Cinematic Voyages: Québécois Transnational Filmmaking and Cuban Domesticity

Darien Sánchez-Nicolás

A Thesis

In

The Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Film and Moving Image Studies) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2022

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Darien Sánchez-Nicolás

Entitled: Cinematic Voyages: Québécois Transnational Filmmaking and Cuban Domesticity

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor Of Philosophy (Film and Moving Image Studies)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

_____ Chair
Dr. Johanne Sloan

_____ External Examiner
Dr. Zaira Zarza

_____ Examiner
Dr. Laura-Zoe Humphreys

_____ Examiner
Dr. Haidee Wasson

_____ Examiner
Dr. Charles Acland

_____ Thesis Supervisor
Dr. Masha Salazkina

Approved by _____
Dr. Joshua Neves, Graduate Program Director

11/28/2022 _____
Dr. Annie Gérin, Dean
Faculty of Fine Arts

ABSTRACT

Cinematic Voyages: Québécois Transnational Filmmaking and Cuban Domesticity

Darien Sánchez-Nicolás, PhD

Concordia University, 2022

This dissertation follows scholarship on transnational film studies, tourism studies, and film and media ethnography to examine Québécois feature films that directly address the issue of international tourism to the island while proposing alternatives to both translocal filmmaking and touristic practices. I investigate the involvement of domestic hospitality businesses in Cuba (*paladares*, private restaurants located in family households, and *casas particulares*, bed-and-breakfast-type hostels) as unofficial partners in transnational film productions between Québec and Cuba, namely in the films *All you can eat Buddha* (Ian Lagarde, 2017), *Cuba Merci Gracias* (Alex B. Martin, 2018) and *Sur les toits Havane* (Pedro Ruiz, 2019). I contend that these films constitute cinematic voyages, i.e., the intuitive application of entrepreneurial tactics to leisure and cultural travels, personal affective relations, and domestic spaces and activities in Cuba towards the completion of independent transnational film projects.

Each chapter foregrounds Cuban domesticity in the different capacities it interacts with foreign film and media productions originating from Québec. The first chapter traces the antecedents of these practices and how domesticity appears as an infrastructure and thematic preoccupation that propitiates grassroots forms of cultural diplomacy based predominantly on the creative labor of migrant women. The second chapter examines the flexibility of *casas particulares* in Cuba as they develop skills, adapt their spaces, and employ local knowledges and workforces to meet the needs of foreign film enterprises. This flexibility results from performing multiple gestures of transborder and transcultural, gendered identifications, acts of solidarity and material care between otherwise unrelated laboring subjects working on location. In the third chapter, I analyze a Québécois road movie and how it turns the domestic into a gendered transnational social space with a matrifocal character. The fourth chapter argues that the process of Latinx-Québécois transnational filmmaking exists in a continuum with the spectral position imposed by the Cuban socialist regime on homosexual identities, transcultural/multiracial affective and sexual arrangements, private tourism venues, and para-legal domestic practices. I contend that latinidad/latinité in Québec and queer/alternative domesticities in Cuba appear as translocal objects negotiated and refashioned through a distinctive Afro-Queer-Caribbean positionality against their respective hostile environments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by acknowledging that this dissertation was written on unceded indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters of what is Tiohtià:ke/Montréal, a place where I have lived as an exiled, a student, and an immigrant for the past seven years.

I would like to thank Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Santa Barbara, San Antonio de Padua, and Nuestra Señora, la Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre for the strength, the peace, the love, and the health I have enjoyed during these years. Here in Québec, I may have lost the rituals and the religious community but not the faith. I also want to acknowledge the benevolent presence of my late abuela Elisa. Your memory and love have always been there since the day you left us; your unfaltering faith and courage in the face of adversity will always be an inspiration. ¡Te quiero mucho, mi abue! Thank you for their blessings, and their prayers to all my benevolent dearly departed. Your spirits and memories are always with me.

Although a product of solitary intellectual work, this thesis is also the result of countless gestures of care, communal solidarity, and friendship. The old adage states that it takes a village to raise a child. I would add to that that it also takes a community to obtain a doctoral degree.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor Masha Salazkina for her compelling direction, her pertinent comments, generous support, and the "tough love" when it was necessary. Thanks to her I have had complete freedom to shape and reshape my projects and ideas, while she offered her measured guidance and insights. Also thank you Masha for having the courage to frankly discuss with me the real dangers that mental health can pose to our intellectual work. I was able to take care of myself thanks to your words and share those insights with others.

I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to the members of my examining committee. LZ Humphreys, you have been dubbed by me in several instances "mi tutora en la distancia" and you have been that in many ways. You have always shown enthusiasm for what I do, and you have always offered encouragement and enlightenment. Thanks to Haidee Wasson, whose classes and seminars helped me find more creative ways of thinking about Film Studies. It was thanks to your "special objects" exercise that I realized I was allowed to talk about the odd subjects I analyze. Thanks to Charles Acland for his suggestions and comments while I was coming up with the initial project of this research. Also, thanks to Zaira Zarza for taking the time to read and evaluate this thesis and Joshua Neves, for reading my comprehensive exams, offering his advice, and providing me with research opportunities.

In Concordia University I would like to thank Luca Caminati. His PhD seminar was always challenging and very entertaining, a difficult balance to find in an academic setting. Rossanna Maule confirmed my belief that teaching can be the ultimate gesture of kindness and generosity. Thank you for your mentoring. Thanks also to the administrative staff in the Cinema Department, all present and past. Their help and work are the cornerstones of our success. When it comes to organizations: thanks to the wonderful staff of the Cuban Heritage Collection of the University of Miami. I must also acknowledge the financial support provided by the Fondation J.A. De Sève,

Concordia University, the Fonds de Recherche du Québec Société-Culture (FRQSC), and MITACS.

In a more personal note, I would be remiss if I didn't thank profoundly and truthfully my "chica" Tess McClernon, and Stephan Boman. You and the kitties have been more than just friends; you are like family to me and Booboo. Thank you for caring for us and loving us. If my life has been anything near "fabulous" throughout this process it was thanks to you. "Straight down the line" I just want to be "stuck in a personal elevator" with you guys! Thanks to Alfredo González Parra who supported me, nursed me, and wiped my tears from a distance. ¡Gracias Alfre! You helped me get out of bed and find the will to live and fight for me and for those around me when I was ready to tap out. Thanks to Ian Miralles who literally flew me out of Mexico to come here. We will always walk together. Thanks to my friends in exile Juan Luis García, Ernesto Fundora, and Diana Sainz Camayd for always "being there" in some way. A mi "banda Latinx", mis hermanes Analays Álvarez, Ximena Holuigue, Alejandro Valbuena, gracias a todes por ayudarme a descubrir un hogar cubano en esta otra isla. To my "perre" Ful Massimi, Philipp Dominik Keidl, Beatriz Bartolomé Herrera, Ylenia Olibet, Lola Remy, Edo Ernst, thank you all for the friendship, the laughs, and the company. *Kwa dadangu, rafiki yangu na mshauri Jamie Thomas: ni na utakuwa msukumo daima.*

A very special thank you to my friend and colleague Bradley Goerne for shaping up my "Hispanic-Franco-English" into something that I hope could pass as competent English writing. Thanks to Maya Wilson-Sánchez and Mariana Olaiz Ochoa for their editing advice. Thanks to many other colleagues and classmates that have shared sources, comments — sometimes beers and meals too– with me over the years: Enrique Fibla, Zach Melzer, Sima Kokotovic, Ilona Jurkonyte, Claire Elizabeth Begbie, Geneviève Dorais, and Anna Cristina Pertierra. To all the persons who made time in their lives and professional careers to help me with this research project: Ian Lagarde, Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, Pedro Ruiz, Arantza Maldonado, Alex B. Martin, Ernesto Leyva, Lis Silva, Onelio Larralde, Raquel Crespo, Verónica Sedano, and Teresa Hernández. To the LatinArte Foundation, the Université de Montréal, and the General Consulate of México in Montréal, thank you for the professional opportunities I have been offered.

To all the homes and families that have been my own during years of exile: in México my heart will always be with Juan Guillermo Ley Bernaus, Horacio Valdez, and Pilar Clarisa Espinosa de los Monteros "mis padres adoptivos mexicanos". ¡Gracias y bendiciones siempre! Au Québec: mille fois merci au clan Leblanc au complet. À Isabelle, Philippe, les enfants, Réjeanne LeBlanc, Denis Tanguay et la famille Tanguay; à Kenza, Roch et Ambre; à Marie-Laurence, Maxime et leurs petites filles; à Hubert, Marie-Hélène et leurs enfants; à Louise, Pierre, Francine, Dina et Foxy; à Jérôme et Kateri: Merci à vous tous de nous avoir fait sentir, à moi et à Booboo, que nous rentrions à la maison et que nous ne faisions pas que passer par ici sans laisser de traces. À toi Martin Tanguay, pour le petit abri de bonheur et d'amour que nous avons construit ensemble avec Booboo. " *Tu as embelli ma vie !* "

Finally, for their incommensurable love, support, and care to my parents Yara Nicolás and Rolando Sánchez, to my sister Daunelys, and my nephew Marcos, whom I have seen grow up through digital screens, to Booboo, my more-than-human partner in this adventure: Thank you!

Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... **VII**

INTRODUCTION **1**

PROVOCATIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW ON FILM AND TOURISM 1
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS 12
METHODOLOGY 18
CHAPTERS OVERVIEW 22

CHAPTER ONE – CONTOURS OF QUÉBEC-CUBA RELATIONS: TRANSNATIONALISM FROM BELOW AND DOMESTICITY **28**

1.1 HUMAN MOBILITY BETWEEN QUÉBEC AND CUBA: HISTORICAL CONFIGURATIONS OF QUÉBÉCOIS-CUBAN CONTACTS 36
1.2 ECONOMIC RELATIONS: "FROM ABOVE" AND "FROM BELOW" 40
1.3 CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: CRAFTING AND RECOGNIZING A NATION BETWEEN CUBA AND QUÉBEC 44
1.3.1 Islas Cultura: Latinx Women's Cultural Work and Cuban Domesticity as Infrastructure *47*
1.4 CONCLUSIONS 62

CHAPTER TWO – CINEMATIC VOYAGE 1: *ALL YOU CAN EAT BUDDHA* BY IAN LAGARDE **65**

2.1 PLAY AND *CHOTEO* IN MEDIA HETEROTOPIAS 82
2.2 DOMESTICITY IN CUBA AND THE "GREENFIELD LOCATION" 94
2.3 CONCLUSIONS 113

CHAPTER THREE – CINEMATIC VOYAGE 2: *CUBA MERCI GRACIAS* BY ALEX B. MARTIN **116**

3.1 ON THE NATURE OF MOVEMENT: A ROAD-MOVIE FROM QUÉBEC TO CUBA 122
3.2 QUÉBÉCOIS "GOING HOME" TO CUBA: NAVIGATING DOMESTICITY, COMMUNAL DESIRES, AND THE TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL SPACE OF GENDER 132
3.3 CONCLUSIONS 148

CHAPTER FOUR – *"¡LUZ!":* VISUALIZING ALTERNATIVE DOMESTICITIES, QUEERNESS AND *LATINIDAD* THROUGH CUBA-QUÉBEC CINEMATIC TRANSNATIONALISM **150**

4.1 SUR LES TOITS HAVANE BY PEDRO RUIZ 150
4.2 LIVING IN *LA AZOTEA*, LIVING IN THE CLOSET, LIVING IN CUBA: ALTERNATIVE DOMESTICITY, GENDER, SEXUAL IDENTITY, AND CITIZENSHIP 168
4.3 *LATINIDAD*/*LATINITÉ*: TRANSNATIONAL LATINX FILM PRODUCTION AND THE CARIBBEAN REMAKING OF LATINX IDENTITY BETWEEN CUBA AND QUÉBEC 186
4.4 *DERRIDA DE PASO POR EL TRÓPICO*: A HAUNTOLOGICAL CODA FOR HAVANA 212
4.5 CONCLUSIONS 233

FINAL REMARKS: THE VOYAGES TO COME **235**

REFERENCES **240**

WORKS CITED 240
FILMS CITED 272

List of Abbreviations

AmDocs: American Documentary Film Festival
BQLH: *Bureau du Québec à la Havane* (Bureau of Québec in Havana) *
CALQ: *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec* (Council for the Arts and Letters of Québec)
CAM: *Conseil des Arts de Montréal* (Council for the Arts of Montreal)
CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CCA: Canada Council for the Arts (CAC in French)
CCICC: *Chambre de commerce et d'industrie Canada-Cuba* (Chamber of Commerce and Industry Canada-Cuba)
CEDAV: *Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales* (Centre for the Development of Visual Arts)
CENSA: *Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria* (National Center for Animal and Plant Health)
CGI: computer-generated imagery
CLFF: Chicago Latino Film Festival
DGQM: *Délégation Générale du Québec au Méxique* (Québec's General Delegation in Mexico)
ECC / **ECF**: Engage Cuba Coalition / Engage Cuba Foundation
ENA: *Escuela Nacional de Artes* (National School of Arts)
FICCI: *Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena de Indias* (International Film Festival of Cartagena de Indias)
FICG: Festival Internacional de Cine de Guadalajara (International Film Festival of Guadalajara)
FLQ: *Front de Libération du Québec*
FNCL: *Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano* (Foundation of the New Latin American Cinema)
GIV*: Groupe Intervention Vidéo*
ICAIC: *Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos* (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry)
INIS: *Institute National de l'image et du son* (National Institute of Image and Sound)
ISA: *Instituto Superior de Arte* (Higher Institute of Arts)
MHSOC: Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema
MINCEX: *Ministerio del Comercio Exterior y la Inversión Extranjera* (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment)
MINCOM: Ministerio de Comunicaciones (Ministry of Communications)
MINFAR: Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas (Ministry of the Armed Forces)
MININT: *Ministerio del Interior* (Ministry of the Interior)
MINTUR: *Ministerio de Turismo* (Ministry of Tourism)
MRFI: *Ministère des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie* (Ministry of International Relations and the Francophonie)
OHCH: *Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de la Habana* (Office of the Historian of Havana City)
OIF: *Organisation internationale de la francophonie* (International Organization of *La Francophonie*)
ONEI: *Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información* (National Bureau of Statistics and Information)
ONF/**NFB**: *Office National du Film* / National Film Board

RIDM: *Rencontres Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal* (Montreal International Documentary Festival)
SODEC: *Société de development des entreprises culturelles* (Society for the Development of Cultural Enterprises)
UH: Universidad de La Habana (University of Havana)
UQÀM: Université du Québec à Montréal (University of Québec in Montreal)

***** All translations from French and Spanish to English were done by the author. In the case of institutional names, I have privileged literal translations as much as possible. When translating interlocutor's statements, as well as written sources in French and Spanish, less strict forms of translation were employed. In all cases both the original Spanish and French were kept accompanied by their English translations. French and Spanish spelling and accents have also been maintained all throughout.

Introduction

Provocations and Literature Review on Film and Tourism

July 2020. SARS-CoV 19 gave us all in Québec the brief illusion of having a normal summer, despite draconian measures of national and provincial border control, regulated movements, mandatory masks everywhere, and early discussions about vaccination mandates. Faced with the impossibility of travelling to the US, to Europe, or to South America, like most Québécois do during their summer holidays, thousands flocked to the shoreline of the Gaspésie. Most of them didn't have reservations. There were a few who had a roof over their heads thanks to their recreational motorhomes (RVs). Still, with overbooked and overcrowded camping sites, they parked in the streets of small cities like Gaspé, Percé, Bonaventure, and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, upsetting locals and other tourists alike, collapsing (read here also monopolizing) public infrastructures and leaving uncontrollable waves of waste behind them. The uncontainable situation was widely publicized by francophone media. From *La Presse* to *Le Devoir* to celebrity tabloids like *Monde de stars*, they all relayed the desperate calls of Mayor Daniel Côté to Québécois travelers to be more careful while visiting the region and to be mindful how they treated residents and the natural resources of the place. In his most drastic statements, he suggested they just stay away if no travel preparations had been made before. "*C'est le bordel!*" (This is a mess!) cried a desperate Mayor Côté, "*Le territoire a été envahi par une horde de visiteurs (...) [qui] accapar[ent] le territoire. Ils sont partout, partout, partout*." [The territory has been invaded by a horde of visitors (...) [who] take over the area. They are everywhere, everywhere, everywhere.] (qt. in Teisseira-Lesard 2020)

A recurring issue in the public debate that followed these events were the words of public counselor and journalist Antoine Favreau. In a Facebook post that quickly became a talking point

and recurring citation in mainstream journals and tabloids, Favreau offered his compatriots some succinct guidelines on how to be a good tourist in Gaspésie: pick up your after yourself, be respectful of the region and its inhabitants, take the time to breath and take in the scenery, don't rush your trip as if it were an official presidential visit calculated to the nano-second. This tetralogue came with a preamble:

> *Depuis quelques jours, je vois ces publications d'organismes touristiques, de certaines municipalités et de campings qui enjoignent les touristes à faire preuve de civisme et de civilité. Des déchets jonchent les plages et les aires de camping.*
> *Ça me fait mal.*
> *J'ai honte.*
> *La Gaspésie, c'est une nature intouchée et des humains chaleureux.* ***Ce n'est pas votre 3 étoiles à Cayo Coco.*** *C'est notre perle nationale. Y manquer de respect, c'est se manquer de respect à nous-mêmes.*
>
> For the past few days, I've been seeing these publications from tourism organizations, some municipalities and campgrounds urging tourists to be civic-minded and civilized. Trash is littering the beaches and camping areas.
> It hurts me.
> I am ashamed.
> Gaspésie is an untouched nature and warm humans. *This is not your 3 stars in Cayo Coco*. It is our national pearl. To disrespect it is to disrespect ourselves. (Favreau 2020, emphasis added)

"This is not your 3-star resort in Cayo Coco". We are led to believe that the same behaviour could be acceptable, if not welcomed, in Cuba. After all, *you* are paying for your little 3-star all-inclusive hotel in one of the thousand keys and islands that comprise the Cuban archipelago. Respect for the gentle folks and care for the pristine environment is warranted in Gaspésie, the national pearl of Québec (*notre perle nationale* [our national pearl]). Opposed to that there's Cuba, often referred to as the pearl of the Antilles (*la perla de las Antillas* [the pearl of the Antilles]) by many nationalist slogans and tourism marketing catchphrases, seemingly the land of permissibility, of wild, exotic environments to pollute freely, and of hotblooded locals to treat as you wish. Of the more than 1,300 comments that praised the courageous words by

Antoine Favreau, only two warned about the dangerous implications that were implicit in the comparison between Gaspésie and Cayo Coco as tourist destinations.

Rewind to the spring of 2017, Gaspésie again. There were no signs of a global pandemic in sight, and we could move "freely" within and outside Canada, with no masks, no vaccination passports, no PCR tests. Freely is between quotes here because that was not what the Gaspésie mayor Daniel Côté thought at the time. While criticizing the provincial and federal governments' lack of sympathy for the regional aeronautical industry, Monsieur Côté made a point of how desperate the situation was for travellers from his region to travel to the rest of Québec and Canada at affordable prices and through reliable means. This time again, Cuba was the barometer for commentary about local and international mobility, tourism, and their impact on regional and domestic economies:

> *On a déjà fait le calcul qu'il en* ***coûte moins cher d'acheter un billet Gaspé-Cuba*** *avec une correspondance à Montréal que d'acheter un billet Gaspé-Montréal. Aussi bien acheter un billet pour la première option, oublier Cuba et rester à Montréal pour qui veut juste se rendre à Montréal*
>
> We have already calculated that *it costs less to buy a ticket Gaspé-Cuba* with a connection in Montreal than to buy a ticket Gaspé-Montreal. You might as well buy a ticket for the first option, forget Cuba, and stay in Montreal for those who just want to go to Montreal. (Haroun 2017, emphasis added)

The journalist Thierry Haroun went a step further to prove Mayor Côté's point and he corroborated that his personal research gave similar results. A trip from Gaspé to Cayo Coco, (again), was two times less expensive than the airfare between the same departure point and Montréal. One could assume there's a persistent obsession in Québec's media imaginaries to make use of Cuba as a liminal geographical reference to highlight a point of social, political, or economic relevance. There's also an undeniable array of (neo)colonial undertones that traverse the moments described above, bordering on outright disdain for the wellbeing of the Other. In

this case the socialist nation, that is subjected through the local rhetoric to pressing Québécois crises. Moreover, in the two examples exists a discursive move that, in one swipe, erases the tropical island and its specificities as a country, its political and economic futures, the needs of its people and the urgencies of its landscapes and ecosystems.

These two overlapping and apparently conflicting dynamics are the pivots around which revolves my investigation, Cuba's marginal place in Québec media and film landscapes and the ebbs and flows of that place, its oscillations between visibility and opaqueness. One of the purposes of this dissertation is to cast a critical light on that place and locate the points of contact between Cuban and Québécois film industries, the power relations that mold them, the economies they activate, the affective and solidary architectures that animate them, the tourism and travel logics they challenge, and the industrial tenets and dynamics they consciously question across these two geographies. Overall, my goal is to answer a somewhat perplexing, somewhat surreal, and yet necessary question that the previous examples seem to ask: what is there of Cuba in Québec? And I don't mean just the hordes of Québécois who flock on a yearly basis to Cuban beaches to holiday under a blistering sun, where they mend their bodies and souls from harsh winters and work burnout. Nor do I allude here to the countless bars and restaurants that all over the francophone province fill their menus with hints at Cuban cuisine and cocktails[i], nor the leisure places or camping sites that try to harness in boreal Québec the wild, sweaty parties that can be enjoyed at Cayo Coco Varadero, or Cayo Santa María. No, with these examples of ill-thought political and economic commentaries disguised as travel metaphors my

[i] To name but a few, I'm thinking here of the Montreal-based, upscale, gourmet restaurants *La Habanera* (1216 Rue Union), *Barraca Rhumerie Montreal* (1134 rue Mont-Royal Est), and *El Pequeño Bar* (401 A Rue Saint-Vincent), and the humbler and more affordable Café Cubano (168 Rue Beaubien Est), Cuba Paisa Restaurant (7102 Blvd Saint-Laurent), El Habanero (5470 Blvd Côte-des-Neiges), and La Cecilia (500 Rue Belanger). Also noteworthy are the Club Havana Camping, the Camping Havana Resort, and the Camping Havana, all in the Ville de Maricourt, a small city halfway between Montréal and Sherbrooke.

intention is to point towards what there is—if anything—of my original home in my current dwelling place where I also try and build a space that I can call my own. In a more precise manner, how can we trace the presence of Cuban domestic spaces in transnational film, media and artistic practices originating from Québec, and how tourism patterns across their borders come into play?

As outlandish as this question may seem, in the years leading up to the pandemic I became more and more aware that Cuba was more than a mere talking point utilized as a comparison to illustrate local issues in Québec. Often it was the geographic background of several cultural news highlighting the international projection of Québec's literary, artistic and cinematic projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2018, the journalist and writer Frédérick Lavoie launched his book *Avant l'après: Voyages à Cuba avec George Orwell*, an instant "*coup de coeur*"[ii] in Québec's libraries. As one flips through its pages, we accompany the author's travels to the island as he surveys the publication of George Orwell's *1984* in a totalitarian, socialist country for the first time. A huge part of his account relies on what he is told by editors, fellow journalists, and political activists behind closed doors in their homes, sometimes as careful, conspiracist whispers, sometimes in a casual manner. 2018 was also the year when the director Daniel Grou aka Podz (*Le sept jours du Talion / The Seven Days of the Talion* (2010), *10 ½* (2010)) took his ongoing project *Mafia inc.* (2020) to Cuba to shoot the intro to his film (Lauzon 2018) allegedly taking place in Venezuela. The year before, *All You Can Eat Buddha* (Ian Lagarde 2017), a film produced partly on the socialist island, was selected for the Toronto International Film Festival's Discovery section and in 2017 and 2018 it accumulated several nominations for the Directors' Guild of Canada Awards, the Canadian Screen Awards and the

[ii] A local francophone designation to indicate bestsellers and staff picks in libraries across the province.

Iris Awards in Québec (IMDb). Radio Canada had also been publishing portraits of the island's homes, relaying everyday struggles of Cubans making ends meet in a more liberalized, open country with a new outward relationship with its northern neighbors: the U.S.A. and Canada (Gonzalez 2016, Movilla 2016). On a more personal note, I often saw myself discussing with colleagues and students here in Canada about the best ways to travel to Cuba, to launch artistic and film projects there, giving them tips to contact families and households that could help them in their endeavours. Questioning the nature of these relationships between Cuba and Québec, and between their respective tourism and media and filmmaking industries was at first a curiosity and then became a necessity. This is the main objective of my thesis: to interrogate how Québécois transnational film and media arts production, international tourism, and the domestic space in Cuba interface with each other, and how, if at all, they help us envision new modes of South-North interactions through cultural cooperation. What are the ethical concerns and the artistic preoccupations that make Québécois cultural workers and filmmakers go on location to Cuba, and how do their tourism preferences deviate from those of their fellow compatriots that, year after year, crowd Cuban sandy beaches and soporific hotels?

Now, to talk about transnational filmmaking from Québec, Canada, or anywhere else in the world, is to talk necessarily about travel and tourism, although these two often get obscured in this equation. Transnational cinema is intimately tied to and dependent upon the notion of global mobility. The process of producing films across borders with the cooperation of sovereign nations, local institutions and workforces, and global media enterprises reveals itself however as an uneven process marked by the systematic emergence of different nodes of power, labor, and knowledge involved in these forms of cultural interfacing that relate the global and the local (Higbee & Lim 2010, 10). This is especially true and could be evidenced more sharpy through

those cinematic relationships stimulated by productions between countries located along the south-north divide, like Cuba and Québec. Strong-armed, asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and the Global South usually make more heavily felt "the global dispersion of production sites; the global dispersion of laboring agents (…) and cross-border partnerships, collaborations, and coproductions in terms of financial investment and creative talent" (Chung 2012, 28) that unevenly connect the two hemispheres as indicated by author Hye Jean Chung.

Being a peculiar set of relationships within transnational filmmaking practices—and predicated precisely on the premise of displacement—the analysis of film and tourism as complicit global industries has predominantly focused on their mutually beneficial synergies. The concept of film-induced tourism postulates cinema as the pretext for large-scale tourist mobility to the location sites of transnational film productions, or as evidence of the seductive economic and hospitality potentialities of certain places in the world to attract global film and media companies' investments.[iii] Theoretical works about these phenomena, again, are not only based on the long-standing perception of the interconnectedness of global film production and tourism, but also bank on the idea that awareness of place and branding as touristic destinations is the catalyst for these interactions. This is to say, film attracts masses to recognizable and well-marketed places. Conversely, as authors Susan Ward and Tom O'Regan have pointed out, cinema outsources productions to preferential sites, propelled by considerations of "*pleasurable* film-making experiences based on (…) professional standing in attending film-making expertise,

[iii] For the sake of brevity, I have chosen to dive directly into one form of film-induced tourism, but this one is certainly not the only type of relationship that exists between cinema and tourism. The authors Cardoso, Estêvao, Fernandes and Alves (2017) describe a vast field of study in this sense under the larger categories of "film-induced versus destination branding image" (23) accounting for diverse phenomena such as film tourism (a type of audiovisual tourism in itself that is generated by the emotional effect of films on viewers), film-induced tourism, and tourism promotional film. For more on these topics of inquiry see for instance Hao & Ryan 2013, Mathisen & Prebensen 2013, Connell 2012, Beeton 2008, and others.

on its symbolic standing as a place that can provide a pleasurable and comfortable lifestyle, and (…) landscapes that have recognizable symbolic capital" (2009, 220-1, original emphasis).

The body of literature fueled by the concept of film or movie-induced tourism has grown exponentially since the end of the past century. Pioneering and largely collaborative studies of what was then known as "movie-induced tourism" by authors such as Baker & Tooke (1996), Riley, Baker & Van Doren (1998), Beeton (2005), Riley & Van Doren (1992) explored through mounting evidence and a variety of lenses the reciprocal dynamics of film and place awareness that resulted in mutually beneficial revenues for the cinema and tourism industries. Speaking from fields such as social sciences, marketing, business and management, early perceptions of film-induced tourism were predominantly centered around understanding the role of place representation and advertising as a byproduct of moviegoing that influenced audiences' choice-making of travel experiences and tourist destinations.

Beeton's foundational term of film-induced tourism opened the path to include those forms of audiovisual expression that went beyond the movie theater screen. Her homonymous book made space for miniseries, television shows, and television-length features that also stoked audiences' expectations and eagerness for certain audiovisual destinations. Since these first steps towards the formation of a distinct field of research within the realm of transnational studies, Beeton notices that the phenomenon of "film-induced tourism" lays down several ways of looking at cinema in its rapport with tourism industries and consumers. Without being a conclusive enumeration, studies in this tradition, according to the author, evaluate "film as a driver of social construction, destination marketing through film, community relations with film-induced tourism, business response to emerging opportunities (including film studio theme parks and tours on location), and filmic tourists' motivation." (Beeton 2006, 182).

Following these lines of thinking, specialists and academics have studied tourism and film aesthetics paying attention to promotional films and their normative gender and sexual identity practices (Pritchard & Morgan 2000), the dramatization of events as an affective propeller of destination choice for audiences (Mathisen & Prebensen 2013), the influence of film language and *mise-en-scène* in creating a positive image of a space as an attractive tourist destination (Hao & Ryan 2013), and the importance of cultural and ideological assessment at the time of crafting messages for distinct regions, populations, and age sectors (Redondo 2012). Others have introduced the idea of movie tourism or film-induced tourism as a new form of tourism influencing governmental and urban dispositions to transform spaces to meet the expectations of would-be tourists (Di Blasi & Arangi 2015). Some authors remain more cautious about the wholehearted endorsement of film tourism. Despite the largely voiced beneficial impact of tourists attracted to places through cinema, Beeton again warns us that it can also carry negative consequences (Beeton 2008), while others focused on the aspect of place authenticity sought out by film-tourists, sometimes let down by the discovery of layers and layers of compositing and visual effects over the actual space they end up visiting (Buchmann, Moore & Fisher 2010).

Despite the heterogeneity of this list of potential domains of inquiry, all of them either implicitly or explicitly relate film-induced tourism to reception, audiences, and fandom studies. A committed study from a film and media viewpoint of the structural intimacy between the tourism industry and globally displaced media and filmmaking was nonetheless inaugurated by authors Ward & O'Regan while conducting their appraisal of the Australian Gold Cost as a greenfield location. In their 2009 article "The Film Producer as the Long-stay Business Tourist: Rethinking Film and Tourism From a Gold Coast Perspective," Ward & O'Regan position the Gold Cost's hospitality sector as tourism that caters directly to the infrastructural needs of

transient film and media projects. Here film-tourism is relocated from the afterimage of movie release and reception to include production crews profiting from "working holidays to a destination" (218) or to audiences attending forms of entertainment that include on-set spectators (i.e *Big Brother Australia*, et al.). As Ward & O'Regan summarize, "[t]ourism management and planning were here responding to the film producer as a long-stay business tourist, and film production itself another event to be managed or catered for."

Ward & O'Regan's study lies closer to my interest on the adjacence of transnational cinema and mass tourism. Whereas these authors focused on big business' strategic corporate diversification into domains others than the entertainment sector, I am more concerned here with those forms of cinematic travelling that are not mere forms of "touristic voyeurism, however apparently benign (…) imbricated with notions of superiority shaped by gender, class, education, race, culture and geography" as denounced by Heather Norris Nicholson (2006, 27). In the Gold Cost case that has been extensively examined by Ward & O'Regan this is substantially evident in the "fly-in-fly-out" nature of capital (2010: 227), skilled personnel, logistics and even audiences to the detriment of the development of local agents, professionals, and industries. Similarly, Michelle, Hardy, Davis and Craig (2015) have thoroughly exposed the political, economic, social, and labor disruptions caused by transnational mega-productions like Peter Jackson's *Hobbit* trilogy (2012-14) with the utter complicity of media industries like Warner Bros., the neoliberal state apparatus of New Zealand, and global audiences.

The cinematic contacts between Québec and Cuba that I examine in this dissertation fall closer to Susan Sontag's perception of tourism as an agent with the potential to overcome and critique barriers imposed by colonialism in narratives about global travel. Sontag observes how travelling to witness firsthand "the enactment of ideals" (2001, 278) that is a revolution confirms

patterns of transcultural civil and emotional investment entangled with symbolic saturation and ideological contradictions that often push first-world progressive travelers to juxtapose “the exotic local” and “the primitive” with “new world” and “the new man.” One thing is certain, Sontag describes solely recreational and diplomatic travels. Nonetheless, many of her concerns ring true to the set of Cuba-Québec relationships that I engage with in this thesis. In the years I look at there was, in many ways, a similar rush and longing for a "soon-to-be-gone" past in Cuba. This was a widespread ideology resulting from the speculative imaginations around the island's newfound amity with the US after 2014. Throughout these pages I hope I can convey a sense of how much these feelings are present in the urge to go and capture a slice in time of what was the "pristine" Cuba, unsoiled by consumerist culture and American influx; to what extent the nature of these Québec-Cuba travels changed the critical outlook these “first-world” tourists/workers took to Cuban shores; and how these ideological biases and romantic idealizations come in to play when productive relations were involved. Issues like these will spring up constantly in the analysis to come.

Given the present lack of research in the Cuban case, this research inaugurates a field of inquiry for Cuban Studies, where tourism studies are confronted with other strands of cultural critique. Being one of the most active tourism hubs of the Caribbean, authors from a variety of perspectives have looked at tourism from its economic, social, and political implications in the Cuban context (i.e. Miller 1997; Cabezas 2009; Simoni 2015; Henthorne 2018 etc.). Authors like Henthorne hint especially in their works toward the investment potential underlying the academic studies about touristic industries in Cuba for future foreign trading partners. On the other hand, many works have either implicitly or explicitly defended the rising power of private enterprises and the shadowed economic potential of everyday life in Cuba. Rosenberg (2009),

Pertierra (2011), and Bastian (2018) already point in their works towards these grassroots entrepreneurial hubs that reshape modes of citizenship and civic participation, consumer habits on the island, class distinction, and social mobility. There is much work to be done, however, to locate the place of culture production in the tourism dynamics in Cuba—and particularly in its private, domestic sector's involvement in the trade—beyond the survivalist transactions and struggles of everyday living. My contribution in this sense compels cultural workers, artists, freelance entrepreneurs, and policymakers both foreign and domestic to recognize this secondary hospitality segment in the island as a potential partner, and therefore to rethink a travel destination that has historically been perceived as one of sun, sex, sea and sand of quasi-mythical proportions.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

In the scope of this investigation, I seek to contribute to this growing field of study by depicting a more intimate and unexplored connection between film and tourism practices, where the latter is not the precipitation of the former, where tourism does not stand as resulting from masses being exposed through film to exotic, faraway lands, and dreamy landscapes. Instead, I strive to analyze specific instances in which transnational independent filmmaking becomes coterminous, entangled with alternative forms of international tourism and local, discreet economic investments. Quite the opposite, the film ventures that I will foreground in this dissertation came to exist as localized challenges to widely assumed ideas about the incontestability of the relationships between place branding, international tourism patterns between Québec and Cuba, and transborder film production. They came to light with the idea first and foremost of defying the infrastructural and structural complicities between official

tourism industries and translocal film productions, and with a decided impetus to craft dissenting routes for the futures of said set of relationships.

What follows is an investigation of the involvement of domestic hospitality businesses in Cuba (*paladares*, private restaurants located in family households, and *casas particulares*, bed-and-breakfast-type hostels) as unofficial partners in transnational film and media arts productions between Québec and Cuba, namely in the curatorial project *Montréal-Havane/Habana-Montreal* by *Islas Cultura* (formerly Proyecto Islas) led by Ximena Holuigue, and the films *All you can eat Buddha* (Ian Lagarde 2017), *Cuba Merci Gracias* (Alex B. Martin 2018) and *Sur les toits Havane / Havana From On High* (Pedro Ruiz 2019). In other words, these three independent films created across the borders of Québec and Cuba will allow us to foreground the touristic alternatives to mainstream venues existing on the island, how they are sometimes privileged by travelers from the francophone nation to the Caribbean country, and their punctual contributions to both foreign and domestic cultural and cinematic projects. Furthermore, they will serve the purpose of reformulating the assumed, traditional affiliations credited to global tourism and film activities. I will concentrate on these three examples within the recent number of Québécois and Canadian film and media collaborations that have offshored their capital, technologies, and personnel to Cuba,[iv] precisely because they constitute a rebuttal to, and a reconfiguration of, the schematic definition of film-induced tourism that I have described above. These features are not exemplary of a film-induced tourism, or its antithesis, a filmmaking practice that becomes subservient to the touristic capacities of certain regions because of their legal, financial,

[iv] Besides the three films that are the main object of study of this research, I am referring here, and thinking strictly about moving-image based projects, to the TV series *Au volant d'une belle cubaine* [Driving a Beautiful Cuban] (Eric Blouin, 2019), the films *Angle mort / Blind Spot* (Dominic James, 2011), *Playa Coloniale / Colonial Beach* (Martin Bureau & Luc Renaud, 2012), *Maffia inc.* (Podz, 2020), *The Fence* (Viveka Melkis, 2020), *Sin La Habana / Without Havana* (Kaveh Navatian, 2020). In the realm of coproductions we could also mention the Canadian American features *Papa: Hemingway in Cuba* (Bob Yari, 2015), and the documentary *Queens of the Revolution* (Rebecca Heidenberg & Kristen Brown, 2020).

infrastructural, civic, and natural resources (Ward & O'Regan 2010, 83). On the contrary, I focus on these three productions because they go on-location with the immediate mandate of critiquing cinematic representations of transnational mobility and explore how filmmaking and below-the-line tourism practices[v] can be one and the same thing. And, in doing so, they also foreground through varying scales the thriving participation of domestic units in Cuba in matters of transborder audiovisual and artistic production.

I contend that these films constitute therefore cinematic voyages, both by the narrative genres they adopt and by the production strategies they enact. Cinematic voyages are related to travel films, travelogues, and roadies. But beyond the representational tropes of displacement, broadly conceived, the processes of location management, securing housing for foreign technicians, scouting, and hiring local personnel, and dealing in ethical ways with local constituencies and communities also make them part of the critical operations they endorse. In sum, cinematic voyages are born out of the application of entrepreneurial tactics to leisure and cultural travels, the operationalization of transborder affective relations, and the radical instrumentalization and adaptability of domestic spaces and activities in Cuba towards the completion of independent transnational film projects. The contextual and situated entanglements of legal, artistic, trade, and human relations pre-existing these transnational film productions I have designated as cinematic voyages complicate the ideological imaginations, the material limitations, and the expectations of the personnel on both sides. In much the same way, their positionalities influence the aesthetic choices of the project, the content of the film and the

[v] Below-the-line tourism is an obvious reference to Vicki Mayer's *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economies* (2011). Inspired by Mayer I strive to bring to the fore not only the work of creatives, and technicians as hidden laborers of today's media economies but also the contributions of hospitality and service providers that work, sometimes even tangentially, hand in hand with the former towards the finalization of cultural, media, and film works. Below-the-line tourism does not necessarily mean illegal but does indicate a state of liminality that characterizes most of the operations of *casas de alquiler* and *paladares*, especially in their activities with foreign film crews, as I will discuss in the following chapters.

employment of local and/or mobile workforces in a circuitous path that challenges the assumption of linear pipelines of reciprocity and/or neocolonial exploitation between Québec and Cuba.

My central argument is that cinematic voyages are illustrative cases to further explore long-established, dominant ideas about the complicitous, extractive nature of the global tourism and media industries in the ensemble of south-north relations in general. In other words, they serve to deconstruct almost unmovable Global Northism's narratives of superiority, colonization, and exploitation vis-à-vis the Global South, especially when it comes to artistic and travel contacts. On the contrary, they allow us to see other facets of these hemispheric interactions based on transcultural sensitive collaboration, values of solidarity, and anticolonial critique. At the same time, they are also a good case to exemplify the complexity of social, economic, and cultural connections between Cuba and Québec and their respective ideations of a pan-Latinx identity. A human map of these cinematic voyages stretches out the borders of the nation-state from underboard economic and labor practices and histories of the domestic in Cuba to larger geopolitical entities like Latin America, Europe, the US, and Canada, with their respective cultural industries, but also linguistic, cultural, and immaterial ones like the Latinx diasporas in North America or *la francophonie.* Lastly, in a more practical sense, I believe these cases warrant attention given that they open new paths of social and economic collaboration with private citizens and enterprises in Cuba, a much-needed breath in the progressive opening of markets and investments on the island[vi] that do not directly strengthen, or that outright

[vi] It should not be assumed by this that what follows is an apology for neoliberalism and the deregulation of markets. Particularly not because it being the case that these are Cuban households dealing under very uneven circumstances with white, North American, industry professionals who travel to Cuba with incommensurably larger financial, technical, mobility, agency and legal advantages. By this I just imply that it would be a good thing to get the money directly to Cubans, circumventing the policing of transactions and goods between foreigners and locals by both the Cuban and the American administrations.

circumvent, the all-encompassing presence of the state in financial accumulation and wealth distribution.

By exploring the involvement of domestic private business in Cuba in the making of these three Québécois films I seek to answer several questions: What are the roles of Cuban domesticity in Québécois transnational film projects? How can we amend the exploitative features baked into the mutually constitutive relationships that exist between the global tourism and media industries? How can we think of transnational film and tourism praxes along the south-north divide as agents of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist cultural and economic cooperation, regardless of how interested and transactional these collaborations can be? What production strategies and representational tropes serve this purpose? Besides the ideological and discursive elaborations at play in these projects, how can issues of race, nationality, language, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, culture, technology, and class inescapably complicate the extent of such solidary actions for both foreign and local agents? What does all of this say about the place of nature, the non-human, and the ecological within both tourism and transnational mediamaking? And finally, as stated at the beginning, what is there of Cuba in Québec? Of Cuban homes, that is?

Rather than a straightforward answer, these questions will act as a compass to map out the applicability in these cases of a "dialectical critique" (Caton 1999, 6). Dialectical critique supposes a critical practice that grapples with both the "cultural representations that perpetuate domination of some over others (…) [and the] covert or explicit criticism of the center and its domination of the margins." It contends, in sum, that all hegemonic processes present cracks in their monolithic structure that conspire towards their own criticism or, conversely, that

distinctions between center and margins sometimes are not as precise and definite as they may seem. Caton writes:

> [D]ialectical reading is a critical practice that people at the center can adopt as readily as those at the margins, and that it is crucial for all of us, no matter what our subject position might be, to insist on the fact and to foster its practice, if change in the system is to come from the top of the power hierarchy as well as from the bottom. (23)

This critical method is familiar to Edward Said's contrapuntal reading (1993) and Caton himself cites as direct influences the works of Tania Modelski ([1988] 2015) and Linda Williams ([1989] 1999), both scholars who, without totally dismissing the entire film corpus of Hitchcock, or the whole pornographic canon, find ways to weave them into their discussions through subversive, feminist frameworks. Moreover, in these cases particularly, I take it as an invitation to consider and engage with those indeterminate spaces where economic and productive operations come hand in hand with the performance of affective and compassionate acts by Cubans and foreigners alike. Where professional and labor relationships are sometimes entangled with familial and emotional configurations that coexist in tension without annulling each other. In this sense, I draw from the preexisting work of ethnographers like Ian G. Lumsden (1996), Noelle Stout (2015), Valerio Simoni (2015, 2019), and their contributions to the entanglements between sexual identities, affects, kinship and tourism, and P. Sean Brotherton (2008) with his analysis on the solidary outward projection and the inherently capitalist thinking behind Cuba's contemporary healthcare system. Building upon their work, what I will ask is: what is the place left for utopia in global industries and productive systems openly and assumedly ravaged by inequalities, injustice, economic violence, and racial exploitation? Throughout the following pages, I will have to navigate the ideological minefield that arises from posing these questions in what remain essentially two, profit-driven, very practical activities: producing and maintaining a

household and, in passing, aiding the completion of a foreign feature while making both financially viable.

Methodology

This dissertation focuses on the manifold interactions that domestic spaces in Cuba entertain with Québécois transnational filmmaking practices. In doing so, I am not only trying to highlight the juxtaposition of the production of home and the reproductive labor that happens in it to the translocal productive strategies of film practices. Much more than that, throughout these pages I critique the established association of transnational tourism and film production and its historical (neo)colonial synergies. On the contrary, these cases allow us to think of globalized cultural and film enterprises as agents that resist, deconstruct, refashion, and criticize on discursive and practical levels their ties to tourism exploitation and its imperialistic outlook. In no small part, these objects of study offer us the possibility to imagine a future of transnational media, arts, and filmmaking that could be both more sustainable and less predatory in terms of the exercise of power along the global North-global South divide. Because of the very nature of these objects of inquiry, the methodologies employed during the years of my research were varied and have been very dependent on diverse spatio-temporal, economic, legal, and emotional configurations. Regarding the first temporal constraint: all these films and projects took years to make. I learned about their existence almost when I started this PhD and there was one only thing certain, that I wanted to talk about Cuban homes and their depictions in and relationships to transnational media and film enterprises in North America. The three feature-length films I talk about here were squeezed together in one chapter in the earliest iterations of this project. Then *All You Can…* was released in 2017, followed by *Cuba, merci*…, *Sur les toits*…, and the arts and

media project *Montréal-Havane/Habana-Montreal…*, which burst onto the local cultural scene one after the other in the spring and summer of 2019. This meant that I had to adapt my work pace and my methods over and over to better deal with the inherent logic pertaining to the appearance of these objects.

Spatially, there were further trials to overcome. As an exiled Cuban myself, one that has never returned to Cuba for personal, emotional, political, and economic reasons, I embraced the challenge of dealing with these films, and the people, the industries, institutions, and homes around them, with a plurality of methods that could account for how these interacted both in Cuba and Québec. To put it succinctly, the findings in this thesis are based primarily on textual analysis, critically quasi-ethnographic[vii] research (Murphy & Krady 2003, Murtagh 2007), online ethnographic observation, participant observation, socio historical-contextualization, and bibliographical research. The multitude of methods employed are, in a way, a clear indication of the complexity and scope of the phenomena I have tried to domesticate with this investigation. They also were employed to bridge those gaps imposed by temporal and spatial predeterminants that I have indicated above. On a more personal note, and just to indulge myself, they are also an homage to my professed enthusiasm for anthropological science and ethnographic techniques. Combining ethnography with film and media methodologies offer valuable tools for us, media

[vii] Both authors seem have slightly different perspectives about the qualities and merits of thus-defined "quasi-ethnographies" but essentially meet halfway about what makes them valuable. For Murphy and Krady the hyphenation "quasi" encompasses the rising numbers of "theoretically sophisticated but empirically thin" (2003, 3) ethnographic works staking their claims in the field and that mobilized "an increasingly textual and rhetorical usage of ethnography." With a sharp focus on audiences and media reception studies, both authors propose an irreverent take on traditional ethnographies questioning for instance if something to be "ethnographic" should be based on some semblance of immersion and participant observation, and more importantly if this is "the only (or even best) road for researchers (…)" (5). Lisa Murtagh proposes a critical element to her endorsement of these quasi-ethnographies. The critical quality of quasi-ethnographies, according to Murtagh, comes into play when one implements a personalized methodological strategy with the aim of contributing to a particular ""body of knowledge"" (2007, 196) and raising awareness about the qualities and potentials of said method with the future intention to correct and develop on it or, as she puts it, "(…) to impact on assessment policies and procedures."

and film scholars, to complement our commonly used methods and better face the challenges posed by the ever-evolving nature of our fields (Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod & Larkin 2002, Pertierra 2018). However, as Pertierra argues, until recently, both anthropologists and media scholars had little interest for what their respective fields and techniques could do for each other's activities (Pertierra, 50 kdl). There are several factors, though, that nuance the extent of my application of strands of ethnographic methods to these objects of study.

First and most glaring, there's the issue of extended access. The hallmark of good ethnographic work continues to this day to be the capacity of thoroughly scrutinizing human groups pertaining to other cultures, taking notes immersed in the field, accompanying all of these with semi-structured interviews and fixed questionnaires (Bernard 2011, Richards 2003, Spradley 1979). Now, these film productions all required very brief and intermittent periods of time for their on-location shooting procedures. *All You Can*… was filmed in no more than 30 days (and several short pre-production travels prior), *Cuba merci*… was accomplished in two weeks' time in the island, and *Sur les toits…* equally took short trips before and during production that lasted a handful of days in total. Even if I had been able to attend these production trips during their timeframes, the conditions of each travel, their goals, actors, and settings shifted drastically from one to the other, rendering questionable any form of sustained observation and engagement.

To remedy this, I opted for a mixed approach of in-depth interviews and online ethnographic observation. The data that supports my argument draws extensively on four years of interviews with filmmakers, producers, technicians, freelance cultural workers in Québec and Cuba, diplomatic officials stationed on the island, owners of *paladares* and *casas particulares* as well as private tourists of Québécois origin that have travelled through a variety of means, some

profiting from the state-owned hospitality industry, others using the services of private entrepreneurs occasionally or systematically. Ethnography here is also employed to denote the stress placed on analyzing and critiquing how the actors in the field interpreted their positions, and of those around them, in the sites of production instead of just charting the legal, financial, and infrastructural specificities of a given film production, which would be more in tune with the scope of production studies.

I alternated between structured and semi-structured interviews, seeking to understand the concurrence of cinematic and tourism practices, the ethics and politics involved as they were perceived by these interlocutors while travelling to and from, working and living in/between Cuba and Canada. Many of the interviews and observations of interlocutors located in Cuba were done via WhatsApp, a cross-platform, end-to-end encrypted instant messaging and voice-over-IP service owned by Meta Platforms, formerly Facebook. Thanks to this application and Facebook messenger, too, I got to "visit" and was given personalized tours of *casas particulares*, *paladares*, and former film sets in my own country. One-on-one interviews with Québécois filmmakers and personnel were carried out sometimes in person or via Zoom depending on the periodic peaks of Covid-19 infections and subsequent lockdowns. In many of these local interviews I also came to realize how much Québécois creatives, investors, and cultural workers depended on the same techniques I did to develop projects, manage personnel, and solve problems with their peers overseas to compensate for their lack of physical presence or "immersion". Interviews and online observations allowed me to create a thick portrait of the human, creative, professional, and domestic relationships that were woven together through the production of these films in Cuba. In the case of Islas' project *Habana-Montreal*, participant

observation was more feasible given that they were mostly local actors residing in Québec with whom I had intimate and systematic access for over three years.

In both cases I have also benefited greatly from what Yokomizo Akindes has broadly described as rhizomatic ethnographies or "methodology as lived experience" in transnational contexts where the "(…) self [is] interpellated in the research process" (2003, 149). This is to say that my subjectivity as an international student, researcher, and an exiled person, with considerable ease in the command of French, English and Spanish, provided me with the rich cultural and linguistic expertise necessary to complement the ethnographic portrait I aimed to convey with this dissertation. Differently from Akindes, I don't claim that this is in any shape or form an autoethnography. My voice as a researcher, though, and my lived experiences and career, come through in the form of the cultural codes, local parlances, and anecdotes that reinforce the "thick interpretation" and the "cultural immersion" that characterize ethnographic research. I offer interpretations and reconstructions as I got them from my interlocutors, but enriched with my own visions of living, studying, and working first in Cuba, then in Québec. Finally, textual analysis of the films and audiovisual creations, socio-historical contextualization of Québécois-Cuban relationships, and bibliographical research come to strengthen the complicated description of the interactions between domesticity, tourism and filmmaking that are the backbone of this dissertation.

Chapters overview

In this research, including domesticity as a key factor in transnational film production opens a new possibility to highlight civic and artistic attempts to eschew the collusion of tourism and cinema in transnational contexts. Therefore, to accomplish the task at hand this dissertation

comprises this introduction, four chapters, and a set of tentative conclusions that, in more ways than one, serve as provocations to expand the scope of the work conducted here. In the first chapter, after a brief literature review on my conceptualization of transnationalism in cinema and tourism and the historicity of domesticity as an object of inquiry across realms such as literary, scientific, and cultural production writ large, I will move on to present a tableau of the myriad human, economic, diplomatic, and cultural exchanges between Canada, Québec, and Cuba, utilizing one case study as an empirical support for the theoretical framework advanced. I'm talking here of the *Habana-Montréal* curatorial cycle developed by the independent cultural agency Islas, directed by Ximena Holuigue. My point with this first chapter is to call attention towards bilateral and international relations between Cuba and capitalist nations that are not always as mercurial as those that pit the socialist regime against the United States of America because of their Manichean ideological divide. Delving into the multiple, often overlooked, but otherwise also densely knit material and ideological bridges between Cuba and its northernmost neighbor in the Americas, this chapter contributes to a portrait of the diverse transnational interfaces of the Caribbean nation-state that are not solely mediated by the presence of its local authoritarian regime.

Drawing from concepts such as transnationalism from below (Smith & Guarnizo [1998] 2017), transnational social spaces (Pries 2001, Faist & Özveren [2004] 2020), and minor transnationalism (Lionnet & Shih 2005) I analyze the multiple investments of Québécois citizens and institutions in meaningfully engaging with individuals and grassroots organizations in Cuba, sometimes under the surveillance of the homegrown repressive state, sometimes out of its purview. Furthermore, while also theorizing what the "domestic" has been and is, how it relates to both the private and the public domain, and in these cases how it also bridges the intimate, the

national, and the transnational, I frame the project *Montréal-Havane: Rencontres d'art actuel*, as a transdisciplinary, cross-border project that first illuminates the intrinsically asymmetric power dynamics present in this type of translocal enterprises in the ways it enables and/or restricts the movement of goods, persons, and objects across frontiers. Secondly, it is my intention to underline domesticity as the site and infrastructure (both soft and hard) where the potential of Canada's grassroots cultural diplomacy, carried out by non-state agents with the support of state, federal and provincial agencies, is tested and its shortcomings and complexities revealed. This rich transdisciplinary project, that has evolved many times during the years I have followed it, inaugurates a set of preoccupations and productive forms for Québécois cultural enterprises acting on Cuban soil which position it uniquely as an antecedent to the cinematic voyages that I will discuss afterwards, despite its somewhat distant relation to cinema per se.

Moving on to the filmic (and, arguably, the main) objects of study of this thesis, during the second chapter I will argue for the notion of ludic resistance in transnational filmmaking to complement our understandings of media heterotopias (Chung 2012, 90; 2018, 2) and "greenfield locations" (O'Regan & Ward 2010, 80) through an analysis of the feature *All you can eat*…. Greenfield locations seem to prescribe the flexibility and precariousness of globally dispersed film work dependent on foreign desires, trade and logistics. For its part media heterotopias denounce the idealized pliability and forceful seamlessness of transborder film praxis with the complementary aid of technology and capital. Nonetheless, I would like to insist on the ideas of solidarity, play, and subversion in transnational filmmaking in Cuba. Attempts to seamlessly erase and domesticate all things Cuban are met with the fluidity and insidiousness with which local labor practices, economic imperatives, raced and gendered bodies, and aural and visual stimuli contest and insinuate themselves in the process. I invite here the idea of play

as non-normalized, instinctive courses of action, as the rehearsal and performance of deviant possibilities. Ludic resistance in this case alludes to those forms of being and creating in the world that feed off of inventiveness, adaptation, molding and refashioning sanctioned paths, relations, and forms of production. Most of the time, through ludic resistance, demands for productivity and standardized performance are subverted or downplayed both by foreign investors going on location and by native hired workforces. The case of *All You Can Eat…* also demonstrates the flexibility of domestic hospitality enterprises in Cuba as they develop skills, adapt spaces, and employ local knowledges and employees through different forms of engagement to meet the needs of foreign film enterprises. However, I contend that such flexibility is afforded as a surplus of performing multiple gestures of transborder and transcultural, gendered identifications, acts of solidarity, and material care between otherwise unrelated laboring subjects working on location.

In the third chapter, with the aid of *Cuba Merci…*, I will analyze how the offshore production of a Québécois road movie illustrates intra- and extra-textually the search for belonging and stability that is part of the road genre. As a cinematic voyage, *Cuba Merci…* relies on grassroots forms of cross-cultural cooperation where foreign actors seek and depend on the proactive involvement of local agents in an act of filmic co-creation. What is essentially three artists and real-life friends travelling through an unknown country while producing an independent road movie eventually invites the participation of the alternative touristic venue where they stay and its surrounding community. By privileging traditional forms of mobility not usually romanticized by the road movie canon, and welcoming input over production design and narrative, this film grapples with the ethical implications of transnational travel and filmmaking, destabilizing their extractive, neocolonial synergies. In this case, Cuban households in particular

become a matrifocal space of representation to discuss gender relations and domestic labor assumptions carried from the north to the south.

In my fourth and final chapter, I turn to the Latinx-Québécois documentary *Sur les toits…* by Pedro Ruiz to propose a queer and hauntological examination of non-traditional homemaking in Cuba, and Latinx film practices and "*latinité*" in Québec, as social and cultural categories of equally shifting historical values by building upon Jacques Derrida's notion of hauntology (1993) in conversation with Juana María Rodríguez concept of queer *latinidad* (2003) and Michael P. Brown's spatial underpinnings of the queer closet (2000). I argue that the process of Latinx transnational filmmaking of this film replicates and exists in a continuum with the spectral position imposed by the Cuban socialist regime on homosexual identities, transcultural/multiracial affective and sexual arrangements, private tourism venues, and para-legal domestic practices. In the same manner, it serves to elaborate the tactical deployment of an iteration of Pan-American *latinidad* or "*latinité*" by the laboring subjects around and within the documentary, equally critical to contemporary discourses present in Québec and Cuba. Finally, I conjure up Derrida's concept of hauntology in the less explored aspect of its relationship to tele-techno-media, as well as Adorno's conceptualization of phantasmagoria, to account for the agency and presence of the [in]animated world, the technological, the more-than-human and the spiritual manifested in/through the film, and the dialogue they appear to establish amongst them. To think about items such as light, indigenous deities, architectural elements, and film equipment is also to expose the manifold temporalities that converge within the documentary, their unheard cries for recognition, social justice and inclusion, and their worries for an increasingly uncertain future.

In the final remarks I synthesize the main ideas and findings of this research while I indicate towards those other objects of inquiry and fields that could help expand and compliment the present work.

Chapter One – Contours of Québec-Cuba Relations: Transnationalism from Below and Domesticity

In order to speak about Québécois-Cuban relations one must simultaneously explore the multiple ties between Canada and Cuba, and between the latter and the US. Former Canadian ambassador to Cuba, Mark Entwistle, rightly characterized Cuban-Canadian rapports as "*unusual* relationship(s) that [have] *always* been that way" due to their "broader contours and settings" (Entwistle 2009, 282, original emphasis). Ties between Québec and Cuba do not fall much further apart from this brief categorization for they have been framed necessarily by Canadian interests, gradually and cautiously implemented, and intermittently rehearsed or withdrawn in several domains depending on federal volitions, even to this day.

To include a third factor like Canada in this seemingly two-sided portrait of human, economic, diplomatic, and cultural transnational contacts is just to acknowledge that they are always already deferent to the influence of external players who have a say in the sovereign decisions of Cuba and Québec. In other words, it is to recognize fully the conceptual and practical entanglements and limitations of transnationalism and its varied understandings. Following in the footsteps of Entwistle's description, I will maintain in the first half of this chapter that the cinematic and artistic associations that interest us here reflect and must conform, play with, and sometimes even try to circumvent the conditions and constraints proper to the ensemble of bilateral exchanges between Cuba and Québec; exchanges that are peculiar, as Entwistle indicates, because they are local and predominantly private in scope in the cases I analyze, negotiated and modulated at a transnational scale when it comes to economic factors, and globally imagined in their diplomatic and cultural aspects. I will be using these descriptions of social, economic, and cultural bridges between Cuba-Québec to make also some theoretical

discernments about what I mean in the body of this research by concepts such as “transnational” and “domesticity.” The second half will be devoted to a single case study, that of the former *Proyecto Islas*, now *Islas Cultura*, a not-for-profit cultural initiative conceived to valorize Cuban artistic culture “both inside and outside the island” ("Who We Are - Islas" 2022). The aims of analyzing this example are threefold. First, to foreground this project as an antecedent of what I call cinematic voyages, especially regarding the singular use it makes of the domestic environment as an overarching infrastructure, both soft and hard, to further trans-local cultural cooperation. Second, to demonstrate how it is an instance of minor transnationalism propelled forward by lateral associations of (migrant) women of diverse ethnic, racial, and geographic origins converging in an artistic dialogue around domestic practices and localized histories of the production of home. And finally, to evaluate the inherent potential of these initiatives as non-authorized but effective forms of cultural diplomacy run by Cuban and Canadian non-state actors.

In general, one could argue that these associations between the Cuban and Québécois populaces are either traditionally weaved into Ottawa’s interests and actions vis-à-vis Havana, or they are held hostage, as resistant enclaves, to the fluctuating but overall aggressive external policies of the US with respect to the island nation. Despite this, Canada, along with Mexico, has remained historically one of the few sates in the Americas to maintain steadfast diplomatic bridges with the socialist government of Havana. However, these ties are often dependent on the charisma of each Canadian and Québécois administration, their rocking back and forth from the “constructive engagement” of most liberal leaders to the “benign neglect” of conservatives as historian Robert Wright argues (2009, 195) and their alignment, or lack thereof, with Washington’s muscled foreign policies towards Cuba.

In either case, they seem ideally positioned as examples to investigate first the varied nature of what we have come to know as "minor transnationalism" (Lionnet & Shih 2005) or "transnationalism from below" (Mahler 1998, Guarnizo & Smith [1998] 2017) in cultural, economic, and political criticism. And secondly, they demonstrate the coexistence with and adoption of the multifaceted tensions between local/global and national/transnational binarisms that subsist in all transnational schemes. Guarnizo and Smith's theorization of what they have called transnationalism "from below" ([1998] 2017, 3) offers a useful framework to both evaluate the revolutionary potentials of transnational alternative configurations—like the Cuba-Québec ones I set out to examine—and question the "celebratory" notions that have accompanied mainstream ideations of transnationalism. In Smith and Guarnizo's alternative readings of transnationalism it can be seen "as an expression of a subversive popular resistance 'from below'" (5). They abound in this sense that "[c]ultural hybridity, multi-positional identities, border crossing by marginal 'others', and transnational business practices by migrant entrepreneurs are depicted as conscious and successful efforts by ordinary people to escape control and domination 'from above' by capital and the state." (Guarnizo & Smith, 5) And this, despite the often vague ideological and political stakes professed by small-time agents of speculative capitalism and the gig economy like some of the homeowners-entrepreneurs, service providers, technicians, and film producers that are the focal interest of my investigation.

Similar ideas have resonated varyingly in canonical scholarship about the transnational push in global cinematic production, distribution, and consumption (see, for instance, Berry 2010, Ezra and Rowden 2006, Higbee & Lim 2010, Higson 2010, etc.). Chris Berry's consideration of the transnational forces behind Chinese contemporary cinema, for example, contemplates at once how they are the undeniable signs of the new global market order embraced

by the Chinese socio-political system, and how they serve to contest the same extra-territorial pushes of globalization that shaped them in the first place (112). Analysis of the transnationalism that characterizes contemporary Québécois film and media has been particularly prolific in underscoring the tensions, if not clashes, between global factors and nationalist ideations given Québec's particular stance with respect to nation-building and identity.[viii]

Engaging with these lines of thinking, I understand the cinematic voyages that I discuss in this dissertation, and in particular the ensemble of Québec-Cuba interactions described in this chapter, as neither mere symptoms of the waning of the national, nor as simply counteragents to globalized media capital influx and disruption in national industries. In many ways, cinematic voyages could be seen as occurrences giving new form and breath to national imaginaries and pretensions both in Cuba and Québec. In the case of the former, they seem to justify the sustainability and alleged openness of the (timid) hybrid model of market socialism the country has been rehearsing for more than two decades now. In the latter's context, their transnational impulse is yet another sign of the self-sufficient drive and the resilience of the francophone nation as a distinct cultural unity within Canada and English North America. In both cases, these productive and cultural schemes bear witness to what Lionnet and Shih have described as "networks of minoritized cultures" (7) that converge horizontally, at once spilling over,

[viii] As Karine Bertrand and Mercédès Baillargeon advance: "Dans le context québécois contemporain, le transnationalisme deviant alors un concept pour interroger la façon dont le cadre national conserve sa pertinence en tant qu'outil pour representer les "communautés imaginaires", pour reprendre l'expression de Benedict Anderson, formée a travers le prisme du nationalisme (…)" (Mercédès Baillargeon & Karine Bertrand 2019, 137). This sets the tone to anticipate how the dichotomy between transnationality and the ebbs and flows of Québec's nationalism is a common thread that persistently finds its place, one way or another, into different accounts of Québec's film and media transnationalism. While discussing objects as dissimilar as the Hollywood exploits of Québécois authors like Jean-Marc Vallée (Karine Bertrand 2019) and Denis Villeneuve (Camilla Eyre & Joanna McIntyre 2018); the digitization of televisual formats and platforms (Marta Boni 2019); and the "peripheral" criticism posed to imperialist centrality of North American / Anglophone hegemony and French continental universalism by the poetics of Denys Arcand (Bill Marshall 2010), for example, the tension between the national and the transnational in Québec becomes sort of an epistemological determinant.

challenging, crisscrossing, and reinforcing the nation-state's boundaries; schemes that are complex and not deprived of contradictions in their operations and ideological projections in relation to vertical, integrationist powers. In this sense, Lionnet and Shih clarify further:

> This cultural transversalism includes minor cultural articulations in productive relationship with the major (in all its possible shapes, forms, and kinds), as well as minor-to-minor networks that circumvent the major altogether. This transversalism also produces new forms of identification that negotiate the national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries, thus allowing for the emergence of the minor's inherent complexity and multiplicity. (8)

Nonetheless, and precisely because of how they join two geopolitical spaces historically marked by overt defiance of North American imperialism (economic, cultural, linguistic, etc.), I insist that they are also visible forms of resistance from below to the dynamics of exploitation and neo-colonization proper to late liberal capitalism, at least in the ways they are expressed within the global tourism and film industries, occupying the center of their ideo-aesthetic preoccupations.

Furthermore, the transnationalist approach from below offers a substantial framework to reflect on how much the domestic space participates in these global flows of ideas, goods, people, and economic structures. It is not only a matter of scale that draws my analysis towards the minor aspects of transnationalism, but also the epistemological and methodological turn it creates by deviating from the traditional examinations of mainstream, highly visible centers of operations and cultural production, i.e. the nation state (Berry), Hollywood (Higson, Ezra & Rowden), and diasporic and exilic cinemas representing geopolitical and cultural entities such as North African and East Asian cinemas (Higbee and Lim). Engaging with home in a meaningful, material, ethnographic way beyond the rhetorical and figurative uses it has been relegated to as a concept remains a glaring void that this dissertation aims at correcting. Certainly, in the works of authors like Naficy (1998, 2001), for example, there are plenty references to home as a

placeholder that indicates at once the physical, built, and inhabited space of dwelling, the hometown, the homeland, and the exilic home that is the host society. But in all these cases it dilutes the presence and the effective participation of the domestic as a site of production and engaging with global flows and operative chains at least when it comes to exilic and diasporic cinema.

Early instances of transnational cultural critique and studies on globalization occupied the critical imagination with an incommensurate taste for large centers of economic power and socio-cultural production. Examples can be found in Smith's attention to ethnicity as a transnational urban space of sociality (1992), Appadurai's -*scapes* (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, etc.) (1996, 33), Bhabha's positing of global selves and their performances as "counternarratives of the nation" (2004, 300), and Sassen's (1991, 1998) examination of global cities and their distinctions as "third world" sites of production and "first world" spaces of social reproduction. Sassen, nonetheless, hinted already towards a new line of thinking when she affirmed that the "household [is] a key analytic category to understanding global economic processes and (…) new forms of cross-border solidarity, experiences of membership and identity formation (…)" (Sassen 1998, 84-5). I would argue that it is with authors who focus on the interstitial aspects of transnationalism like Guarnizo and Smith ([1998] 2017), Sarah J. Mahler ([1998] 2017), Immanuel Wallerstein & Joan Smith (1992) and others, that the domestic space starts receiving systematic attention as an important site of production and reproduction of transnational flows (Guarnizo & Smith, 7, 9; Mahler, 104; Wallerstein & Smith, 6-7). As Mahler warns us, the "conventional academic division of labor" (105) is partly to blame for the present oversight of the physical boundaries of home and their participation in processes of planetary scale. She goes on to explain: "The global and the local intersect within households, within daily

life, within neighborhoods, and coping with the complex texture and trajectories of these interactions is a challenge which ethnographic perspectives have great 'competitive advantages' in addressing."

As prominently as domesticity has figured as an object of gendered representation in literature (Nicole Huang 2005, Katherine Gilliespie 2004, Anderson 2009, etc.), architecture and urban studies (Charles Rice 2006, Gilsum Baydar 2005, Amy G Richter 2005, etc.), and cultural studies (Kathleen Anne McHugh 1999, Michael McKeon 2006, Stacy Gillis & Joanne Hollows 2008, etc.), its place in the study of transnational film and media registers as a profound paucity. A notable exception and an inspiration for my attention to domesticity comes with the interdisciplinary work of Stacey Weber-Fève Lanham in *Re-Hybridizing Transnational Domesticity and Femininity: Women's Contemporary Filmmaking and Lifewriting in France, Algeria and Tunisia* (2010), which brings together film and literary analysis with feminism, postcolonialism, transnationalism, and studies on domesticity. Of particular interest for me is the fact of highlighting the linkages between diasporic filmmaking and "homemaking (…) and the making of home" (213) in the works of Raja Amari such as *Satin Rouge* (2002) and *Les Secrets* (2009).

The versatility of "the domestic" and its capacity to work as an allegory of private space, the national (as in domestic affairs), and the transnational in the way it participates in the reproduction of migration, economic networks, and the internationalization of discourses on feminist solidarity, human rights, and democratization, as I have tracked up to this point, is what makes it an important theoretical anchor for this dissertation. Throughout these pages, I will be particularly inclined to endorse McKeon's conceptualization of domesticity as "both a species of modern privacy and unintelligible apart from our modern experience of publicity (…)" (xxi). As

McKeon indicates, "traditional" thinking tends to distinguish, but not separate, the public from the private whereas in "modernity," the two are separated: "(…) a condition that both sustains the sense of traditional distinction and, axiomatically reconstitutes the public and the private as categories that are susceptible to separation" (xix). In his analysis of the gradual partition in 18th-century English culture, literature, and society of the domestic and the public, McKeon affirms that:

> The "secret history" of domesticity is the history of that category as its separation out from the realms of political rule and economic labor constitutes as something that is both fully precedented and, by virtue of its unprecedented separation out, something new in the history of English culture. (161)

Bringing the production of home and transnational filmmaking together in my analysis serves to revert this modernist surgical move and to understand how domesticity joins discursively and practically the private, the public, the local, and the global despite prevailing bourgeois (read here Victorian too) ideas about their separation and distinction, the artificial and spatial gendering of intimacy and publicity, and the resulting division of labor. Thinking about the participation of domesticity as a nucleus that contributes both to the production of Québécois transnational films and to the refashioning of transnational tourism flows in North America reconstitutes the domestic as a site of capital importance for investigating and understanding micro-processes of cultural, economic, and social reproduction of global significance in how we conceive cinematic and political contacts between Québec, Canada, and Cuba, but also between the Global North and the Global South. In the pages that follow, it will become clear how larger phenomena like migration, international economic investment, and artistic and cultural production necessarily dialogue with each other around and within the domestic environment.

1.1 Human Mobility between Québec and Cuba: Historical Configurations of Québécois-Cuban Contacts

Human contacts between Québec and Cuba in the form of (temporary) migration are a factor to consider in understanding why the relationships they entertain are at once unusual and special. As Guarnizo and Smith argue, mobility is one of four pillars of transnationalism along with the globalization of capitalism, the technological revolution, and the global flow of political ideals of decolonization and the standardization of human rights. Human movement across borders provides transnationalism with expansive "social networks that facilitate the reproduction of transnational migration, economic organization, and politics" (4). The Cuban-Québécois bridges I will talk about are no exception to this.

Travelling between Québec and Cuba, mostly in the form of tourism but also for personal affairs, temporary and permanent migration, and business opportunities constitutes a major interactions trail for both constituencies in yearly demographic figures that are exceptional not only with respect to their other North American neighbors, but even to the rest of the hemisphere and the world. As I will demonstrate, this is one of the three foundations that give character and viability to the cinematic voyages I will discuss further along.

These Québec-Cuba encounters have been traditionally the localized mobility and networking efforts of citizens and private companies, and their impact has been limited and felt only in specific population sectors. Continued proximity between the Canadian and the Cuban constituencies is a vector historically prioritized by Ottawa to foster the progressive liberalization of the Cuban socialist economic model and to further pro-democratic and human rights dialogues with Havana as part of their constructive engagement line (Wiley 2010, 16; Axworthy qt. in Wright 2009, 197). From the Caribbean adventures of Sieur Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville on

Cuban shores where he met his final days[ix] (*Musée Canadien de l'Histoire*), through the isolated examples of Canadian participation in the successive independence wars fought by Cubans (Wiley, 14), to the triangulation of heroin trafficking between Marseille, Havana, and New York by the Quebecois gangster Lucien Rivard during the 50s (Cédric Chabuel 2020), to the refuge offered to members of the FLQ in Cuba in the 70s[x], Cubans have grown accustomed to dealing with and meeting French Canadians and vice versa. To this I would add even as a detriment to the predicaments of Québec linguistic and nationalist struggles. In my personal experiences, most Cubans on the island, myself included, tend to blur Québécois singularity and subsume it

[ix] After a series of campaigns in the Antilles, D'Iberville died of an unspecified illness, supposedly yellow fever (malaria), in Havana on July 9th, 1709. On the same day was registered the death of the Captain General of the island, Pedro Álvares de Villarin, D'Iberville's close friend (Cubasi.cu, Real Academia de la Historia). According to the myth, his trip to Havana was in this case part of a secret plan plotted by the Spanish and the French crowns to take over the British possessions of the Caribbean and the Carolinas (Real Academia de la Historia). In the trials that D'Iberville had to face posthumously, it was alleged on the contrary, that his frequent travels to Cuba and Saint-Domingue (present day Haiti) were part of fraudulent schemes of illicit enriching by D'Iberville, who sold in contraband iron taken from the bulk of French exports under his care. According to his biography he was buried that same day of July 9th in the *Iglesia Parroquial Mayor of San Cristobal de la Habana* (today the metropolitan cathedral) under the name Dom Pedro Berbila. His remains were relocated later to the *Palacio de los Capitanes Generales* (Palace of the Captain Generals), now Museo de la Ciudad de La Habana. In the northwest corner of the inner courtyard of the museum, tourists and visitors can still appreciate the tombstone of his grave and a commemorative plaque placed on the spot by the Cuban and French governments in 1937. These memento mori of Pierre Lemoyne D'Iberville in Havana, colonial vestiges of Cuban-Neo French-French early contacts, are complemented with a statue erected on *La Punta* Park, overlooking the entrance channel of the bay of Havana and right across the *La Cabaña* fortress. This statue is an exact replica of the one in front of the Parliament in Québec City depicting D'Iberville and was donated by the Government of Québec. In 2019, October 18th, the former mayor of the City of Mobile in Alabama, Sandy Stimpson donated a plaque to be placed at the foot of this statue in remembrance of D'Iberville being the founding father of the American city (www.tribuna.cu). As it can be inferred by these, a seemingly private contact like the one symbolized by D'Iberville with colonial Havana spirals a vast network of transnational associations with currency in our days, joining together places like Québec, Cuba, France, the US, the English Caribbean and Spain. For more on his life see Bernard Pothier, "LE MOYNE D'IBERVILLE ET D'ARDILLIÈRES, PIERRE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, (last accessed June 25, 2022).

[x] This is no doubt one of the oddest episodes of the Cuba-Québec cases of "historical intimacy." According to journalist Jean-Michel Leprince, the deal that members of the FLQ agreed upon with the governments of Québec and Canada to free the British diplomat James Cross was that they wanted "the freedom of 23 political prisoners, a plane with destination to Cuba or Algeria, 500 000 $ CAD and the name of whistleblower." (Leprince 2017) To make matters more interesting, during the hostage negotiation process, former ambassador to Ottawa, José Fernández de Cossio suggested to Prime Minister P.E.Trudeau that the entire Île-de-Notre-Dame became a *de facto* Cuban consular territory to which Trudeau agreed (Cossio qt. Leprince). From there the FLQ members took a helicopter to the Dorval airport and, from there, a military plane to Havana. According to D'Arcy Jenish, exile for the *felquistes* in Havana proved to be "a nightmare for the kidnappers" bored as they were, confined to hotels and homesick (Legion 2020). For more on this episode and the subsequent exile of the *felquistes* in Cuba, see Louis Fournier ([1982] 2020), Louise Lanctôt (2020), etc.

under the largely advertised Canadian multiculturalism. This is to say, they are taken to be "just Canadians who speak French" as many Cubans assume their northern neighbors go back and forth between French and English uncomplicatedly. For those less experienced in the nuances of French accents, they are then French-speaking persons. In sum, they are simply taken to be Canadians or mistaken as Frenchmen.

Regardless of the dense and far-reaching historicity of these contacts, migration between Cuba, Québec, and Canada is still very limited. According to the 2016 census of Canada, over 17,000 Cuban nationals had arrived through various immigration programs. Of those, a vast majority still made their final residence in Ontario (8685), with Québec following closely behind with 6,210, of whom 4,855 live in the larger Montréal Metropolitan Area (Statistics Canada 2017). Although these numbers are nowhere close to other countries in the hemisphere like Mexico or Colombia, Cubans are still a large group of immigrants from the Caribbean and Central America, second only to Haitians. Unlike the exceptional approach afforded to all Cuban expatriates in the US, who were automatically assimilated as refugees, Canada has always in a stealthy manner discouraged the entry of Cubans. In the early years of the Cuban revolution, groups of Cubans with temporary visas made of Montréal a Miami-like center of operations seeking to return to the island and overthrow the newly established government (Wylie, 47). Also, as Cuban émigrés, we have all heard many times stories in the Cuban diaspora in the US of those who used Canada as a larger detour or a temporary steppingstone between their origin and their final destination given the nature of the somewhat friendlier frontier between the two countries. Official figures of this migration parkour are unknown to Cuba and Canada. But it is safe to assume that both these factors may have marked Canadian attitudes towards immigration from Cuba, weary about its international standing *vis-à-vis* two of its closest neighbors and

strongest trading partners, and the perceived reputation about the security of its borders with the US.

Similarly, Canadians do not comprise a substantial portion of immigrants to Cuba. In 2019, only 18 Canadians arrived in Cuba with the intention to reside there. Historic political and trading allies of Cuba like Russia and Spain lead in immigration numbers (datosmacro.expansion.com). All of this contrasts with the overwhelming numbers of Canadians, and especially Québécois, who travel to Cuba on a yearly basis. It is a widely known fact that French Canadians prioritize Cuban resorts as their winter destination. The ONEI of the Republic of Cuba reported in March 2020 rising numbers of Canadian visitors up to 1,120,077 in 2019 out of a yearly total of 4,275,558. It is not an overstatement to say that more Canadians visit Cuba on a yearly basis than Cuban émigrés (ONEI 2021). Of these, roughly 40% are of Québécois origin (Van Glabeke 2016). Much like migration, tourism between Cuba and Canada/Québec is a one-way street which exemplifies the predominantly colonialist perceptions that most Québécois have regarding Cuba. While numerous Québécois may gloat about often flying to Cuba, I have been able to assess in private conversations that very few have visited any place other than secluded resorts in the keys along the Cuban shores or the major coastline attractions of the island: Varadero, Santa Maria del Mar, Playa Ancon, Guardalavaca, the northern keys of Holguín and Camagüey, etc. On the other hand, these interactions do little to foster any sense of solidarity or cooperation between these countries' respective constituencies. In sharp contrast with the benevolent light that the Cuban government casts over international tourism as a key factor in the survival of its socialist project, I still retain in my memory the usual quips by Cubans on the island observing how foreign tourists are accomplices that help support the same system they blame for their lack in civil liberties and economic well-being. Nonetheless, these

transnational episodes and statistics are an important historical and sociological background that provide "a structure of meaning to the acts of crossing borders, living in bi-national households, and reproducing transnational social relations" (18-9) as Guarnizo and Smith argue, and as we will confirm, our cinematic voyages explore too through a filmic approach.

1.2 Economic Relations: "From Above" and "From Below"

Economic activities between Cuba, Québec, and Canada subsist today within a complicated transnational ecosystem of foreign trade and diplomatic tensions in the Americas. Since the early days of the Confederation, commerce with Cuba served as an index to gauge the prospect of Canadian interests in the Caribbean and Latin America. But it has also often put Ottawa at odds with Washington as the latter has felt challenged in its influence over the southern countries of the hemisphere by Canada, but also especially by Cuba.

As foreseen by Archibald R.M. Ritter, the present and future state of businesses between Cuba and Canada, and by extension those with Quebec, "(…) will be determined […] by Cuba's economic performance, the policy environment within which Cuba conducts its international economic relations, and the process of normalizing Cuban-United States relations" (Ritter 2009, 246). Despite these entanglements, Cuba constitutes Canada's second largest trading partner and market among nations in the Caribbean and Central America. Total trade between the two countries amounts to over one billion Canadian dollars every year with steady investments principally in mining, agriculture, and food industries, but also power, oil and biogas, machinery and mechanics, biotechnology, medicine and, obviously, tourism (Government of Canada).

Amidst this background, trade between Québec and Havana best exemplifies the push and pull that Cuba's foreign relations inflict in the way it conducts its economic activities. It is safe to

say that, before the US-Cuba thaw initiated by the Obama administration, large companies from Québec conducting business on the island were relatively few in number. The *Groupe Lussier* that imports heavy machinery to Cuba since the mid 1990s is still one of those isolated examples. Undeterred by the aggressive US policing of all economic exchanges with the socialist government of Havana, the *Groupe Lussier* and its Cuban affiliate *Terracam* took upon themselves to absorb Cuba's needs for "trucks, buses, tools and repairment accessories" (Movilla 2016), remedying the lack of a reliable market left by the disappearance of the former USSR. After more than 25 years, the island nation represents 10% of the total business income of the company. Private companies like *Lussier* gained momentum and visibility with rising concern in Canada and Québec that a possible rapprochement between Washington and Havana could possibly lead to the loss of their prominent role as economic partners with Cuba. The creation of the BQLH—Québec's formal representation in the island—was meant to solidify Québécois presence in domains like biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, neuroinformatics, urban agriculture, and others (CCICC, BQLH).

In this "Cuba-US-normalization-induced frenzy," more discreet economic investments on the island gained notoriety and coverage by Canadian media. Real estate investors and independent hospitality enterprises like *Passion Adventours* by Daniel Soucy, Jerôme Hudon's *La Habana Vida* (Lachance 2016), and *La Puerta Rosa* by Jean Fugère (Lanctôt 2019) were and still are routinely portrayed by ICI Radio Canada as examples of Cuba's raw potential for yet untapped resources and infinite investment possibilities. As Daniel Soucy, the owner of an eco-tourism Québécois enterprise operating in Cuba exclaimed enthusiastically in 2016: "(…) *[I]l y a de l'argent à faire (...) Tout est à faire ici*" [There's money to make. All is yet to be made here] (Lachance). These words capture more or less the ideology behind the array of Radio Canada's

articles that, with diminishing frequency, still entice the imaginations of the Québécois entrepreneurial class. With 90% of his clients reportedly from Europe, not Québec nor Canada, Soucy's case among others fans this idea of Cuba as the ultimate investment frontier for transnational capital while concealing the precariousness and legal loopholes faced by these discreet business projects. All things considered, these investment initiatives show several points in common: they all demonstrate a distinct interest for investment in the nascent real estate sector in Cuba, legalized only a couple of years prior in 2011 (El Mundo 2011, Reuters 2011). Secondly, they show how the transnationalism from below that I have been tracing up to here, in its economic variant, is not only an affair of localized dimensions, but one of a marked taste for tapping into the entrepreneurial potential of the domestic realm. Soucy, Hudon, and Fugère's enterprises, are all *"casas particulares"* turned into transnational hubs of transit that cater specifically to the global francophone and Canadian tourists travelling to the island. These agents reconduct transnational economic interactions from the level of the locality to that of the trans-domestic, connecting households and persons within and across Cuban-Québécois borders.

In a telephone conversation during the summer of 2020, the former director of the *BQLH*, Mme. Johanne Desnoyer, indicated that despite knowledge of these activities carried out by Québécois citizens on Cuban soil, neither Québec nor Ottawa have prepared legal assistance or incentives to these forms of investment (Desnoyer, August 26th, 2020). It seems even more contradictory, being as these are the ones that dialogue most closely with the newly-born private sphere in Cuba and indigenous populations writ large. All the cases mentioned above have made Cuba their legal residence for myriad personal and strategic reasons. In doing so, they not only trailblaze for future extractive investments in consortium with Havana's political and economic elites, but they also sometimes become paralegal actors who impact from below, employing local

workforces and implementing grassroots alliances with other private ventures in their area of influence (Lachance). Even recently, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Cuba's projections for tourism hard, Jean Fugère reaffirmed his moral obligation to keep subsidizing the salaries of his employees in Havana, despite not having had one single client since mid-2020. This he said to me the same summer of 2020 during our first conversation at his Montréal residence in the Plateau-Mont-Royal borough (Fugère, June 12th, 2020).

But besides the humanitarian and moral aspects, we are concerned here with no negligible portion of the Caribbean island's labor force and economies. According to a 2017 estimate advanced by the Washington lobby ECC / ECF, 32% of the island's workforce is employed by private entrepreneurs like Fugère, Soucy, and many others, both foreign and local. At least 1/3 of those entrepreneurs invest in hospitality ventures like the ones indicated above, and related sectors like transportation, telecom, etc. (Henken 2017, 1). It bears consideration also that, as reported by the ECF, Cuba boasts one of the most highly educated workforces in the hemisphere, which is also one of the cheapest by most standards. For this skilled workforce, private employment means competitive wages 2 to 16 times higher than those paid by the government (Henken 2). Harshly policed in its homeland and neglected by international actors, a progressive democratization of Cuba must come through the bolstering of this independent economic sphere to counterbalance the centralization of political and economic governance. I am fully aware that the neoliberal appeal of these initiatives could pose serious threats for the stability of the labor force on the island, but my benevolent depiction of these cases is animated by something as simple as just transferring the money directly to Cuban actors without mediation of the state. These figures and considerations could and should be considered by all those foreign partners who, like Canada, Mexico, and the European Union, envision the gradual democratization of

Cuba as part of their missions. Cultural projects like the ones analyzed in this investigation play right into this landscape, too, enabling alternative forms of transnational grassroots civil and cultural diplomacy.

1.3 Cultural Diplomacy: Crafting and Recognizing a Nation between Cuba and Québec

The BQLH is one of five diplomatic representations of the francophone nation in the Americas and the Caribbean. It was inaugurated in 2017 to strengthen the ties between Cuba and Québec through mutual aid toward the former's redefinition of its "economic and social system" and the latter's broadening of its regional agency and international influence (*Gourvernement du Québec* (Québec.ca)). As indicated in the previous section, economic investment, but also "research, innovation and science, sustainable development, culture, education and instruction, (…), energy, environment and the struggle against climatic change, agriculture as well as tourism" constitute the main sectors of bilateral cooperation stipulated in the *Déclaration commune de cooperation Québec-Cuba*, signed between the MRIF and the Cuban MINCEX.

By virtue of this agreement, Québec's influence on the socialist island is channeled through arrangements with state-controlled ministries and institutions. A quick glance to the BQLH's website shows evidence of numerous projects, with a clear cultural and academic penchant, launched since its foundation with Cuban agencies like the CENSA, the ICAIC, the ISA, the OHCH, the UH and others (MRIF). As it should be inferred from this, their impact in society at large and engagement with the private sector remains minimal, especially if we take into consideration the important steps that have been taken towards the legalization of private

entrepreneurship and ownership on the island nation (see Augustin & Semple 2021, Nugent 2021).

Regardless, the presence of Québec in several aspects of Cuban scientific and cultural life has been magnified since the institution of the bilateral agreement and Québec's diplomatic representation. This situation illustrates the usefulness of this newly found cultural diplomacy strategies tying Québec to Cuba. Considered the "third pillar" of many nation states' foreign policy along with security and economics (see Belanger 1999; Mark 2008, Nye & Owens 1996, Potter 2020, and others), culture is one of the few domains the province of Québec has effectively under its total control in its international projection. Security and the economy must remain shared with the federal jurisdiction. This recently discovered impetus of Québec's cultural diplomacy in Cuba would appear to speak in unison to their respective national anxieties in the present context as it has been explained by authors like Louis Bélanger, who has indicated the evident "linkages between culture and foreign policy (…) in a context of growing cultural insecurity" (678). The traditional nationalist appetite of Québec and Cuba's growing concerns about the future of its socio-economic model can be deemed responsible, in part, for the deployment of these new forms of cultural foreign policy. In the case of the aspiring nation that is Québec, it legitimizes its political agency in the design of its foreign policy, a "bottoms-up" instantiation of "cultural statecraft" (Potter, 201) à la Québécoise, to paraphrase author Evan Potter. In the case of Cuba, it confers to its elite a new lifeline in terms of political affiliations and possible economic revenues right when the Trump administration began reverting all the advances achieved in US-Cuba relationships before 2017.

This new development has changed Québec's cultural influence on the island. From its otherwise singular participation in the festivities of the former *Semana de la Francofonía en*

Cuba [the Week of *La Francophonie*] held every year in March since 1995, the now month-long festival has resulted in Québec coming face to face against the historically biggest francophone player on the island: France. Film promotion and distribution has been particularly favored in this sense. Starting in 2019, the *Muestra de cine de Québec en Cuba* [The Showcase of Québécois Cinema in Cuba] was part of the events to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Havana City. The selection of films included varied feature films such as *Laurence Anyways* (Xavier Dolan, 2012) and *Hochelaga, terre des âmes / Hochelaga, Land of Souls* (François Girard, 2017). Film screenings also propitiated other forms of cultural exchange, like when the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema alumnus Pascal Plante travelled to the Cuban capital to present his *opera prima Les faux tatouages / Fake Tattoos* (2017) (Méndez Muñoz, 2019). Through the cooperation of the BQLH, ICAIC, and the OHCH, the Cuban premiere of Plante's film took place in Old Havana's recently inaugurated *Centro de Referencia de los Adolescentes* [Reference Centre for Teenagers], a space for community building and animation for teenagers in one of the poorest municipalities of the capital. Contradictorily, this same municipality is one of those most directly impacted by international tourism, with the highest concentration of colonial architecture and historical sites in the city. Québec, and by extension Canada, was also the first nation of the Global North officially designated guest of honor during the 2020 International Documentary Film Festival *Santiago Álvarez in Memoriam* held in Santiago de Cuba every year. Mme. Desnoyers relayed this information to me during the same phone conversation of summer 2020. The francophone province was also a special guest at the 2017 International Book Fair of Havana dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation (Martínez Hernández & Pérez 2017, Radio Rebelde 2017). It would seem that the place occupied by France as a special ambassador in Cuba of the OIF is slowly but steadily

shared with the French-speaking Canadian province. In the same conversation, Mme. Desnoyers drew my attention toward the existence of official agreements with the SODEC and TELEFILM for film production. Although I could never find any evidence of such agreement in the case of the SODEC, the text of the coproduction agreement between Cuba and Canada for TELEFILM is accessible on their web portal. However, none of the producers and filmmakers I had the chance to interview knew about these agreements and there are no indications that anyone has benefited from them up to this point. The facts remain and speak for themselves. It could seem that the past few years signal the heyday of Cuba-Québec relations. The sheer multitude of cultural diplomacy initiatives that I have summarily described index in turn the depth of political and economic linkages that were established between Havana and Québec City before the pandemic put a halt to all.

1.3.1 Islas Cultura: Latinx Women's Cultural Work and Cuban Domesticity as Infrastructure

Beyond the transnational link offered by the promotion of francophone culture, under the shadow of institutionalized regional and global interests of Québec in Cuba, subsist other unofficial attempts to bridge Cuban and Québécois societies through cultural and civic cooperation. These associations function often through informal constellations nested in the Latinx diasporas in Québec and their ideological and spiritual attachments to what Cuba stands for in the region. No doubt, the project I will discuss in this second part of the chapter pushes even further the potential of non-state agents and their ideations of cultural diplomacy "from below" to "re-imagine what is meant by the idea and practice of cultural statecraft" (Potter, 201),

that is, to advance Canada's and Québec's economic, political, and democratic standing in the international arena from the bottom-up.

I am thinking here about Ximena Holuigue's project *Islas*, which I consider to be an independent project of civil and cultural diplomacy working alongside the shifting contours of the relationships between Canada, Québec, and Cuba. As I intend to discuss, these bridges of cooperation are themselves in essence transcultural and transnational in a sense that exceeds the linear paths between Ottawa and Havana. Nonetheless, they draw all their strength from the tactical association with privately owned businesses and art centers in Cuba lodged in domestic spaces, and self-managed artists' centers in Québec. I position them as the foundation that made possible the filmic projects I offer as main object of this research in later chapters.

On May 17th, 2019, I wandered into a vernissage of an exhibition of contemporary Cuban art in *La Centrale Galerie*/Gallery Powerhouse, and discovered there the existence of a far-reaching Pan-Latinx network of self-managed, not-for-profit artistic agencies working between Cuba and Québec in matters of artistic and audiovisual production and promotion. The project was spearheaded by MHSOC alum, Ximena Holuigue, a second-generation Québécoise of Chilean ancestry, with the help of two Cuban friends and colleagues, Grettel Medina and Cristina Figeroa Vives, both curators and art historians of my university cohort in Havana.

Habana-Montréal: Encuentros de Arte Contemporáneo / Montréal-Habana: Rencontres en Art Actuel was a two-part curatorial and artistic residence cycle held between the two cities. The Québécois chapter took place in May 2019, which I had the chance to attend, and in October-December was the turn for its Cuban instalment. Funded by federal, provincial, and municipal organizations like the CAC-CCA, the MRIF, the CALQ, and the CAM, *Habana-Montréal* linked a network of autonomous cultural workers and centers like Centre Clark, OBORO, and the

Cinémathèque Québécoise in Québec, and *AVECEZ* Art Space, *Estudio Figueroa-Vives* and *Artista x Artista* in Cuba. During the two-week, tightly packed schedule that I witnessed, many of Montréal's art spaces became a showcase for the state of contemporary art in Cuba and the platforms to debate and understand also the place of artists and cultural workers in the rising private cultural scene on the island.

Habana-Montréal remains one of the most ambitious projects undertaken by Holuigue, a self-made woman entrepreneur, and her not-for-profit enterprise *Islas*. Throughout the years, Ximena has attracted an all-female team of Cuban curators, designers, and PR specialists dispersed between Québec, the US, Cuba, and Spain. Her affection for the island and her mission to work there stems from her childhood years and was solidified with her graduation project at Concordia University. When her family left Chile during Pinochet's dictatorship, they were split in two branches: one transplanted to Québec, and the other one opted for socialist Cuba. Ximena fondly remembers still her frequent visits to Havana as a child. There she got to live publicly in her parents' mother tongue and enjoyed the mirage of the kind of Latino familiarity and life her parents had in Chile, had lost in their migration process, and had told her about in stories many times over. Cuba became thus for her a homeland by proxy and, from her nuclear family living there, an extended adoptive family of Cuban aunts, uncles, and cousins, as she calls them, was created eventually. When the time came for choosing a topic for her graduation documentary in 2004-5, she decided to focus on the lives and struggles of fishermen in Cojímar, a district sitting in the eastern shores of Havana City. There she lived with them for over a month until the completion of the short film and her graduation.

"Talking a lot about art and talking a lot about culture in Cuba and here in Canada in general (…) I started seeing the amazing potential that there was truly a need for establishing and

maintaining, for the long term, a cultural bridge" (Holuigue, June 6th, 2019). Ximena told me one sunny afternoon sitting across from me at the former Gypsy Kitchen+Bar of the Plateau, now rebaptized Name's on the way. Years after that first creative and cultural immersion on the island with her documentary, Holuigue was appointed as cultural liaison for the Canadian delegation to the director of the 2015 Havana Biennial, Jorge Fernández. This happened during Stephen Harper's years as Prime Minister (2006-2015), and relations between Ottawa and Havana were profoundly neglected. Most of Ximena's work for the Biennial was conducted blindly without cultural attachés in the Canadian Embassy in Cuba nor official Québec representation to the island. In turn, she had to rely heavily on the intel and local social capital she had previously amassed in travels to Cuba since she was a child. Like she told me that day, jokingly, she had been acting as Canadian cultural envoy many times already, just unpaid. It dawned on me that, jokes aside, Ximena was probably very self-aware of the optics and the value that her involvement in Cuba had for Canada's / Québec's cultural investments in the island. As a second-generation immigrant, a woman of color totally fluent in Spanish, French, and English, Holuigue was perhaps the ideal embodiment of Canada's multiculturalist projections overseas and living proof of the success of Québec's intercultural accommodations for newly arrived.

Right after the Biennial, *Islas* made it its mission to "[encourage] collaboration and coproduction [of] projects that hire and give visibility to the diverse communities across the island (and) its Cuban diaspora" (www.cubaislas.com), as it read on its old website. Bilateral relations have improved greatly after the Harper years and since those first instances, now, the CBC, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and the Documentary Channel are but a few of the partners she has attracted to invest and work with private agents in the socialist nation.

The same way that *Islas* has served to deepen and complexify Ximena's relationship with Cuba—she is presently completing the process to become a permanent resident and future Cuban national—it has also served over the years to ground the transition from Havana to Québec of several other migrant women. In Montréal, traditionally, Ximena has had the punctual support of a fluid group of Cuban women, all art historians, all curators, too, who have served with *Islas* temporarily and in different capacities, just as diverse as were also their levels of integration and/or belonging to both Cuba and Québec. When I encountered *Islas' Habana-Montreal* in the spring of 2019, the team was mainly composed of Raquel Crespo, a master's student from Cuba recently arrived in Canada, Veronica, a Cuban-Canadian art historian who had previously emigrated to Vancouver and then to Montréal, and Analays Alvárez, an Art History PhD living and studying in Québec since 2006.

As they all reported to me one cold winter night in December 2019, *Islas* was a two-way bridge back to and from Cuba. It demanded of Raquel, for example, an engagement with Cuba that she felt she had left behind willingly when she emigrated from her home country, and one that she didn't want anymore. The project benefited immensely from her recent knowledge of the arts field on the island: her connections with curators, institutions, and artists, her knowledge of local mechanisms and procedures, etc. But *Islas* also provided the young student with a compass in a new country and cultural scene where she felt "*bastante perdida, descubriendo*"—pretty lost, still finding her footing (Raquel Crespo, December 2nd, 2019). *Islas* was the platform where she was able to shape her migrant self and recast her identity from Cuban to a Latinx curator and researcher, more mobile, more worldly, and with different horizons. Through her involvement with Holuigue's *Islas*, Raquel projected a future of profesional diversification and new ambitions: *"Yo necesito (...) empezar a trabajar no solo con Cuba, con Latinoamérica, con el*

Caribe y las relaciones de Cuba con esos territorios. Incluso la relación de Cuba con el mundo, que me interesa más ahora mismo. [I need (…) to start working not only on Cuba, but on Latin America, the Caribbean, and the relationships of Cuba with those territories. Even working on the relationships between Cuba and the world, that is more interesting to me right now.]" (Raquel Crespo, December 2nd, 2019)

For others, like Analays, it offered them a landline in Montréal to reconnect with an intellectual and artistic background they thought already lost forever after several years of migration: *"Yo sobre todo quería informarme y compartir un poco mi experiencia y mis conocimientos, pero sobre todo ponerme al día con respecto a lo que pasa.* [I mostly wanted to gather information and share a bit of my experience too, but overall get up to date to what is happening right now.]" (Analays Álvarez, December 2nd, 2019). In general, it becomes clear how Ximena's venture casts a light on different stages and life experiences of the migrant Latinx/Cuban woman in Québec and Cuba. But it also secures, at varying levels, professional and personal futures on both sides.

Besides these positive stories, the professed statement and inherent dynamics of Ximena's *Islas* have corroborated too the imbalances in institutionalized support that non-official actors working between Québécois and Cuban constituencies experience. In its short history, *Islas* has confronted several times the prevailing power asymmetries and mobility differences that varyingly affect individuals hailing from the Global North and the Global South. Independent curators Christina Figueroa-Vives (*Estudio Figueroa-Vives*) and Lillebit Fabraga (*Artista x Artista*), accompanied by Grettel Medina—affiliated then to the CEDAV in Havana—were the only ones able to travel to Montréal during those spring days of 2019 to attend the events. Happening at the height of what is now known as the "Havana Syndrome" diplomatic fright (see

Baloh & Bartholomew 2020, Entous & Anderson 2018, Aristi & others 2022), the Canadian consulate was closed and application procedures for the obtainment of visas was virtually halted on the island and deferred to its homologue in Mexico City. As a result, all invited artists for artistic residences in Canada that year were left behind in their home country waiting for procedures that took longer than usual and burdened with accrued costs as they had to factor in supplementary Mexican visas and travels. In some cases, the Canadian consulate in Mexico flatly refused to grant the visas to those who didn't have proof of legal residence in Mexico.

Throughout the inaugural vernissage, and in most events after that, one could see the Cuban curators reporting live back to their associates in Cuba. When connectivity in Havana allowed it, it was not uncommon to see Figueroa, Medina or Fabraga walking around in the different galleries with their phones high over their heads juggling their personal communications, "showing" their colleagues in Cuba the development of the activities and rehearsing *ad hoc* WhatsApp-mediated networking meetings between Cuban creators back home and local audiences. The night when a Cuban video art show was inaugurated at the *Cinémathèque*, those like me, who made their way back to OBORO to participate in the reception taking place afterwards, were greeted by the tongue-in-cheek volumetric video installation on its façade that declared the space the *ipso facto* Embassy of Canada in Cuba. Montréal-based video-mapping artist Danny Perrault conceived this piece as a response to the absence of his Cuban partner in the project, Milton Raggi, thereby questioning the physical, bureaucratic, and logistical borders that taxed independent cultural work between Cuba and Canada.

Furthermore, OBORO was not only the ad hoc Canadian Embassy to Cuba. The artist-run center was also doubling down as the temporary residence of the Cuban curators. Only a couple

meters away from the exhibition hall, Cristina, Grettel, and Lillebit had their luggage, beds, and daily necessities. In the same space where they met with local curators and artists, they received personal visits and slowly but steadily accumulated the items they planned on taking with them back to Cuba: groceries, clothing, appliances, etc. On the one hand, thanks to *Islas*, OBORO turned into a multi-sedimented space that was metaphorically a site of diplomatic contestation against the treatment that Cuban intellectuals and artists received from the Canadian government. On the other, it embodied a contradictory symbol of Canadian and Québécois inclusiveness and interest in cultural investment on the socialist island, given the support not only of the artist-run centers but also the plethora of federal and provincial arts councils financing the operation. Underneath it all, the professional environment that is OBORO was also the space where the management of a transnational artistic project cohabited with an impromptu home made for migrant female workers visiting Montréal, where they recreated a type of public domesticity that gave locals both an idea of a Cuban migrant household and its outward transnational projection.

A different picture arose when it was time for the Montréal contingent to travel to Havana. On the island, *Islas'* commitment to work and invest in domestic spaces-turned-private enterprises has been long-established and well-documented. Besides the institutional support *Islas* found in the CEDAV and the Centre for Contemporary Art *Wifredo Lam* for this project, its most recurrent associates were self-managed independent art spaces and neighboring *casas particulares* and *paladares.* This was the case of *Avecez* Art Space—a Spanish wordplay that translates literally as Sometimes Art Space—an on-again off-again art gallery that is also the home to the Cuban curator Solveig Font, the gourmet fusion restaurant *Grados* run by chef Raul Hernández González (a.k.a. Raulito Bazuk, the "alpha chef," as Holuigue calls him), and *Casa*

Graciela, an Airbnb located right above Solveig Font's exhibition space named after its proprietor.

Collaborating with self-managed rental places and restaurants in Havana responds to Holuigue's tactical thinking to make her project profitable, but also has concrete beneficial impacts for Cuban non-state partners, too. This mode of operation puts in motion a synergy that fosters the creation of a transnational artistic community, feeding off the existing cooperation between on-the-ground enterprising agents. When said connections don't exist, *Islas'* needs help create them out of necessity. Ximena's first concern was always to look after the unrestricted mobility of the visiting artists from Montréal in an urban context where public transportation is as affordable as it is scarce and unreliable. As a result, all artists visiting Havana were placed in venues near the sites where their artworks would be exhibited. This allowed them to navigate promptly a city that was unknown to many of them. A second consideration was the access that Cuban partners should have to their Canadian collaborators. A stay in a hotel could result in locals not always being allowed in for visits or working sessions[xi]. As Ximena explains: "The truth is that this organic way of producing and designing logistics in Cuba is something that I do now only after having learned how to take into account all these elements." But she also reflects, these factors are not self-evident to everyone:

> Working with curators and cultural workers there you eventually realize that they work in a very organic, strategic way, but they wouldn't even talk about it. Why did you choose this or that place to lodge foreigners? Because of a number of reasons that are determined by things very specific to Cuba only (Interview with Ximena Holuigue, March 11th, 2021).

[xi] Since 2008 Cubans are allowed to stay in resorts that were previously only reserved for international tourism, but still, bookings by foreigners who will be staying with nationals are looked at with a magnifying glass and require a prior registration of the person or persons in question. All this is to prevent prostitution according to the Cuban management. While some hotels may look the other way, usual travelers who have business or sentimental partners on the island recommend that if you want to entertain locals while you travel to Cuba, *casas particulares* are the safest option. As an alternative, sites like Tripadvisor host discussion feeds where foreigners indicate hotels with "benevolent" attitudes towards foreign-national encounters (e.g., www.tripadvisor.ca "Can Cuban Citizens Stay in Resorts with Foreign Partners").

Finally, this also precipitates local liaisons of isolated entrepreneurs to help them find strategic alliances in a nascent private sector that is extremely atomized and with little public power. For instance, Solveig's *Avecez* Art Space has often worked with Raulito's *Grados* restaurant several blocks to the northeast in the same municipality, El Vedado. They have designed together thematic menus and the seasonal remaking of the graphic image of the *paladar*. Graciela, the owner of the namesake hostel *Casa Graciela*, and Solveig, though separated by only a couple of flights of stairs, had barely even talked to each other, despite being two neighboring businesswomen.

Besides running a *casa particular,* Graciela is the head of the institutionalized neighborhood watch, or *CDR* in its original Spanish (Committee for the Defense of the Revolution). Most Cubans have grown skeptical of their CDRs, usually perceived as watchdogs and whistleblowers (*chivatos*) working for the Cuban intelligence and the police. When Ximena convinced Solveig to place some of the artists in *Casa Graciela,* it meant that the Québécois would have expedited contact with *Avecez* Art Space, but it also animated a conversation between the two entrepreneurs with significant impact for the project's visibility within the neighborhood. Artists staying in *Casa Graciela* held all their meetings there on the immense terrace overlooking 21st street in El Vedado and the space even became, in time, the object of a performance intervention by Victoria Stanton, a Concordia University faculty member. In turn, Graciela took it upon herself to manage local communications of the project, hanging posters all throughout the neighborhood and in the building, placing signage to help locate the exhibition venue for visitors, and lending her kitchen for Victoria's collaborative performance *Descanse y disfrute / Rest and Enjoy* (Victoria Stanton 2019). This savvy juggling of the political and social specificities of most households and neighborhoods in Havana helped assuage Cuban power

structures who were convinced then of the transparency of the foreigners' presence on the ground. But it also proved to have beneficial results for the local community itself.

In this portrait, the specificities of the domestic space and its dealings—material, ideological, human, and the urban surroundings—is what allows me to think of it as an infrastructure that helps bridge artistic and cultural work from the household, to the local and the transnational level. As Brian Larkin as argued in his book *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (2008), infrastructures are "both technical and cultural systems that create institutionalized structures whereby goods of all sorts circulate, connecting and binding people into collectivities" (6). As Larkin details, they can be "soft" as a particular knowledge, a religion, and "the performance of a cultural style," or they can be more basic materially as in the case of transportation, telecommunications, urban layout, services, etc. (5).[xii] Regardless of their material or immaterial qualities, they "allow for exchange over space, creating the channels that connect urban places in wider regional, national and transnational networks." It is not a matter of metaphor, then, to assume that the use of domesticity in this project acts as an infrastructure in the comprehensive way Larkin advances.

The skillful command of cultural, sociological, and political codes by Ximena, as well as her knowledgeable understanding of the infrastructural shortcomings of Cuba in terms of transportation, lodging, etc., informs her singling out the domestic as the primordial space to

[xii] My proposition of domesticity as infrastructure is equally inspired by AbdouMaliq Simone's conceptualization of people as infrastructure (2004). In similar fashion to Larkin, Simone moves beyond the traditional vision of infrastructures as "reticulated systems of highways, pipes, wires, or cables" (407) to conceive of people's performance of daily actions in the city as a life-giving factor of African cities like Johannesburg. Particularly Simone's notion of human infrastructure is extended in this case to "(…) the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices (…) a platform providing and giving life in the city" (407-8). The strategic use of individual domestic spaces in Havana as it is done by Holuigue and her associates, sees infrastructure in the same manner, only that in this case its effects are felt by human networks way beyond the limits of the city. For more see Simone, AbdouMaliq 2004. "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannerburg." *Public Culture* 16 (3): 407-29.

facilitate the array of micro and macro exchanges that she envisions with her transnational project. *Islas* relies in equal parts on the built walls of the homes that act as hostels, galleries, and cultural centers, their services and affordances, their neighboring dwellings, and their capacity/willingness to interact with those other households. On the other hand, *Islas* must navigate, and turn to its advantage, the cultural and political determinacies that can help the project reach its maximum transnational potential or sink totally under the weight of countless ideological hurdles and human disconnects. Domesticity functions as the infrastructure, the "cultural and technical system," connecting and oiling the flow of people, mostly Latinx women, artworks, and ideas from Québec to Cuba and back. As Ximena would say jokingly, but also in total seriousness, to whomever was willing to listen: "A lot of things [come] out of something as simple as putting artists in specific lodgings" (March 11th, 2021).

The counterpoint logic of transnational artistic production vis-à-vis local homemaking histories and economies is reproduced, too, through the artworks developed under the umbrella of this project. With the aforementioned *Descanse…* Stanton established a conversation with the private homes that invited her and her hosts' domestic traditions. *Descanse…* exhibits a clear parallel with feminist conceptual artists like Judy Chicago, exploring "domesticity and women's handicrafts as historical forms of artistic expression (…) and (…) non-patriarchal cultures and religions" (Molesworth 1999, 107). In this three-episode performance, the artist infiltrates and mimics her hosts' relationships with the acquisition, preparation, presentation, and consumption of food. The first installment took place in *Avecez* Art Space (07/11/2019), the second at *Casa Graciela* (09/11), and the third at the *Grados* Restaurant (14/11), which also doubles as the house of Raulito's mother.

Each episode began with a trip to one of El Vedado's *mercado agropecuario* or *candonga* (farmer's market), where Stanton bought groceries with the appointed host—Solveig first, followed by Graciela, then Raulito. The menus were conceived during the act of purchasing the available produce and all of it was paid for by Stanton. Following directions by her hosts, Victoria had to rely on what they knew could be doable with what they managed to find in the market those precise dates. As Ximena pointed out, it didn't make much sense to have anything pre-fixed in mind, because you might arrive to the *mercado* only to find that none of the items imagined for the menu were on the stands that day. Back at the venue, Victoria put herself to work with, respectively, Solveig, Graciela, and Raulito as they prepared the dishes while entertaining the guests/spectators. Finally, they all sat down to eat, feasting on local traditional delicacies like appetizers of *harina con huevos fritos y chicharritas de malanga* [polenta with fried eggs and edo chips] and main dishes of *ropa vieja* [Cuban pulled beef or pork in a tomato-based hearty broth], *tostones* [fried green plantains], and *arroz moros y cristianos* [rice and black beans].

The reenactment of everyday domestic practices interrogates Victoria's privilege—that of a White Canadian woman in the Cuban context—and her personal, culturally assumed notions of abundance confronted with "the parameters of this (Havana's) specific context: namely being a place where resources (food among them) are not always readily available" (Victoria Stanton 2019). For this event, the author dwells again within the confines of one of the poetic axes of her performance practice, that of relational aesthetics anchored at the intersections of social practice and the gift economy. As with similar experiences in Copenhagen (2018) and in Montréal (2019), Stanton summons during the process questions and site-specific histories of care, as well as a reflection on her role as an artist/outsider—sometimes also alien/foreigner—and as

"provider" and conduit for these gestures of joint reproductive and artistic work. The ultimate dimension of the performance finds full meaning especially within the original constellation provided by *Islas,* already acting within the friction zones between transnational cultural industries and domestic, localized economies and labor in Cuba.

If Stanton's performances offer a poetic appropriation, so to speak, of the infrastructural capacity shouldered by domesticity, the Colombian-born, Montréal-based artist Helena Martin Franco, also part of the group of artists taken to Cuba in the autumn of 2019, takes the domestic space and its materiality as a tacit infrastructure. In Havana, Martin Franco presented a three-episode video art installation, part of a larger cycle titled *Cada cama tiene su discurso / Autres lits, autres paroles* [Each bed has its discourse / Other beds, other words] (Helena Martin Franco 2013). In these video-clips, Martin Franco "invades" the bedrooms of anonymous individuals, whose faces we never see, and engages with them in conversations about their personal histories of sexuality, romantic relationships, gender roles and conceptions, erotic episodes in their lives, etc. To incite this conversation, Martin Franco uses the pretext of "la mujer elefante," an alter ego that features recurrently in her works constructed textually by playing with a mixture of gender preconceptions imposed on women originating from the Judeo-Christian tradition, Latinx telenovelas, romantic songs, film, etc. (see: http://fe.helenamartinfranco.com/femme-elephant/). "La mujer elefante" is used by the artist to send her prospective hosts on a journey down their intimate memories, where they reflect about what an elephant woman is, and how this speaks to their personal trajectories as gendered and sexualized individuals.

In Havana, Martin Franco presented the episodes by Daniella, Mauricio, and Pablo, each one of them representing diverse aspects of Latinx sexuality and gender roles traversed by issues like migration, diaspora, interracial and transcultural affective relationships, and others. To

reproduce the intimacy that Martin Franco achieves with her interlocutors in the original videos—she is always in bed, feet together, sometimes under blankets—the digital projector was mounted in Cuba over books on top of Solveig Font's personal bed in her bedroom. Attendants to the exhibition were invited to sit on the bed, reproducing Martin Franco's gesture, and to listen to Daniella's, Pablo's, and Mauricio's "bedroom talk."

Here we see yet another appropriation of domesticity and its mythologies—those of the domestic as the sanctum of sexual intimacy, as a site both of private pleasurable encounters and sexual reproduction—but in this case amplified through technological and artistic mediation. Stories about the fictional "*mujer elefante*," the anecdotes of Martin Franco's interlocutors, their perceptions of culturally constructed femininity, and probably the lived experiences brought by the spectators with them, are juxtaposed and put in dialogue via the physical space of the bedroom and the bed. There we must intuit that they create a palimpsest with those other untold anecdotes of Solveig, the owner of the home/art gallery and the bed that serves as "infrastructural support" to the installation. The material items of the domestic are once again made to act as an infrastructure linking the domestic space in Cuba to Québec to the Latinx diaspora in Canada. It also joins in passing the culturally specific debates and fantasies about gender and sexual identities of women and men of Latin American origin both in Cuba and Canada, in conversation with their intimate practices of pleasure, exile, and transculturation.

Dynamics like the one proposed by *Habana-Montréal* have been susceptible to replication in multiple other cases. *Islas* has become a *de facto* cultural ambassador for the promotion of small-scaled cultural work from Canada and as a vehicle of social economics and empowerment in Cuba. A couple of years prior, Ximena also took CBC's Documentary Channel production of *The Fence* (Viveka Melki, 2020) to Caibarién on the northern shore of the central Cuban

province of Villa Clara. In this case, it was the local *paladar Pocorull* that became the headquarters for the production team and tended to their every need, from catering, to reserving spaces for the Art Direction department, to lending their furniture and cutlery to appear in the film. Undoubtedly, she has carved a space for herself as a mediator and facilitator of these kind of experiences. When the producer of *All You Can Eat…*, Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, searched to launch Ian Lagarde's project in Cuba, it was only natural that one of the first people she turned to was Ximena.

1.4 Conclusions

This chapter has had two main objectives. First, to offer a theoretical framework for the pivotal concepts of this dissertation, namely transnationality and domesticity. Second, I have presented a comprehensive background of the general cadre of Cuban-Québécois relationships, with a particular emphasis on matters of cultural diplomacy, as these precede and inform the cinematic voyages I discuss in this investigation.

As a first salient point, I have demonstrated how the relationships between Québec and Havana are always already transnational in nature, in a way that surpasses the linear path inferred by naming the socialist country and the francophone province in Canada. Whether cinematic, cultural, diplomatic, economic, or social, all linkages between Cuba and Québec are automatically impacted by the international performances and traditional relationships of each one of these political entities with other hemispheric or global actors, such as Canada, the USA, Latin America, *la francophonie*, etc.

Secondly, in discussing the present critical debates on questions of transnationalism, I have placed this research within the arena of "minor transnationalism" or "transnationalism from

below." This conceptual choice is not only a matter of size and scale, or a reference to the secondary relevance that dealings between Québec and Cuba might have. My leaning towards a conceptualization of transnationalism from below is informed by its attention to transnationality as a global phenomenon of minute, personal and local implications, despite traditional intellectual concentration on larger centers of economic power, financial accumulation, and ethnocultural production in analyses of the "transnational." Moreover, especially appealing for me, as I have indicated, is the inclusion in accounts of the transnational from below of households and domesticity as spaces of transnational production and reproduction—discursive, material, and even social. In that sense, in my theoretical annotations on the recent intellectual histories of domesticity, I have privileged those authors that do not subscribe to the traditional ideations of the domestic as merely the space of the private, and that on the contrary, propose a vision of domesticity that is equally linked to the public realm as much as it is a private matter.

That is why my socio-historical portrait of Cuban-Québécois bilateral relations moves constantly from the macro historical perspective of economic deals, diplomacy, etc., to the micro-histories of personal, domestic bridges between the two. Finally, with the extended space devoted to the dynamics of cultural diplomacy between Havana and Québec, I wanted to do justice to unofficial initiatives of cultural diplomacy that I consider pioneers in engaging transnational cultural production from Québec and the domestic and private sector in Cuba. The example of the cultural project *Islas* allowed me to illustrate how this artistic dialogue with private, domestic spaces in Cuba reflects the potentials and shortcomings of cultural diplomacy from the bottom-up. First, I showed how the project is a vehicle of cultural integration and mobility for migrant Latinx women working and living in/between Cuba and Québec. Finally, my intention was to demonstrate how domesticity, in the way it is interpellated by *Islas*, is an

infrastructure both “soft” and hard; an infrastructure that catalyzes a transcultural, artistic conversation between women cultural workers, from their households to the locality, to the transnational.

Chapter Two – Cinematic Voyage 1: *All you can eat Buddha* by Ian Lagarde

The letters sent from Cuba by cinematographer Sergey Urusevsky (*The Cranes are Flying* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1957)) to his wife, Bella Friedman, while he was pre-producing the mythical Cuban-Russian film *Soy Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964) show a man and an artist slowly but surely on the verge of losing his mind. The first epistles he sent his "Belka" from the 9th floor of the *Habana Libre* hotel, formerly the Hilton, (Urusevsky qt. Konovalov 2015, 113) irradiated with the force and the enthusiasm of a militant socialist enthralled by the (almost haptic) presence of the revolution still happening before his eyes: the fiery unending speeches of Fidel Castro and his larger-than-life performances, the remaining traces of political violence and trauma left on the victims of Batista's regime, the masses revolting at every new event of U.S. aggression against the new political order, etc. And the heat everywhere, the density of the humid, torrid, tropical air "(…) [was] so real that you could climb on it, like on steps, higher and higher (…)" wrote Urusevsky. "I'm starting to believe!" (Urusevsky qt. Konovalov, 112) the idealist Russian photographer announced in his first letter.

This initial feeling quickly gives way to his resenting the endless parade of scenes, characters, places, official dinners, nightclubs, stories, and the discreet shopping sprees that allegedly pleased Kalatozov (130) and that the Cuban partners kept putting in front of them as part of the "revolutionary tourism package" assembled to help the Russians find inspiration and establishing shots for their future tropical story. It wouldn't be an overstatement to speculate that, in good part, the dizzying takes and dazzling points of views of Cuban reality rendered by Urusevsky and Kalatozov derived from their "bird's eye view" vision of the island, perched as they were in lofty hotels for most of their stay, and carted in modern Cadillacs from

neighborhood to neighborhood, and city to city.[xiii] Besides this "mandated tourism," another source of discontent for Urusevsky was his initial incapacity to "mold" Cuba to his vision, to "domesticate" the unruly tropicality of an island that defied any vision or plan devised by his Russian Cartesian mentality: the disorganized swarms of extras who failed to understand or follow directions given in Russian (129), the Cuban cities that resembled all "very Hispanic villages as I imagine them" (129), the sticky fingers of curious Afro-Cuban children that soiled his lenses, touching them when he was not attentive (133), and, finally, the Cuban shanty towns that stubbornly kept disappearing before his eyes (124), swept away by the momentum of the Revolution that changed it all.

These peculiar encounters between deterritorialized film labor, tourism dynamics, left-leaning transnational solidarity and worldmaking, and local acts of resistance in the face of transnational productive forces is what lies at the bottom of the main object of study of this chapter. The first cinematic voyage that I set out to engage fully in the following pages is *All You Can Eat Buddha*, the first fiction feature by Québécois cinematographer and director Ian Lagarde. Unlike Kalatozov and Urusevsky, Lagarde's film went on location to Cuba without the amenities of official welcomes. However, like the Russian cinematographer, from the inception of his project Lagarde observed with preoccupation the potential symbiosis between cinema and

[xiii] In Urusevsky's letter of November 29th, 1961, he describes point by point the popular demonstration that became the funeral of the "*alfabetizador*" (voluntary instructor of the 1961 Cuban campaign against illiteracy) Manuel Ascunce Domenech, as it was witnessed by him and the rest of the Russians in the Habana Libre Hotel from the 17th floor (Urusevsky, 135). His rendition of the event is quite similar to the final scene of the third segment of *Soy Cuba*, when the camera walks up a building, then traverses a series of labyrinthine apartments and factory halls and finally leaps out a window following a flag floating over the populace that carries the coffin of Enrique, a revolutionary student killed minutes before in the film. Other traces of touristic life in Cuba, as it was witnessed by Urusevsky and his colleagues, made their way into the film and might explain why the first story is so keen in depicting rowdy hotel parties, lethargic pool scenes, frenzied nightclubs and neon-lit street scenes, too. This, of course, is a personal reading that has little evidence other than Urusevsky's letters. It would make for a fascinating project, though, to see how much of 1960 Cuba's tourism influenced the vision of Kalatozov and Urusevsky during the making of their second, most notorious film.

tourism. For the Québécois artist, making a satire with surrealist hints of the perverse incentives baked into the global tourism sector was the essential concern that transpired narratively in his overseas film project. Alongside this, at every step of the production critical tactics were employed to minimize feeding into exploitative aspects of standardized mass tourism while on a foreign shoot, particularly in a location like Cuba with the connotations it carries for international tourism as it is practiced by large numbers of Québécois tourists.

In this chapter I will use the concept of ludic resistance to signify those strategies used to make space for playfulness and defiance in transnational filmmaking and touristic practices. Ludic resistance, as I will detail at length later, recognizes the subversive, revolutionary aspects of play, pleasure, and solidarity in location film work. It advocates for adopting unsanctioned paths of creative action while working on location, making sensible use of local workforces, sustainable exploitation of resources, and, especially considering deterritorialized film labor, a path to transcultural collaboration and material solidarization with the Other, despite class, gender, language, and race differences.

My intention is to utilize this concept of ludic resistance to change our traditional conceptions of film locations across the globe, and the transnational media labor exercised in them, as integral agents of global exploitation and subjugation. That is why I will be engaging with the concepts of "media heterotopias" (Chung 2012, 90; 2018, 2) and "greenfield locations" (O'Regan & Ward 2010, 80) as important previous attempts that have called our attention toward the unbalanced relationships involved in offshore filmmaking. In my understanding of these important concepts which have recent critical traction in transnational media and film studies, what is lacking is, essentially, the capacity for agency of the laboring subjects to discern, refashion, talk back, and subvert the oppressive powers that shape their embodied practices in

production sites scattered across the planet. Both theoretical constructs describe global media industries as a propitious landscape for unjust trade, labor, and economic agreements that usually leave subaltern individuals on the receiving end of these deals to bear the brunt of neo-colonial traditions of exploitation and the ups and downs of changing landscapes of media economies.

The concept of greenfield locations is anchored in the alleged dependability of often precarious national media industries on global flows and trends in transnational film ventures or, conversely, their capacity to adapt to and cope with the latter. Authors Susan Ward and Tom O'Regan specify that greenfield locations are:

> …[Places] for film and television productions, whether domestic or international, to go "on location." Predicated on the fly-in-fly-out logics, such places *combine certain forms of expertise and facilities, which can be "added to" by typically above-the-line and some below-the-line production workers.* Greenfield locations (…) are almost wholly dependent upon film and television production generated elsewhere. They do not have the depth or breadth of a substantial local film and television production industry that would allow them to generate their own content to fall back on. Instead, their ongoing viability is tied to peripatetic film and television producers going on location *to use facilities, service providers, film workers and natural and built environments*. (Ward & O'Regan 2010, 80, emphasis added)

Now certain emendations need to be made here. Talking about Cuba as a peculiar instance of greenfield location, as it is tacitly described by Ward and O'Regan, would apply mostly to the recent history of the country and its media industries. Havana may never have had the international projection that big global cities like New York, Paris, London, or Beijing have had in the production and circulation of film and television. However, it did have a robust domestic industry that generated a faithful local audience and, for a part of its history, was largely a revolving door for Latin American and left-leaning film professionals from across the globe, not only for film and media production and consumption, but also for film education.[xiv] But, as I will

[xiv] For more on the strength of the domestic film and media industry, the foreign projection of Cuban industry professionals, and the prominence of film education in Cuba and its international impact see for instance: Chanan,

indicate below, from 2015 to 2017 Havana's landscapes, its skilled technicians, its traceable history in terms of the film industry, and its reputation as a safe country in the region singled it out as an important site for travelling film projects, especially North American ones.[xv] For the sake of this research, though, I will pay attention particularly to "below-the-line" workers and service providers, who helped in the filming of *All You Can Eat…* I'm talking here about owners of *casas particulares*, managers of *paladares*, freelance technicians and cinematographic services providers (also knows as fixers or field producers), all of whom were instrumental elements in aiding the Québécois creatives maintain their critical stances vis-à-vis the pernicious loop between transnational cinema and tourism and embrace fully their sustainable, ethical ways of creating and living temporarily in Cuba. I will build upon this line of thought further, but my main point is to locate in the greenfield location that might be Cuba the myriad human and affective connections that bring together laboring subjects in transnational film settings. In other words, how the relevance of a greenfield location can be appreciated differently when symbolic, ideological, and affective matters come into play despite the obvious infrastructural shortcomings and logistical problems that some transnational film sites can present.

The concept of media heterotopias will help us visualize the rhetorical and material erasure of the time, resources, and labor consuming processes of joining disparate geographies, filming

---

Michael. 2004. *Cuban Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Humphreys, Laura-Zoe. 2019. *Fidel Between the Line. Paranoia and Ambivalence in Late Socialist Cuban Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press; Rivero, Yeidi. 2015. *Broadcasting Modernity. Cuban Commercial Television*, *1950-1960*. Durham: Duke University Press; Balaisis, Nicolas. 2013. "The School of Every World: Internationalism and Residual Socialism at EICTV." In: M. Hjort (ed.) *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas*, 185-201. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, and Zarza Blanco, Zaira. 2015. *Roots and Routes: Cuban Cinemas of the Diaspora in the 21st Century*. Doctoral Thesis, Queen's University.

[xv] Besides the Québécois films and series going to film in Cuba that I have mentioned in the previous chapters, the last years of the Obama administration saw a rising number of American and Canadian "on-location" projects in the largest of the Antilles, like *Transformers: The Last Knight* (Michael Bay, 2017), the reboot of TV series *MacGyver* (2016-2021) in its first episode of the second season "DIY or Die" (Stephen Herek, 2017), Netflix's *The OA* (2016-2019),*Papa: Hemingway in Cuba* (Bob Yari, 2015), and *The Fate of the Furious* aka *Fast and the Furious 8* (F. Gary Gray, 2017). This last one coincided temporally with the shooting stages of *All You Can Eat*… as I will analyze further along.

locales, and cinematic industrial traditions through the process of digital compositing channeled through transnational pipelines of visual effects and audiovisual post-production. Hye Jean Chung conceptualizes media heterotopias as:

> [The] spatial conception of cinema that charts the global movement of bodies, resources, images, and commodities. They can be envisioned as maps, in which different territories are merged as composite, mobilized into closer proximity with one another, or linked via globally dispersed production pipelines (…) [M]edia heterotopias are created through a labor-intensive production process that involves location shooting and various forms of digital filmmaking, editing, and remastering in geographically diverse production sites. (2018, 45)

This concept is significant for my argument as it considers that cultural and geographical determinants are important for understanding the material, labor, and ideological frictions generated by transnational media flows and production. The concept of media heterotopias is inspired by Michel Foucault's seminal idea of heterotopias, which are "other sites" (1986, 24) that serve to mirror, comment, and virtually reconstitute the world of human action—prisons, boarding schools, nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, etc. For Chung, Foucault's heterotopias are not unlike the CGI specialist who digitally alters the material captured in the realm of the real to make it something else. My intervention within this scholarship aims to give further voice to the subaltern laboring bodies in these other spaces of cross-cultural encounters vehiculated through the pre-production and production of transnational films. Although Chung's analysis is very detailed in her inclusion of visual effects specialists, digital artists, sound editors, and others (all involved in post-production in her case studies), I will turn my attention primarily to the on-location filming process and the personnel involved there. Chung looks exhaustively to the profilmic and the digital coming together to give the seamless idea of a unified artistic, economic, and technological world expressed through film. I intend to focus on the realm of what I would call the para-filmic, those gaps, pockets, folds, and shadowy aspects of Chung's

heterotopic analysis that are never made visible in the final virtual world of the film, but that are equally constitutive of it, like those who care for and tend to the creative personnel working on location and serve as essential components for their work and well-being, but are rarely part of the account of how the film got made.

I want not only to insist on the cumbersome and asymmetric processes that burden the individuals working in filming locations where diverse cultures, languages (both vernacular and technical), economic schemes, and cultural productive histories temporarily coexist. Rather, I turn this narrative upside down and examine how the conjunction of these specificities impact globalized media production spaces and flows, turning them into sites of transnational collaboration, identification, and affective care amongst otherwise unrelated bodies and ideologically diverse parties. I will foreground how the material conditions of living, housing, caring for and nurturing the artists working in global film locations like Cuba inform the resulting films. I'll be looking for signs of these activities and specially how they serve to counter mainstream narratives about the homogenizing nature and exploitative effects of tourism's capital in our media economy landscapes. Why shouldn't we think that in these pockets we might find a nucleus of resistance, camaraderie, and affection, a space where transnational human and labor relations across the north-south divide can be altered and refashioned efficaciously and for positive effects? [xvi] Inspired by these two concepts, I will emphasize those

[xvi] In this regard, the concept of contact zone advanced by Rossen Djagalov and Masha Salazkina is useful as well to think of transnational cinematic interactions that question the "'colonizer-colonized', 'center-periphery'" dichotomy (Djagalov & Salazkina 2016, 280). Although focused on the realm of film festival and cinema circulation, Djagalov's and Salazkina's historicization of the Tashkent film festival as a contact zone between Second World and Third World cinema professionals, oeuvres, and theories demonstrate the "variety and instability of hegemonies at play" (281) in the Soviet cultural terrain. As the authors underline, "solidarity in the common struggle against Hollywood [and] western domination" was a paramount factor in the cinematic relationships generated at this film festival despite the obvious imbalances between Soviet authors and those coming from the so-called Third World. For more about this see Djagalov, Rossen and Salazkina, Masha. 2016. "Tashkent '68: A Cinematic Contact Zone." *Slavic Review* 75, nº 2 (summer 2016): 279-98.

gaps of resistance, playfulness, solidarity, and subversion present in the production axis created in the transborder filmmaking between Cuba and Québec. I will argue that the capacity of foreign film ventures to carve out of a Cuban greenfield location a "directorial vision"—i.e., a media heterotopia—is challenged and nuanced by the fluidity and force of local labor practices, housing choices, economic imperatives that come with those choices, the racialized and gendered nature of the bodies involved, and the aural and visual stimuli that end up rendering the pre-production and production stages of the film more complex.

I offer the concept of ludic resistance to nuance our understanding of greenfield locations and media heterotopias. It alludes to those forms of being and creating in the world that feed off of inventing, adapting, molding, and refashioning sanctioned paths, relations, and forms of production. Most of the time, through ludic resistance, demands for productivity and standardized performance are subverted or downplayed both by foreign investors going on location and by native hired workforces. The case of *All You Can Eat…* also demonstrates the flexibility of domestic hospitality enterprises in Cuba in developing skills, adapting spaces, and employing local knowledges and workers through different forms of engagement to meet the needs of foreign film enterprises. However, I also contend that such flexibility results from a surplus of the development of multiple gestures of transcultural and gendered identifications, acts of solidarity, and material care between otherwise unrelated laboring subjects working on location.

Ian Lagarde's *All You Can Eat…* is essentially a twisted fable about international tourism that suspends its moral at the end. In certain ways, it is also the ultimate product of our contemporary obsessions with worldly mobility and transborder ambitions. This first fiction film had both its world and domestic premieres at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)

2017 and went on to receive the Borsos' Best Feature and Best Director Awards at the Whistler Film Festival of the same year, along with the Gilles-Carle Prize during the *Rendez-Vous du Cinéma Québécois* in 2018.[xvii] Described by *The Hollywood Reporter* as a "disquietingly strange tale (…) at once political and intestinal" (Van Hoeij, 2017), *All you can eat…* accumulated domestic critical acclaim and was nominated in several categories at the Canadian Screen Awards and the Prix Iris while it made its way through the international festival circuit in cities like Rotterdam, Mumbai, Montréal, La Rochelle, Austin, and others. The international trail of *All You Can Eat…* consolidated Ian Lagarde's success as director on top of his already fruitful career as a cinematographer on films such as *Vic+Flo ont vu un ours* / *Vic+Flo Saw a Bear* (Denis Côté 2013), which received the Alfred Bauer Silver Bear at the 2013 Berlinale, and *À tous ceux qui ne me lisent pas* / *For Those Who Don't Read Me* (Yan Giroux 2018).

One could argue that the film delves further into Lagarde's critical explorations of the North American middle-class psyche, and its material and iconographic obsessions steeped in excess. Whereas his celebrated directorial debut, the documentary *La Savane Américaine* / *American Savannah* (2008), explores the bourgeois North American obsession with lush, picture-perfect, green lawns as a class marker, *All You Can Eat…*'s bizarre narrative places resorts and tourist kitsch at the center of a metaphor about surplus, consumption, the search for ultimate fulfillment, and exhaustion as indicators of middle-class upwardly aspirations. Throughout the film we accompany Mike (Ludovic Berthillot), a reclusive, mild-mannered yet magnetic tourist, on his visit to the resort *El Palacio*, an all-inclusive hotel on an unnamed island in the Caribbean. Blinded by the array of prefabricated amusements and choreographics of care

[xvii] These yearly awards, presented jointly by Bell and Québec Cinéma, are destined to "[honour] the memory of one of Québec's boldest filmmakers", and to recognize the best first or second fictional feature of the year in Québec. See: https://rendez-vous.quebeccinema.ca/prix-et-jurys (Last accessed July 2, 2021, 3:39 PM)

meant to ensure his enjoyment, Mike seems to be interested in only his constant visits to the all-you-can-eat buffet, which punctuate the episodes of the story. A universe of characters that are either fascinated by, accomplices to, or jealous of his cravings gravitate around Mike and his insatiable appetite. There is Valentino (Sylvio Arriola), a *maître d'* with an unending capacity for servitude; Esmeralda (Yaïté Ruiz), an enigmatic, somber chambermaid with a penchant for drawing penises everywhere; J-P Newtown/Jean-Pierre Villeneuve (David La Haye), the resort's MC who resents the spectacle of Mike's hunger for undermining his popularity; and a sentient, giant octopus, a sort of local benevolent spirit, with which Mike establishes a symbiotic relationship. Steadfast in his willing descent into the maelstrom of his desires, Mike's body degrades due to a pernicious gangrene while he devours everything in his path, giving and taking life around him.

As Lagarde has often mentioned, it was important for him to make a point about this atemporal, mythological side of his film. According to the director, the idea behind it was born as he was sunbathing at a Mexican all-inclusive hotel in the early 2000s and wearing a plastic wristband while reading Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* ([1922] 2003). As he remembers, the scene itself conveyed the inherent tension of the tense juxtaposition of "the universe of the profane kitsch of mass tourism and the universe of the sacred kitsch of the *bildungsroman* literature" (Labrecque 2018, 15). That was what led him to conjure up his "exploration of spirituality through the extremes of capitalism" (Interview with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020) as he explained to me while we talked at the park Laurier burdened by an overwhelmingly hot summer day in Montreal. Alongside Hesse's work, one can discern in the movie hints of influences of the same syncretic oneirism present in neo-surrealist works like Fellini's *8 ½* (1963) and Alejandro Jodorowsky's *The Sacred Mountain* (1973). The cinematographic qualities of *All You Can Eat…*

complement this historically vague microcosm, enveloping the luscious tropical environment of the *El Palacio* hotel and its surroundings in opaque, tainted hues of glaucous, powdery light, coupled with camera movements that render homage to John Alcott's deep and haunting pictorial zooms in and out in *Barry Lyndon* (Stanley Kubrick, 1975).

The production of this ambitious project took place in Cuba over the course of 23 days in April and May 2016. The Caribbean destination was singled out as a location over other potential places like the Dominican Republic, Mexico, or even Florida. Producer Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette admits that it was the director's partialness for the island that led them to almost exclusively explore Cuba as a production destination, after several location-scouting trips. Cuba meant a guarantee in advance of proximity and secure, steady access. In those years at least daily flights from Havana to Montréal were common and comparatively inexpensive. Compared to other possible locales like Mexico or south Florida, an additional attraction was the socialist island's image of a "cheaper" setting— "but not so much cheaper than anywhere else" as Lagarde would eventually come to understand. Furthermore, the island was compelling as a shooting location because Cuba's *tout-inclus* are the predominant "sea and sand" playgrounds for numerous Québécois who flee their country during the bitter days of winter. Lagarde was particularly intrigued by the narratives spread by his compatriots who travel on a yearly basis to Cuba, stories that at once stood as a source of knowledge about an "authentic Cuba", and also as testimonies of a total disregard for its population, history, and culture.

With regards to this context Lagarde comments:

> *J'ai toujours cru qu'y a plein de problèmes avec cette idée-là, en croyant qu'en voyagent on va à la rencontre de gens (...) ça m'a toujours fasciné cet univers-là des gens qui voyagent mais qui vont pas du tout à la rencontre du monde, et qui n'ont aucun intérêt. Ils veulent retrouver leur chez-soi dans un contexte tropical*.

> I have always believed that there are a lot of problems with this idea, with the belief that by traveling you meet people (...) I have always been fascinated by this microcosmos of people who travel but who don't actually go the encounter of the other at all, and who have no interest for it. They want to find their home in a tropical context. (Interview with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020)

What Lagarde signals here denotes Canada's and Québec's roles as vital agents of a global advertising machinery that insists on a culture of valuing exoticism while neglecting any form of intimate contact between Cuban and Canadian constituencies. For instance, during the same years he planned his shooting in Havana, the Cuban MINTUR had commissioned Canadian photographer Russell Monk for the images that accompanied its worldwide campaign "*Auténtica Cuba*" (authentic Cuba). In posters that are now fixtures of the urban landscape of Montréal, one would find alternately packed Cuban *fiestas*, bustling refurbished American classic cars, and baseball games populated by locals as the segue way to deserted seascapes inhabited mostly by Caucasian models staging family portraits.

Here again a clear parallelism can be established between the main character of the film, Mike, his fellow tourists, and Hesse's *Siddhartha*. In Hesse's story, Gotama quests for the meaning of his existence and his place in the grand design of life. As his name in the Sanskrit language signifies *siddha* ([that which] accomplishes) and *artha* (what was searched for),[xviii] he is the one who, in his path, achieved self-fulfillment and knowledge. The literary hero also stands as a representation of the historical Buddha, who, before his enlightening, was named Siddhartha Gautama. In Lagarde's Caribbean translation of the Buddhist mythology, vacationers promenade around in the labyrinth-like, canopy-covered paths of the peculiar resort, and one can't help but wonder how much of that experience is dictated by a genuine will to seek a deeper understanding of the self and the others. How is it not just their inability to break the inescapable entropy and

[xviii] https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/siddha

limits of their existence? It is not an accident that Mike's meanderings in the film appear only as pauses between the inevitable gravitations to the dining hall, where limitless eating doesn't translate automatically as a pleasurable act, and the pool, which functions as a place where he and other vacationers simply float in a coexistence that doesn't instill gathering or community building.

By the time the initial development stage for the shoot started, Havana's notoriety as a greenfield location was highly developed. After decades of prohibition, a large number of American film and television productions were allowed to film on the island for the first time. The Obama administration's more conciliatory approach to Cuba was then at its peak and audiovisual outsourcing to Cuban shores trailblazed the USA's soft-power diplomacy *vis-à-vis* Raul Castro's presidency. Throughout the days that the crew of *All You Can Eat…* spent working in Havana, they lived under the shadows of *The Fate of the Furious* (F. Gary Gray, 2017), the highly publicized, mega production of the 8th episode of the *Fast and the Furious* franchise. The pre-production agents for *Fast and the Furious 8* sought the help of the Mexican company Ithaca Films to mediate with ICAIC and other governmental agencies in Cuba. The directive of the Mexican organization was to secure permits, scout locations, relay demands, cast local experts and extras, and negotiate security concerns on behalf of the Americans, which made it a large-scale regional affair. Furthermore, location manager Eric Hooge boasted regularly about how they had to swarm Cuban locales with items directly imported from the US on a cruise ship docked in Havana's port, which he compared with nothing less than the Allies' invasion of the shores of Normandy during WWII (Hooge q.b. Mills 2017). From trucks to VIP restrooms, toilet paper, fuel, and ink, all was brought to Cuba to shoot an opening sequence of about 8 mins,

along with a 300-member crew and couriers who flew between Havana and the US every time they ran out of something.

Moreover, as Laura-Zoe Humphreys details in her book *Fidel Between the Lines: Paranoia and Ambivalence in Late Socialist Cuban Cinema* (2019), Cuban personnel hired to work in the American project were at once thankful for the advantages they got in terms of salary, access to technology, and professional prestige, and conflicted by the unequal treatment they got on set with respect to the American and Mexican technicians (223-24). In my own interviews with Cuban film workers, I could sense how they were very cautious in their discussions about the ways Cubans were treated on the set of *The Fast and the Furious 8*. Everyone praised the money their colleagues made, the relationships they amassed, and the boost to their careers that came with *F&F8*. But they all alluded, first, to the artistic quality as an issue that most local technicians had against the film; second, to the voracious nature of the shooting that overwhelmed the cultural and logistic life of the city; and finally, to the distinctions made between locals and foreigners, "(…) *como si estuvieran siendo menos*" [as if they were less] as Liz Silva, the assistant to the Cuban Art Director of *All You Can Eat…* told me as she commented on her colleagues' experiences (Interview with Liz Silva, March 9th, 2022).

In a radically different approach compared to *F&F8*, Cuba's profile as a potential "greenfield location" was nuanced by the ideological elaborations of the Québécois creative personnel beyond its material, infrastructural, natural, and industrial attractions. For Lagarde himself, who adopts left-leaning, liberal worldviews and places great importance on his own working-class origins, Cuba and Québec seemed connected by their respective histories of resistance and struggle against a type of North American imperialism. He explains:

> *Pourquoi Cuba ? Parce qu'on avait de liens là-bas. On a beaucoup de liens traditionnels entre Cuba et le Québec surtout toute l'histoire des « felquistes » qui*

> *se sont réfugiés à la Havane dans les années 70s. Et nous autres quand on est petits ça marque l'imaginaire. Et après ça je pense que c'est l'un des endroits le plus visité par les québécois car c'est l'un des endroits les moins chers, où il y a le meilleur deal avec les transporteurs aériens et les complexes hôteliers qui en plus appartiennent aux transporteurs aériens, ce que j'ai découvert quand j'étais là-bas*.
>
> Why Cuba? Because we had ties there. We have many traditional links between Cuba and Quebec, especially the history of the "felquists" who took refuge in Havana in the 70s. And when we were children, it left its mark on our imagination. And after that I think it is one of the most visited places by Quebecers because it is one of the cheapest places, where there is the best deal with airlines and resorts that also belong to the airlines, which I discovered when I was there (Interview with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020).

Since his childhood, sympathy towards the socialist country sprung from the *FLQ* events and, furthermore, steady touristic contacts between Québec and Cuba were also at the base of his location choice. One can note, nevertheless, the continuity, and sometimes even conflict, between ethical and practical considerations. Juxtaposed to the distanced idealization of a heroic, radical Cuban history of solidarity with leftist movements worldwide, the director discerned also a push for capitalization and market liberalization that the example about the hotels and the airlines above demonstrates. "*Tu as l'héritage communiste mais transféré à l'industrie du tourisme de masses*" [You have the communist heritage but transferred to the mass tourism industry] reflected Lagarde (Interview with Lagarde, July 10th, 2020).

Tougas-Fréchette, in turn, would add that even though her experiences with Cuba started with the first scouting trips for *All You Can Eat*…, it took her only one visit to identify the same connection at a cultural and artistic level. In her view, such proximity is more specific to her professional praxis. When it came to art films, Québécois and Cuban film workers saw eye-to-eye, explained Gabrielle. She elaborates:

> *Dès qu'on a mis le pieds là-bas, c'est sûr qu'on a vu qu'on avait une connexion au niveau de la culture. Pas tant que nos cultures étaient reliées mais qu'on avait ce même engouement-là, ce même lien avec le cinéma, ce même désir de faire de l'art.*

> *On s'est très vite rendu compte que le film allait être considéré comme une œuvre, comme un film d'art et pas seulement comme une simple production. À Cuba la culture c'est partout, c'est très important est surtout c'est très valorisé donc on trouvait que c'était l'endroit parfait pour aller faire le film.*
>
> As soon as we set foot there, we saw that we had a connection in terms of culture. Not so much that our cultures were connected, but that we had the same passion, the same love for cinema, the same desire to make art. We realized very quickly that the film would be considered an oeuvre, an art film and not just a simple production. In Cuba culture is everywhere, it is very important and above all it is very valued, so we found that it was the perfect place to make the film (Interview with Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, October 13th, 2020).

I was struck by the producer's unintended reference to the first words of the foundational law of ICAIC. It is now a part of the myth surrounding ICAIC's foundation that, in the law sanctioning the creation of the Cuban film institute, the first phrase was the statement: "*Por cuanto: el cine es un arte*" [Now therefore, cinema is an art].[xix] Her statement reveals how down-to-earth concerns espoused ideological imaginaries that saturate transborder film labor with a different set of values. The selected location site is expected to boost the film's future standing as an auteur, art-house film, given Cuba's cinematic tradition and its reception beyond its own borders. It is not just a fetishized enclave that is exoticized and normalized as a site for consumption and travel and therefore included in a film to realize its sexy, cosmopolitan allure. Field producer Ernesto Leyva goes beyond artistic and political aspects in his vision of why Québécois and Cubans are similar to each other and how that may influence the historical flow of professional film projects that connect Havana and Montréal. In conversations with me over a WhatsApp video-call, he often came back to the point of how much he saw Québécois and Cubans as two peoples with cultural and idiosyncratic affinities. As he explained:

> *[S]omos muy parlanchines ambos, los dos lados. Te cuento una historia. Caminando yo en Montreal, una tarde alguien vino y me tocó el hombro y me dijo: "Señor, su mochila está abierta." Eso nunca me ha pasado en otra ciudad del mundo. Me pasa en La Habana, donde pasa alguien y te dice: "Socio, ¡te van a*

[xix] To read the whole text in its original in Spanish see "Cuba, la ley nº 169" in https://doi.org/10.4000/cinelatino.1735

> *robar!" O en Montreal, donde alguien viene a advertirte. Ese sentido de solidaridad y de resistencia que tienen ambas culturas es también importante. (...) El canadiense, el québécois -no te puedo hablar mucho de otras partes de Canadá porque mi relación es con Québec y es una relación muy muy muy cercana- el québécois es muy muy solidario y pienso que eso es fundamental en la relación de los dos.*
>
> [We] are both very talkative, both sides. I tell you a story. Walking myself in Montreal, one afternoon someone came and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Sir, your backpack is open." That has never happened to me in any other city in the world. It happens to me in Havana, where someone comes by and says, "Socio, you're going to get robbed!" Or in Montreal, where someone comes to warn you. That sense of solidarity and resistance that both cultures have is also important (...) The Canadian, the Québécois - I can't talk much about other parts of Canada because my relationship is with Québec, and it is a very close relationship - the Québécois is very supportive and I think that is fundamental in the relationship between the two cultures (Interview with Ernesto Leyva, March 9th, 2022).

All these statements offer different layers to the factors that propitiate the Québécois selection of Cuba as a prospective greenfield location. There is the valorization that artistic and cinematic culture seem to profit from in Cuba, the history of leftist struggles carried by both constituencies in varying degrees, the steady touristic flow that bridges the two nations, and the ideological, cultural, and even embodied contacts that Leyva exemplifies. It is in these examples that I demonstrate how the profile of a greenfield location is sketched by much more than infrastructural, legal, and technical facilities. This case shows how going on location attends to affective and idiosyncratic issues that confer the project a near utopian world-making character mediated by transnational artistic collaboration. Once in the field, however, the realities of producing and working in Cuba proved to be more complex than the conceptual visions that made it a suitable destination.

2.1 Play and *Choteo* in Media Heterotopias

Calculating idiosyncratic, ethical preferences and economic constraints became the name of the game for much of the cinematographic adventure in Havana. For a film that underlines and satirizes the corrosive effects of mass tourism, the act of imagining the latter was entangled in a circuitous logic of developing tactics for exploring and practicing global media production and movement differently. It became, then, a matter of "playing the systems that be" so to speak, both at a macro and a local level. Creative personnel were confronted with the dichotomy of, on the one hand, exposing and commenting critically on the dehumanized industrialization of hospitality services, the flattening of leisure converted into the passive intake of ready-made spectacles, and, on the other, trying to avoid engaging in these same issues through their own locally displaced cinema praxis.

I utilize play here not only as a form of deviant trickery to achieve a certain goal. On the contrary, play is invoked as a productive and engaged form of adaptability and exploration, or as philosopher Sutton-Smith puts it, a lifetime capacity for reactivity enabling us to "persist in the face of adversity" (1997, 231). Within the context of cinematic voyages, play is a precipitation of the complicity between pleasurable, ludic scenarios and transnational film labor standing in stark contrast to Huizinga's description of play as materially disinterested and opposed to profitability ([1949] 1981, 13). Rather, my sense of play, as I read it into this film and its completion, arises from the possibility of its political capacities to engage with confrontational, unscripted, idealized, and even utopian assembly processes through the dismantling of the inequalities built into the status quo. In summary, play "both builds and reinforces our capacity to conceive utopian versions of our experiences in the everyday world," as explained by the anthropologist Peter Stromberg (2009, 15). It helps motivate questions about power, mobility, agency, and self-

identification for locally dispersed laboring individuals and invites the performance of alternative possibilities of identification and solidarity. Building upon this premise, I will present two distinct aspects of play: its aesthetic capacities and its political potentials.

I found it suggestive that, in the eyes of Ian Lagarde, one of Cuba's main attractions as a foreign location resided in its *"soviético-ludique"* (soviet-ludic) character. Alongside the many ideological projections that fascinated this team of Québécois film professionals exists the perception of the island as a physical and spiritual space composed of the layered sedimentation of colonial heritage, tropical excess, and remnants of the regimented Soviet character. Ludic indicates here the propensity for distortion and fragmentation that all imported dogmas adopt when they pass through the prism of Cuban interpretation, something applicable to both former Soviet influence and the production requirements of the French-Canadian film crew. The assembly of the diegetic space of the film is the direct result of this perception of the built environment and its ludic nature. It could also indicate a magnified presumption about the possibilities afforded to the foreign creative personnel who usually construe shooting locations as a playground for remaking and compositing. In this aesthetic dimension, playfulness resides in the desire to construe a visual expression resulting directly from the uneven agentic capacities carried by the French-Canadian creatives to Cuba. In this sense, mining a "Soviet ludic aesthetic" resembles the labor and material pipelines installed in the pursuit of a directorial vision as detailed by Jean Chung's media heterotopias.

For instance, during the first seven minutes of the film a series of jump cuts set up the space and the characters, splicing and compositing disparate visual settings of the Cuban capital. We go from the vast presence of the sea in the opening shot to the arrival of a Soviet LAZ-697 bus depositing tourists on the doorsteps of the mythic *El Palacio*. From there we follow Mike in

a long sequence through the lobby of the hotel, along the outdoor paths of the resort, into his brutalist-style cabin-like room, and then to his first visit to the all-you-can-eat-buffet. What seems like a walkable-in-real-life promenade is actually the composite assembly in diegetic space of the lobby of the FNCL; the hotel Villa Trópico in Playa Jibacoa, some 70 km east of Havana City; the MELS film studios in Montréal; Playa Baracoa, in the western municipality of Bauta; and the Faculty of Music of the ISA, respectively. Each of these landmarks of Cuban geography were brought together through montage. The on-screen result of the Soviet ludic indexes the fetishization of mobility and seamlessness suggested by Chung, as Lagarde reassembles Cuban and foreign spaces to give life to his individual vision. However, that search is met with constant acts of resistance and local modulation.

Play also indicates its presence through countless acts performed by the locally-hired, skilled workers to subvert or challenge the fetishized Soviet-ludic ideal. Lagarde and his team would learn soon enough that their quest for the Soviet-ludic aesthetic had its counterpart in the local folklore of *«oui, tout est possible, c'est Cuba! Non, c'est difficile, c'est Cuba !»* [Yes, everything is possible, it's Cuba! No, it's difficult, it's Cuba!], as the director reported to me (Interview with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020). At every step, he explained his vision and creative goals to the Cuban personnel, banking on their infinite "*debrouillardise*" [resourcefulness]. In practice, the material scarcities and the proclivity of local workers to make-do with what was at hand without going the extra mile to please the foreign gaze were also justified by the categorical impossibility that was Cuba, too. The socialist nation-state, in the view of the Québécois, was assumed to be the land of possibility, but also the space where that promise would be cut short because of its political and economic specificities. For example, Lagarde remembers that for the first establishing shot of the motor lobby of the hotel/FNCL he needed a luggage rack with

specific measures to be added to the Soviet-built bus. After agreeing to this, the art director on the Cuban end and his team eventually responded by suggesting installing a rack that suspiciously looked more like a recycled phone booth. The francophone director was skeptical of the odd suggestion and, at first, he contested it because it would ruin the overall authenticity of the scene. Eventually he capitulated before the ham-fisted proposition.

One shouldn't infer from this that these situations were the result of idleness on the part of the Cuban team. Lis Silva, the Cuban assistant director of the art department insisted, while I interviewed her, that fulfilling the director's wishes was her first mandate. According to her, offering make-do, secondary solutions were, first, a blow to her professional pride and a source of personal frustration and, secondly, the last compromise she would arrive to in order to give the foreign director something to work with. As she outlines:

> *Bueno, para mí como responsable del equipo que estaba en el set (...) llegar a donde está el director y decirle no puedes tener esto que quieres, es la última opción. Me gustaba llegar ante él con dos opciones. "Mira. Lo que tú quieres no he podido conseguirlo hasta ahora. Pero te puedo dar esto y te puedo dar esto. ¿Tú crees que así se pueda? ¿Tú crees que se pueda cambiar? ¿Tú crees que esto pueda sustituir lo que realmente te gustaría?" (...) Porque por una cuestión de respeto también, que se vea que se ha hecho un trabajo. (...) Considero como una falta de respeto que no se tenga el elemento que el director quiso con un tiempo que se tuvo para conseguirlo. ¿Comprendes? Desgraciadamente, las cosas no funcionan siempre así. Pero nunca me gusta llegar a donde está el director sin una opción. O sea, no llegar nunca con "no tengo" o "no puedo". Si no se puede de esta forma, vamos a tratar de hacerla de esta otra. Porque el director también necesita tener variedad y poder decidir hasta qué punto muchas veces la segunda opción llega a ser mejor que la primera.*
>
> Well, for me as the person in charge of the crew that was on set (...) going to the director and saying you can't have what you want, that's the last option. I liked to come to him with two options. "Look. What you want I haven't been able to get it so far. But I can give you this and I can give you that. Do you think it can be done this way? Do you think it can be changed? Do you think this can replace what you would really like?" (...) Because it is also a matter of respect, to show that a job has been done. (...) I consider it disrespectful not to have the element that the director wanted with the time we had to get it. Do you understand? Unfortunately, things don't always work that way. But I never like to get to where the director is without

> an option. That is, never arrive with "I don't have" or "I can't". If you can't do it this way, let's try to do it this way. Because the director also needs to have variety and to be able to decide to what extent the second option is often better than the first one (Interview with Lis Silva, March 9th, 2022).

As I infer from her statement, play is equally present in the capacity of locals to react to the endemic logistical constraints of the Cuban context and to use those constraints to heighten the creative strength and artistic vision of a given film project. In a certain way, play is also a creative dialogue that disrupts the top-to-bottom production hierarchy in the film industry, where the director commands and the technicians create. In this case, directorial visions are explained and, after considering technical and supply shortcomings, said visions are debated, altered, and even enhanced by propositions from the bottoms-up.

In a similar example, Lagarde wanted the buffet in the dining hall set placed in one of the rooms of the former Country Club of Havana, now the Faculty of Music, to resemble an overabundant table not unlike pictorial *bodegones* or still-life paintings. The completion of the buffet became a push-and-pull negotiation between the francophone director and the art department once again. The latter installed what was readily available, resulting in an all-you-can-eat feast far different from what Québécois producers had envisioned. As Lagarde remembers "*il n'y [avait] que des plantains, des frites puis du poulet*" [There were just some plantains, some fries, and chicken] (Interview with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020), in sum, items that would hardly put Mike's gargantuan appetite to the test. The same thing happened to the sets where plants were needed, Lagarde complained jokingly at some point, unwilling to accept that greeneries would be in shortage in tropical, luscious Cuba.

From her perspective, Tougas-Fréchette points to a series of underlying issues at the bottom of these problems. As she recalls, the Cuban art director had a string of experiences with transnational projects that would import to Cuba even the smallest of their logistical needs:

> *(Lui, il) était habitué á faire des films avec des équipes qui arrivent avec beaucoup de choses. Nous on n'est pas arrivé avec beaucoup des choses. On était une petite équipe et on était arrivé et on va travailler sur place avec ce qui a sur place (...) Je pense qu'il a été pris de court et c'était un mélange de n'avoir pas de ressources mais aussi d'avoir une espèce de manque de volonté. Je pense aussi qu'il était fatigué, il avait fait pleins des projets puis il ne pensait pas qu'on allait être aussi demandant.*
>
> (He) was used to making films with teams that came with many things. We didn't arrive with a lot of things. We were a small team and we arrived and we're going to work on location with what we had on the spot (...) I think he was caught off guard and it was a combination of not having the resources but also having a kind of lack of will. I also think he was tired; he had done a lot of projects and he didn't think we were going to be so demanding (Interview with Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, October 13th, 2020).

As Lis Silva elaborates further, the will to locally source everything for the film, as was the desire of Tougas-Fréchette and Lagarde, was an ethical and productive choice praised by the Cuban crew. However, it also meant that the Cuban side had to gamble with the Québécois' expectations and what they could actually manage to offer on location. As she told me, having the same buffet ready for each take with recurring items was partly why they chose to place on the set the bare minimum so that they could be sure to procure the same things every single day, especially in a country where food scarcity has been an endemic problem for decades now. As Silva describes:

> *El buffet era un set que requería de lo mismo todos los días. (...) Debía ser la misma comida cada día y eso era un poco complejo. (...) Y más el problema de que aquí a veces consigues y a veces no. Hoy hay pollo y hay camarones y hay langosta y mañana ya no las hay. Y como era comida fresca, había que tratar de mantener y llevar siempre la misma.*
>
> The buffet was a set that required the same thing every day (...) It had to be the same food every day and that was a little complex (...) And then there was the problem that here sometimes you get stuff and sometimes you don't. Today there is chicken, and there is shrimp, and there is lobster, and tomorrow there is no more. And since it was fresh food, you had to try to keep and bring the same food every day (Interview with Lis Silva March 9th, 2022).

This dictated that for the Cuban side, the simplest, most common items would make their work easy playing with and anticipating the hiccups of the supply chain on the island. Here, the subversive capacities of play are apparent in the form of low-stakes, non-confrontational downplaying of the material demands of capital partners on the island to infuse the filming process with local traditions of what Anne Marie Stock defines as "street filmmaking" (2009, 15), an ever-developing filmic game of make-do and adaptation. In Chung's tradition of heterotopic thinking, subjects from the global south are routinely positioned as malleable, plastic entities pliable to the requests of foreign media capital. In reality, they too demonstrate being capable of, through play and inventiveness, opposing their own idiosyncratic elaborations, the "yes, it's Cuba/No, it's Cuba" effect that Lagarde so much dreaded, to talk back to and curve power asymmetries. Opposite this, Tougas-Fréchette, Lagarde, and their team relied, perhaps too much, on the locals' ability to produce and deliver. Although the Québécois may have factored in the endemic impediments to obtaining manufactured goods that has plagued Cubans for decades, the latter, when left to their own devices, invent with what they have at hand. There's a cultural short-circuit between the outsiders' aspirations of valuing local resources and local laborers and the latter's propensity to either depend on imports or make do with what they can recycle. Therein resides the rich potential for play to instill adaptation on the francophone team's part and afford discreet acts of subversions and material criticisms to Cubans.

Nonetheless, not all these mischievous acts manifested in the form of defiance of orders. Some of them were the result of haphazard circumstances that escaped Lagarde's control or profited from his expectations. Once he had discovered the Faculty of Music, he felt particularly attracted to it given its place in the symbolic history of Cuba. The fabulous building was the main structure of the former Havana Country Club, a complex of neo-colonial style residences

and golf courses. After 1959, the golf courses were bulldozed to get rid of all traces of the bourgeois sport representative of the "American Way of Life." In the following years, it was occupied by the ENA, then turned into the ISA. Nowadays, the ISA is one of the biggest cultural and educational projects of the revolution and a Latin American architectural heritage jewel designed by "starchitects" Ricardo Porro from Cuba, and the Italians Roberto Gottardi and Vitorio Garatti. The former country club was also the place that refused Batista's membership during the years of his dictatorship, as a fascinated Lagarde commented when justifying his choice to shoot there (Interview, July 10th, 2020). But despite his careful planning, Lagarde's choice of location eventually encountered the inevitable hurdles of shooting in a music school and the poor management and internal communication of the Cuban arts school, which seemed less interested in accommodating the foreign film crew's needs. Although the institute granted permission for the shooting, it failed to make arrangements for the film crew and their schedule. Lagarde's original idea of letting the sounds of the island take center stage in the acoustic design were thwarted by the constant local noises of students rehearsing their instruments all over the green lawns surrounding the faculty and the voices of sopranos vocalizing in their classrooms. Skillful sound design work would be needed back in Montréal by Sylvain Bellemare (*Arrival* (Denis Villeneuve, 2016)) to "tone down" the unscripted intrusion of local noises, thus erasing the sonic traces of Cuba.

Likewise, since the early 2000s, the school of music, like the whole ISA, was undergoing capital renovation. To create visual continuity between the FNCL and the ISA, it was crucial to paint extensively the locales in hues of blue that mirrored the paradisiac beaches in the film. The ISA's administration agreed, but color alterations were made so that they could be integrated without conflict to the final restorations, easing the financial burdens and work issues of the

school. Thus, the film's visual needs were met by collaborating with the infrastructural demands and situated contexts of the shooting site. The self-determining, survivalist capacity of the human and material environment of the location is factored, by negotiation or by insinuation, into the ludic assembly process of the film's architecture. The Cuban Art Director for the film, Onelio Larralde, had a very simple explanation for these issues. According to him, intervening in *Villa Trópico* and the FNCL was easy, given that both places are used to making profit from the rent of their spaces for many activities, not only filmmaking. The ISA, however, was a different matter. As he explains: "*[E]llos no están acostumbrados a dar ese servicio, no rentan el lugar para que sea modificado, por eso costó que entendieran todo lo que tuvimos que hacer en el lugar*" [[T]hey are not used to providing that service, they don't rent the place for it to be modified, so it was hard for them to understand everything we had to do in situ] (Interview with Onelio Larralde, March 13th, 2022). Ernesto Leyva, the field producer, had a different take on this matter. According to him, "solidaridad" (solidarity) is what inclines a place like the ISA to comply with the foreign film crew's needs. But it is also the solidary vision of the Québécois team with respect to the financial and material needs of the school that also eased the negotiations. Leyva elaborates:

> *Mira, ahí viene de nuevo la parte que te hablaba del tema solidaridad. Y te lo digo así porque a pesar de que tú pagas (…) eso requiere solidaridad. Eso requiere que las personas se conecten con que hay que hacer cine. Más allá del tema negociación y del tema dinero que generalmente no es todo lo que uno quisiera, está ese factor humano. (…) A todos se les advertía desde un principio el volumen de intervención. Pero llegábamos con diseños, con bocetos, con compromisos de restauración cuando termináramos con las brigadas, con materiales. Cosas que pudieran ser palpables para ellos y que les ofrecieran una garantía de que su locación iba a quedar igual o mejor cuando nos fuéramos. Que fue, por ejemplo, el caso del ISA, que acometimos prácticamente la restauración de toda la zona del diner del Country Club y quedó perfecto cuando nos fuimos de ahí.*
>
> Look, here comes again the part that I was talking about the issue of solidarity. And I say this because even though you pay (...) that requires solidarity. It requires that

> people connect with the fact that we need to make cinema. Beyond the issue of negotiation and money, which generally is not as much as one would like, there is that human factor (...) Everyone was warned from the beginning about the volume of intervention. But we arrived with designs, with sketches, with restoration commitments when we finished, with the brigades, with materials. Things that could be palpable for them and that would offer them a guarantee that their location would be the same or better when we left. Which was, for example, the case of the ISA, which we undertook practically the restoration of the entire diner area of the Country Club and it was perfect when we left there (Interview with Ernesto Leyva, March 9th, 2022).

There were also moments in which the overseas sound and image design of the film would not be as effective at manipulating and erasing all things that signified Cuba. The director's desire to create this ludic multiverse not attached to any real location was also a way to secure the smooth circulation of the film by insisting on its playful visual and aural qualities; in other words, through making the visual package of the film appealing to global audiences seeking to consume sensorially interesting and inviting places. However, in one of the scenes, Mike finds himself inside his hotel room in bed just isolating. The scene, shot here in Montréal, depicts Mike's hotel room, which includes an old television set broadcasting an exalted political speech. This nearly inaudible speech symbolizes in the film one of those cyclical social upheavals of the Global South that, in this case, threatens to disrupt the haven of pleasures and gluttony that is *El Palacio*. Since the archival material was found in Québec, it seems that it was impossible to locate all the metadata about it and Lagarde decided to include the audiovisual fragment in his film anyways. When the Cuban producer, Ernesto Leyva watched the final montage, he expressed his concerns that it was the former revolutionary leader in the recording and including his ghostly mediated presence affected the chance of the film to be screened on the island, as has indeed been the case. A simple example like this one exemplifies the limits of graphic compositing, sound design, and editing to effectively converse with different socio-political circumstances. Whereas compositing and editing can be identified as symptoms of a potentially

infinite capacity to rummage through and amalgamate dissimilar audiovisual traditions—again, to play with them, as it were—the very nature of the material used can hold the power to frustrate the malleable agency of the foreign gaze. *All You Can Eat…* is the result of transnational digital labor and expertise, but its capacity to construct a Soviet-ludic universe in fact becomes a hindrance when foreign artists navigate disparate geopolitical circumstances alien to them and thus restricting their own mobility.

In a second instance, play denotes in my analysis the Cuban propensity to disdain authority and strictures, especially in regimented contexts. This idiosyncratic feature of local culture is what authors like Mañach ([1928] 2022), Muñoz (1999) and Laguna (2010) have explored when discussing Cuban "*choteo*," loosely translated as mockery and irreverence. As Laguna contends, *choteo* fosters "the activation of pleasure through culturally specific forms of play [as] a productive mode of social engagement that helps create an active political consciousness" (513). *Choteo* is a postcolonial episteme, a local tool of criticism and subversion of established powers available to subjugated postcolonial individuals. *Chotear* allows for a politization of play, ridiculing non-Cuban intentions while drawing from historical traditions of local mainstream political discourse *vis-à-vis* the unfathomable machinations of foreign capitalism.

As the director of the film conveyed, there were several instances in which rumors circulated among the Cuban crew and officials related to the political and aesthetic positionality of the project and the director's intent. The huge silicone octopus that appears in the film as a semi-deity that communicates with Mike found itself more than once at the center of such forms of derision and misinterpretation. When the Québécois first arrived with the mechanical device, customs officials asked in detail what was the purpose of the plastic animal. It was implied in the discussions that they feared the octopus would be an item used in some sort of bestiality scene.

The octopus was the object of intense scrutiny and for two or three weeks it was retained by customs officers. Equally, the almost erotic symbiosis established between the main character and the octopus would be jokingly construed on set as a porn-flick-in-the-making that the northern professionals were concealing from them, as it occurred with another important scene in the movie. Almost toward the end of the film Mike's uncontrollable hunger makes his archenemy, J-P Villeneuve, a prey. This moment gave Lagarde an opportunity to shoot in a Cold War bunker that he had discovered at the edge of a beach in Baracoa on one of his scouting trips. However, the nature of the scene itself and the vulnerable state of the actors—almost in the nude—called for a minimum number of crew to be present. This sparked once again allegations of pornography and/or snuff film practices on the part of the Cuban staff, something they made known to Lagarde in a mocking fashion. To Lagarde's dismay, these represented no small matters and he hastily tried to quash the rumors, fearing that widespread distortion of his intentions with the film could potentially have damaging results, even though he perceived they were, for the most part, insiders' jokes. Even more puzzling to the director was the fact that, rumors aside, most technicians in Cuba expressed genuine pleasure to work on his project. As Larralde and Silva both mentioned, Lagarde's film had more legitimate artistic credentials, as opposed to their peers working on more spectacular or anodyne shoots, like *Fast and Furious 8* and *Transformers,* which were happening at the same time and where they were better paid.

Anecdotes like these highlight the political dimension of play and *choteo* under the form of enjoyable, ludic narratives that bring down, and even dehumanize, the parochial perceptions of the foreign film crew's mobility, transnationalism, and power. Because of these anecdotes, media heterotopias appear like ideological minefields that international film producers and workers must traverse carefully. *Choteo* and play were forms of "*sofocar al Yuma*" as most Cubans

would amicably reclaim it, that is, to keep a cool, vernacular form of checking and balancing transnational agency by the island's residents. In other words, to keep foreigners on their toes, destabilizing them by reverting their exploitation and purchase capacities against them. The unfounded allegations, perhaps unconsciously, mirrored the descriptions of the "moral aberrations" of capitalism that Cubans have heard historically in the litanies of their political leaders. Western democracies and media are presented assiduously as the root of all vices and deviant behaviors, not unlike the way Soviet ideology thought them to be. Gossip about pornography and snuff films are, therefore, very telling of the way local workers act out the inherent anxieties and stresses of their own labor conditions in so called heterotopic media landscapes. Morally distorting the imagined extractive maneuverings of foreign capital investors, whose rationale and complicity with the Cuban establishment local film workers didn't readily comprehend, relocates agency into their hands as they face those in control of the means of production and financial resources.

2.2 Domesticity in Cuba and the "Greenfield Location"

As I have demonstrated before, cinematic voyages encompass countless acts of resistance present at the interstices of south-north creative pipelines when it comes to film and tourism industries. It should not be inferred by this that the misrepresentation of the Québécois crew's intentionality through situated, local methods of play and performance proscribes the foreigner's capacity to come equipped with their own epistemes and critiques with regards to the same *status quo*. *All You Can Eat…* was conceived as a satire of the international tourism industry and the unsustainability of this model's promise to please and fulfill individual ambitions without limits. In a sense, it was also a revolt against the very thinking that one must submit to this situation.

Lagarde felt it was a moral mandate to try and "*déjouer le(s) système(s) officiel(s)"* [to foil, to elude official systems] (Interview with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020), with varying degrees of success, as he realizes now.

He actually made a point of it in one of the most iconic scenes in the film. At the beginning of the film Mike attempts to leave the hotel for the first time. As Mike's stay comes to an end, he somehow misses the bus that is supposed to conduct him to the airport. A medium shot situates Mike looking toward an empty motor lobby at the entrance of *El Palacio* with his back to the camera. Valentino, the *maître d',* walks in from the right and assumes a submissive pose, calmly crossing his hands in front of him and mildly curtsying to the parting guest. He then proceeds to let Mike know that unfortunately the bus has already left with other guests, but that he can call a cab for him in which case he would arrive at the airport even before the bus. Mike never looks at him and just asks "*C'est possible rester un peu plus longtemps?"* [Is it possible to stay a little longer?], to which a smiling Valentino replies "*Tout est possible, Mike!"* [Everything is possible, Mike!] (15:46). When Mike fails to state clearly for how long he would like to extend his stay, Valentino jokes and declares him an adventurer. A jump cut takes us now to a close shot of Mike's profile. He turns and barely looks at the *maître d'* replying tacitly "*Non, plutôt le contraire"* [No, quite the contrary]. Another close shot, against a profuse background of green foliage out of focus, shows us the chubby hand of Mike handing his gold credit card with a world map engraved on it. Valentino's hand takes the card and returns to Mike a golden bracelet that he attaches to his wrist. At each exchange, the off-screen sounds of Tibetan Buddhist *dril-bus* (bells) and a singing bowl highlight these ritualized gestures.

Lagarde saw in this golden bracelet a symbol of submission and resignation, as he reflected during our interview in Montreal. It shows the uncomplicated reproduction of *«la géopolitique*

des échanges humaines, matériaux, et capitaux de nos temps» [the geopolitics of the human, material, and capital exchanges of our times] that he acidly tries to satirize in his work. In a way, it also satirizes the almost mystical dimension of the compliance of the Third World subject under the prospect of capital flows from the White global North. The scene exudes dualisms in a way that is not far from a cliché, as Lagarde admits he wanted them to be. The natural background out of focus loses presence and importance, giving place to the interchange of a card and a bracelet. This residual trade of plastic stands as an index of the invisible operations of global capital securing the mobility and leisure of contemporary individuals buying back at the highest price their own pleasure under the guise of spiritual quests in an "eat-pray-love" fashion. It is after this that Mike unleashes his true, avid nature and appetite. What appears a prosaic transaction opens a world of colossal surplus to an individual marked as white and Western through his Parisian accent, a subject who avows his absolute disregard for the knowledge of the Other in the same frame as a sign of privilege and pride. Lagarde underscores this scene in his film, but he knew even before the beginning of the shoot that in his practice he sought to distance himself and his project from this grim tableau.

As both the producer and the director recall, they started pre-production by establishing local alliances with private establishments in Havana that stood apart from mainstream tourism venues and official institutions (Interviews with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020, and Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, October 13th, 2020). During their first travels to Cuba, they tried activating preexisting alternative transnational networks of cultural collaboration to favor their own vision but also to invest in local agents not directly linked with the government organizations. It was through the Québécois production manager and producer Jean-François Roesler (*Battlefield Earth* (Roger Christian, 2000), *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (Eric Brevig, 2008)), also a

mutual friend of the romantic couple, that they got in touch with Teresa Hernández, owner of the *casa particular Casa Merced*, on Calle Escobar in the borough of Centro Habana. Roesler had set his gaze on Cuba as a prospective location and travelled there often but had never been involved in a project on Cuban soil. One of the many contacts he retained from his travels was Teresa and he put them all in contact. Tougas-Fréchette says of Teresa:

> *Honnêtement moi je l'appelle ma maman Cubaine »*, expresses Gabrielle nowadays, *"C'est sûr que si je vais à Cuba je vais toujours là. On a même fait un court-métrage qui s'appelle Merced, qui est sa fille, Merced est sa fille, avec son petit garçon aussi. C'est vraiment notre famille. Ceux sont les gens qu'en tout cas dans mon cas ont été les plus près de nous*.
>
> Honestly, I call her my Cuban mom", expresses Gabrielle nowadays, "For sure if I go to Cuba I always go there. We even made a short film called Merced, which is her daughter, Merced is her daughter, with her little boy too. It's really our family. They are the people that in my case have been the closest to us (Interview with Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, October 13th, 2020).

The ad hoc familiarity links that seem to infuse these client-service provider relationships are not uncommon for the Cuban context when it comes to transnational ties between locals and outsiders. The anthropologist Noelle Stout, in her study of queer sex tourism practices on the socialist island, notices a similar trend of inscribing transactional relations within the realms of kinship and familiarity to cement the flow of consumer goods, services, and opportunities between Cubans and foreigners. Stout writes: "[t]he kinship imaginaries produced by and through erotic economies (…) indicate new forms of intimacy that were no longer defined mainly in opposition to market exchange" (2015, 679). As Stout recognizes, categorizing these interactions as only instrumental or as "genuine and authentic" obviates how neither one nor the other are mutually exclusive. In my perception of this case, I would add that they can be both at the same time. I would argue that ideas of self-sacrifice, acknowledgement of differential vulnerability, close engagement and radical solidarity on both ends complicate productive

relationships that remain essentially uneven, mutually beneficial, and self-interested. Emulating the words of Elizabeth Povinelli, these intimate operations seem to further illuminate the ingrained connections between the "macro-practices (…) of certain forms of capital production, circulation, and consumption" and the discreet, localized, everyday "micropractices of certain forms of love" (2006, 191).

It is hard not to recognize the motherly and enterprising nature of Teresa, especially when talking about Gabrielle and Ian. As she rocks back and forth on her *sillón*, a kind of throne from which she overlooks the busy streets of Centro Habana, she familiarly started calling me "*mi niño*" (my son, my child), too, over our many conversations on WhatsApp. The mere mention of Gabrielle and Ian lit up her face and those of her children, who always started by demanding news about the Québécois couple. During the first three weeks that they spent in Havana, Teresa, Ian, and Gabrielle's friendship evolved from a transactional relation of hostess-clients to a deeper affective connection catalyzed by the tumultuous affair that was jumpstarting the latter's cinematic enterprise in Cuba. As Gabrielle recounted to me:

> *On est arrivé en voyage de repérage, de préparation et tout ça, on a réservé pour rester là [chez Teresa] je pense qu'au début c'était trois semaines (…) On est resté trois semaines chez Teresa puis on s'est lié d'amitié vraiment très rapidement avec [elle]*.
>
> We arrived on a scouting trip, preparation, and all that, we booked to stay there [at Teresa's] I think at the beginning it was three weeks (...) We stayed three weeks at Teresa's and then we became friends really quickly (Interview with Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, October 13th, 2020).

Along with Teresa, Roesler had referred Tougas-Fréchette to Michel Miglis, the Swedish-Greek owner of *Casa Miglis*, "a meeting point for creative people and artists from all over the world."[xx] *Casa Miglis* is a *paladar* located on Calle Lealtad, less than a couple of blocks from

[xx] https://www.casamiglis.com/about-us/ (Last accessed December 2nd. 2020, 11:20 AM)

Escobar, where Teresa lives. Besides being a restaurateur endorsing Swedish cuisine for locals and foreigners visiting the island, Miglis has doubled as a film and music video clip producer since his arrival to Cuba in 1996. He married a Cuban woman in 2005 and shortly thereafter started his *paladar*. Through it he has brought to the island artists like Abba-teens, Dr. Alban, Teddy Bears, and others. Michel Miglis is also credited as the production manager and actor in the Swedish documentary *El Médico: The "Cubatón" Story* (Daniel Fridell, 2011) (Best Documentary New York International Latino Film Festival, 2012). As Teresa remembers, Daniel Fridell was her first "*cliente que se dedica al cine*" (cinema client). Since then, she has collaborated with Miglis, receiving in her house his varied clientele wishing to shoot video clips, movies, or promoting international music in Havana.

This constellation was the entry point of *All You Can Eat's*… to the Cuban context. Unfortunately, the *Casa Miglis-Casa Merced* cooperative network proved to be less effective for their specific needs. Whereas the liaisons with Teresa prospered in the affective and operational aspects, Lagarde and Tougas-Fréchette became rapidly frustrated with the lack of commitment from Miglis, who never really lived up to his promises of securing locales, permits, local workforces, etc. In order to make up for the lost pre-production time, Gabrielle turned to Ernesto Leyva, a Cuban fixer with "*le plus de contacts à Montréal. (…) Le représentant (…) le mieux connu à Montréal de l'ICAIC*" [the most contacts in Montréal. The best-known representative of ICAIC in Montréal] specifies Lagarde (Interview, July 10th, 2020). Thanks to these calculated partnerships, *All You Can Eat…* was able to stay in the good graces of Cuba officialdom, while also following its desire to "*déjouer*" that same sanctioned system. Leyva was instrumental in obtaining permits and making ICAIC's elites look at the project in a benevolent way. It was thanks to him that Lagarde changed the cinematic location in the script from the Dominican

Republic to an unnamed island in the Caribbean Sea just to get approval, thereby appeasing ICAIC's doubts of foreigners representing the Cuban tourism industry through such a bizarre film. Beyond the legal and ideological implications of such change, Ernesto comments:

> *¿Qué sentido tiene que sea Cuba? ¿O que sea Dominicana o que sea cualquier otro? Todo lo contrario, vamos a hacerlo en un lugar neutro porque, en definitiva, lo más importante de todo esto es la historia que estamos contando. (...) Es una película, es un guion que si lo ubicas, incluso en un espacio, o en una determinada situación histórica específica, empiezas a perder la tensión de lo esencial. Hay otras cosas que te empiezan a contaminar esa tensión.*
>
> What's the point if it's Cuba, or if it's the Dominican Republic, or if it's anywhere else? Quite the contrary, let's do it in a neutral place because, in the end, the most important thing about all this is the story we are telling (...) It's a film, it's a script that if you place it in a space, or in a certain specific historical situation, you start to lose the tension of the essential. There are other things that start to contaminate that tension (Interview with Ernesto Leyva, March 9th, 2022).

As Ernesto details, in those years the decision-making processes in Cuba were difficult and he suggested to the director these slight changes to realize the aesthetic impact of the story but also to avoid raising any eyebrows in Cuban organizations. Ernesto also snatched a line-up of all-stars technicians from under the vast shadows cast by the *Fast and Furious* recruitment by flaunting the avant-garde nature of his project against the commercialist credentials of the Americans, recounts a thankful Lagarde. The *Casa Miglis*-*Casa Merced* affiliation gave its place to a new homegrown logistical chain based on Ernesto Leyva's know-how, and the active self-refashioning that *Casa Merced* underwent once *Casa Miglis* had failed (Interview with Ian Lagarde, July 10th, 2020).

The case of *All You Can Eat…* adds a different layer to Ward & O'Regan's explanation of the role of pleasure in the consideration of boutique locations. In their analysis, pleasure stands in as a proxy for a brand, a staged idea of leisure amplified by exoticization that is mined as a resource while working on selected geographies (2009, 221). In other words, pleasure is

intimately tied to ideas of exploitation and marketing. What we can perceive in this case is something not alien to a pleasurable notion but expressed through forms of care, affect, and subversion while laboring in transnational contexts. Beyond the commonplace of describing through familiar terms what remains, in essence, a business transaction, one can see here a diversification of roles and services on the part of the *casa particular* that do not always come mediated by monetary and/or goods exchanges. Furthermore, as the same authors affirm when characterizing boutique locations through their Australian West Coast case study, *All You Can Eat…* serves as evidence in the Cuban context for an "alignment of local and extralocal networks, with production that has a more considered approach to facilities, locations and expertise" (2010, 83). However, it achieves this by conversing with and refashioning traditional housework and the domestic economy, inserting the latter within a larger framework of global creative labor. International media-making goes hand in hand with a personal, intimate, human approach that permits navigating and refashioning the boutique location.

Lagarde's team ended up making the most of *Casa Merced*. They slept there and were attended to like guests, but they also used the place as their meeting space with the ICAIC representatives and technicians. *Casa Merced* is a typical turn-of-the-century Havana house with ample living rooms, high, refreshing ceilings, an interior courtyard, and a big balcony, the result of the eclectic architectural movement that swept the Cuban capital in the early years of the 20th century. All of this was offered to Gabrielle and Ian to use as they pleased in preparation for the film with no extra fees. This offer was especially welcomed by Lagarde, who had been offered a working suite at ICAIC thanks to Ernesto's mediation. However, Lagarde had been horrified when he saw his work at ICAIC disrupted by the constant fumigation campaigns that ritually invade public and private buildings. Afraid not so much of schedule delays but of the chemicals

spread out by the fumigation teams, Teresa's living room became a more suitable place to work. They also used the common spaces of the house for script readings, camera and lightning tests, and eventually rehearsals (Interview with Ernesto Leyva, March 9th, 2022). The eclectic interiors of the home were a sort of stage from which to imagine the possibilities of planning and shooting the film at the future exterior locations. The logistical planning of the shoot was also undertaken from Teresa's *casa*, with her active involvement even if she was not always at the forefront and never attended a shooting. During meetings with the Cuban producers and service personnel, Teresa acted as a mediator or "B.S.-detector" as Lagarde described laughing. After each meeting, Teresa would alert them about any inflated price estimates and unnecessary hurdles imposed by the Cuban side, which would give the Québécois grounds to counter with alternatives that had also been suggested by their hostess. In the same manner, some locations were suggested by Teresa or the staff working for her.

As the manager of her own place, Teresa always made a clear distinction between those moments in which enterprising was her main goal, and others that were the result of freely giving to and solidarizing with the work of the creative couple. Teresa gave them total freedom to use the home as they pleased, as she remembers:

> *Y también no me gustaba que en otras casas donde se quedaban que por un termo de café les cobraban cualquier cantidad de dinero, y por una reunión que a mí no me costaba nada pues se podían sentar en la sala o el comedor (...) Yo no iba a estarles cobrando por eso. No tenía por qué estarles cobrando por todo si al final ellos son personas muy amables. Conmigo siempre se han portado muy bien y siempre han querido mucho a mis niños. Y cada vez que vienen son muy generosos con nosotros. Y no me gustaba que les estuvieran tomando el pelo porque yo conozco los precios de aquí.*
>
> And I also did not like the fact that in other houses where they stayed, for a thermos of coffee they charged them any amount of money, whereas for a meeting that did not cost me anything, they could sit in the living room or the dining room (...) I was not going to charge them for that. I had no reason to be charging them for everything if in the end they are very kind people. They have always behaved very well with

> me, and they have always loved my children very much. And every time they come, they are very generous with us. And I didn't like that others would abuse them because I know the prices here (Interview with Teresa Hernández, November 25th, 2020).

More telling in this sense was how, throughout our conversations, she kept correcting me in my use of the word "*contactos*" (contacts), replacing it with "*conocidos*" (acquaintances). Teresa's vernacular distinction illustrated sharply the differentiation between relationships mediated by economic interests and transactional expectations (*contactos*) as opposed to mere "*conocidos*." These latter were expected to extend to the foreigners the same courtesy or favor they would have offered to Teresa as a non-tourist. Her business offered to the Québécois group its logistical networks of providers and resources—for example, when they needed to procure light bulbs for the film sets or other items for art direction—setting aside homegrown conventions that capital surplus would come out of entering into contact with foreigners. In her domain of work, the word "*contactos*" has a particular supplementary meaning. As it is commonly used by those working in private hospitality, it suggests the practice of charging an extra fee to visitors in order to then pass on this fee to those who referred them. When Teresa so promptly corrected my word choice, it reminded me of several occasions in which people around me would engage in similar practices by referring foreign lovers, colleagues, and family members to certain "contactos." She could have monetized her knowledge and social capital just by recommending that Gabrielle and Ian get in touch with others, but flatly refused to do so and was very cautious of labeling her networks as contacts when it came to the helping the couple. After a point, it became evident why Teresa wanted to distance herself from such parlance.

Besides these small instances of mutual aid, affective caring was at the core of more substantial ways through which the maintenance of the domestic economy of the *casa* became embroiled with the management of the filmic enterprise. Soon enough, Lagarde and Tougas-

Fréchette had to learn the very particular currency-exchange policies of the island, still in place back in 2016.[xxi] For Lagarde and Tougas-Fréchette it was a long, hard, but fruitful education, having to grapple with this juxtaposition of above- and below-the-line transactions. With most of the payments conducted in cash, Gabrielle had to travel on a daily basis to the banks to withdraw and convert money. Teresa and her former partner, Titi, would invariably accompany her during those moments to support her and guard over her. Also, to help her not overdraw beyond daily withdrawal limits, Teresa and Gabrielle struck an agreement. The latter would prioritize her recurrent production payments while the former would hold temporarily the lodging fees without additional interest rates. *Casa Merced* acted tacitly as an *ad hoc* credit agency given the lack of such frameworks for transnational media investments on the island.

This seemingly simple aspect complicates even further our traditional understanding of greenfield locations as compared to what I call cinematic voyages here. As we can see above, the "fly-in-fly-out" logic is somehow present. Its sustainability in the Cuban context depends, however, on homegrown forms of collaboration that are not readily co-financed by the media institutions of the socialist state or acknowledged by funding agencies in the country of origin. Moreover, in this reciprocation of affective inclinations, care giving, and financial considerations, cinematic voyages participate in another facet of what authors like Saskia Sassen and Rachel Salazar Parreñas respectively refer to as the international division of productive and reproductive labor. Greenfield and boutique locations' workforces are especially susceptible to

[xxi] Until 2021, Cuba was a country that, in an attempt to preserve its economic and social models, had introduced since the 90s the US dollar along with two other local currencies, the Cuban Peso (CUP) and the Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC), or *chavitos*, as Cubans called them. The latter was destined to tourists mostly. Payment in dollars was always conducted circumventing the ferocious policing of the US treasury and banks, which is why most of the times minor and large-scale financial engagements with Cuba are equally paid in cash. For more on this see for instance https://www.france24.com/es/programas/econom%C3%ADa/20201212-cuba-qué-cambia-en-adelante-con-la-reforma-monetaria-más-grande-en-décadas or https://www.reuters.com/article/cuba-economia-moneda-idESKBN28L0YO .

the upturns and downturns of global economic trends and national pushes for deregulation, as discussed by Ward & O'regan (80, 84), but these descriptions turn a blind eye to how laboring subjects are differently affected in creative industries.

What I denote here as cinematic voyages, on the other hand, invites the visualization of "the international transfer of caretaking" or the "three-tier transfer of reproductive labor among women in sending and receiving countries of migration" as Rachel Salazar Parreñas has demonstrated in her examination of international domestic labor carried out by Filipina migrant women for white women in developed countries (2000, 561). Salazar Parreñas indicates issues of gender have been often overlooked as a driving force behind migration flows (2015, 31). She also posits that this transfer of caretaking underscores the importance of reconsidering traditional accounts of the transnational productive and reproductive conundrums proper to globalization. Thus, her conceptualization of the "care chain" (30) is an entry way to include global, regional, and localized asymmetrical practices of "commodification and racialization of the household division of labor in globalization" and how it "links two important but separate discourses on the status of women (…) the 'racial division of reproductive labor' and (…) the 'international division of labor'" (2000, 561).

Cinematic voyages allow us to engage with Salazar Parreñas' axiom that "[g]ender (…) is a hidden cause of migration" (2015, 31) and her unidirectional depiction of the racialized and commodified aspects of the transnational division of reproductive labor to interrogate the different gradients that gender and race impose on the migrant experience (I should add, on the creative industries' migrant experience, both temporary and permanent). Furthermore, they make place for the location of gender in deterritorialized productive practices of media industries as

they go on location and for the continuum between productive and reproductive labor that sustain the transnational human ecology and economies of these films.

In these cases, however, it should be noted that the feminization of the transnational sharing of caregiving and reproductive work follows multidirectional vectors that nuance the direct formula of caregiving and racialized women. Teresa and her business embody the progressive commodification of reproductive labor. As a Hispanic woman from the Global South, her economic scheme is based on the perfectioning and entrepreneurializing of housework extended to international clients. But as we see above, she can at times dial back her entrepreneurial drive to simply tend to and support transnational production workforces, as was the case for Gabrielle and the film crew led by Ian Lagarde. In turn, these two also acquired and mimicked the same caring functions for Teresa and her household, and this they did even beyond the period of time spent on the island.

On Teresa's side, as a single mother of two children, it was clearly implied that her inclination to favor Gabrielle came out of a deep-seated appreciation for and valorization of gendered labor and the advancement of women in professional contexts. Without a formal education herself, her own perception of empowerment due to the enterprising of her housework inclined her to transfer her capacities in solidarity with another woman in a different workplace, overlooking racial, economic, and cultural considerations. Teresa admires Gabrielle's career endeavors in the same way that she values all independent women:

> *Como se dice en Cuba mujeres luchonas que nos gusta buscarnos nuestras vidas. (...) Sé que es una mujer que quiere salir adelante y adelante no se sale si todo el mundo quiere un pedazo del pastel, ¿me entiendes? Adelante se sale si uno agarra un pedacito no un pedazo. Y yo me siento con la obligación de ayudarle.*
>
> As we say in Cuba, women fighters who like to make our own lives (...) I know she is a woman who wants to get ahead and you can't get ahead if everyone wants a piece of the cake, you know what I mean? One gets ahead if everyone grabs a little

> slice, not a piece of it. And I feel obliged to help her (Interview with Teresa Hernández, November 25th, 2020).

Beyond the ideological and affective elaborations at play in her discourse, there is a correlation in palpable material expressions of caring that are replicated by Gabrielle, too, during and after filmmaking. Gabrielle and other members of the film crew often call back to hear from Teresa and her family. As Teresa mentions, they post pictures of her house and send other clients her way to help keep her enterprise going. Furthermore, as Gabrielle and Teresa admit, when family and friends from Montréal travel to Cuba, not only are they directed to *Casa Merced*, but Gabrielle takes the time to learn what Teresa might need for her family or her enterprise and sends it there with them (Interview with Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, October 13th, 2022).

Once the film was completed, Gabrielle invited Teresa and all the workers of the Cuban team to keep equipment, clothing, and items from the film sets. As Lis Silva reported to me, she and Gabrielle developed a solid professional and personal relationship. Because of this, the Québécois producer to this day suggests to any friends or colleagues going to Cuba with film projects to contact and hire Lis, she told me. This has solidified Silva's own professional networks, not only with Canadian and Québécois filmmakers, but also with European producers and directors (Interview with Lis Silva, March 9th, 2022). Ian and Gabrielle confirmed to me that, financial restrictions aside, they felt morally obligated to discreetly distribute among Cuban personnel "small envelopes" with complementary payments to make up for the low wages paid by ICAIC to its workers. When discussing this topic, they were visibly guarded and conflicted about it. Ernesto, the Cuban fixer, carefully explained it was not a practice that was welcomed officially. He opted for having nothing to do with it, but didn't discourage them from doing it. On the other hand, I could perceive the obvious anxiety provoked in them by the fact of being perceived as accomplices of the exploitative dynamics of transnationally hiring professional

technicians in a developing country like Cuba. In any case, with examples like these we can see how, by association with the *casa de alquiler,* transnational productive and reproductive labor, film work, and the domestic economy on location in Cuba exist in a continuum. The diversification of the mandate of the small hospitality business in Cuba demands a constant recalibration of those instances where enterprising is replaced by nurturing and support of laboring individuals.

What is more, these examples confirm that the internationalization of care and affective workflows may remain an essentially feminized phenomenon. But they also help us see how the transfer of care can travel in more directions than just from the global south subjects to the global north ones. Here, in fact, it intersects with racial and gender divisions, and involves professional workforces, waged laborers, permanent and temporary creative migrants alike without annulling the profound structural fractures that separate these human groups. In *All You Can Eat…*we see the chamber maid following Mike at every step around the hotel: when he gets sunburned in the pool, when his protean appetite starts taking a toll on him, when her son bothers the otherwise unexciting routine of the tourist, etc. She even yearns for his presence at the end of the film as if the sole purpose of her existence was caring for the departed traveler.

In real life, Teresa, Gabrielle, and Ian, all had their share of transnational care transfer from both sides of the spectrum, their "Esmeralda commitments" so to speak. The case of these temporary mobile workforces, propelled by the inherent logic of global creative industries, complicate to an extent unforeseen the schematically conformed international/racial division of reproductive labor that authors like Parreñas Salazar observe. Thanks to *All You Can Eat…* the group of white francophone film workers travel to the poorer country to become a momentary means of employment for both productive and reproductive forces. As varied as the workforces

they hire are, their roles in the location setting also seem to diversify and intersect both these realms. On the side of Teresa, her status on the island, undoubtedly different from that of Gabrielle and Ian, allows her nonetheless to become a source of employment for other poorer women—mostly women of color—in her neighborhood. However, given the particular relationship established between the Québécois couple and the Cuban household, the white migrant creative workforces end up partaking simultaneously in matters of producing their films and collaborating with aspects of the reproductive care that burdens the woman of color that is Teresa. They help, even momentarily, in matters like taking care of children, in their socialization, overseeing the fulfillment of their daily chores and moments of leisure, etc. All of this while making their feature film about transnational tourism and also *Merce* (Ian Lagarde, 2017), a short experimental film about the intersections of informal tourism and the domestic environment in Cuba.

Merce can be seen as both the symbol of, and the surplus afforded by, this international division—or rather, confusion—of productive/reproductive work. As Ian explained to me, the intimate relationship they developed during their travels to Cuba inspired him and Gabrielle to use some of the time with the family to create this little capsule of life in Havana while they also toiled to jumpstart their film on the island; a life that is seen from the eyes of a teenage girl and her friends, retold and displayed before the eyes of the transient film professionals visiting her household/familial enterprise. A brief discussion of this short film, thematically and temporally connected to the making of *All You Can Eat…*, helps me expand my depiction of the commingling between creative productive work and reproductive labor in transnational contexts. It also will assist me in the illustration of informal tourism in domestic contexts in Cuba as the

space that propitiates this osmosis between globalized productive activities and the performance of reproductive care.

In the experimental short film, already mentioned above, we are guided by a subjective camera that follows the daily acts of a Cuban teenage girl. The experience of a changing Cuba is seen through Merced as she goes back and forth from the privacy of her living room where she exhibits her mastery at playing the Nintendo Wii video game *Dance Dance Revolution* (Konami-Bemani, 1998-2020), to her rambles with friends on the streets of Centro Habana, rehearsing childhood dreams and hopes for their futures. The camera evolves from the erratic, shaky movements of the opening minutes to the steady pace afforded by the company of Merced, her brother, and their mother laboring in the kitchen, a recurrent landmark in the short film. It opens with the deafening soundscapes of Centro Habana. The lively nature of one of the most populated municipalities of the Cuban capital seems to overwhelm the registering capacities of the camera/individual. It/s/he captures bits and pieces of the surroundings: the phantasmagoric manifestation of tourists through their reflection in mirrors, the worn-out charm of checkered Italian tessellae over the sidewalks, and broken Catalonian tiles barely clinging to the facades of the city's buildings. The filmic subject spins dizzy, disoriented, basically lost. Once it goes into the serene interiors of *Casa Merced*, it pauses, and grows calmer, homing in on the small gestures of the Cuban family. It attends to the innocent play of Jorge with his toy soldiers and to Mercedes' technologically mediated steps after a choreographed video game, shared with millions of kids around the world. The still subjective camera finds a familiar environment and a purpose that connects that landscape to a global elsewhere.

From there on, the fixed rituals of the home become the obsession of the viewing subject: it observes Teresa's chores around the house, accompanies the kids on their way to school and

while they play in the streets, and surveys wage laborers working on the maintenance of the decaying balcony. Opposed to the commodified, timeless, and lifeless servitude offered in *All You Can Eat…*'s *El Palacio*, *Merce* is a time capsule of housework and life in Cuba today. Moreover, the film is a testament to how the migrant film workers were both supported by and contributed to the production of this Cuban home.

As Ian and Gabrielle familiarized themselves more with the Cuban home, they occupied their resting moments from pre-producing *All You Can Eat…* with this small filmic project. In the text, Teresa is indeed portrayed caring for her family and clients, but through the interstices of the text, we can also place the Québécois team's active involvement with their hosts, caring for and tending to Teresa's children they assist in house dynamics while they also conduct their creative professional work. They watch them in their games inside and outside the house, they witness their play dates with friends, accompany them while they prepare for and then walk to school. All of this happens under the watchful eye of a rolling camera. The extra-textual analysis of both *Merce* and *All You Can Eat…* expands our comprehension of the ways in which cinematic voyages confront "on location" ethical and affective engagement and the international division of reproductive labor. Conventionally, a distinction is imposed between unpaid or underpaid reproductive work and professionalized labor, the former being subservient to the latter, and professional work being the only one directly contributing to the creation of value. Ernesto Leyva, ever the producer, offers a different take on how this happened in very clear terms. As he says:

> *[L]a parte de esta casa que nosotros tomamos bajo nuestro nuestro uso o para nuestro uso, pasa a ser un elemento más de producción [del filme]. Un elemento al que se le suministra agua, al que se le suministran todos los insumos que pudieran de alguna manera ayudar a que la casa como tal no reciba todo el peso de la producción. (…) [E]l nivel de carga de trabajo que [la casa] recibe es el de tres o cuatro almuerzos y desayunos y mantener limpieza, pero no cuando tienes dentro*

> *de la casa establecida una oficina y cosas de ese género, ¿tú me entiendes? De ahí que la producción asume como tal* ***ese pedazo de la casa o esas zonas de la vida de la casa y pasan a ser un elemento más de producción*** *y ahí nosotros entonces sí cubrimos todo lo que pudiera ser limpieza, cubrimos algunos otros elementos para colaborarle a la casa y que no sea una carga tan grande para ellos.*
>
> [T]he part of this house that we take under our care or for our use, becomes another element of production [of the film]. An element that is supplied with water, that is supplied with all the consumables that could somehow help the house as such not to receive the full brunt of the production (...) [T]he level of workload that [the house] receives is that of three or four lunches and breakfasts and maintaining cleanliness, but not when you have an office and things like that inside the house, you know what I mean? Therefore, *production assumes as such that part of the house or those areas of the house's life and they become another element of production* and then we cover everything: that could be cleaning, we cover some other elements, etc. to collaborate with the house so that it is not such a big burden for them (Interview with Ernesto Leyva, March 9th, 2022, emphasis added).

We can pinpoint in these words a symbiotic dynamic between productive and reproductive forces that makes it hard to distinguish where either begin or end. But more importantly they show how the customary hierarchy between productive and reproductive work is disrupted. *Merce* is a peculiar type of surplus resulting from such atypical assemblage. The Québécois crew relies on the expertise and actions of Teresa to conduct their creative work on site, but they also contribute actively to alleviating and sharing in her reproductive tasks, diversifying their creative capacities. Their project is not only creating a work of art, so to speak, but also contributing to the everyday production of a home. The reciprocation of roles between film production itself and domestic labor, and the adaptability of the actors to adopt and carry forward both activities in tandem, blurs the stark differentiation between service and creative work, but also between the geographical boundaries that demarcate the contours of the transnational transfer of care and productive/reproductive work.

By the end of *All You Can Eat…,* Mike, the hero, goes back to the sea. He leaves behind him the desolate landscape of a resort simultaneously ravaged by a "change in administration"

symbolized by the looming Revolution of the end of the story, and his own hunger. He departs into the sea that opened the first frames of the feature and, against that same sea, we see Esmeralda, the chambermaid, praying in earnest for his return: "*Revenez Mike. Vous nous manquez à tous. Aujourd'hui, hier, demain, maintenant, et pour toujours"* [Come back Mike. We all miss you. Today, yesterday, tomorrow, now, and forever more.] (1:22:57). When I last talked to Teresa, COVID-19 had altered our lives radically and her once bustling home was now empty and quiet. Cuba had recently closed its borders in the face of the first wave of infections and official and alternative tourism venues were all shut down. In a mimetic *mise en abyme* she echoed Esmeralda's words when she asked me to say to Gabrielle and Ian: "*Mi casa los extraña y yo también"* [My home misses them and so do I]. *Casa Merced* had found a different mandate with the recurrent, sensitive presence of Québécois film crews like *All You Can Eat…*, *Cuba Merci Gracias*, and *Sin La Habana* (Kaveh Nabatian, 2020), as I will continue exploring in the following chapter. For Teresa, business as usual is a factor to consider but also the human and creative interactions born out of her hostel-cum-location/production agency. It remains to be seen how much of this can be replicated in a post-pandemic world where projects like the ones analyzed here might find it difficult to imitate the same intuitive procedures that mixed work, small-scale, sustainable leisure, and living in Cuba.

2.3 Conclusions

In this first case study of cinematic voyages, I have employed the concept of ludic resistance to account for the role of play, pleasure, solidarity and *choteo* as forms of subverting the exploitative synergies proper to transnational filmmaking and touristic practices. Ludic resistance denotes the adoption of unsanctioned paths of creative action while working on

location, making sensible use of local workforces, a sustainable exploitation of resources, and especially, considering deterritorialized film labor, a path to transcultural collaboration and material solidarization with the Other, despite class, gender, language, and race differences. With this concept, I propose a revision of our traditional conceptions of film locations across the globe, and the transnational media labor exercised in them, as integral agents of global exploitation and subjugation. Rather, I have suggested that we also scrutinize these sites of production to find those pockets of resistance, playfulness, solidarity, and subversion that are present in the production axis generated through transborder filmmaking between Cuba and Québec, in particular. In sum, ludic resistance in its multiple manifestations enriches our comprehension of greenfield locations and media heterotopias.

Equally, I have demonstrated the central part played by domesticity in helping this cinematic voyage adopt these changes of optics, ethics, and productive strategies. It has become evident how the project was conceived from the beginning as a possibility to explore local alliances with private households and enterprises in Cuba away from mainstream tourism's infrastructures and official venues. By this very fact I have also shown how proximity between foreigners and locals in a domestic setting render the production of the film more complex with ideas of radical care, identification, and solidarity. As I have indicated, cinematic voyages are a transnational and transcultural enterprise that remain essentially uneven in structural terms, economically and financially beneficial to all the parties involved while remaining attentive to the differential vulnerability of the Other. Furthermore, I have insisted on how this inventive dialogue between a transnational film project and Cuban domesticity evidence a loop between productive and reproductive labor. The production of the film and the production of home are not two separate instances differently affecting and engaging subjects of diverse races, cultural backgrounds, and

socio-economic standing. On the contrary, they are here one and the same thing, thus reshaping our traditional vision of the international division of productive and reproductive work.

Chapter Three – Cinematic Voyage 2: *Cuba Merci Gracias* by Alex B. Martin

The pioneering nature of cinematic voyages is most notable in *Cuba Merci Gracias*, the independent production almost singlehandedly orchestrated by Alex B. Martin. It was produced before *All You Can Eat Buddha,* although it was released after Lagarde's feature. It also aligns with the genre of travel films that exposed European and North American audiences to the images and customs of foreign peoples thanks to the technical prowess of cinema and locomotion as decisive modern achievements. When Alex approached his friends and colleagues, Ian Lagarde and Gabrielle Tougas-Fréchette, about the possibility of going to shoot in Havana, the duo had barely launched the pre-production stage of *All You Can Eat*…. Martin's premise had a less-encumbered nature than that of Lagarde and Tougas-Fréchette's. That made it easier for him to take note of the couple's knowledge, get in contact with Teresa and her *casa*, and jet off to the Cuban capital with two of his closest friends in the early months of 2016, right before the US-induced frenzy took hold of the island.

Cuba Merci… was presented for the first time in Montréal during the 2018 *Festival du Nouveau Cinéma*, on October 5th (IMDb). Its commercial release was nonetheless deferred until the summer of 2019 and was short-lived. Martin's *opera prima*, produced by the local production laboratory Maestro Films and distributed by K-Films Amérique, received its *classement* (rating) from the *Régie du cinéma* in July of the same year. After that, it saw a brief theatrical run in Montréal and Québec City for a couple of weeks, mostly in art-house cinemas like the *Cinéma Beaubien* in the francophone borough of Rosemont-La Petite Patrie where, incidentally, I saw it for the first time.

In the film, a couple of friends, Manu (Emmanuelle Boileau) and Alexa (Alexa-Jeanne Dubé), play cinematic versions of themselves and their real-life friendship. Their travel to the

island follows, at first, the typical lethargic tropes of most of the island's tourists: they bathe in the sea, rest on the sand while sunbathing, discuss menial personal troubles pushed by the inertia of their aimless meanderings through the city, smoke cigars, or snooze off while being rocked by old *almendrones* (1940s and 50s American cars) on their way to and from the beach. Behind the performed nonchalance of travelers in a foreign land, one can perceive the baggage that each girl is carrying with her to Cuba. Alexa seems to be struggling with the aftermath of a recent tumultuous relationship whereas Manu clings to the idea of the journey as a way to overcome and compensate for personal depression.

What begins as a visual diary of the two women's process of "unplugging" and healing eventually turns its gaze to their surroundings. Cuba and its multiple realities occupy the second half of the film despite the fleeting interest of the two women tourists. The camera regains a sort of will of its own to explore the urban landscapes the two women seem to take so very lightly, engaging in interviews with subjects that don't seem to have a direct contact with Manu and Alexa. Cuba becomes a character in and of itself. Alongside this quasi-ethnographic background, the two women's friendship acquires new contours to the extent that the reality of their travel elicits existential questions about south-north relations, notions of individualism and solidarity, female empowerment, and the singular politics of the pleasures sought through the voyage. The enigmatic end of the film takes us back one more time to the sea, where all these underlying tensions flare up in a climax between the two friends.

Alex B. Martin's debut in fiction is a small-budget, independent film, which cost approximately $20,000 CAD in total, and is best described as a type of guerrilla filmmaking similar to the No Wave Cinema movement of the 1970s and 80s. Moreover, it pays homage to the French *Nouvelle Vague* and Italian Neorealism both formally and thematically. It privileges

agile, nervous camera movements and natural lighting and sound. Its preferred narrative tool is the jump cut, continually diverting our attention away from the heroines to the life surrounding them. The sudden cuts sometimes leave the soundscape of the previous scene lingering into the next, which reinforces a sense of promiscuity between fiction and document. Winks to *Cléo de 5 à 7* (Agnes Varda, 1962), *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*) (Vittorio De Sica, 1948), and even *Stranger Than Paradise* (Jim Jarmusch, 1984) are interspersed throughout the story. Background passersby acknowledge the camera letting us know that it-is/it-is-not a fiction film we are watching, and most of it follows the two women through the urban landscape in long shots without the usual camera coverage. Specifically, with regards to the films mentioned above, it retains the same intrepid conception of modern urban life based on uncompromised mobility that, in this case, is heightened by the fact that the main characters are foreigners. Essentially codified as a road movie in Cuba, it touches upon the travelers' cultural, racial, and political misconceptions and preconceptions and also brings into question the ethical and infrastructural issues of transnational displacement.

The choice to make a first film whose thematic preoccupations gravitate around international voyages seemed like a natural one for Alex B. Martin. Born in Rimouski, this Montréal director, screenwriter, and actor graduated first from the *École supérieure de théâtre* and then received a degree in Film Production from UCLA. Considering this, he recognizes travel and work, or rather working while traveling, to be integral characteristics of his professional profile. As he describes:

> *Moi je suis vraiment quelqu'un qui a beaucoup voyagé. C'est vraiment une grande partie de qui je suis. C'est très important aussi pour moi de voyager. Je fais aussi la série de télé de Voyages. C'est comme ça que je gagne mes sous mais aussi mes films personnels, mes documentaires, sont des films qui questionnent qu'est-ce que c'est qu'être en voyage, c'est quoi le tourisme, c'est quoi voyager? C'est quoi le*

> *rapport à l'autre dans l'interpersonnel mais aussi quand on va à la rencontre des cultures?*
>
> I'm really someone who has traveled a lot. It's really a big part of who I am. It's also very important for me to travel. I am also a director in the TV series "Voyages". That's how I earn my money, but also my personal films, my documentaries, are films that question what it is to travel, what is tourism, what is travel? What is the relationship with the other in the interpersonal but also when we go to the encounter of cultures? (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020).

His documentaries, experimental films, and TV shows are recurrently the product of personal travel experiences or commissions by TV networks like TV5 Monde, Télé Québec, MaTV, and TVA. From place awareness and advertising to the specificities of contemporary artistic work to the intricacies of online poker culture, titles like *99 envies d'évasion Mexico* (2020), *Résiste!* (2021), and *Bluffer sa vie* (2012) respectively attest to Martin's diverse portfolio.

Because of this, one could argue that Martin's work does more than locate and scrutinize the place of global mobility in our societies. It is also an essential tool in fostering, and remediating outside the diegetic realm, the same impulse for transnational movement that his film *Cuba Merci…* portrays. From its inception, the original idea for the movie came hand-in-hand with the desire to travel accompanied by the director's real-life close friends Emmanuelle and Alexa-Jeanne, who portray the two protagonists. Alex, Emmanuelle, and Alexa had cherished for a long time the idea of working together on a project. The fact that Alex was leaving on a vacation to Cuba gave the group of friends and artists the excuse to go to a country they all wanted to visit as tourists and that could also be used as a site for the development of their common artistic venture. Preparing for their trip to Cuba occurred simultaneously with developing a pre-script, contacting partners like Teresa from a distance despite technological hurdles on the island regarding communications, and choosing the appropriate equipment to render the whole enterprise feasible. From the early stages, *Cuba Merci…* established a

mirroring dynamic between international voyage as a thematic anchor and as an infrastructural factor through the exercise of filmmaking.

Now, Martin's preceding documentaries and short films depict, and actually feed into, the mechanics of global tourism through the branding and marketing of cities and countries. The variety of his filmic corpus is destined for a broadly-defined francophone audience, with all their cultural specificities and diverse interests depending on population demographics. However, his and his friends' cinematic voyage started by confronting the duality of wishing to subvert similar processes, but also ironically following in the steps of the same ideological traps of social construction and imagination of places. Alex was frank in admitting that he didn't know much about Cuba aside from what his father—a habitual client of all-inclusive [*tout inclus*] hotels on the island—and other friends relayed to him. He echoes Lagarde's ideas in that, first and foremost, he wanted to separate himself and his film from the tradition of relationships between Québec and Havana like the one entertained by his father. As Alex reflects:

> *C'est sûr que mon idée aussi c'était de casser ce rapport-là qu'on de Cuba au Québec. C'est sûr que j'avais cette mission-là secondaire, mettons. De pouvoir montrer aussi que les pays qu'on pense connaître on ne les connait pas, puis de montrer Cuba, puis de pas trop le mettre dans des situations très cinématographiques. Au Québec on dit de "beurrer la toast". Je ne voulais pas le théâtraliser. Je voulais un Cuba qui était vrai, qui était réel. Des fois c'est sombre, des fois c'est bizarre, des fois ce n'est pas très beau, puis au même temps c'est beau dans ce que c'est.*
>
> Of course, my idea was also to break this relationship that Cuba has with Quebec. It is sure that I had this secondary mission, let us say. *To be able to show also that the countries that we think we know we don't know them, and to show Cuba, and not to put it in very cinematographic situations*. In Quebec we say "butter the toast". I didn't want to dramatize it. I wanted a Cuba that was real, that was real. Sometimes it's dark, sometimes it's weird, sometimes it's not very beautiful, and then at the same time it's beautiful in what it is (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020, emphasis added).

Cuba Merci… functions as a reaction against the sheltered ideas that most travelers have of a place when immersing themselves in the scenic universe of prepaid package tourism. Martin's refusal to "*beurrer la toast*" (to sugarcoat) Cuba is, in no small part, a personal critique of his own previous filmography, a complicit agent in such dynamics. Alexa and Manu sometimes find themselves in situations that most Québécois tourists would never even imagine when they choose to vacation in a Caribbean country: sitting for hours on end on a sidewalk waiting for a means of transportation that would take them back to the city from the beach, caressing stray dogs in the streets of Havana, or being outright refused a cold beer they want to purchase because allegedly there are no more in stock.

On the other hand, the lack of first-hand knowledge about Cuba is countered by the familiarities of other friends of the filmmaker who expressed diverging perceptions of the socialist nation, but that are nevertheless equally mediated by affective, if not imagined, considerations. Amongst his influences in choosing Havana as the destination for his cinematographic expedition, Alex enumerates close personal relationships, mostly francophones and Latins/Latinx (Italians, French, Colombians, Mexicans) who had a say in the matter. Some had travelled there avoiding the beaten path of resorts; others had studied and/or resided on the island for work. "*C'était un peu ce rapport avec la vérité et l'honnêteté qui faisait que moi je connaissais Cuba, que moi j'avais entendu parler de Cuba*" [It was a bit that relationship with truth and honesty that allowed me to know Cuba, that I had been hearing about Cuba], explains Alex (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020). Cuban culture stands as a "*centre connecteur*" for Martin and his colleagues, where a broadly conceived notion of Latinhood—in this case European and Latin American all included—finds a common ground and is articulated. Expressions of Cuba as a connective tissue for a trans-Latin constituency is a sentiment that one

certainly gets used to as a Latinx and as a Cuban living in Québec. But the same can be said for Mexicans, Argentinians, and other diasporas whose countries of origin have had historical ties with the francophone people (see Demers 2014). Indexing Cuba as a metonym of Latin America finds its roots in and also echoes a very recurrent form of branding of Montréal that is both deep-seated and treasured in Québec and Canada. The historian Gérard Bouchard has noted similar trends in the historical formations of Québécois national identity, calling them part of a "heteroclite heritage, within which coexist parallel ideals (…), contradictory allegiances (…), poorly assembled choices (…) [and] *bulk identities* (…)" (2000, 83, emphasis added). Case in point, the Montréal "*latino*" that is thought to be a melting pot for Latin (i.e. Continental Latin Europe) and Latinx cultures is the same one that is oblivious to persistent and uneven difficulties found by those same groups to coexist in Canadian/Québécois societies (see for instance Vega Vega 2019, Armony 2014, etc.). Once in the reality of the field, Alex had to revisit some of these presumptions in a calculation of "what served" the depiction of his, Manu, and Alexa's lived experiences in Cuba, and "what served" the island itself as per their vision. Reflecting on the whole, the director affirms that the outcoming product was a middle ground between the many extraneous impositions and realities found in the field and the "impositions" and analytical grids they carried with them to their destination. The final cut of the film is a dialogue with this complicated landscape, which seems to leave open-ended Martin's meaningful question: "*C'est quoi finalement voyager*?" [What is in the end travelling?].

3.1 On the Nature of Movement: A Road-Movie from Québec to Cuba

*Cuba Merci…*is undoubtedly the most straightforward example, among the works addressed in my research, of the critical emphasis placed on mobility and tourism through/while

making cinema. This is a film that dwells at once within the realms of the road movie, the autoethnography, and the travelogue. Its multifaceted angles stand as the filmic equivalent of the French concept of a *carnet de voyage*, a scrapbooking technique employed by travelers, scientists, and adventurers, a mixture of "visual story and literary exploration, oscillating between graphic arts, journalism, human sciences and poetry" (Santucci 2014) that is intimately tied to the valorization of exploration and discovery in modern French culture. These parallelisms with a trans-media object clearly associated first with French colonial expansion, then with the deployment of francophone culture throughout the world, aligns with the opening question of Tom Gunning's essay "The World Within Reach: Travel Images Without Borders." Gunning dives right into a core issue of the relationship between transnational mobility and cinema when he asks: "What clearer examples can we have of films that cross national boundaries than those devoted to portraying (…) "foreign views" and travel?" (2006, 25). As Gunning brilliantly demonstrates through analysis of pre-cinematic devices and early cinema's rapport with the rise of large-scale human mobility, the reach and importance of travel films should be scrutinized with caution as they are indeed the visual deployment of imported illustrations of a foreign space. More to the point, Jeffrey Ruoff indicates that the travelogue, part and parcel of the narrative fabric of *Cuba Merci…,* lies at the center of the possibilities afforded by "industrialized forms of representation" and "industrialized modes of transportation" and their intersections with "travel, tourism, and colonialism" (2006, 2).

If we think of *Cuba Merci…* as a road movie, it undeniably exhibits all the defining characteristics of the genre through a transnational, hybrid lens: its fascination with transportation, mobility, and vehicles (Orgeron 2008), the omnipresence of the road not just as narrative resource, but as source of the action (Archer 2016), and a trans-medial, trans-generic

drive (Mills 2006; Corrigan 1991). Besides all these widely accepted features, Devin Orgeron's *Road Movies: From Muybridge to Méliès, to Lynch and Kiarostami* brings our attention to a less debated, usually overlooked component of road movies that is very illuminating for the case at hand. I am talking here about their obvious fetishization of stasis and tradition even by omission, their determination to underline "the protection and stability offered by home and the home's contrast with the characters' shortsighted attempts to escape to worlds of mobility and freedom" as contended by Orgeron (41). Since the 1960s, the road movie has become a symbol of a particular understanding of postwar Euro-American cultures as ones infatuated with speed, cars, rebelliousness, pursuits of liberty, and counter-cultural movements. Orgeron turns this model upside down and argues in his book that what is concealed underneath all of this is a profound malaise with the vertiginous nature of modernity, a wariness of its human costs, and an idyllic longing for the stability and the comforts of community and domestic space.

In this section, I will draw on Orgeron's enticing formulation in order to state the case of *Cuba Merci…* not as a road movie (in regard to how it adheres to certain generic features or fails to do so), but rather, I will examine how it confronts, both literally and metaphorically, the idea of home and domesticity entrenched in the genre. While the authors discussed above have worked tirelessly to define the stylistic, syntactic, and semantic configurations of the road movie genre, I would like to pay more attention to the production components that go into "filming the road," and "being on the road" also as tourists, with the looming presence of home and communal illusions haunting the process. Focusing on the phenomenon of making films while also spending time as tourists/friends/film workers in a Cuban home will afford us the opportunity to pay attention to what Ruoff designates as "the live component" omnipresent in travel films, the "experiential and performative dimensions of the cinematic experience" (2) that

fiction films customarily conceal. I hope to bring to the fore what I perceive as an expanded notion of authorship that makes the actors, the director, the hosts of the house, and the community at large participants contributing to virtually every step of the production design of the film and its narrative. Secondly, I aim to demonstrate that the narrativization of transnational mobility within the film by means of the clear exhibition of the narrative device, i.e., the camera, indexes the auteur aspirations of a young filmmaker like Alex B. Martin and his claims on authorship. And finally, I will indicate how the domestic space sought and found through the process of filmmaking, as well as in the story itself, becomes a "matrifocal" locus, a frictional, gendered, transnational social space between mobile North-American francophone women and Cuban women.

The road in Martin's film is one structured around the idea of a progressive cultural and communal assimilation. For the entirety of the first part of the film, a series of successive *huis clos* hone in on Manu and Alexa and the peripeties of their touristic journey. From the waiting room of the Montréal airport to the plane, to the classic American cars they pay for on their treks to the beach for sunbathing and resting, the two characters appear isolated for the most part in locomotive environments that signify the prerogatives of their mobility through a different cultural and social landscape. They don't seem to acknowledge the presence of other fellow travelers or the service providers who "move them," but most crucially, through the camera we know that they fail to show interest in anything else than the transplantation to Cuban soil of their existential debacles, traumas, and personal histories supposedly left back home. The landscape itself forces its way into the diegetic development through peeps and glimpses, from an airplane window and occasional shots through the classic cars' windshields. It is all the more

significant that when Manu and Alexa are not indulging in their musings, either on the plane or in the vehicles, they sleep while they move. As interpreted by Martin:

> *Il y a une qui arrive un peu déprimée, l'autre arrive un peu avec son idée de faire la fête et à travers ça elles sont pas du tout curieuses d'écouter la musique qu'on écoute à la radio dans un taxi. Elles sont pas du tout curieuses de qui est le chauffeur du taxi, peu importe ! C'est à travers le voyage qu'elles se découvrent sans même penser l'avoir fait nécessairement. Elles réalisent qu'elles ont un intérêt pour l'autre*.
>
> There is one who arrives a little depressed, the other one arrives a little with the idea of partying and through that they are not at all curious to listen to the music on the radio in a cab. They are not at all curious about who the cab driver is, whatever! It's through the journey that they discover themselves without even thinking about having done it necessarily. They realize that they have an interest for the other (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020).

However, the nature of this self-discovery is something that I intend to qualify and nuance further below. It remains that, during the first half of the movie, movement through and within borders arises from the assemblage of "locomotion" and "media-motion" (2008, 9) that Walter Moser finds at the genesis of the road-movie canon. As Moser writes:

> *La locomotion résume les différentes formes de mobilité dans lesquelles se trouvent engagés des êtres humains qui se déplacent physiquement. La médiamotion est une forme de mobilité que nous procurent les médias mais qui, dans un certains sens, remplace ou redouble le déplacement physique en offrant aux ëtres humains une expérience presque paradoxale: le contact à distance. Le médiamotion permet de se déplacer, de se trouver aiilers sans bouger physiquement.*
>
> Locomotion summarizes the different forms of mobility in which human beings are engaged when they move physically. Mediamotion is a form of mobility provided by the media but which, in a certain sense, replaces or redoubles physical displacement by offering human beings an almost paradoxical experience: contact at a distance. The mediamotion allows to move, to be in contact without moving physically (Moser, 9).

The first one designates the literal physical advancement through space of individuals via vehicular means. Media-motion stands then as the possibility of "replacement or reinforcement" of spatial transit and "contact from a distance" even in the absence of physical motion. As *Cuba*

Merci… progresses, we gradually perceive how the project privileges the latter to the detriment of the former. At the same time that media-motion substantiates the extra-textual capacity of the cinematic technology to register and capture mobility and motion writ large, it also catalyzes a form of human and cultural contact and dialogue that abandons locomotion to revolve around the production of images and its technologies as motors of social cohesion.

This transition makes itself more evident halfway through the film. Up to then, the two characters have been set against a vehicular background and the ephemeral images of a landscape that speeds past them. Almost invariably we see Manu and Alexa in a medium/close shot sitting in the back of a classic American car, or *almendron*, as locals call them, going to and coming from the seaside, discussing trivial matters that are nonetheless essential for character development. Most notably, in the second to last of these dynamic sequences, the two friends debate about Manu's spontaneity and wanting of "refinement" by means of self-contention, something that Alexa finds surprising. A shy person herself, she warns Manu that her desire for "elevation" might in fact become a personal prison. In scenes like this one, the camera places the two actresses against their seats, erasing in the process the driver and what happens in the front of the car, as if only the two of them existed. Along the same lines, when the two women are in the city, the Havana we see is clouded in darkness; it is often nighttime and the few characters we see are always turning their back to us or are seen through a lattice window. Sometimes we just get glimpses of parts of their bodies, like their feet or their hands, as they interact with Alexa and Manu.

Moving on from the security, speed, and isolation of the car, the second half of the film commences to make space for more culturally inflected forms of motion that negate those forms of mobility the two women seem to be more familiar with as subjects from the industrialized

North. We leave all of the sudden the deserted seascapes and the comforts of the back of the vehicles to follow them by foot through the streets of Centro Habana. The dark streets are now populated with passersby starkly different from the night crowd that, as a local survival tactic, caters to an unofficial entertainment industry for tourists. Along with Manu and Alexa the camera itself becomes more present and vivid. The medium shot breathes now through a wider lens and is interpellated by several stimuli that confer it new, subjective qualities. It jitters in excitement while playing soccer with the two main characters and the children of the neighborhood; it follows closely the rituals of fishing on the Malecón boardwalk as a way of killing the inertia of Havana evenings; it barely avoids being run over by a Lada car as the three jaywalk in the labyrinth-like urban grid of Centro Habana; and dances around a troupe of kids who practice their daily choreographies at a cultural center. This second section mimics the qualities of the documentary: we see a series of subjects exposing their feelings and ideas regarding the country. The camera meanders toward the extra-diegetic conversations of a group of women in a beauty parlor and the craft of its nail technicians at the expense of the main characters.

The ways Cuba, as a third, multiple character, takes over the narration is characterized by a double move. First, it underplays vehicularity as a pillar of the standard road movie to highlight traditional and situated forms of movement potentiating transcultural communication and communal interactions. Secondly, it underlines the media apparatus and its movement as a vortex where all these human vectors that up to this point were only insinuated converge. Downplaying automated locomotion to privilege the manifestation of the camera is a sign of Martin's directorial vision. As a documentarist working mostly on location where social

insertion was not always orchestrated, Martin admits that the camera for him is a propulsor of social interactions. As he commented during one interview:

> *La caméra est une bonne excuse dans le fond. Pour moi la caméra c'est ça. Une excuse pour aller à la rencontre de l'autre. C'est une excuse pour toi d'aller parler à quelqu'un. C'est une excuse pour les gens de voir que tu as une caméra, pour venir te parler (...) Ça devient une sorte de lien social. Surtout quand on est une seule personne avec la camera.*
>
> The camera is a good excuse in the end. For me the camera is that. An excuse to go and meet the other person. It's an excuse for you to go talk to someone. It's an excuse for people to see that you have a camera, to come and talk to you (...) It becomes a kind of social link. Especially when you're just one person with the camera (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020).

Since the film is based mostly on a brief sketch of a script, Martin, accompanied by Alexa and Manu, had the liberty to walk through neighborhoods with the camera, addressing the questions and curiosity of the residents and, as fruit of those conversations, the premises for the scenes eventually came up. In some cases, neighbors and people familiar with the filmmaking process asked to be included. The mediation allowed by the camera went beyond its capacities as a capture device and a narrative tool, but it also functioned as the motor, the genesis of the story assemblage itself, and the normalization and adoption of the foreign group and their enterprise in the dynamics of the community. Moreover, it disrupts the vertical conception of the author's signature to foster a more horizontal approach that shares authorship and agency between the subjects filmed and the ones filming.

I would further argue that, attending to Martin's words above, this capacity of media-motion to mobilize humans transnationally, be it in virtual spaces, at a symbolic level, or through physical space, is also the architect's stone over which resides the authorship claims of debut directors like Martin, but also Lagarde, as in the previous case study. In other words, human mobility, mediated by and represented through transborder film labor, is equally a signifier of

professional advancement for these young Québécois directors and their recognition as cinematographic auteurs. Devin Orgeron, in his reframing of Abbas Kiarostami as a road-movie filmmaker, demonstrates how the Iranian director's features and short films don't shy away from exhibiting that they are always "in conversation with the world outside the frame and, in this way, [his films] acknowledge the frame and the framer themselves" (Orgeron, 189). Moreover, in almost all his stories there is a keen "interest in the connections between social and physical movement," that "image making is a method by which to become mobile" (189) both socially and spatially. As Orgeron sees it, attention to human motion and, furthermore, the non-Western critique of modern Western culture's obsession with spatial mobility as a symbol of social status, are structural principles in the poetics of Kiarostami.

Now, Martin's attention to the ability of the camera to propitiate social cohesion and interactions doesn't fall far from this expanded sense of mobility. First, it inheres in Martin's statements quoted earlier in this chapter when he admitted the integral role played by international travel and the depiction of tourism in his professional life. His livelihood literally derives from his capacity to travel, to move freely and therefore to have a certain self-awareness of the place that mobility has in his social standing and his career. Secondly, not only Martin sees the camera as the passport to this world of global drift and professional and personal connections. *Cuba Merci*…, as most of Kiarostami's films, manifests the presence of the camera and its mobility to literalize in turn the manifestation of the author behind it. In both cases, the spotlight placed upon the means of enunciation, that is to say the recording device, is an undisputable sign of the existence of an auteur voice behind it moving along with it through a world that keeps expanding before their eyes, so to speak. In both cases, too, references and homages to auteurs like De Sica, Antonioni, Varda, Godard, etc. are not fortuitous. For one, they

follow in their aesthetic tradition and disrupt the visual stability of classical cinema to return the attention to the voice behind the camera. Secondly, if there is something that connects all of these directors it is the unabashed obsession with contemporary human mobility it all its forms and at different spatial scales: by bike, by car, on foot, by train, within the city, across the nation, across borders, etc.

In Martin's case, this becomes even more present given that all his previous documentaries and TV series speak about travelling, about being a tourist across the globe, and prompting others to follow in their footsteps. As Martin's directorial debut in fiction, *Cuba Merci…* is a film that positions itself in continuity with the corpus he had already amassed as a TV documentary filmmaker and series director. It therefore stands to reason that tourism, mobility, media making, and self-reflexivity as a travelling subject propelled by the creation of moving images are the core of the young Québécois' aspirations as an auteur. As he admitted himself in our frank conversations, the arts in general, but moving image arts in particular, is what took him from humble working-class origins in Rimouski to an international career, first as a foreign student in the US, then as a globetrotting filmmaker in virtually every corner of the world (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020). *Cuba Merci…* is not just a passive mirror of global mobility and tourism. It is also an active catalyst of social, professional, and physical mobility for those involved in this project. As I move into the next section, I will return to this point by highlighting what this means for Martin's hosts in Cuba as I interrogate the place of home, the communal synergies that the film generated, and the space of gender in this transnational project.

3.2 Québécois "Going Home" to Cuba: Navigating Domesticity, Communal Desires, and the Transnational Social Space of Gender

The aid of Teresa's *Casa Merced* became paramount as the transnational film venture developed into a collective/domestic effort. The director concedes that their relationships with Teresa, someone who is highly esteemed in the surroundings and the employer of a considerable portion of available workforces in the neighborhood, paved the investment in, and the collaboration with, the petit film crew. The cinematic *casa particular* in the film is the place where Alexa and Manu recover daily from their hectic excursions in the city. Their semi-nude, vulnerable bodies find in the fresh interiors moments to exteriorize their fears, their pain, to rest and to perform intimate gestures of self-care and grooming necessary for women. The Cuban home is at times the platform from which they imagine and try to understand an environment that is alien to them. It is also the space where a certain rift starts to appear in how the characters conceive their touristic selves while they realize how different are their perceptions of each other from the ones they had in their homeland, and how at odds are their respective meanings of the travel they are undertaking.

For example, as the film evolves, Manu feels more in tune with their surroundings and interested by the community around them. It feels almost as if she had found somehow a place for herself in Cuba. She dresses more provocatively, and she engages more with everyone around her. She "Cubanizes" herself in a way. She especially shows interest in the communal aspects that constantly invade the privacy of the domestic. For example, when she observes the occupants of the downstairs apartments washing their clothes in an open space available to all the ground-floor level, or when they (Alexa and Manu) both play soccer with the kids of the home and those of the neighborhood in the streets. In an intimate scene within their bedroom, she

realizes that she has run out of sunscreen and asks Alexa to borrow hers. While she asks for permission, she is already on the verge of grabbing the sunscreen bottle. Alexa, however, stands mute for a couple of minutes and then interrogates her friend: why was she out of sunscreen? Didn't she bring enough? What was she planning to do when she ran out of it totally? The pointed questions, and the silences that follow before Alexa agrees to let her borrow the sunscreen, make a tension palpable. The level of communality and interdependence that Manu has observed and come even to fetishize is a form of intimacy that Alexa doesn't welcome in her life. This strain between the two women will remain a driving force of the story until the dramatic end.

Manu's desire to comprehend the ways of the Others around her are visible, too, in the only scene where Teresa, the owner of the home, appears. This scene, one of the most interesting in the film, happens in the dining room with Teresa who has just served Manu and Alexa their breakfast and sits down to chat with them. Manu and Alexa are sitting at the breakfast table with her debating the role of women in Cuba. Up to this point, the attention, or lack thereof, that the two white women receive from local men is gradually becoming a contentious issue between them. Manu, flirtier and more outgoing, enjoys catcalling and the sexual advances of Cuban men, which attracts the veiled jealousy and criticisms of Alexa. Based on these exchanges Manu explains to Teresa how she thinks that women in Cuba are still typified a certain way through the approval and the valorization of a male gaze that depicts them as desirable objects. Teresa dismisses these ideas by commenting on her own situation as an empowered, older woman, an entrepreneur who tends to her children but who is also the supporter of her much younger lover, Titi. Laughing it up, Teresa describes Titi as an example of the same situation Manu experiences, but for men, stopping short of a portrait of a partially emasculated Cuban male. With that

depiction of her lover, Teresa confronts the outsiders' idea of a prevailing macho culture on the island, offering a more nuanced vision of gender relationships.

The subtle rebuttal of Manu's misconceptions about gender dynamics and performativity in Cuba made by Teresa is best exemplified by the place she carves in her familial enterprise for the Québécois creative venture. When I met Teresa for the first time, she was no longer related to Titi, her partner at the time when Alex and his friends were shooting in her house. However, her reflections when talking to me didn't seem to differ a lot from what was said in the film. As a single mother of two she must juggle together the wellbeing of her children and the betterment of her business. The company of a man, or the lack thereof, was not a dissuasion for her from starting her own business nor did it diminish the tenacity she puts into carrying it on. On the contrary, she seems to thrive from being a single mother who exploits successfully her domain of expertise, i.e., the enterprising of reproductive work and domestic know-how. She maintains:

> *Yo llevo en este negocio de arrendamiento 17 años, la edad que tiene mi niña. Yo empecé en este negocio cuando mi niña tenía solamente un año de nacida. Y siempre he sido una madre soltera. Sí he tenido relaciones, pero no ninguna persona que sea de larga duración. Muchas de esas personas han contribuido en mi vida y a mi negocio en el sentido de que me han ayudado con algunas cositas. Pero en sí yo siempre he sido una madre soltera que he salido adelante con mis dos niños, ¿me entiendes? Y he tratado siempre de no vincular a mis niños tampoco mucho al turismo internacional porque son dos niños que estudian y tiene que dormir bien sus horarios y demás.*
>
> I have been in this rental business for 17 years, the same age as my daughter. I started in this business when my daughter was only one year old. And I have always been a single mother. I have had relationships, but not any long-term relationships. Many of those people have contributed to my life and my business in the sense that they have helped me with a few little things. But I have always been a single mother who has managed to get by with my two children. You know what I mean? And I have always tried not to link my children too much to international tourism because they are two children who study and have to sleep well and have their schedules and so on (Interview with Teresa Hernández, November 25th, 2020).

Taking up again the scene discussed above, it becomes clear that the domestic space Teresa describes here is one where transnational tourism, foreign media production, childbearing and reproduction, and discreet economic investments come together. Her domestic realm is a transnational social space where traditional gender performance is at once disavowed and sustained. Ludger Pries defines transnational social spaces as "'stacked' social spaces [that] could extend over more than one of the coherent geographic container spaces of different national societies" (Pries 2001, 3). He goes on to clarify that the emergence of "pluri-locally spanned *transnational* social spaces" (Pries, 3, original emphasis) can be due to the apparition of "social realities and entities that grow up either from the grassroots by international migration or through a complex top-down and bottom-up process brought about by international companies." (Pries, 3) As indicated above, all these components are present in Teresa's configuration and understanding of her domestic arena. Her home is the situated yet socially and geographically dense space where national borders, local and international businesses, and small-scale and large-scale enterprises meet. Furthermore, it is also a place where the gendered nature of domestic work is explicitly used as a source of local empowerment, but also as a bridge of transnational discussions about the place and role of women in private, labor, and public spheres, as witnessed in the scene with Manu and Alexa.

This gendered transnational social space automatically enters into dialogue with the specific histories of feminist affirmation and struggles both in Québec and Cuba. Manu, while expressing her concerns about Cuban women's persistence in presenting certain features that invite the objectification of insular woman by their potential male partners, becomes the echo of a francophone North American society where women have conquered much but face insurmountable challenges, too. As *Le Groupe des 13* denounced in 2018 in Québec, the present

sociopolitical climate of conservatism and Québécois right-leaning nationalism made it so that social movements, like those of women, operated at a disadvantage. As they elaborate:

> *[L]es lutes pour les droits civiques et politiques de toutes les femmes, contre la pauvreté et les violences envers elles, pour l'égalité, l'accès à la contraception, au travail ou à l'éducation se traduisent la plupart du temps, après de combats épiques, en lois, politiques, plans d'action, strategies (aide sociale, violence conjugale, agressions et exploitations sexuelles, égalité, etc.) au fil des revendications portées par les mouvements feminists et leurs allies.*
>
> [T]he struggles for civil and political rights for all women, against poverty and violence against them, for equality, access to contraception, work or education are mostly translated, after epic fights, into laws, policies, action plans, strategies (related to social aid, conjugal violence, sexual assaults and exploitations, equality, etc.) in the course of the demands carried by the feminist movements and their allies (*Le Groupe des 13* 2018, 90).

However, as they also warn, despite the real advancements and the persistent efforts of recent phenomena like #MoiAussi, and #BalanceTonPorc (global francophone instances of the #MeToo movement) to which I would add the wave of feminicides that Québec experienced during the Covid 19 pandemic,[xxii] denote the still fragile place of women both in the public and private domains. When the female characters of the film voice their worries, these are the anxieties from which they draw their arguments.

Teresa's brushing off their ideas shouldn't be seen as a symptom of Cuban women's ignorance of these topics or indolence toward the issues that face women in Cuba and elsewhere.[xxiii] Unlike Alexa and Manu, pleasing and attracting the gaze of potential sentimental

[xxii] For more on this see, for instance, Lacroix-Couture, F. 2021. "Le Québec endeuillé par la vague de féminicides en 2021" *L'actualité*, December 22, 2021. https://lactualite.com/actualites/le-quebec-endeuille-par-la-vague-de-feminicides-en-2021/, Trudel, R. 2021. "Féminicide: un fléau qui ne touche pas que le Québec" *Le Journal de Montréal,* June 17, 2021. https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2021/06/17/feminicide-un-fleau-qui-ne-touche-pas-que-le-quebec, and La Presse canadienne. 2022. "La mobilisation contre les féminicides commence à porter ses fruits" *Radio-Canada*, April 6, 2022. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1874744/mobilisation-contre-feminicides-premier-anniversaire-rmfvvct.

[xxiii] Recently, independent journalism on the island has reported periodically cases of feminicides, conjugal violence, street harassment, and the deficiencies of the legal system to face these matters and make the responsible persons accountable for their actions. Although it has become almost an uncontested truth that the Cuban government conceals the real numerical data on conjugal violence and death of women at the hands of their husbands and lovers,

partners, as might be the case of these two tourist women in search of summer adventures under the tropical sun of Havana, is not part of Teresa's priorities. Secondly, she is simply drawing from a different tradition and observing the same situation from a different framework. Teresa personifies the history of Cuban matrifocality (Safa 2009, 42) where, despite the existence of a patriarchal system, women are the ones who lead and sustain the household, especially single mothers like Teresa.[xxiv] Authors like Raymond Smith (1973), Anna Cristina Pertierra (2008), and Helen Safa (2009) locate matrifocality in those "households headed by women (…) even when men are nominally head of the household as their authority diminishes because of increasing female autonomy" and authority (Safa, 42). As Safa also indicates, women have had important gains in post-revolutionary Cuba "becom[ing] major decision makers in the family and in society" (Safa, 42). This matrifocal lineage has greatly expanded in the post-Soviet era on the island when women like Teresa have found in the domestic environment sources of revenue and

---

in recent times Cuban official and para-official institutions have reported on these painful issues and have forced the hand of the government to change their stances on these matters. Furthermore, these issues have been exposed on state-owned national television, dealt with in radio and televisual PSAs made by state agencies, and debated at regional forums like the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL in Spanish) (Oliva, 2020). This, despite the Cuban establishment's touting the eradication of all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, sexual identity, etc. To give a sense of the challenges faced by Cuban women today see, for example: Anouna, Jasmin. 2018. "Aquí no hay protestas. Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in Cuba." Senior Honor Thesis, Swarthmore College, Rodriguez Fuentes, L. 2020. "Cuba Slow to Act Over Domestic Abuse" *Institute for War & Peace Reporting*, August 25, 2020. https://iwpr.net/global-voices/cuba-slow-act-over-domestic-abuse, Oliva, L. "Mi casa, mi tumba" Violentadas en Cuarentena, November 11th, 2020. https://violentadasencuarentena.distintaslatitudes.net/portfolio/cuba/, and Narvarte, P. 2022. "Activist Collective in Cuba Raises Funds to Provide Shelter and Protection to Harassed Women Journalists" *Latin American Journalism Review*, January 19, 2022. https://latamjournalismreview.org/articles/collective-of-activists-and-women-journalists-in-cuba-raises-funds-to-provide-shelter-and-protection-to-harassed-independent-journalists/.

[xxiv] To give an estimate of the extent of this phenomenon of single mothers sustaining and leading households in Cuba, in 2015 according to figures published by the ONEI, 53.8% of Cuban homes were nominally headed by men. That same year the ONEI also advanced that, following its estimates, by 2030 women and men in Cuba could reach almost parity in being the leaders of their households, with women making up in the future 52.5% of the heads of homes (Sosin Martinez: 2017, Torres Santana, Stavropoulou, Samuels, Solís & Fernández: 2020) For more on this see Resik, M. 1996. "Women-Cuba: Single Women Confront Hard Life" *Inter Press Services*, May 28, 1996. https://www.ipsnews.net/1996/05/women-cuba-single-mothers-confront-hard-life/, Sosin Martinez, E. 2017. "Cuban Women without a Man" *Havana Times*, January 20, 2017. https://havanatimes.org/features/women-without-a-man/, Powell, C. 2017. "Postcard From Havana: A Lack of Childcare Leaves Women in Quandary" *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2017. https://www.cfr.org/blog/postcard-havana-lack-childcare-leaves-cuban-women-quandary, or Voss, M. 2017. "Cuba offers tax cuts, other motherhood incentives as population ages" *CGTN*, September 22, 2017. https://america.cgtn.com/2017/09/22/cuba-demographics-seniors-motherhood-birth-rate.

resignification of the value of homemaking, as suggested by Pertierra. Teresa's statement above and her cinematic reply to Alexa and Manu merely indicate this different context where the private sphere is for her the backbone of her position as the breadwinner for her children but also for her temporary lover.

In this sense, as we can see in the case of *Cuba Merci…*, Titi, her ex-partner, served as a buffer to help her with parallel investments that didn't precisely contribute to her capital security, but that benefited from or increased her social capital and standing in her sphere of influences. Teresa remained the holder of the reins of her business model and Titi coasted on her reputation to carry out unpaid or underpaid creative endeavors. Here the extra-cinematic *casa* is the enterprising venue that linked the artistic project with the creative potential of a Havana neighborhood. With Titi as an unofficial ambassador, the community interactions pushing the film forward were calculated as part of the social architecture of *Casa Merced*. He accompanied them during on-location shooting, he helped them secure scenes in spaces where Teresa's family is involved, like Merced's dance studio, and became an overall spokesperson for the film crew with the locals. In other words, Teresa sponsored the creative venture through the enrolment of her partner with a project that didn't necessarily mean financial gain, but that required her class and social status in her community. She, as a woman in Cuba, remained the bread winner and her man could spend his time on less concrete matters like attending to the film crew.

This is not to say that women like Teresa do not place value on the ways their partners make a living formally or informally. As stated, she was thankful for the contributions Titi and others like him have made in her life, and those of her children, throughout the years ("*me han ayudado con algunas cositas"* [they have helped me with some little things]). Moreover, for the Québécois film crew, Teresa's physical domestic labor and Titi's social management were

equally important for the kind of project they carried out, but not without certain limitations. As Martin explained, the presence of Titi as an *ad hoc* fixer, or location manager, both facilitated and hindered the development of the production. The same social interactions animated by Titi that fueled the film and gave value to the authenticity sought by the story were eventually a burden for the small production team. At first, as Martin recognizes, Titi's help was instrumental in facilitating the insertion and welcome of the small guerrilla film crew in the "quartier" (barrio). He explains:

> *Ce côté-là d'avoir eu Titi qui était très respecté dans le quartier (...) C'est comme si rapidement tout le monde savait on était qui. Tout le monde savait nos noms, même sur la rue qu'on habitait. Tout le monde était curieux. (...) [M]ême si on n'avait pas continué à travailler avec lui on était son ami les soirs. On parlait après les tournages avec lui, il était présent dans nos vies. On était tombés un peu sous leur ailles, ce soit la dame ou lui parce qu'après ça tout le monde était comme : Ah mais ceux sont les québécois de Titi ! Je pense que ça a devenu une sorte de visa. On était bien reçu. Si on arrivait dans un autre endroit où les gens ne nous connaissaient pas je pense même que le mot se passait. On a eu accès à leur réseau. Je pense que le film ne s'aurait passé aussi bien si on n'avait pas eu accès à ce réseau-là.*
>
> This fact of having had Titi who was very respected in the neighbourhood (...) It's as if everyone knew who we were. Everyone knew our names, even the street we lived on. Everyone was curious (...) [E]ven if we didn't continue to work with him, we were his friends in the evenings. We spoke with him after the shootings, he was present in our lives. We fell a little bit under their wings, either the lady [Teresa] or him because after that everyone was like: Ah but those are Titi's Québécois! I think it became a kind of visa. We were well received. If we arrived in another place where people didn't know us, I think the word would get around. We had access to their network. I don't think the film would have gone as well if we hadn't had access to that network (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020).

As indicated in the statement above, Martin eventually tried to minimize Titi's presence on location so that he and his colleagues could concentrate on filming and moving things along. Having to manage the pleasantries and rituals of neighborhood camaraderie and the ever-evolving story lines offered by locals expanded the limits of the project to horizons impossible to sustain (Interview with Alex B Martin, May 6th, 2020). During the nights they would still

exchange with the young man and would plan for the next day relying on his arrangements. His indications and the influence exerted by Teresa were instrumental not only in opening doors for Alex and the actresses, but also a protective device for an enterprise that remained essentially illegal. Given the small format of the movie, Alex thought that licenses wouldn't be necessary. It was thanks to Titi's and Teresa's guidance that they went to places where the filmmaking process could pass inadvertently, interpreted as nothing more than tourists making a video or protected by the complicity and silence of the community at large (Interview with Teresa Hernández, November 25th, 2020). Therefore, in Centro Habana, they became "*les Québécois de Titi*". The fact that they took them under their wings ("*on était tombés un peu sous leur ailles*," as Martin put it) smoothed out the participation of the community and the welcome they gave to a foreign film in which they felt they were all equal participants to a certain degree.

As Martin recalls:

> *On avait accès, les gens nous donnaient accès à bcp. Puis je pense aussi le fait de parler espagnol, moi je tournais bcp sans les filles, tout seul avec une caméra. Et pas seulement le fait de tourner pour le film mais de tourner, le fait que les gens me voient dans le quartier avec une caméra. Par exemple je parlais avec une vieille dame que son fils faisait du reggaeton et qui habite en Floride, puis on parlait : peut-être la prochaine fois que tu y viennes on peut tourner quelque chose ensembles. J'ai eu la chance de tourner aussi un peu des gars qui faisaient du karaté aussi. J'ai eu accès à....chaque personne voulait qu'on le film.*
>
> We had access, people gave us access to a lot. And I also think the fact that we spoke Spanish helped us. I shot a lot without the girls, all alone with a camera. And not only the fact of shooting for the film, but the fact that people saw me in the neighborhood with a camera. For example, I was talking to an old lady that her son was doing reggaeton and he lives in Florida, then we were talking, "Maybe next time you come there you can shoot something together." I had the chance to shoot a little bit with some guys who were doing karate too. I had access to.... everyone who wanted us to film them (Interview with Alex B. Martin May 6th, 2020).

Martin's words here are at once a strong example of media-motion, that is the filmic apparatus providing a channel of contact and mobility, maybe even the aspiration of it, based on

its very existence in the field. The icon of a man with a camera is at once the main interest to open doors and give "access" as Martin eloquently puts it. It is also, secondly, the device that puts in movement the gears of a machinery of transnational networking equally predicated on the making of a film or the promise of future media projects that could be done, as the example of the lady with the "Reggaetonero" son demonstrates. Finally, as I interpret it, it shows the will of the director to open his project as a community matter. Besides his pre-script, and the ideas he may or may have not had once he started shooting in Cuba, people's desire to be filmed—those who "wanted" Martin to capture their images—were given a voice within the final cut of the feature. There are plenty of examples: the neighbors that go about their daily chores in their homes right under Teresa's home, the "philosopher," as Martin called him, who muses about the sociopolitical differences between Cuba and Miami in an eloquent French of continental inflection, the popular musicians who play for and then waltz with a couple of young Québécois women by the Malecon, and the summer lover boys that Manu and Alexa procure for themselves. In sum, the original project of the trio of friends/film crew expanded its contours to make place for the community surrounding them, which suggested to a certain extent what should or could be part of the film. Of course, Martin would retain the role of director and the final choices were his to make. But he was at least open to hear and welcome suggestions.

This experience may have deeply impacted the local imaginary, up to a point that even my research became at times a moment of "transborder" visibility for those who wanted to be seen by a "camera" or at least a recording device. In a candid moment during our first conversation, Teresa paraded before the phone camera her team of workers, her daughter, and friends who even remotely participated or appeared in the film. Aiding Martin or cameoing in the movie seemed to give these people a sense of pride and they were more than happy to say so to me.

They detailed in which capacity they appeared in the film, and, in turn, I was almost forced to oblige by telling them whether I remembered their appearances in the movie. It bears repeating that none of these films have been shown in Cuba yet, so these people haven't seen their "filmic selves" and that's why my report seemed to mean a lot for them. But I also identify this as proof of their versatility and dynamism, features they hoped they would be able to trade in the future for comparable possibilities of transnational employment in projects akin to *Cuba Merci*... Some of them offered their services during the filming of *Sin La Habana*, Kaveh Nabatian's movie which was also shot predominantly in *Casa Merced* and its vicinities. Probably the incapability to fully understand the purpose of my inquiry, and the fact that I succinctly described myself as "*haciendo un doctorado en cine*" (doing a PhD in film studies), made them think I could invite them to participate in something more related to cinema-making than just being part of academic research. It remains that these introductions felt more like guerrilla castings that happened informally on WhatsApp while I tried to rein in the conversation to where I needed it to go and struggled with the faulty internet connection. It should be noted that, as I witnessed, most of Teresa's employees passing in front of my camera were all women, too.

The commercial title of the film, *Cuba Merci Gracias*, was adopted as a testament to the resulting expanded notion of authorship and management coming out of said communal involvement. It attests to the film crew's and fictional characters' yearning for and nurturing of those relationships, but also to their fractured, intercultural, uneven nature. Martin went back recurrently to this conflicted duality that he explores throughout the film. As tourists and film workers he was conscious that they were there to take, to produce, and extract. The actionable chain of command of both tourism and film production is exemplified by the mobility of the first part of the story and the exoticization of the machinery involved in those forms of motion

through the Caribbean country. Picturing Cubans and foreigners riding 1940's and 1950's cars are part of the semiotics of advertising Cuba as a touristic destination worldwide. This marketing grammar at once seduces the mobile agency of travelers but also denotes Cuba as a modern country that is not so modern at the same time. Now, when other forms of motion through film and on the ground were favored, a different set of human links, both intra and extra-textual, came into effect. Nonetheless, it didn't necessarily prescribe a deeper understanding of the overall experience of travelling, and the film remains skeptical about the politics that are part of these dynamics as the director reiterated. In his words:

> *On prend pour acquis qu'on peut aller où l'on veut dans le monde et prendre et que ça va. Même si on est un peu respectueux on peut se demander : est-ce que ça va vraiment ? Moi j'ai un rapport...ce n'est pas nécessairement positif le tourisme puis le voyage puis au même temps c'est absurde parce que c'est ma passion parce que c'est comme ça qu'on crée des liens puis après ça on peut partager des réflexions puis avancer tous ensembles de façon plus planétaire, mettons. Puis au même temps il y a beaucoup de naïveté, d'inconscience, d'insouciance.*
>
> We take for granted that we can go anywhere in the world and take and that it's okay. Even if we are a bit respectful, we can ask ourselves: is it really okay? I have a relationship...it's not necessarily positive tourism and travel, but at the same time it's absurd because it's my passion, because that's how we create links and after that we can share thoughts and move forward together in a more global way, let's say. And at the same time there is a lot of naivety, unconsciousness, carelessness (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020).

The naïve and unconscionable purpose of carelessly taking is what we see being both performed and self-critiqued through the eyes of the characters. For example, due to miscommunication they resent a woman street vendor who refused to sell them hot beers, finally calling her a "bitch" behind her back. I would like to go back here to the gender tensions that the characters and the film explore together. The film necessitated and allowed these sorts of intuitive moments that rose from unscripted, spontaneous interactions with the locals. Martin saw in the Cuban waitress's refusal to sell them hot beers a comical moment that undid the

subservient image of women in the service industries worldwide, allegedly always ready to please and acquiesce with a smile. As he said: "*C'est correct que la fille au début ne veut pas leur vendre de la bière chaude. Elles vont dans le film dans un petit commerce et la fille ne veut pas leur vendre de la bière chaude parce qu'elle ne les connaît pas puis elle s'en fout cette fille-là. Ça c'est bien correct !*" [It's okay that the girl at the beginning doesn't want to sell them warm beers. They go to a small shop in the film and the girl doesn't want to sell them warm beers because she doesn't know them, and she doesn't care about them at all. That's all right!] (Interview with Alex B. Martin, May 6th, 2020) Yet, the filmic Manu and Alexa seem to have a different take on the matter, and they expected to get as foreign paying customers the utmost deference from the Cuban service provider. In a way, it is as if their desire of enfranchisement and liberation for Cuban women from their traditional roles and attitudes in society stopped here where the transactional nature of relationships between women came into the mix.

Furthermore, despite the conversation that Manu had with Teresa over the inviting attitudes of women in Cuba, as we see in the film, she starts reproducing uncomplicatedly those same manners. Alexa becomes increasingly vexed with an Emmanuelle who, for the most part, has no qualms about kissing, flirting, and inciting local men to invade her personal space. The militant Manu of before appears to have fewer and fewer problems with Cuban women's expressions of femininity in relation to male counterparts. She seemed at ease increasing the yearly figures of Euro-North American women who travel to Central America and the Caribbean explicitly looking for sexual encounters with locals (Lu et al. 2020). It is not even casual that Cuba figures amongst those countries where sex tourism is expected to be an integral factor in the touristic experience (Simoni 2014). As Manu gives in to her touristic self, she adopts features of that which she used to criticize from her original positionality as a feminist Québécoise. These

moments, along with the repeated arguments with Alexa around the issue of men, and the dialogue with Teresa over the empowerment of women on the island, are instances of those transnational social spaces where layered identities and ideologies sometimes coexist, sometimes grind with each other, and others, overtly extending the clash from Québec to Teresa's living room and to the streets of Centro Habana.

In another moment, Manu seems fascinated by the existence of a temporary skating rink in front of paradigmatic seafront of El Malecón. When she tries to flex her skills as a skater, we see her struggling at once with the poor quality of the ice maintenance and the clumsy Cuban skaters that get in her way. This scene brings to the fore in the most poetic way the desire for speed, mobility, and fluidity sought by the tourist-characters and the incompatibility of their idiosyncrasy and the types of motion, both spiritual and physical, allowed by the host country. Emmanuelle seems to find a piece of her homeland (a familiar territory to her) in the skating rink. Her wishes to feel at home are portrayed as shaky, irregular, faulty, as we see her trying to skate only to stumble at every turn due to the poor ice or the hordes of Cuban kids bumping into each other and into her. Martin's road movie unfolds a path riddled with communicational and physical obstacles and highlights the shortsightedness of Manu and Alexa—too self-centered on what the voyage should provide for them—while remaining oblivious to the journey itself.

Progressively another impossibility appears, that of communication and recognition within the abstract community of tourists from Québec that they represent, which I believe speaks volumes of the diversity of fractures that make up Québécois identity, besides the widespread parochial ideas of a monolithic and tight nation. Towards the end, Manu and Alexa find themselves increasingly at odds with each other's attitudes in Havana, regarding men, sexuality, expenditures, use and management of resources, etc. When they have dinner together celebrating

Emmanuelle's birthday, the song "*Vivir mi vida*" by Marc Anthony (Sony Latin Music 2013) is heard in the background, and through this simple intertext a moment arises to profile the social contrasts of today's Québec against the backdrop of its international projection. Marc Anthony's rendition is a cover of the French-Arab hit by the Algerian singer Khaled "*C'est la vie*" (Universal 2012). Both songs travelled across borders in the original and Spanish versions and were particularly popular in Francophone and Hispanic nations like Québec and Cuba respectively. At the same time, thanks to the magic of capturing the moment as they filmed, over the song we can hear the out-of-frame, joyful cry of a man in unmistakable Québécois vernacular: "*C'est ma tune!"* [It's my song!] (48:34). Emmanuelle and Alexa cringe and roll their eyes. Manu utters: "Yish!" shuddering in disapproval of what they both perceive to be a vulgar invasion of their compatriot into the semi-formal ambiance of the Cuban restaurant. They make it a point to distance themselves from him, not unlike they are distancing from each other.

Katherine Ann Roberts sees in the Québécois road movie a film typology that "'frees' contemporary filmmakers to appropriate the road genre for their own national narratives, to focus on identity, family and community within Québec" (2018, 241). In Roberts' case studies, the freedom explored within the road movie refers mostly to escaping the burdens of a national narrative that neglects foundational aspects of Québec's roots, like its Americanness and indigeneity. However, this example allows us to push this image further and think about how the overseas cinematic exercise of making a road movie becomes a laboratory to challenge monolithic assumptions about Québécois collectivism. Living and working in Cuba, testing as they could sensible ways of dialoguing with the host culture, made the characters and the director reject the parochialism of Québec tourists on the island. The somewhat comical scene indexes them as something they are not, or something they are becoming, through the process.

The schism between Manu and Alexa in Cuba, and between the two and their national identities, reaches its paroxysm towards the end. The enigmatic violence of the final sequence, the nearly fratricidal/suicidal gesture that takes over the two women, summarizes their incapacity to apprehend the context and the fissures that have also settled between them and their original collectivity. Before the credits roll, a teary and exhausted Alexa and Manu sit on the sand with their backs to the Cuba they neglected first, then tried to know and failed. While they gaze into the horizon, they are imagining in the vastness of the sea a Québec, potentially divided, unreconciled, as they are too, that is not within reach either. In the passage from motorized, unrestrained mobility as tourists to the slow pace of trying to walk literally in "Cuban shoes," Alexa and Manu have shed layers of their collective identity to assume partially features of another that don't quite fit them.

Extra-textually however, the possibilities to act differently emanate from the radical gestures that the production deployed as critical work ethics within the Cuban context in dialogue with Teresa's household and neighborhood. While making this road movie, Martin and his friends sheltered—both metaphorically and in practice—in a foreign home and a community, progressively adopting their standards and emulating their visions. There, the transborder journey and film enterprise benefited from, but also strengthened, the multiple social rapports that were already present in the field. The proverbial search for home and stability that seem always unattainable, according to the tropes of the road genre, are materialized here by the domestic transcultural cluster generated through filmmaking.

3.3 Conclusions

In this second case of a cinematic voyage, I have utilized Alex B. Martin's *Cuba Merci…* to further probe into the meaning of transborder human mobility and domesticity for the transnational production of this road movie. I showcased the film as a road movie not with the intention to repeat the canonic patterns that make them such, but rather to analyze how the production and shooting of the road genre is itself a fruitful process from which to examine the significance of human motion, both figurative and literal. Most importantly, despite the emphasis that the road genre shows with regard to mobility and the vehicular aspects of it, my intention was to demonstrate that what is ultimately looked for are the ideas of home and community, of belonging in a sense. That is why I have given attention to the ways in which community and domesticity played out in the making, and the possible interpretations of, *Cuba Merci*…

In the first section, I draw from the tradition of travel movies, broadly conceived, to concentrate on the road movie genre. From there I engage with the idea of motion in a plural sense, as the film itself demonstrates a critical relation to the notion of mobility. I foregrounded how, thematically, *Cuba Merci*…dismisses vehicular mobility, a cornerstone of the road movie canon, to favor traditional forms of movement and that, by doing so, it places greater importance on media-motion, i.e., the capacity of media to bridge and move subjects around the globe, be it virtually, socially, symbolically, or in a factual way. Moreover, I use this idea of media-motion to suggest that mobility of the camera coupled with the transborder work of the author and the mobilization it makes of the genre movie are integral aspects that the director uses to stake his claim in film authorship and upward social mobility.

In the second section, I have contended that, as a transnational production, the film's narrative and structural relation to the domestic realm allows for the creation of a gendered

transnational social space. In this space, individual, collective, and gendered identities are discussed, confronted, and negotiated. Furthermore, this transnational social space exhibits a distinct matrifocal nature, that is to say, a site of enfranchisement and empowerment of women that relegates to a secondary frame the presence and authority of men. I have also demonstrated how the relationship with domestic space eventually spills out the contours of home to generate countless interactions with the surrounding community, where the film crew and the fictional characters of the film found a new transient collectivity with alternative possibilities of identification.

Chapter Four – *"¡Luz!":* Visualizing Alternative Domesticities, Queerness and *Latinidad* through Cuba-Québec Cinematic Transnationalism

4.1 Sur les toits Havane by Pedro Ruiz

Sur les toits Havane (*Havana, from on High / Arriba Habana* – its commercial titles in English and Spanish, respectively) is the fourth feature-length documentary by Québec-based Venezuelan cineaste and photographer Pedro Ruiz. Of the films discussed in this dissertation, this would arguably be the one that feels most "authentically Cuban" for its theme, the people it follows, and the overall directorial vision. It conveys a "Cuban feel" as vague as this might sound. Locals feature in it more prominently than they did in Lagarde's and Martin's previous cases, it is all in Cuban Spanish, even when foreigners speak, music also contributes to highlight this insular spirit of the feature, and Cuban issues and debates are the focal center of the documentary.

Havana, from on High was produced by *Faits Divers Média*,[xxv] with the support of SODEC, the CCA, the CALQ, the Government of Canada, and *Post-Moderne*, a Montréal postproduction and equipment rental company. *Sur les toits…*, their most recent release, remains to date the most acclaimed film in *Faits Divers'* portfolio. Before its official première on May 3rd, 2019, this independent documentary became an object of interest, celebrated at festivals like Hot Docs, *Rendez-vous Québec Cinéma*, the FICG (Mexico), the FICCI (Colombia), the AmDocs (Palm Springs), and the CLFF, among many others. After its release in Canadian theaters, the documentary continued its worldwide tour through the film festival circuit from

[xxv] With a reduced but solid portfolio of "avant-garde and social documentaries" (Faits Divers Média, 2021) *Faits Divers…* is a small documentary production enterprise created in 2009 by Ruiz himself and producer Arantza Maldonado, from Spain.

Santorini and Rotterdam, to Gibara and Mumbai, just to name a few. Last year, when I had the opportunity to interview Pedro Ruiz after an online screening of his documentary for the 2020 *LatinArte* Festival in Montréal he was happy to inform us that *Sur les toits…* had been awarded the Canadian Screens Award for best Cinematography. To date, it has been similarly nominated under the same category in several other events, coming out triumphant at the American Documentary Film Festival (2019), for instance. During the same conversation, Ruiz shared his surprise when he found out through representatives of the ONF/NFB that his film had been the Canadian documentary with the longest theatrical run for 2019. Although I haven't been able to confirm this personally, it demonstrates a significant achievement for an independent documentary screened in the shadows of box office mega-hits of the same period such as *Avengers: Endgame* (Joey Russo and Anthony Russo, 2019) and *Pokemon: Detective Pikachu* (Rob Letterman, 2019).

Like the films discussed in the previous chapters*, Sur les toits…*constitutes another example of a cinematic voyage. Following *All You Can Eat…* and *Cuba Merci…*, Ruiz's film also relied on Cuban private households for its overseas production but, unlike them, it made local homemaking and domesticity the center of its theme. Depicting a parallel world "between earth and sky" (Phillips-Carr 2019), Ruiz addresses the endemic housing crisis of contemporary Havana, resulting from a myriad of issues like official indolence, internal migration and overcrowding, lack of resources and maintenance, etc. As a result of all these problems coinciding in Cuba, access to the uninhabited terraces of multistoried buildings is the last refuge available to people seeking to put a roof over their heads. For years, decrepit and abandoned buildings have sheltered in their crumbling ruins, and specifically their "*terrazas*," individuals creating *ad hoc* refuges in unthinkable places.

Tiptoeing around Havana's rooftops we encounter individuals like Lala, a sex worker who supports herself and her born-again Christian husband, Roberto, through illicit sex trade with tourists. Others, like Arturo, the TV repairman who describes a decaying Havana as a city in "black and white" (22:56) like the images on the obsolete Soviet TV sets he refurbishes in his house/workshop, only leave their homes during the nights. There is also Juan, a *Babalawo* (high priest of the *Regla de Ocha-Ifá* or *Santería*) who, from his vantage point in a Cuban "*azotea*," has seen the Pope, the Castros, and Obama passing by down below, at his feet so to speak. Another subject is José, an HIV-positive queer man who made a shelter of an unused freight elevator for his erotic encounters, turning his back on his predominantly homophobic family background. These moments of heartwarming sincerity are interwoven with views of a crumbling Havana. The city appears bathed in the golden light of its Caribbean dawns and sunsets, and the narrative is punctuated by surreal moments of performativity, artistry, and creativity by these rooftop dwellers living on self-confined islands within an island, contoured by the presence of the sea, the sky, and the urban grid below their feet.

The Cuban capital here is presented as a space that is detached from our habitual horizons and dislodged from geographical references so dear to the mainstream foreign gaze. In tandem with this, the documentary shows the continuity between intimacy and the public, the production of home, and the outward projection of personal skills and sustenance activities as constitutive parts of domestic life. Again, in the documentary, we could think of Gabriel, the colombophile who appears explaining his passion for raising carrier pigeons. As an animal metaphor for his own need of and fight for shelter, Gabriel explains that his admiration for the carrier pigeons is due to their attachment to home and their physical endurance. He raises them privately with the official support of the MINFAR and the MINCOM, entities who see commercial and social

value for potential times of crisis in these activities. Similarly, we encounter Tita, the widower living with her hens and cocks on a rooftop, where the ample space allows her to do the laundry of her clients/neighbors for money, her only real income. There is also Jean, a francophone journalist-turned-host of a *casa particular* called *La Puerta Rosa* [The Pink Door], an obvious allusion to his queer identity. Jean and his (now former) romantic partner Renier, an afro-Cuban man, manage their shared household with the same calculations that go into any touristic venue. They ready their personal car to transport tourists when the latter need it, intermittently work with the cooperation of OHCH to provide their guests with historical tours through the same neighborhoods from which they extract their resources and hire personnel, and, as hosts, instruct their clients in the ways and flavors of "Cuban life," as Jean has repeatedly explained in his interviews to ICI Radio Canada (*Les Grands Entretiens*, ICI Radio Canada, 2017). These seemingly invisible houses utilize homemaking, domesticity, and their most intimate identities as features that link them to local, national, and international entities beyond the humble confines of their derelict windows and doors.

All You Can Eat… and *Cuba, Merci…*, to varying degrees, conceal or indicate the involvement of the private sphere and homemaking on the socialist island in their assembling of the filmic process. By contrast, *Sur les toits…* homes in on housework and maintenance as a communal epic of human resilience and quasi-utopian worldmaking from the margins. Most of the homes we see in the documentary are familial units relying on non-traditional forms of management, where economic enterprising, affective and sexual relations, and domestic activities are juxtaposed with one another. Through interviews and more observational scenes we attend to the minute details of everyday life in today's Havana. Thus, where the previous cases have served to illuminate the participation of Cuban domesticity as an element of transnational

film production, *Sur les toits*… both makes of domesticity its main theme and relies on it for its making, as I will explain shortly.

The depiction of the city offered by Ruiz is caught between Havana's flamboyant past and its meagre present. The survival stories that are its main focus appear to float around the decrepit façades of historical milestones from Cuba's Republican years. The square, loosely defined by *Escobar* to the west, *Paseo del Prado* to the east, *Calle Concordia* to the north, and the *Boulevard de San Rafael* in the south, sets the boundaries of the cinematic space that is stitched together, not using urban references but employing individual testimonies as landmarks. Thus, the geography of Ruiz's documentary returns to Centro Habana, like Lagarde and Martin had done, too. During the years of preproduction and production (2015-2018), there was a visible enterprising spirit humming in this borough thanks to the push offered by openness to American tourism and private investment. Hanging from the old neoclassical, eclectic, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco balconies, one finds a cacophony of signs offering *casas particulares*, restaurants, etc., that are part and parcel of the economic survival tactics of those who live in the city pompously called "the Paris of Latin America" by American travelers. The renewed attitude of Centro Habana resonates within the remnants of a former touristic glory, a sign of this commercial center once nicknamed "the Broadway of the Caribbean," due to its sheer number of neon signs that are extinct today.

The film roams along paths that exhibit at once echoes of American neocolonial fanfare and the social interstices neglected by the communist establishment. Some of the subjects we meet in the documentary, like José and Arturo, were interviewed in what was once the *Hotel Bristol*. A 1930's building still distinguishable today thanks to the shield with the arms of the British city engraved on the sidewalk, the *Bristol* has its entrance facing the *Boulevard de San*

Rafael. This once state-of-the-art establishment, whose peculiarity was sharing the ground floor with the lobby of the *Cine Rex-Duplex* (the first multiplex cinema theater in Cuba), closed in the 80s and stands now as a guerrilla social housing project for former employees of the Bristol and Havana's poorest residents in need of homes. Left to its own decay, its current residents took hold of it and made homes in every imaginable space, from elevators shafts to abandoned pools. One block further to the south, interviewees like Tita defy official warnings of eviction due to imminent danger of collapse and subsist on the rooftop of the old *Hotel Astor.* The Astor served as hotel from the 1920s to the early 30s and was one of first high-rises built in the Cuban capital with its twin, the *Hotel Roosevelt*, across the street. After the 1929 crash and the ensuing economic crisis, it became an upscale apartment-hotel for families with a fixed income all through the revolutionary years. Now, its ruins host a couple of families on the lower floors and a handful of residents on the rooftop, invisible from the street level. In Havana vernacular, it is legendarily known by its weird moniker *El palacio de la leche* (The Milk Palace), on the corners of Amistad and San Miguel streets. The main staircase of the building came crumbling down a few years prior to filming, leaving Tita to fend for herself in the ancient service room on top of the building while most tenants were forcefully relocated. Juan, the *Babalawo*, has his *terraza* house overlooking at Paseo del Prado. Which leads us to Jean Fugère's *La Puerta Rosa*, the epicenter for the shooting, located on Calle Escobar, less than three blocks south from Teresa's *Casa Merced* on the same street. A stone's throw away from his *casa*, one can find an icon of the island's film tourism: *La Guarida*, the legendary restaurant immortalized as the home of Diego in the film *Fresa y chocolate* / *Strawberry and Chocolate* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1993) and in Netflix's *The OA*. This mixture of capital and abject poverty frames most of the street views and personal portraits in *Arriba Habana*, as the film is named in its Spanish version. Part of it can be

attributed to chance, but the producer Maldonado and director Ruiz must be credited, along with Jean Fugère, for excavating and selecting the documentary's voices, sandwiched between old-fashioned hotels, abandoned cinema theaters, empty department stores, and a multitude of *casas particulares* and *paladares* trying to give new life to a historically busy urban space.

The origins of the idea for the film indicate the cooperative links between Pedro Ruiz's documentary and Jean Fugère's hospitality business *La Puerta Rosa*. The documentary we witness can be thought of as the coming together of a multisided dialogue between the two authors around Cuban livelihood and domesticity. The ideas that resulted from it matured in each one of them, eventually finding expression through the making of the project led by Ruiz and Maldonado. As Ruiz told Caroline Montpetit in *Le Devoir* in April 2019, it was while he worked on *Philemon chante Habana* (2012) that he discovered the "canopy" of "terraces suspended above urban life" in the city (Montpetit 2019). However, his interest in the dialectics of space per se and the ways each culture elaborates upon it was sparked before that, when he was still living in Caracas. In a talk to the online audience of the 2020 *LatinArte* Festival, Ruiz shared that one of his formative readings was *La poétique de l'espace* ([1957] 1961) by the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. Ruiz said:

> *[Ese] libro minó mi mente y se quedó y en mis varias visitas a La Habana y a Cuba por diferentes proyectos que tuve que hacer allá -míos y de otras personas, empezó como a nacer una ideíta por ahí y a unirla con ese libro (...) que habla de los espacios, de las casas del sótano hasta la buhardilla. En La Habana, visitando esas terrazas, me vino esa idea de centrarme en esa perspectiva digamos inusual de la capital cubana*.
>
> [That] book sapped my mind and stayed with me, and in my various visits to Havana and Cuba for different projects I had to do there -my own and other people's- an idea began to be born there and to join it with that book (...) that talks about the spaces, about the houses from the basement to the attic. In Havana, visiting those terraces, I got the idea of focusing on that unusual perspective of the Cuban capital (Interview with Pedro Ruiz, October 31st, 2020).

Bachelard's work can be felt profusely all throughout *Sur les toits*... Taking its cues from the book, the film echoes a way of thinking about architecture, and more particularly homes, not defined by functionalism but through the optics of phenomenology, stressing the importance of individual imagination and affective responses vis-à-vis the built environment. Bachelard's words about the home being much more than its geometry, a site for which "a greater elasticity of reverie is required (…) to inhabit it" ([1957] 1961, 77), resonate in the mouths of some of the characters in the film. For instance, in Lala's daydreaming of a house where she can have basic items, like a kitchen table and cutlery, and in Fugère's ideas that his *terraza* is the place where light lives, both examples in which walls and loadbearing structures are traversed with imagination, open-endedness, and desire.

On Fugère's side, his interest in the sprawling world of Havana's rooftops came out of both the cultural work associated with his B&B and his unfinished literary project about the island, a novel-memoir he has been writing over many years in Cuba. Since its inauguration in 2016, *La Puerta Rosa* had welcomed Ruiz as a tourist, a friend, and a casual traveler to the Caribbean nation on more than one occasion. Looking out from the magnificent terrace on top of the house, Fugère showed Ruiz and his team the richness of the built and human landscapes that he had usually included only in the guided tours he offers to his clients. One of his most popular tours is precisely the one around old hotels in Centro Habana, like the Bristol and the Astor. For many years now he has also been writing his memoirs in which a chapter is devoted entirely to his infatuation with life in the highest points of the city's buildings. Through his description of those spaces, one perceives further the conflicted attitudes and feelings of locals and foreigners towards the surrounding *azoteas* (terraces). One of the passages reads:

> *Lors de mon premier séjour à La Havane, au début des années 2000, j'habitais une terrasse, au 6^{ième} étage et quand je disais aux havanais où j'habitais, le visage des*

> *gens s'allongeait. La terrase n'avait pas la meilleure reputation. (...) Aujourd'hui on se bat pour y avoir accès mais à l'époque personne n'aurait levé le petit doigt pour en avoir une.*
>
> During my first stay in Havana, in the early 2000s, I lived on a terrace, on the 6th floor, and when I told Havana's inhabitants where I lived, people's faces got longer. The terrace did not have the best reputation. (...) Today we fight to have access to it but at the time nobody would have lifted a finger to have one (Fugère 2012, 3).

He generously shared with the filmmaker his unpublished manuscripts about Cuban and the human networks that he had built around his *casa de alquiler*, as was the case with some of the neighbors in the Hotel Bristol. From there on, Ruiz and Maldonado tasked themselves with expanding the grid of contacts and spaces that ended up appearing in the documentary, enriched by the friends and acquaintances they had amassed themselves.

From Caracas, to Montréal, to Havana, *Sur les toits…* was born out of transnational and transcultural intellectual and artistic cooperation further catalyzed by successive individual processes of displacement and migration within/around these three cities. Next to the original nucleus of Maldonado, Ruiz, and Fugère, the sound director René Portillo and assistant director Gustavo Marcano (Venezuelan-Canadian and Venezuelan, respectively), complemented the professional team coming to Cuba from abroad. On the other side, a huge accomplishment of the film was developing job opportunities for neighbors of the spaces within the documentary and the employees of *La Puerta Rosa* in different capacities. Victor Linen, a local musician and resident of the Bristol, served as field producer or fixer. Asilady Díaz Ibáñez and Reynaldo Pérez Sueiro, chambermaid/cook and general manager of the hostel, respectively, were credited as caterers, too.

The history of the transnational crafting of a "Cuban image" was also present in the filmmaker's intentions for the film. According to Ruiz himself, he had in mind the many excellent films that historically have been made about Cuba and Havana by Russians,

Americans, and others. *Carnet de viaje* / *Traveller's notebook* (Joris Ivens, 1961), *Soy Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964), and *Havana* (Sydney Pollack, 1990) came to his mind just to name a few. As Ruiz reflects:

> *La idea no era competir con eso, pero sí agarrar un punto de vista diferente. En la película no hay nada que inmediatamente podría significar Cuba como por ejemplo escuchar el Chan Chan o algo así. Entonces esa perspectiva me gustó y esa posibilidad de escaparnos y de poder viajar en esos puentes.*
>
> The idea was not to compete with that, but to take a different point of view. In the film there is nothing that immediately could mean Cuba like listening to Chan Chan or something like that. So, I liked that perspective and that possibility of escaping and being able to travel on those bridges (Interview with Pedro Ruiz October 31st, 2020).

Although Ruiz didn't want to emulate these previous representations of Cuba, one can't help but being surprised by the similarities that his documentary holds with respect to the previous examples. As I briefly suggested in the second chapter, Kalatozov's and Urusevsky's "aerial" representations of Cuba could be attributed to their physical (and figurative) vantage point with respect to Cuban reality. The fact that Ruiz conceived his documentary while living as a foreign filmmaker in a Cuban *azotea* is, at the very least, a fortuitous coincidence. All of the examples mentioned above depicted Cuba "in flight" as they also "flew" over the island and looked at it "from above". However, there are also substantial differences with these other films. First, in the documentary, inhabiting the highest parts of the Cuban capital is not the prerogative of tourists, as one can see in parts of *Soy Cuba* and *Havana*, but a final opportunity for locals to find a dwelling place. Second, the originality of Ruiz's perception, and the "Cuban feel" that I briefly mentioned before, reside in the discreet, human scale of the social landscape he depicts, far from the revolutionary epic mythologized by Ivens, Kalatozov, Varda, and even Pollack[xxvi] to

[xxvi] It should be specified that Pollack's film, although nominally set in Havana, was shot in the Dominican Republic. Pollack hoped to film in Havana directly and according to his interviews he and Robert Redford, who plays the main character of the film, pleaded their case to the State Department directly and the then Vice-President

a certain extent. Furthermore, it addresses the revolution in a more nuanced way, both in its earth-shattering potential to build a utopian world and in its multiple shortcomings and neglects that are swept under the historical rug, so to speak. Finally, I salute in this case the engagement with poverty and precariousness not in the melodramatic terms that, say, Kalatozov or Ivens treated it. I remember in this regard Urusevsky's petition to the Cuban government to keep some of the local shantytowns so that they could appear as they were in *Soy Cuba* (Urusevsky qt. Konovalov 2015, 124) or even Ivens's notion that social change on the island "needed to be visualized in material terms," in a "'before and after'" the revolution structural temporality, as it is maintained in Joshua Malitsky's discussion of *Carnet de viaje* (2013, 81), both accurate examples of a foreign romanticization of Cuban poverty if there ever was one. Precarity in Ruiz's film is burdening, alienating, dehumanizing even, no doubt. But it is also exposed with the same lack of pathos with which Cubans face it on a daily basis, and explored as a state in which fantasy, freedom, love, dignity, and even pleasures, in one word, humanity, in all its complexity, potentially exists.

All these aspects allow me to advance the working hypothesis that reclaiming, refashioning, and persisting in the struggle for home units under the direst circumstances, as presented in the documentary, are portrayed as local processes of a universal dimension intimately intertwined with the contingent status of queerness and *latinidad* of the different actors participating in this Canadian/Québécois production on the island nation. The determination to resist, demand, and imagine dignified domestic spaces comes hand in hand with

---

of the US at the time Dan Quayle (1989-1993). After repeated negatives, Pollack had to re-create Havana in Santo Domingo given the natural and architectural similarities between the two countries. For more details about the production process of *Havana* see, for instance: Pollack, Sydney. 1990. "Film Director Sydney Pollack in Havana."" Interview by Terry Gross. *The Fresh Air Archive*, December 11, 1990, audio, 23:38, https://freshairarchive.org/segments/film-director-sydney-pollack-havana. (Last accessed July 16, 2021).

the contentious nature of "*latinité*" and Latinx filmmaking in Québec and the challenged rights of queer individuals and alternative households within the socialist legal framework of Havana.

"Alternative" is used here as borrowed from the authors Pilkey, Scicluna and Gorman-Murray (2015) to accommodate the multifaceted home experiences of identities that align with non-traditional lifestyles, but that also go beyond that. Two clarifications need to be made here though. By equating here queerness with many other forms of alternative lifestyles and modes of homemaking, I do not intend to erase and empty the specificity of the queer experience and its predicaments when it comes to historical formations of home, families, familial ties, domestic environments, etc. As Matt Cook argues, queer and gay individuals have traditionally been pigeonholed in opposition to their families, but as he also clarifies, families have been "malleable enough, conceptually and practically, to accommodate – sometimes uneasily, sometimes more comfortably – the queer difference of uncles, fathers, brothers, sons and nephews" (Cook 2014, 89). Queer subjects constitute an important part of Ruiz's documentary's focus on non-heteronormative homes, but so do homeless people, the elderly, single people, the poli-nuclear household, and heterosexual couples who defy the patterns of patriarchal, bourgeois, Judeo-Christian domesticities. That is why I bring together in my analysis all these previous alternative forms of constructing and producing homes and situate them next to queerness, because claiming any of these differential identities, as Cook suggests, has lasting effects in their capacities to craft familial units and domestic environments given their shifting, often shaky, and as I intend to prove, contested "legal, social and cultural positioning[s]" (Cook, 4). In other words, because all these institutional framings place all the groups mentioned above on an equal footing when it comes to their common struggle of procuring, accessing, producing, and maintaining a home.

Second, “alternative” as synonym of queer also draws on previous compelling work conducted by authors like Shannon Hayes (2010), Kristine J. Jacobson (2010), and Valerie Padilla Carroll (2016) on concepts such as radical homemaking, new (feminist, environmentalist) domesticity, and neodomesticity, respectively. As articulated by Padilla Carroll, most of these forms of radical and alternative homemaking practices arose in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movements in the US and the rest of the world as forms of “anticapitalist and environmental activism that embrace[d] a global vision of sustainability based on reciprocity and care” (2016, 51-2). Similarly, Hayes’s ethnographic research on radical homesteading follows the same trend of reconciling within the domestic space feminist stances with broader criticism of capitalism, religious fundamentalism, and consumer culture. In her words: “Radical Homemakers are men and women who have chosen to make family, community, social justice and health of the planet the governing principles of their lives” (2010, 13). Although many of these high ideals are not at the core of the precarious homemaking configurations that I will examine in this chapter, some common ground can be found in what I have coined as “alternative domesticities.” First, the domestic is not solely the task of women, nor does it prefigure the existence of the nuclear family. It also embraces unorthodox economic operations for its subsistence, such as barter economy, urban foraging, and underground, or even illegal, activities. Finally, it stands in overt defiance, more or less consciously, to heteronormative morality, consumerist culture, and Judeo-Christian religious fanaticism.

Jacobson’s localization of the neodomestic in American contemporary novels offers undoubtedly the closest and simplest explanation of what lies at the bottom of my conceptualization of alternative/queer domesticities. Both the neodomestic and queer/alternative domesticities expose the “politics of domestic instability” at play in their dynamics, as opposed

to the cherished idea of stability associated with stereotypical notions of home, to "demonstrate the exclusions associated with the single-family, privately-owned home" (2010, 3). As it is argued by Jacobson, the neodomestic displays two main characteristics, among others, in which it is hard not to recognize the homes that I will continue to discuss: 1) their "relational (as opposed to oppositional) domestic space, which self-consciously emphasizes the home's connection to 'outside'" and 2) the "domestic renovation and redesign of the conventional material and ideological home" (4). As it will soon be clear, the houses that are shown in the film push Jacobson's ideas to the limit. The material, ideological, and spatial reconfigurations of the neodomestic units in the novels she analyzes are hyperbolized by the Cuban homes in the documentary, taking these redesigns to their ultimate literal meanings. They all relate to and depend on the world beyond the home reaching the transnational and the global, in some cases both physically and economically. Their physical and moral contours are equally open-ended and developed tactically with the sole objective of procuring and maintaining the proverbial roof over their heads (and not much more in most cases). Finally, they make of material precariousness and legal, social, and objective instability their main existential features whether they shelter single individuals, the elderly, queer homesteaders, persons in near homelessness, single-parent families, or pluri-nuclear families.

Thus, in *Sur les toits…,* I examine the alternative/queer sites this film portrays and nestles itself in. The endemic lodging crisis of the socialist country takes center stage in this multi-awarded documentary through the depiction of the struggle for survival of subjects wrestling living spaces out of a fundamentally unjust and precarious urban setting. This case furthers the entrepreneurial potential of homemaking and hospitality in Cuba, but now as a joint venture between queer Québécois and Cuban citizens, and dynamized by the accommodations afforded

to foreign film workers laboring in Havana. As I will argue in this section, the circumstantial partnership of *Sur les toits…* with a biracial, transnational queer *casa particular* in Havana drove the project to illuminate the porous friction zones of legal, paralegal, and illegal activities like tourism, migration, housework, sex work, de-regularized labor, transnational media, and international affective and sexual assemblages. The process of filmmaking reveals domesticity, queerness, and "*latinidad*" [Latinhood] as contested identities and precarious sites of transnational investment while they are negotiated and differently framed by the law and the official institutions of Cuba and Québec.

Therefore, I ask what can international film production, tourism, and the production of home tell us about Latinx identities in the francophone province and alternative domesticities in the communist country, respectively? How are all these identities conjugated and operationalized in space multiple times through what appears to be similarly impossible and challenged tasks in different contexts, i.e, the making of a Latinx-Québécois transnational film and access to and maintenance of Cuban non-traditional domestic practices? In this final chapter I will argue that depicting the creation of living spaces lends itself to commenting on the labors and pleasures of both accomplishing transnational Latinx filmic projects hailing from Québec and the modelling of visibly queer tourist enterprises and homes in Cuba. I must clarify that "queer" is employed in this chapter not so much as a marker of identity, but mostly as a method of critical inquiry. In other words, less as a noun and more like a verb in the sense of queering the physicality of the domestic space, and the production of home. Through the analysis of this documentary, I will propose a queer and hauntological examination of non-traditional homemaking in Cuba, and Latinx film practices and *latinité* in Québec as socio-cultural categories of shifting historical values in each of these nations in the ways they are revealed by the friction zones of the

cinematic production of *Sur les toits…*The subjects and stories unearthed by the film create, for the most part, non-normative and alternative configurations of familial dwellings and economies. Undoubtedly, a similar argument can be made by analyzing the survival and creative strategies of Ruiz's and Maldonado's filmography and Fugère's queer home and business in Havana. Transnational film creation, therefore, sheds light on and is nurtured by the ambivalent, spectral position bestowed by the socialist regime upon non-normative households, homosexual identities, transcultural and multiracial affective and sexual arrangements, and private tourism venues as well as para-legal domestic practices. But it also reflects the tactical development of an idea of *latinidad* or *latinité* equally at odds with Québécois and Cuban mainstream cultural, media, and political discourses.

The *latinité* that I employ here encompases the personal critiques that the creative personnel, and the interlocutors of/within the film propose to the national projects of Cuba and Québec. This francization of latinhood that I freely alternate in my analysis is indebted to Juana María Rodríguez's queering of the concept *latinidad.* For Rodríguez, *latinidad* is an essentially queer category, or at least a concept susceptible to queering. It is a cultural identity beyond national belonging that stresses "'and' over 'is'" as the means to think through the "differences" and the "contradictions of the various constructions of *latinidad*" (2003, 22) that have been historically motivated and infused with divergent connotations in francophone Québec and in Hispanic Cuba. In the cinematic accounts of Juan, the *babalawo*, Leonardo, the Rastafarian, the spoken-word poet, Omar, and Jean, as well as in the words of the director Ruiz, the producer Maldonado, and other subjects in this inquiry, we can perceive the many layers that comprise an extended elaboration of *latinité* that I contend is at once opaque, decentralized, ramified, queered, and Afro-Caribbean-centered. Now, precisely because of the deviant readings that these

subjects make of an always-already disputed notion like *latinidad*—charged with a fraught historicity, more so in the Canadian/Québécois milieu—I establish a link between its employment in the documentary and the subject matter of the film itself. This is to say the fragile, ghostly existence of citizens in Havana who subsist in "*abris de fortune*" [makeshift shelters] above the city's *azoteas*.

The materiality of the subject matter is of no small relevance for the deployment through different spaces and scales of the iterations of "*latinité*" that I will showcase in this final chapter. From individuals to their homes, to the larger urban scale of the Cuban capital and, from there, stretching all the way up to Québec's Pan-American imaginations, queerness and *latinidad* appear as ontologies with very precise spatial connotations. The documentary itself is not so much concerned with the machinations of identity formation as it is with the physicality of the places where said individualities operate, with their struggles to erect and preserve those places. That is why Brown's geographical and urban underpinnings of the queer metaphor of the closet are taken as the theoretical complement to unravel the existing relationships between alternative domestic production, Latinx filmmaking, and queer homemaking inhering in the North-South axis of Québec-Cuba. Brown's metaphor of the closet is one anchored in solid material examples that indicate the damaging effects of exclusion and silencing of queer individuals by the workings in time and space of nodes of "power/knowledge of oppression" (2000, 3). His exploration of the triad "power/knowledge/space"—with obvious debts to poststructuralist thinking and Lefebvre's creation of space—offers me a guiding method to think through the spatial and material implications of depicting the local struggles of alternative domestic practices in Havana, of queer housework and domestic enterprises straddling the frontiers of Cuba and Canada, and of Latinx film production as a transnational practice. My use of Brown's spatial

metaphor of the closet in my film analysis is not intended to devalue or empty out the metaphor of its primacy for the queer experience. Nor do I intend to expand its limits in a shallow fashion by making misguided inferences about the documentary's subjects' sexual identities. On the contrary, I take it to be a useful rhetorical and objective presence that poses valid arguments for the universal denunciation of inequality, alienation, and exclusion expressed through spatial relationality as seen in the film. The ubiquity and elasticity of Brown's closet serves to advance a discussion of the visibility, through sliding scales, of demands of inclusion, acceptance, and social justice expressed by different social groups, including homosexuals but not solely them, spanning from the Havana to Québec City.

In this sense, Derrida's hauntology, as the "*chose qu'on ne sait pas (...) et on ne sait pas si précisémnet cela **est***" [[the] something we don't know (...) and we don't know if this *is* exactly], as a "*non-objet, [un] présent non-présent* (…)" [non-object, [a] non-present present] (1993, 25-26, original emphasis), influences my critical explanation of the spatial, economic, and creative tactics, as well as the identity elaborations that the film foreshadows. The characters in the film appear balancing over regimes of visibility and invisibility, existence and inexistence, and all-around fragility and precariousness. Spectrality and phantasmagoria come together in the ways these social characters make sense of their livelihoods and we see it constantly in the poetics of the explanations they offer about their living conditions, not unlike how the filmmakers talk about their accomplishments too. Especially with phantasmagoria, it seems to be a governing principle for the formal and aesthetic qualities of the film. Engaging with these notions of spectrality and phantasmagoria, both in Derrida's and in Adorno's senses, respectively, enables me to navigate the overwhelmingly aestheticized discourses surrounding *Sur les toits…*, to hint at the unseen productive aspects in the film and their relationship to the reproductive struggles of

its liminal homes. Beyond that, the cinematic space again—the space in the film and the one of its making, the sinuous closets that disrupt the spatial narrative of the socialist urban grid—collaborate to foster an aura of "***incorporation*** *paradoxale*" [*paradoxical* incorporation], a process of "***donnant du corps***" [*giving body*] (202, original emphasis) lending a body, and therefore an existence and a language, to the multiple fetishizations of Cuba's past and possible futures through its meagre present. *Sur les toits…* serves as an entry point to unpack these dialectics of materialization through the daily negotiations of its subjects and makers with the former commercial glamour of Centro Habana's neighborhood and homes; their pressing domestic needs, losses, and struggles; and the looming fears of capitalization, gentrification, incommensurate tourism influx, and potential displacement.

4.2 Living in *la azotea*, Living in the Closet, Living in Cuba: Alternative Domesticity, Gender, Sexual Identity, and Citizenship

In the opening sequence of Ruiz's fourth documentary, we are automatically situated flying over Havana. A dark, scarcely lit-up urban space makes its way across the screen accompanied by the monotonous litanies of *Radio Reloj* [Radio Clock], a historical radio station in Cuba that tells the time every minute around the clock accompanied by actualities, political and social commentaries, and other news. Havana life is waking up to the timeless cadence of news broadcasting about Trump's tightening foreign policies against Cubans, a clock ticking in the background, and the morse code repetition every 60 seconds of RR, as it has been since 1947. A crosscut takes us to the interior of a home where an anonymous man walks into the frame and opens a door. It cuts back to the familiar view of the city from the opening shots, but this time we see the same man standing against the door as if he were walking over the city's skyline. A fiery

dawn is burning behind him and what previously seemed like a section of his house we discover now to be the whole home, a small dwelling perched on top of a high rise, overlooking Havana's buildings and the sea. He walks further into the horizon and starts a laundry machine with the *Hotel Habana Libre*, the entrance to the bay, and the burning sky as backdrop.

The man is doing his laundry out in the open with a whole city as witness. The intimate action of tending to the hygienic needs of his home is publicly displayed from a high vantage point. In less than 60 seconds, like the cyclical news segments of *Radio Reloj*, we have been conducted from the urban to the individual, from the public to the private, from the mechanics of a city waking up to the mundane gestures of house chores. There's something more to be inferred about the washing machine that starts running against the city landscape. "*Sacar/airear los trapos sucios*" [Pulling out/airing out the dirty laundry] and *"la ropa sucia se lava en casa"* [the dirty clothes are washed at home] are both local sayings Cubans employ to denote the importance of sweeping private affairs under the rug, leaving them hidden and unspoken, and that are expressed through the metaphoric use of the image of doing laundry or visualizing the sanitization that comes with it. But in this case, they are literally represented as being done out in the open, in front of a city, a foreign film crew, and multiple possible viewers. With this sequence, *Sur les toits…* situates its spectators within its chosen point of view of Havana, but also establishes its first clues for a filmic procedure that walks seamlessly across the porous lines that divide intimacy and the public, everyday acts performed in Cuba's households and larger foreign entities, homeliness and near homelessness.

The *trompe-l'oeil* effect afforded by the camera angle first promises a home via the metonymic image of one of its parts: the entrance and the door in this case. But in the following take, it cuts in action to the dissolution of that idea of a house to show it for what it is: a single

room suspended on top of a rooftop where both the man and its shelter seem to hover over the void. Blowing up the material contours of the domestic unit and turning it into a public, visible space is the film's strategy to advance a comment on the particularities of housing problems on the socialist island, but also to discuss at large alternative models of homemaking that destabilize the traditional and heteronormative idea of nuclear homes. Stressing even more these notions, the person we see "*lavando sus trapos*" [doing their laundry] out in the open is not a woman, traditionally associated with domestic tasks at least in the public imaginary, but a man. Regardless of how simple this detail might seem, it is a first instance for the director to guide our gaze toward domestic configurations that disrupt the image of the heterosexual couple and the traditional family, with their allotment of physical activities in the realm of housework in today's Havana divided along gender lines.

A cascade of images follows suit, further reinforcing the same point. After the opening sequence, a cacophony of actions is replicated through a dynamic montage showing several lonely subjects against very different material settings accomplishing the same ordinary chores: waking up, getting out of their beds, airing their spaces, gathering their laundry, turning on stoves, brewing their morning coffee, preparing their meals, etc. Each frame bleeds into the next one up to the point where individualities dissipate and all that remains is one common attempt to give resemblance to "making a living" under exiguous conditions. Besides the solitude insinuated by mostly single, middle-aged, or elderly individuals, the physical environment echoes the material limitations of the world captured by Ruiz. The households are all on open rooftops but more than that they all seem to subsist in a limbo between a definite structure and a ruin: mismatched materials are hemmed together to create walls and ceilings, vestiges of worn-out wood structures stand in as doors and windows, blackened pans and old coffeepots convey

the synesthetic pleasures of homemade Cuban food and the invigorating smell of Cuban coffee despite the humble kitchen set-ups. The essence of the actions remains universal and recognizable, whereas the visuals suggest that housework in these homes is not only atypical but also the result of sheer willpower and the overcoming of multiple hurdles.

These sets of images offer insight into the commonalities within the domestic practices and structures visualized in the film, and the special conditions under which they are performed. The performativity of acts of care and work rein in the narrative focus toward the most intimate moments of these homes. At the same time, the recurrent shift between the physical state of the home and the invading surroundings of the Havana skyline, or rather the collapse of the two due to the spatial peculiarities of the houses in question, starts to articulate an understanding of the economies of home that bridges the interior and the exterior, challenging the usual considerations of what is the "domestic."

In the filmic introduction of Lala and Roberto, an Afro-Cuban couple in one of the households in the documentary, she describes themselves as warriors "*porque nosotros luchamos mucho para obtener lo poco que tenemos*" [because we struggle a lot to get what little we have] (07:24). As she says these words off screen, her partner Roberto rehearses boxing moves on the terrace. Immediately after she enumerates the things she struggles for: a fan, pots, pans, glassware, cups, a counter for her kitchen, cutlery, etc., in other words, the basics of what any home would need for ordinary activities like preparing and sharing food or resting. But "*luchar*" for Lala, or rather the futility of her struggle (*lucha*), has multiple meanings. As Lala denounces the lack of job opportunities for women like herself on the island, she addresses the problem of prostitution catering to international tourists as the sole resource left for people in her situation, a practice Cubans have codified too as "*estar en la lucha*." In the most intimate moment of her

confession, when she stops short of admitting that she is one of those women whose only path is sex work, Lala passes from the interior of her kitchen where she is cooking in darkened, handle-less pots and pans, to the terrace where the landscape of the city is made visible to the camera. She tells us that from her terrace she can see the bay and the cruise ships entering the bay. While doing so she stretches her arm towards the sea in view, as if she could grab ahold of the distant vessels as they come and go. "*El problema que hay es que hay mujeres y hay barcos*" [The problem is that there are women and there are ships] (20:04) deplores Lala, explaining the prevalence of sex work and how it impacts mostly women and particularly women of color like herself. Not only that, but she also takes a moment to underline the shortsightedness of the economic model put in place by the socialist regime in its attempts to reconcile a state-regulated welfare system with the dictums of a free(er) market economy. As examples, she advances how for people in precarious situations state-subsidized products are increasingly scarce and therefore insufficient to meet their needs. "*De pollo y aceite no se vive*" [You can't live off chicken and cooking oil] (19:44) she complains. At the time this interview was recorded, the new currency exchange policy that the Cuban state has called *Tarea Ordenamiento* hadn't yet come into effect. Since it was imposed in 2021 amidst the Covid pandemic, it left citizens of the island like Lala coping with a devastated internal market and crippling inflation that makes it harder to acquire even the staples of a Cuban family's basic needs and goods.

Furthermore, although it is never directly addressed, from her accent and that of her partner we can infer that both Lala and Roberto are internal migrants in Cuba, or "*palestinos*." The term "*palestinos*," a local slur inspired by the stateless condition of Palestinians in Israeli-occupied zones, marks and differentiates those citizens from the south-eastern provinces of the island that migrate to the capital. Usually undocumented and susceptible to raids by the police, they become

easy targets of repressive bodies and informants who collaborate to imprison them and send them back to their original provinces. In most cases, like Lala proclaims, they are also Black people who flee their hometowns for lack of work opportunities and police harassment. Prostitution, the informal job market, vagrancy, or downright delinquency are the only possibilities left for these Cubans who are typified by state officials as foreigners and illegal migrants in the "Capital of all Cubans." Also, even if prostitution is not a crime per se in Cuba, "*acoso al turismo*" [tourism harassment] enveloped within "*peligrosidad predelictiva*" [risk of delinquency, the perception of someone's proclivity to commit a crime even before it happens] are legal concepts inscribed in the Law N$^{o.}$ 62 of the Penal Code (articles 73.1-84). This article has been historically critiqued since it applies to those with no legal employment and who are perceived to have delinquent tendencies and anti-social behaviors. Systematically, these legal concepts have been disproportionately applied to internal migrants ("*palestinos*"), Afro-Cuban youth, women sex workers, and queer individuals as activists have denounced recently (see Guerra-Blanco 2018; Padrón-Cueto 2020, Diario de Cuba 2020). Therefore, illegality or para-legality pervade the home of Lala and Roberto, both by means of the practices that sustain them and their origins.

The spatial relation established in this scene, even the banal gesture of Lala from her *azotea* encapsulating the comings and goings of international cruise ships, stretches the operations of her alternative domestic economy from the situated borders of her terrace to the rest of the city to foreign tourism writ large. In her speech, she links the material shortcomings of her domestic space to the inefficacy of Cuba's post-Castro economic restructuring and the rise in tourist investments and facilities on the island resulting from the Obama-induced Cuban boom. The discussion of a private affair, such as the choice to enter the underground and proscribed sex tourism practice ("*jineteros*" and "*jineteras*" as Lala calls them), offers an entryway to

comprehend the public, national, and global factors that interlock with the sustenance of alternative and precarious homemaking in Cuba.

Furthermore, in the scene leading up to Lala's testimony, we learn that her partner Roberto is a member of one of the many evangelical churches that have recently risen to social prominence within Cuba's religious milieu. Overlooking the city from their rooftop, he utilizes the camera shooting as a pulpit from which to offer a very personal and unorthodox sermon based on the biblical passage of the multiplication of the loaves (St. Matthew, 14:13-21). The scene is characterized by a certain surreal, even whimsical aura given its topic, the individual, and the setting. Roberto holds a bible in his hands, wears dark, hip sunglasses and an acid-green tank top with the word OBEY on it. The pious biblical anecdote suggests the bodily and spiritual fulfillments promised by the Judeo-Christian messianic narratives, in this case as they are interpreted through the desperate needs of Cuba's poorest citizens. The casual appearance of the OBEY tank top comically clashes with the proselytizing attitude of Roberto, as it indexes the clothing brand's original reference to John Carpenter's sci-fi political satire *They Live* (1988), a revolt against the dawn of the unbridled neoliberal version of capitalism proposed by the Reagan administration. Moreover, Roberto uses his screen time to declare that he is a true "*revolucionario*." Whereas traditionally this term describes the most undeterred defendants of the socialist regime, in Roberto's machinations it is rather someone devoted to the wellbeing of, the care and the love for his neighbors as per the Christian dogma.

Roberto's viewpoints seem even more interesting paired against his partner Lala's cagey yet justifiable views on international sex work. Therefore, under the same roof two opposing ideological tenets coexist as complements. One, male-centered, founded under the virulent wave of conservative evangelism that has taken over Cuba in recent years, very vocal against official

recognition of LGBTQ+ identities, same-sex marriage, state-wide adoption of feminist policies and gender ideology (Hinkley 2019; Jiménez Enoa 2019), and strengthened morally and economically by their peers in the US (Hoogendoorn 2021; US Department of State 2021). The local perception is that North American evangelical churches have made their way to the island by providing economic security and enfranchisement to their adepts, a practice called "la jabita misionera" [the missionary shopping bag]. It is only logical that, for Roberto, his first interpretation of Christianity seems to be that of a salvation that brings forth material satisfaction. His choice to preach cinematically a biblical story about the assurance of needs fulfilled and the promise of overflowing wealth springing from spiritual faith is not accidental. On the contrary, it is a less-than-veiled description of everyday reality in Cuba. Lala's views are laxer and more relativist when it comes to her moral compass, but equally predicated on the influx of foreign currencies and goods. Her dreams of financial and homely security find resonance in several signs of the urban landscape surrounding her in the documentary and that she indicates from her open-ended view: hotels, cruise ships, tourists. The entanglement of economies, signs, and meanings in this section reflects the elastic ethical and tactical positionalities that go into alternative ways of producing and operating non-traditional homes on the island. But it is also a commentary on the plasticity of the social spaces of these households, pliable to expanding their contours by the calculated operationalization and activation of ideology, gender, and sexuality as it is exemplified by subjects like Roberto and Lala.

The actions suggested by these actors and the framing executed by the documentarists bring the idea of the alternative production of homes closer to Brown's grounding of the closet not just as a spatial metaphor but as "an important material dimension of sexuality generally (and gay men specifically) and the city" (56). However, in the space produced by the actions of

couples like Lala and Roberto, there's little consideration for the primacy of heteronormativity, at least in its traditional moral tenets. As it is seen, economic survival and homemaking for this peculiar home unit are rooted in and dependent on the commodification of both transnational sexual intimacy and confessional faith on an urban scale.

Similar to this example, and evocative of Brown again, the film indicates too how gay desire makes itself an object of commerce in the closeted micro-universe of rooftop houses it follows. Jorge is an older gay man living with HIV since 1999, as he confesses midway through the documentary. Incompatibility with his homophobic brother ostracized him to the *azotea* on top of his building. There he has made a home for himself with the bare minimum—basically a bed and a nightstand—in what used to be the elevator's mechanical room. Going up and down from his home to the streets is the routine that propels his days. "*Levantarme, buscar el desayuno, después el almuerzo, después la merienda, la comida y así. Eso es diario."* [Get up, get breakfast, then lunch, then snack, then lunch and so on. That's every day] (29:00-12) Along with his customary needs and the items for his subsistence, Jorge goes to the streets to look for and pay for casual love and company. He admits, chuckling, to often paying for younger male sex workers to come with him to his house to be intimate with him. In his rationale, access to gay intimacy and bonding for men around his age is restricted to a barter economy in which age difference demands, or rather forces, the commercialization of sex. He does it because he is already 50: "*ya no son veinte*" ["I'm no longer twenty"] (29:23). Paying for sex now that he is older is the logical continuation of when he made himself available to the highest bidder when he was himself younger.

The film creates a contrapuntal nexus between Lala's story and Jorge's episode and their discussion of sex-for-profit practices. Unlike Lala, Jorge's words are not equated to a sequence

of urban landscapes nor are the hallmarks of his sexual commerce made visible as hotels, cruise ships, and touristic spots were before. His testimony is confined to the place where he lives, the terrace he enjoys as his own, and the staircases he uses to take food into his house. As a matter of fact, the mundane act of going into the streets to secure what is needed to feed himself is one of the rare instances in which we see any of the social actors in the film walking at ground level, albeit depicted from bird's-eye shot. The city-wide exteriority of heterosexual sex work is contrasted to the enclosed nature of gay sexuality, confined to the limits of the home. In other words, what we fail to see is intimately tied to what we can see when it comes to the role sex plays in the survival tactics of liminal domesticities. What is more, this confirms the centrality of heterosexuality—even in its more marginal instances—as dependent on the effacement of anything related to homosexual identities, as argued by Sedgwick (1990) and Brown alike. Moreover, while Jorge is discussing his habit of paying for company and fleeting love, the film establishes a visual metaphor by accompanying his words with an extreme close-up shot of a plastic shopping bag that is suspended from his hand as he climbs up the stairs. The eventual partners and the transactional sex he refers to seem to be signified by this plastic bag Jorge uses to carry his groceries upstairs. The invisible "*jabita misionera*" that Roberto, Lala's partner, hinted at before, is inverted here into a symbol of the commodification of affection and sex pleasures. It also contrasts heavily with the previous image of Lala stretching her arm from the azotea as if she could reach out and grab the cruise ships that one can see from her home. Here the camerawork zeroes in on the bare, transactional elements that allude to Jorge's material and sentimental needs and the effort that comes with them. Commodified gay desire and the subsistence domestic economy are presented here as two complementary poles of the life of an older gay man living on the fringes of Cuban society. The impossibility of seeing, in the

documentary, the urban settings that would signify the presence of queer sex work speaks precisely of the prevalence of the closet as a result of the institutionalization of homophobia in the socialist state. In other words, there is a closet within the closet created by the lawful proscription of a sex economy in general, but with special undertones when it comes to male-to-male sex. To emulate Brown's words, sex proves to be linked to the production of urban space at large and in this case alternative domesticities specifically, but this process also connotes a certain elasticity when one factors in components like sex work and sexual identities making such spaces more visible and expansible or completely shadowing them. In Lala's case, they span from her rooftop to the Cuban entry ports and beyond where her customers come from; in Jorge's example, it implodes within his living compartments and it's untraceable and unnoticeable.

A new dimension of the differential interfacing of sexuality, domesticity, and space appears in the film through the case of Jean Fugère. Jean is a cultural and literary journalist from Québec City retired in Havana since the early 2000s with his Afro-Cuban ex-partner, Renier. He states tacitly towards the final moments of the documentary that his rooftop dwelling is "*el espacio donde hay todo el espacio*" [the space where there is all the space] (63:40). Poetic imagination apart, there's a substantial amount of self-awareness in this statement that indicates at once the eccentric material borders of make-do homes in terraces, the intra- and transnational human configurations and financial arrangements that they participate in, as well as the importance of his singular home in the articulation of the network of makeshift houses shown in the documentary. The house in question was acquired by Jean and Renier in 2005 as their personal residence. After successive renovations, and with so much space at their disposal, *La Puerta Rosa*, their privately owned and run B&B, opened in 2016 right at the heyday of the

international tourism that coincided with the end of the Obama era. Since then, according to Fugère, it serves a predominately French Canadian, French, and Canadian clientele traveling to Cuba.

The space where all the space is, for Fugère, reiterates once more the ebb and flow of the constitution of private space given its manifold and dialectical relations with its surroundings. As he utters these words off-screen, a shirtless Fugère comes out of his *azotea* rooms to overlook *Calle Escobar*. On his chest we can distinguish the dark blue and white bead necklaces that customarily adorn the practitioners of Santería, especially those who are sons and daughters of Yemayá, mother of the Oceans, overseer of fertility, self-love, emotional traumas, and purveyor of personal healing. As Fugère concedes, going up to his refuge does not mean automatically turning your back on the bustling life of Havana's streets. On the contrary, it means inhabiting a fine line along which the outside obligations and inner life coexist. In fact, besides the common currency that is for most of these businesses the advertisement of an "authentic" Cuban experience, in the case of *La Puerta Rosa*, this authenticity comes coupled with the spectacularization of private queer life and religiosity. As Jean told me in his home in Montréal, people should come to their house not expecting a traditional North American breakfast of peanut butter and jelly on white toast, but rather a guava compote and a strong Cuban coffee. But by the same token, on their website, he invites potential guests to be aware that the ground level of the house is a "*casa-templo*," i.e., a *Santería* personal shrine around which gravitates a network of *santeros*, or *Santería* practitioners. Renier, Jean's former sentimental partner, is himself the descendent of a long line of *babalawos* and *santeros* and, in their home, he carries on that tradition for locals and foreigners alike. Through their enterprising they turn the space of their confessional and emotional intimacy into the exchange currency for the maintenance of

their home, a home that straddles borders and depends on the constant translocal flow of visitors and goods facilitated by the two owners.

The capacity to commodify the different features of this biracial, transnational couple was also evident in similar ventures they tried to replicate here in Québec. Before the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the Montréal restaurant scene, Fugère and Neulis Perez Puebla, a Cuban immigrant queer friend and business partner of Fugère, were the owners of one of the two franchises that operated under the sign *Soupesoup* in the city, a brand created in 2001 by chef and businesswoman Caroline Dumas. *Soupe Obatala*, named after the Yoruba orisha creator of human beings and incarnation of the "light of consciousness," took over the staple *Soupesoup* restaurant on Rue Saint-Denis that had been operating for over 10 years in the downtown's Quartier Latin. Even when the whole franchise closed all its spaces in 2019, *Soupe Obatala* took on its new name and continued to thrive. A diverse crowd of UQÀM students and city workers comprised the clients that sat down surrounded by iconic ICAIC-produced posters advertising Cuban films like *Vampiros en La Habana* (Juan Padrón, 1985), *Elpidio Valdez y el fusil* (Juan Padrón, 1979) and *Los pájaros tirándole a la escopeta* (Rolando Díaz, 1985). During the existence of the restaurant, the menu was mostly composed of traditional French-Canadian soups, salads, and sandwiches with Caribbean/Cuban accents, accompanied by *Mojitos*, *Cuba Libres*, and the special of the house, the Cocktail *Obatalá*, which honored the iconic white garments of the Afro-Cuban deity. The summer of 2020, when I first visited Jean Fugère at his house in Plateau-Mont-Royal, he announced with a heavy heart that just the day before *Soupe Obatala* had closed its doors for good like so many other failed small restaurants everywhere.

The process of transnational deterritorialization of the closet explained by Brown, in this case represented by the domestic unit of Fugère and his ex-partner, is a much more complex

affair than the simple export of Western ideas about queer love and intimacy. This translocal instance of the closet places the diverse natures of Afro-Caribbean, Cuban, and Québécois culinary and domestic cultures in conversation with the cultural and political readings that each space and tradition makes of queerness. Put simpler, it should not be implied that the export/import of Western queer culture is a frictionless process where it just travels abroad triumphant in any case. The entrepreneurial spirit that sustains businesses like *La Puerta Rosa* and *Soupe Obatala* is a product of Western commodification of the totality of individual identity and experiences, common in Euro-North American societies. But it is as much a sign of historical tactics of resistance, enfranchising, and thriving of transcultural and underground practices like Afro-Cuban Santeria or homosexuality in non-western countries like Cuba. Enfranchisement through the instrumentalization of domestic arts and practices functions, in the socialist state, as an underground pathway of financing an otherwise proscribed familial unit, that of a transnational, biracial queer couple. In Québec it could be seen as a sign of the pathways to integration and security offered to immigrants, like in the case of Jean's Cuban financial partner. Coupled with the inherent risks of investing in the frail and saturated market of hospitality businesses both in Havana and Montréal, the specific dynamics of gay life in Cuba can be considered at once one of the assets and the main fragility of establishments like these. Yes, the exotic traits of their initiatives, offered as spectacle for the immersive pleasure of potential customers, is no doubt the main attraction that Fugère and his business/sentimental allies can play to their advantage. I would dare say that, in the case of *La Puerta Rosa*, the queer component of an overtly gay-friendly space in a notoriously and historically homophobic country is a huge part of its success. But on the other hand, at least in the Cuban arena, this level of visibility also brings forth unwarranted hostility and sometimes unsurmountable hurdles imposed

by the socialist regime, making visible the institutionalized homophobia and racism that give character to the spatial metaphor of the closet in the first place.

Traditionally, analysis of the queer experience of the closet has postponed issues of ethnicity, immigration, and race, among others, as Brown himself admits. Moreover, the closet itself can be thought of as a colonial elaboration exported by the progressive expansion of Western queer culture and ideology to the rest of the world. But this case proposes a point from which to begin to unravel the convergence of queerness, citizenship, and race in Cuban, or rather, how they conspire to bring to the fore the historical resistance on the island to Western influences and the recognition of non-heteronormative identities. In the film, Fugère recounts how after buying the house he shares with Renier, they planted a grapevine in the backyard of the lower floor. The growth of the plant all over the building up to the terrace looking for the sun has become a visual hallmark of his hostel and a symbol of his determination to thrive in a context fundamentally averse to his presence. The grapevine, the building it has attached to, and the familial unit housed in it, could be taken as a whole signifying one same struggle to exist despite the circumstances.

Behind the image of the grapevine lies the ongoing histories of persistence and contingency that queer couples on the island battle with to gain recognition under the law. It has only been recently that the Cuban parliament has considered revising its existing *Código de la familia* [Family Civil Code], which has been in place since 1975. The proposed *Código de las familias* (in the plural), if approved, will replace the old one in accordance with the new Cuban constitution approved by popular referendum in February 2019. Unprecedentedly, it will echo the "advancements in the [familial] legislation of other countries" (Granma 15/09/2021). It also attempts to make place for the "familial pluralism" (Granma 15/09/2021) present in Cuban

society and to "perfect and amplify its juridical figures," actualizing concepts such as matrimony, civil unions, parenthood, and adoption, among others. Especially, it also offers solutions to the reality of transnational unions and the migration of couples, part and parcel of the reality of present Cuba.

These recent changes, however timid, might be an undeniable game changer for subjects like Jean and Renier. But this was not the case when they embarked on the project of *La Puerta Rosa*. Given that, as a foreigner and a gay man, Fugère had neither means to legalize his stay in Cuba nor marry Renier, they had to come up with an elaborate scheme to take advantage of the legal blind spots of the Cuban legislation. As far as the authorities were concerned, it was Renier's mother who bought the house. She would later marry Jean so that he would "inherit" from her the house he had already acquired with his own money imported from Québec. It should be noted that buying and selling real estate was not a legal option until 2011, so the acquisition of the house by Renier's mother was already a paralegal act known popularly as "*permutas*" which allowed for the exchange of real estate with currency changing hands under the table. When Jean tried to gain possession of the house by marrying Renier's much older mother, the MININT, the official administration that manages among other things immigration in Cuba, launched an investigation to prove the veracity of Jean's union with the visibly older, Afro-Cuban, hearing impaired woman.

Fugère further details:

> *Ah c'était une telle saga ! (...) quand la personne de l'armée m'a vu arriver elle n'était pas très bien disposée à mon égard. Alors elle a pris de notes que je n'ai jamais lu. Mais à mon dossier… J'ai demandé à des gens de lire ce qui était écris et on m'a dit qu'elle, elle n'avait pas cru au mariage, et que c'était elle qui a poussé pour qu'y ait une enquête pour qu'on découvre s'il y avait vraiment une union ou il n'y avait pas une union, etc. Alors tout ça pour dire que c'est pour ça que la résidence permanente m'a été refusée donc je ne pouvais pas devenir propriétaire*

> *et là comble de tout, la mère de Renier est décédée. Trois mois après. Alors, et là par héritage, la maison est passée à Renier, (…) et moi je n'y existais plus.*
>
> Ah it was such a saga! (...) when the person from the army saw me arrive, she was not very well disposed towards me. So, she took notes that I never read. But in my file…I asked people to read what was written and they told me that she didn't believe in the marriage, and that she was the one who pushed for an investigation to find out if there really was a union or not, etc. So, all this to say that this is why I was refused permanent residency, so I could not become a homeowner and to top it all off, Renier's mother died. Three months later. So, by inheritance, the house passed to Renier, (...) and I no longer existed there (Interview with Jean Fugère, June 12th, 2020).

Histories like this one are not uncommon for transnational couples with one of them being Cuban. But as Fugère implies in his anecdote by the phrase *"elle n'était pas très bien disposée à mon égard"* [she was not very well disposed towards me], suspicions by the Cuban officials of his queerness and the interracial nature of the couple led them to further investigate and debunk the veracity of his union, therefore denying him both citizenship rights and legal ownership of his property. His inability, or unwillingness, to "pass" as a straight man marrying a local, or the openness with which he conducted his relationship with Renier in their neighborhood, ultimately placed their domestic dream and enterprise in a limbo of precariousness and illegality, at least for Jean;[xxvii] a situation that only worsened with the deterioration of Jean's and Renier's relationship

[xxvii] This example could make us think automatically about the dangers of well-to-do foreigners buying real estate in Cuba and chasing low-income families out of their homes and neighborhoods. Authors and foreign press outlets, however, have indicated that this hasn't been the case. Neither before nor during the Obama years, and not after that either. On the contrary, as investigated by authors Achtenberg (2013) and Hope (2018), gentrification on the island is predominantly a homegrown phenomenon, carried forth either by Cubans on the island, with the help of foreign money sent by relatives abroad, or by historical Cuban elites. Furthermore, Hope goes on to assert that the decentralization of the real estate market in Cuba and the commodification of access to housing has led to the reproduction of the same class systems of pre-revolutionary years, with revolutionary elites and former pre-1959 Cuban bourgeois families who remained in Cuba speculating with the most valuable properties in Cuban cities (2018: 125, 126) and trading with them. As I have indicated before in the introduction, foreigners like Québécois buying and owning homes in Cuba remains a rather liminal aspect of local the real estate market, curtailed by myriad regulations. And although it remains a latent danger, and the protectionist socialist laws are somehow beneficial to make Cuban properties remain accessible to Cubans, my point with this example was to indicate that when issues of sexual identity are factored in these processes, they disproportionally affect the capacity to bend to their favor the same legal hoops that transnational heterosexual couples manage to jump through to secure homes for themselves. For more on this issue see for instance Achtember, E. 2013. "Gentrification in Cuba? The Contradictions of Old Havana." *NACLA*, January 31st, 2013. https://nacla.org/blog/2013/1/31/gentrification-cuba-

and their eventual separation. Jean conducts his life and business in a perilous arrangement with Renier and is susceptible to eviction by his former partner who is now the legal owner of the house.

Race, the opacity of immigration procedures, homosexuality, and the evidence of constituting a non-heterosexual familial unit gave form to a particular instance of the power/knowledge dynamics embodied by the closet. As indicated by Brown, examples like this one "(…) ask us to consider the ways in which gays and lesbians *do* attempt to desire in particular contexts — especially though in spite of the fact that such contexts may impel them to conceal or deny their identity (…)" (130, original emphasis). The labyrinth-like strategies deployed by subjects like Jean and Renier attest to the inventive capacities—however foiled they may be—of transnational, biracial queer couples to work around the constrictions placed on their very existence by the socialist state. On the other hand, their ultimate failure reveals the differential treatment these individuals receive due to the homophobic weaponization of citizenship access, immigration procedures, and legal loopholes when it comes to visibly gay and lesbian couples. Foreign ownership is routinely scrutinized and carefully framed by Cuban officials, but evidently it awakes other containment operations when it comes to small-scale homosexual foreign investors and potential owners. The closet is here the transnational product of a misguided anti-colonial, anti-imperialist rhetoric grounded equally in the shared historicity of institutionalized homophobia and xenophobia, disguised as ideological orthodoxy and the political struggles for the preservation of socialism.

---

contradictions-old-havana, The World Weekly. "Gentrification arrives in Cuba." *The World Weekly*, May 25th, 2015. https://www.theworldweekly.com/reader/view/1398/gentrification-arrives-in-cuba, (last accessed July 20, 2021), and Hope, B. 2018. *Everyday Adjustments in Havana. Economic Reforms, Mobility, and Emerging Inequalities*. New York: Lexington Books.

In sum, it should be noted that from its initial moments the documentary is highly concerned with the universal traits that run through all these forms of alternative domesticities. Highlighting the material oddities that define these domestic spaces gives way to a plethora of gestures and practices like cooking, cleaning, and caring for other family members that connect these houses to widespread ideas of homemaking. Walking a fine line between what is public and private, the director dives into the deviant tactics that sustain the domestic environment and its ties to transnational networks of sexual, religious, and tourism economies. The metaphorical and material instances of the queer idea of the closet have been instrumental to understanding the interaction of power and knowledge that restrict and help expand the operations of these alternative domesticities. Moreover, the closet itself, as constituted by the film space, serves to illuminate the conflicts arising from the maintenance and security of non-heteronormative households in Cuba. When elements like the law, race, gender, and sexual identity are brought into consideration, property rights and access to living spaces are highly contingent on the volitions of repressive official institutions.

4.3 *Latinidad*/*Latinité*: Transnational Latinx Film Production and the Caribbean Remaking of Latinx Identity between Cuba and Québec

The historical relationship of the socialist state with many of the social groups it set out to revindicate proves to be fraught with ambivalences and dark zones as exemplified by the cases discussed above. I contend in this section that much the same can be said of the status of latinhood in Québec, at least in the ways *Latinité* is negotiated, construed, and challenged given the uncertain status of filmmakers and cultural workers of Latinx origins in Canada.[xxviii]

[xxviii] Latinx will be used all throughout this section as a gender-neutral form to allude to individuals of Latin American descent. *Latinidad*, and *Latinité* will be employed in alternation depending on the human groups I will be

Moreover, I intend to demonstrate that the *latinité* rehearsed by the subjects and the film inspected in this chapter serves as an identity that is always already deterritorialized, projected to a transnational scale, and strategically deployed through boundaries and ethno-national spaces.

Some form of ideation of the Latin, and I dare say of the Southern Latin, has been present in Québécois explorations of their singular identity within the ethno-cultural space of North America and the global North. Furthermore, many of these idiosyncratic constructions of latinhood have hinted towards the "tropical northern [*tropique du nord*]," "Dionysian [*dionysiaque*]" character of the Québécois (Rioux 1980, 87 and 88), as insinuated comically by sociologist Marcel Rioux, in what remains today one of the founding treatises on Québécois identity.[xxix] This has led me to argue that latinité in Québec is deterritorialized and transnationally negotiated because it has been traditionally inscribed under the narratives of pan-Latin alliances stretching across both sides of the Atlantic: from the European Latin cultures—particularly the French one—to Latin America to the Latinx diasporas in North America. In this case, we can assert that Latinx individuals' film projects find themselves caught amidst a set of complicated financial and promotional mechanisms of Québec's institutions. Therefore, they are always thrown into a series of transcultural operations that ultimately seek Québécois and Canadian validation of their singular roles in, and contributions to, these societies. For the production and circulation of their films they need, then, to counterbalance by means of complex and multidirectional strategies within and across national borders. To achieve that, their original nationalities must become opaque currencies within Pan-American, trans-Latin networks, also

talking about. When dealing with francophones, I will privilege *Latinité*. Conversely, when dealing with Hispanic individuals, I will use *Latinidad*.

[xxix] For more on Rioux's curious explanations of the Québécois as a "hot-blooded" people of "Dionysian" character, despite the harsh winters and the inclination to reproduce some form of Nordic mimicry product of their colonization, see Rioux, M. 1980. *Les Québécois*. Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil.

dependent on the value afforded to shared (neo)(post)colonial legacies, the regional presence of Latin American entrepreneurship, and the weight—or weightlessness—conceded to the diverse Latinx diasporas in the French-language province, Canada generally, and even the neighboring US. Strategically deployed, first, because the idea of *latinidad* I propose here is performed with a conscious appeal to the pan-ethnic and multinational character of global Latin cultures through a portrayal of the material aspects of marginal Cuban domesticities and with an emphasis on its Antillean, Afro-Caribbean, and queer facets. Such *latinidad* is not solely the prerogative of those who can claim their origins in the Latin American subcontinent. Individuals and institutions from Québec can and often do utilize the concept too. *Latinité/Latinidad* is differently conceptualized and performed by all these actors depending on settings, discourses, narratives, and political needs, therefore postponing or highlighting its resolute Latinness or its Europeanness. In other words, this *latinidad* is a creole concept-in-motion that evidences the tensions between the alleged communal, ethno-national characteristics of Latin American nations and the general amalgamation of Pan-Latin regional and global constructions. This is not to mention the historical processes of colonization, imperialism, cultural and factual genocide, slavery, forced and willing migrations, etc., that have also been erased, or included, in the crafting of "the Latin."

The multifaceted character of the construction of a Québécois *latinité* and, by extension, the identification with or distinctions between Latinx constituents that such a construct has allowed, have been historically dependent on the strategic interests that Canada, Québec, and Latin American nations have perceived in their mutual relationships. Historians like Maurice Demers, Geneviève Dorais, Michel Nareau, and Cynthia Wright, to just name a few, have amply analyzed the tactical links established with Latin American countries such as Cuba, Puerto Rico,

and Mexico. They have also demonstrated how these bridges have been built around shifting societal values spanning from catholic conservatism (Demers 2012, Demers 2014) to leftist proletarian solidarity (Wylie, Tabío & Wright 2018; Dorais 2018), passing through material cultural and literary commonalities (Nareau 2012). Moreover, they serve to illustrate in these formative moments the call for an all-encompassing idea of *Latinidad/Latinité* that is always already negotiated through the punctual engagement of regional ethnicities and countries, i.e., Canadian francophones, Cuban and Mexican political, religious, or economic elites, etc. A common thread among all these tendencies has been the interregional framing of "a form of Latin solidarity against the modernization of their societies [Québec's and Latin America's] based exclusively on liberal and capitalist values" as affirmed by Demers (2014, 41). As a result, invocations of a mystified *"sensibilité commune"* (Demers, 32), from *la Belle Province* to the south of the Rio Grande border, are rooted in a shared and controversial ideal of *latinidad* that conveys very pressing and concrete matters like opposition to the imperialistic and neocolonial assimilation and domination by Anglo-North American cultures. As Demers further explains, through the example of the Québécois/Mexican Catholic collaborations of World War II: "[A]sserting the *latinité* of French Canada (…) meant a strategic positioning that many perceived as disrupting the balance of power. Latinity was an intersubjective construct that French Canadians and Latin Americans used to legitimate a rapprochement between their countries" (Demers, 90). In that sense, *latinité* was also used as a bargaining chip to draw Ottawa's attention to the specific needs of each party and secure legitimacy. *Latinité*, then, was a paradigm that would be equally pulled from several contrasting interests across geographies; on the one side, as political leverage to advance the struggles of minoritarian groups against a majority (by francophones versus anglophones in Canada, by Latin American states in their diplomacy with

Canada, and by Latinx diasporic communities vis-à-vis their majoritarian host ethnicities) and, on the other, as a form of alternative diplomacy or soft power for non-state actors and state agents alike.

The historical formation of *latinité* as a construct in Canada and Québec allows me to contrast it with the critically queer nature of the concept of *latinidad* employed by Juana María Rodríguez in her book-length study *Queer Latinidad: Identity, Practices, Discursive Spaces*. The case of the transnational film project that I analyze in this chapter confirms that, as Rodriguez writes, "*[l]atinidad* serves to define a particular geopolitical experience but it also contains with it the complexities of immigration, (post)(neo)colonialism, race, color, legal status, class, nation, language, and the *politics of location*" (2003, 10, emphasis added). Navigating said politics of location are a constant in the practice of Latinx diasporic filmmakers and producers in Québec, as Arantza Maldonado, the producer of *Sur les toits…* and co-founder of *Faits Divers Média*, recognizes. Maldonado came to Montréal as a Spanish national of Uruguayan descent. While discussing the risks and issues of working in the local media industries she admits that for everyone: "*Es verdad que es complicado*" [It is true that it is complicated], but she expands further on her statement to add:

> *Siendo de fuera es todavía más complicado. No es porque no seamos capaces de hacerlo sino porque te cierran un poco las puertas simplemente por el hecho de que por ejemplo Pedro Ruiz y Arantza Maldonado no han estudiado en el INIS, han estudiado cada uno en su universidad en su respectivo país y al llegar aquí pues sí hablamos inglés y francés, pero no somos de aquí. Entonces es más complicado entrar*.
>
> Being from abroad is even more complicated. It's not because we are not able to do it, but because they close the doors a bit simply because for example Pedro Ruiz and Arantza Maldonado have not studied at INIS, they have each studied at a university in their respective countries and when they arrive here, we speak English and French, but we are not from here. So, it is more complicated to break through (Interview with Arantza Maldonado, September 8th, 2021).

Media professionals like Maldonado and Ruiz don't have the same kind of calling cards, in terms of cultural and social capital, that others have if their instruction and careers were launched here in Canada. The fact that she insists on using their full names and their unmistakably Latin nature hints toward the fact that these very initial signifiers of identity foreclose integration for specialists like them and mark them as someone from somewhere else. Mastery of local languages and proven expertise have little influence in these cases. As she later elaborated, Maldonado's dialogue with and her introduction into official institutions and indigenous production houses came along thanks to the unofficial tutelage she received from the Montréal-based French producer Brigitte Germaine (*Belle Époque* (Gavin Millar, 1994); *Littoral / Shoreline* (Wajdi Mouawad, 2004)). Being from outside, or rather the perception of being outsiders through their credentials, despite years of living in the country, was remediated by this sort of triangular leverage that professionals like Maldonado can command by association in similar Pan-Latin arrangements. Configurations like this one allow them to call attention to their projects from organizations like SODEC and TELEFILM.

Despite these circuitous processes, or maybe because of them, both Maldonado and Ruiz insist on these cinematic returns to the broadly conceived "*mundo latino*" (Maldonado) that their filmography performs. Ruiz's and Maldonado's *Faits Divers…* has repeatedly supported projects that focus on the Latin Caribbean and, more particularly, on Cuba. Ruiz humbly describes it as "*una especie de magia o de casualidad*" [a kind of magic or a coincidence] (Interview with Pedro Ruiz, October 31st, 2020) that made his first documentaries travel to the Caribbean area and Cuba. This takes on another connotation considering his Venezuelan roots, a country with an undeniable imprint on the historical, cultural, and political history of the Caribbean. One could say that Ruiz's cinematic returns to his roots have taken a tangential turn via these recurrent film

projects to the global Caribbean region instead of going back directly to Venezuela. In any case, one can discern here the elements of an authorial signature deployed carefully in a tightly knit and cohesive filmography. The cultural bridges between Cuba and Québec were first at the center of his initial long feature, *Animal Tropical à Montréal* (Pedro Ruiz, 2007), about the brief trip to Canada made by the Cuban writer and all-around *enfant terrible* Pedro Juan Gutiérrez. They were further developed in *Philemon chante Habana* (Pedro Ruiz, 2012), where the author narrated the insular adventures of singer, composer, and songwriter Philemon Bergeron-Langlois (a.k.a. Philemon Cimon) while he recorded his second album *Les sessions cubaines* (EGREM, 2010) in Cuba. Finally, Ruiz's and Maldonado's second collaboration, *La dérive douce d'un enfant de Petit-Goâve* (2009), about Haitian writer Dany Laferrière, follows Laferrière from Montréal to Paris to Port-au-Prince in an intimate portrait that owes greatly to the rich imaginary of the author of *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* (1985). This film became their first popular success and earned them the Prix du public at the 2009 RIDM.

Adding to the four films already made in Cuba and Haiti by *Faits Divers Média*, another project is now on the drawing board about the Havana experiences of the FLQ members who lived as political exiles in socialist Cuba, and yet another one about migration in Nicaragua and the Central American region. The chaotic nature of these configurations is what Ruiz referred to before as "*una especie de magia o de casualidad*" that has led all their projects to Cuban shores. However, as he detailed at some point, his choice of words "magic" and "chances" are metaphors that attempt to conceal the incommensurable enterprise ("*una locura (…) casi que un acto fantástico*" [a crazy (…) almost fantastic act]) (Interview Pedro Ruiz, October 31st, 2020) that it becomes for a "*Latino Americano*" to finish a feature film in Canada.

The politics of location play out too in the funding and circulation strategies of projects like this documentary, or rather the struggles to secure them. Both Maldonado and Ruiz admit that, during the three years spanning the making of the film, a part of it was done out of their own pockets. These are not surprising facts, as Maldonado clarifies. Documentary follows different production paths than fiction features, and it can be relatively easy to get a project off the ground with minimal crew and expenses. As soon as they have a first cut to show, filmmakers can go and seek the money to finalize their films. "*Es más fácil cuando entregas un primer montaje*" [It is easier when you deliver a first cut] explains Maldonado (Interview with Arantza Maldonado, September 8th, 2021). However, before that, refusal by funding organisms like SODEC was not what surprised the producer and the director of the film, but the rhetoric behind it. In the comments they received from SODEC when they first applied for financial aid, members of the adjudicating committee made clear their doubts regarding a project about "just" Cuba.

Maldonado remembers it like this:

> *La SODEC nos rechazó dos veces. De hecho, la primera vez que nos rechazó nos dijeron unos comentarios que Obama acababa de ir y que no hablábamos de la visita de Obama. Y nosotros solo nos decíamos bueno, pero es que no es una película sobre la visita de Obama. Es una película sobre Cuba, o sea no tiene nada que ver. Está muy bien que haya ido Obama, pero esa no es la película. Y bueno comentarios, así como ¡ah bueno esa película no! ¡Una película sobre Cuba no va a dar la vuelta al mundo, no va a ir a festivales!*
>
> SODEC turned us down twice. In fact, the first time we were turned down we were told by some comments that Obama had just gone and that we were not talking about Obama's visit. And we just said: Well, but it's not a film about Obama's visit. It is a film about Cuba, so it has nothing to do with it. It's all very good and well that Obama went, but that's not the movie. And comments like "oh, no, not that film! A film about Cuba is not going to go around the world, it's not going to go to festivals! (Interview with Arantza Maldonado, September 8th, 2021)

To SODEC, whose stated mission is helping Québécois cultural industries distinguish themselves in the local and international arenas, while assuring "la qualité, *la diversité, l'originalité et l'accessibilité*" [the quality, *the diversity, the originality and the accessibility*] (SODEC, emphasis added), a predominantly Latinx foreign crew, working on a documentary that refused to perpetuate the glossy images from Cuba that local and global audiences demand, didn't seem to align easily with its international agenda. A story about Obama in Cuba apparently did more. This emphasizes the idea of how many of the cultural and political links between Québec and Cuba are mediated by the status of the latter and its standing in relationship to the US or other geopolitical entities. SODEC needed to tie its name to "bigger players" like Obama and its North American neighbor. Their idea of future success for the documentary seemed to depend on it.

This example is a symptom of much larger issues like the status of ethnic/multicultural media in the Canadian context. Recent local discussions highlight increasing appeals to Canadian institutions for effective inclusion and representation of ethnic groups in their funding and cultural policies. Indicative of this is the fact that on March 9, 2020, TELEFILM's report of its *Inaugural Working Group Meeting-Diversity and Inclusion* stated as one of its key takeaways that, for minority and BIPOC workers, "there's constant pressure and demand to explain and 'sell' their cultural perspectives. They need to constantly educate others on their culture in order to sell it" (IWGM-DI 2020, 3). In the case of *Sur le toits…*, the clear demand that the creatives "sell" their project about Cuban culture as always tied to its historical differences with the US accounts for this. Ruiz's documentary, with ties to Québec, Venezuela, and Cuba, clearly speaks to what scholars like Augie Fleras have identified as part of Canada's evolution towards "post-multicultural," "hyperdiverse," "post-ethnic," and "multiversal" realities (2015, 26). Yet,

projects like this one are still forced to make the case for their existence through topical understandings of the Other's cultural specificities or rather be persuaded to contribute to perpetuating such topics in detriment of more nuanced explorations of their complexities. Without contesting the actuality of increasingly "diverse diversities" (Fleras, 32), as this very same case proposes given the real extent of inclusion and diversity in Canada, one cannot help but wonder: what does inclusion really entail for racialized, ethnically inflected media projects that are to be created in "hyperdiverse," "post-ethnic" Canada and Québec? Is it even possible to do away with ethnicity in a "post-ethnic," "post-multicultural" Canada? What would a media look like that can jettison its ethnic component made by and for minorities that are still underrepresented in the industry at large, their projects underfunded as proved by this example? Aren't these the same minorities that are routinely excluded from the decision-making spheres that allocate resources across ethnic and cultural groups in Canada in the hopes of representing the multiple through the choices of the singular? Or more germane to our case, how to ascertain the effectiveness of the post-multicultural move in Canada when, just crossing provincial lines, the "old" tenets of multiculturalism have been and still are ferociously defied for the sake of, say, Québec's ideation of "interculturalism," i.e., the recognition of the primacy of the founding settler cultures of Canada that negotiate reasonable accommodations or "collaborative adjustments" (Bouchard 2015, 7) with "newly arrived" ethnicities? Although I do not offer definitive answers to these questions, I do think they suggest a clear picture of the rhetorical entanglements that complicate ethnic and Latinx media undertakings caught amidst opposing federal and provincial funding structures and cultural policies as these two try to speak to increasingly diverse, mobile, and global constituencies.

For instance, as producer Maldonado further comments, provincial and federal arts councils seem to work following different guidelines. After some time working out of their own pockets, the CALQ was the first organization to sponsor the project followed later by the CCA-CAC. Maldonado clarifies that councils have a more artistic-driven approach when it comes to supporting transnational projects. Seemingly fewer economic calculations and revenue expectations go into consideration than with public financing institutions like SODEC and TELEFILM. Case in point, cultural initiatives bridging Québec, Canada, its Latinx diasporas and Latin America often find support in these local councils at the provincial and local level. The film *Habana-Montréal* discussed earlier was one of those cases, but also the *Centre de diffusion d'art multidisciplinaire de Montréal DARE-DARE*'s collaborations in Mexico and Cuba, the *Festival LatinArte* and other equally self-managed artists centers' liaisons with the South American continent, like *OBORO*, *GIV*, etc.

Confronted, then, with an initial lack of resources, Maldonado and Ruiz sought the help of in-the-field "fixers" like Victor and Jean Fugère, a term Maldonado dislikes to some extent because she considered them first and foremost friends. They served as proxies in the pre-production of the film when they were not able to afford the costs of going back and forth to and from Cuba. Later, when funding started to flow into the project, the on-the-ground friends acquired other technical labels (fixer/field producer/musician in the case of Victor, researcher in the case of Jean) that justified the payments they would receive for the services rendered before out of affective connections. It stands to reason, then, to believe that as Latinx cultural workers in Québec and Canada, the spatial implications of your projects, the connections with certain locals, and their geopolitical framing might determine the capacities to carry them to fruition or not. Success in this sense depends in equal parts on the ability to appeal to territorial

imaginations, the successful navigation of muddy cultural policies, and the capacity to command deterritorialized forces, influences, and affective links.

When it came to circulation of the finished documentary, it also befell Maldonado and Ruiz to intuitively secure paths in film festival circuits for a Latinx documentary made in Canada about the invisible sides of Cuba. Without sales agents and distribution companies, Latinx and Latin American film festivals were the first logical venues that opened venues for *Sur les toits…* The *Festival de Cine Pobre de Gibara* was one of them, as Maldonado and Ruiz explain, and the Festival LatinArte here in Montréal, too. "*Yo creo que tuvimos más éxito en Latinoamérica porque creo que lo entendieron mejor*," [I think we had more success in Latin America because I think they understood it better] considers Maldonado. She adds: "*En Europa nos costó un poquito más entrar. En España nos costó muchísimo por el hecho de que en España se habla muchísimo más de Cuba que en otros países*" [In Europe, it took us a little bit longer to break into the market. In Spain, it was very difficult for us because of the fact that in Spain people talk about Cuba much more than in other countries] (Interview with Arantza Maldonado, September 8th, 2021).

It was in Latin American festivals like Cartagena, Guadalajara, and others that the film was warmly welcomed and went on to amass substantial recognition. Curiously, and going back to the vague Pan-Latin tutelage mentioned above, the film is now part of the portfolio of Québec's distributor *K-Films Amérique*, devoted to promoting the best of "quality national cinemas" (K-Films Amérique "*Qui Nous Sommes*"). Distribution led by K-Films has taken the documentary through global festival circuits, with an emphasis on its originality as a Québécois product and a Latinx film at one and the same time.

Québécois foreign cultural diplomacy has also instrumentalized the Latinx nature of the documentary. For instance, the documentary was scheduled as part of a special screening in February 2020 during the last *Québecine*, the yearly showcase of Québec cinema in México, co-organized by the *Cineteca Nacional* in the Distrito Federal and the DGQM (Québecine). Amidst growing concerns over the rising COVID-19 pandemic, but also because of the subject matter of the film itself, organizers scheduled for this film two, open-air, free-of-charge presentations in the gardens of the Mexican cinematheque, an institution located in the quaint historical borough of Coyoacán, which is characterized by an architectural environment not unlike the urban landscape showed in *Sur les toits…* There is some sort of acid irony implied in the fact of screening for free in a Latin America country a film by Latinx immigrants who struggled to secure funding from Québec's institutions. Moreover, there is also a certain "material irony" in how the meagre nature of the dwellings in the film is unintendedly replicated by the open-air screenings that Mexicans attended on what are rather chilly February nights in Mexico City. The filmic object that is *Sur les toits*… becomes, in the Québécois curatorial conception, a bridge of sorts that connects Latin American constituencies across geopolitical contexts through a mystified and ritualized "culture of precariousness," so to speak, even in the phenomenological aspects of the reception of the film.

The film proved to have a certain appeal to Québec's global and regional cultural diplomacy, especially in its advertising of the province as a space that embraces diversity and celebrates the inclusion of, say, Latinx diasporas. This proves how the *latinité* imagination of Québec's cultural diplomacy instrumentalizes ethnic projects in its outreach to Latin America, the same ones that might otherwise go routinely underfunded in its territory. This, however, is not always met without resistance by Latin American regimes. For instance, it was again the

"Cuban/Latin feel" of the project that singled it out as a prospective participant within the official diplomatic and bilateral cultural work carried out by the BQLH in Havana and Mexico. Before I first talked to Mme. Johanne Desnoyer, the former general director of the BQLH, her office had been in conversations with ICAIC officials to present *Sur les toits*… at the opening night of the *Muestra de Cine de Quebec en La Habana*. The favorable welcome that this documentary about life in Havana had had on Canadian and Québécois screens made it seem a suitable choice for the event, given that it was dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Cuban capital. Furthermore, it is a film from Québec, shot in Cuba's main city, designed and produced by a small team of artists and technicians from Venezuela and Spain, all elements that reinforced the phantasmatic Latin heritage entertained by the francophone nation's diplomacy when it comes to Latin America and the Hispanic world in general.

Nonetheless, *Sur les toits…* was not included in the final program of the *Muestra*, and *Hochelaga, terre d'âmes,* took its place at the opening ceremony (See Chapter 1). Whereas Mme. Desnoyer remained guarded about the reasons why she thought the film was not chosen, others, like *Islas'* Ximena Holuigue, also a Latinx individual with similar experiences dealing with Cuban cultural authorities, can at least imagine the arguments advanced by the ICAIC. "It is a very depressing portrait of Havana," Ximena confided to me while riding bikes in Montréal one summer night. When she knew what the BQLH wanted to do with the film, she had a hard time believing the film would make it to the final list at all, let alone be part of the inaugural ceremony. According to Holuigue's experiences, Cuban officials have turned recently somewhat resistant to somber depictions of their country by foreigners and so have Cuban nationals to a certain extent. Ximena's point of view resonated with my own lived experiences as a Cuban, being brought up in an ideological echo chamber clamoring that Cuban problems were the

domain of Cubans alone, and by this the official rhetoric meant Cubans on the island. Any "foreign" individual who expressed explicit criticism of the socio-economic-political situation, Cuban émigrés included, were met with pointed disdain and the parochial inclination to question the "legitimacy" of their critique. Ruiz's documentary made no compromises in that sense.

But, on the other side, I had Cuban colleagues and friends in the US, Spain, Switzerland, and Canada who had also seen the film and commented in unison how honest and uplifting, moving and even hopeful Ruiz's depiction of marginal homes on the island was. Some even compared it to *Suite Habana* by Fernando Pérez (2003) for the obvious elements they share: their concentration on the domestic realm of life in Cuba, the multiple portraits of family units they follow, the poetic, humanistic, and dignified examination of precariousness and poverty they both perform. I admit that I have always been inclined to favor this latter positive attitude toward the film, with some reservations. All these elements were part of the considerations that made me select the film as part of the program for the 12th edition of the *LatinArte* Festival in Montréal last year, an event profiting from the support of a variety of city, provincial, and federal funding to celebrate the artistic presence of Latinx diasporas in Québec. Even I, unwittingly, was fueling the same branding of Québec as a Pan-Latin ethno-space with what seemed at the time an appropriate curatorial choice. *Sur les toits…* appears to sit comfortably amidst all these contrasting perceptions and personal readings. And it remains that, for better or worse, the film serves the purpose of *"Latinx-washing"* Québec's very white, Nordic, and monolithic cultural and filmic scenes.

Sur les toits… is not an isolated example of the many translocal tactics that are crucial to Latinx creatives living and working in Québec as they deal with the ways their careers and labor expertise risk being bypassed. During the 12th LatinArte Festival in Montréal, actor and director

Christian de la Cortina (*Transit* (2008); *Generation Wolf* (2016)) expressed similar grievances against the perceived blind spots that funding, production, and circulation institutions have toward Latinx filmmakers. This happened in a virtual Q&A after the presentation of his film *Generation Wolf*. De la Cortina is the son of immigrants of Chilean origins with a long career as an actor in major francophone TV hits like *District 31* (Aetios Production, 2016-2022) and *19-2* (Echo Média, 2011-2015) and in celebrated English-speaking films such as *Brooklyn* (John Crowly, 2015). Unlike Ruiz and Maldonado, he was born in Canada and has Canadian degrees both in business administration (Sherbrooke University) and film production and direction (INIS). With an evident penchant for small budget thrillers with prospective broad audience appeal, De la Cortina's films dismantle the mainstream media's stereotypical representations of Latinx individuals. His works also advance political, sociological, and eco-critical notions cherished by the young director when they comment often on Canada's subdued role in ecological and humanitarian crises in South America and Africa or the spaces and the character of the inclusion accorded to second generation Canadians coming out of immigrant families.

Notwithstanding, his genre films have been routinely snubbed by SODEC maybe because of their language politics (due to the use of Spanish and English), prevalence of genre codes in the films, being too commercial, etc. Instead, De la Cortina has relied mostly on financial arrangements with small investors and businesses, from the Ville de Bromont in his native region of the Eastern Townships, as well as the city's administration, given the regional interest in filmic depictions of the county to foster tourism. Alternatively, he has also depended on Latinx sponsorship and solidary labor from the larger Hispanic community in the US. As a result, his films gained recognition in North American film festivals specializing in Latinx and Latin American cinema through the workings of private production and distribution multinationals like

Entertainment One (eOne), Samuel Goldwyn Films, and Amazon Studios, in their branches catering to the Latinx universe. They have rarely been shown in Canadian and Québécois circuits. Histories like these ones are not exceptional in the experience of Latinx artists in Québec. The processes of visualization and invisibility of Latinx media and film are constantly negotiated through transborder, deterritorialized arrangements based on histories of migration, positionality, locality, and cultural capital, among other factors.

How does representation mirror the complex architecture of the making of *Sur les toit…?* Domesticity becomes here again an important site to understand the expansive notion, and the contested character, of what I have called here in alternation *latinidad* and *latinité*. The critically queer character of *latinidad/latinité* is potentiated by the rebellious identities that inhabit the canopy of alternative domesticities present in Ruiz's documentary. They live at the margins of Cuba, "*esa línea donde estoy cerca de lo que es la tierra, pero también estoy más cerca del cielo*" [that line where I am close to what is earth, but I am also closer to heaven] (11:29), as Reynol proclaims near the beginning of the film. Therefore, their liminal claims on *Cubanía*, and by extension on *latinidad* too, are made with total reclamation of a "right to opacity" (Glissant 1997, 190) in the engagement of these categories. Repurposing Édouard Glissant's notion of relational poetics and identities, this working concept of *latinité* eludes sameness although it must subsist under the umbrellas of affiliations. As Glissant writes, opaque identities like these ones are the acceptance:

> [N]ot merely to the right of difference but (…) to the right to opacity that is not enclosure within an impenetrable autarchy but subsistence within an irreducible singularity. Opacities can coexist and converge, weaving fabrics. To understand these truly one must focus on the texture of the weave and not on the nature of its components. [They] give up this old obsession with discovering what lies at the bottom of the natures. (…) The right to opacity would not establish autism; it would be the real foundation of Relation, in freedoms (1997, 190).

Latinité/Latinidad in the film demands a strong refusal of the limitations of dissenting forms of life and identities. It defies domestication by the given taxonomies instituted by the Caribbean socialist regime, but also by the essentialist scales with which *latinité* has historically been weighted in Québec. The concept of *latinidad*/*latinité* I outline here is essentially opaque in the Glissantian sense because it embraces the limitless and ever-changing contours of its domains, contesting geographies, racial differences, gender and sexual identities, and linguistic determinants. This is a *latinidad* with a more Afro-Caribbean and Antillean profile than what the Latino/a canon has traditionally allowed for itself, lived in the flux of the relational and not in the stasis of the definition. In sum, it eludes the transparency of measuring up against given ethnolinguistic and geographical centers, where it must find itself either lacking or living up to. It rather reaffirms as tactical operation the continued implementation of difference and pluralism against universalism and essentialism, something I like to think is signified by the presence of the *X*—the unknown, the problem to be solved, the site to be found on the map, that comes with the more intersectional and political adjective Latinx, so much under attack these days by the North American conservative right.

The visual aspects of many of these alternative domestic spaces we see in the film speak to this expanded yet particularized notion of *latinidad,* one that unravels the epistemologies and ontologies of *Cubanía* to index the larger idea of the Latinx. I can think here, for example, of the walls of the homes of Omar, a spoken word musician and unrecognized son of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, and Maria, the 97-year-old matriarch who lives in a house with several generations of her family. Pictures of Guevara, Fidel Castro, and José Martí coexist with images of Latin American cultural icons like Maradona, the virgin of Guadalupe, reproductions of Chilean painter Roberto Matta, the Virgin of the Charity of El Cobre, patroness of Cuba, and

memorabilia of the revolutionary process that has been lived on the island since the 1950s. These two examples invite comparisons with the queer national altar that the mythic homosexual character Diego in *Fresa y Chocolate* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1993) has in his house. On his crowded walls there are pictures of Lezama Lima, Lecuona, and other salient figures of Cuban artistic culture. In his relationship with David, his heterosexual friend, this national altar is expanded with bracelets of the Rebel Army that carried on the Cuban liberation struggle and also photos of Castro and Ché Guevara. The homes we visit in *Sur les toits…* transform this fictional palimpsest of Cuban national history into a manifestation of the idea of the "national" equally dynamic and more tilted toward the Pan-Latin American.

A perfect metaphor of this would be when Omar improvises a piece that weaves together elements of the *rumba de cajón* with urban poetry and Russian classical music while advocating for more open-ended cultural and political individualities, claims that are particularly poignant in the Cuban context:

"Saber la verdad que encierra

La angustia desarrollada.

La misma verdad,

la tierra,

Sabe a tierra y sabe a nada

Sabe a tierra y sabe

a nada.

Querías la vida muerta de una vez

Y controlarla.

Querías cerrar la puerta

Y lo que has hecho es

quitarla.

Lo que has hecho es quitarla"

[Knowing the truth behind

The established anguish.

The same truth,

The earth:

Tastes like earth and tastes like nothing

Tastes like earth and tastes

like nothing.

You wanted life dead at once

And control it.

You wanted to close the door

And what you have done is

take it away.

What you've done is take it away] (61:45-62:14).

Equating *verdad* and *tierra* (truth and soil, or land in the larger sense, but also homeland or earth), Omar mocks the futility of holding onto fundamentalist versions of either one or the other (they turn to *nada*). The pernicious attempts to rein in and control the ever-expanding world of singularities and differences—"*Querías la vida muerta de una vez y controlarla*" [You wanted life dead at once and control it]—have come knocking down the doors and barriers that were supposed to contain them in place and silence them. To the rhythm of the fierce beat of his *rumba* in crescendo, Omar stresses the indomitability of humans to imagine and recast their

identities. He calls for the allowance of multiple forms of identifications that are foreclosed by fundamentalist teleological narratives and regimes of truth. This is applicable in equal parts to the theological pretensions of socialist Cuba and the fluid sense of being Latinx and crafting *latinité* from the nationalist Québécois context surrounding the film.

Individuals like Leonardo, the Rastafarian, and Juan, the *babalawo*, make further contributions to this heterogeneous mosaic with decidedly Afro-Caribbean and Antillean accents that reconfigure, from their *terrazas*, the physical, linguistic, and cultural borders of the historical entity traditionally designated as Latin America. With Leonardo we hear about his adoption and practice of the Rastafarian faith and culture, for which he has been persecuted and imprisoned on several occasions per his own account. His speech and musical creations, strewn with anglophone imports, speak simultaneously to the ethno-cultural vastness of the Antillean and Caribbean space, but also to the increasing globalization of Anglophone popular culture in Cuba and Latin America in general. In Lala's and Roberto's house also hangs a picture of the Rastafari and Jamaican icon Bob Marley.

On a similar note, Juan closes his testimony with a *moyugba*, an homage prayer in the *Regla de Ocha-Ifá* religion, half in Spanish, half in Yoruba, in front of an altar where his *orishas* dwell along with Catholic icons. The ritual performance consists in offering cigar smoke and rum to his deities while praying to them to attract their favors. This is punctuated by discussions of his perceptions of the historical differences between Cuba and the US, the rift between the Cuban diaspora in Miami and Cubans on the island, widespread anxieties of islanders like himself in regard to the progressive capitalization of their society, and most importantly the historical maneuvers of subjugation and forced normalization of Afro-Cuban bodies to conform with the socialist project in construction. *"Tu no podías tener el pelo largo porque era ilegal. Tú*

no podías tener un "espendrun" porque era…era ilegal. La policía te cogía y era ra ra ra a ver qué tu tenías ahí" [You couldn't have long hair because it was illegal. You couldn't have an "espendrun" (Cuban neologism for an afro updo) because it was...it was illegal. The police would catch you and it was ra ra ra to see what you had there] (28:00-09). While he says this, he mimics the act of being forcefully pinned down before the camera and the hieratic, lifeless gaze of his *orishas*, as if someone aggressively put his fingers in his imaginary afro searching for illegal substances or contraband.

The allusions to Rastafarian culture should be taken as an indication of how Afro descendants in Cuba across ideological allegiances construct alternatively and perform materially their identities at the crossroads between marginalized ideations of *Cubanía* and blackness, and what are Caribbean, Antillean, and Latin American cultural icons. On the other hand, Juan's memories of the violent policing and othering of black Cuban bodies conveys a virtual reckoning with the island's unresolved racial issues and the acknowledgement of the neglect and effacement of Afro-descendant legacies in the global making of Latinx identities.

But furthermore, they must globally be assumed as those echoing "tropisms, in series", those "movements in approximate directions" that constitute at once the unity and the diversity proper to the Antilles and the Caribbean as "meta-archipelagos" (Benítez-Rojo 1996, 4) that can materialize anywhere in the world, so brilliantly described by Antonio Benítez-Rojo. Benítez-Rojo's idea of the repeating island is a symbol of Caribbean *créolité*, of Latin American *mestizaje,* and of the globalization of both these conditions. It also speaks directly to the need for de-centeredness that Omar, the spoken word poet mentioned above; the same that Leonardo embodies with his Anglo-inflections, and that Juan expresses through his religious syncretism and his screen performativity of past and present racial violence. As Benítez-Rojo exposes:

> [T]he Caribbean is not a common archipelago, but a meta-archipelago (…), and as a meta-archipelago it has the virtue of having neither a boundary nor a center. Thus the Caribbean flows outwards past the limits of its own sea with a vengeance, and is ultima Thule may be found on the outskirts of Bombay, near the low and murmuring shores of Gambia, in a Cantonese tavern of circa 1850, at a Balinese temple, in an old Bristol pub, in a commercial warehouse in Bordeaux at the time of Colbert, in a windmill beside the Zuider Zee, at a café in a barrio of Manhattan, in the existential saudade of an old Portuguese lyric (Benítez-Rojo, 4).

Isn't this the heteroclite, expanded nature of the *Latinidad/Latinité* that has been described thus far? The queer capacity to add and juxtapose that Juana María Rodríguez pointed towards before? The opaque currency and texture of identities that Glissant explicated, equally found in the Southern sub-continent, the "ethnic" barrios of American metropoles, and the phantasmatic Latin feel of a city like Montreal? Wouldn't it be tempting to think that the meta character of the Antillean/Latinx identity that is discussed here stretches all the way to the extra-textual realm of the film and directly touches Pedro Ruiz, the director? His circuitous physical and cinematic paths have been indeed "voyages in pursuit of the furtive *locus* of the Caribbeanness" and by extension *Latinidad* (Benítez-Rojo, 22), as I have suggested, going back and forth between his native Venezuela, Montréal (floating at the heart of the Hochelaga Archipelago), and the galaxy of islands or meta-archipelagos of the Caribbean that have been at the core of his career as filmmaker.[xxx] Ruiz's work materializes the global condition hailed by James Clifford when he audaciously affirmed that "we [were] all Caribbeans now in our urban archipelagos" (Clifford

[xxx] The ever-changing nature of the concepts I employ here are probably better expressed by the notion of creolization defined by Benítez-Rojo in his essay (…). There he warns against the temptation of speaking about "a predictable state of creolization" (55), words that I also make mine when I speak about Caribbeanness, Latinidad and/or Latinité. In their essence, all of these categories are "unstable states" that should be seen more as tactical processes worked in time again and again, neglecting tacit answers and postulations. Once more, in the words of Benítez-Rojo they are "but a discontinuous series of recurrences, of happenings, whose sole law is change." (55) For more on Caribbean creolization see for example: Benítez-Rojo, A. 1998. "Three Words Towards Creolization" In *Caribbean Creolization. Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*, edited by Kathleen M. Balutansky & Marie-Agnès Sourieau, 53-62. Miami: University Press of Florida, Chancé, D. 2011. "Creolization: Definition and Critique" In *The Creolization of Theory* edited by Françoise Lionnet & Shu-mei Shih, 262-68. Druham: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822393320-013, and Bernabé, J. 1992. "De la négritude à la créolité: éléments pour une aproche comparée." *Études françaises*, 28(2-3), 23–38. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal. https://doi.org/10.7202/035878ar.

1988, 173). And indeed, this documentary performs a geopolitical and hemispheric reconfiguration of the Latinx American that stretches from the Northernmost areas of the continent to the South, avoiding the Central American isthmus, artificially fractured by the ravages of American imperialism and neo-colonialism, and streaming through the Caribbean Sea, with its repeating islands and its particular histories of violation, colonization, and decolonization coupled with their "awesome process of creolisation or indigenisation [sic]" (Nettleford 1979, 21).

In the film Jean Fugère offers a final example of how the adoption and performance of *Cubanía* from its singularity indexes the political character that has historically accompanied the manifold conceptualizations of Caribbeanness and *Latinidad,* Québec's phantom *Latinité* included. Although a white Québécois himself, his inflection of *Latinité* departs from that of the traditional francophone bourgeoisie rooted in Catholicism and conservative values. On the contrary, he displays distinctively queer, Afro-Caribbean worldviews that undergird and refashion the revolutionary goals of Québec's independentism and anti-anglophone cultural imperialism.

In his segment, he discusses his infatuation with the light that inundates his life in his *azotea*, the significance that *la luz* has for Afro-Cuban religions as a sign of the truth revealed, and the manifestation in our life of the beauty of afterlife and the strength of ancestors: "*La luz es la cosa más importante en la vida. (...) Cuando hay algo que se pasa en el cielo, con los dios (sic). Cuando hay un muerto que se expresa, dicen: ¡Luz! ¡La luz llegó!"* [Light is the most important thing in life (...) When there is something that happens in heaven, with the gods. When there is a dead person who enters this realm, they say: Light! The light has arrived!] (64:01-13). In the following minutes, we learn that his decision to settle part-time in Cuba with his partner

Renier came after the unfortunate event of him being attacked during one of his many travels to the island and the fortuitous discovery of a life-threatening cancer because of his visit to the emergency ward after the assault. This alternation between violence and salvation, of otherworldly revelation and the embrace of human suffering, is what I could still sense when I asked Jean about the reasons for his adoption of *Cubanía* and his perception of *latinité*. As I entered his residence in Montreal, he offered me "*un café cubano de verdad*" [a true Cuban coffee] or a "*jugo de guayaba*" [guava juice] which even I was surprised to find in a Montréal fridge. On the second floor of his Montréal house, sitting near his *Santería* altar and surrounded by Spanish copies of books by Don Fernando Ortiz, Alejo Carpentier, and Mario Vargas-Llosa, Fugère explains candidly how in Cuba he was able to live his homosexuality and his spirituality as one and the same thing:

> *[Il y a] une humanité à Cuba que tu ne trouves pas ailleurs. Tu peux être leurré, moi-même j'ai été leurré deux, trois fois même. Mais il n'en reste pas moins que le reste j'y trouve suffisamment des raisons pour vivre à Cuba dans un environnement qui me donne des ailes, et qui me rend meilleur que ce que je suis*.
>
> [There is] a humanity in Cuba that you don't find elsewhere. You can be fooled, I myself have been fooled twice, even three times. But the fact remains that I find enough reasons to live in Cuba in an environment that gives me wings, and that makes me better than I am (Interview with Jean Fugère, June 12th, 2020).

His personal freedom and his spiritual awakening are intimately linked to the radical sense of liberty and humanistic values that he perceives in Cubans, with the lot of personal and collective violence that comes with it. Reading his unpublished memoirs, I could see how these ideas lay now at the core of his independentist hopes as a Québécois:

> *Mon homosexualité n'est plus dans le chemin, elle est désormais partie de moi comme l'est l'indépendance aux Cubains et comme je souhaiterais que soit l'indépendance aux Québécois. (...) Quand on s'indépendantise comme individu ou comme peuple, il faut avoir la force du coup de barre. Il faut se "faire violence", comme on dit ou "se botter le derrière" comme on dit aussi. Breton écrivait à la fin de Nadja: "La beauté sera convulsive ou ne sera pas.*

> My homosexuality is no longer in the way; it is now part of me as is independence for Cubans and as I would like independence for Québécois. (...) When one becomes independent as an individual or as a people, one must have the strength of the blow of a rod. One must "do violence to oneself", as they say, or "kick oneself in the butt" as they say. Breton wrote at the end of Nadja: "Beauty will be convulsive or will not be" (Fugère 2012, 12-13).

Fugère's adoption of *Cubanía*, or rather *Afrocubanía*, offers a reaffirmation of personal and national liberation that is negotiated transnationally through the valorization of the resilience and strength of queer and Black subjects in the Americas. Through the film we witness the inversion of the national narrative of Cubans becoming hyphenated migrants (Cuban-Americans, Cubain-Québécois, etc.) via Fugère who adopts the cultural identity of the most marginalized aspects of Cuba. It emphasizes Latinx and Caribbeanness as an always already migrant identity, recognizing that "in the Caribbean, everyone comes from somewhere else" (Hall 2001, 27), as Stuart Hall has claimed. In a way, too, these examples perform what author Ylce Irizarry has described as a "material 'queering' of *cubanidad*" (2021, 110, original emphasis) and *Latinidad* by exhibiting ethno-racial alliances, sexual configurations, and ideological dissentions that both traditions have consistently neglected within their tenets. For Fugère, queering his identity in Cuba meant also imagining a queer, independentist utopia for his native Québec, through the adoption of another kind of *latinité,* again in Irrizarry's words a "*narrative of new memory*" (125, original emphasis), one that is both non-heteronormative and Afro-centric and therefore more apt for the struggle ("*la lucha*") of coming out into *la luz.* Like his experiences in Cuba and his challenged love on/for the island, independence in Québec and the decided embrace of its Latinx character should accommodate the subaltern, the neglected and the othered, and dispel the fears of loss and self-inflicted brutality. In other words, *latinité* à la Québécois should become synonymous with the historical fights that have marked the histories of *latinidades* both at home

and in their multiple diasporas. They should both be guided by a leap of faith and resolution, by the grace of self-acceptance and the turbulence of what is open-ended, opaque, and inapprehensible like the elusive, queer character of that which we call *latinidad/latinité*.

4.4 *Derrida de paso por el trópico*: a Hauntological Coda for Havana

> "*Aquí estas horas están llenas de espantos. Si usted viera el gentío de ánimas que andan sueltas por las calles (…) Son tantas, y nosotros tan poquitos, que ya ni la lucha le hacemos para rezar porque salgan de sus penas. No ajustarían nuestras oraciones para todos. Si acaso les tocaría un pedazo de Padrenuestro. Y eso no les puede servir de nada."*
>
> ["Nights around here are filled with ghosts. You should see all the spirits walking through the streets (…) There's so manyo f them and so few of us that we don't even make the effort to pray for them anymore, to help them out of their purgatory. We don't have enough prayers to go around. Maybe a few words of the Lord's Prayer for each one. But that's not going to do them any good"]
>
> --Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo*

A "*retrato de la siempre mágica capital cubana*" [portrait of the ever-magical Cuban capital] (FICCI 2020), "almost otherworldly" (Phillips-Carr 2019), "*un monde en dehors du temps*" [a world outside of time] (Montpetit 2019), *Sur les toits…* exposes with grueling realism unseen parts of contemporary Cuba, and yet it seems to pierce the veil that allows us to see that which is hidden to human sight. It speaks to our time and yet it is not just of our days. It appears from "out of time." Men and women like Lala, Roberto, Juan, Reynol, Jean, Katiuska, and others are conjured up, so to speak, through the documentary and persist through the advertising machinery about Cuba to haunt and transform the idea of the island. They have always been there. We have sensed them and seen signs of them especially thanks to the capacity proper to

cinema to make visible that which is almost always oblique to the normal gaze. They resurface now and then, maybe under different forms, but always with the same demands of justice to be done, of reparations unfulfilled, denouncing hopes gone awry. Their faces come to light ritually, time and again, in Sara Gómez's *De cierta manera* (1974), Jorge Luis Sánchez's *Un pedazo de mi* (1989) and *El Fanguito* (1990), and Fernando Pérez's *Suite Habana* (2003). More recently, they inundated the island's streets and made headlines across the world. Hordes of ghostly presences that no one seemingly knew were there came forth with hunger of freedom and certainty for their future, wreaking havoc when all they could see was despair and death. Like in Juan Rulfo's Comala, the fictional town in *Pedro Páramo* (1955), neither the promise of a future utopia nor the present remedies of devotional piety would suffice to quench their thirst. "*Órdenes de combate*"[xxxi] [combat orders] were given in what can be called the first socialist war against specters summoned up by past idealized enemies. This is something that not even Derrida could have dreamed of when analyzing the spectral promiscuity between the revenants and the living that haunted Shakespeare's Hamlet.

To use hauntology as a method is to make space for those sections of sociological reality whose ontologies do not meet the standards of an inquiry based on what is seen and present. Derrida's hauntology, in its original French *hantologie* (1993, 31), almost a homophone of ontology, represents in his later work his grappling with the proclaimed loss of a substantive presence of Marxism in the Global North and its alleged historical defeat by neoliberalism. As argued by Tom Lewis, it meant also a renewed attempt to the reconciliation of Marxism and

[xxxi] On July 11th, 2021, when scores of Cubans took to the streets to protest the government due to the economic hardships resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the words of the current Cuban president Miguel Díaz Canel were "*La orden de combate está dada,¡ a la calle los revolucionarios!*" (The combat order is given; to the streets all revolutionaries). This phrase was widely publicized and criticized out of Cuba as something that could be potentially construed as a call for a civil war. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_ewAUfSUyc (Last Accessed, August 12th, 2022).

Derrida's deconstructionism by dislodging the former from the primacy of a singular tradition of Marxism, in its Leninist/Stalinist praxis, and politicizing the latter, conferring to it a more material grounding beyond the realm of discourse analysis and into historical and sociological criticism (2008, 134-35). The specter of Marx, from his influential political essay, supplants the autarchy of ontology with the dialectical potential of presence *and* absence, of that which is neither alive nor dead. In this case particularly, the contemporary challenges of the European and North American Left tasked with completing the work of a just world with the spectral remains of a form of a Marxism that does not exist anymore, or at least no *more as one* (the "*plus d'un"* that is at once the "*moins d'un"* (Derrida, 21)). Moreover, Derrida's hauntology is a graphic method of making present and giving body and futurity to an all-encompassing idea of otherness. Ghosts are the Other and the othered; all those that are no more or that are not yet fully here nor there. As Derrida enumerates, those whose inherent un-contemporaneity, despite their living presence ("*non-contemporaneité à soi du présent vivant*" [non-contemporaneity of the living present] (16)), cannot be accounted for, for they are lost to social, political, and legal violence, or have yet to gain their full citizenship in the face of totalitarian erasure, displacement, colonialism, and persecution. Paraphrasing the words of Jameson, talking about ghosts is questioning the self-sufficiency of the living present for the other, "its density and solidity" (Jameson 2008, 39), but questioning also the causality of a past that led them to be anachronistic presences today and prescient warnings for the future. In sum, hauntology could be thought of as an onto-epistemological expression of returning anxieties in the present for the possible futures of the marginalized, the forgotten, and the subjugated.

To focus on the haunted dimension of alternative domesticities, as they are represented in *Sur les toits…*, is a form of ghost-watching not unlike the one advanced by authors like Blanco

(2012) and Gordon (2008). Following in the tradition inaugurated by Derrida, for these authors, as for myself, the idea of hauntology permits a form of critical analysis both within and around the film that will account, first, for the conjugation "of the spatiotemporal coordinates that merge to produce a site of haunting" (Blanco, 1), and second, because haunting also makes place for that "repressed or unresolved social violence [that] is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely" (Gordon, xvi).

My claim that *Sur les toits…* produces ghosts, or rather spectral images, resides in the way it illuminates or mediates—both literally and figuratively—a specific site of submerged practices and subjects stretching all the way from the developing to the developed world, from tropical Havana to freezing Montréal. In Derrida's words, in order to see ghosts, to be able to speak with and to them, one must stand within a specific "*lieu de parole, d'un lieu d'expérience et d'un lien de filiation*" [a place of speech, a place of experience and a bond of filiation] (Derrida, 33). A haunted site is catalyzed through the encounter of the migrant Latinx artists and technicians from Québec and Venezuela and the dispossessed and marginalized individuals in Cuba. Two distinct experiences of invisibilities, in a sense, carry forth their own spatial and temporal features and they are mixed. They show the pervasiveness of the so-called Global South, not so much as a geographical marker but as a set of intersectional thrusts towards silencing, othering, and suppression that accompany the dissenting and racialized bodies, be it at the heart of an alleged socialist utopia or the industrialized world. Haunting, in this case, is the result of this form of capturing a reality where uncertainty, loss, personal traumas, and struggles coexist with the hope of resilience, coping, and creativity. But it is also the precipitation of simultaneous processes of technical and digital mediation and remediation of Havana's past, suggested by the film and around it, that question the separation between modernity and tradition, the distinction between

the human, the more-than-human and nature, and, ultimately, the future sustainability and existence of these makeshift dwellings.

Living with ghosts in the documentary is not merely a matter of metaphorical parlance. Spirits are present, sometimes as scars that signify the pain of a loss; on other occasions, as repetitive vestiges of a past that repeats itself every day in its absence. Tita, who lives on the *azotea* of the former Hotel Astor, lives surrounded by such ghosts. Right from the beginning, she defends herself as someone who would never talk ill of the Revolution or Fidel (one arguably as deceased as the other), but in a contrite way, as if either could be eavesdropping on her. She's depicted standing tall against the clear Havana sky, surrounded by clothing hung out to dry, almost ready to take flight. This is her livelihood; she washes other people's clothing for a living. Clients mount the perilous staircases of the popular *Palacio de la leche* to give her and pick up their belongings. She never comes down to the streets, she admits. She won't come down ever again we can infer from what she says:

> *Mi marido se murió, que era el que me ayudaba también, ¡pero figúrate!*" -she tells from off the screen, remorseful. *"Era asmático, tomaba mucho ron. Por eso fue que se murió y fumaba mucho también. Estaba alcohólico ya y tomaba mucho. Le dio un paro respiratorio de esos (...) Le dio una falta de aire, pero bajando las escaleras para abajo se murió allá al frente de las puertas del edificio (...) No, no yo ya no bajo. Yo no bajo a la calle, ni a casa de mi hermana que vive allí (...) A veces pasan cuatro, cinco meses, un año sin bajar.*
>
> My husband died, he was the one who helped me too, but just imagine!" -she tells from off the screen, remorseful. "He was asthmatic, he drank a lot of rum. That's why he died and he smoked a lot too. He was already an alcoholic and drank a lot. He had one of those respiratory arrests (...) He had a shortness of breath, but he died down the stairs in front of the doors of the building (...) No, no, I don't go downstairs anymore. I don't go down to the street, not even to my sister's house who lives there (...) Sometimes four, five months, a year go by without going downstairs (...) (21':25"-22':27").

Alcoholism, smoking, the hazardous infrastructure of her precarious home, isolation, poverty: all conspired to take the life of Tita's late husband. His physical passing is and will always be signified for her by the entrance of the building, haunting her existence, her comings and goings, with the remembrance of an avoidable and preventable death had their circumstances been any different. It is more than a coincidence that the same entrance that took Tita's husband's life is the reason why the Astor got its nickname *El Palacio de la leche*. After it ceased operations as an upscale hotel, the middle- and upper-class residents of the apartment-hotel *Edificio Zarrá* (its official name after its owner), had their milk delivered every morning daily to these doors. Humble milkmen had strict orders to not disturb or even enter the bourgeois intimate spaces, their clients remaining invisible presences that truncated the physicality of a transactional relationship. The accumulation of milk bottles on the sidewalk in the morning are still present in the way the Astor is registered in the social memory of Centro Habana. After its condemnation, most of its residents were taken elsewhere by official authorities, leaving behind the husk of a veritable haunted site.

Tita is depicted in the documentary as a victim of the looped logic of hauntology as Derrida has it. Her fate is delineated by the out-of-timeness or out-of-jointness proper to a trans-historical system of injustice and exclusion that is inherited from the past into the future, that disrupts and "*disjointe le présent vivant*" [disjoints the living present] (16) following Derrida. Always different but always coming under the same forms, ever as a "*répétition **et** première fois mais aussi répétition **et** dernière fois*" [repetition and first time but also repetition *and* last time] (31, original emphasis). Ghosts, as we can see in this example, created, and exist within the folds and ripples in the historicity of the production of home, private, and public dynamics negotiated around domestic practices, and the ways all of these are impacted by socioeconomic distinctions

across periods of time in a singular space. It is almost a necessity that the space of haunting, at least cinematically speaking, has almost always been the domestic: the abandoned dwelling, witness to unspeakable horrors; the home built on grounds taken by force and genocide; the cabin in the woods. The ghosts of mourning, pain, destitution, and loss on one side, and those of class separation and discrimination, on the other, are confabulated in equally affecting the possibilities of sociability for households and individuals in the famous *Palacio de la leche* (The Milk Palace). They keep a self-confined Tita from ever leaving the building, they are the hollow traces of those that were forcibly relocated when the building was officially condemned in recent socialist times, and before that, in restricting the access of the working classes to the *sanctum sanctorum* of the bourgeoisie they served.

The painful haunting of multiple losses and lacking evidenced in the documentary is a common thread of most of the social subjects that make an appearance in it. Moreover, by indicating that which they have lost or profoundly long for, in other words, that which we cannot see, the film insists on the forms of social invisibility and looming deaths that ail its interlocutors. See, for instance, Maria, who holds dear her memories of working alongside Che Guevara and the late Fidel Castro in the early days of the revolution. This 95-year-old freedom fighter against the Batista dictatorship came to Havana after 1959 as an instructor associated with the Ministry of Defense. She tells us that she was one of the few female combatants in the decisive battle of Santa Clara, led by Che Guevara himself. It was there that she met him and later, in Havana, got acquainted with Castro. Their pictures hang in her living room, the same space that doubles as her bedroom in an overcrowded home with several generations of her family living under the same roof. Yet, it is to el Che that Maria gives a voice through her memories, not to her invisible relatives. It is for him that she expresses devotion and a certain

sense of piety and mourning for his violent demise: "*Yo conocí a Fidel y a Raúl. Y al Che también, ¡pobrecito! (...) Se fué y figurate lo que le pasó allá. ¡Yo lo sentí!"* [I knew Fidel and Raúl. And Che too, poor thing! (...) He left and imagine what happened to him over there. I felt for him!] (72:29).

The immense cultural and political icon that is Che becomes in Maria's living room a faithfully departed, friendly, pitiful specter that merits her sympathies and is humanized to the extent of near irrelevance and banality. Che's iconic photo, taken by Cuban photographer Alberto Díaz Gutiérrez (aka Korda), is framed near Maria's bed beside a picture of herself taken by Che, an unsuspected amateur photographer himself (see, for instance, Galletti Hernández 2020). The proximity of the images testifies to an intimate, caring relationship between Maria and el Che that would be unthinkable to most Cubans. Both pictures, side by side, establish, as if by means of sympathetic magic, a physical and spiritual closeness that is emulated by Maria when she recalls the last words that el Che told her before leaving for his fateful last journey to Bolivia: *"¡Cuídate mi niña!*" [Take care my child!] (73:06). The same magical force is reproduced by Maria when, uttering these words, she pats her own head lending her arm to the protective force of Che. By Maria giving her voice and her body to channel Che's lasting manifestation, she also contaminates him with the invisible status that she embodies. Their relationship is lost to collective memory just as much as Maria's contributions to female empowerment and participation in the revolutionary processes of Cuba are blurred to near oblivion.

This scene, almost towards the end of the film, is a séance of sorts, a true and miraculous example of haunting and spectral possession of Maria by el Che. The paternalistic patting of the head seems, and is, a banal gesture of affection, but also a very telling one of patronizing and

easily minimizing the sacrifices of Cuban women in the island's convulsive history. Finding the authority of Che in the shaky hands of Maria over her head follows what Avery Gordon defines as "*finding the shape described by [an] absence* (…) the paradox of tracking through time and across all those forces that which makes its mark by being there and not there at the same time" (Gordon, 6, original emphasis). What is present and not made explicit is, first, the existence still today of racial, gender, class, and power asymmetries embedded in socialist Cuba that neither the Cuban revolution nor its subsequent history were able to fully erase. It may have launched, in its beginning, fruitful debates around these issues, but for the most part left untouched the structural imbalances upon which these divisions rested. Maria could have completely lost "her ghostly presence in the register of history" (6), her participation in the building of the sociopolitical project carried out on the island, had it not been for the documentary bringing her back from the shadows. Now, Maria is but a symbol, a decaying, fragile monument on the verge of physical erasure, living with invisible relatives and friendly specters. With her stand the countless other women who have given their lives to a revolution that remains on the fence when it comes to women's rights and protections; a revolution that is also routinely depicted as mostly white, predominantly male, fully patriarchal, and homosocial, as is the case of its most visible icons, like Che, Fidel, Raúl, and many others.

Second, and more importantly, is that this example of haunting is a definite reclamation of figures like Maria, of their force and resilience to shape a society regardless of their liminal place in it. Haunting speaks to female submission and rebelliousness acting in unison, of public performance, social involvement, and domestic work and sacrifices. In her photo shown in the film, taken by Che, she in fact appears kneeling. Next to her, we see Che's iconic image reproduced in a news journal, standing with a defiant gaze into the distance, surrounded by his

hallmark dictum: *"¡Hasta la victoria siempre!*" [Until victory always!] But even on her knees Maria is wielding a combat weapon. This is replicated by her testimony of being a weaponry instructor, and a policewoman and traffic guard in the early, dangerous first years of the Cuban revolution. She shows to the camera the material vestiges of her hard-won status, now inexistent: badges, uniforms, etc. Relics of the new possibilities that opened up for women on the island once, but relics, nonetheless. Now, even though we are unable to see them or hear them, her history also indexes a home that exists, inhabited by many other invisible presences in the forms of children, grand-children, and great-grand-children, thanks only to her prowess and strength. She was the one who reclaimed it, as the single reward for her sacrifices, and is the one who shares it with her descendants who have not been able to carve a better future for themselves in the same social system she fought for. Haunting here lets us know what has happened in the shadows and what keeps taking place with Cuban women despite their invisibility and silencing. What is haunted here is the political discourse of a state that announces a fair, equitable society when it comes to gender balance and inclusion faced with the real extent of its gender and sexual politics.

The powerful charge of the haunted finds its vortex in the collection of images and icons that are sedimented in Maria's domestic space and memories. In a very self-referential move, it could be argued that the documentary is in and of itself another media-driven case of what Derrida coins as an "*articulation d'une 'spectrographie*'" ["articulation of a 'spectrography'"] or a "'*graphique' de la spectralité*" ["the 'graphics' of spectrality"] (Derrida, i). Ruiz's film disarticulates and rearticulates Havana's urban landscape by conferring social presence to the invisible, the rejected, and the forgotten. It not only shows specters and their hard-won dwellings in contemporary Cuban society. It also conspires in the reproduction of the haunted spaces in the

Cuban capital where the past, the present, and the future fold within each other. *Sur les toits*… is another vector registering and therefore reshaping the present qualities of the built environment due to the impact of the "*télé-technoscience des médias ou la production du 'synthétique', du 'prothétique' et du 'virtuel*'" ["tele-technoscience of the media or the production of the 'synthetic,' the 'prosthetic' and the 'virtual'"]. In other words, of the ways media transform the perception of the real, take notice of new social forces, and amplify the capacity of contestation of civil societies everywhere, with special relevance for the Cuban case. It may give voice to resistance and resilience of the dispossessed, but it is caught within the conflicting dynamics of minting and branding an urban geography that leaves each time fewer and fewer interstices available for refuge in the face of capitalization and gentrification.

First, the presentation of the spectral nature of marginal domestic lives in Havana is turned into visible spectacle in the sense of the "paradoxical incorporation" of visibility and invisibility of these subjects and homes made visible through technological mediation, in excess as it were. This excessive visibility of the otherwise invisible relies on a peculiar positionality just as much as it depends on specific technologies to capture that which is hidden. There is not a corner of these houses that is left untouched, not a single, menial gesture of homemaking that is not performed in front of and for the camera. There is no intimate detail or painful confession that is not verbalized for audiences to witness them. As both Ruiz and Maldonado confided, their film work was dictated by the cadence of the litany of daily chores in each home. From there, the documentation goes to the multiplicity of forms of private and social needs that are accomplished on the city's rooftops in microscopic detail. Maldonado remarks that Ruiz's choice of lenses for the film—Cooke lenses, primarily used in fiction films—was destined to permit this outstanding form of panopticism. She emphasized that they were incredibly expensive to rent, especially for

a small, independent production like theirs. But it was a necessary burden to achieve the polished, sharp contrasts, the color evenness and balance, the glossy, deep images, and the smoother transitions within the frame throughout the documentary:

> *Llevábamos una cámara chiquitita pero lo que llevábamos eran unos objetivos muy buenos. Los Cooke. Y esos Cooke son objetivos que no son baratos de alquilar. Realmente invertimos mucho ahí, pero porque queríamos que la dirección de foto fuera excelente, que fuera magnífica para remarcar y resaltar esa luz tan bonita que hay en La Habana al anochecer y al amanecer. Y eso yo creo que se refleja en la película porque juega un poco con los sentimientos del espectador cuando ve esa belleza de La Habana.*
>
> We took with us a tiny camera but with some very good lenses. Cooke lenses. And those Cooke lenses are not cheap to rent. We really invested a lot there, but because we wanted the photo direction to be excellent, to be magnificent to highlight and emphasize that beautiful light that Havana has at dusk and at dawn. And I think that is reflected in the film because it plays a little bit with the viewer's feelings when he sees that beauty of Havana (Interview with Arantza Maldonado, September 8th, 2021).

It is almost as if the least perceptible subjects and the concealed beauty of the film could only be manifested and captured through the most sophisticated, expensive technological items for the creation and reproduction of images. The spectral qualities of Cuban social events and urban life are brought to light through the techno-media capacity to excavate it and bring forth those things that were always there without being visible. This is what Derrida describes as media's capacity to produce phantoms or, what is more, the phantasmatic nature of media production in and of itself as it emulates production writ large in relation to the production of specters ("*du concept de production dans son rapport au fantôme*" ["of the concept of production in its relation to the ghost"] (Derrida, 131)). In a more tacit reading, it could be extended to the fact of production as being always already related to the spectral.

This facet of spectrality, its relationship to and capacity for production and reproduction through media, also relates to Adorno's idea of phantasmagoria. In his book *In Search of Wagner*

([1952] 2005), Adorno elaborates extensively on what he calls phantasmagoria in the Wagnerian opera, i.e., the mystification of the workforces and conditions of production by insistence on the physical qualities of the finished product. Technical perfectionism, in Adorno's words gives the capacity to a product to appear as "self-producing" (2005, 74), not unlike a phantom, and goes hand in hand with the mystical nature of the subject matter of Wagner's most salient works. The "occultation" or, better yet, the impossibility, to pinpoint the existence of visible and sanctioned means of production and channels of circulation for Latinx-Canadian films and documentaries like *Sur les toits…* heightens the phantasmagoric nature of such products. Technical and imaging perfection for the documentary overcompensates for the possibility of a ghostly existence in the future and the obscure array of hurdles and impossibilities faced by the production team that have been described above. The production of the specter, or phantasmagoria, as we can call it too, is the result of effacing how it is a process deeply anchored in human labor and, to a certain extent, discrimination and exploitation. From film critics to festival curators to the Canadian Screen Awards, the emphasis on aesthetics for *Sur le toits…* gives the illusion of a parthenogenesis, something that came into reality fully formed and perfect. But aesthetic illusion, as Adorno indicates, does nothing more than shroud the anxieties and unevenness of a *status quo* that gives primacy to aesthetic value to abstain from discussion of the injustices built into creative exchanges and labor both within and outside the film. The predilection for aestheticism stands in sharp contrast to the detailed accounts by each one of the subjects in the documentary of how they came to acquire their homes, what it takes to manage and provide for them, to save them from the surrounding decay, to avoid pervasive surveillance and forceful displacement. In a similar way, it blurs the conditions of production, circulation, and reception of the film, of the labor and struggles that went into the making of the documentary, being as scarce

and fraught with difficulties as they were. Phantasmagoria results from this concealment of labor and exchange value to dwell just in the illusory realm of hyperrealist aesthetics with a dash of magic realism. Romanticization of these aspects within the film and outside it frames resilience as a glamorous act that obfuscates the pains and problems of these marginalized existences. Describing the final product as "magic," as done by Ruiz and Maldonado, but also by most critics and audiences, conspires to veiling but also signaling naively the unimaginable amounts of labor, both waged and freely given, that was fought for, invested, and gambled, first, to secure shelter in all the narratives in the film, and second, to give this work the artistic resonances it conveys.

In a second reading, phantasmagoria also reveals more fundamental differences between two modes of marginal production and their encounter—one local, natural, reproductive, and domestic; the other transnational, techno-media-driven, productive, and artistic. Both are secluded in a sort of spectral realm where each undergoes similar but very distinct forms of exclusion and denial. On the one hand, the Cubans whose experiences are narrativized in the film, carving homes and refuges in spaces where the failure of modern technologies and infrastructures is ritualized and captured as such. On the other hand, mobile Latinx/Hispanic creatives travelling to Cuba, geared eventually with state-of-the-art technology to deliver a product resulting from previous free work and personal investment in a cultural enterprise of uncertain paths.

Haunting, in this example, also resides in the pitting against each other of domestic reproductive work, portrayed as it is under the sign of failure and decay, and transnational creative labor, globally branded under the banner of hyper-technologization and mobility. In the first case, it could be argued that the documentary proposes that the failed state of those domestic

facilities is what allows most of those homes to exist in the first place: empty pools, unused elevator shafts, stripped water tanks, staircases, etc., are now recuperated as homes. Also, they are captured for the most part invaded with plants, weeds, and flowers, as in the case of Jean's hostel, Juan's home, and Katiuska's house, too. In other instances, like Lala, Tita, Reynol, and Gabriel, animals for domestic consumption and for companionship are the only affective interaction that most of these individuals seem to enjoy. Given the talking-head format of the documentary it is very rare that we see the interlocutors addressing their loved ones or human companions on camera. Rather, it is not uncommon to see them talking to roosters in friendly ways as does Tita or petting and feeding dogs and hens while chatting to them like Juan, Lala, and Reynol do, or nurturing and grooming pigeons as in Gabriel's case. There is a decisive inclination in the film to insist on the "natural" state of these homes by underscoring, time and again, the derelict state of modern housing on the island. Caring for their homes and fighting to keep them from falling prey to entropy, in other words the constant and minute production of alternative homes, is adjacent to securing greeneries, sheltering animals, and procuring sustainable forms of consumption and well-being in an otherwise arid and bankrupt urban landscape. Ecological justice seems entangled here with urban rights, housing rights, and social justice as part of homemaking. In a way, it seems like a dangerous move to "naturalize," both figuratively and literally, the abject state of neglect and liminality in which these subjects are forced to live, entangling nature with poverty and marginality. However, it can also be construed as a call to attention and a critique of the ways in which modern Western societies have positioned urbanism, domesticity, and the private sphere in antagonism to the natural realm, and heavily enmeshed with social, class, and racial distinctions.

Standing in direct opposition to this is the marketing machinery of the documentary, which insisted heavily on the first-world nature of the product unveiling Cuba to foreign eyes, much to the chagrin of the creatives themselves. The contrast between these two aspects of human work—domestic and transnational, natural and technological, reproductive and productive—takes some prevalence within the documentary and is something that Maldonado and Ruiz seemed to wrestle with critically at every stage of the filmmaking process. When Maldonado talked to me about the optical wonder of the Cooke lenses, and what they meant for the stature of the film and its technical qualities, a discussion ensued about the rudimentary techniques of mediation and communication that are part of the houses that we see in *Sur les toits...* In several instances, we observe bird-eye views of these *azotea* dwellers using the endemic pulley system that adorns most high rises in Havana. These pulleys are *ad hoc* remedies for the disappearance of elevators and the fragility of staircases worn out by time. They save effort for their owners and secure the flow of services and private-public interactions. Groceries are lifted to higher floors, as are letters, messages, private documents, contraband, currency, etc. As the producer told me, during their shootings pizzas, refreshments, and other items were sent to them by the same pulley system and they eventually made their way into the documentary. As a matter of fact, they were already part of the script's first drafts. Beyond the pulleys, there are other telling examples of similar technological-natural remediations used locally like the system of carrier pigeons described by Gabriel, the colombophile. This humble private practice serves the purpose of entertainment and human-animal complicity and symbiosis. In Cuba, it is also strictly controlled by the MINCOM and the MININT, both subservient to the MINFAR. Breeders like Gabriel are subsidized by these entities and his pigeons are used in defense drills, electoral processes, in the face of natural disasters, etc., denoting the zeal of the Cuban state in governing all forms of

communication and instrumentalizing them in its totalitarian goals. It remains, however, that the creative capacities and the capturing devices of the filmmakers were keen on capturing these local modes of reproductive mediation that stood in stark contrast to their own productive means.

Now, on the film crew's side, these means of production demanded very different capacities and considerations just as much as their affordances were more comprehensive. Expensive cameras, lenses, microphones, recording equipment, and such were carried by arm ("¡*A base de brazos!"* [All on our arms!] joked Maldonado (2021)), up perilous stairs, weighting down the film crew. They were also central concerns for Maldonado and Ruiz when it came to calculating security for the film crew at *La Puerta Rosa*. They were surveilled by ICAIC appointees at customs to make sure the equipment that was imported as a temporary import also left the island in due time. Not to mention how taxing they were for the financing structure of the documentary, how they burdened the tasks and bodies of the technicians, and how instrumental their effects were in the future artistic success of the enterprise. It wouldn't be a stretch to put in parallel the affective efforts of the subjects in the documentary toward their non-human companions and their unorthodox homes, and the labor and concerns of the film crew vis-à-vis their tools. As Maldonado explains:

> *¡Eso fue muy difícil (...) de manera logística, porque los edificios ya sabes están arriba, no hay ascensor, hace calor, hay humedad, las escaleras son de un decimotercer piso y a veces están en unas condiciones!! Y nada además era un equipo pequeño porque además queríamos conseguir esa complicidad con los personajes y cuando llegas con un equipo de no sé, diez personas pues no es lo mismo. (...) Y a base de brazos, realmente a base de brazos, o sea que para arriba para abajo todo el tiempo.*
>
> That was very difficult (...) logistically, because the buildings, you know, are upstairs, there is no elevator, it's hot, it's humid, the stairs are on the thirteenth floor and sometimes they are in a very bad condition! And it was also a small crew because we wanted to get that complicity with the characters and when you arrive with a crew of I don't know, ten people, it's not the same (...) And with arms, really

> with arms, that means up and down all the time (Interview with Arantza Maldonado, September 8th, 2021).

Ruiz brought another nuance to this reflection about the impact of technology on the documentary's life. As much as he acknowledged that the critical acclaim of the film's cinematography was in part predicated on its technical refinement, he admitted to always being preoccupated by the ethical and affective issues involved in the aestheticization of this South-South dialogue between Cubans and Latinx foreign film workers. Presenting the hardships of his interlocutors was a challenge for him. Being respectful to the interlocutors and not making just a beautiful spectacle of their rather devastating human problems, but presenting them in a non-propagandistic, non-inflammatory discourse were also part of his concerns. As Ruiz reflected, any story in the film "*se puede parecer tanto a ti, como a mi o algún familiar nuestro o alguna vivencia que hemos tenido*" [can resemble you, me or a relative of ours or some experience we have had] (Interview with Pedro Ruiz, October 31st, 2020) as individuals from Latin America. Besides this he remains conscious of the invasion into their lives that represented the very fact of the cameras and technical personnel in the homes. As he concluded:

> *Como te digo es un viaje espiritual esa película, e intentamos ser muy respetuosos porque también somos latinos y porque creo que es la manera de abordar a la gente también. Y también porque no es fácil entrar en la vida de la gente con un "camarón" y un equipo de filmación.*
>
> As I said, this film is a spiritual journey, and we try to be very respectful because we are also Latinos and because I think that's the way to approach people as well. And also, because it is not easy to enter people's lives with a "huge camera" and a film crew (Interview with Pedro Ruiz, October 31st, 2020).

All of these cares are important issues that are obfuscated by the critical reception and the marketing strategies that proposed the film as nothing more than a magical take on Havana. And that is why attending to the contrast in means of production and mediation, as well as the differences between productive and reproductive labor as they coexist in this documentary,

become an essential aspect of the haunted product that is *Sur les toits…* As a very telling and deconstructive sign of this we could indicate the different titles given to the documentary across markets and languages. In French and English, *Sur les toits Havane* and *Havana, from on High*, respectively, indicate an almost Vertovian flight over a city via film, the detached capacity to record it mechanically and show it to curious eyes as it has never been seen before. In Spanish, on the contrary, *Arriba Habana* is a battle cry calling for upheaval, praising the dignity and the resilience of those who seem to have lost almost everything.

I would like to offer a final example of the technological and media counterpoint sketched so far. When we shift our focus to the existence of similar spectrogenic processes occurring in the urban, material surroundings of the film space this discussion takes on other connotations. By the time Ruiz and his team were veritably unearthing the hidden lives of marginalized humans in the heart and heights of Centro Habana, on the ground and at a virtual level a counter process of veiling these realities was happening. Since 2015, the same year in which *Sur les toits…* started filming at the former Bristol Hotel, the Astor hotel, and neighboring locations, a Cuban American project known as the *Havana Light Project* inaugurated its center within the ruins of the ancient Cine Rex. As mentioned above, this multiplex, the first of its kind in Cuba, shared its green marbled lobby with the Bristol, where many of the individuals of the film live and that had been in disrepair for several decades. Under the influence of Cuban artist Kadir López Nieves, Cuban American entrepreneur Angeleno Adolfo Nodal, and Los Angeles businessman William Merriken, the Havana Light Project works to restore the Cuban capital to the glow of its capitalist past by refurbishing broken neon signs that once adorned the establishments of Centro Habana, La Habana Vieja, and Vedado. The Cine Rex and its twin theater, the Duplex, were turned into the REX Neon Center. From this place, neon signs started springing up in several

commercial buildings, some of them at establishments still in use, like the *Hotel Inglaterra* and the *Hotel Nacional*. Others, like the Rex itself or the *Cine Mégano*, behind the National Capitol, denote only the ghostly shell of a commerce that lives now in the memories of a long gone past.

Working to impose on the built environment the otherworldly glow of a non-existent past pushes the idea of spectrality to new limits, more materially mediated and more tangible, too. It is potentially also very damaging for the quiet, sheltered homes and lives of the poorest individuals living in these neighborhoods. Since its inauguration, the REX Neon Center has become a thriving cultural site inviting performances and activities that have come to be mired by international tourists and travel agencies. As of now, more than a hundred signs have been renovated and they hope to achieve the goal of five hundred (Vankin 2016). The sheer multiplication of bed and breakfast hostels in the area around the Bristol, the Rex theater, and the Astor is very telling of the practical dangers of gentrification that hangs over the heads of precarious dwellers in the *azoteas* of Centro Habana. By raising the ghosts of a capitalist and commercial history, the present of spectral subjects becomes haunted by just another system of social exclusion and discrimination and their future is seriously jeopardized. Spectrality here indicates another layer of technological mediation imposed on the urban setting that denotes, at once, different forms of productive labor and uneven possibilities of access to housing rights and urban belonging.

The agency generated within and around the film by subjects, more-than-human objects, and productive means denotes phantasmagoria in its capacity to illuminate a filmic dialogue between two modes of labor that touch and clash with each other. The fetishization of capitalism's information and communication technologies compels a series of attitudes and corporeal expressions that might not always be at the forefront of film production analysis.

Technology here almost takes precedence over the bodily activities of the film crew and the subjects scrutinized by it. It is semi-animated in the eyes of state officers and therefore heavily watched. And by virtue of its presence there, it grazes over and coexists with those other communal, more natural, public infrastructures that are used by locals. The technological dialogue is a means to gauge uneven social relations even between equally racialized, Global South individuals, subjected to different forms of marginalization across contexts and borders. Following Derrida's vision, spectrality here can be read as the visualization of lingering pre-modern techniques in continuum with ICTs, both equally transforming the sense of belonging to a given social reality and indicating the out-of-timeness of demands for justice, attention to the dispossessed, and social change. In Adorno's perception, the obsession in and out of the film with the use-value of each of these objectual worlds are a symptom of phantasmagoria's tendency to cloud the exploitative and unjust nature of what are essentially transactional and exchange relationships mediated by technologies. Fascination with the cinematic, almost medieval pulley system of Havana, as with the extra-diegetic, ultra-precise, heavy British lenses refers to the misleading, fetishistic function of the commodity. As Adorno puts it, "aesthetic appearance becomes a function of the character of the commodity (…) [and] purveys illusion" (79). An illusion that, in turn, is put into the service of concealing the human labor and distress behind it, claiming that the aesthetic portion of its character is the one marker of authenticity and reality. It postpones the recognition that its use-value does nothing to dispel the prevalence of asymmetric exchange values intertwined with oppressive social and economic structures. Just as one may choose to fly over Havana with this film, resuscitate with light its capitalist past or engage with it in a more critical, complex way.

4.5 Conclusions

In this fourth and final chapter of the dissertation, I have proposed Pedro Ruiz's documentary *Sur les toits…*as my last example of transnational cinematic voyage. As with the cases examined before, this film engages with Cuban domesticity as a foundational element of its production in Cuba, but it also makes of homemaking on the island, and more particularly marginal homemaking, its main thematic concern.

In my analysis of *Sur les toits*…, I have established a parallelism between the marginal nature of alternative domesticities in Havana, and the equally fragile positioning of *Latinité*, and Latinx productions hailing from francophone Québec. Taking as my primary anchor the queer, transnational *casa particular* of *La Puerta Rosa*, also featured in the film as an example of homemaking from the margins and unofficial partner of the production of the documentary, I have explored how dissenting domestic configurations—queer households, the homes of sex-workers, the shelters of the near homeless, the mono-parental and the pluri-nuclear families—figure in the film. Furthermore, I have utilized the queer metaphor of the closet to illuminate the ways in which dissent from the hetero-patriarchal familial definition of family and the domestic unit places these homes in the state of marginality in which they subsist.

This state of liminality of alternative domesticities allowed me to play with the historical and contrasted interpretations that *latinité* has had Québec and how these perceptions played out in the struggles of the creative team of *Sur les toits…* to finalize their Pan-Latin project. As can be seen, the inherent tensions of the different ideations of *latinité* in Québec situated the documentary project alternatively as something useless and undesirable for the Québécois funding structures, and then as an appealing building bloc of its foreign cultural diplomacy in its outreach to Southern neighbors like Mexico and Cuba. Furthermore, by analysing the visual and

textual cues present in the film, I have shown how Ruiz's film elaborates a new articulation of *latinidad*. Said *latinidad* takes the Caribbean in its multiplicity as the epicenter of an expanded conceptualization of the "Latinx," which is, in my understanding, more open, inclusive, and one that embraces decidedly the créole, Afro-Caribbean, and queer aspects of the homes presented in the film.

Final Remarks: The Voyages to Come

Throughout this dissertation I have critically examined the space of Cuban domesticity within contemporary Québécois independent filmmaking. What I have called in this research cinematic voyages are transnational contact bridges that join Cuban and Québécois constituencies through the interface established between the production of home on the socialist island and transnational film production in Québec. I have paid particular attention to highlighting the essentially uneven power relations that shape these contacts and the local and transnational economies they engage, activate, and defy. With the same attention, I have emphasized the emotional and solidary structures that undergird these cinematic travels and how they challenge the pre-existing tourism and travel logics established between Havana and Québec. The main objective of this dissertation has been to question the entanglements between Québécois transnational film and media arts production, global tourism, and Cuban households to reveal the ways in which they allow the imagining of new modes of South-North cultural cooperation not immediately curtailed by neocolonialist, imperialist, or oppressive and discriminatory logics. On the contrary, as I have indicated at every step, these filmic and artistic projects have steadily confronted and questioned their own positionality, displaying openly their critiques of the traditionally exploitative rapports between industrialized countries and their developing neighbors when it comes to cultural production and tourist dynamics in the Americas.

In these pages I have argued that cinematic voyages are examples of transnational filmmaking and human mobility that help us question long-cherished, prevailing ideas about the exploitative pipelines built into the global tourism and media industries running across the North-South divide. Instead, cinematic voyages allow us to see other facets of these hemispheric interactions based on transcultural collaboration, values of solidarity, and anticolonial critique

through the focalization on the complexity of social, economic, and cultural connections between Cuba and Québec. Methodologically and conceptually, my inquiry has been threefold. First, it has been guided by a dialectical method of critique that examines simultaneously the cinematic representations of the domination and exploitation of the Global South by the Global North, while also inviting productive strategies and ideological critiques that question the extent of such domination and attempt to reverse it. This paradoxical method of inquiry engages with those unsettled realms where economic calculations, productive operations, professional schemes, and labor relationships come hand in hand with the performance of affective and compassionate acts by Cubans and foreigners alike, entangled as they are in the domestic space with familial and emotional configurations that coexist in tension without annulling the profit-driven, interested character of transnational filmmaking.

Second, I have adopted the path of minor transnationalism, or transnationalism from below, to make space within the larger tradition of transnational cinema studies for the exploits of small-scale, mobile creative personnel, the domestic space, and the local as equally important actors in the broader contours of global processes such as border-crossing film production and transnational tourism. Third, I have focused on the domestic space to understand how it joins discursively and practically the private, the public, the local, the translocal, and the global despite dominant ideas about their radical separation and distinction, the artificial and spatial gendering of intimacy and publicity, and the resulting division of labor. I have demonstrated that a radically different picture of cinematic and political contacts between Québec, Canada, and Cuba, but also between the Global North and the Global South, come into the light by bringing domesticity into the equation of the production of Québécois transnational films and the ways in which Cuban homes participate in the reconstitution of transnational tourism trends in North America.

In the second chapter, I employed the concept of ludic resistance to denote those strategies put in place to make space for playfulness and defiance in transnational filmmaking and touristic practices. Ludic resistance advocates for adopting unsanctioned paths of creative action while working on location, making sensible use of local workforces, sustainable exploitation of resources, and, especially considering deterritorialized film labor, a path to transcultural collaboration and material solidarization with the Other, despite class, gender, language, and race differences. In my analysis, I have demonstrated the flexibility of domestic hospitality enterprises in Cuba when developing skills, adapting spaces, and employing local knowledges and employees through different forms of engagement to meet the needs of foreign film enterprises. However, I have also contended that such flexibility is afforded as a surplus of the development of multiple gestures of transcultural, gendered identifications, acts of solidarity, and material care between otherwise unrelated laboring subjects working on location.

The third chapter allowed me to further probe into the conjunction of transborder human mobility and domesticity through the transnational production of a Québécois road movie. In this chapter, I scrutinized how the production of the road genre in Cuba, with the aid of a *casa particular*, lends itself to examine the significance of human mobility, both figuratively and literally, and how ideas of home, community, and belonging play out in the road movie canon. Given the film's narrative and structural relation to the domestic realm, I have argued that it creates a gendered transnational social space where individual, collective, and gendered identities are discussed, confronted, and negotiated.

In the fourth and final chapter, I have established a parallelism between the marginal nature of alternative domesticities in Havana, and the equally fragile positioning of Latinité, and Latinx productions hailing from francophone Québec. By focusing on a documentary investigation of

dissenting domestic configurations—queer households, the homes of sex-workers, the shelters of the near homeless, the mono-parental and the pluri-nuclear families—I have proven that dissent from the hetero-patriarchal definition of family and domesticity places these unorthodox homes in a state of marginality in socialist Cuba. This state of liminality of alternative domesticities is extended to the different historical ideations of *latinité* in Québec as they shape the production, reception, and uses of a Latinx documentary in the francophone, North American province. Finally, I have made clear how, within the film, a new articulation of *latinidad* appears that embraces openly the *créole*, Afro-Caribbean, alternative, and queer aspects of the homes presented in the film.

Circling back to the initial question that I raised at the beginning of this dissertation, one could say that there's much about Cuban homes to be found in contemporary Québécois film productions. First, there are the sheer numbers of similar entrepreneurial endeavours like the ones that I have discussed here that keep accumulating, making this research virtually outdated as I finish writing it. Films like *Sin La Habana* (Kaveh Nabatian 2020) and *The Fence* (Viveka Melki 2020) are two of the examples I can provide that have been mentioned here but never fully examined. Each one, like the films that are the main objects of this dissertation, have come to light through equally intuitive, opaque, uncharted production paths and different forms of engagement with Cuban households. In sum, each one of them allows us to imagine unsanctioned, maybe even more sustainable, humane futures for transnational touristic practices and cinema and media creation. As naïve as these statements may seem, they carry the utmost importance for those who, like myself, chose to believe that there can be more than one creative and developmental path for our global cultural industries and for the ways these connect the Northern populations and their counterparts of the Southern hemisphere.

The fact that I have chosen to mention two films that are barely named in my analysis indicates, too, the possible routes that I have left untouched. I see this dissertation as a first step into the manifold, bilateral cinematic and cultural collaborations between Québec, Canada, and Cuba. For instance, in many of my interviews, it became clear that, much in the same way that Québécois productions and creatives invited themselves into Cuban homes, similar numbers of Cubans (and also Mexicans, Colombians, Venezuelans, and others from Latin America) temporarily take up residence in Québec to labor and live in local film projects. What could be the emanations of home and domesticity that might transpire in these alternative movements from the South to the North? Again, what would surface in Québec of Cuba, and by extension the Latin American subcontinent, if I continued to sketch this lopsided cinematic bilateral portrait? These and many other questions that I still have to grapple with are indicative of the unfinished character of this work, of the many "voyages," both academic and cinematic, that must happen.

REFERENCES

Works Cited

2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Cuba. Washington DC: Office of International Religious Freedom / U.S Department of State, May 2021. https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/cuba/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Achtenberg, Emily. 2013. "Gentrification in Cuba? The Contradictions of Old Havana." NACLA, 31 January 2013. https://nacla.org/blog/2013/1/31/gentrification-cuba-contradictions-old-havana. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Acosta, Nelson. 2011. "Cuba autoriza compraventa casas desde semana próxima." *Reuters*, 4 November 2011. https://www.reuters.com/article/latinoamerica-economia-cuba-vivienda-idLTASIE7A7BFO20111104. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

———. and Marc Frank. 2020. "Cuba anuncia que la reforma monetaria comenzará en enero." U.S., 11 December 2020. https://www.reuters.com/article/cuba-economia-moneda-idESKBN28L0YO. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Adorno, Theodor W. *In Search of Wagner*. New York: Verso, 2005.

Akindes, Yokomizo. 2003. "Methodology as Lived Experience: Rhizomatic Ethnography in Hawai'i." In *Global Media Studies: Ethnographic Perspectives*, edited by Patrick D. Murphy and Marwan W. Kraidy, 147–65. New York: Routledge.

"All You Can Eat Buddha (2017) - IMDb." IMDb, 11 September 2017. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7230148/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Álvarez, Analays. Interview by the Author, December 2, 2019.

Anderson, Douglas R. 2009. *A House Undivided: Domesticity and Community in American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Anouna, Jasmin. 2018. “Aquí no hay protestas. Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in Cuba.” Senior Honor Thesis, Swarthmore College.

Anuario demográfico de cuba. La Habana: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas e Información, September 2021.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press.

"Appel à projets dans le cadre de la coopération Québec-Cuba 2021-2023." Bienvenue sur Québec.ca | Gouvernement du Québec, 30 August 2021. https://www.quebec.ca/nouvelles/actualites/details/appel-a-projets-dans-le-cadre-de-la-cooperation-quebec-cuba-2021-2023-34248. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"À propos de nous Faits Divers Média." Faits Divers Média maison de production de films. Accessed 25 July 2022. https://www.faitsdiversmedia.com/aproposde.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Aristi, Guillermo, Lyna Kamintsky, Margaux Ross, Chris Bowen, Cynthia Calkin, Alon Friedman, and Javeria A. Hashmi. "Symptoms Reported by Canadians Posted in Havana Are Linked With Reduced White Matter Fibre Density." *Brain Communications*, March 2022. https://doi.org/10.1093/braincomms/fcac053.

Armony, Victor. 2004. "Des Latins du Nord ? L’identité culturelle québécoise dans le contexte panaméricain." *Recherche* 43, no. 1 (November 2004): 19–48. https://doi.org/10.7202/009445ar.

Arsenault, Marie-Louise. 2017 "Jean Fugère: Se libérer du carcan." Radio-Canada.ca | Information, radio, télé, sports, art, 28 April 2017. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/premiere/emissions/les-grands-entretiens/segments/entrevue/21730/jean-fugere-liste-lecture-quebec-cuba. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Artista X Artista-Facebook." https://www.facebook.com/artistaxartista/. Accessed 16 September 2022. https://www.facebook.com/artistaxartista/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Augustin, Ed, and Kirk Semple. 2021. "Cubans Study a Shrinking List of Banned Private Enterprises." *New York Times*, 11 February 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/11/world/americas/cuba-expands-private-enterprise.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Bachelard, Gaston. 1961. *La poétique de l'espace*. 3rd ed. Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France.

Baillargeon, Mercédès, and Karine Bertrand. "Introduction: Le transnationalisme du cinéma et des (nouveaux) médias: Le contexte québécois." *Contemporary French Civilization* 44, 2_3 (July 2019): 137–50. https://doi.org/10.3828/cfc.2019.8.

Balaisis, Nicholas. 2013. "The School for Every World: Internationalism and Residual Socialism at EICTV." In *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas*, edited by Mette Hjort, 185–201. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137032690_10.

Baloh, Robert W., and Robert E. Bartholomew. 2020. *Havana Syndrome Mass Psychogenic Illness and the Real Story Behind the Embassy Mystery and Hysteria*. Cham: SpringerLink.

Bastian, Hope. 2018. *Everyday Adjustments in Havana: Economic Reforms, Mobility, and Emerging Inequalities*. New York: Lexington Books.

Baydar, Gilsum. 2005. *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*. New York: Routledge.

Beeton, Sue. 2005. *Film-Induced Tourism (Aspects of Tourism)*. Channel View Publications.

———. 2008. "Location, Location, Location: Film Corporations' Social Responsibilities." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 24, no. 2-3 (June 2008): 107–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548400802092551.

———. 2006. "Understanding Film-Induced Tourism." *Tourism Analysis* 11, no. 3 (October 2006): 181–88. https://doi.org/10.3727/108354206778689808.

Belanger, Louis. 1999. "Redefining Cultural Diplomacy: Cultural Security and Foreign Policy in Canada." *Political Psychology* 20, no. 4 (December 1999): 677–99. https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895x.00164.

Benítez Rojo, Antonio. 1997. *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. 2nd ed. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press.

———. 1998. "Three Words Towards Creolization." In *Caribbean Creolization. Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*, edited by Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau, 53–62. Miami: University Press of Florida.

Bernabé, Jean. "De la négritude à la créolité : Éléments pour une approche comparée." *Études françaises* 28, no. 2-3 (1992): 23–38. https://doi.org/10.7202/035878ar.

Bernard, H. Russell. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 5th ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira.

Berry, Chris. 2010. "What Is Transnational Cinema? Thinking From the Chinese Situation." *Transnational Cinemas* 1, no. 2 (November 2010): 111–27. https://doi.org/10.1386/trac.1.2.111_1.

Bertrand, Karine. 2019. "De Gilles Groulx à Jean-Marc Vallée: Transnationalisme, Américanité et Territoire dans le Cinéma Québécois." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 49, no. 1 (January 2019): 70–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2019.1579742.

Bhabha, Homi K. 2004. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.

"Bible Gateway Passage: Matthew 14:13-21 - New Catholic Bible." Bible Gateway, 2019. https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2014:13-21&version=NCB. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Blanco, María del Pilar. 2012. *Ghost-Watching American Modernity: Haunting, Landscape, and the Hemispheric Imagination*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Boni, Marta. 2019. "Les séries québécoises: Modularité, circulation et transnationalism." *Contemporary French Civilization* 44, no. 2-3 (2019): 241–56.

Bouchard, Gérard. 2000. *Genèse des nations et cultures du Nouveau Monde: Essai d'histoire comparée*. Montréal: Boréal.

———. 2015. *Interculturalism: A View From Quebec*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Brotherton, P. Sean. 2008. ""We Have to Think Like Capitalists but Continue Being Socialists": Medicalized Subjectivities, Emergent Capital, and Socialist Entrepreneurs in Post-Soviet Cuba." *American Ethnologist* 35, no. 2 (May 2008): 259–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2008.00033.x.

Brown, Michael P. 2000. *Closet Space: Geographies of Metaphor From the Body to the Globe (Critical Geographies)*. New York: Routledge.

Buchmann, Anne, Kevin Moore, and David Fisher. 2010. "Experiencing Film Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 37, no. 1 (January 2010): 229–48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.09.005.

"Bureau du Québec à La Havane." Représentations du Québec à l'étranger. Accessed 3 August 2020. https://www.international.gouv.qc.ca/fr/la-havane#services. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Cabezas, Amalia L. 2009. *Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

"Canada-Cuba fact sheet." Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada, September 2022. https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/fact_sheet-fiche_documentaire/cuba.aspx?lang=eng. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Can Cuban Citizens Stay in Resorts With Foreign Partners?" https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowTopic-g147270-i91-k3458467-Can_Cuban_Citizens_Stay_In_Resorts_With_Foreign_Partners-Cuba.html, 2010. https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowTopic-g147270-i91-k3458467-Can_Cuban_Citizens_Stay_In_Resorts_With_Foreign_Partners-Cuba.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Cardoso, Lucília, Cristina Estevão, Cristina Fernandes, and Helena Alves. 2017. "Film Induced Tourism: A Systematic Literature Review." *Tourism & Management Studies* 13, no. 3 (July 2017): 23–30. https://doi.org/10.18089/tms.2017.13303.

"Casa Miglis Facebook | Facebook." Facebook. Accessed 2 December 2020. https://www.facebook.com/casamigliscuba/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Caton, Steven C. 1999. *Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology*. University of California Press.

Chabuel, Cédric. "EP2 - Lucien Rivard, Doudou Rimbaud et la filière sud-américaine." Radio-Canada.ca | Information, radio, télé, sports, art, 25 November 2020. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/balados/7908/french-connection-marseille-montreal-new-york/495806/drogue-lucien-rivard-mafia-doudou-rimbaud. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Chambre of Commerce and Industry Canada-Cuba." Chambre of Commerce and Industry Canada-Cuba. Accessed 3 August 2020. https://ccicubacanada.org. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Chanan, Michael. 2004. *Cuban Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Chancé, Dominique. 2011. ""Creolization: Definition and Critique"." In *The Creolization of Theory*, edited by Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, 262–68. Durham: Duke University Press.

Chung, Hye Jean. 2012. "Media Heterotopia and Transnational Filmmaking: Mapping Real and Virtual Worlds." *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 4 (2012): 87–109. https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2012.0071.

———. 2018. *Media Heterotopias : Digital Effects and Material Labor in Global Film Production*. Durham: Duke University Press.

"CINE REX & HAVANA LIGHT PROJECT | insightCuba." Tours & Travel to Cuba for Americans | insightCuba. Accessed 17 September 2022. https://insightcuba.com/blog/2019/07/10/cine-rex. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Clifford, James. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Connell, Joanne. 2012. "Film Tourism – Evolution, Progress and Prospects." *Tourism Management* 33, no. 5 (October 2012): 1007–29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.02.008.

Cook, Matt. 2014. *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Corrigan, Timothy. 1991. *A Cinema Without Walls: Movies and Culture After Vietnam*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.

Crespo, Raquel. Interview by the Author, December 2, 2019.

"Cuba - inmigración 2019." Datosmacro.com. Accessed 29 July 2020. https://datosmacro.expansion.com/demografia/migracion/inmigracion/cuba. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Cuba, la Ley n°169." *Cinémas d'Amérique latine*, no. 17 (December 2009): 169–71. https://doi.org/10.4000/cinelatino.1735. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Cuba Merci-Gracias (2018) - IMDb." IMDb, 5 October 2018. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7976126/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Demers, Maurice. 2014. *Connected Struggles: Catholics, Nationalists, and Transnational Relations Between Mexico and Quebec, 1917-1945*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

———. 2012. "De l'exotisme à l'effet miroir : La représentation de l'histoire latino-américaine au Canada français." *Mens* 13, no. 1 (November 2012): 19–54. https://doi.org/10.7202/1019697ar.

Derrida, Jacques. 1993. *Spectres de Marx: L'État de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale*. Paris: Éditions Galilée.

Desnoyer, Johanne. Interview by the Author, August 26, 2020.

Di Blasi, E., and A. Arangio. 2015. "Marzamemi, an Interesting Case Study of Film-Induced Tourism." *Almatourism - Journal of Tourism Culture and Territorial Development* 6, no. 1 (2015): 213–28.

Djagalov, Rossen, and Masha Salazkina. 2016. "Tashkent '68: A Cinematic Contact Zone." *Slavic Review* 75, no. 2 (2016): 279–98. https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.75.2.279.

Dorais, Geneviève. 2018. "La révolution cubaine en Amérique latine : Essai historiographique sur l'importance d'un symbole régional." *Chronique des Amériques* 18, no. 3 (August 2018): 2–9.

"El canadiense que murió en La Habana." CubaSi, 31 March 2018. https://cubasi.cu/es/cubasi-noticias-cuba-mundo-ultima-hora/item/75650-el-canadiense-que-murio-en-la-habana. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

El Mundo. 2011. "Entra en vigor el decreto que legaliza la compraventa de viviendas en Cuba." 10 November 2011. https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/11/10/suvivienda/1320947610.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Entous, Adam, and Jon Lee Anderson. 2018. "The Mystery of the Havana Syndrome." *New Yorker*, 9 November 2018. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/11/19/the-mystery-of-the-havana-syndrome. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Entwistle, Mark. 2009. "Conclusion: Canada-Cuba Relations: A Multiple-Personality Foreign Policy." In *Our Place in the Sun: Canada and Cuba in the Castro Era*, edited by Robert Wright and Lana Wylie, 282–303. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

"Estudio Figueroa-Vives. Art Gallery in Havana, Cuba." Estudio Figueroa-Vives. Accessed 30 August 2020. https://estudiofigueroavives.com/en/home/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Eyre, Camilla, and Joanna McIntyre. 2018. "Traversing National Borders, Transcending Cinematic Borders: The Sojourner Cinema of Denis Villeneuve." *Trespassing Borders*, no. 7 (2018): 33–48.

Ezra, Elizabeth, and Terry Rowden. 2006. "General Introduction: What Is Transnational Cinema?" In *Transnational Cinema, the Film Reader*, edited by Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, 1–12. New York: Routledge.

Faist, Thomas, and Eyüp Özveren, eds. 2020. *Transnational Social Spaces Agents, Networks and Institutions*. New York: Routledge.

Favreau, Antoine. 2020. "“La gaspésie n'est pas un tout-inclus.” | facebook." Facebook, 23 July 2020. https://www.facebook.com/antoine.favreau.39/posts/10157766703751775. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Festival Internacional De Cine De Cartagena De Indias- FICCI." Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena de Indias- FICCI. Accessed 17 September 2022. http://ficcifestival.com/pelicula.php?p=XG3C6fwmWmto9egB1nwASvgCXG3C6fwm. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Fleras, Augie. 2015. "Multicultural Media in a Post-Multicultural Canada? Rethinking Integration." *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition* 8, no. 2 (2015): 25–47.

Fournier, Louis. 2020. *FLQ: Histoire d'un mouvement clandestin*. Montréal: VLB ÉDITEUR.

Fugère, Jean. 2012. "39-Las Azoteas." Unpublished manuscript, digital typescript.

———. Interview by the Author, June 12, 2020.

"Gentrification Arrives in Cuba." The World Weekly, 25 May 2015. https://www.theworldweekly.com/reader/view/1398/gentrification-arrives-in-cuba. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Gillespie, Katharine. 2004. *Domesticity and Dissent in the Seventeenth-Century: English Women Writers and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, eds. 2002. *Media Worlds Anthropology on New Terrain*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Glissant, Edouard. 1997. *Poetics of Relation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gonzalez, Aleida. 2016. "Trois emplois pour mieux vivre, la vie cubaine d'Aleida." *Radio-Canada*, 12 February 2016. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/764753/economie-cuba-vie-emploi. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Gordon, Avery. 2008. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Granma Redacción Digital. 2021. "Anteproyecto del Código de las Familias." 15 September 2021. https://www.granma.cu/cuba/2021-09-21/publica-el-ministerio-de-justicia-la-version-22-del-anteproyecto-del-codigo-de-las-familias-pdf. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

———. 2021. "Principales aspectos del anteproyecto del Código de las Familias." 15 September 2021. https://www.granma.cu/cuba/2021-09-15/nota-introductoria-a-la-publicacion-de-la-

version-22-del-anteproyecto-de-codigo-de-las-familias. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Gross, Terry. 1990. "Film Director Sydney Pollack in "Havana"." Fresh Air Archive: Interviews with Terry Gross, 11 December 1990. https://freshairarchive.org/segments/film-director-sydney-pollack-havana. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Guerra Blanco, Anderlay. 2018. ""Es la ley más abusiva", se quejan cubanos sobre "peligrosidad social"." Radio y Televisión Martí | RadioTelevisionMarti.com, 24 April 2018. https://www.radiotelevisionmarti.com/a/es-la-ley-más-abusiva-se-quejan-cubanos-sobre-sobre-peligrosidad-social/173672.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Gunning, Tom. 2006. "‘‘The Whole World Within Reach’’: Travel Images Without Borders." In *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*, edited by Jeffrey Ruoff, 25–41. Durham: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822387947-003.

Hall, Stuart. 2001. "“Negotiating Caribbean Identities.”." In *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*, edited by Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl, 24–39. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press.

Hao, X., and C. Ryan. 2013. "Interpretation, Film Language and Tourist Destinations: A Case Study of Hibiscus Town, China." *Annals of Tourism Research* 42 (2013): 334–58.

Hao, Xiaofei, and Chris Ryan. 2013. "Interpretation, Film Language and Tourist Destinations: A Case Study of Hibiscus Town, China." *Annals of Tourism Research* 42 (July 2013): 334–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.02.016.

Haroun, Thierry. "“Les aéroports régionaux crient famine.”." *Le Devoir*, 27 April 2017. https://www.ledevoir.com/politique/quebec/497363/les-aeroports-regionaux-crient-famine.

Hayes, Shannon. 2010. *Radical Homemakers: Reclaiming Domesticity From a Consumer Culture*. Richmondville, NY: Left to Write Press.

Henken, Ted A. 2017. *Entrepreneurial Activity in Cuba's Private Sector*. Washington DC: Engage Cuba Coalition / Engage Cuba Foundation, January 2017.

Henthorne, Tony L. 2018. *Tourism in Cuba: Casinos, Castros, and Challenges*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Hernández, Teresa. Interview by the Author, November 25, 2020.

Hesse, Hermann. [1922] 2003. *Siddartha*. Bt Bound.

Higbee, Will, and Song Hwee Lim. 2010. "Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies." *Transnational Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (January 2010): 7–21. https://doi.org/10.1386/trac.1.1.7/1.

Higson, Andrew. 2010. "Transnational Developments in European Cinema in the 1920s." *Transnational Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (January 2010): 69–82. https://doi.org/10.1386/trac.1.1.69/1.

Hinckley, Story. 2019. "Cuba's Growing Evangelical Community Discovers Its Political Clout | the GroundTruth Project." The GroundTruth Project, 26 April 2019. https://thegroundtruthproject.org/cubas-growing-evangelical-community-discovers-political-clout/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Hollows, Joanne, and Stacy Gillis. 2008. *Feminism Domesticity and Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Holuigue, Ximena. Interview by the Author, June 6, 2019.

———. Interview by the Author, March 11, 2021.

"Home - Islas." Islas. Accessed 25 June 2022. https://cubaislas.com. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Hoogendoorn, Kyle. 2021. "North American Churches Support CRC in Cuba." The Banner, 21 May 2021. https://www.thebanner.org/news/2021/05/north-american-churches-support-crc-in-cuba. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Huang, Nicole. 2005. *Women, War, Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s (China Studies)*. Leyde: Brill Academic Publishers.

Huizinga, Johan. 1981. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Boston: Routledge Kegan & Paul.

Humphreys, Laura-Zoë. 2019. *Fidel Between the Lines: Paranoia and Ambivalence in Late Socialist Cuban Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478007142.

Inaugural Working Group Meeting - Diversity and Inclusion Key Takeaways and Concepts. Telefilm Canada, September 2020.

"Inauguration du Bureau du Québec à La Havane : Le Québec célèbre un moment charnière de ses relations avec Cuba." Québec.ca | Gouvernement du Québec, 30 October 2017. https://www.quebec.ca/nouvelles/actualites/details/inauguration-du-bureau-du-quebec-a-la-havane-le-quebec-celebre-un-moment-charniere-de-ses-relations-avec-cuba. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Inicia hoy 26 Feria Internacional del Libro, La Habana 2017." Radio Rebelde - Emisora de la Revolución, 9 February 2017. https://www.radiorebelde.cu/noticia/inicia-hoy-26-feria-internacional-libro-habana-2017-20170209/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Irizarry, Ylce. 2021. "Encarnaciones Cubanas: Elías Miguel Muñoz and Queering of the Latina/o Canon." In *Latinidad at the Crossroads Insights Into Latinx Identity in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Amanda Ellen Gerke Luisa and María González Rodríguez, 108–34. Boston: Brill.

Jacobson, Kristin J. 2010. *Neodomestic American Fiction*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Jiménez Enoa, Abraham. 2019. "Dios y el «diseño original»: La cruzada evangélica contra el matrimonio igualitario en Cuba." *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 280 (March 2019): 116–31.

Konovalov, Alexei. 2015. "Sur le tournage de Soy Cuba. Lettres de Sergueï Ouroussevski à son épouse Bella Friedman (1961-1962)." *1895*, no. 77 (December 2015): 106–50. https://doi.org/10.4000/1895.5074.

La Presse canadienne. 2022. "La mobilisation contre les féminicides commence à porter ses fruits." *Radio-Canada*, 6 April 2022. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1874744/mobilisation-contre-feminicides-premier-anniversaire-rmfvvct. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Labrecque, Maxime. "Ian Lagarde: « J'ai toujours accordé une importance primordiale au son, car c'est ce qui vient te chercher de façon subliminale. »." *Séquences : La revue de cinéma* 312 (2018): 14–16. https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/87645ac.

Lachance, Nicholas. 2016 "Des Québécois flairent la bonne affaire à Cuba." *Le Journal de Québec*, August 2016. https://www.journaldequebec.com/2016/08/13/ils-flairent-la-bonne-affaire. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Lacroix-Couture, Frédéric. 2021. "Le Québec endeuillé par la vague de féminicides en 2021." *L'actualité*, 27 December 2021. https://lactualite.com/actualites/le-quebec-endeuille-par-la-vague-de-feminicides-en-2021/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Lagarde, Ian. Interview by the Author, July 10, 2020.

Laguna, Albert Sergio. 2010. "Aquí Está Alvarez Guedes: Cuban choteo and the politics of play." *Latino Studies* 8, no. 4 (December 2010): 509–31. https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2010.47.

Lanctôt, Jacques. 2019. "Le petit coin de paradis de Jean Fugère." *Le Journal de Montréal*, 22 June 2019. https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2019/06/22/le-petit-coin-de-paradis-de-jean-fugere. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Lanctôt, Louise. 2020. *Une sorcière parmi les felquistes : Journal de la crise d'octobre*. Montréal: Le Scriptorium.

"La puerta rosa." La Puerta Rosa. Accessed 19 May 2022. https://lapuertarosa.com. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Larkin, Brian. 2008. *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Larralde, Onelio. Interview by the author, March 13, 2022.

Lavoie, Frédérick. 2018. *Avant l'après : Voyages à Cuba avec Georges Orwell*. Saguenay: La Peuplade.

Legion: Canada's Military History Magazine. 2020. "Should the James Cross Kidnappers Have Been Granted Safe Passage to Cuba?" 2 September 2020. https://legionmagazine.com/en/2020/09/should-the-james-cross-kidnappers-have-been-granted-safe-passage-to-cuba/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Le Groupe des 13. 2018. "Les mouvements des femmes au Québec : Acteurs incontournables de changement social." *Nouveaux Cahiers du socialisme* 20 (2018): 90–97. https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/89270ac. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Leprince, Jean-Michel. 2017. "Le FLQ à Cuba : Les dessous d'une négociation secrète." *Radio-Canada*, 25 January 2017. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1012824/front-liberation-quebec-cuba-negociation-secrete-histoire-entrevue-exclusive. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Lewis, Tom. 2008. "The Politics of 'Hauntology' in Derrida's Specters of Marx." In *Ghostly Demarcations a Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx*, edited by Michael Sprinker, 134–67. 2nd ed. New York: Verso.

Leyva, Ernesto. Interview by the Author, March 9, 2022.

Lionnet, Françoise, and Shu-mei Shih, eds. 2005. *Minor Transnationalism*. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822386643.

Lu, Timothy Siliang, Andrea Holmes, Chris Noone, and Gerard Thomas Flaherty. 2020. "Sun, Sea and Sex: A Review of the Sex Tourism Literature." *Tropical Diseases, Travel Medicine and Vaccines* 6, no. 1 (November 2020). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40794-020-00124-0.

Lumsden, Ian. 1996. *Machos, Maricones, and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Mahler, Sarah J. 2017. "Theoretical and Empirical Contributions Toward a Research Agenda for Transnationalism 1." In *Transnationalism From Below*, edited by Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, 64–100. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351301244-3.

Maldonado, Arantza. Interview by the Author, September 8, 2021.

Malitsky, Joshua. 2013. *Post-Revolution Nonfiction Film: Building the Soviet and Cuban Nations*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mañach Robato, Jorge. [1928] 2021. *Indagación del choteo*. Barcelona: Linkgua Pensamiento 68.

Mark, Simon. 2008. "A Comparative Study of the Cultural Diplomacy of Canada, New Zealand and India." Doctoral Thesis, The University of Auckland**.**

Marshall, Bill. 2010. "New Spaces of Empire: Quebec Cinema's Centers and Peripheries." In *Cinema at the Periphery*, edited by Dina Iordanova, David Martin-Jones, and Belén Vidal, 119–34. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

———. 2019. "Quebec Cinema as Global Cinema." In *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Cinema*, edited by Janine Marchessault and Will Straw, 251–68. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Martin, Alex B. Interview by the Author, May 6, 2020.

Martínez Hernández, Aynel, and Irene Pérez. 2017. "Inauguran pabellón de canadá en XXVI feria internacional del libro." Cubadebate, 10 February 2017. http://www.cubadebate.cu/noticias/2017/02/10/inauguran-pabellon-de-canada-en-xxvi-feria-internacional-del-libro/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Martin Franco, Helena. 2019. "Une femme éléphant » A quién pueda interesar." Une femme éléphant, 2 November 2019. http://fe.helenamartinfranco.com/avecez/.

Mathisen, Line, and Nina K. Prebensen. 2013. "Dramatizing an Event Through a Promotional Film: Testing Image Effects." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 30, no. 7 (October 2013): 672–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2013.827545.

Mayer, Vicki. 2011. *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

McHugh, Kathleen Anne. 1999. *American Domesticity: From How-to Manual to Hollywood Melodrama*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McKeon, Michael. 2006. *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Méndez Muñoz, Susana. 2019. "Inaugurada Muestra de Cine de Québec en La Habana." Portal Cubarte, 31 October 2019. http://cubarte.cult.cu/periodico-cubarte/inaugurada-muestra-de-cine-de-quebec-en-la-habana/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Michelle, Carolyn, Ann L. Hardy, Charles H. Davis, and Craig Hight. 2014. "An Unexpected Controversy in Middle-Earth: Audience Encounters With the 'Dark Side' of Transnational Film Production." *Transnational Cinemas* 6, no. 1 (August 2014): 49–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/20403526.2014.941185.

Miller, Mark M. 1997. *Investment in the New Cuban Tourist Industry: A Guide to Entrepreneurial Opportunities*. Westport, Conn: Quorum Books.

Mills, Katie. 2006. *The Road Story and the Rebel: Moving Through Film, Fiction, and Television*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.

Mills, Nancy. 2017. "The Fate of the Furious - Location Managers Guild International." Location Managers Guild International, 2017. https://locationmanagers.org/the-fate-of-the-furious/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Modelski, Tania. [1988] 2015. *Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. Taylor & Francis Group.

Molesworth, Helen. 1999. "Cleaning Up in the 1970s: The Work of Judy Chicago, Mary Kelly and Mierle Laderman Ukeles." In *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, edited by Michael Newman and Jon Bird, 107–23. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.

Montpetit, Caroline. 2019. "Balade sur les toits havanais." *Le Devoir*, 27 April 2019. https://www.ledevoir.com/culture/cinema/552954/entrevue-balade-sur-les-toits-havanais. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Montréal Habana: Rencontres en Art Actuel." Montréal Habana, May 2019. https://www.montrealhabana2019.com. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Moser, Walter. 2008. "Présentation. Le road movie : Un genre issu d'une constellation moderne de locomotion et de médiamotion." *Cinémas* 18, no. 2-3 (August 2008): 7–30. https://doi.org/10.7202/018415ar.

Movilla, Martin. 2016. "Le succès partagé d'une entreprise québécoise en affaires à Cuba." *Radio-Canada*, 6 March 2016. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/768912/cuba-affaires-groupe-lussier-terracam-quebec. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Muestra de cine de Quebec (@QUEBECINE). 2020. "Hoy a las 20hrs proyección en el foro al aire libre de Arriba Habana en @CinetecaMexico." Twitter, 29 February 2020. https://twitter.com/QUEBECINE/status/1233829446714413056. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Muñoz, José Esteban. 1999. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Murphy, Patrick D., and Marwan M. Kraidy. 2003. "Towards an Ethnographic Approach to Global Media Studies." In *Global Media Studies: Ethnographic Perspectives*, edited by Patrick D. Murphy and Marwan M. Kraidy, 3–21. New York: Routledge.

Murtagh, Lisa. 2007. "Implementing a Critically Quasi-Ethnographic Approach." *Qualitative Report* 12, no. 2 (June 2007): 193–215. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2007.1634.

Naficy, Hamid. 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton University Press.

———. 1998. *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place (Afi Film Readers)*. Routledge.

Nalvarte, Paola. 2022. "Activist Collective in Cuba Raises Funds to Provide Shelter and Protection to Harassed Women Journalists - LatAm Journalism Review by the Knight Center." LatAm Journalism Review by the Knight Center, 19 January 2022. https://latamjournalismreview.org/articles/collective-of-activists-and-women-journalists-in-cuba-raises-funds-to-provide-shelter-and-protection-to-harassed-independent-journalists/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Nareau, Michel. 2012. *Double jeu: Baseball et littératures américaines*. Montréal, QC: Le Quartanier.

Nettleford, Rex M. 1979. *Cultural Action and Social Change: The Case of Jamaica, an Essay in Caribbean Cultural Identity*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Nicholson, H. N. 2006. "Through the Balkan States: Home Movies as Travel Texts and Tourism Histories in the Mediterranean, C.1923-39." *Tourist Studies* 6, no. 1 (April 2006): 13–36. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797606070584.

Nugent, Ciara. 2021. "Cuba Is Opening Up Its Economy. But Don't Call It a Shift to Capitalism Just Yet." *Time*, 9 February 2021. https://time.com/5937706/cuba-private-business/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Nye, Joseph S. and William A. Owens. 1996. "America's Information Edge." *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 2 (1996): 20–36. https://doi.org/10.2307/20047486.

Oliva, Liz. 2020. "Cuba - Violentadas en Cuarentena." Violentadas en Cuarentena, 11 November 2020. https://violentadasencuarentena.distintaslatitudes.net/portfolio/cuba/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Orgeron, Devin. 2008. *Road movies: From muybridge and méliès to lynch and kiarostami*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Padilla Carroll, Valerie. 2016. "The Radical Possibilities of New (Feminist, Environmentalist) Domesticity: Housewifery as an Altermodernity Project." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 23, no. 1 (March 2016): 51–70. https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/isw013.

Padrón Cueto, Claudia. 2022. "Nuevo Código Penal cubano: La eterna supervisión del régimen." CubaNet, 30 June 2022. https://www.cubanet.org/destacados/nuevo-codigo-penal-cubano-la-eterna-supervision-del-regimen/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. 2000. "Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and the International Division of Reproductive Labor." *Gender & Society* 14, no. 4 (August 2000): 560–80. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124300014004005.

———. 2015. *Servants of Globalization: Migration and Domestic Work*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Pertierra, Anna Cristina. 2011. *Cuba: The Struggle for Consumption*. Coconut Creek, FL: Caribbean Studies Press.

———. 2008. "En Casa: Women and Households in Post-Soviet Cuba." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 40, no. 4 (November 2008): 743–67. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022216x08004744.

———. 2018. *Media Anthropology for the Digital Age*. Medford, MA: Polity Press.

Phillips-Carr, Chelsea. 2019. "Up on the Roof - POV Magazine." POV Magazine, 24 April 2019. https://povmagazine.com/havana-from-on-high-pedro-ruiz/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Pierre le moyne d'iberville 1686-1702 | musée virtuel de la nouvelle france." Accueil | Musée canadien de l'histoire. Accessed 25 June 2022. https://www.museedelhistoire.ca/musee-virtuel-de-la-nouvelle-france/les-explorateurs/pierre-le-moyne-diberville-1686-1702/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Pilkey, Brent, Rachael M. Scicluna, and Andrew Gorman-Murray. 2015. "Alternative Domesticities: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach to Home and Sexuality." *Home Cultures the Journal of Architecture, Design and Domestic Space* 12, no. 2 (September 2015): 127–38.

"Population immigrante selon certains lieux de naissance, la catégorie d'admission et la période d'immigration, Canada, provinces et territoires, régions métropolitaines de recensement et régions à l'extérieur des régions métropolitaines de recensement, Recensement de 2016." Statistics Canada: Canada's national statistical agency / Statistique Canada : Organisme statistique national du Canada, 17 October 2017. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dv-vd/imm/index-fra.cfm. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Pothier, Bernard. "Biography – LE MOYNE D'IBERVILLE ET D'ARDILLIÈRES, PIERRE – volume II (1701-1740) – dictionary of canadian biography." Home – Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Accessed 25 June 2022. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_moyne_d_iberville_et_d_ardillieres_pierre_2E.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Potter, Evan. 2020. "From "Stardust" to Statecraft: The Canada Council for the Arts and the Evolution of Canadian Cultural Diplomacy." *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 75, no. 2 (June 2020): 199–219. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702020935147.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2006. *The Empire of Love*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822388487.

Powell, Catherine. 2017 "Postcard From Havana: A Lack of Childcare Leaves Cuban Women in Quandary." Council on Foreign Relations, 24 May 2017. https://www.cfr.org/blog/postcard-havana-lack-childcare-leaves-cuban-women-quandary. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Pries, Ludger, ed. 2001. *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century*. New York: Routledge.

Pritchard, Annette, and Nigel J. Morgan. 2000. "Privileging the Male Gaze." *Annals of Tourism Research* 27, no. 4 (October 2000): 884–905. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(99)00113-9.

Québec, Canada. Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec. *Coopération Québec – Cuba 2017-2018 Critères et Modalités de Soutien des Projets*. Call for Applications. Adopted 13 September 2016.

https://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/content/documents/fr/IN_coop_qc_cuba.pdf. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

———. Ministère des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec. *Déclaration commune entre le Ministère des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec et le Ministère du Commerce Extérieur et de l'Investissement Étranger de la République de Cuba*. Declaration. Adopted 13 September 2016. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Ramírez, Daniela Blandón. 2020. "Economía - Cuba: ¿qué cambia en adelante con la reforma monetaria más grande en décadas?" France 24, 12 December 2020. https://www.france24.com/es/programas/economía/20201212-cuba-qué-cambia-en-adelante-con-la-reforma-monetaria-más-grande-en-décadas. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Redondo, Ignacio. 2012. "Assessing the Appropriateness of Movies as Vehicles for Promoting Tourist Destinations." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 29, no. 7 (October 2012): 714–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2012.720156.

República de Cuba. Ministerio de Justicia. *Ley No. 62, Código Penal*. Adopted 29 December 1989. *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba*, 30 December 1989. https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/es/ley-no-62-codigo-penal. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Resik, Magda. 1996. "WOMEN-CUBA: Single Mothers Confront Hard Life." *IPS-Inter Press Services*, 28 May 1996. https://www.ipsnews.net/1996/05/women-cuba-single-mothers-confront-hard-life/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Revista LatinArte. "Sur les toits Havane - Rencontre en direct avec le réalisateur Pedro Ruiz." Heure 23 du Grand Marathon - 31 octobre Sur les toits Havane - Rencontre en direct avec le réalisateur Pedro Ruiz et le Commissaire Cinéma Darien S. Nicolas Presence en Ligne - Festival LatinArte 2020 Angela Sierra Direction Général. YouTube, 2 November 2020. Video, 34:59. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfgeOJ_w5h4.

Rice, Charles. 2006. *Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*. New York: Routledge.

Richards, Keith. 2003. *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Richter, Amy G. 2005. *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity (Gender and American Culture)*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Riley, Roger, Dwayne Baker, and Carlton S. Van Doren. 1998. "Movie Induced Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 25, no. 4 (October 1998): 919–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(98)00045-0.

Riley, Roger, and Carlton S. Van Doren. 1992. "Movies as Tourism Promotion." *Tourism Management* 13, no. 3 (September 1992): 267–74. https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(92)90098-r.

Rioux, Marcel. 1980. *Les québécois*. Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil.

Ritter, Archibald. 2009. "Canadian-Cuban Economic Relations: Past, Present and Prospective." In *Our Place in the Sun: Canada and Cuba in the Castro Era*, edited by Robert Wright and Lana Wylie, 246–82. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rivero, Yeidy M. 2015. *Broadcasting Modernity: Cuban Commercial Television, 1950-1960*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.

Roberts, Katherine Ann. 2018. *West/Border/Road: Nation and Genre in Contemporary Canadian Narrative*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Rodriguez, Juana Maria. 2003. *Queer Latinidad: Identity, Practices, Discursive Spaces*. New York: New York University Press.

Rodríguez Fuentes, Laura. 2020. "Cuba Slow to Act Over Domestic Abuse." Home | Institute for War and Peace Reporting - IWPR, 25 August 2020. https://iwpr.net/global-voices/cuba-slow-act-over-domestic-abuse. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Rosenberg Weinreb, Amelia. 2011. *Cuba in the Shadow of Change Daily Life in the Twilight of the Revolution*. University Press of Florida.

Ruoff, Jeffrey. 2006. "Introduction: The Filmic Fourth Dimension: Cinema as Audiovisual Vehicle." In *Virtual Voyages: Image and Travel*, edited by Jeffrey Ruoff, 1–22. Durham: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822387947-001.

"RVQC | Prix et Jurys." Les Rendez-vous Québec Cinéma. Accessed 2 July 2021. https://rendez-vous.quebeccinema.ca/prix-et-jurys. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Safa, Helen. 2009. "Hierarchies and Household Change in Postrevolutionary Cuba." *Latin American Perspectives* 36, no. 1 (January 2009): 42–52. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582x08329042.

Said, Edward W. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf.

Sánchez Martín, Juan Luis. "Pedro Álvarez de Villarín | Real Academia de la Historia." DB-e | Real Academia de la Historia. Accessed 25 June 2022. https://dbe.rah.es/biografias/46257/pedro-alvarez-de-villarin. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Santucci, Nicolas. 2014. "Desseins et origines du carnet de voyage." *Libération*, 5 December 2014. https://www.liberation.fr/voyages/2014/12/05/desseins-et-origines-du-carnet-de-voyage_1155735/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Sassen, Saskia. 1991. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 1998. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: New Press.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 1990. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

"Ser juzgado por 'peligrosidad predelictiva' lleva a una condena segura en Cuba." DIARIO DE CUBA, 13 January 2020. https://diariodecuba.com/derechos-humanos/1578937728_8714.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

"Siddha, Siddhā: 48 definitions." Wisdom Library; The portal for Hinduism, Sanskrit, Buddhism, Jainism, Mesopotamia etc... Accessed 15 August 2022. https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/siddha. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Sierra Liriano, Raquel. 2019. "Refuerzan lazos históricos La Habana y Mobile." *Tribuna de La Habana*, 19 October 2019. http://www.tribuna.cu/capitalinas/2019-10-17/refuerzan-lazos-historicos-la-habana-y-mobile. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Silva, Lis. Interview by the Author, March 9, 2022.

Simone, A. 2004. "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg." *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (October 2004): 407–29. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-16-3-407.

Simoni, Valerio. 2014. "Coping With Ambiguous Relationships: Sex, Tourism, and Transformation in Cuba." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 12, no. 2 (April 2014): 166–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2014.915093.

———. 2015. *Tourism and Informal Encounters in Cuba*. New York: Berghahn Books.

———. 2019. "Tourism, Migration, and Back in Cuba." *American Anthropologist* 121, no. 3 (July 2019): 755–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13307.

Smith, Joan, and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. 1992. *Creating and Transforming Households: The Constraints of the World-Economy (Studies in Modern Capitalism)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, Michael Peter. 1992. "Postmodernism, Urban Ethnography, and the New Social Space of Ethnic Identity." *Theory and Society* 21, no. 4 (August 1992): 493–531. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00993487.

Smith, Michael Peter, and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, eds. 2017. *Transnationalism From Below*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351301244.

Smith, Raymond T. 1973. "The Matrifocal Family." In *The Character of Kinship*, edited by Jack Goody, 121–44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511621697.011.

Sontag, Susan. 2001. *Where the Stress Falls: Essays*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Sosin Martinez, Eileen. 2017. "Cuban Women Without a Man." *Havana Times*, 20 January 2017. https://havanatimes.org/features/women-without-a-man/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Spradley, James P. 1979. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stanton, Victoria. “Descanse y Disfrute.” November 7, 2019.

Stock, Ann Marie. 2009. *On Location in Cuba: Street Filmmaking During Times of Transition*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Stout, Noelle. 2015. "When a Yuma Meets Mama: Commodified Kin and the Affective Economies of Queer Tourism in Cuba." *Anthropological Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (2015): 665–91. https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2015.0040.

Stromberg, Peter G. 2009. *Caught in Play: How Entertainment Works on You*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Sutton-Smith, Brian. 2001. *The Ambiguity of Play*. Harvard University Press.

Teisceira-Lessard, Philippe. 2020. "C'est le bordel !" *La Press Plus*, 24 July 2020. https://plus.lapresse.ca/screens/78c6513d-7643-4aa8-b559-201bb88c8ecb__7C___0.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

teleSUR tv. 2021. "Díaz-Canel Bermúdez: La orden de combate está dada, a la calle los revolucionarios." El Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y Presidente de la República, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, compareció en vivo en cadena de radio y televisión nacional para desmentir campañas de déscredito contra el país y explicar los últimos sucesos de protestas en varios puntos de la geografía cubana. Fabiola López comenta sobre estas declaraciones. teleSUR. YouTube, 11 July 2021. Video, 8:52. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_ewAUfSUyc.

Tooke, Nichola, and Michael Baker. 1996. "Seeing Is Believing: The Effect of Film on Visitor Numbers to Screened Locations." *Tourism Management* 17, no. 2 (March 1996): 87–94. https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(95)00111-5.

Torres Santana, Ailynn, Maria Stavropoulou, Fiona Samuels, Valia Solís, and Rocío Fernández. 2020. *"La mujer en la casa y el hombre en la calle" Empoderamiento económico de las mujeres jóvenes y normas sociales en Cuba*. Havana City: ODI, February 2020. https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/The_woman_in_the_house_the_man_in_the_street_

young_womens_economic_empowerment_esp.pdf. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Tougas-Fréchette, Gabrielle. Interview by the Author, October 13, 2020.

Trudel, Roxane. 2021. "Féminicide: Un fléau qui ne touche pas que le Québec." *Le Journal de Montréal*, 17 June 2021. https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2021/06/17/feminicide-un-fleau-qui-ne-touche-pas-que-le-quebec. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Van Glabeke, Joséphine. 2016. "Cuba-Québec: Une ouverture à sens unique ?" *L'Exemplaire*, 21 May 2016. https://www.exemplaire.com.ulaval.ca/reportages/cuba-quebec-une-ouverture-a-sens-unique/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Van Hoeij, Boyd. 2017. "All You Can Eat Buddha': Film Review." *Hollywood Reporter*, 18 September 2017. https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-reviews/all-you-can-eat-buddha-1040563/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Vankin, Deborah. 2016. "L.A. Helps Havana's Vintage Neon Signs Glow Again: 'It Marks a New Era, a Return of the Light, of Hope'." *Los Angeles Times*, 16 June 2016. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-havana-light-20160613-snap-story.html. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Vega Vega, Reina Victoria. 2019. "Les Latino-Américains à Montréal - Histoire Canada." Histoire Canada - Histoire Canada, 25 November 2019. https://www.histoirecanada.ca/consulter/colonisation-et-immigration/les-latino-americains-a-montreal. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Voss, Michael. 2017. "Cuba Offers Tax Cuts, Other Motherhood Incentives as Population Ages." CGTN America, 22 September 2017. https://america.cgtn.com/2017/09/22/cuba-demographics-seniors-motherhood-birth-rate. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Ward, Susan, and Tom O'Regan. 2010. "Fashioning the Boutique Location: Remaking the Gold Coast as an International Production Location." In *Locating Migrating Media*, 79–101. New York: Lexington Books.

———. 2009. "The Film Producer as the Long-Stay Business Tourist: Rethinking Film and Tourism From a Gold Coast Perspective." *Tourism Geographies* 11, no. 2 (May 2009): 214–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616680902827175.

Weber-Feve, Stacey. 2010. *Re-Hybridizing Transnational Domesticity and Femininity: Women's Contemporary Filmmaking and Lifewriting in France, Algeria, and Tunisia*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

"Who We Are - Islas." Islas. Accessed 15 September 2022. https://cubaislas.com/elementor-753/. (Last Accessed September 15th, 2022)

Wiley, Lana. 2010. *Perceptions of Cuba Canadian and American Policies in Comparative Perspective*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Williams, Linda. [1989] 1999. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wright, Robert. 2009. "Northern Ice: Jean Chretien and the Failure of Constructive Engagement in Cuba." In *Our Place in the Sun: Canada and Cuba in the Castro Era*, edited by Robert Wright and Lana Wylie, 195–223. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Wylie, Lana, Luis René Fernández Tabío, and Cynthia Wright. 2018. "Introduction – Diplomacies: Constructing Canada and Cuba." In *Other Diplomacies, Other Ties*, edited by Lana Wylie, Luis René Fernández Tabío, and Cynthia Wright, 3–36. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442622593-002.

Zarza Blanco, Zaira. 2015. "*Roots and Routes: Cuban Cinemas of the Diaspora in the 21st Century."* Doctoral Thesis, Queen's University.

Films Cited

Amari, Raja. *Les Secrets* (2009)

———. *Satin Rouge / Red Satin* (2002)

Bay, Michael. *Transformers: The Last Knight* (2017)

Blouin, Eric. *Au volant d'une belle cubaine / Driving a Beautiful Cuban.* (2019)

Bossé, Réal & Claude Legault. *19-2* (2011-2015)

Brevig, Eric. *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (2008)

Bureau, Martin & Luc Renaud. *Playa Coloniale / Colonial Beach* (2012)

Carpenter, John. *They Live* (1988)

Christian, Roger. *Battlefield Earth* (2000)

Cortina, Christian de la. *Generation Wolf* (2016)

———. *Transit* (2008)

Côté, Denis. *Vic+Flo ont vu un ours* / *Vic+Flo Saw a Bear* (2013)

Crowly, John. *Brooklyn* (2015)

Díaz, Rolando. *Los pájaros tirándole a la escopeta* (1985)

Dionne, Luc. *District 31* (2016-2022)

Dolan, Xavier. *Laurence Anyways* (2012)

Downs Colaizzo, Paul & Brett Mahoney. *MacGyver* (2016-21)

Fellini, Federico. *8 ½* (1963)

Fridell, Daniel. *El Médico: The "Cubatón" Story* (2011)

Gary Gray, F. *The Fate of the Furious* (2017)

Girard, François. *Hochelaga, terre des âmes / Hochelaga, Land of Souls* (2017)

Giroux, Yan. *À tous ceux qui ne me lisent pas / For Those Who Don't Read Me* (2018)

Gutiérrez Alea, Tomás. *Fresa y chocolate* / *Strawberry and Chocolate* (1993)

Heidenberg, Rebecca & Kristen Brown. *Queens of the Revolution* (2020)

Ivens, Joris. *Carnet de viaje* / *Traveller's notebook* (1961)

James, Dominic. *Angle mort* / *Blind Spot* (2011)

Jarmusch, Jim. *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984)

Jodorowsky, Alejandro. *La montaña sagrada* / *The Sacred Mountain* (1973)

Kalatozov, Mikhail. *Soy Cuba* (1964)

———. *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957)

Kubrick, Stanley. *Barry Lyndon* (1975)

Lagarde, Ian. *All You Can Eat Buddha* (2017)

———. *La Savane Américaine / American Savannah* (2008)

———. *Merce* (2017)

Letterman, Rob. *Pokemon: Detective Pikachu* (2019)

Marling, Brit & Zal Batmanglij. *The OA* (2016-2019)

Martin, Alex B. *99 envies d'évasion Mexico / 99 Reasons to Escape to Mexico* (2020)

———. *Bluffer sa vie / To Bluff in Life* (2012)

———. *Cuba Merci Gracias* (2018)

———. *Résiste! / Resist!* (2021)

Melkis, Viveka. *The Fence* (2020)

Millar, Gavin. *Belle Époque* (1994)

Mouawad, Wajdi. *Littoral* / *Coastline* (2004)

Nabatian, Kaveh. *Sin La Habana / Without Havana* (2020)

Padrón, Juan. *Elpidio Valdez y el fusil / Elpidio Valdez and the Musket* (1979)

———. *Vampiros en La Habana / Vampires in Havana* (1985)

Plante, Pascal. *Les faux tatouages / Fake Tattoos* (2017)

Podz. *10 ½* (2010)

———. *Le sept jours du Talion / The Seven Days of the Talion* (2010)

———. *Maffia inc.* (2020)

Pollack, Sydney. *Havana* (1990)

Ruiz, Pedro. *Animal Tropical à Montréal* (2007)

———. *La dérive douce d'un enfant de Petit-Goâve* (2009)

———. *Philemon chante Habana* / *Philemon Sings Havana* (2012)

———. *Sur les toits Havane / Havana from on High* (2019)

Russo, Joey & Anthony Russo. *Avengers: Endgame* (2019)

Sica, Vittorio De. *Ladri di biciclette* / *Bicycle Thieves* (1948)

Varda, Agnes. *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962)

Villeneuve, Denis. *Arrival* (2016)

Yari, Bob. *Papa: Hemingway in Cuba* (2015)