparent in inter-community projects finds concerted expression in Wapikoni's focus on global Indigenous interconnections. Over the last fourteen years Wapikoni has developed a considerable range of international links and continues to cultivate such relationships. As Barbeau repeats: "We're trying to create a network of resources for First Nations all over the world so that youth feel less alone, less invisible" (*The Gazette*). This activity features attendance at international festivals, overseas training opportunities, discussion forums, diplomatic ties between communities, and reciprocal relationships with analogous audiovisual organizations in Bolivia, Columbia, Peru, Chile, Panama, Turkey, Norway, France and Finland. Opportunities for new encounters also work synergistically with links between communities in Québec. For example, Finding the Light (2013) by Emilio Wawatie, Shayna Decontie Thusky, and Raymond Caplin, brings together two Anishnabe and one Mi'kmaq youth from Québec to shoot a film about their experience at an international Indigenous festival and filmmaking workshop in Inari, Finland. Upon contact with Sámi and other Indigenous groups, the young filmmakers discover a shared history of colonization. Later that year, Wawatie accompanies fellow-Wapikonian and co-founder of Idle no More Québec, Mélissa Mollen-Dupuis to New York, and eloquently speaks on behalf of Wapikoni at the 13th Session of the

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Thus, Wapikoni associates itself with the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which, as highlighted in my reading of *Mesnak*, and according to James Anaya, acts to question the validity of the nation-state as the paramount form of human association that all collectivities should necessarily strive towards (9).⁵³

Other films also reveal the mobilizing effect of international exchanges. Kevin Papatie's visit to the Chiapas region of Mexico immediately preceded his manifesto-film *Nous sommes* (*We Are*, 2009), while Evelyne Papatie's trip to Brazil's Mato Grosso encouraged her to address her own people audio-visually in a short film titled *Des forêts de Kitcisakik aux forêts de Xingu* (*From the Forest of Kitcisakik to the Forests of Xingû*, 2008). In this film, Evelyne Papatie draws attention to shared concerns and emphasizes her calls for the parallel renewal of Indigenous resistance in her community through the use of parallel editing in the final segment of her film. Finally, *De passage* (Passing Through, 2011) by Sacha Dubé and Billy Roy Mowatt, produced during an exchange to Marseille, inverts the gaze of the sympathetic Western filmmaker out to highlight Indigenous problems. Instead, this Atikamekw-Anishnabe filmmaking duo casts a sympathetic eye on the marginalization of the Marseillais in relation to Paris and thereby invites solidarity with non-Indigenous groups.

Opportunities and Risks

So how does the aggregation of the cross-currents described above, combined with the convergence of Indigenous and Québécois aspirations and traditions, add fluid yet effective opposition to the global hegemony of the nation-state? The transnational and transportable nature

⁵³ Wapikoni also became an official partner of UNESCO in 2017 ("Annual Report 2017").

of Wapikoni brings into focus shared territory and mutually influencing identities, highlighting potential opportunities, but also possible risks. As I have emphasized, transportation implies not only a physical dimension, but also an emotional one. In the context of Québec, this coincides with and is augmented by the pervasively melancholic character of Québec cinema generally, a feature which, as I have tried to show over the course of this thesis, bears significant connections to Québec's colonial history. As discussed in previous chapters, Weinmann attributes Québécois melancholia to the failure of the 1980 referendum. For Weinmann, this condition is a means by which Quebec keeps alive the ideal of independence, whereas mourning would acknowledge the death of sovereignty. Interestingly, Weinmann also associates the coureur des bois with melancholia because "his inveterate nomadism clashes with the affirmation of the territoriality of the Québécois space" ("À l'ombre" 36-38). Thus, the *coureur* transpires as an inherently contradictory metaphor for nation-statehood. While admitting Québec's incomplete national status as one source of Québécois melancholia, we may yet suggest that its roots comprise additional layers of complexity. Indeed, as we have seen, Gilroy's notion of post-imperial melancholia, where diminished imperial nations suffer from the loss of empire as well as its prestige and moral authority, also corresponds to Québec, where the imperial origins of New France are occluded by the accent placed on Québec's status as a colonized nation. In parallel, Khanna upturns Freud's pairing of mourning and melancholia as respectively healthy and pathological processes, instead seeing melancholia as a self-critical, ethical imperative exhibited by decolonized nations who accept the colonizer's nation-state framework. If we are to believe, as I have argued in chapters 3 and 4, that Indigenous cinema provokes Québec's latent melancholia and generates an ethical emotional reaction, this is particularly pertinent in the case of Wapikoni, an initiative triggered by the death of Wapikoni Awashish, and conceived precisely as an ethical response to loss. Wapikoni draws attention to Québec's transportation myth epitomized by the *coureur* and to its incompatibility with territorial integrity. But by tapping into this symbolism, and by channelling the call to ethical action of melancholia to which Québec is predisposed, it simultaneously points Québécois society out of its impasse, logically proposing an opportunity to re-think nationhood and explore other forms of intercultural association as genuinely collaborative enterprises.

Marcel Rioux observed the re-imagining of defining national symbols and objectives in the late 1960s when he analysed the conceptual shift from French Canada to Québec as a reaction to the increasing vulnerability of Francophone culture across Canada (113). This shift coincides with the emergence of *cinéma direct*, and a new iteration of the *coureur*. Wapikoni, through its embodiment of the transportation trope, enlivens the reified *coureur* archetype and thus encourages a renewed reconsideration of identity. If Rioux advocated making viable the cultural survival of Francophone culture in North America by using the only predominantly Francophone state as its lever, at the present juncture then, does the reconceptualization elicited by Wapikoni highlight Québec as a potentially collaborative instrument to promote different strategies of cultural association?

Mentioned briefly in the section on *Le torrent*, the documentary film *Québékoisie* appears to broach this possibility through yet another iteration of the transportation metaphor, one that follows the Wapikoni's guiding principle of "travelling towards" Indigenous cultures. *Québékoisie* is framed as a road-trip where a young Québécois couple cycle the length of Québec's route 138 to Nutashkuan, stopping in Indigenous communities and confronting their own colonial past. This film hints at a reinvigorated, culturally diverse, but as yet undefined idea of the space presently understood as Québec. *Québékoisie*, however, while celebrating a

hybridity evocative of the *coureur*, does not fully consider the possible co-optation of this concept. Indeed, as Wapikoni incites viewers to realize the multi-layered and relative nature of Québec's colonized status, hegemonic discourse may seize superficial aspects of cultural hybridity to undercut fundamental structural and social change. The 2013 debate on the Charter of Québec Secularism provoked a salient example of this when former Québec Premier, Bernard Landry (who expressed his differences with the Charter), defended Quebecers from accusations of xenophobia levelled in the English-Canadian press by evoking Québec's *métissage* with Indigenous peoples ("Charte des valeurs"). Although Landry's intervention illustrates the absurdity of simply reducing sovereigntism to racism, his recourse to Quebecers' history of intermarriage with First Nations to disprove bigotry problematically mobilizes Indigenous identity to defend a competing settler colonial project. Indeed, the fact remains that, for the most part, Québec has come to resemble other settler nations, governed according to non-Indigenous principles, and allowing little space for Indigenous epistemologies. If, as Taiaike Alfred proposes, Indigenous societies need to base themselves not only on traditional artistic, cultural and religious foundations, but also on properly Indigenous political principles ("Peace, Power, Righteousnees" 28), a vision of Québec that claims *métissage* as a defining national trait ought logically to reflect this hybridity in its own governance. Employed opportunistically, however, the notion of *métissage* may disavow current economic, social and political divisions between Quebecers and Indigenous peoples rather than act towards resolving such imbalances. It remains to be seen then to what degree Wapikoni can oppose such dangers through its transportation of a broad range of Indigenous voices, in multiple directions, both temporally and spatially, within a structure that celebrates movement and yet questions its manifestations.

To conclude this section on Wapikoni, and to contemplate whether the project is equipped with the necessary logic to contribute towards a fundamental reconsideration of nationhood, let us juxtapose a few foundational and structural aspects of Wapikoni with elements of Alfred's influential Indigenous manifesto, Peace, Power, Righteousness. Alfred stresses a number of interrelated points as crucial to building a successful Indigenous challenge to Western hegemony. The most central concerns leadership. In this respect, Wapikoni, though open to all participants, actively encourages the formation of a nucleus of young leaders in each community and aims towards the transferral of skills and responsibilities (Sédillot). Earlier this year, Barbeau ceded her role as Artistic Director of Wapikoni to Innu leader and rights activist Odile Joannette, a transition Barbeau claims to have hoped for since the early stages of the project (Niosi). Alfred also highlights the need for both community cohesion and transnational solidarity. These criteria are addressed by Wapikoni's focus on intra-community communication and inter-community network building across provincial and national borders. In addition, links between Wapikoni and other organisations tend to take shape organically. Once such opportunities arise as coherent and useful, strategic methods follow to develop them (Manon Barbeau, Personal Interview). Finally, Alfred's call for the regeneration of Indigenous political foundations is adapted from Haudenosaunee condolence ceremony, which, though different from the Western concept of melancholia, nevertheless accentuates the need to recognize loss. This parallel suggests an area of mutual understanding that lies in the recognition of colonial injuries and their perpetuation. Indeed, for Alfred, "most white people in positions of authority [have] to be prodded simply to recognize their dominance over indigenous people" ("Peace, Power, Righteousness" 102). Wapikoni fulfils this provocation via its prolific output, but beyond this, also prepares the ground for a significant horizontal shift in communication. It provides a vehicle for repairing damaged links between generations, and activates a critical mass of young engaged artists, who, through their coincident incursions into Québec film, culture and politics, announce a concerted re-evaluation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships.

Although Barbeau has expressed her eagerness for tangible results in the form of Indigenous feature film production (*Le Devoir* 2008), one ought to consider (as highlighted in earlier sections of this thesis) that notwithstanding the work of Alanis Obomsawin and other documentary filmmakers, an Indigenous feature-length fiction did not emerge in Québec until 2011 with Yves Sioui Durand's *Mesnak*, followed by Jeff Barnaby's *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* in 2013, and Sonia Bonspille Boileau's *Le Dep* in 2015. As such, highly visible Indigenous filmmaking, particularly in the French language, has had limited incidence in Québec. Telefilm Canada's endorsement of three feature projects by Wapikonians Kevin Papatie, Abraham Côté and Evelyne Papatie therefore gives cause for optimism, even if the axing of the *Featuring Aboriginal Stories Program* (2008-2011), which supported these projects, signals the uphill struggle faced by these emerging filmmakers (Manon Barbeau, Personal Interview). As such, Wapikoni's adherence to identifiable aims corresponding to those of Indigenous intellectual bases give cause to hope that it may increasingly form a distinctly Indigenous response to mainstream audio-visual production in ways that underpin wider sociopolitical challenges.

⁵⁴ Since receiving development support for his feature project *Nibi et Kigos* from Telefilm in 2009, Kevin Papatie has joined the Montreal-based *La Coop Video* production centre. His feature film is currently listed as in development with production planned for 2020. https://coopvideo.ca/cineastes/kevin-papatie/

Section 4: "Refusal" in Tracey Deer's Mohawk Girls Television Series

Foreword: This short article was published in the French-language volume Télé en séries edited by Jérôme-Olivier Allard, Élaine Després, Simon Harel, and Marie-Christine Lambert-Perreault for Éditions XYZ. Although it departs from the theme of haunting which previous sections address, this section offers a foray into recent developments in Indigenous media production and attempts to apply recent and influential theoretical work in Indigenous studies by prominent Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) scholar Audra Simpson.

Introduction

After directing *Mohawk Girls* (2005, NFB) and *Club Native* (2008, NFB), two documentary films through which she cast an incisive look at her own community of Kahnawake, Kanien'kehá:ka filmmaker Tracey Deer turned to television as a means of addressing subjects which have catalyzed her work since she began as a filmmaker: membership rights in an Indigenous community besieged by the state structures of Canada and Québec, and the difficulties faced by young women in this milieu. Thus, with the *Mohawk Girls* (2014-Present) television series, Deer portrays four Kanien'kehá:ka women in their twenties, Bailey (Jenny Pudavick), Anna (Maika Harper), Zoe (Brittany Leborgne) and Caitlin (Heather White), each looking for happiness, love and belonging, but confronted by the sociopolitical exigencies of an Indigenous nation determined to resist the political and demographic forces aligned against it.

In her book *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*,

Audra Simpson offers an ethnographic study of this community and opposes the dominant idea of "recognition" with the concept of "refusal." Thus, Simpson proposes that "[t]he ongoing conditions of settler colonialism have forced the Kahnawa'kehró:non to take an offensive

position not just against the settler nation, but in some ways against themselves" (12). In this respect, Kahnawake's membership law, which requires that its members have at least four Kanien'kehá:ka great-grandparents, and which forbids non-Indigenous partners of Kanien'kehá:ka residents to live on this territory, seemingly constitutes a resolution which is intimately tied to the territorial dispossession inflicted upon this nation.

In Mohawk Girls, Deer dramatises the tensions that underpin the adoption of such a position of "refusal" by the Kanien'kehá:ka community of Kahnawake. By doing this, Deer exposes non-Indigenous spectators to a depiction of personal and social conflicts, and to the underlying settler colonial mechanisms that such a radical position can reveal. By critiquing Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous attitudes, the latter of which tend to overlook the persistence of colonialism, Deer informs the viewer tempted to see the community's policy simply as an inverted Mohawk "racism," and emphasizes the women, who find themselves dealing with reactions stemming from a sustained colonial aggression towards their society. While it has been dubbed the Indigenous Sex in the City (1998-2004), Deer's project is in many ways much more original and complex. In fact, the obstacles that the young women face in this series are of an explicitly historical and political nature. Through the four protagonists, Bailey, Anna, Zoe and Caitlin, Mohawk Girls humourously demystifies numerous clichés about First Nations. At the same time, these characters allow Deer to question certain Kanien'kehá:ka attitudes about strangers which stem from what Simpson describes as a "tireless discourse of engagement with things considered foreign, obtrusive, and impinging," but which nevertheless renders political power in Kahnawake accountable to its population (43).



Figure 40: Tracey Deer's Mohawk Girls (2014-Present, APTN), dubbed "Sex on the Rez."

In the foreground, Bailey's romantic disappointments exemplify the possible consequences of an out-of-community relationship. From the outset, Bailey discovers that the perfect Kanien'kehá:ka man with whom she sees herself starting a family turns out to be her second cousin. Put out at the thought of having to start a new search to find the man of her life in Kahnawake, and to the great chagrin of her family, she turns toward Montreal to find love. However, her meetings with several suitors enable the viewer to experience Bailey's frustration towards non-Indigenous people, at the very same time as she tries to escape from the mistrust of others that she deplores in her own community. Indeed, even those non-Indigenous people who are receptive to the stuation of the Kanien'kehá:ka turn out to be guided by prejudice and miscomprehension. Bailey first loses her temper against an intellectual who congratulates her for beating the system by not paying taxes, succinctly reminding this interlocutor of the origins of the relationship between Europeans and Indigenous peoples and qualifying the whites' relationship to their adopted land as "the best rental deal in history" (S01E01). Then, she explains to Anna her hesitation at wishing to undertake a romance with a non-Indigenous man: "Look, I didn't write the rules" (S01E01). This affirmation evokes not only the impact of the membership rules on Kanien'kehá:ka women, but also hints at their conceptual origins in the Indian Act of 1876, as well as the application of patriarchal structures by this law, which opposes the matrilineal foundations of Kanien'kehá:ka society, where women historically held significant decisional power. Likewise, when her white boyfriend, offended at being the object of the Mohawks' mistrust, declares that he feels like he is in "some weird, reverse racist time-warp," Bailey answers him back without missing a beat: "Well, you get what you give" (S01E02). Thus, the source of racial politics is resituated within the context of the settler colonial state to which the non-Indigenous viewer belongs, and who, while recognizing him or herself as the target of exclusion, can appreciate the much greater incidence of colonialism on Kanien'kehá:ka women. Thus, *Mohawk Girls* contributes to challenging "the story that settler states tell about themselves" (Simpson 177).

In parallel, other sub-plots allow the viewer to better understand the motivations and effects of the controversial membership policy and to overturn certain stereotypes. Anna, whose father is Kahnawa'kehró:non and whose mother is white, returns to Kahnawake after having been raised in New York. Alienated from Kanien'kehá:ka traditions and realities, and being only 48% Mohawk according to the genealogical criteria that govern membership rules in Kahnawake, she tries vigorously to fit in. The other characters explain what the "duties" of women are to the Kanien'kehá:ka nation and how to behave in order to be a full member of the community. Zoe in particular stresses that the women must be beyond reproach because of all the awful things that strangers say about Mohawks. Ironically though, she cannot help herself from secretly taking part in BDSM nights in Montreal. At the same time, her "atypical" looks, allow Deer to denounce reductive conceptions of identity founded on superficial physical attributes. Last but not least, Caitlin endures the disrespectful behaviour of her boyfriend and father. In this respect, the television series seems to critique the behaviour of certain Kanien'kehá:ka men

towards women, but nevertheless suggests that they still carry the intergenerational trauma caused by the residential school system instituted by the federal state (S01E04).

The last episode of season three of *Mohawk Girls* ends on a cliffhanger. As Bailey breaks up with Watio, a likeable Kanien'kehá:ka man, but one with whom she has little in common, Watio gets down on own knee to ask Bailey for her hand in marriage, declaring that he will change anything about himself to please her. Given that Watio harbours a strong distrust of outsiders and even refuses to travel if it entails holding a Canadian passport, this culminating moment of the series highlights the Kanien'kehá:ka position of "refusal." It is telling, however, that Watio does not mention the passport at the crucial moment of his declaration, a detail that perhaps indicates the acceptable limits of his compromise in the context of what Simpson describes as the "nested sovereignty" that caracterizes the Kanien'kehá:ka nation (10-11).

CONCLUSION

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The diverse film readings that make up this research have predictably led to an assortment of conclusions. Though varied in their focus and in the results of their inquiries, these constituent findings nevertheless point to convergent insights into the sociopolitical structures and dynamics that are communicated through film and media texts produced in Québec. As such, each individual inquiry contributes to the overall purpose of this dissertation insofar as it helps paint a clearer picture of underlying key problematics characterizing contemporary society in this geopolitical context. As such, findings relating to the principal themes of alterity, orality, melancholia, and Indigeneity are arranged here into four distinct but overlapping groups, each addressing a fundamental question posed by the overall thesis. Given the porousness of thesis chapters in terms of thematic concern, the four main areas of interrogation and conclusion outlined below follow the general trajectory of my reflection, but do not correspond explicitly to individual chapters or sections, with each constituent part of the thesis contributing in varying degrees to answering any one of these primary questions.

1. The Supernatural in Québec Cinema and Alterity

At the outset, this thesis put forward that the increasing prevalence of supernatural tropes across genres in Québec cinema, a national film tradition firmly based in documentary realism, and one marked by the notable absence of the supernatural or of genre films, represents a stylistic development that centrally reflects the national imaginary's struggle with historically dominant groups and their marginalized counterparts. These groups include language groups, ethnic minorities, people of colour, women, sexual minorities, disabled people, nonhuman beings, and,

most particularly, Indigenous peoples. Thus, one overarching claim of this group of essays asserts, in the first instance, that Québec films which display supernatural elements tend to reveal this society's deep-rooted preoccupations with interculturality and otherness more generally. Having examined several key texts that pertain to these issues, the correctness of this premise seems clear. To be more precise, this investigation reveals that it is the shifting nature of relationships of power between dominant and less dominant groups which bears a connection with the narrative trends observed in Québec cinema since the 1990s. Several of the case studies early in this thesis set the groundwork for broader discussions by affirming that the supernatural mode in Québec cinema reveals a particular preoccupation with otherness. My belief is that this concern relates to any marginalized section of society, but in this thesis, I provide case studies that deal more specifically with interculturality, gender, sexuality, class, Indigeneity, nonhuman status, race, and disability.

In terms of interculturality, my analyses of *Maelström* and *Léolo* in particular demonstrate connections between the supernatural and a preoccupation with immigrant populations. Less overtly, *Albédo*'s suggestion of haunting via the posthumous co-authorship of David Marvin, also connects the supernatural to the immigrant district of Griffintown as an emblem of Irish-Québecois working-class marginalization. *Maelström*, I find, adopts a global perspective through the portrayal of immigrant characters, their impact on Québec society and that of global commodities circulating across borders. Thus, the film establishes an analogy between Québec and other nations, most specifically in this case Norway, through allusions to Norwegian folk culture. Likewise, Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Léolo* uses the supernatural to engage with and even appropriate ethnic identity. This technique enables Lauzon to also appropriate the style and preoccupations usually attributed to accented, or immigrant, filmmakers. On the other

hand, Kim Nguyen's Le marais deploys the supernatural to offer an accented perspective that acts as an important counterpoint to filmmakers who have not experienced displacement personally or intergenerationally. Filmmakers like André Forcier, for example, also deploy the supernatural, but their more straightforwardly embedded experience of Québec produces qualitatively different outcomes to the way they channel these narrative devices. In this respect, Forcier's fantasies of otherness echo the perceptions Québecers have of the world, while Nguyen's tend to priviledge outsiders' views. Nguyen is a director who, based on genuine ethnic origins, and in contrast with Lauzon, can be less controversially described as an accented filmmaker in accordance with Naficy's model. As such, Nguyen's deployment of the supernatural in combination with oral practices tends to favour marginalized external communities confronted by dominant local forces. As a child of immigration, Nguyen's cinema warns against the dangers of an entrenched internal dominance and the dogmatic fear of difference. Whereas Forcier mediates Québec to itself by conjuring fantasies of external worlds that use Québec culture and worldviews as the foundation for their invention, Nguyen mediates Québec to itself through a global perspective, thereby attempting to break down entrenched boundaries about foreignness in a way that tends to hybridize Québec cinema. Despite the fact that these directors' credentials as accented filmmakers differ, Nguyen appears to favour fantasy as a means of exploring his personal background in a manner analogous to Lauzon. Even though he rarely broaches the topic of Vietnam, Nguyen enters allegorically into an uncommitted dialogue with his father's homeland. Thus, Nguyen's hesitant and indirect approach to some of the themes Naficy identifies with accented cinema diverges from realism and takes an unequivocally supernatural form in *Le marais*.

Preoccupations with interculturality, it seems, often extend to representations of the nonhuman. Maelström, for instance, interweaves its engagement with cultural diversity with a subplot featuring a fish-storyteller, whose comments intersect the main story line as he is repeatedly gutted. This suggestion that otherness, as expressed by the superntatural, extends to the nonhuman realm is pressed further in *Le marais* where the metaphor of the outsider as nonhuman is explicit. Indeed, in *Maelström*, as in many Québec films, the supernatural is seen merely as an incursion rather than as part of the dominant mode. Accordingly, the scenes of the fish as narrator are treated as separate from the main narrative, limiting their thorough infiltration of the "real" world. In contrast, the "monstrous" or nonhuman takes precedence in *Le marais*. The tension between these two filmmaking approaches finds further application in certain Québec films dealing with race. Drawing on Richard Dyer's critique of whiteness and Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of genre, my reading of Daniel Roby's La peau blanche finds that this film ridicules racist and social Darwinist assumptions and theories. This film, I note, makes whiteness strange in a way that mirrors Richard Dyer's theoretical challenge to assumptions about whiteness as a racial category. Deploying a suitably ironic tone, La peau blanche inverts stereotypes and plays on what Derrida describes as generic purity's paradoxical reliance on intermixing. This is consistent with Fatima Tobing Rony's conceptualizations of monstrosity as a tool to critically assess the inherent racism in early genre films like King Kong. Thus, my analysis of La peau blanche identifies playful admonitions of what Dyer describes as "white death" and of gendered tropes promoting a fear of miscegenation. Significantly, I find a resemblance between the film's protagonist and the famed hero of Romero's Night of the Living Dead, an evocation that brings us to the problematic portrayal of Vézina (Didier Lucien) in Robin Aubert's Les affamés. A Black character, knowing he must die after a zombie bite, Vézina

nostalgically reminices about missed opportunities to take his family to Disneyland. At that very moment, his white comrades prevent him from becoming monstrous by hacking him to death brutally before his transformation. Ironically, those same white characters also eventually get bitten and turn into monsters, forming post-apocalyptic, white zombie families from which Vézina is excluded.

A further category of otherness that comes under consideration in this corpus relates to disability. Indeed, without dominating the films that this theme traverses, it nevertheless forms an important aspect of a number of texts analyzed in this thesis. And while several of these films (Le marais, La vraie nature de Bernadette, Albédo, and Le torrent) stress ostracization as a consequence of society's narrow persepective on disability, others (Saints-Martyrs-des-Damnés, Café de Flore, and La neuvaine) seem to place greater emphasis on disability as a metaphor for valuable yet ultimately unviable alternatives to dominant worldviews. Falling into the latter group, Café de Flore foregrounds disability and combines this theme with that of global cultural exchanges, a topic already identified as significant in *Maelström*, thereby illuminating the way cinema re-shapes representations of Québec's relationship with France and Britain. As I have argued, Café de Flore, through its narrative structure and the themes it tackles, allegorizes the manner in which Québec, as a historically peripheral society in an increasingly globalized world, re-thinks power relations and repurposes colonialist strategies to do so. And even though Café de Flore manages to mobilize marginality itself to renegotiate Québec's relationship with France, this ultimately results in a reinvention and perpetuation of patterns of exclusion. In this film, the colonial element that is evoked by the supernatural tends to foreground Québec's emancipation from its former colonial metropoles: Paris and London. The film's biligual protagonist seemingly tries to break away from the dominance of these so-called founding identities. To this end, Café

de Flore mobilizes the disruptive and subversive possibilities of both the supernatural and of disability, but the film's ending ultimately assimilates these ethical visions of the future by proposing a conclusion that promotes a "healthy" and wealthy white male view of Québec achieved through the reincarnation of its French and British antecedents. Café de Flore inverts, or at least challenges, established hierarchies between Québec and the main global forces that have dominated its culture and politics. But, at the same time, it deals in representations that assume the non-viability of disabled futures within its recalibrated power dynamic. This does not resolve the problem of power imbalance but instead opens up the possibility for formerly marginalized cultures like Québec to join in the persistent imbalance of global cultural exchanges and perpetuate patterns of marginalization.

Thus, the above examples and several others which could not be broached within the parameters of this thesis provide strong evidence for correlations between Québec films featuring supernatural elements and a lasting concern with otherness. And yet, we might ask whether Québec films that do not feature the supernatural are just as likely to display similar preoccupations. Indeed, films like *Monsieur Lazhar*, *Incendies*, *Inch'Allah*, and *Starbuck*, all constitute recent examples of narratives by Francophone Québécois directors that deal with intercultural topics, but show no obvious references to the supernatural. One apparent difference between these texts and more supernaturally-inflected ones lies in the fact that none of the non-supernatural films listed above seem inclined to confront Québec's emerging hegemony. Rather, all of them aim to consolidate this dominance and try to "contain" immigrant characters within Francophone Québécois models. For instance, *Monsieur Lazhar* presents us with the "ideal" immigrant character, French-speaking and docile, what Mahrouse, Maillé and Salée term the "good Other" (11). *Incendies* portrays fully-integrated second generation immigrants played by

Francophone Québécois actors (a trope that is already apparent in Villeneuve's earlier *Maelström* with Jean-Nicolas Verreault cast as the Québécois son of a Norwegian immigrant). As Mahrouse, Maillé and Salée also point out, *Inch'Allah*, like *Incendies*, situates Québec in a global context and deploys the "common trope of the benevolent white Québecers who generously come to the aid of Others" (10). And finally, *Starbuck* goes further than *Incendies* by not only presenting a second-generation immigrant as fully integrated, but actually framing this character within the body of quintessentially Francophone Québécois actor and comedian Patrick Huard. Thus, when interculturality is treated in a manner that converges with the self-image of an ascendant Québec hegemony, the supernatural, with its subversive allegorical potential, becomes less useful as a mode that invites counter-hegemonic viewpoints and bears the capacity for suggesting ambiguous confrontations with mainstream opinion.

Having said this, my study does reveal a notable example of a film that deals directly and unflinchingly with interculturality from a nonconformist perspective, while also excluding the supernatural. In this respect, Gilles Groulx's 24 heures ou plus does not have recourse to the supernatural to discuss interculturality any more than this filmmaker's earlier Le chat dans le sac does to discuss Québec nationalism. Indeed, Groulx's direct engagement with intercultural subjects goes as far back as his early short films Golden Gloves (1961) and Voir Miami... (Seeing Miami..., 1962). Accordingly, in 24 heures ou plus Groulx develops an example of Third Cinema that can usefully engage with interculturality and support Indigenous decolonization efforts without encroaching on or appropriating these struggles.

2. Orality in Québec Cinema and the Supernatural

A second, related question upon which this inquiry is based asks why Québec cinema in particular, a film tradition repeatedly described as "oral," should eschew supernatural motifs for most of its history. Indeed, this makes little sense if we consider the abundance of supernatural motifs in Québec's cinema's logical narrative precursor – oral storytelling. If Québec's "oral" cinema extends traits that logically build and follow on from Québec's earlier oral storytelling tradition, why has the supernatural remained so absent from its history for so long? Why were other features of orality extended to cinema while the supernatural was stifled? In this study, I have observed that since the resurgence of the supernatural in Québec cinema, its devices are often communicated through the mechanisms of orality. Moreover, though they cannot simplistically be labelled as subversive, in some contexts, either orality or the supernatural, or a combination of these features, appear to bear counter-hegemonic potential. Indeed, at various points in his writings on Québec cinema, Germain Lacasse stresses the resistant nature of orality, which is consistent with the oral storytelling tradition in Québec where the supernatural held the possibility of undermining authority and often marked the point of tension between conformity and revolt.

On this subject, my analyses of *Babine* and *Maelström* investigate the genealogy of contemporary supernatural iterations of oral storytelling found in these films and places them alongside the late work of Pierre Perrault as a major precursor. However, my reading of *Babine* shows that orality can also be made to serve the ascendant hegemony, masking its emergent authority through a narrative premised on inverted nostalgia, or a longing for a traumatic past, and developing a merely superficial semblance of resistance. Not truly unsettling, this cinematic form of oral storytelling posits the newly dominant group in a faux-marginalized position and

pits it against a reified straw-man oppressor. In his own films, Perrault seems to intuitively recognize this fallacy, but, rather than confront the contradiction directly, Perrault's work drifts away from human subjects, seemingly as a means of maintaining an alignment with the oppositional stance that orality naturally appears to insist upon. This observation ultimately supports Lacasse's presupposition about orality's inherently subversive qualities while nevertheless recognizing its vulnerability to co-optation, and conversely, its capability to adapt its modes of expression as a way of retaining a critical stance. Consequently, Perrault, unable to reconcile himself to an overt recognition and contestation of Francophone Québec's transition from marginalized to dominant group, with La bête lumineuse and Cornouailles, logically shifts to poetic representations of otherness through non-human animal characters as a way of remaining consistent with the dynamics of orality, but without challenging the newly dominant Francophone culture. In this respect, Perrault's work also finds itself moving further and further away from the centre of its geographic and political concerns and gradually loses its potency as politically effective cinema. Conversely, by applying Perrault's formal strategies to fiction and by uninhibitedly mobilizing anthropomorphism, *Maelström* manages to address contemporary Québec interculturality and the economic, social and cultural effects of globalization in a manner that remains indirect and metaphorical, but nevertheless useful and revealing. These overlaps between orality and the supernatural in Québec cinema seem to point to the possibility that the oral storyteller paradoxically possesses irrepressible and mutable counter-hegemonic qualities, even as this figure remains in tension with attempts to co-opt and instrumentalize it for more conservative purposes.

As outlined in the introduction, one explanation put forward by the existing literature for the minimal presence of the supernatural in Québec cinema before 1990 holds that this stylistic approach was seen as contrary to Québec's emancipatory objectives. This hypothesis suggests that the supernatural was mistrusted as a distraction, taking attention away from the immediacy and groundedness of Québec's anti-colonial liberation. My findings serve to further clarify this theory. The analyses brought together in this study suggest that the increased frequency of supernatural motifs from the 1990s onwards inversely mirrors Québec's status as a marginalized society. Supernatural occurrences in Québec film have occurred with more and more regularity as the Quiet Revolution has receded further and further away in time. This reflects the fact that, during the 1960s, Québec could credibly, if not unambiguously, align itself with decolonization movements worldwide. During the Quiet Revolution, and probably into the 1970s, Québec cinema had relatively few inhibitions about its message or demands for emancipation. Indeed, early post-Quiet Revolution films such as Le chat dans le sac credibly depict French-Speaking Québec as a marginalized society. In such a conjuncture, oral approaches alone were sufficient to oppose the hegemonic influence of more dominant cinemas. As Lacasse has highlighted, orality can be counter-hegemonic insofar as it distorts a dominant outside narrative (and thus promotes a version of the marginalized local narrative). The supernatural, in earlier films, seems less necessary as an additional subversive force, and appears to have been perceived as interfering with the directness of the message of opposition conveyed by Québec cinema. As Québec society became more affluent (and yet failed to achieve political independence), assurance about self-images associating Francophone Québec with marginalization began to wane. Indeed, Francophone Québec now forms the dominant group within its own context at least, that is to say, in relation to immigrant, Indigenous and other marginalized voices. But even as Francophone Québec society has gradually become aware of itself as dominant in this region, this awareness has been coupled with a reluctance to relinquish its identity as a victim of

colonization. In this altered context where Francophone Québec no longer forms the marginalized group, orality's anti-hegemonic elements can no longer continue operating without contradiction. It is not by coincidence then, that supernatural tropes in Québec cinema begin to appear more frequently during this transition period, with the subversive qualities of the supernatural mode compensating for the increasingly ineffectual resistance of oral frameworks in these changing circumstances. Indeed, orality in Québec cinema logically needed to undergo a significant transformation in order to modulate the narratives emanating from its own mainstream. Its operations seemingly required a mutation into supernatural forms as a way of implicitly critiquing Québec's dominance over others within its own society, as an affluent settler colonial state lacking only full political independence. With time, Québec nationalist politics have become dominated less by a movement of liberation than a drive for settler state formation. This contradictory position has provoked a shift in the quality of certain oral mechanisms, which have adopted supernatural guises in order to continue their work of commenting critically on maintream narratives in favour of more marginalized segments of Québec society. Thus, oral practices epitomised by the bonimenteur figure in contemporary Québec cinema have become "supernatural" or "ghostly" in many cases.

The manner in which religious and spiritual aspects of the supernatural manifest themselves reflects the gendered disparity between mainstream national visions of Québec and their less dominant counterparts. The way these manifestations of the supernatural unfold also tends to confirm my conclusion that the supernatural comes to palliate oral mechanisms whose resistant potential has been limited by an emergent Québec hegemony. Although the emergence of the supernatural in Québec cinema really begins in earnest in the 1990s, precursor texts like Carle's *La vraie nature de Bernadette* foreshadow this development. Indeed, *Bernadette*,

although tending towards exploitation, appears to recognize shifting hegemonies, gender issues and the importance of supernatural tropes for reimagining Québec identity. Foregrounding a strong female protagonist, Carle's film offers an alternative point of reference to other directors of his generation who deal with religious aspects of the supernatural. In some respects, Carle's use of the thaumaturge, or miracle maker, and of the miraculous itself, may draw comparisons with other filmmakers' combination of oral cinema's *bonimenteur* figure with the supernatural.

In contrast with many male-authored productions relating back to Québec's Catholic heritage like On est loin du soleil (Leduc, 1971) and Jésus de Montréal (Arcand, 1989), and more contemporary examples like Bernard Émond's La neuvaine, films by women tend to supernaturalize orality more overtly. In this way, they manifest gender (and/or sexuality) as otherness via the supernatural. This begins subtly in pioneering works like Poirier's De mère en fille and Les filles du Roy, but becomes more apparent in later texts like Martin's Mariages and Trois temps après la mort d'Anna. Haunting in Les filles du Roy coincides with a period of consolidation of male-centered conceptions of national identity. As a means of modifying mainstream discourse on nationhood, this film and others that follow in its trajectory deploy oral features and figures that can be described as ghostly bonimentrices. Women's cinema in Québec, notably Anne Claire Poirier's De mère en fille and Les filles du Roy, imply the haunting presence of unborn children and female ancestors, including Indigenous women. With the rise of Québec feminism in the 1970s, these texts complicate the assumptions of the nationalist movement, which, driven by patriarchal worldviews, moves decidedly into mainstream territory by the mid-1970s. However, initiating its own internal somewhat Eurocentric hegemony, Les filles du Roy acknowledges, but tends to silence Indigenous women. Such contradictions in works that declare themselves emphatically favourable to reconceptions of national identity, not only along gender

lines but also in terms of its hybridity with Indigenous peoples, demonstrate the profundity of Québec's identity crises as understood and represented by its cinema. Indeed, the increasingly recurrent trope of the ghostly child-bonimenteur adds itself to previously identified iterations of the bonimenteur figure and points to the complexities of the obsessive national quest for origins.

Again, Gilles Groulx's 24 heures ou plus constitutes a significant counter-example and tends to confirm the above claim that films marked by orality shifted to its supernatural form as a way of conserving orality's resistant dimension. Also considered an "oral" film with Groulx himself and Jean-Marc Piotte acting as onscreen bonimenteurs throughout, 24 heures ou plus deals effectively with interculturality within its oral framework and does not invoke the supernatural precisely because of Groulx's self-positioning as a self-critical and ethically uncompromising ally to subaltern groups. As such, Groulx maintains a consistent alignement with marginalized voices across time (regardless of their ethnic background). Already shifting away from the mainstream Québec identity he himself helped establish with Le chat dans le sac, Groulx's overt and uncompromising commitment to alterity and marginalization over other ethnic, national or cultural allegiances, in his case, renders redundant any adaptation of oral practices towards the supernatural.

3. On the Prominence of Melancholia in Québec Cinema

While the supernatural in Québec cinema articulates self-images and unconscious fears, conveying social anxieties in films across genres, using fantasy, magic realism, horror, science-fiction or even documentary, one of its most unifying features lies in the pervasive mood of melancholia communicated by such occurrences. In this respect, my analysis of *Léolo* initiates an engagement with psychoanalytic theory that later comes to frame several analyses in this

doctoral thesis as a whole. In discussing Léolo, drawing on the work of Bill Marshall, I argue that Lauzon's family romance fantasy is not driven primarily by a desire to belong to a higher social class as Freud posits such complexes to be. Instead, it is really the desire to belong to an artistic and cultural community that drives Léo's fantasy, even if that community is associated with lower socio-economic standing. What Lauzon seems to be articulating here, is that Québec needs to value artistic and cultural capital. In this film, Italy appears to serve as a surrogate through which Lauzon can both criticize Québec's failure to support original and creative visions, whether artistic or political. Léolo also stresses the opportunity Québec still possesses to invent its own artistic (and by extension political) identity. Moreover, although Léolo is ostensibly a fantasy about Italy, my reading of this film reveals an underlying primary concern with Indigenous peoples and identity. Thus, Léolo seems to convey that by placing the frank resolution of its colonial relationship with Indigenous peoples front and centre of its priorities, Québec can also creatively overcome recurring and incapacitating anxieties stemming from the perception of immigration as an economically desirable yet culturally challenging phenomenon, and one often seen as a potential threat to Québec values and traditions.

The manifestation of Québec's problematic relationship with interculturality as melancholia and haunting connects with Ranjana Khanna's own view of these phenomena. For Khanna, haunting is a symptom of melancholia that signals a loss related to the choice of formerly colonized nations to adopt the nation-colonizer's state structure (25). Indeed, as Dene scholar Glen Coulthart reminds us, invoking Fanon, "the curse of [national] independence," does not resolve the colonial dynamic but rather transforms its expression into "the subjection of the newly 'liberated' people and territories to the the tyranny of the market and a postindependence class of bourgeois national elites" ("Red Skin, White Masks" 47). Although falling short of

political independence, and although not always straightforwardly a "colonized" people, the original French imperial designs on the North American continent, and the fact that Québec has moved substantially closer to independent nation-statehood after a period of marginalization and liberation, tends to permit an analogy between Québécois and postcolonial nationhood. Indeed, the proximity of this goal is palpable in the results of the 1995 referendum on sovereignty.

Realistically coveting nation-statehood, even if ultimately unattained, has therefore generated postcolonial melancholia for Québec in a way that is analogous to postindependence governments in other geopolitical contexts. Moreover, the continued marginalization of Indigenous peoples comes to exacerbate feelings of postcolonial melancholia, which become layered with Gilroy's post-imperial melancholia, a sentiment of loss felt by former imperial powers. In this sense, Québec suffers from a loss of integrity towards those colonized groups it would pitch as its allies as well as its own ideals of decolonization, added to a loss of the power wielded by fully autonomous settler colonial nation-states over Indigenous peoples.

Through misguided attempts to deal with haunting while preserving existing patterns of inequality and priviledge, several texts appropriate and diffuse the ethical potential of melancholia. *Café de Flore*, for example, like several other Québec films, engages actively with a haunting that is engendered by melancholia as a way of also engaging with Québec's colonial past. However, *Café de Flore* co-opts the ethical imperative generated by melancholia and merely enables past inequalities to morph into a Québécois framework where they can continue to operate by re-casting viable disabled futures into ghostly pasts. For its part, *La neuvaine* combines oral devices and the supernatural as a way of highlighting tensions and unresolved issues between contemporary Québec and the society envisaged by previous generations of Quebecers. Its narrative strategies seem to work, temporarily bringing these generations together,

but this rapprochement proves ephemeral and anxieties about national identity ultimately remain unresolved. The legacy of older films by male directors dealing with religious supernatural themes also extends across gender lines to Lanctôt's Pour l'amour de Dieu, a link that is perhaps unsurprising given Lanctôt's starring role in La vraie nature de Bernadette. Thus, Lanctôt's own artistic career forms a vector of continuity. Indeed, in my discussion of Bernadette, I argue that this film exploits a moment of crisis in Québec history to reform rather than revolutionize the deloyment of supernatural tropes. As opposing ideologies clash and result in a significant hegemonic shift, Bernadette subtly acts to subvert the established order while appropriating its devices. This works in parallel with, and perhaps complementary to, seemingly more radical attacks on the established order such as Gilles Groulx's 24 heures ou plus, but also contrasts with women-centered supernatural and spiritual traditions in the work of Anne Claire Poirier and Catherine Martin. In accordance with the intergenerational focus of these two filmmakers, Anne Émond's Les Êtres chers and Nelly constitute notable examples of the deployment of supernatural incursions, intergenerational haunting and the ghostly bonimentrice by an emerging woman director.

The feelings of loss correlating to Québécois melancholia become manifest in several of the films analyzed over the course of the current project. As noted above, my reading of *Léolo* suggests that the root of Québec's melancholic malaise has something to do with Québec's relationship to Indigenous peoples. Likewise, my analyses of *Le torrent* and the Wapikoni project tend to confirm this claim. Indeed, Indigenous filmmakers have intuitively recognized the strategic usefulness of probing melancholia, as the work of Obomsawin, Sioui-Durand, Barnaby and the Wapikoni project also indicates. In this respect, *Le torrent*'s return to the trope of the abused child, when juxtaposed with allegorical representations of abuses perpetrated through the

Indian Residential School system and colonialism more generally in the work of Jeff Barnaby, encourages us to make connections between the theme of abused children, orality and melancholia. Many ghostly bonimenteurs in Québec cinema happen to be wronged children, including those of *Trois temps après la mort d'Anna, Les démons, Chorus,* and *Origami*. The situations depicted in these films invariably deal with self-blame for the parent (or for another child in *Les démons*) who is haunted by the ghostly child-bonimenteur. These tropes may reflect the paternalism inherent to colonial relations, but also self-criticism about the betrayal of ideals born from the initial impulse of the decolonization process and promises of future egalitarian relationships.

4. Haunting and Indigenous Provocations of Québécois Melancholia

As emphasized above, supernatural and/or melancholic moments often combine with oral structures in many of the films tackled in this thesis. They thus reveal that the persistently colonial nature of Québec's relationship to Indigenous peoples, sometimes expressed overtly, at other times more implicit, remains the central issue at stake in grasping Québec's intercultural anxieties as a whole. Although other factors obviously contribute to the complexity and diversity of supernatural representation in Québec cinema, Indigenous presence resurfaces as a fundamental and deep-seated preoccupation. In this respect, Québec's transition from a position of marginalization, potential solidarity, and convergence with the liberation struggles of Indigenous peoples to one where Québec has sought to "manage" Indigenous populations on "its" territory is significant. Indeed, as Daniel Salée points out, Québec's state policy towards Indigenous peoples begins in the early 1960s with the Lesage government, which sought to sign agreements to develop Northern territories for resource extraction on territories occupied by

Indigenous peoples who had hitherto fallen under federal administration ("L'État québécois" 119-120). Furthermore, Salée adds, the 1990s saw an intensification of Indigenous contestation and claims against both federal and provincial governments, most notably with the Oka Crisis of 1990 (122). These salient reminders of Québec's changing and increasingly paternalistic rapport with Indigenous peoples coincide in the 1990s with the emergence of supernatural tropes in Québec cinema. These observations correlate with my conclusion that oral practices in Québec cinema became less effective as tools of resistance against outside forces, which Québec now resembled. Consequently, supernatural devices came to palliate oral mechanisms, thereby enabling them to exercise indirect and allegorical opposition to the Québec mainstream.

My study finds that Indigenous cinema, through narrative approaches that foreground haunting, inevitably provokes reflection upon the reality of Québec's disavowed colonial relationship by stimulating a feeling of postcolonial melancholia. This process impels Québec to actively strive towards decolonization for itself as well as others. Indeed, Québec's own genuine liberation from colonialism seems inextricably linked to the conditions suffered by groups whose struggles it has historically identified with, and over whom it has played the role of colonizer. In the first half of the present thesis, Indigeneity is mostly foreshadowed as a key form of otherness in Québec cinema. Up to this point, I discuss melancholia and haunting as central features of Québec national cinema and as telling indicators of intercultural and intergroup tensions. The second half of the thesis, however, initiates the argument that Indigenous cinema produced in the territory now known as Québec works to provoke melancholia through Indigenous views of the supernatural and thereby incites an underlying ethical imperative to fully engage in decolonization. In this respect, following an intital investigation about how the supernatural operates as a narrative mechanism in Québec films, and the examination of key recurrent themes

stemming from these analyses, this collection of essays turns to a clearer engagement with Indigenous perspectives through film. This enables the acknowledgement that Indigenous media and the visions it carries strike at the foundations upholding national and postcolonial film studies in Québec.

Overall conclusions emerging from my readings of Indigenous film texts show that Obomsawin's Kanehsatake archives the possibility of invoking Québec's postcolonial melancholia via analogous Indigenous reactions to loss. This enables subsequent Indigenous films, forming a burgeoning Fourth Cinema corpus, to provoke Québec melancholia and thereby highlight contradictions at the heart of Québec's national cinema and nation-state project. Thus, my intervention contributes to Film Studies and Indigenous Studies in the specific geopolitical context of Québec by first expanding on existing scholarship that deals with Obomsawin's work, in relation to which it stresses areas of common cultural understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples via narrative strategies, views of the Oka Crisis, and the manner in which its events are archived and subsequently invoked. Speculating on how Indigenous storytelling structures in Alanis Obomsawin's Kanehsatake engage non-Indigenous Québec through an analysis framed within Ranjana Khanna's conceptualization of postcolonial melancholia and Indigenous epistemologies such as Paula Gunn Allen's notion of achronicity, or Indigenous time, it finds that affective stimulations resonating with Québec society complement Obomsawin's more overt engagement with the history of First Nations struggle. It also concludes that Kanehsatake's engagement with supernatural entities and emphasis on Indigenous forms and temporality reveals affinities with certain counter-hegemonic Western models. Thus, Obomsawin's film creates openings for non-Indigenous viewers to appreciate Indigenous perspectives and catalyzes future resistance.

The final chapter of this dissertation, focusing more squarely on Indigenous cinema and its challenge to the Québec imaginary, continues to approach this topic from the position of settler efforts to decolonize and unsettle Eurocentric assumptions and reveals that the dominance of melancholia in Québec cinema can be interrogated by emerging Indigenous practices. Yves Sioui Durand's Mesnak constitutes possibly the most explicit example of an Indigenous film text that exploits Québec's melancholia while Indigenizing the screen with forms and ideas based on Indigenous conceptual frameworks, including the concept of Indigenous prophecy put forward by Michelle Raheja. Likewise, the work of Jeff Barnaby adds nuance to films like *Le torrent*, which strive to comprehend Québec's lasting inability to possess and find its place in the territory upon which it is situated. In parallel, the Wapikoni project responds to histories of "travellers' tales" emanating from a non-Indigenous perspective to reverse the flow of information that determines how the Québec imaginary perceives its relationship to Indigenous peoples. Finally, Tracy Deer's television series Mohawk Girls offers non-Indigenous viewers an alternative view of Kanien'kehá:ka membership, which tends to be presented one-dimentionally in Québec and other mainstream media.

Implications of the Study

Developments in Québec politics and culture over the last year confirm the ongoing relevance of a study that attempts to decipher Québec's relationship with interculturality. Following hot on the heels of the Reasonable Accommodation Crisis (2007-2008) and the failure of the 2013 PQ-sponsored Charter of Secularism (Bill 60), the Québec Liberal Party's Bill 62, was passed in October 2017. However, this bill has since been contested by the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and was suspended by a decision of the

Superior Court of Québec. Needless to say, these developments have brought intercultural issues to the fore once again and confirm that such problematics cannot be ignored, even by those political factions that most wish to sweep them under the carpet. The trends uncovered in the current thesis indicate, however, that these issues will not recede as long as their core issues continue to be ignored. Even if inquiries like the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, or legislation proposed by Québec's mainstream parties, appear to tackle Québec's intercultural malaise frontally, my research suggests that these measures are patch-up jobs at best, and counterproductive or misguided at worst. Indeed, the intercultural issues that dominate Québec debates are inevitably doomed to repeat themselves unproductively as long as their content and objectives continue to exclude Indigenous peoples. This exclusion is sometimes rationalized eloquently, as with the Bouchard-Taylor Commission (BTC):

It is with regret that we had to remove from [our] mandate the aboriginal question. Since this decision was criticized, it is important to review the reasons that justified it. First, we feared that we would compromise our mandate by appending to it such a vast, complex question. We also wished to avoid needlessly overlapping the deliberations under way in conjunction with tripartite negotiations between Québec, Ottawa and the aboriginal peoples. Another reason is that aboriginal affairs must be discussed "nation to nation," pursuant to two resolutions adopted by the National Assembly of Québec in 1985 and 1989. Finally, for us to have assumed this responsibility, we would have had to receive a proper mandate from the Québec government and the First Nations and Inuit. From the standpoint of Québec's culture and identity, we will ensure that the situation of the aboriginal peoples occupies its rightful place. For this reason, we

sought on several occasions to invite representatives from the communities in question to express themselves during our public consultations (34, my emphasis).

Although the above justifications appear to genuinely recognize the equal importance of Québec-Indigenous relations, as Gada Mahrouse has argued, the decision to exclude the "aboriginal question" from the commission and report actually "had the consequence of dehistoricizing the discussions that related to other racialised groups and obscuring the the fact that nationalism has always been in conflict with the nationalism of First Nations" (88). Indeed, the authors of the report cannot get around the fact that, in spite of the complexity of Indigenous concerns, addressing these issues constitutes a necessity that is integral to tackling relations with other minorities. As such, they cannot be relegated to "an appendage" of the main discussion as the report intimates. Thus, while purporting to avoid "needless overlaps" the BTC (like other attempts to tackle this question) effectively compartmentalizes sets of negotiations between mainstream Québec and groups challenging its hegemony. Through what amounts to a divide and conquer tactic, this approach oversimplifies networks of intercultural relationships and occludes any direct interaction between groups that might bypass control of negotiations by mainstream Québec society.

Indeed, as the current study has suggested, several works of contemporary Québec cinema point to Indigenous peoples and the ongoing colonial injustices to which they are subjected as the most vital area requiring address and holding the key to unlocking other forms of inter-group tension. In fact, redress towards Indigenous nations, my findings indicate, remains a prerequisite that underpins the resolution of all other intercultural issues in Québec (and possibly all settler states). What the analysis of the films in this collection implies is that for Québec to deal confidently with intercultural tensions, it must overcome the contradictions

inherent to its position as a settler colonial nation seeking to complete a purported process of liberation undertaken at the moment of the Quiet Revolution. It must first fully acknowledge its status as a colonizer without attempting to attenuate this fact through histories of its own marginalization, facile and opportunistic claims to biological and cultural métissage with First Nations, or identity appropriation strategies. In this respect, to remain consistent with claims of hybridity with Indigenous peoples, Québec must renounce aspirations to founding another settler colonial nation-state based on Western models, including that of Canada. This imperative, however, does not entail a resignation to subnational status within the Canadian settler state, a system that undoubtedly also requires dismantling. To truly liberate and decolonize, Québec must strive to challenge what I have referred to in my readings of Mesnak and the Wapikoni project, citing James Anaya, as "the premise of the state as the highest and most liberating form of human association" (9). In this respect, given its relative global importance as a political entity, Québec is ideally placed to make a considerable impact in undermining the current nation-state model while conceiving, in genuine collaboration with Indigenous allies, a new and more just model of human association.

On the cultural front, the implications of my research also speak to recent media flashpoints over the work of globally celebrated Québec theatre and film director, Robert Lepage. This study touches briefly on Lepage in its discussions of *Mesnak* and *Le torrent*, but the pertinence of this filmmaker's oeuvre and influence runs through the topics tackled in this thesis and cannot be underestimated. During the summer of 2018, as part of the Montreal International Jazz Festival (MIJF), Lepage and singer Betty Bonifassi began staging, *SLÂV*, a high-profile show based on African-American slave songs. The production quickly ran into strong criticism and then protests from artists, media and the public for the creators' decision to have only two

Black performers out of six play a Black slave chorus, in addition to Bonifassi herself playing the title role, also a Black character. This led to jazz musician Moses Sumney cancelling his performance with the MIJF in solidarity with protestors and offering a replacement show at halfprice which quickly sold-out. After a few performances, $SL\hat{A}V$ was cancelled by the MIJF and an apology issued. Lepage eventually responded, but remained unapologetic, describing the motivations for the cancellation as "a direct blow to artistic freedom," and identifying the fundamental principles of theatre as "[s]tepping into the shoes of another person to try to understand them, and in the process, perhaps understand ourselves better." Lepage further argues that "when we are no longer allowed to step into someone else's shoes, when it is forbidden to identify with someone else, theatre is denied its very nature, it is prevented from performing its primary function and is thus rendered meaningless" (Banerjee). Lepage thus puts forward commonsensical arguments about theatre and artistic freedom, refusing to enter into a lucid discussion about what actually constitutes identity appropriation. His comments thus resonate logically with worldviews for which white priviledge yet remains undiscernable, simultaneously failing to acknowledge obvious imbalances of power that exist between different groups, and to admit the potentially damaging effects of identity appropriation. Indeed, Lepage claims in his statement that artistic freedom is paramount in theatre, but ignores, in this case, the responsibilities incumbent on artists, not to degrade artistic freedom of expression with participation in and exacerbation of historical violence that remain invisible to some because of cultural bias and priviledge.

Shortly after the $SL\hat{A}V$ controversy, Lepage came under fire again for the absence of Indigenous performers in Kanata, a show he was invited to direct by the Théâtre du Soleil in

Paris. This show was to depict the histories of Indigenous peoples and Settlers in Canada. Twenty Indigenous actors and their Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies submitted an open letter to *Le Devoir* in protest against the total absence of Indigenous participants in the project. One Indigenous actor, Dave Jeniss, complained that Lepage had consulted Indigenous experts for advice, but excluded Indigenous actors from the performance (Pelosse). These developments, as my analysis of *Le torrent* seems to show, were already apparent at least as early as Lepage's production of 887. From Jeniss' comments, however, one may infer an exasperation with the repetition of exclusion characterizing Lepage's earlier Indigenous-themed productions. These developments show the extent to which there remains a surprising level of miscomprehension concerning the precise nature of Québec's relationship with cultural minorites and Indigenous peoples. Far from presuming to have elucidated with complete clarity their underlying causes or to fully grasp all the nuances of cultural appropriation in this context, the present study nevertheless hopes to contribute positively to this debate and is intended as an attempt, through scholarly investigation, to actively listen to Indigenous concerns and perspectives.

Limitations and Proposals for Future Research

In light of the *SLAV/Kanata* controversies, one unfortunate limitation of the current project is the omission of a dedicated analysis of Robert Lepage's engagment with science and temporality, particularly the theme of the future. As an artist who dominates the Québec and world scene, a closer examination of Lepage's films might potentially generate further useful insights into his

⁵⁵ Cancelled after its investors withdrew support, Lepage subsequently announced that the production of *Kanata* would go ahead in late 2018, following an arrangement struck with le Théâtre du Soleil for which Lepage has accepted to waive his own artist's fee.

⁵⁶ Yet another example of a similar reaction to racial offense that sparked considerable debate followed the programming of Dominic Gagnon's experimental film *Of the North* at the *Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal* in 2015.

work's resonance. His first feature, Le confessionnal (The Confessional, 1995), which Erin Manning links to spectrality ("Haunted Home"), already displays concerns with time, while evidently connecting this theme with pertinent elements of Québec's history and religious traditions. Similarly, Lepage's English-language dystopian adaptation of the 1990 play by John Mighton, Possible Worlds (2000), and his investigation of communication with extraterrestrial life in La face cachée de la lune (The Far Side of the Moon, 2003) merit consideration in a study examining the supernatural and otherness in their futuristic and science-fiction dimensions. Other relevant science-fiction films that ultimately fall outside the scope of the current study include Dans le ventre du dragon (In the Belly of the Dragon, Yves Simoneau, 1989) and Mars et Avril (Mars and April, Martin Villeneuve, 2012). Indeed, a study dedicated to the treatment of the future in Québec cinema might go beyond the sci-fi genre to look at Stéphane Lafleur's Continental, un film sans fusil (2007), En terrains connus (2012), and Tu dors Nicole (2014), where brief incursions of the supernatural into realist narratives place emphasis on the future and thus suggest links between melancholia and Québec cinema's ethical imperatives and potential for creating alternative futures. In a more comedic register, Québécois sci-fi spoofs Dans une galaxie près de chez vous (In a Galaxy Near You, Claude Desrosiers, 2004) and its sequel directed by Philippe Gagnon (2008), as well as the children's film, Le martien de Noël (The Christmas Martian, Bernard Gosselin, 1971), offer humorous glances at Québec's attitude to otherness and futurity.

Several films deploying the motifs of faiy-tale and/or orality necessitate inquiry. Such an investigation might begin with a deeper examination of André Forcier, who, like Lepage, enjoys an influential position in Québec film history, especially considering his career-long commitment to magic realism and affinities with oral practices observed by Lacasse. Films such as *Au clair de*

la lune (1983), Kalamazoo (1988), Une histoire inventée (1990), La comtesse de Baton Rouge (1997), Je me souviens (2009) and Embrasse-moi comme tu m'aimes (2016) touch upon the interpenetrating themes of social class, whiteness, age, gender, ethnicity, race, nonhuman status, disability and sexuality. Also relevant to a discussion around orality, Olivier Godin is an emerging director whose features Le pays des âmes (2011), Nouvelles, nouvelles (2015) and Les arts de la parole (2017) can be described as fables in a manner that is also consistent with the oral practices theorized by Lacasse. Likewise, Fantastica (Gilles Carle, 1980), Le coeur de Madame Sabali (The Heart of Madame Sabali, Ryan McKenna, 2014) and Henri Henri (Martin Talbot, 2014), contemporary tales featuring the supernatural, address environmentalism, race and disability. On the other hand, L'Odyssée d'Alice Tremblay (Denise Filiatrault, 2002) spoofs the fairy-tale genre, while *Ésimésac* (Luc Picard, 2012) adapts another story by popular Québec storyteller, Fred Pellerin. Other films, like François Girard's Le violon rouge (1998), make indirect references to Québec oral storytelling tropes, in this case the enchanted violin, while others such as Le poil de la bête (Philippe Gagnon, 2010) and Chasse-galerie, la légende (Jean-Philippe Duval, 2016) explicitly adapt classic Québécois tales to the big screen. Grande Ourse, la clé des possibles (Patrice Sauvé, 2009), which, like Une galaxie près de chez vous, emerged from a popular television series, might also be connected to these traditions.

Given the expansive possibilities of the subject-matter under consideration in this thesis, many films that speak meaningfully to the sub-topics grouped under the theme of alterity could not be tackled sufficiently or at all. These include films focussed on gender and/or sexuality such as Mireille Dansereau's *La vie rêvée* (1972), *La cuisine rouge* (1979) by Paule Baillargeon and Frédérique Collin, Manon Briand's *La turbulence des fluides* (2002), and Sébastien Rose's *Comment ma mère accoucha de moi durant sa ménopause* (2003). Similarly, *Littoral* (Wajdi

Mouawad, 2004) and Arwad (Samer Najari, Dominique Chila, 2014) are films by accented filmmakers whose work might be compared and contrasted with that of Kim Nguyen. In fact, Nguyen's own body of work is not fully explored in this thesis. Truffe (2009), La cité (2010), Rebelle (2012), Two Lovers and a Bear (2016), and Eye on Juliet (2018) all deserve proper scrutiny to flesh out the preliminary insights triggered by my brief examination of this filmmaker's work as accented cinema. Additionally, three films by Robert Morin feature supernatural incursions and offer interesting possibilities for study in terms of their engagement with race in Le nèg' (The Negro, 2002) and Indigeneity in Wendigo (1994) and 3 histoires d'Indiens (3 Indian Tales, 2014). Other Indigenous-themed films by non-Indigenous directors addressing religious or supernatural elements include Arthur Lamothe's work, particularly Mémoire battante (Fighting Memory, 1983), but also Astataïon ou le Festin des morts (Mission of Fear, Fernand Dansereau, 1965), and Hochelaga: terre des âmes (Hochelaga: Land of Souls, François Girard, 2017). Although I briefly mention Francis Leclerc's Mémoires affectives, and Bruno Cornellier analyzes this film in considerable depth, the relevance of its themes and form warrant further examination in relation to the problematics put forward by this thesis.

Regretably, this thesis leaves little room for the discussion of Québec films in English by non-Indigenous directors. In a broader study, English-language texts by Québec filmmakers would be worth exploring further with the purpose of pinpointing precise distinctions between French and English relationships and colonial histories vis-à-vis one another and less influential groups in Québec. Most importantly perhaps, is the work of Paul Almond, an Anglophone Québécois filmmaker whose trilogy starring Geneviève Bujold: *Isabel* (1968), *The Act of the Heart* (1970), and *Journey* (1972), is rich and relevant to the theme of the religious supernatural. But many Québec English-language productions emerged during the tax-break era and can be

qualified as B-movie exploitation films.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, some of these films tackle supernatural themes and retain traces of Québec-specific references that may provide revealing insights about the Anglophone minority's perspective on shifting power structures and interculturality.

Examples include, *The Pyx* (Harvey Hart, 1973), a film heavy with religious and Satanic symbolism featuring Francophones as secondary characters; *Shivers* (David Cronenberg, 1975), set in a Montreal luxury apartment complex overlooking the St. Lawrence River; *The Blue Man/Eternal Evil* (George Mihalka, 1985) which deals with the themes of astral projection and spiritual vampirism, travelling between bodies beyond the boundaries of age, gender or race, thereby suggesting potentially useful comparisons with *La peau blanche*. More recently, *The Wild Hunt* (Alexandre Franchi, 2009), the title of which evokes the popular Québec tradition of *Chasse-galerie*, erases all references to Québec, but, as a production focusing on fantasies of identity originating from this context, may yet prove revealing.

Similarly, a more focussed study of both English and French-language Québec films presented in local genre festivals like *Fantasia* and *Spasm* deserve dedicated study in order to consider the particular conditions, cultural dynamics and motivations of films aimed at such an exhibition context. Several examples of Québec films emerging from or catering to this context are directed by Francophones opting to work in English. Among these, *Turbo Kid* (RKSS Collective, ⁵⁸ 2015) is a post-apocalyptic science fiction comedy featuring Laurence Leboeuf as

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⁵⁷ Between 1975 and 1982, federal Canadian tax policy enabled investors in film projects to deduct all of their investment from taxable income. This policy impacted the Canadian film industry which saw a significant increase in film productions, many of which were B-movie exploitation films. In Québec, companies like Cinépix participated in this trend and produced several English-language genre films in which the local context is often hardly unnoticeable. See "Tax Shelter Films" by Ted Magder, Piers Handling and Andrew Mcintosh.
⁵⁸ The RKSS (Road Kill Super Star) Collective is made up of Anouk Whissell, François Simard and Yoann-Karl Whissell. Notably, *Turbo Kid*'s casting of Michael Ironside as an antogonist may be seen as a nod to the tax-break era films. Ironside appeared in tax-shelter era classic *Scanners* (David Cronenberg, 1980), and Don Carmody's *The Surrogate* (1984), a softcore B-movie exploitation film produced only two years after the end of the tax-shelter era (1975-1982). Both are English-language films produced in Québec by Les Films Mutuels and Cinépix respectively.

Apple, a quirky android. The lowbrow comedy *Sans dessein* (2009) by Caroline Labrèche and Steeve Léonard features a ghost from the future while this duo's second feature *Radius* (2017), somewhat reminiscent of David Cronenberg's Québec-produced *Scanners* (1981), deals with memory loss and a parallel deadly power of the mind, but effaces Québec from its narrative.

Although notable interventions on the subjects of religion (É. Beaulieu, Manning) and Satanism in Québec cinema (A. Loiselle) exist, I believe there is yet a need to build on these important works by correlating them more closely with the issues of alterity, orality, melancholia and Indigeneity that drive the current thesis. Such a study might pursue or revisit analyses of major films like *On est loin du soleil, Jésus de Montréal, Le matou* (Jean Beaudin, 1985), *Le confessionnal, Sur le seuil* (Eric Tessier, 2003), *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, and *Miraculum* (Podz, 2014), but could also tackle less frequently discussed experimental and genre films like *Le diable est parmi nous* (Jean Beaudin, 1972), *L'ange et la femme* (Gilles Carle, 1977), *Adramélech* (Pierre Grégoire, 1986), *La morte amoureuse* (Alain Vézina, 1995), *Pudding Chômeur* (Gilles Carle, 1996), *Folle de Dieu* (Jean-Daniel Lafond, 2008), and even children's films drawing on themes of religion and interculturality via the supernatural like Isabelle Hayeur's *Le Golem de Montréal* (2004).

Similarly, death and haunting runs through the work of seminal filmmaker Claude Jutra, including the films A tout prendre (1964), Mon oncle Antoine (1971), and Kamouraska (1973). The importance of this theme and filmmaker, as well as recent revelations by sexual abuse victims concerning Jutra, necessarily inflect readings of his work and intersect with issues of sexuality addressed in this thesis. Further reflection on death can be found in several other productions including Les dernières fiançailles (The Last Betrothal, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, 1973), Cargo (François Girard, 1990), Karmina (Gabriel Pelletier, 1996), Le siège de l'âme (The Seat of

the Soul, Olivier Asselin, 1997), K2 (Gabriel Pelletier, 2001), Un crabe dans la tête (Soft Shell Man, André Turpin, 2001), The Blue Butterfly Léa Pool, 2004), À l'origine d'un cri (Robin Aubert, 2010), Une vie qui commence (A Life Begins, Michel Monty, 2011), Colombarium (Steeve Kerr, 2012), and Endorphine (André Turpin, 2015).

Other lacunae which further investigation and attention to different approaches could help remedy include a more dedicated genre-based approach to the supernatural mode. As iterations of the supernatural in Québec film become more frequent, sub-divisions in the corpus are also more likely to emerge. Breaking down the supernatural into smaller components for more targeted analysis would inevitably reveal more nuanced and precise findings that relate to the characteristics of each genre and their allegorical tendencies. This could in turn engender a more comprehensive and detailed look at several key films, which are only briefly mentioned or not at all. Furthermore, this study naturally incites further research of a comparative nature in other settler colonial contexts. This kind of study would reveal much about the specificities of Québec's situation and flesh out insights into the mechanisms of settler colonialism. This analysis also finds that accented cinema holds a broader potential for application than first theorized by Naficy, and could be expanded, using Québec as a paradigmatic case, to further explore the relationship between accentedness and Indigeneity across other settler colonial contexts. Wapikoni, with its transnational focus, remains a good springboard to explore other contexts in this way. As such, a more dedicated study of Wapikoni via the themes of transportability and the supernatural would be a welcome endeavour. Finally, from a methodological standpoint, a focus on non-textual research approaches, particularly on reception seems a logical next step in understanding the Québec imaginary and its struggles with interculturality. In this respect, it is hoped that the current study, despite its limitations, may help contribute positively towards other interventions that further probe Québec as a social, cultural, and political environment harbouring possibilities for the productive reinvention of nationhood within and beyond the specificities of its own milieu.

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FILMOGRAPHY OF FILMS AND MEDIA DISCUSSED

(IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

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Proulx, Maurice. Les routes du Québec (The Roads of Québec, 1951)

Poirier, Anne Claire. De mère en fille (Mother-to-Be, 1968, NFB)

Perrault, Pierre. Un pays sans bon sens! (A Ridiculous Kind of Country, 1970, NFB)

Carle, Gilles. La vraie nature de Bernadette (The True Nature of Bernadette, 1972)

Groulx, Gilles. 24 heures ou plus (24 Hours or More, 1973/77, NFB)

Poirier, Anne Claire. Les filles du Roy (They Called Us 'Les Filles du Roy', 1974, NFB)

Groulx, Gilles. Première question sur le bonheur (First Question About Happiness, 1977, NFB)

Leduc, Jacques, and Renée Roy. Albédo (Albedo, 1982, NFB)

Perrault, Pierre. La bête lumineuse (The Shimmering Beast, 1982, NFB)

Tana, Paul. Caffè Italia Montréal (1985)

Obomsawin, Alanis. Incident at Restigouche (1984, NFB)

Lauzon, Jean-Claude. *Un zoo la nuit* (*Night Zoo*, 1987)

Lauzon, Jean-Claude. *Léolo* (1992)

Obomsawin, Alanis. Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance (1993, NFB)

Perrault, Pierre. Cornouailles (Icewarrior, 1994, NFB)

Nguyen, Kim. Soleil glacé (Frozen Sun, 1999)

Villeneuve, Denis. Maelström (2000)

Martin, Catherine. *Mariages* (*Marriages*, 2001)

Vollant, Tshiuetin. Ka Kushpian (My Journey, 2001, Wapikoni Mobile)

Nguyen, Kim. Le marais (The Marsh, 2002)

Barnaby, Jeff. From Cherry English (2004)

Leclerc, Francis. Mémoires affectives (Looking for Alexander, 2004)

Aubert, Robin. Saints-martyrs-des-Damnés (2005)

Émond, Bernard. La neuvaine (The Novena, 2005)

Kistabish, Mélanie. Le lac Abitibi (Lake Abitibi, 2005, Wapikoni Mobile)

Newashish, Canouk. Coureurs de nuit (Night Runners, 2005, Wapikoni Mobile)

Papatie, Evelyne, and Vince Papatie. *Kokom Déménage (Kokom On Move*, 2006, Wapikoni Mobile)

Papatie, Evelyne. Des forêts de Kitcisakik aux forêts de Xingû (From the Forest of Kitcisakik to the Forests of Xingû, 2008, Wapikoni Mobile)

Picard, Luc. Babine (2008)

Papatie, Kevin. Nous sommes (We Are, 2009, Wapikoni Mobile)

Barnaby, Jeff. File Under Miscellaneous (2010)

Martin, Catherine. Trois temps après la mort d'Anna (Mourning for Anna, 2010)

Vallée, Jean-Marc. *Café de Flore* (2010)

Lanctôt, Micheline. Pour l'amour de Dieu (For the Love of God, 2010)

Podz. Les 7 jours du Talion (7 days, 2010)

Côté, Abraham, and Kevin Papatie. *Indian Taxi* (2011, Wapikoni Mobile)

Denis, Mathieu, and Simon Lavoie. Laurentie (Laurentia, 2011)

Dubé, Sasha, and Billy Roy Mowatt. De passage (Passing Through, 2011, Wapikoni Mobile)

Poucachiche, Charlotte. *Le voyage* (The Journey, 2011, Wapikoni Mobile)

Sioui Durand, Yves. Mesnak. (2011)

Collective Project. Anmani mak Kum (Anmani and Kum, 2012, Wapikoni Mobile)

Flamand, Debby. Meskano (The Path, 2012, Wapikoni Mobile)

Lavoie, Simon. *Le torrent* (The Torrent, 2012)

Leblanc, Réal Junior. *Blocus 138 – la résistance innue (Blocus 138 – Innu Resistance*, 2012, Wapikoni Mobile)

Barnaby, Jeff. Rhymes for Young Ghouls (2013)

Brazeau, Bradley, and Evelyne Papatie. *Vers Vancouver* (Towards Vancouver, 2013, Wapikoni Mobile)

Caplin, Raymond, Shayna Decontie Thusky, and Emilio Wawatie. *Finding the Light* (2013, Wapikoni Mobile)

Chevrier, Karl. Wigwas (2013, Wapikoni Mobile)

Grégoire, Joyce. Coeurs nomades (Nomad Hearts, 2013, Wapikoni Mobile)

Pilot, Pishu Pierre. Atikuat nimeteut (The Caribou Trail, 2013, Wapikoni Mobile)

Carrier, Mélanie, and Olivier Higgins. *Québékoisie* (2013)

Deer, Tracey. Mohawks Girls (2014-Present, APTN)

Delisle, François. *Chorus* (2015)

Lesage, Philippe. Les démons (The Demons, 2015)

Dubuc, Yvan, and Carole Poliquin. L'empreinte (Footprints, 2015)

Émond, Anne. Les Êtres chers (Our Loved Ones, 2015)

Émond, Anne. Nelly (2016)

Aubert, Robin. Les affamés (Ravenous, 2017)

Demers, Patrick. *Origami* (2017)

ADDITIONAL FILMS AND MEDIA CITED

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

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3 histoires d'Indien (Robert Morin, 2014)

Action: The October Crisis of 1970 (Robin Spry, 1974, NFB)

À l'origine d'un cri (Crying Out, Robin Aubert, 2010)

Amours imaginaires, Les (Heartbeats, Xavier Dolan, 2010)

Ange et la femme, L' (The Angel and the Woman, Gilles Carle, 1977)

Arwad (Samer Najari, Dominique Chila, 2014)

Aurore (Luc Dionne, 2005)

Belle empoisonneuse, La (The Beautiful Angel of Death, Richard Jutras, 2008)

Big Little Lies (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2017-19)

Bons débarras, Les (Good Riddance, Francis Mankiewicz, 1980)

Boris sans Béatrice (Boris Without Béatrice, Denis Côté, 2016)

Butcher Boy, The (Neil Jordan, 1997)

Chat dans le sac, Le (The Cat in the Bag, Gilles Groulx, 1964, NFB)

Coeur de madame Sabali, Le (The Heart of Madame Sabali, Ryan McKenna, 2014)

Colony, The (Jeff Barnaby, 2007)

Confessionnal, Le (The Confessional, Robert Lepage, 1995)

Continental, un film sans fusil (Continental, A Film Without Guns, Stéphane Lafleur, 2007)

Contre toute espérance (Summit Circle, Bernard Émond, 2007)

Corbo (Mathieu Denis, 2015)

Coureurs des bois (1978, NFB)

C.R.A.Z.Y. (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2005)

Dallas Buyers Club (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2013)

Dans le ventre du dragon (In the Belly of the Dragon, Yves Simoneau, 1989)

Dans une galaxie près de chez vous (In a Galaxy Near You, Claude Desrosiers, 2004)

Dans une galaxie près de chez vous 2 (In a Galaxy Near You 2, Philippe Gagnon, 2008)

Déclin de l'empire Américain, Le (The Decline of the American Empire, Denys Arcand, 1986)

Demolition (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2016)

Donation, La (The Legacy, Bernard Émond, 2009)

Endorphine (André Turpin, 2015)

En terrains connus (On Familiar Grounds, Stéphane Lafleur, 2012)

Entre tu et vous (Between You and You All, Gilles Groulx, 1969, NFB)

États-Unis d'Albert, Les (The United States of Albert, André Forcier, 2005)

Face cachée de la lune, La (The Far Side of the Moon, Robert Lepage, 2003)

Fantastica (Gilles Carle, 1980)

Grands enfants, Les (Day by Day, Paul Tana, 1980)

Golden Gloves (Gilles Groulx, 1961, NFB)

Henri Henri (Martin Talbot, 2014)

Hochelaga, terre des âmes (Hochelaga, Land of Souls, François Girard, 2017)

Incendies (Denis Villeneuve, 2011)

Invasions barbares, Les (The Barbarian Invasions, Denys Arcand, 2003)

Je me souviens (André Forcier, 2009)

Jésus de Montréal (Jesus of Montreal, Denys Arcand, 1989)

Kalamazoo (André Forcier, 1988)

King Kong (Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933)

Learning Path, The (Loretta Todd, 1991, NFB)

Littoral (Tideline, Wajdi Mouawad, 2004)

Maria Chapdelaine (Gilles Carle, 1983)

Mars et Avril (Mars and April, Martin Villeneuve, 2012)

Martien de Noël, Le (The Christmas Martian, Bernard Gosselin, 1971)

Miraculum (PodZ, 2014)

Monsieur Lazhar (Philippe Falardeau, 2012)

Mourir à tue-tête (A Scream From Silence, Anne Claire Poirier, 1979, NFB).

Nèg', Le (The Negro, Robert Morin, 2002)

Night of the Living Dead (George A. Romero, 1968)

Nouvelle-France (Battle of the Brave, Jean Beaudin, 2004)

Nuit #1 (Anne Émond, 2011)

On est loin du soleil (Far from the Sun, Jacques Leduc, 1971, NFB)

Ordres, Les (Orderers, Michel Brault, 1974)

Petite Aurore, l'enfant martyre, La (Little Aurore's Tragedy, Jean-Yves Bigras, 1952)

Plouffe, Les (The Plouffe Family, Gilles Carle, 1981)

Radius (Caroline Labrèche, Steeve Léonard, 2017)

Raquetteurs, Les (The Snowshoers, Michel Brault, Gilles Groulx, 1958, NFB)

Rebelle (War Witch, Kim Nguyen, 2013)

Règne du jour, Le (The Times That Are, Pierre Perrault, 1967, NFB)

Romance of Transportation in Canada, The (Colin Low, 1952, NFB)

Sans dessein (Lost Cause, Caroline Labrèche, Steeve Léonard, 2009)

Séraphin, un homme et son péché (Séraphin: Heart of Stone, Charles Binamé, 2001)

Sex in the City (Darren Star, 1998-2004, HBO)

Survenant, Le (The Outlander, Érik Canuel, 2005)

Trans-Canada Express (Stanley Hawes, 1944, NFB)

Tu dors Nicole (You're Sleeping Nicole, Stéphane Lafleur, 2014)

Turbulence des fluides, La (Chaos and Desire, Manon Briand, 2002)

Un crabe dans la tête (Soft Shell Man, André Turpin, 2001)

Valérie (Denis Héroux, 1969)

Voir Miami... (Seeing Miami..., Gilles Groulx, 1962, NFB)

Voyageurs, Les (Bernard Devlin, 1964, NFB)

Wendigo (Robert Morin, 1994)

Wild (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2014)

Wow (Claude Jutra, 1969, NFB)

Young Victoria, The (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2008)

PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PAPERS INCLUDED IN THESIS (IN REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

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- "Indigenous Cinema, *Hamlet*, and Québécois Melancholia." *In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization*. Edited by Helen Gilbert, J.D. Phillipson, and Michelle H. Raheja. Liverpool University

 Press, 2017, pp. 105-122.
- "Léolo's Fantasized Italy: Family Romance and Accented Cinema in Québec." *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, Jan 2017, pp. 47-64.
- "Le 'refus' dans la télésérie *Mohawk Girls* de Tracey Deer." *Télé en séries*. Edited by Jérôme-Olivier Allard, Élaine Després, Simon Harel, Marie-Christine Lambert-Perreault. Éditions XYZ, 2017.
- "Landscape, Trauma, and Identity: Simon Lavoie's *Le torrent*." *A Cinema of Pain: Essays on Quebec's Nostalgic Screen*. Edited by Liz Czach and André Loiselle, Wilfrid Laurier Press, Forthcoming.
- "Miracles, mythes, cinéma : *La vraie nature de Bernadette* et *The Butcher Boy.*" *Le Québec et l'Irlande*: *Culture, histoire, identité*. Edited by Simon Jolivet, Linda Cardinal, and Isabelle Matte.

 Éditions du Septentrion, 2014, pp. 166-196.
- "Catherine Martin: Intergenerational Haunting and Orality in Québec Film." Conference Paper Presented at the Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC), Ryerson University, Toronto, 2017.
- "Recasting Québec/France as Intercontinental Haunting: Jean-Marc Vallée's *Café de Flore*." Conference Paper Presented at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), Atlanta, 2016.
- "Le surnaturel et l'oralité dans le cinéma Québécois/The Supernatural, Storytelling and Oral Cinema in Québec: Local and Global Narratives." Conference Papers Presented in French and English at the *Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS), Université du Québec à Rimouski,* and at the Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC), University of Ottawa, 2015.

- "Kim Nguyen, Accented Cinema, and the Supernatural in Québec Film." Conference Paper Presented at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), Montréal, 2015.
- "Intergenerational Religious Traditions in Québécois Cinema: Bernard Émond's *La neuvaine*." Paper Presented at the Concordia Department of Religion Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference, Montreal, 2015.
- "A Transportable/Transnational Cinema: Wapikoni Mobile." Gerald Pratley Award Lecture Presented at the Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC), Brock University, St. Catharines, 2014.
- "Implicating Québec: Historical Trauma and the Films of Jeff Barnaby." Conference Paper Presented at the American Culture Association (Indigenous Studies), St. Louis, 2013.
- "Archiving Melancholia in Alanis Obomsawin's *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance.*" Conference Paper Presented at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), Chicago, 2013.
- "Griffintown: La ville comme archive explorée à travers *Albédo*."/"Photography, the Archive and Griffintown in *Albédo*." Conference Papers Presented in French and English at the *Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS)*, Bishop's University, Lennoxville, and the Canadian Association for Irish Studies (CAIS), Concordia University, Montreal, 2011.
- "Identity and Memory: The Absurd Paranormal in Recent Québécois Cinema." Conference Paper

 Presented at the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts (IAFA), Orlando, 2010.