Parlons Montréal: Exploring Young Montrealers' Linguistic Identity

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Abstract

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Parlons Montréal is a research-creation project that explores my generation's relationship to linguistic identity. Assembled in Klynt, this bilingual nonlinear interactive documentary explores notions of identity, linguistic tension, language laws and challenges faced by young Montrealers (aged 18-30). I conducted 13 interviews with Montrealers throughout the city and asked them about their thoughts on language, identity and Montréal's linguistic landscape. This written component offers a broader perspective which situates my documentary historically. As such, I will be exploring the historical events that inform our current linguistic landscape and offer more context on the realities young Montrealers face.

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Introduction to the Project

In first grade, a boy tells me I cannot play soccer on his team because I'm a French "frog." Children are often quite cruel and don't think about their actions. I cannot hold him accountable. But how did this six-year-old boy know how to articulate such a complicated debate, at a time where we had yet to have a history lesson? I did not know how to process the insult. Through my time in an Anglophone elementary and high school, I learned that there were perceived differences between Anglophones and Francophones and that other multilingual Montrealers like myself would forever be stuck manoeuvring these identity markers. Without a clear understanding of the historical events that led to my experience of the remnants of these linguistic tensions, I was confused. This confusion would lead me here, to this research-creation project, where I begin to address my generation's relationship to language. I conducted interviews with young Montrealers of various backgrounds, asking them where they stand within these tensions and how they navigate a city with such a complex history. In this project, I ask myself: what does it mean to live in a city that was once so divided, culturally and linguistically? What does it mean to be a Montrealer in the context of the most multilingual generation in Québec? How do trilingual or multilingual Montrealers relate to their multifaceted identities?

The linguistic tensions my generation faces are remnants of previous struggles fought by our parents and grandparents' generation. After all, the weight of the 1995 referendum was lost on us, as some of us were not born yet or in the early years of elementary school. My parents and grandparents, in particular, have lived through tumultuous times in the city (two referendums, the Quiet Revolution, the Oka crisis[1], etc.). Their tensions are rooted in their lived experience and their collective memory of a very divided city. Today, the city is nowhere near as divided as it once was. Yet, some of the cultural linguistic tensions still linger. In many cases, tensions faced by Montrealers occur based on factors beyond language. Race, gender and sexuality are factors that influence the ease through which Montrealers experience the city. If this is indeed the case, what are the current linguistic challenges young Montrealers must face? How might we conceptualize today's present linguistic landscape in contrast to what it previously was? It seems to me that we have inherited biases and preconceptions from our parents over battles we have not

[1] Community members in Kanesatake prefer to remember this conflict as "The Resistance at Kanesatake" in order to counter colonial narratives generated by non-Indigenous reporters. See *Seeing Red* by Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson.

fought. From this point of view, I begin pondering what it means to live in a city that was once so divided linguistically. What kind of residual effects has this given the current generation of young Montrealers? What does it mean for individuals whose mother tongue is neither French nor English? How do we make sense of these tensions on unceded land, where First Nations languages are excluded from the conversation altogether? How do young immigrants navigate their identities through language policies such as *la loi 101*[2]? While I was unable to tackle *all* these questions in my documentary, these inquiries inform the written component and will be further developed.

This documentary situates itself as a contribution to the conversation on language in Montréal. In this project, I am not interested in surveying the status of French or English amongst my peers. Instead, I am exploring the way we use language and where we stand on the historical tensions of the past. Furthermore, language is an entry point to discuss dynamics of colonialism, racism, culture and the notion of nationhood in Québec. My interviewees were asked questions regarding their identity, what they think being a Montrealer means and how they use language in their daily interactions. The interviews in my documentary took place at various locations in Montréal from September 2018 to March 2019. The interviews lasted approximately twenty to forty-five minutes each and were edited down to multiple short 30-second to 1-minute clips. They were then placed into various categories in the Klynt software. In designing the interface, I included various murals in Montréal that spoke to the categories I had created. The interface is also accompanied by a two-minute montage of various Montréal locations.

Language as Culture

Linguistic tensions can be traced back to the earlier disputes over settler colonialism. From 1756-1763, the British and French colonies fought for control of Eastern North America in what was known as The Seven Years' War (Eccles). Culminating in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City, the war ended when British forces defeated the French military and France ceded the rights of the land to the British. This change in colonial rule had profound effects on the French population, who felt as though they had been colonized by the British. As Jean

[2] *La loi 101*, otherwise known as Bill 101, is a law introduced by the Parti Québécois in 1977 that makes French the official language of the province. The law ensures that French be the language of "Government and the Law, as well as the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce and business" (Charte de la langue française).

Bouthillette argues in his book *Le Canadien français et son double*, "what is for France the abandonment of a territory and the signing of a peace treaty is inscribed in our history as the origin of servitude within a foreign occupation" (Bouthillette 81). After the reconquest of New France by the British, tensions arose due to the lack of access to local government that led the French population to feel disadvantaged in contrast to the British bourgeoisie (Roy). In 1826, the Parti canadien, otherwise known as The Patriotes was formed in order to demand more power to assembly members, increased ministerial responsibility as well as the eligibility to be appointed to council (Roy). They drafted 92 resolutions, which were all denied by authorities in London (Buckner). Following an economic depression for French farmers in 1830, these tensions led to the Rebellions of 1837-1838, where Francophone Patriots fought against British rule and the political status quo (Buckner). During these battles, martial law was applied and approximately 325 people perished (ibid). These tensions led the British to send governor Lord Durham to resolve the fighting, who was known for the Durham report that consolidated Upper and Lower Canada (Mills).

Linguistic tensions were at their most divisive during the Quiet Revolution, which shaped contemporary Québec. Between 1931-1961, Francophones left farms and suburban life for Montréal, which led to an urban growth of unilingual Francophone speakers populating the city (Levine 43). As such, it became part of an *ébullition culturelle* [cultural boiling point], during which Francophone artists established French publishing houses, theatres, music scenes and journalism (ibid). This development in cultural creativity contributed to *Montréalization*, where the majority of cultural activity came from Francophones in the Metropolitan area of Montréal (ibid). The vibrant cultural and artistic scene was followed by Francophone intellectuals who contributed largely in overturning the Church's power over the province (Levine 44). *Québecitude*, which translates as a strong sentiment of pride for French Québec, was felt throughout the Francophone population that began to regard themselves as Québécois rather than French Canadian (Levine 48).

Language became an important factor in the creation of a national identity. In Québec especially, language has a heightened political undertone. As Danielle Juteau explains in *The Citizen Makes an Entrée: Redefining the National Community in Quebec*, the French language is "presented as a common good and a heritage that belongs to all, as the former and restrictive definition of the ethnic nation is replaced by a civic one" (Juteau 452). As such, the French

language becomes a shared property that citizens must collectively work at preserving from the threat of English as the language of globalisation (ibid). While French is secured and granted legitimacy through legislation, its importance is not valued to the same degree by everyone. By making the French language the basis for national identity leaves many to feel excluded, as language is not an accurate representation of cultural belonging.

In order to preserve the presence of the French language in Québec, a new model of multiculturalism was brought to the province. Throughout Canada, multiculturalism is used as a way of dethroning the "Anglo-normative understanding" of Canadian society (Taylor 417). It is a way to form a new Canadian political identity based on the participation of everyone on equal grounds. As such, multiculturalism is letting go of a British identity and history in order to build a collective one, with no dominant narrative. In Quebec, because the French language is continually under threat of assimilation, multiculturalism is an unsuitable model (Taylor 418). The preservation of the province's historical past, precisely its French history, is integral to the construction of the *Québécois identity*. Charles Taylor speaks of a triple threat regarding language in Québec: the predominance of the English language in North-America, an Anglophone majority in Canada and English as the language of globalization (Taylor 417). Interculturalism speaks to the importance of retaining the historical identity in building a new national identity. As Charles Taylor argues, "if multiculturalism in the generic sense includes policies which aim both at recognition of difference and integration, one might argue that the prefix 'multi' gives greater weight to the first goal- acknowledging diversity- while 'inter' invokes more the facet of integration" (Taylor 416). As such, interculturalism focuses on integration into a Francophone society in order to meet its goals of language preservation. By focusing on one common culture centered around the French language, cultural differences are flattened as a result. As Charles Taylor argues, "the idea that one could dethrone the ancestral identity, and declare that Quebec had no official culture, could never take hold in this province" (Taylor 418). Efforts put towards integrating immigrants into a Francophone system, such as *la loi 101*, contribute to the process of creating and maintaining a Francophone society.

Bonjour/Hi

Montréal used to be divided along Boulevard Saint-Laurent, which acted as an invisible boundary between two linguistic communities (Sherry, "Bridge of Reversals" 383). Nowadays,

this distinction is blurred by the presence of many immigrant communities that have made Montréal their home. The invisible barrier is no longer a reality, as Francophones move into Notre-Dame de Grace and Anglophones move into Rosemont-La-Petite-Patrie. In an interview with *The Montreal Gazette*, Sherry Simon, linguist and professor at Concordia University, mentions her hopefulness in younger generations, as they are increasingly more bilingual, which make the ideological barriers of past generations slowly fade (Curran). However, she argues that the "two solitudes" is not a phenomenon of the past, as certain situations of tensions still occasionally surface (ibid).

Most recently, this was seen during the Bonjour/Hi tensions. In the Fall of 2017, the national assembly passed a motion where merchants were encouraged to stop using the word "hi" to greet customers. In this case, the "hi" was referred to as an irritant and contributed to a sentiment of divisiveness between those in favour of a French-only greeting and those in favour of bilingualism. For many, the bilingual greeting was a friendly gesture towards accommodating customers who could then choose the language they wanted the interactions to occur in. Others saw this bilingual greeting as a form of assimilation to the English language. This debate is not recent, in fact, Monica Heller addressed it in 1978 in her article *Bonjour/Hello: Negotiations of Language Choice in Montreal*, a short while after the application of *La charte de la langue française*. In her article, she notes how mundane everyday interactions have become political. As Heller argues, "awareness of language comes from the symbolic role it has in political life, and from the social value it has acquired as an obvious characteristic of the social groups involved in shifting relationships" (Heller, "Bonjour-Hello" 588). When Heller struggles to make a garagist understand what repairs she needs to get done on her car, he responds with "Ma'am, you don't need to speak to me in French, I'm not a separatist" (ibid). Nearly forty years later, negotiations of language use are still heated debates. Hearing individuals switch from one language to another might be common in Montreal but instances such as the Bonjour/Hi debates are a reminder of the ongoing divisiveness of language use in Montréal.

New Identities Through Third Space

Linguistic tensions can be put aside, sometimes temporarily, through the creation of third space. As Sherry Simon explains in "Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City," the creation of third space points to a "third" language or culture that shifts the tension between two

dominant languages (Sherry, "Translating Montreal" 16). As such, third space acts "as a contingent force that reveals the false dilemma of linguistic and cultural duality" (Henriquiez 697). In the 1960s, third spaces were confined to small pockets in the city, such as the Boulevard Saint-Laurent and the Mile-end. Nowadays, the creation of third space occurs throughout the city, as immigration has proliferated into all neighbourhoods of the city. Nowadays, third spaces occur throughout the Island, as many traditionally Anglophone or Francophone neighbourhoods become populated by immigrant populations. Additionally, many Francophones and Anglophones now live on the opposite side of the invisible barrier.

The barriers and divisions of the past are no longer a reality for most young Montrealers. Codeswitching, "the use of more than one language in a single communicative episode" and being receptive to multiple languages is seen as integral to what makes a "Montrealer" (Eastman 442). Embracing a multilayered identity is a common tag amongst younger Montrealers. According to the 2016 Canadian census, the percentage of bilingual Montrealers has never been higher, reaching over half the population (Statistics Canada 2016). Approximately, 12 percent of Montrealers speak a language other than French or English at home, which results in a more complex and diversified linguistic landscape (ibid). The duality between French and English is now complicated by the presence of many other languages that have come to fill the streets of Montréal.

The high concentration of immigration in Montréal since the 1980s results in fluid linguistic relations, where generations of young Quebeckers are mixing their parents native languages with English and French. As André Furlani argues, "far from being a site of harmonious difference, Montréal remains a city of unequal and fraught transactions, yet [one] which makes today's city a laboratory for new forms of expression" (Furlani 119). A high concentration of immigration has created optimal conditions for diversity within Montréal's public spaces (Germain, Rose 11). Wim Remysen and Kirsten Reinke both draw attention to this development, in acknowledging that the linguistic practices are informed by the unequal relationship other languages occupy in relation to French and English in Canada (Remysen, Reinke 2). Codeswitching is a way for individuals to showcase their threshold experiences: they occupy liminalities, a foot in more than one culture (Lamarre et al., 49). It can be a way to negotiate between two cultures or simply showcase one's background (Heller, 16). It is what linguistics scholar Claire J. Kramsch describes as "performing cultural acts of identity"

(Konidaris 27). Through the performance of multilingualism, new ways of speaking have emerged in Montréal that reflect waves of immigration into the city since the 1980s.

What La Presse journalist Amin Guidara refers to as "le parler Montréalais," is a new dialect that goes beyond Frenglish by introducing fragments of contact with Haitian Créole and Arabic (Guidara). Historically, Canadian French borrowed from Indigenous languages and English, but nowadays, it is influenced by the myriad of language it encounters: mainly English, Arabic, and Haitian Créole (ibid). Linguistics professor Mireille Tremblay attributes this linguistic evolution to the predominance of French since the application of *la loi 101* (ibid). From this basis, a new dialect built upon the dominant language in Quebec has created a new verbal repertoire that combines the linguistic codes of Arabic and Haitian Créole. Furthermore, not only are these practices understood by individuals who do not belong to these ethnic groups, but they are even adopted by them (ibid). As Kevin Calixte explains, "we love destroying language in order to rebuild it" (ibid). These new linguistic practices contribute to what Patricia Lamarre describes as "brouillage des frontières,'' where the traditional barriers between two communities begin to blur (Gérin-Lajoie 60).

There is an important distinction to make regarding "le parler Montréalais". As both playwright Michelle Allen and linguist Guy Bertrand attested while featured as guest panelists on the set of *Les Francs-Tireurs*, Montréal has a uniquely multiethnic linguistic context that differs from the rest of the province. For this reason, they argue that Montréal should be studied on its own. Young Montrealers borrow from a multitude of linguistic repertoires, frequently switching between French and English—often within a single sentence—or simply switching from one language to the other in the same conversation. As Sherry Simon explains, this is a process that has been occurring since the 1990s where a new Anglo/Franco Montrealers identity is formed based on individuals bilingual and often trilingual identities (Simon 8).

Linguistic Tensions on Unceded Land

What is more complex to recount is the history of languages amongst First Nations communities. Montreal is situated on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory, with Inuktitut, Cree and Mohawk being the most spoken languages (Statistics Canada). According to the 2001 Statistics Canada survey, only half (48.5%) of the First Nations in Quebec had some knowledge of their ancestral languages (Taylor et al. 72). These numbers reflect the cultural genocide of First Nations

communities that placed the survival of their languages and cultures at risk. Nowadays, many First Nations languages are no longer spoken or are only spoken by a handful of individuals (Statistics Canada). I am mindful of the context of colonization surrounding these linguistic practices and how they have worked to assimilate First Nations communities. While these languages are not spoken by a majority, it is important to remain conscious of their importance on this territory. Ultimately, how do we negotiate the institutional prevalence of the two official languages to the detriment of First Nations languages? It was important that I address this issue in my documentary. While many interviewees were not able to speak to these issues, I have included the interview segments where some of the participants point out the hypocrisy of the linguistic debate on unceded territory.

My focus on English and French is specifically due to the fact that linguistic tensions have been focused on these two dominant settler languages. Most of my own experience and my interviewees' experience derives from the institutional prevalence French and English have in Canada and in Québec. With recent legislative changes in Canada, these dynamics are bound to change. In 2016, a class action was created in order to demand that the government of Canada recognize First Nations languages in Canada. Lead by Perry Bellegard, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations in Canada, the call seeks to recognize the 90 Indigenous languages spoken on the territory (Ballingall). As a gesture towards reconciliation, the Canadian government worked with the Assembly of First Nations to create The Indigenous Languages Act. The bill was brought to royal assent on June 21st, 2019, and guarantees the right to promote, preserve and maintain Indigenous languages (Government of Canada 2019).

In order to reflect the linguistic practices my generation is engaged in my documentary is in spoken French and spoken English without subtitles. This gave me the opportunity to curate paths of individuals who wouldn't normally associate with each other to inhabit the same online space. The creation of this virtual third space allowed the clips to build off one another without reinforcing a French versus English dynamic. While translating these interviews might have made them more accessible to a larger audience, this documentary is a reflection of the increase in bilingualism in Montreal. Approximately half the overall population of Montréal has knowledge of both French and English (Statistics Canada 2016). As such, I wanted the interface, the interviews and the title to reflect the linguistic practices we are engaged in.

Literature review

Montréal is a unique terrain for sociologists and linguists to explore since languages "circulate under the ageis of one dominant and unquestioned tongue" (Simon "Translating Montreal" 11). The city has a complicated history regarding Canada's official languages. As such, languages are on unequal grounds in the city, as French has been granted a status of superiority due to policies such as *la loi 101*. Since the beginning of the nationalist movement, Montreal has been studied by scholars, from various disciplines, such as Monica Heller and Charles Taylor, who have studied the changes and creation of a distinct culture. Being Québec's largest city, Montréal groups together many individuals of various backgrounds that come to form the Montrealer identity. According to the 2016 census, approximately 34% of its population is formed of immigrants (Statistics Canada 2016). Exploring this identity requires a globalized view of previous perspectives that come to inform the way individuals interact today. This section will outline the work of two scholars who have both lived and written about the linguistic situation in Montréal. Monica Heller and Sherry Simon have contributed to our understanding of the city's social and cultural shifts by merging their own experience with in-depth cultural analysis. Then, I will be moving into contemporary perspectives.

Monica Heller's work is essential in understanding the linguistic changes that have occurred throughout Québec during the Quiet Revolution and how these have shaped the Quebec we know today. Born in Montréal, she grew up amidst the divisive linguistic debates of the Quiet Revolution. In 1978, as part of her PhD in Linguistics, Heller decided to conduct a six-month ethnographic study of the linguistic changes that were occurring in Québec following the adoption of *la loi 101*. She chose an Anglophone-owned brewery, where she worked alongside Marcel, Hélène, Maryse and Pierre, as they adjusted to the new linguistic policies. The government created a certificate of francization, which was part of an effort to make French the official language of the province and the language of the workplace. This required that companies had to achieve a certain level of French in order to keep doing business in the province. Through her time at the brewery, Heller witnessed the adjustment period that required a translation of the terminology used throughout the brewery and a shift in the hierarchical dynamics between Anglophone and Francophone workers. Heller notes that the presence of this law shifted bilingualism from "the privileged domain of the francophone male working class, and more of the emergent middle class involved in national and international markets,"

regardless of their linguistic identities (Heller, "Bilingualism: A Social Approach" 91). As such, Heller's ethnographic study shows how the dynamics of bilingualism were shifted through the application of *la loi 101*.

Similarly, the work of Sherry Simon highlights the benefits and tensions of growing up in a city with identity troubles. Caught between her Anglophone Yiddish community and her curiosity for the East end of Montréal, Simon's "Translating Montreal: Episodes in the life of a divided city" recounts her voyage crossing the invisible barrier between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in Montréal. Her experience as an Anglophone in Montreal, growing up in the Jewish community in the 1950s and later becoming fluent in French allows her to have a unique perspective of the linguistic changes that have occurred in Montreal. Her book recounts literary writers who have travelled across the linguistic divide in order to inform their own work. Such authors include Malcolm Reid, F.R Scott, A.M Klein and Pierre Anctil. Through translation, Simon argues, points of cultural contact are created and bridge communities together (Simon, "Translating Montreal" 17). For these writers, crossing over to a different culture meant enriching one's own writing by adopting some of the codes. In *Heroine*, Gail Scott embraces codeswitching typically heard in the streets of Montreal. "Bonjour ma belle, t'es bien belle aujourd'hui. Sit down, I've got something to tell you." (Scott 46). As Simon argues, "instead of being an obstacle, Montreal's languages have become a stimulant to the English-language writer. The city has become a laboratory for the interlingual imagination" (Simon, "Translating Montreal" 124).

Through translation practices, efforts of hospitality and power between languages can be explored (Simon, "Translating Montreal" 110). Simon speaks to the translation practice of *Les Belles Soeurs*, a play written by Michel Tremblay in 1965 that had a profound cultural impact on Francophone Québec. Written in joual, the play elevated "the déclassé idiom of the streets to the nobility of theatrical expression," giving Francophones legitimacy in the vernacular language spoken by the working class (Simon, "Translating Montreal" 106). The play was translated into Yiddish in 1992, which was the first time Michel Tremblay had agreed to translate the play into another language in Montréal (Simon, "Translating Montreal" 108). Simon uses the concept of third space to refer to instances where the tensions associated with each culture can be put aside or where cultures that do not normally coexist can find common ground. Through third space, Sherry writes, "the once divided city has become a laboratory where new categories of identity

are coming into being" (Simon, "Translating Montreal" preface, XV). As such, her exploration of the fluidity Montrealers have in switching from one language to another offers a glimpse into the multilayered identity Montrealers embrace. As Sherry argues, "the definition of community, the "we" of the city, is a temporary victory, always in need of repetition" (Simon, "Translating Montreal" 205).

Heller and Simon's work are important in showing the historical significance of cultural belonging. With the arrival of *La charte de la langue française* in 1977, language has been a basis of cultural belonging. Sociologist Danielle Juteau argues that the bill is the Québec government's way of creating a Citoyen Québécois, who is capable of upholding values from Québec, as opposed to Canadian values (Juteau 450). This new Citoyen Québécois is ideally French-speaking, which as Juteau argues, is also "accompanied by the sharing of essential cultural references, and participation in the institutions that embody them" (Juteau 452). As such, Heller and Simon's generation witnessed the political changes that have changed the way an entire generation conducted their daily lives. For those who have not known a Québec without these language laws, their relationship to language differs greatly.

Contemporary Perspectives Through Ethnography

In more recent work, an ethnographic study of Anglophone students in Montréal, Diane Guérin-Lajoie explores their relationship to the Québécois identity and their reflections on the concept of belonging. As some of the respondents explain, a sentiment of exclusion is frequently experienced on the basis of not being a native-French speaker, or what is commonly referred to as "pure-laine" (Gérin-Lajoie 61). There is a majority/minority dichotomy that alienates linguistic minorities on the basis of accent or perceived difference from feeling as though they can identify as Québécois. By mixing ethnography, interviews and surveys with 8 young students throughout the year, Lajoie gathered their thoughts and opinions as they progressed throughout the year (Gérin-Lajoie 56). There were a total of 113 interviews with the 8 participating students, most of them identifying as bilingual or trilingual (ibid). While a bilingual identity can lead to *brouillage des frontiers* [blurring of borders] where some students manoeuvre both linguistic communities, there are certain restrictions when it comes to identifying as Québécois. Despite not feeling like a minority in Québec, respondents spoke of the difficulty of associating to the Québécois identity. As one of the respondents explains, "I feel

like a Québécois. But it's like if you ask any French Canadian, "Joe, tu es Italian, toi?" Like nobody ever said to me "tu est Québécois". Nobody nobody nobody. And what, I will live here another two generations and I'm still not going to be Québécois" (Gérin-Lajoie 61).

Similarly, other participants speak of being told to speak French when playing in their own neighbourhood or to leave the province if they are unhappy with the language laws. Lajoie explains that linguistic policing comes from hierarchies of power (Gérin-Lajoie 62). In this context, this power is manifested through the French language, where "a dominant group uses its power to impose certain social positions on subordinate groups" (Castles and Davidson qtd in Gérin-Lajoie 62). As such, language and even accents become markers of inclusion or exclusion within the dominant group. Drawing from Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist and anthropologist widely known for his contributions in mapping the intergenerational power dynamics in society, Lajoie argues that language is not a neutral instrument. Rather, it is very much inscribed within the dominant ideology of a nation (ibid). As such, Lajoie argues that language is used as a tool of inclusion and exclusion and that the French language is a strong instrument of social control (ibid).

In "Multilingual Montreal: Listening in on the Language Practices of Young Montrealers," Lamarre et al. takes on an ethnographic study of the linguistic practices of young Montrealers aged 18-35 years old, as they manoeuvre through the city. Through 190 in-situ observations over a period of eight months at various location in the city, Lamarre was able to paint a portrait of the linguistic exchanges occurring in their daily lives. As Lamarre argues, "bilingual exchanges often have nothing to do with the negotiation of language use but a great deal with having a foot in more than one culture" (Lamarre et al. 49). Conversations in traditionally Anglophone parts of town were heard in French, with a great deal of codeswitching between French and English (ibid). This ethnographic study points to an emerging change in linguistic relations in Montreal, where in-situ observations are often recorded in three languages. As Lamarre argues, "when we compare this relaxed attitude to the tensions often underlying language use in Montreal in the seventies, a major shift in the politics of language choice seems to have occurred" (Lamarre 66). The data resulting from their ethnographic study points to a shift from "one-way bilingualism," to a two-way bilingualism (Lamarre 67).

Media Review

In the following section, I will explore media texts that embrace a multilingual identity in Montréal. In the last twenty years, many Montrealers in the media industry have been pushing to reflect the diversified Montréal they know. This bilingualism is less focused on efforts of translation. Instead, these initiatives bring French, English and other communities together. Afterwards, I will elaborate on my decision to explore these ideas using interactive documentary, and the interactive documentaries that have informed my work.

In the last twenty years, many efforts have been placed into bringing two linguistic communities together in the comedy scene. Born of Irish descent in Quebec City, Mike Ward is a "pure-laine bicultural" (Kelly). Ward speaks of his dual identity, speaking English with his father and French with his mother, as though he had two-second languages (ibid). In 2013, he hosted *The Bilingual Show*, a Just for Laughs initiative that seeks to bring comics from both communities together. His bilingualism not only means he can target both communities, but furthermore, he can bring these two communities together, overcoming the two solitudes (MacLennan). Ward jokes of this dual-identity in his signature style that bridges dark humour with highly satirical political commentary. The success of these shows, often sold out within days, show that there is a need to create media texts that relate to both official languages. Successful "blockbuster" films like *Bon Cop, Bad Cop (2006)*, the highest-grossing film in the province of Quebec, effectively play on the cultural tropes between Francophones and Anglophones (Adams).

Sugar Sammy follows this same multilingual trend. He is one of the first generations to have experienced *la loi 101*. He performs in English, French, Hindi and Punjabi. His last bilingual show, *You're Going to Rire*, plays on the dual identity of the city. The promotional material for his show read "For Christmas, I'd like a complaint from the Office de la langue française," which he admittedly got. As he explains in an interview with The Washington Post, his comedy is largely shaped by his experience growing up amidst the 1995 referendum, following the remarks made by former Premier Parizeau, who claimed that they had lost because of ethnic votes (Izadi). He adds, "If I look around me, in my neighbourhood and in the city, there are a lot of people like me, but we didn't see that representation on television or in pop culture," (ibid). Because he has a foot in more than one culture, Sugar Sammy is able to address sensitive topics through his comedy, such as Québec nationalism, immigration, race and politics. Sugar Sammy goes beyond bilingualism and plays on the city's multicultural aspect as well. *Ces-gars*

là (2014), a show written and produced by Sugar Sammy, mixes French, English, Punjabi and Italian, to reflect the multicultural Montréal the show is set in.

Hybrid Quebecois Identity Through Rap Queb

Since the 1970s, following American hip-hop and rap influences, the presence of rap has proliferated very quickly in Quebec. According to l'ADISQ (Association Québécoise de l'industrie du disque), it is now the most popular musical genre amongst generation Y and millennials (Arbour-Masse). As Sarkar argues, "for a whole generation of young Quebeckers, the popularity of rap music combined with the consequences of Quebec's language policies is creating a new sociolinguistic and identity dynamic in the French-speaking world of Quebec'' (Sarkar "Ousqu'on Chill à Soir?" 31). Despite its popularity, rap still remains on the fringes of the Quebec music industry, since such linguistic mixing does not align with the CRTC's goal of promoting Francophone songs (Arbour-Masse).

Furthermore, Montréal rap bridges the languages of immigration with the linguistic policies of the province, which results in verses that mix French, English, Haitian Créole and Arabic. As Mela Sarkar argues, rap is a medium the youth use as a strategy for identity-building (Sarkar "Ousqu'on Chill à Soir?" 28). Furthermore, the repeated references and slang from other languages brought into most rapper's songs constitutes "name proclaiming," a strategy for identity construction that involves "performed acts" (Sarkar "Hybrid Identities" 121). These performed acts are understood as an "ongoing series of social and cultural performances rather than as the expression of a prior identity" (ibid). As such, these linguistic practices represent much more than a playful lyrical enhancer. They are a reflection of the third space that is created on the island on a daily basis. This places their linguistic practices on political ground; on the one hand, it does not respect the efforts of francization implemented by the government, and on the other, they further problematize the issue of franglais amongst language officials.

Challenging Monolingual Francophone Québec

The use of multiple languages in rap verses results in the creation of third space in which new conventions and identities are performed. Rap's constant reference to multiple territories or ethnicities, bridged with the plurilingual nature of their lyrics, results in third space that challenges the dominant Québécois narrative (Sarkar, "Hybrid Identities" 121). Following an

interculturalist mindset, identities should be constructed through a shared value of the French language. Language officials have long opposed codeswitching, especially when it pertains to English as it connotes a trend of assimilation towards the language of globalization (See Bock-Côté and Cornellier). Rappers use their platforms to challenge this idea of nationhood. When local rappers Dead Obies and Loud were invited on the set of *Tout le Monde en Parle*, a considerable amount of their interview was spent justifying their use of the English language in their lyrics. By challenging the idea of a French monolingual nation, young Montréal rappers are setting the stage for a narrative that extends the confines of the French language.

A large majority of young Montréalers, born of immigrant parents, must constantly prove to the province that they belong since they are constantly asked: "Where are you from?" Young Montréal rappers are in a position to challenge and shed light on these political and often tense contexts. As local rapper Wasiu writes in one of his verses on the track *la loi 101*:

The next best is from Québec
They say I ain't
Cu' my culture ain't the French Québ'
Like they ain't Québecois, bitches yellin' "kiet come on"
We that new generation, cool on get mamanw'

By mixing English and Haitian Créole, Waisu critiques the way he is seen as an outsider in his own province. "Québéquicité," a term coined by Mela Sarkar, refers to two main components that are often excluded from discussions of national identity in Quebec, mainly skin colour and accent (Sakar "Ousqu'on Chill à Soir?" 32). According to this concept, an individual possesses Québéquicité when he appears white and speaks with a Québécois accent (Sarkar "Ousqu'on Chill à Soir?" 33). Hip-hop and rap position themselves directly against this notion by creating a hybrid mixture of linguistic codes and by celebrating a multiethnic identity. Looking at identity construction through the lens of Québéquicité is helpful in understanding the process of inclusion/exclusion that occurs through the basis of determining who is 'pure-laine' or not.

Linguistic Identity in Linear Documentary

In the documentary scene, many recent films have addressed the language debate in the province. In *Quebec, Mon Country, Mon Pays (2016)*, John Walker returns to his hometown of Montréal to explore the aftermath of the Montreal exodus, where approximately 500,000 Anglophones left the city for Toronto starting in the 1970s, due to the election of the Parti Québécois and the language laws that followed. The documentary explores the two solitudes in Montréal by focusing on the exclusionary feelings of the Anglophone community following la *Charte de la langue française*. The film expresses the duality of both communities who feel like they are minorities. Denys Arcand articulates the Francophone fear of being a minority in a continent that is largely Anglophone. On the same note, a young Anglophone woman speaks of not being able to identify as Québécois. As a basis for identity, the documentary shows that language is not a sufficient marker of identity. At their core, both communities share the same fears of being a minority.

I Speak Français (2019) addresses the state of French amongst youth in the province's largest cities. While the documentary is largely focused on the status of French, it offers a glimpse into the reality of youth in Quebec who are far more detached from the notion of the English language as a form of cultural assimilation. This documentary is very involved in showing the importance of French in the province, above all else. It also shows a contrasting divide between interventions from older generations and interventions from younger participants. As Mathieu Bock-Côté and Denise Bombardier argue, the linguistic practices of today's youth, such as codeswitching or abbreviations are nothing less than trivial and reflect a lack of interest towards the preservation of the French language (I Speak Français). Bock-Coté speaks of an effect of *assimilation tranquille* [quiet assimilation], where young Francophone Quebecers would slowly lose touch with their mother-tongue (ibid). Through the use of surveys that asked 18-24-year old's a series of questions regarding their use of French, the documentary provides statistics that serve to back-up the interview segments. In Montréal, 90% of the youth surveyed said they were proud to be able to speak French and 59% said they used French only (I Speak Francais). These numbers suggest that the youth in Montréal are far less concerned with the notion of *assimilation tranquille*. Speaking multiple languages is seen as offering more opportunities rather than reinforcing the narrative of the French language as being in decline because of a spike in bilingualism. Through multiple interviews with youth around the province,

the documentary portrays a new generation that seeks to protect the French language, while acknowledging the benefits of being bilingual.

These examples point to a shift in linguistic relations in Montréal. Rappers, comedians and television shows are eager to represent the diverse linguistic practices that take place on the island. Mike Ward and Samir Khullar (Sugar Sammy) remind us that embracing our multilayered identities offers a chance to represent the diversity of Montréal, while rappers like Wasiu are not shy to point out the power dynamics that are present as a result of language legislation. In the next section, I will outline what brought me to the documentary format and the theoretical framework that informs my interactive documentary.

Documentary and Intermediality

Throughout my undergraduate degree, I completed production courses in Intermedia, which have allowed me to explore design, installations and animation. Dick Higgins, a co-founder of the Fluxus movement, coined the term "intermedia", in the mid 1960s in his Intermedia Manifesto. He used the term to describe the in-between spaces in media, where new forms of knowledge emerge. Works are intermedial insofar as they emerge from a fusion of two mediums. In other words, intermedia is not an art movement, but rather an instance "wherever the desire to fuse two or more existing media exists" (Higgins 53). By exploring Intermedia works inspired by the Fluxus movement, such as Yoko Ono's Cut Piece (1964) and Nam June Paik's video installations, I began to create work inspired by happenings and performance art. I created installations where users were invited to interact and engage with sound-based narratives. I created animations using various techniques and projected them in studio spaces. Towards the end of my undergraduate degree, I got the chance to work on a directed study where I learned more about the Klynt software and the possibilities of interactive documentary. Working with the software forced me to consider the affordances of nonlinear storytelling, which have informed my artistic practice since then. In the following years, whether through school projects or contractual work, I integrated nonlinearity to my projects. Interactive documentaries offer the possibility to apply intermedial strategies to the documentary format: to take a medium and to rethink its possibilities. I have always been fond of the documentary format and its ability to construct social reality. Having created many linear documentaries beforehand, I decided to explore nonlinear interactive documentaries through research-creation.

My creation process is framed through the lens of articulation theory as conceptualised by Jennifer Daryl Slack and John Macgregor Wise, and as applied to the medium of interactive documentary by Soar. Articulation theory does not rely on one single truth. Rather, the various articulations that come to create an assemblage act as building blocks which paint a larger narrative. This theory is essential for my documentary, as the individuals interviewed are not representative of one oversimplified reality. Each Montrealer has their own sets of struggles and achievements and manoeuvre the city in their own way. As such, it is of vital importance to note the fact that this collection of interviews is an invitation for further conversation, rather than a reflection of reality. Slack and Wise describe an articulation as 'the contingent connection of different elements that, when connected in a particular way, form a specific unity" (Slack and Wise 127). As such, an assemblage is a constellation of articulations, held together by "an intermingling of bodies, actions and passions" (Slack and Wise 129). By using a non-linear documentary structure, my interactive documentary allows for multiple narratives to build off of each other to create an assemblage of life in Montréal through the lens of young Montrealers (18-30 years old). By doing so, I am moving away from the conventional narrative arc generally offered by linear documentaries. Montréal is a set of assemblages where each individual has their own articulations that form their own experience of what Montréal is. My documentary is a larger assemblage, collecting the articulations of friends and peers in a single online space. By not having a single narrative, I am allowing for multiple points of view to overlap, contradict and relate to each other in the same categories. While the documentary has a curated timeline through the creation of distinct categories, viewers are free to interact with the clips as they please. They can skip, rewatch and disregard a category altogether. Ultimately, the viewer can decide to watch the piece in a linear fashion, starting from left to right as though they were reading the documentary, or simply navigate in a nonlinear fashion to the themes and individuals they wish to explore.

Third Space and Hybridity are concepts that are crucial in the exploration of colonized land. Montréal is especially complex in its exploration of national identity because of its complicated history of colonization, followed by the creation of a nation-state and the arrival of many immigrants from the 1980s onwards that come to form over one third of its population. Coined by postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, Third Space speaks to the "cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between spaces- that carries the burden of the meaning of

culture" (Bhabha 37). His concept of hybridity speaks to subjectivities that are able to traverse these cultures and do the work of translating and negotiating. In her own work, Sherry Simon leaves hybridity behind and instead focuses on the process of translating (Simon 9). By looking into translation practices, Simon argues that this tool allowed her to focus on cross-culture dialogue while also accounting for the times where encounters have failed (ibid). According to Bhabha, third space "displaces the histories that constitute it and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (Bhabha, 211). In Montréal, Third Spaces would historically be represented by streets such as Boulevard Saint-Laurent, that brought immigrants from different backgrounds together in the middle of the city, dividing the Francophone and Anglophone communities. Simon describes the neighbourhood she grew up in, that increasingly became a "contact zone" or a "buffer zone" as an example of third space (Simon "Translating Montreal" 8). Today, Third Space is created throughout the city, as new forms of meaning are created through the use of multiple linguistic codes. As such, Bhabha's Third Space is in a constant state of renegotiation, as linguistic practices are constantly evolving based on linguistic policy, immigration and culture.

Interactive Documentaries

Interactive and multilinear ways of telling stories or displaying work have been around since long before the internet. Choose your own adventure books became successful in the late 1970s and video console games began their meteoric rise in the 1980s. Coined by Theodor H. Nelson in 1965, hypertext refers to "a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways" (Nelson qtd in Tsay 451). As a precursor to interactive documentaries, hypertext focuses on the multilinear trajectory's readers can take through a piece. Similarly, Riccardo Ridi, a computer science and philosophy professor at the University of Venice has explored hypertext in its various forms from encyclopedia entries to multilinear online formats. He defines hypertext as "a document (or a set of documents) composed of several information units (called "nodes"), connected between them by links chosen a priori by those who produce the document itself (who select them among all logically possible links) and a posteriori by those who read the hypertext" (Ridi 393). As such, the viewer or reader decides for themselves which path to take, skip or revisit. Much like the choose your own adventure books, interactive

documentaries allow users to explore works by engaging with them rather than passively viewing them.

According to Hannah Brasier, “a person who interacts with a multilinear documentary by connecting video parts together via an interface contrasts to someone who watches a linear film unfold in accordance with an editor’s decision” (Brasier 29). This allows for the viewer to make connections between the clips they are presented with and to browse freely through the content. While interactive documentaries cannot remove the editor’s voice altogether, the multilinear form allows for a wider array of opinions to coexist. Without the burden of creating one cohesive narrative structure, multilinear forms allow for a wider array of opinions and themes to be explored within the same piece.

Rather than being an evolution of the documentary form, many scholars argue that we are instead witnessing a new art form. At the IDFA DocLab Conference in 2013, Tom Perlmutter, then head of the National Film Board of Canada, argued that interactive documentaries were a new art form (Aufderheide 71) In that year, the NFB had invested approximately 20 percent of its resources into the development of NFB Interactive (ibid). This collection now includes interactive documentaries, interactive games and stories and virtual reality. The NFB is now a world leader in this field alongside ARTE, the European cultural channel (Soar 155). Along with government funded institutions, interactive documentaries have been made more accessible with user-friendly software such as Klynt, Korsakow and Racontr, which allow individuals to create their own films.

I originally started this project not knowing if I was going to assemble the documentary in Klynt or Korsakow. Klynt allows for fixed curated paths that follow a given trajectory. Korsakow on the other hand relies on media linked through keywords called SNUS (Smallest Narrative Unit). The main difference between Korsakow and Klynt is that the former relies on dynamic paths while Klynt is based on predetermined closed paths. Due to the various topics covered in my interviews, I thought it would be best to choose Klynt. Certain topics might resonate with viewers more than others and I wanted to give viewers the possibility to watch only what they felt interpellated by. Choosing this platform meant that I had to sacrifice the dynamic characteristics of Korsakow in terms of the “moment of risk,” as Adrian Miles explains, of not knowing which SNU will come next or what the viewer will see (Mac). The type of interactivity that Klynt offers is what Sandra Gaudenzi, describes as “reactive” insomuch that it

relies on user interaction to click through the documentary within a fixed output (Gaudenzi 95). With Klynt, users click through a series of clips in a reactive trajectory.

The fragmented nature of cinema and interactive documentaries can be explained through what Adrian Miles describes as granularity. Granularity refers to the way in which self-contained units are pieced together to create a whole (Miles 69). In Miles's words, interactive documentaries face the problem of making "something whole from smaller fragmentary parts where, in both cases, these fragments are already whole" (ibid). How then, do these collections of videos relate to one another? In a traditional linear documentary, clips are arranged into a sequence and the viewer makes connections between the shots. Miles argues that in the context of interactive documentaries, viewers make sense between shots regardless of how they are arranged (Miles 70). This is due to the fact that interactive documentaries move away from the hard connections of linear documentaries and move towards soft connections that offer numerous paths (Miles 72).

Here at Home and Justice

I am greatly influenced by *Here at Home*, an interactive documentary created by Manfred Becker, Sarah Fortin, Darryl Nepinak, Louiselle Noël and Lynne Stopkewich. This documentary explores homelessness in Canada by following the social workers of the At Home project that seeks to end chronic homelessness in Canada (NFB, Here at Home). The project set out five crews to document the work of At Home in Canada's five trial cities (ibid). Rather than being a traditional map, the provinces are dispersed throughout the interface with various colourful articulations emanating from them, representing the interconnectedness of the work At Home does. The clips range from 3-5 minutes and accompany a social worker and the various individuals who benefit from the At Home program. The clips are self-contained and do not require for the viewer to view all 10. Three semi-circles are placed at the bottom and allow viewers to cycle through the map with the videos, a page with statistics from the project and the backstory.

Instead of displaying the interviews on a map, the home background in this documentary is a series of interconnected constellations. The articulations between the interviews allows for the viewer to understand that all of these narratives are related to one another, yet do not follow a linear trajectory. As such, the interface parallels articulation theory, as described by Jennifer

Slack and J. Macgregor Wise. Through various points of connection, the interface forms an assemblage. Articulation theory rejects the notion of a singular truth or fixed entity. Due to the contingent nature of articulations, an assemblage is always subject to rearticulation and disarticulation (Slack, Wise 128). Therefore, interactive documentaries offer the possibility of creating new meaning through the rejection of a singular narrative trope or storyline. In Making (with) the Korsakow System, Soar explains that this rejection of one narrative trajectory "implies that linear storytelling is, per Slack and Wise's (2005) broader argument about the relationship between technology and culture, mechanistic as a process and deterministic in terms of its attempts to represent 'lived reality'" (Soar 168). Furthermore, Sandra Gaudenzi argues that "interactive documentaries are relational artefacts that allow direct engagement with the reality that they portray - and that therefore create new epistemologies" (Gaudenzi 37). Thus, interactive documentaries, through their multilinearity, offer "affective narratives" by offering a collection of media texts instead of building one main argument (Soar 161).

Justice (2016) created with Télé-Québec depicts the lives of individuals who have experienced prison. The interactive film starts with a questionnaire that users must complete before getting to the film. With a slider, you are asked whether you agree or not with a given statement. The questions include: I would be willing to volunteer my time in order to help a sexual offender in the process of rehabilitation, detainees take it easy at our expense or victims have the social responsibility of denouncing their aggressors. After giving your answer, your answer is compared to statistics showing how the rest of the population feels towards the question. The film offers multiple ways through. You can either select from three initial interviews, or you can click on the "Face-à-Face" link at the bottom, which takes you to a collection of all of the interviews. Each interview is shot in the same studio environment, with soft lighting and a shallow depth of field. Shot in a medium-wide frame, with occasional close-ups, the interviews offer a personal and intimate experience with each participant. I took a similar approach in framing my interviewees, opting for medium shots and close-ups. At the end of each segment, the viewer is presented with either three follow-up questions or the option to change participant. The experience puts the viewer in the position of the interviewer, dictating what the interviewee will respond to. Since I took a much more participatory approach, I had not asked the same set of questions to all of my interviewees. Instead of focusing on reiterating the

same questions, I approached the interface with subthemes, which led certain interviews to coexist in the same category, despite not asking them the same question.

Methodology

This research-creation project utilizes what Chapman and Sawchuk describe as "research-for-creation" (Chapman, Sawchuk 15). The storyboarding, the interview process and the additional filming are all part of the gathering process, that Chapman and Sawchuk equate to the same title as traditional research (reading academic articles and finding key references, etc.) (ibid). This process works "towards a future "revealing," enabled through an artistic perception of technology as a practice or craft" (ibid). In my case, the artistic vision is an interactive documentary that results from the interviews I have conducted. It is a method that allows for experimentation with lots of room for trial and error. This experimentation took place by having friends assist in shoots and participating in the filming or sound recording of the interviews.

In order to recruit participants, I created the following guidelines: My interviewees had to be either born in Montréal or lived the majority of their lives in Montréal. They had to be between 18-34 years old (Generation Y or Millennial). I selected three interviewees to begin the process and made sure I had a diverse pool, to begin with (Francophone/Anglophone/BIPOC/LGTBQ+, etc.). I let the recruitment process come organically, focusing less on obtaining certain demographics and more on securing interesting individuals. As a maker, it was important for me to be in conversation with the individuals that would be included in my documentary. I asked each interviewee to choose the location they felt best represented them or that they felt most comfortable in. Afterwards, each interviewee was sent an interview rough cut that they could comment on.

It was important for me to move beyond my own conception of what Montréal is in order to let my interviewees tell me themselves. Initially, I was focusing on addressing the language wars in Montréal. After a few interviews, I realized not many people knew what the language wars referred to and a handful of interviewees required a quick definition when I spoke of the two solitudes. I decided to move away from the military language and speak to linguistic tensions instead. I asked questions such as: what does it mean to be a Montrealer to you? How would you describe your childhood growing up? Why is the location you chose significant to you? My interviews would last between 20-45 minutes. I had also asked each participant to

choose a location that represented them or that they felt most comfortable in. I decided to do this for two reasons: to ease the interviewees and to visually reflect Montréal in the aesthetics of my shots, rather than being in a studio space. Some participants opted for simplicity and comfort, inviting me into their homes. Others were set on a particular outdoor location and chose to brave the cold in order to occupy their chosen space.

In order to branch out, I used the snowball method. The snowball method consists of taking one contact and asking for referrals and moving forward with these strings of contacts (thus mimicking a snowball effect). I started off with three initial interviewees and through word of mouth, many people in my network reached out to participate. As such, the entire process was less of a clean triangulation of contacts, but rather a messy string of friends of friends. Due to the small pool of interviewees, I stayed relatively close to my network of friends. There was only one interview I conducted whom I had never met before. Friendship thus became a vital component of the way I conducted the interviews for this research. Borrowing from Lisa H. Tillman's work on Friendship as Method, my interview process became much more geared towards interactive interviewing (Tillman 733). Interactive interviewing requires "intense collaboration, and privileges lived, emotional experience" (ibid). Friends were both interviewed and helped with the technical aspects of the production, assisting other shoots when their schedule permitted. They became involved in the creation, by offering support, feedback and assistance. I was able to get a unique perspective on the work I was doing by allowing others to chime in. During the interviews where I had a friend help out, they would often ask their own questions to the person being interviewed based on their own experience of having been interviewed beforehand.

Working without a set crew meant I had to assume the many different roles of production. This means I was at once the interviewer, the sound person and the camera operator. On certain shoots, I had friends help with the filming process, which meant that I could devote more of my attention to the interview itself and building rapport with the interviewees. Other times, I had to juggle the various steps of production with the responsibility of creating a safe interview space. No matter how prepared you are in these situations, there are certain things you cannot prepare for. During the shoot with Turell, it was so cold that the camera and the Roland froze and shut off at different times, which left me with incredible answers but no accompanying footage. The creative process involved in creating a piece like this is unpredictable, hence the

importance of being open to new directions and artistic avenues. In this case, a quick use of B-roll allowed me to use Turell's answer in order to include it in the documentary.

Discussion: Moving Through the City

Despite its reputation for inclusivity, in terms of its geography, Montréal is still a divided city, with a majority of Anglophones residing in the West and a majority of Francophones occupying the East (Simon, "Translating Montreal" 12). Boulevard Saint-Laurent, was once hailed as the third space of Montréal due to its high concentration of immigrant populations which acted as a buffer, demarcating the boundaries between the two solitudes (Simon "Translating Montreal" 7). The dichotomy between East and West is significantly less pronounced than it was during previous generations. As Germain and Rose argue, these divisions are constantly changing as a result of a decline in the Anglophone population and the diversification of immigration which result in a more diversified ethnocultural heterogeneity throughout Montréal (Germain, Rose 215).

Young bilingual Montrealers define the way they move through space according to an unspoken rule of adaptability—one which requires an adjustment of linguistic codes on an interaction-by-interaction basis. Historically, crossing over "the Main" meant the possibility of confronting tension, being othered, or encountering what Karl Stern describes as "frontiers of distrust" (Simon "Crossing Town" 16). As far back as the 1950s, researchers have been exploring this phenomenon; Sherry Simon investigated it while traversing her Anglophone Yiddish community to the East End of Montréal in the 1950s. More recently, André Carpentier captured these translation practices by moving through Montréal's alleyways in the early 2000s for his book *Ruelles, jours ouvrables*. Nowadays, although the city is still somewhat divided linguistically, young Montrealers navigate the space with great ease.

Discussion: Protection of the French Language

For others, codeswitching between multiple languages is merely an annoyance and is viewed as evidence that the offender has not mastered their mother-tongue. It is perhaps an outdated mentality, one echoed in Marc Cassivi's essay "Mauvaise Langue," in which he argues against the negative connotations unfairly attributed to Frenglish. Frenglish is still seen as a form of assimilation to the English language by many Francophone individuals (Cassivi 11). The fear of

"assimilation tranquille'' [quiet assimilation], an anxiety surrounding the decline of the French in favour of English culture, is still present in a number of Francophone communities, especially in the rest of the province. Showcasing one's bilingualism through codeswitching is seen as a negative factor in the face of protecting the French language. Following this line of thought, those who fear an ongoing *assimilation tranquille* argue that each language has its appropriate context and in Quebec, that means that the majority of interactions in public spaces should occur solely in French.

The protection of the French language continues to be a highly discussed topic throughout the entire province. Due to its diversity, Montréal is seen as a problem zone, where efforts of francization and the maintenance of French within Francophone communities is contested. As such, critics of "le parler Montréalais," often criticize instances of codeswitching, mainly within Frenglish and other linguistic variants. For previous generations, the emphasis was on the protection of the French language, particularly during the referendums. Younger Montrealers do not feel the same urgency to protect laws such as *la loi 101* in efforts to protect the French language. In a study on language conducted in the province amongst 18-24 year olds, 91% said they would like to modify *la loi 101* so that they could attend school in English (I Speak Français 2019).

Production: Archiving Identity

Identity is in a constant state of flux, and as such, the interviews I conducted act as an archive of each interviewees sense of self at that specific moment. In *Showing Lived Experience and Community Narratives* Susan Gair and Arielle van Luyn note that "participants' stories, and their sense of identity, may change over time, in turn changing their narratives (Thomson qtd. In Gair and Luyn, 3). Asking the question 'what does it mean to be a Montrealer' is very much tied to the interviewee's state of mind on that given day, their experiences and current events. I learned this reality at the very beginning of the project. I first interviewed my brother and discovered that he was very comfortable in front of the camera. Before doing the interview, we stumbled on a second hand store that had vintage crewnecks my brother loves to wear. He got two crewnecks and was feeling very happy about his purchase. During the interview, he gave honest answers and appeared genuine on camera. Due to technical issues, the sound quality was very poor, so I asked him for a second interview. Before this interview, the weather was much colder, and he

had had a long week. He was a lot more tense, giving me one-worded answers and often contradicting what he had said in the first interview. Of course, I was also dealing with research with a family member, which can add another layer of complication due to the blurring of the sister/researcher relationship. I then learned the importance of spending time with my interviewees before the interview, to ease whatever tensions they may be experiencing. This manifested itself in simple things like drinking a quick coffee before the interview and chatting casually or by watching an episode of *The Office* before getting started.

Post production: Editing

After each interview, I laid out the footage in Premiere and isolated the best answers. Each interview was broken down into a 3-4-minute lineup. In most cases, I did not have enough b-roll to move away from a "talking head" interview style. I also had difficulty creating seamless cuts, as I tried to stay away from jump cuts. For a long time, I was set on creating and editing 13 interviews that could be viewed in a nonlinear fashion. It was only when I went back to my Premiere files that I realized that I had many excellent unused interview answers that I hadn't included because I lacked the necessary b-roll to create a smooth transition. I had been so fixated on creating 3-minute cuts (due to the short attention span of most internet users) that I had disregarded lots of good material. The original templates I was developing weren't making full use of the affordances of interactive platforms and were instead creating a linear trajectory within an interactive platform.

Interface Process

The template above offered no contextualization for the videos. As argued by Nunkoosing, “the reader has to make his or her own sense of the often-decontextualized fragments of the interview that the researcher constructs as his or her narrative of research” (Nunkoosing 699). In this case, the viewer must make sense of the videos presented. They are decontextualized from the initial moment where the interaction occurred and mediated through the interactive documentary. When I first moved away from the chronological number sequence, I had created three categories: Identity Belonging and Tensions. While these all spoke to the overall interviews I conducted, they did not provide enough contextual grounding to complicate that narrative. I added 9 more subthemes to these themes, allowing for each theme to contradict or build off the previous. Each category contains at least 3-5 videos.

Many interactive documentaries include the option to view a map in order to situate viewers. While abstract in its composition, *Here at Home* includes a vague reference to the geographic makeup of Canada. Other documentaries such as *Gaza:Sderot* offer the possibility of viewing the two cities side by side in a separate category. Aesthetically, I decided to move away from representations of maps. As Lamarre argues, Montréal is still divided geographically (Lamarre 53). What separates my generation from the past is our ability to maneuver the entire island with ease. As such, displaying my participants on a map might reinforce a divide, as the locations chosen by each participant reinforces the East/West linguistic duality. By separating each interview into categories, I was able to overcome this geographic divide and juxtapose perspectives from different parts of the city, and consequently, different linguistic communities.

Conclusion

Creating this documentary was both a challenge to myself and a way to explore the complex linguistic situation my generation finds itself in. It was a way for me to understand and explore my dual identity and to see how others were negotiating their multifaceted identities. Through this project, I discovered the way language acts as an instrument of power in a province like Québec and how linguistic codes can serve as exclusionary measures. As much as language can be used creatively, it can also be used to designate who belongs and who doesn't.

Conducting this research has made me rethink the notion of Francophone and Anglophone. In an age where we are increasingly more multilingual, having to identify as one over the other seems reductive. As many of my interviewees mention, language choice is often

as banal as how they feel on a given day. Choosing one over the other seems to have political resonance with previous struggles that still linger today. As Lamarre argues, changing the identity markers in our city would be beneficial in order to account for the often bicultural or multicultural identities of the new generation (Lamarre 51). While Québec is tied up in linguistic debates to preserve its language, we are not addressing the linguistic practices of an entire generation that is making use of the city's multicultural makeup.

Production

My documentary does not seek one particular truth and it does not aim to represent an entire generation. Rather, I situate my documentary as an intervention in a large conversation. As such, Chapman and Sawchuk further argue, "research-creation partakes of the spectacle of the work of art and its demonstration of alternative frameworks for understanding, communicating, and disseminating knowledge" (ibid). This project could have been a research-paper, a podcast, a Youtube playlist, etc. However, through the creation of a non-linear documentary, I have been able to construct a more complex narrative than might otherwise have been possible; one that is sensitive to the nuances of contemporary linguistic and cultural identity in Montreal.

Project Limitations

In a context where First Nations are fighting for language recognition in their own territory, such conversations would have enriched the overall piece. While this gesture is definitely not

enough, I made a conscious effort to include Indigenous art when designing the interface. Throughout the different categories, I have included two different murals by Indigenous artists. As such, *Hommage à Alanis Obomsawin* by Meky Ottawa and the Saint-Henri mural painted by Cedar Eve Peters during her solo exhibition Unceded Voices: Anticolonial Street Artists Convergence in 2017 are a visual reminder of the importance of Indigenous voices in Tiohtiá:ke/Montréal.

While I attempted to gather different Montrealers from various backgrounds, the majority of my interviewees were very educated (Cégep and University). Millennials who have chosen a different path and who have been in the workforce for a longer period of time might have had a different perspective. Many anecdotes that emerged from my documentary occurred in the service industry (working in café's) in the context of student jobs. The service industry calls for individuals to be in constant contact with customers, and as such, there are more opportunities for linguistic slip ups to occur. In my own experience working in retail, a large rush of customers often means your attention is divided and accidentally speaking the wrong language to the wrong customer can often mean losing a sale or creating tension. In an office setting, these linguistic realities are still present, but they present themselves in different ways; in lunchroom conversations and in the subtleties of office relations. A larger number of interviewees would mean that I would have access to different workplace related incidents. Perhaps if I had not used the snowball method, I would have been able to branch out of my immediate network, which is largely composed of students, working in the service industry.

With such a small pool of interviewees, this project situates itself as an invitation for conversation, rather than seeking to make conclusions. As Vaughan explains of the research and creation process, my project is not so much situated in "creating new knowledge and more as calling forth, pulling together and arranging the multiplicities of knowledges embedded within" (Vaughan 170). Through its circulation online, I hope it sparks further debate and that it inspires other Montrealers to have these discussions.

Further Research

A more representative study might include a sample pool of individuals from the 19 neighbourhoods throughout the city. By conducting an ethnographic study following individuals throughout their day, the nuances and their linguistic practices would emerge on a more fluid

level. It is one thing to talk about language and to talk about codeswitching, but it will never account to witnessing it in daily interactions.

Conducting research within the context of my generation made sense in terms of scope for my project, but a more inclusive intergenerational perspective would allow for a more nuanced account of linguistic identity to emerge. Putting different groups of individuals from various backgrounds (such as neighbourhood or age) in conversation might offer an opportunity to bridge generational incomprehension. As portrayed in the documentary *I Speak Francais*, many older individuals seem to regard codeswitching and abbreviations as a catastrophe and a decline in the quality of language. However, this view of older generations regarding language mixing as a negative experience is only a reflection of certain mentalities. Over the last year and a half, I have had the opportunity to talk about my project with many individuals in the city and found that these multilingual practices were experienced by a number of Montrealers, regardless of age. As such, a more comprehensive study might be able to capture intergenerational codeswitching and reveal how these linguistic practices evolve over time.

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