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**ARTICULATING A DIASPORIC IDENTITY: THE CASE OF LATIN
AMERICAN FILMMAKERS IN QUEBEC**

Thesis presented to the
Graduate Studies Faculty of the University of Ottawa
as part of the Master in communications program
towards the diploma as Master in Arts (M.A)

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Al comienzo podrá hablar de inmigrantes, pero pronto se tratará de mixturas profundas, partes constitutivas de su memoria, de su nueva sensibilidad. El mestizaje, más que una palabra, es un horizonte de posibilidades, y el arte es, de todas las herramientas humanas, la que mejor sabe enseñarnos de qué manera delicada y eficaz esas mezclas culturales llevan a nuevas soluciones.

- William Ospina (2009)

SUMMARY

The flow of immigrants to Canada continues to increase steadily. Questions regarding identity are thus unavoidable in order to understand how diasporic identities are constructed within a multicultural Canada. An important contribution to this debate is embedded in the cinematographic expressions that immigrants produce. Such cultural products serve not only as means to represent themselves, but also to negotiate their positions in regards to Canadian society, as well as their countries of origin. The Latin American community is an interesting example, as multiple cultures, nations, histories, and identities are included within it.

This study critically analyzes how identity is represented in the films produced by Latin Americans in Quebec. The analysis takes into account the films, the filmmaker's perspective and the conditions these documentaries were produced in. Given these elements, this research looks at how a Latin American identity is constructed from the diaspora, and what kind of cinematographic strategies the filmmakers use to articulate such an identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. State of Affairs

Immigration to Canada has almost tripled in the last 20 years (Statistics Canada, 2005). A recent study of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC, 2006) reveals that the number of immigrants accepted into the country has increased enormously. In 1986, 99,351 newcomers entered Canada, by 2006 that number augmented to 251,649, with a steady increase each year. Furthermore, the government of Canada has predicted that with the current entrance rate, by 2017 roughly one out of five people in Canada will be a member of a visible minority, of which 70% will be immigrants (CIC, 2006, Statistics Canada, 2005).

With such a high number of people flowing into the country, it becomes essential to recognize the ways in which immigrants understand their culture and identity. Immigrants inevitably inhabit a place in-between cultures and temporalities: far away from their places of origin and identification, they are confronted with a new culture, and a new way to 'be' in the world. The constant influx of immigrant affords the opportunity to explore the formation of new and heterogeneous immigrant communities and identities.

The cinema provides a medium for dialogue and negotiation of such issues. Film and video production constitute an alternative medium of representation, helping groups of people who are excluded from mainstream media to reclaim their voices and images. Today, digital video technologies have enabled a wider access to produce and distribute audiovisual products. Evidence of this is the rising of on-line video uploading services such as YouTube, and Google video, as well as an increase of independent video production, especially for non-traditional distribution platforms as the Internet and mobile devices.

Although there is still a long way to go, with regards to the development of cinema produced by immigrants and minorities, in the last few years there has been an increase of such types of productions, which have been recognized nationally and internationally. Leach (2002), in an essay on Quebecer and Canadian cinema, wrote that a national cinema is usually defined “by canons of film that supposedly accord with national myths and by the exclusion of films that do not” (p. 4). However, there are certain issues at stake when defining Canadian cinema,

To talk of Canadian cinema, in the first instance, seems oxymoronic. After all, with the majority of Canadian screens showing nothing but American feature films, and the majority of our audiences seeing and enjoying these same films, where can one begin to conceptualize a properly “Canadian cinema”? Can “Canadian cinema” simply mean the films made, in the titular sense, in Canada, which some Canadians perhaps have seen? (MacKenzie, 1999, par. 5)

Multiculturalism and immigration are seminal components in the process of understanding what a national identity is. In this sense, immigrant cinema not only plays an important role as a means of representation and integration of immigrant communities, but it also contributes to the debate in regards to Canadian identity and culture.

Filmmakers from South-Asian, Chinese and Middle-eastern origins have taken the lead in the development of immigrant cinemas in Canada (Moorti, 2006; Gittings, 2002; MacKenzie, 1999). Several studies have been dedicated to their contributions to the Canadian cinematic panorama, as well as their developments as a *diasporic* cinema (Moorti, 2006; Marks, 2000). Nevertheless there are filmmakers from other origins that are slowly joining this group. This is the case of filmmakers of Latin American origin.

Latin Americans are a growing immigrant community in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2007). Following the latest Canadian citizenship and immigration report, the amount of immigrants coming from South and Central America has significantly augmented; there has been a steady increase of about 40% in the last ten years. Also, in 2006, people from this area

accounted for almost 10% of the newcomers (CIC, 2006). As for the province of Quebec, these numbers are consistent. This group is one of the fastest growing visible minorities in the province. The 2006 census found 89,500 Latin Americans living in Quebec; an increase of 50.4% since 2001. Latin Americans represented 13.7% of the visible minority population in Quebec, the third largest in the province (Statistics Canada, 2006). Also, Quebec is the depository of the second largest conglomeration of Latin Americans in Canada, with more than 65% living in the Montreal region (Statistics Canada, 2007).

The term 'Latin American' describes a group which comprises people coming from twenty different countries, with distinctive, yet similar idiosyncrasies, histories and geographies; not to mention different races, languages, and class divisions. Their experiences coming to Canada and to Quebec vary as the numerous political upheavals and diverse economic conditions of their countries of origin do; many had immigrated as refugees, temporary workers, economic immigrants, etc. As a result of the diversity of their backgrounds and experiences as immigrants, different practices, ideologies, and positions converge and differ in the films they produce. This particular experience makes these films and filmmakers, an interesting object of study, given the little attention that Canadian scholars have given to this community and their cinematographic expressions.

Latin Americans are relatively recent arrivals in Canada, and they are extremely diverse. To convey a Latin American identity is not only a matter of classifying under the same umbrella all the people coming from that region; it is about recognizing the diversity within this group, and being able to explore and criticize both shared values and contradicting discourses. In this study, I will be discussing this notion in the framework of cultural and diasporic studies. Through these lenses, identities are more than just the way we describe ourselves; they are the

points of attachment, of identification, that are “sutured” together to convey an identity under specific conditions (Hall 1996b, 2000). This approach enables the understanding of why ‘articulating an identity’ becomes a political act, and how representing it through cinema entails a cultural statement.

1.2. Research Question and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to analyze the ways in which Latin American filmmakers in Quebec articulate an identity in the diaspora, via cinematographic representations. Taking into account their cultural heritage, their experiences as immigrants, and their feelings towards their homelands and Canada, I believe there is a unique conjuncture of identity practices that are always in the process of being articulated and represented. I would like to suggest that there are multiple diasporic reconfigurations of Latin Americans in Quebec that could lead us to comprehend the process through which nationalistic identifications become transformed into a new “Latin Americanness” identity in exile, or to use Anderson’s (2006) term, a new Latin American “imagined community” in Canada.

This reflection has been the result of my own experience as a Latin American filmmaker, as well as my observations regarding the ‘movement’ of many fellow Latin Americans in the diaspora, towards a broader identity that disrupts nationalistic allegiances. At the same time, this collective action enables Latin Americans to position themselves as a group, within the larger Quebec and Canadian society. Artistic expressions have played an integral role towards such an integrationist movement, and this is why I decided to concentrate on one of those facets: the cinema. The main question of this project is: **To what extent do film directors of Latin American origin in Quebec articulate diasporic practices of identity in their films?**

This question entails the idea that the Latin American community in Quebec is indeed a diasporic community constituted by multiple 'belongings'. Also, that there is a constant negotiation with ideas of home, displacement and integration. In this way this project will consider:

- 1. To what extent does the representation of multiple practices of identity rearticulate a Latin American diasporic identity in Quebec?**
- 2. What are the cinematographic strategies used to represent this identity?**

1.3. Research novelty

Given the systematic lack of information regarding the Latin American community in Canada and in Quebec, this study constitutes a starting point to examine how this particular group has sought to represent their identity. Within the communication and film studies field, it also helps to unveil yet another contribution by immigrants to national cinemas, and in this way to put into question the essentializing and restrictive parameters of what tends to be considered as Canadian and Quebec cinemas.

Under a critical perspective, and based on the study of contexts and articulations, this study will contribute to the analysis of new immigrant communities narratives and their cinematographic representation. Such an analysis will take into account different elements; I attempt to go beyond textual analysis, by asserting the strategic positioning of such narratives within Quebec's social and cultural context.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter will explore some theoretical approaches to the study of identity, of diaspora and of its impact in the construction of a theoretical framework about Latin American identity and diasporic cinema. First I will discuss the concepts of identity and the theory of articulation, which are key terms to understanding the theoretical and methodological approach on issues of identity. Next, I will examine the concept of diaspora, and the constitution of a diasporic cinema. To better elucidate this topic, I will take into account the formation of a Latin American identity, the contributions of the New Latin American Cinema, and the influence of Latin Americans in exile.

2.1. Understanding identity

2.1.1. A conceptual survey about identity

In order to understand the process of identity formation, I will map some theoretical approaches to the identity question. Servaes (1997), Hall (2000), Tomlinson (2003) and García-Canclini (1995), among other cultural theoreticians identify two ways of conceiving identity: One relates to an essentialized, natural and fixed identity that defines and delimits the individual and the groups that he/she belongs to. The second view acknowledges identity as a process in which identity is constructed and reconstructed in the course of social interchange and individual development. It understands identity as a strategy, an articulation of multiple elements that are organized together at a specific time, in specific circumstances. As Tomlinson (2003) rightfully asserts, the former view of identity “was something people simply ‘had’ as an undisturbed existential possession, an inheritance, a benefit of traditional long dwelling, of continuity with the past.” (p. 269). Stuart Hall (2000) illustrates this fixed conception of identity, or more

concretely, cultural identity, as ‘shared culture’, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. “This oneness, underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence” of the individual (Hall, 2000, p. 234). The problem with such kind of view of identity is that it denies the possibility of change, as Spivak (1994) argues, it can be detrimental to the exploration of contemporary social realities, as it serves as an instrument to legitimize hegemonic discourses, thus keeping those that ‘do not belong’, e.g. the Other who is alienated and silent¹.

Fixed notions of identity might not correspond to the reality faced by people in our increasingly globalized world. The traffic of people, information, and goods has radically accelerated, and those boundaries that kept identities ‘safe’ are becoming less solid. Essentialist conceptions of identity have been put into question due to the accelerated intercultural exchange promoted by globalization. In fact, as Giddens (1991) explains, globalization has propelled a continuing process of ‘time-space distanciation’ a sort of “intersection of presence and absence” (p. 10-34). In *Modernity and Self-identity* (1991), Giddens argues that identity is a dynamic construction between the “self” and the “social structure”. This process, which he calls “reflexivity” (1991, p. 53), is constructed through the narratives that the individual makes of the self. For Giddens (1991), self-identity is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography. Narratives of the self are a kind of ‘reflexivity’ exercises that are used to monitor our actions. This reflexive action refers to the constant revision of social activity in the

¹ The Other is a term widely used in philosophy, anthropology, cultural and gender studies to signify a socially constructed category that emphasizes the difference and opposition of those subjects that do not accord to canons of the Self. The term mostly carries a negative connotation, which denotes the underprivileged position of the Other within societies. For gender and postcolonial studies, the term serves a description of the disadvantaged positioning of subjects that are not white western men,

light of new knowledge; therefore reflexive identities involve reflections on experience and the active construction of identities in the light of those reflections (Giddens, 1991, p. 38).

In his book, *La globalización imaginada*, Garcia Canclini (1999) suggests that we are witnessing a proliferation of spaces for cultural and sociopolitical intermediation. In a world where constant movement is the key feature, it is impossible to accept a concept of identity that remains untouched by competing discourses. Such discourses consist in ideological constructions regarding globalization, capitalism and nationalism that contrast with discourses regarding race, class, gender and displacement. The individual incorporates, juxtaposes, rejects and accepts these points of identification. Gilroy (1997) echoes this view, which is shared by other cultural studies' theoreticians (Hall, 1996a; Clifford, 1997; Grossberg, 1996), in the sense that identity is then understood as a strategic and positional concept:

Identity provides a way of understanding the interplay between our subjective experience of the world and the cultural and historical settings in which this fragile subjectivity is formed (Gilroy, 1997, p. 301).

In this way, the 'elusive' concept of identity reflects the numerous elements that integrate it. Geourgiou (2006) asserts that as a concept it implies belonging, a sense that can be real as well as imagined, but that "in either case, is central to understanding people's political and emotional attachments to other individuals and groups" (p. 19-40). This variety of belongings is not exclusive, in the sense that one "identity" does not necessarily exclude the coexistence of other "identities", and such identities might be similar or even contradictory. As Hall (1996a) asserts,

Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, are increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices, and positions. They are subject to a radical historicisation, and are constantly in process of change and transformation (p. 4)

Hall affirms that due to the changes brought about by modernity, and lately, globalization, it is fundamental to be able to understand identity as a *conjuncture* of many factors. With the multiplicity of networks, movements, and connections, the totalizing character of identities is necessarily put into question. Hall (1996a) proposes a view of identity focused on “significant difference” which constitutes not what we are but what we *become*. Such process implies, for Hall (2000), “a continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” (p. 716).

In this sense, identity is in large part shaped by the stories we tell about ourselves as well as the stories others tell about us. Such stories are being produced and reproduced through social interaction. Narratives of the self and collective memory are maintained and reinforced through communications, which enables discursive connections and identifications.

Identity is informed by the “imagined communities” (Anderson, 2006) that delineate individual and social belongingness. Through this concept, Anderson explains the birth of nationalism, as the product of a process of political, social and cultural construction. As a result of this conjuncture, an imaginary connection is produced among members of such communities (nations) now delimited within the boundaries of a nation-state. Anderson argues that a key element for the production of this imaginary link is the action of mass media. The most important role of the media in this process is to establish relationships among people and groups located at a distance. Thus these communities are imagined because “members . . . will never know most of their fellow members . . . yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). Anderson’s work becomes crucial to the understanding of identity as a construction, and the importance of communication technologies and media within that process. In this sense, immigrants’ use of cinema and other audiovisual media, will necessarily affect the way these new communities imagine themselves, as they are able to

challenge the myths of nationalism, and create transnational connections that better represent their identities.

The fixed boundaries of the imagined communities that informed our identities have been expanded, shrunken, over imposed, and blurred. This change has been evident in the ways social and human sciences are approaching the study of identity. In this sense Geertz (1983) argues that in the case of anthropology, the old positivistic, totalizing approaches have given way to a more pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended perspective. Indeed, social sciences are turning to human sciences for theories and methods that better fit the study of identities, which are no longer understood within a static framework.

Moreover, the fields of cultural studies, post-colonialism, transnational and globalization studies share the view that identities are relational, contextual, and heterogeneous. For example, Brah (1996), a feminist transnational studies author, reminds us about the constructed nature of identity, i.e. it integrates in itself a number of multiple elements. Such combination, acceptance and rejection of multiple elements, is “simultaneously subjective and social, and is constituted in a through culture” (Brah, 1996, p. 20). Indeed, Brah puts an accent on the fact that contemporary approaches to identity, demand attention to how,

differences, multiplicities, and commonalities are played out; how these are constituted, contested, reproduced or re-signified in many and varied discourses, institutions, and practices (...) since identity is process, what we have is a field of discourses, matrices of meanings, narratives of self and others, and configuration of memories (p. 246-247).

Ultimately, identity formation has to do with the way discourses about belonging circulate in society and with the way individuals appropriate, reject or transform them in order to make sense of the world and of him/herself as a subject. It is through the analysis of identity formation that one may grasp the way dominant ideologies circulate. At the same time, the

process of *becoming* points to the ways alternative, peripheral, and subaltern discourses are articulated (Spivak, 1994).

For the purposes of this study, I will construe the notion of identities as heterogeneous articulations composed of similar, as well of contradictory elements that create unique forms of identification at a given moment. The purpose of this study lies in the *process* by which Latin Americans in the diaspora construct their identities, how in displacement these individuals put together different elements to articulate a given position within the society they live in. Such process is reflected in the narratives they construct through different media, in this case, cinema. Baker and Galasinski (2001) recognize that the value of describing ourselves as “multiple’ lies in “recognizing the variety of vocabularies, range of purposes and numerous sites of activity and social relationships that are involved in being a person in a contemporary society” (p. 42). As Maalouf (1998) insightfully describes, and with his words I would like to end this global definition of identity, the recognition of the multiplicity of identities only leads to a better understanding of others:

Dès lors qu’on conçoit son identité comme étant faite d’appartenances multiples, certaines liées à une histoire ethnique et d’autres pas, certaines liées à une tradition religieuse et d’autres pas, dès lors que l’on voit en soi-même, en ses propres origines, en sa trajectoire, divers confluent, diverses contributions, divers métissages, diverses influences subtiles et contradictoires, un rapport différent se crée avec les autres, comme avec sa propre « tribu ». (p. 44)

2.1.2. The Theory of Articulation

So far I have mentioned that identity formation is possible through the arrangement of various elements, positions, subjectivities in a given context. It is now important to further explore the concept of ‘articulation’ in order to be able to understand the linkages that enable the construction of identities. Daryl Slack (1996) argues, that the theory of articulation was heir of

the developments of neo-Marxist theory and Cultural Studies. She argues that it is above all a theory of contexts, in which structures of power are identified, in order to identify the ways discourses are formed and reproduced. Daryl Slack cites Hall to expand on this argument, thus articulation is “the form of the connection that *can* make unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage that is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time” (Daryl Slack, 1996, p. 121).

A theory of articulation attempts to point out the ways that discourses, and thus identities, are put together, in a specific context, at a given time. By doing so, it enables the analysis of various elements that come together to articulate a certain discourse, at a given moment. Most importantly, articulation allows for re-articulation. By accepting the constructed and contextual nature of discourse formation (in this case discourses about identity), it recognizes the possibility of re-articulating such discourses in different ways. In other words, articulation is *the means by which otherwise unrelated elements in a culture are arranged into a meaningful whole*. Hall mobilizes the concept of articulation both as a theory and methodology. In an interview with Lawrence Grossberg, he explains that it is “a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects” (Hall, 1996b, p. 141).

Laclau and Mouffe’s *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (1977) inform Hall’s theory of articulation. In their work, the authors analyze the ways in which certain notions become dominant in a culture, given the relative openness of the social in heavily industrialized nations. This openness results in a “non-necessary belongingness” for the various elements of a given social formation, or indeterminacy to the way that history, culture, economics or the

material world, and social actors come together to form dominant discourses. However Hall (1996b) contributes to this theory, by explaining that an articulation is a process in which relations and positions are articulated and re-articulated in order to challenge dominant ideology. In regards to Hall's arguments, Trimbur (2006) traces the way articulation was developed since Marx. He explains that in *The German Ideology*, both Marx and Engels pointed out that the construction of society is due to forces of power and history that are already determined. However, post-Marxist scholars, have criticized the deterministic nature of Marxist theory.

Trimbur identifies the work of Raymond Williams, as a pioneer critique of Marxism, by trying to develop a model that is not based in the inescapable laws of history, as described by Marx, but "upon the limits and pressures of specific historical, social, and cultural conjunctures" (Trimbur, 2006, para. 4). Williams criticizes traditional Marxist views of a "fixed and necessary correspondence between cultural practices and social structures" (in Trimbur, 2006, para. 5). Following Williams' arguments, the field of cultural studies tried to develop a model that integrates the former view, along with recent poststructuralist notions about the indeterminacy or non-necessary correspondence of discourses, practices, and structures.

The concept of articulation is relevant for this study, as I will analyze the way dominant discourses about identity have been revised within the experience of diaspora. Moreover, I will look at material constructions of such articulations, that is, the films produced in this context, which are discursive and cinematographic articulations, which at the same time, produce novel forms of understanding identity.

The 'cultural politics' underlying articulation in Cultural Studies is concerned with the possibility of writing, uttering, putting together new stories with 'new languages' that embody values with which we concur and that we wish to be taken as true (Baker, et al., 2001). Also,

such politics deal with the possibility to challenge ‘regimes of truth’ and naturalized discourses. I does so, by allowing the possibility to combine many elements together, for as dissimilar as they might be, and produce challenging discourses. As Grossberg (2007) asserts, articulation theory allows for the examination of contexts, and the observation of the way in which discourses, meanings and messages are ‘sutured’ together, in a sort of ‘radical contextualism’.

The theory of articulation helps us understand the ways discourses are being produced, reproduced, and represented. Analyzing cultural products through this optic entails the understanding of the socio-economic context in which they are reproduced, as well as the different discourses that together create such representations. In the case of films made by immigrants, it is important to take into account how film encodes the tensions of immigration, adaptation and resistance.

In sum, articulation relates to the connection of various elements (similar or different) that come together at a given time in order to produce meaning. The ways discourses are articulated allow us to understand power relationships within society. Taking into account the idea of identity as an articulation of multiple elements and practices, I will now proceed to analyze how the construction of a Latin American identity is here understood as an articulation.

2.1.3. Latin American Identity as an Articulation

The idea of a Latin American has been a theme of critical reflection since before independence from Spain. In fact, since the conquest of the America’s in the XV century, identities have been constructed and contested due to the massive changes in demographics brought about by the Spanish invasion, the indigenous extermination, and the massive African “migration” (Bakewell, 1997). After the wars of independence, nation-states were established,

and a new era of national community-building started. However, a united Latin America was a project largely debated when independence from Spain became feasible at the beginning of the XIX century. Simon Bolivar, one of the key characters in the independence of the northern nations of South America, advocated for a united Latin America based on a common history, culture and idiosyncrasy (Bakewell, 1997).

It is not the purpose of this study to delve with the history of Latin America, however, I will point out certain elements of such an identity, which already gives us hints about the articulation of many similarities and differences within the framework of a Latin American identity.

If we examine closely the links between the peoples from Mexico to Argentina, we will find a myriad of characteristics that are anything but homogenous. Just as national identities, the imagined community of Latin America had been constructed through the intersection of discourses of all kinds. From the glorification of a 'pure' indigenous past, to the celebration of a mixed culture, contemporary understanding of 'Latin American shared identities' has been mainly supported by media (Martin-Barbero, 1991; Garcia-Canclini, 1995). Indeed, the widespread reach of media, has assured the construction of discourses that proclaim a specific way of interpreting and fomenting a series of "social, political, and even aesthetic conventions shared by the citizens of the continent" (Castro-Gomez, 1996, p. 61). In his analysis of culture and modernity in Latin America, Brunner (1992) argues that late XX century Latin America seems to be like a "Labyrinth-city" that he describes as *Tamaramerica*, a place where identities are sutured and undone continuously. In this way, as Castro-Gomez (1997) elucidates, cultural identity in Latin America must be thought of as "a constant process of negotiation" (p. 65 my translation). We must locate this identity "in the symbolic linkages, discursive re-localizations

and cultural hybridities” (Castro-Gomez, 1996 p. 66, my translation), which will expose the “small histories” beyond national allegiance, and take into account different dimensions of identity like gender, race, class, etc.

The idea of a Latin American identity serves a negotiating space to expose the exclusionist nature of national discourses. Garcia Canclini (1999) proposes the notion of a “Latin American space’ because it holds the co-existence of many identities: “The indigenous, the Afro-American, the European, *latinidad*, *tropicalidad*, converge and drift apart depending on the case” (1999, p. 103, my translation). In this sense, I will use the term Latin American to indicate the numerous elements that co-exist, combine and juxtapose among the peoples whose place of birth is located within this extensive territory South of the Bravo River.

2.2. Diaspora and diasporic identity

Once the concept of identity as an articulation is understood, we can move on to analyze the concept of “diasporic identity”. Following the definition of *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1969), ‘diaspora’, comes from the Greek *diaspeirein* “to scatter about, disperse”, from dia- “about, across” and *speirein* “to scatter” (p. 411). However, the term *spererein* has to do more with the act of spreading, sowing seeds across a terrain for them to grow. This image is fundamental with the term of diaspora, as it does not necessarily refers only to the act of scattering as such but with a dispersal that will grow and bring about new offspring.

The term “diaspora” has mostly been associated with the Jewish communities throughout the world, however, with the accentuation of people’s movement, in our globalized world, the term now refers to “diverse groups of displaced persons and communities moving across the globe” (Braziel & Mannur, 2002, p. 2).

2.2.1. Understanding Diaspora

“Diaspora” at its simplest, could be defined as the dispersal of peoples from their original homeland. Butler (2001) argues that although the term may include various elements, most scholars agree upon three basic features of the diaspora: scattering, relationship with an imagined or actual homeland, and the consciousness of being part of a transnational group (p. 192).

French sociologist Stephane Dufoix (2003) argues that until the mid 80s, the term is used without a real effort to define it. It served to name certain populations living outside a “territoire de référence” (p. 21). Dufoix argues that four populations were frequently referred to as diasporas: The Jews, the people from African origin in Europe and the Americas, the Palestinians, and the Chinese.

The rise of ethnic and diasporic studies was greatly influenced by post-modern theories; Dufoix suggests that it became an offspring of the works of Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard and Gilles Deleuze. Postmodernist theory had an echo within the social sciences and within this context a new vision of diaspora was developed. The classic view of a point of departure and the maintenance of an original identity in spite of dispersion shifted upon the postmodern reflexion based on “l’identité paradoxale, le non-centre et l’hybridité” (Dufoix, 2003, p. 27). Dufoix acknowledges the subsequent contribution of the works of James Clifford, Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall for the development of the field.

Paul Gilroy has extensively written about the Black diaspora. The author places diaspora as oppositional to ‘national histories’ (Gilroy, 1997, p. 318), he asserts that a ‘diaspora consciousness’ is valuable precisely because of its mixed nature, “a hybrid and recombinant form, that is indebted to its ‘parent’ cultures, but remains assertively and insubordinately a bastard” (p. 323). Indeed, ‘diaspora’ is a concept that problematizes the cultural and historical

dynamics of belonging, because it stands “opposed to the distinctively modern structures and modes of power orchestrated by the institutional complexity of nation-states” (Gilroy, 1997, p. 329). Perhaps Gilroy’s most celebrated term is the concept of the ‘changing same’. Taken from African-American writer LeRoi Jones (in Gilroy, 2003, p. 50), it refers to the idea that there is a ceaseless process of *becoming* inherent to the diasporic subject; in it, the subject becomes an ‘open signifier’, that is an open representation, that seeks to celebrate the multi-positionality and living memory of such a subject (p. 51). Thus, the diasporic consciousness allows the bypassing of binary oppositions (continuity/rupture, centre/periphery) to a more complex co-existence.

The notion of coexistence and multiplicity, previously described when talking about identity, finds its practical application within diasporic subjects and communities. From the moment the individual or the group leaves, when crossing a border, and inhabiting a different space, there is not only a new position that is acquired: it is the being in various positions that becomes a living possibility. At the same time, as Shome (2006) explains in her study of call centers in India, global interconnection also opens the possibility of a diasporic existence in a simultaneity of times, not only spaces.

Indeed, the movement from one place to another opens various dimensions at the same time: Space is put into question for the diasporic subject occupies a physical space, but within it there is as well, the idea of other spaces left behind or yet to come. Braziel and Mannur (2003) identify this process as a ‘dislocation-relocation’ (p. 2). Accordingly, Garcia Canclini (1999) explains that the migrant or the diasporic ‘global’ subject is one that at the same time “is offered and condemned to talk from more than one place” (p. 123). In this sense, Braziel and Mannur (2003) highlight that when approaching diasporas, it is not only a matter “of considering how are diasporic identities formed, how are they practiced, lived and experienced” (2003, p. 9).

The relationship with the homeland may take diverse forms simultaneously, from physical return to emotional attachment, to the reinterpretation of homeland cultures (Butler, 2001, p. 205). In this sense, diasporic narratives will always be tainted with expressions of displacement, loss, and nostalgia. Durham (1999) suggests that a characteristic of diasporic narratives is their 'fecundity in producing compensatory fantasies and longings' (p. 21). He also points to the fact that diasporic narratives express the discontinuity of the individual and the community, "the incompleteness of the self and the estrangement from home are their common themes" (p. 22).

The alienation of the self leads to a re-evaluation or active negotiation of 'pure' notions of home and history. In an article about cultural identity and cinematic representation, Hall (2000) argues that

The past continues to speak to us. But this is no longer a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it is, like the child relation to the mother, always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. (p. 714)

The narratives of diaspora are constructions that allow the subject not only to position itself, but to translate its past to its new context. Such multiplicity entails a "confluence of narratives" (Brah, 1996, p. 57), as histories and journeys as lived and re-lived, produced, and reproduced, and "transformed through individuals as well as collective memory and re-memory" (p. 183). This active constitution of diasporic identity is then produced in the everyday life, and reproduced through "the stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively" (Brah, 1996, p. 183). As Andacht (2007, In press) suggests, "it may be wiser to think of these displacements, as an endeavour of translation, of literarily taking one's meaning from one position to another" (p. 1). However such endeavour becomes more like a play of meanings and histories through the generation of narratives. In other words, contemporary contexts of displacement and movement

have produced a polyphonic hybrid subject (Andacht, 2007, in press) in a constant play with the past and the present, which is translated in the construction of new narratives.

Still, when it comes to diaspora, there is something problematic. For on the one hand, it acknowledges difference, and on the other, it may uniform the subjects, and even the community, not acknowledging other elements such as class or gender. Scholars like Ang (2003) have pointed out the potential paradoxes that the term “diaspora” may raise, she explains that

the transnationalism of diaspora is actually proto-nationalist in its outlook, because no matter how global its reach, the content of a diaspora, who can and cannot belong to it – is ultimately limited by a pre-given boundedness (defined in terms of race, ethnicity or religion) which is deemed or intrinsic to it (Ang, 2003, p. 9)

This is why I acknowledge a view of identity and diasporic identity as a *process*, a continuous dialogue to assert, acquire, and reject multiple characteristics of one’s identity based not only in our sense of belonging, but also in the way we regard other forms of cultural identity. For example, Clifford (cited in Grossberg, 1996, p. 98) explains that the term “diaspora” is “a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local as a distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement” (p. 92).

Placing diasporic identity as an unfinished process does not mean that one is acknowledging an underprivileged location. On the contrary, diasporic identities are strategic *positionings* that allow the subject or the community to resist, criticize and even challenge the same disadvantaged locations where dominant discourses position them in. The constitution of diasporic identities allows the construction of the subject *anew* (hooks, 1990, p. 147), through which it reformulates its own discourses and practices. Lowe (2003) elucidates this point. For her, diasporic identities “include practices that are partly inherited, partly modified, as well as partly invented”, they also include “the practices that emerge in relation to the dominant representations that deny or subordinate [diasporic identities] as Other” (p. 136)

2.2.2. The Diasporic Space

Following displacement (voluntary or not), the subject is readily confronted to the question of his/her own identity. The individual is called to position him/herself in a process to reaffirm, reject or translate identity. The issue at stake then is that the individual will be “floating” between multiple belongings, and how, at a given time, in a specific context, the individual will articulate, that is, associate certain components of different identities.

It is now relevant to speak of a diasporic identity as one that is constructed through journeying within at least two worlds. The diasporic position entails a dimension between home and homeland. As Ang (1998) rightly asserts, “a diasporic consciousness [is] an existential condition that becomes understood and reconciled through the myth of a homeland from which one is removed but to which one imagines one actually belongs” (par. 5). This constant travelling and translating makes the diasporic subject one that vividly lives the process of identity construction. Naficy (2001) describes this ‘condition’ as “liminal subjectivity and interstitial location” (p. 35), i.e., a subject that is located in-between spaces, capable of positioning him/herself in multiple locations. This in-between space corresponds to Bhabha’s ‘third space’. Bhabha (in Rutherford, 1990, p. 210-212) reminds us of the importance of the ‘third space’ as a space of negotiation of one’s identity, where the decolonized subject is able to re-position himself and translate its history. The third space is a location where difference is acknowledged, and it is brought about by the rejection of a universality of culture. The importance of this argument is that it encourages a movement to revisit the past and articulate a new present, through a process of recognizing difference. Re-location means new forms of viewing and understanding the world.

There is yet another element that is important to take into account about diaspora, and that is its collective, associative character. Naficy (2001) notes that contrary to exile, which he defines as “forced displacement with a prohibition to return” (p. 11), diaspora entails a necessary sense of collectivity, a collective memory. Moreover, he adds that,

Unlike the exiles whose identity entails a vertical and primary relationship with their homeland, diasporic consciousness is horizontal and multisided, involving not only the homeland but also the compatriot communities elsewhere. As a result, plurality, multiplicity, and hybridity are structured in dominance among the *diasporans*, while among the political exiles, binarism and duality rule (Naficy, 2001, p. 14, my italics)

Up until now I have discussed the concept of diaspora and its most salient characteristics. This discussion will allow us to understand how the Latin American identity has been constructed in displacement. The liminal position of diasporic subjects places them in a space “in-between”. This liminality is produced from their negotiation between the idea of home (home country) and hostland (Canada/Quebec). In this process a new identity is then articulated, in this case, a Latin American identity that serves various purposes: position the individual within a greater community (all Latin Americans) and locate this community within the host society (Latin Americans in Canada). A diasporic Latin American identity is a positioning strategy to cope with the vague position of being immigrants, as well as position from which to narrate their own histories, not as Chileans, Peruvians, or Colombians, but as a Latin American community living and integrating the Canadian mosaic. Most importantly, this discussion elucidates how a diasporic identity is not about re-defining one’s identity, but about integrating new forms of identification that enables the construction of narratives which reflect both the pain of displacement and the pleasures of hybridity.

2.3. Diasporic cinema

Considering the violent dispersal of people, cultures and lives, we are inevitably confronted with mixed histories, cultural mingling, composite language and creole arts that are also central to *our* histories (Chambers, 1994, p. 17)

In this section I will discuss some theoretical approaches about diasporic cinema and its location within the category of national cinemas. I will map particular characteristics of this cinema that will subsequently serve as the basis of the qualitative analysis of the films and interviews considered in this study.

2.3.1. Mapping diasporic cinema

The cinema creates a space of dialogue. It provides a medium to agree, deny, differ, translate and thus articulate those different elements that seem to be constitutive of identities. Cinema provides a channel of expression and representation, and it offers a negotiating ground to question and constantly reshape cultural identity. Numerous studies from the area of transnational and diasporic cinema have brought to light aspects about it: an independent cinema made by immigrants and minorities which portrays their own views of the world, as well as a particular aesthetics. Marks (2000) describes this type of cinema as being

Characterized by experimental styles that attempt to represent living between two or more cultural regimes of knowledge, or living as a minority in the still majority white, Euro-American West.” (p. 1)

In her study of Hindu-Canadian documentaries, Moorti (2003) observes that “visual media products enable people from the diaspora to articulate community as affect, as a phenomenology of experience” (p. 358-359), in doing so, the diasporic community produces “a visual grammar that sees to capture the dislocation, disruption and ambivalence that

characterizes their lives” (p. 359). Similarly, Lowe (2003) describes these representations as “filmic migrations” that oscillate between discourses.

Cinema offers a vehicle through which the experience of immigration, integration, and accommodation can be represented. The ambiguity of the diasporic subject can be channelled through a distinctive narrative, one that “works from the perspective of exile and/or migration, from the pain as well as the freedom of displacement” (Marchetti, 1998). The creation of a different way to represent “the immigrant’s own” histories has become the landmark of this type of cinema. It is precisely through a scrutiny of their representational practices that we will be able to explore, what Moorti (2003) calls the ‘diasporic optic’, that enables the analysis of “the grammar and rhetoric of the interstice” (p. 356), that is, “the ways in which subjects locate themselves and negotiate between multiple cultural affiliations, and articulate processes of dislocation, affiliation and displacement” (Moorti, 2003, p. 357).

There are a number of terms to define the cinema produced by diasporas. Some have proposed the term “Transnational Cinema” (Shohat and Stam, 2003; Rueschmann, 2003; Göktük, 2001; Marchetti, 1998), others have qualified it as “diasporic” (Hall, 1997), “accented” (Naficy, 2001), “Intercultural” (Marks, 2000), “migrant”, “international”, “Other’s Cinema”, etc. Indeed, analysis and theory in this field is fairly new. The numerous terms found demonstrate the diversity of approaches, as well as the ambiguous location of this type of films, not yet considered as national cinema, constantly crossing borders and defying categorization.

However, the undefined position of diasporic cinema, locates it in the periphery of mainstream cinema. Naficy (2001) recognizes that many ‘independent transnational filmmakers’ have made films about their homelands, cultures and politics, but that these are often marginalized as “merely ‘ethnic’, ‘national’, ‘Third World’ filmmakers unable to reach

mainstream audiences” (p. 2). There has been a consistent lack of recognition of the ways in which such filmmakers have enriched the cinemas of both their homes and adopted lands. In this sense, Marks (2000) argues that what she calls “Intercultural cinema” is “fundamentally concerned with the production of new languages” (p. 14). The condition of being in-between cultures initiates a search for new forms of visual expression and leads to the hypothesis that many of these works “call upon memories of the senses in order to represent the experiences of people living in diaspora” (p. 20). For Marks (2000), unlike “Western ocular centrism” (the prioritization of the eye as a sense for acquiring knowledge, truth, experience), intercultural cinema embraces the proximal senses (smell, taste, touch) as a means for embodying knowledge and cultivating memory. Which is why Marks (2000) sees diasporic films as an attempt to counter Euro-American Western hegemony that proscribes a certain mode of thinking as the ‘right’ one (e.g. rational, visual), setting the terms for “what counts as knowledge” (p. 24).

Naficy (1994) advocates for the recognition of this type of films as a genre in itself, a genre that “cuts across previously defined geographic, national, cultural, cinematic, and meta-cinematic boundaries” (p. 1). Indeed, the notion of genre crossing is inherent to the definition of genre itself. As Altman (1999) explains, “all genre formation begins with a process of cycle-making creolization, combining gypsy adjectives, with established land-owning generic substantives” (p. 199). Indeed, what diasporic films presents us with is a genre formation dynamic, that reflects the very processes by which diasporic identities are constructed. This is not to say that they do not use representation strategies already “in-place”. For example, the use of the documentary genre has been a consistent tool for both Canadians and immigrants to Canada to represent their identity, however the genre in itself has continued to evolve as it

reflects the cultural, economic, technological and social conditions in which it is produced and distributed.

2.3.2. Characteristics of a diasporic cinema

In *Accented Cinemas*, Naficy (2001) identifies three types of 'accented filmmakers', i.e., exilic, diasporic, and ethnic. He considers that this classification is useful in mapping the constitutive elements of such kind of cinema, but often films do not "fall naturally within these classifications, while the majority share the characteristics of all three in different measures" (Naficy, 2000, p. 11). As for the characteristics of the accented cinema, he identifies various distinctive markers: (1) Multilinguality, direct-address and the accented pronunciation of the host-land language; (2) Visual fetishes of homeland and the past; (3) Nonlinear structure, driven by the juxtaposition of multiple spaces, times, voices, etc. (4) Border-crossing; (5) "the journey" as a central theme; (6) authorship and autobiographical inscription. The previously mentioned characteristic will be pivotal for the analysis of Latin American films in Quebec, as they constitute the point of departure for the film and text analysis to be conducted in this study.

Cinema offers a way to come to terms with the inherit ambivalence produced by immigration and integration into the new society. Having the possibility of expressing and of producing their own audiovisual products help to produce a new language, it is an audiovisual language through which the filmmakers are able to represent personal narratives.

This consideration allows me to add another characteristic of diasporic cinema that complement the ones already described by Naficy. This is the intimate, domestic, personal theme as an element of this type of cinema. This is why the study of identity representations becomes so relevant in the analysis of diasporic cinema. It is through the representation of

identity that this cinema comes to terms with its own position within the wider national and transnational cinemas. Even if identity is not the only theme developed in this type of cinema, it occupies a significant place.

Indeed, one may observe that films serve as a *performance* of identity. In this sense, diasporic filmmaking enables the “staging” of an alternative identity, that is, the action of (audiovisually) articulating multiple belongings. To understand the implications of this Ervin Goffman's ideas on social interaction and “self representation” (Goffman, 1959) is a good starting point. Goffman argues that social interactions are performances not of what we are but what we want others to believe we are,

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it (p.10)

In the same way, Judith Butler (1990) explains that identity categories such as gender are in fact performances of certain characteristics that a given gender is “naturally” supposed to possess. Just as Butler's explanation of gender formation, diasporic performance contests essential and unitary identity performances. Butler follows Goffman arguing that identities, gendered and otherwise, do not express some authentic inner “core” self but are the dramatic effect (rather than the cause) of our performances. Thus cinema provides a medium to expose hegemonic discourses that deny the possibility of fluid identities, which shift and change in different contexts and at different times.

Moreover, “by their choice of mise-en-scène, filming style, themes, characters, and editing, filmmakers inscribe themselves as author and enunciating subject of their films” (Caughie, 1981, p. 203-4). Films become the stages where identity is performed. Through the

editing of otherwise unrelated images, memories and belongings, the filmmakers are able to represent their diasporic condition. This does not mean that filmmakers have to appear on camera or that the subject has to be explicit about them, but that they use their films as “an occasion for dramatizing themselves” (Caughie, 1982, p. 205), to put forward their own stories, their own narratives. Such an action, Naficy (2001) suggests, are both “risky and highly empowering for the filmmaker – even though their films are often small, artisanal and imperfect” (p. 282).

There is yet another consideration that Naficy explores and that is often overlooked when analyzing films produced by diasporic filmmakers. Most of the studies done in the area look at the film itself, its aesthetics, narratives, texts and subtexts, and try to locate them within the framework of multi-positionality and hybridity. However, there is an important aspect that is not taken into consideration when analyzing such films, and that is, the ways they are produced. Although this study will be mainly looking at the former markers, it is important to take into account the conditions in which these filmmakers produce; simply because such conditions are necessarily reflected in the films themselves. Naficy (2001) extensively studies these elements into what he calls an “accented mode of production”, one that is located in the interstices of mainstream and alternative production,

The production process of accented films is convoluted: funding sources, languages used on the set and on the screen, nationalities of crew and cast, and the functions that the filmmakers perform are multiple (...) the telltale signs of these production difficulties are the traces they sometime leave on the films, which give a certain look and feel of “imperfection” that signifies or allegorizes exilic conditions of production” (p. 51)

This is not to say that because of the disadvantages or difficulties that the filmmaker may encounter, the quality of those films are necessarily low. Through a brief examination of diasporic cinema around the world, we can find many films of great quality made by ‘non-

nationals' which have gained international attention and which have opened the debate about what is comprehended as national cinemas. Such is the case of Deepa Mehta, Atom Egoyan in Canada, Amir Naderi, Mira Nair, Evans Chan, Gregory Nava in the U.S, Gurinder Chadha, Issac Julien, in Britain, just to name a few.²

It is important to take into account that economic and logistic conditions may be a factor in the final product. Similarly, there are challenges regarding distribution, on this topic Naficy (2001) argues, that distribution is often limited, and that "they must spend an extra effort to obtain a level of exposure" (p. 51). However, with co-production agreements, and festival circuits, diasporic filmmakers may have an opportunity to assure the production and distribution of their films, when acknowledging the "international" character of the films.

Indeed, in her study of media consumption of Greek Cypriot diasporas in London and New York, Georgiou (2006) acknowledges that diasporic publics are formed as much about the "imagining of a common origin as it is about the transnationalization of possible common imaginings, which are particular and specific to a group but also global in their relevance" (p. 136). In this sense, the mode of production and distribution of these types of films depends in part on their transnational character, which makes them cultural-specific yet global, given the similar conditions that the production and distribution of such films are subjected to. Feder (2003) indicates that diasporic filmmakers address simultaneously various audiences:

Their communities of origin; a community of immigrants with shared yet different experiences of exile, assimilation, and discrimination; their host communities of choice; and in a handful of recent cases, to a wider national audience (p. 357)

The challenges of producing as a diasporic filmmaker are numerous. Rosen (1985) explains that for example, the Arabs producing in Paris constitute a subculture in itself, one

² For further discussion about cinema and arts in the diaspora around the world consult the various articles in: C. R. Ember, M. Ember, I. A. Skoggard (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*. New York: Springer. Also, in *Accented Cinemas*, Naficy (2001) presents a large corpus of diasporic filmmakers in Europe and North America.

which subtext is a “double discontent”, an impossibility to produce in the home country (given political, social or economical conditions), and a disadvantaged position within the host culture. However, in another article, Rosen affirms that the challenges of double discontent are also arranged within a dual culture,

There is an undeniable cross-fertilization of cultures, the sparks of insight that any new experience ignites, the special reflectiveness stimulated by distance, and for those who stay long enough, the sense of double heritage (...) but the geographical displacement of Arab filmmakers is not only a mirror of existing dislocations within society. The cinema itself becomes uprooted” (1989 p. 36).

There are many challenges involved in the process of migration and adaptation to a new country/culture. They are also experienced by the filmmakers trying to find a place in both the cinemas of their host countries, and their homelands. These challenges are often represented in the topics, aesthetics, and modes of production of their films, which consciously or not reflect their liminality and multiplicity. This positioning may enable the configuration of particular practices of representation. This positioning also provides a unique location from which to produce films, but may also disable their possibilities to ‘speak’ (Spivak, 1994). It is up to the filmmaker to profit or not the advantages of a ‘diasporic optic’ that allow him/her to translate into their own articulations the particular context they are living and producing in. Cinema provides a medium to represent, to produce, to construct, and thus to perform identity. Cinematic representation allows for the translation and for the articulation of individual and community identities by performing, remembering, and dramatizing the experience of migration and accommodation, the experience of Otherness.

2.4. Latin American Filmmaking and Diaspora

2.4.1. The Lesson from the New Latin American Cinema

While evaluating the literature on diasporic and transnational cinema there was an almost inevitable mention of Third Cinema. Argentinian filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino coined this term in the article "Towards a Third Cinema" which was published in 1969. It calls for the creation and recognition of emerging alternative cinemas, mostly located in the Third World. Solanas and Getino call to use cinema as (1) a tool for consciousness rising; (2) an instrument for research and social analysis, and (3) as a catalyst for political action and social transformation (Solanas and Getino, 1983).

Third cinema not only provided an alternative to the cinema industry (Hollywood, and cinema d'auteur) but also radically counteracts it. The filmmakers called for a cinema of resistance, a cinema 'to oppose' other ideas or ideologies. The ideas crystallized in the Argentinians' manifesto were promptly echoed in the rest of Latin America. The 60s and 70s were especially prolific times, both in cinematic production as well as in the articulation of their ideas in the form of manifestos (Martin, 1997). For example, Glauber Rocha and his "Aesthetics of Hunger" (1983) pioneered the movement in Brazil, known as Cinema Novo; Fernando Birri in Argentina, founded the documentary school of Santa Fe, his ideas are reflected in "Cinema and underdevelopment" (1983); Julio Garcia Espinosa, a prolific Cuban filmmaker, founded the Cuban Institute for the Arts and Cinematographic Industry (ICAIC), and in his manifesto "For an Imperfect Cinema" he calls for an engaged cinema, an opposing cinema that shows "the process of a social problem" (1983).

R. Stam (2003) argues that Third Cinema "offered a practical production strategy which turned scarcity into a signifier" (p. 31). Various filmmakers around the world took from this

idea; the term Third Cinema was then paralleled with cinemas of the Third World. The movement became a means for the emerging countries of the Third world to speak up, to show their realities. Third cinema was used as a postcolonial vindication tool, and as channel to articulate national identities. Such was the case in Africa with the films of Ousmane Sembene from Senegal, Gillo Pontecorvo in Algeria, and Youssef Chahine in Egypt. In Asia, the films of Satyajit Ray in India and Tran Anh Hung in Vietnam are examples of the cinema as political tool³ (Armes, 1987; Pines & Willemen, 1989).

In Latin America, instead of reasserting national identities, the movement sought a continental unity through a critique of national cinemas, and the discourses that has until then informed them. Solanas and Gettino (1983) manifesto asserts how “the film act means an open-ended film; it is essentially a way of learning” (p. 20). Thus, as opposed to traditional cinema, third cinema is a “cinema fit for a new kind of human being, for what each one of us has the possibility of becoming” (p. 21). The Third Cinema movement therefore represents a consciousness of the history-making and knowledge-making aspects of film. As Pick (1993) explains the Third Cinema movement, in Latin America took a specific form, and developed into what came to be known as the New Latin American Cinema,

[The New Latin American Cinema] has served to contest traditional accounts of the specific national cinemas of the region (...) As the movement has challenged the homogenizing accounts of national cinemas, it has simultaneously sought to provide a place where diverse national and regional practices can converge. (Pick, 1993, p. 3)

The continental dream of the New Latin American Cinema that reflected the political and social realities of its inhabitants was crystallized with the creation of two landmark organisms: The film and television school of the three worlds in San Antonio de Los Baños near Havana,

³ For a complete list of filmographies please refer to *Third World Film Making* by Roy Armes and Pines and Willemen anthology *Questions of Third Cinema*.

Cuba, and the New Latin American Film Festival in Havana. It is important to highlight that Cuba served as a conjunction point to these filmmakers, especially if we take into account the radical political context of Latin America during the 70s and 80s. In this sense, the members of this movement sought to locate a common agenda, and in the process they articulated, or in fact *re-articulated* a Latin American identity. Based on a common history of exploitation, looting and injustice, and as a reaction of political and social context of the times, the New Latin American Cinema reasserted the *mestizo* character of Latin America (Pick, 1993, p. 31). It recognized the hybrid, mixed nature of the continent, a mix of three cultures (European, Indigenous and African). Latin Americans were not claiming a 'pure' identity, one fostered through nationalism, instead they embraced the idea of a *creole* identity (Hall, 1997), one that was informed by the melange of indigenous, African and European cultures, one comfortable with the hybrid character of its identity.

Pick (1993) explains that the New Latin American Cinema is intended to redefine conceptions of Latin American popular culture, by opening up spaces to those normally excluded, and to revisit "collective traditions and representations imbedded in the history of Latin American peoples" (p. 101). By doing so, the directors and intellectuals involved in the New Latin American cinema movement criticized the way national identities have been configured, that is, mostly serving the purposes of those in power; these discourses were inevitable reflected in national cinemas.

Indeed, as Lopez (2000) argues, cinema has been an essential tool to the development of nationalist discourses throughout Latin America. The author traces a history of early Latin American cinema. Within it she exposes how the medium has been linked with discourses about modernity, which served to legitimize various forms of nationalism,

In Latin America as a whole, the cinema was, from its earliest moments, closely aligned with those in power, be they wealthy and socially prominent or simply in government, and this alignment was a first step toward nationalist projects (Lopez, 2000, p. 61).

As a consequence of the appropriation of the medium by the powerful classes, the images displayed did not coincide with that of the majority of the people. In this sense filmmaker Fernando Birri rightly asserts,

The cinema of our countries shares the same general characteristics of this superstructure, of this kind of society, and presents us with a false image of both society and our people. Indeed, it presents no real image of our people at all, but conceals them, so the first positive step is they provide such an image (1983 p. 11).

In an article on Caribbean cinema and diasporic identity, Hall (2007) echoes Birri's views:

Such texts restore an imaginary fullness or plentitude, to set against the broken rubric of our past. They are resources of resistance and identity, with which to confront the fragmented and pathological ways in which that experience has been reconstructed within the dominant regimes of cinematic and visual representation of the West. (p. 225)

In this way, the project of the new Latin American cinema goes hand-in-hand with the reformulation and articulation of a "Latin American Identity", which serves as a way to put into question nationalistic discourses and the way they have fomented inequalities and discrimination. At the same time, it serves as a medium through which they negotiate their identities, by denouncing the construction of national identities by those in power. The example of the New Latin American cinema serves as an example of how a "Latin American identity" has been constructed, in some specific conditions. During the 70s and 80s most of Latin America experienced virulent forms of nationalism, embodied in dictatorships. At the same time, a continental reaction was made possible through the inspiration brought by the Cuban and Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. The articulation of a Latin American identity constituted a political and cultural strategy to counteract the devastating effects of authoritarian regimes.

2.4.2. Latin American filmmakers in exile

There is another point that I would like to address concerning the New Latin American Cinema, and its influence in the development of the cinemas by the Latin American diaspora: That is the role that exile and immigration played in the development of the movement.

Due to the upheavals and dictatorships that plagued Latin America from the 60s to the 80s, many of the filmmakers previously mentioned were led to go on exile (voluntary or involuntary). This movement towards exile extended the boundaries, both conceptual and aesthetic, of the New Latin American Cinema project. Exile, both as a notion and experience, helped these filmmakers to “broaden their thematic concerns and extended their practices beyond the affiliation with national communities” (Pick, 1993, p. 157). The fact of being displaced from their ‘homelands’ further opened up the possibility to understand themselves as part of a greater community of people. Either in other countries of Latin America, in North America or in Europe, many artists “encountered” their fellow Latin Americans in exile. This epoch forged a significant explosion of “Latin American” production in exile, especially in filmmaking and writing, this period is now known as “the Latin American Boom” (Nunn, 2001; Ocasio, 2004).

Chilean author José Donoso asserts that “exile is one of those knots of live-wires, a shared collective experience, from which the greater part of Latin American contemporary fiction derives its strength” (In Pick, 1993, p. 159). Indeed, Pick (1993) asserts that the sense of double marginality (from their countries and the host ones), of ambivalence, “is a site of struggle where identification is dialectically anchored in nostalgia and resistance” (p. 159). The resulting representations necessarily link ‘the personal with the social’. Pick (1993) observes that in this process “personal memory and self-awareness are authorized but always perform within regional and communal narrative” (p. 160). A particular characteristic (not exclusive though) of

filmmaking in exile is precisely the re-appropriation of the personal sphere in order to place oneself within discourses. Accordingly, Mercer (2003) rightly asserts that “articulating the personal and the political interrupts hegemonic logic” (p. 255).

The idea of a Latin American continental cinema solidifies from displacement. The experience of exile and diaspora contributes (although sometimes painfully) to negotiate cultural practices and, in the process, the subject discovers the richness of occupying multiple spaces, in order to articulate new identities. Chilean filmmaker Miguel Littín describes this idea thus: “I am a Chilean and a Latin American filmmaker who is also a contemporary man” (In Pick, 1993, p. 161).

2.4.3. Latin American filmmakers in Canada

In Canada, Latin Americans constitute a fairly recent immigrant group. This is reflected in the systematic lack of academic studies regarding this community, not to mention of their artistic contribution to Canadian society. A thorough research on the topic only provided a few articles, amongst them one significant study by Elena Feder (2003) from Simon Fraser University. Indeed, this article also denounces the lack of information regarding Latin Americans in Canada, or “LatinØ- Canadians⁴” as the author describes them. Feder (2003, p. 355-357) argues that there are two waves of immigration of Latin Americans to Canada, one in the 70s-80s during the times of Latin American dictatorships. During this period many filmmakers immigrated to Canada especially from Chile, El Salvador, and Argentina. The type of production favoured was documentary film, and was strongly aligned with the New Latin American cinema axiom that art is inseparable from politics. Among these artists Feder (2003) highlights the works of the

⁴ Feder uses the neologism LatinØ, rather than Latino/a since the letter “Ø” stands as “a marker of a politics and a poetics of deconstruction, both always already underpinned by gender and difference”

Chilean refugees, who pioneered the cinematographic production of documentary especially those relating to the Chilean dictatorship and the immigration experience⁵. Feder (2003) identifies a second wave that started at the beginning of the 90s and continues until now. The second immigration wave is broader and larger, as it includes peoples from Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and is mostly related to economic immigration. Filmmakers of this generation use multiple genres, especially experimental video. The documentary tradition is still very strong and continues to attract newly arrived filmmakers; however many have embarked into feature fiction film, and multimedia short film production, especially in Anglophone Canada. Feder (2003) notes that for many artists of this generation the topic of the “other within” i.e. the aboriginal populations of North and South have been widely developed,

This theme is important, first because it ties the whole continent together through a shared history of colonization and resistance adaptation spanning 500 years ... The second generation tends to engage in deeper processes of Other-identification and self-redefinition, departing from the intersections of race, ethnicity, nationality and gender, to arrive at a balkanisation of both being and seeing. (Feder, 2003, p. 361).

Most of the filmmakers she identifies as second generation are classified in her study as media artists instead of filmmakers. Amongst these artists, Feder (2003) emphasizes the works of Juan Balmaceda⁶, Claudia Medina⁷, Jorge Manzano⁸, Claudia Morgado⁹ and the creators of the Latin American experimental film festival (Alucine) in Toronto: Jorge Lozano, Sinara Roza and Guillermina Buzio.

⁵ Amongst the films talking about Chile's coup d'état there are: *I Remember Too* (1973) by Leutén Rojas; *Récits d'une Guerre Quotidienne* (1986) by Gaston Ancelovici and Jaime Barrios. Amongst the works of Chilean filmmakers portraying the immigration experience to Canada I am obliged to mention Marilu Mallet in such films as *Lentement* (1975), *Les Borges* (1986), *Journal Inachevé* (1982), and the trilogy *There is No Forgetting* (1975), directed along with Chilean exiles Jorge Fajardo and Rodrigo Gonzalez.

⁶ *Nishin* (1994), *La Shamana* (1997)

⁷ *In Between the Middle* (2001)

⁸ *Odenaag Naabndamwin/City of Dreams/Ciudad de Sueños* (1995) and *Johnny Greyeyes* (1999)

⁹ *Ode to the Chilotas* (1990), *Unbound* (1995), *Angustia* (1996), *Sabor a mi* (1997),

Most of the filmmakers either form first or second wave generations who have settled in either Vancouver, Montreal or Toronto, as the Latin American communities in these cities also grows.

Feder (2003, p. 357) acknowledges that there is support offered to Latin American filmmakers by the NFB and to curators by the Canadian and provincial arts councils. This indicates that the absence of Latin American filmmakers in the Canadian cinema panorama is not mainly due to institutional reticence, but to little control over the means of distribution of film and video in

filmmaker to represent his ambiguous position and that of the community he/she subscribes to. As in Canada, the cinematic contributions of Latin Americans (and of other immigrant communities) have been poorly document, this analysis will bring to light some considerations about the definition of Canadian and Quebec Cinema.

This research will identify specific strategies used by filmmakers in the province of Quebec to produce their films and make sense of their identities, thus situating them within the socio-economic context of film production in Quebec.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is a case study on the way a diasporic identity is articulated in the films produced by Latin Americans living in the province of Quebec. The methodological approach to this project consists of a qualitative content analysis of six texts consisting of: three documentary films and three interviews conducted with the directors of the aforementioned films.

The nature of the questions and the data related to this research object, as well as its exploratory nature, require a qualitative method of analysis. Bonneville, Grosjean, and Lagacé (2003) explain that a qualitative research seeks to explain specific social phenomena, as it is lived by its subjects. It is also based on an inductive logic, in which the specificity of the subject of study will lead to the development of a generalized theory that will be consistent with the observed facts (2007 p. 156). An inductive method also fits the anticipated theoretical framework, in the way that the analysis of specific articulations will bring about a theory of the construction of Latin American diasporic identities in Quebec, through the data gathered from the films and interviews.

3.1. Discourse Analysis

Films and interviews of filmmakers will be studied through discourse analysis lenses. The notion of “discourse” and its direct incidence in the structures of meaning have occupied a key role in the development of XXth century’s humanities. To name but a few, the influential work of John L. Austin (1962), and his notion of *performative utterance* and *speech act* provided an early linkage to the co-relation of language and action. Austin suggested that “by saying something, we do something”, and in this way language becomes performative. Structuralism, which is best represented in the works of Saussure (1974), explores language as a system that

underlies the process of signification. The meanings of language exist in relation to each other, and it is through a common structure that meaning can be uttered. This model was later criticized by post-structuralists in the rejection of single structures to a multiplicity of understandings, given that all meaning is constructed. As advanced by Foucault (1981), discourses are “systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak” (p. 58). Foucault traces the role of discourses in wider social processes of legitimating and power, emphasizing the construction of current truths, how they are maintained and what power relations they carry with them. Foucault (1981) explains the relationship between power and knowledge,

Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit, rather, that power produces knowledge...; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (p. 27-28).

Discourses are constructed through two types of processes, one that emerges and functions as a means of struggle, and at the same time, a process that serves as a means of control and constraint. In short, power is always in relation to that which resists it. By definition there are no power relations without resistance. Of course, those relations are to varying degrees strategic, tactical, and functional. Given the fact that they are asymmetrical, there are always dominant relations of power.

Cultural and postcolonial studies have made significant contributions to the understanding of discourse and representation. As Stam (2000) explains in his recapitulation of theories and academic movements influencing film theory, cultural studies focus not so much on

media specificity and film language but on 'culture as spread out over a broad discursive continuum, where texts are embedded in a social matrix and where they have consequences in the world' (Stam 2000, p. 225). For cultural studies, contemporary subjectivity is inextricably interwoven with media representations of all sorts. They recognize both high and low culture, and understand them as sites of negotiation of the individual and the collective. It opens a space to "marginalized voices and stigmatized communities" (Stam 2000, p. 226). Cultural studies seeks to explore the connections between forms of power and to develop ways of thinking about culture and power that can be utilized by agents in the pursuit of change.

Critical analysis draws from the influential work of Foucault on *Power/Knowledge* (1980) and discourse as a signifying practice that constructs and shapes the way we understand the world. Gee (1990) clarifies that discursive practices involve *ways of being in the world* that signify specific and recognizable identities. Methodologically, these theories have been applied to critical discourse analysis (CDA). Fairclough (1995), one of the leading theoreticians in regards to CDA draws on Foucault's work in order to explain that discourse helps shape and constrain our identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge and beliefs. He describes critical discourse analysis as aiming "to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes" (1995, p. 132). The purpose of this kind of analysis will be to determine how such practices of identity arise 'out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power" (Ibidem).

Fairclough (2001), developed a three-dimensional framework for studying discourse, it aims to develop three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken, written, filmed) language text, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution

and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of socio-cultural practices. This framework will be used in the analysis of the written and filmic texts. In a first instance, a basic analysis of the texts will identify discourse units and key elements that are notoriously present in the texts. On a second stage, these units of analysis will be contextualized by taking into account the way these texts were produced, distributed and signified within a specific socio-cultural framework.

3.1.1. Discourse analysis and articulation

Van Dijk (1988, 2000) explains that CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, knowledge and dominance, and the ways they are maintained and reproduced within specific contexts. This method “provides the critic with a tool for studying communication within “socio-cultural context” (2000).

The challenge was to carry out critical discourse analysis to an art form that is not only conveyed to language. At this point it is useful to remind our discussion on Articulation theory. Articulation as both a theory and a method in Cultural Studies allows me to interpret the complicated and conflicting ways in which power manifests itself in the representations and discourses within the documentaries and interviews which I analyzed. It helps understand how discourses become structured by delineating the many similarities and differences that come together to form the specific representations analyzed (i.e., the documentary films). Hall reminds us that

The so called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be articulated in different ways because they have no necessary belongingness. The ‘unity’ which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily be connected (Hall, 1996b, 135).

Analyzing films as articulations allows me to point out the process through which such films were created, the position of the filmmakers within Quebecer society, and the strategies used to convey their message. As Grossberg states, articulation is about contextualization. Understanding the environment in which documentaries are produced is fundamental to my analysis, because it delineates the conditions in which the films come to being. Consequently, articulation provides the best route to investigating representations as “the analysis of any concrete situation or phenomenon entails the exploration of complex, multiple and theoretically abstract non-necessary links” (Daryl- Slack, 2003, 119).

I see articulation in the same way as film editing. Every articulation is a montage of various elements - voices, images, colors, passions or dogmas - within a certain period of time and with a certain expanse in space. The significance of the articulated moments depends on this.

I make a number of assumptions with regards to the nature of discourse and the character of this analysis. Wodak (1999) explains that analysis should avoid easy, dichotomous explanations of the phenomena under study. Second, I aim to discover contradictions or dilemmas (Billig, 1997) underpinning the texts to be analyzed. The films are autonomous texts, as their existence is in a good measure independent of the author’s own existence; however, the filmmaker’s opinions on their views of identity and self-representation may be located in opposition to or simply differ from the films in themselves. For example, the film *Midnight Ballads*, by Diego Briceño portrays an uneven power relationship between Latin Americans and Quebecers, however his own view about this relationship is described as participatory and in-dialogue. Third, the analysis is self-referential. I realize that it is impossible not to bring into this research my own values and evaluations: since I am as well a Latin American audiovisual producer living in the diaspora. In this sense, analysis is self-interpretative: the process is laden

with the researcher's attitudes and beliefs as well as the assumption that there is no ultimately 'correct' interpretation of texts (Wodak, 1999).

3.2. Research Rationale and Data Collection

3.2.1. Rationale

The object of analysis focuses on films produced in Quebec and directed by filmmakers of Latin American origin. The reason why I chose to limit my research to this province is mainly because of the growing size of the Latin American population. according to the data gathered by the province of Quebec, immigration increased from 8.2% to 13.4% in the past five years (Government of Quebec, 2006). Furthermore, following the last census of the province in 2006, this community constituted 17% percent of the immigrant population and, 69% of the people that identified as Latin Americans were born in foreign countries. Also, almost half of the population (48.8%) arrived between 1991-2001 and 34% between 1981-1990. Finally, the majority of the people 15 years old and older are identified as first generation immigrants. (Government of Quebec, 2005).

Montreal in particular has the greatest concentration of Latin Americans in the province, and it holds 23% of the total Latin American population in Canada. In 2001, there were 56000 reported Latin Americans living in the metropolitan area. (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Another consideration is the fact that Quebec is the province of Canada where the question of cultural identity more prominently occupies public attention. In Quebec, the debate about identity is central to the political and social discourse. This social and cultural panorama turns out to be influential for the development of an identity dialogue.

In addition, Quebec has an established cinematographic industry and infrastructure. Cinema production in Quebec exceeds that of the rest of the country, which is also supported by a loyal audience and an efficient distribution system. This infrastructure facilitates the means by which immigrants have access to cinematographic production.

3.2.2. *Film Corpus*

The films chosen were selected by means of a non probabilistic method of purposive sampling. The process started by identifying one Latin American filmmaker who recommended others in a “snowball effect” (Bonneville et al. 2007). Snowball sampling is especially useful when trying to reach populations that are inaccessible or hard to find; as is the case of the filmmakers of Latin American origin, given the little distribution of their films. In the sample I tried to include a variety of nationalities of origin, in order to reflect the numerous components of the Latin American denomination. The final selection of films was also based on the accessibility to obtain a copy of the film, as well as the filmmakers’ availability to conduct an interview. The following films were analyzed:

- *Americano* (2007) by Carlos Ferrand (born in Peru)
- *Midnight Ballads* (2008) by Diego Briceño (born in Colombia)
- *The Dark Side of the White Lady* (2006) by Patricio Henriquez (born in Chile)

These films were chosen according to the following criteria : (1) They have been produced in the last five years; (2) The filmmakers have Latin American origins, and also hold Canadian citizenship; (3) The films are classified as Canadian productions following the CRTC and CAVCO’s regulation on Canadian content;¹⁰ (4) They were produced in Quebec, and (5) have a version in at least one of Canada’s official languages.

¹⁰ The Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) and the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) regulate the certification of audiovisual products, as ‘Canadian’, following a 10-point scale. To gain

I wanted to limit the number of texts analyzed to be able to conduct an in-depth analysis. I considered that three units of analysis (pairs of film and interview) would provide sufficient data in order to identify recurrent phenomena or relevant regularities, in order to trace the ways identity is articulated in these films.

3.2.3 Interviews

In order to apply the methodology and the theory used in this research, I conducted three semi-directed interviews with Latin American filmmakers, in Montreal. The interview framework furnishes the researcher a variety of pre-defined topics, and at the same time allows the interviewee to complement and to add other topics relevant to the subject (Bonneville et al. 2006, p. 175).

The questions are thus open so as to encourage the interviewees develop further reflections on their work. An interview guide was conceived which considered two main topics, their personal views on their identity and of a Latin American identity, and another one relating to the production of their films, their experience as filmmakers in Canada and in Latin America.¹¹

The interviews were carried out during fall 2008 in Montreal, at a place chosen by the interviewees. The subjects were asked to choose their language of preference, and all of them agreed to conduct the interviews in Spanish, the subjects' first language.

With this method I intended to obtain further information about the motivations and positions of the directors, as well as to gain a broader understanding of the specific circumstances surrounding the production of the films. Also, I explored their personal positions

access to public grants and aids from other Crown agencies (NFB, Telefilm) as well to be eligible for the Film and Video Production Tax Credit, a production must be certified by the CAVCO. <http://www.pch.gc.ca/cavco/>

¹¹ Refer to annexes section for the semi-directed interview questionnaire

facing the question of diasporic identities, as well as the motivations behind the themes of their films.

3.3. Data Analysis

A preliminary analysis was conducted in which the filmic and spoken texts were identified, taking into account notions of home, homeland, displacement, and nation. From this analysis, a more complete evaluation table was composed based upon the discovered indicators.

A second analysis followed, taking into account the primary results, and the ways in which the notions afore mentioned were articulated and transformed throughout the films. These findings were then compared to the directors' own discourse relating their views of identity and the ways they thought identity was represented in their films. Throughout the analysis, socioeconomic and production contexts were taken into account in order to convey Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis.

3.3.1. Film Analysis¹²

The film analysis was conducted mainly through a critical discourse analysis perspective, as explained previously. In this sense, a first analysis of the films focused on the ways discourses about identity were represented, taking into account social and cultural practices, as well as power relationships. In order to take this analysis further, a second analysis was conducted taking into account the preliminary CDA analysis, so as to observe how these discourses were articulated cinematographically. In this sense, I took into account traditional

¹² For a synopsis of the films refer to Annex 1.

cinematic elements of analysis namely: (1) mise-en-scene, (2) cinematography, (3) editing, and (4) sound (Bordwell & Thompson, 2007).

Since the object of analysis consists of film texts, it seemed convenient to take such elements into consideration, since they will aid to better exemplify the specific cinematic strategies used by the filmmakers.

3.3.2. Interview Analysis

In order to conduct a rigorous analysis of the data, I used the method described by Bonneville et al. (2007) following the three chronologic stages: Transcription of data, index cards for each text, and identification of key terms. I performed a full transcription of the interviews¹³, in order to familiarize with the content, and be able to organize it in index cards. To be able to identify the key terms, I followed Bonneville et al.(2007) suggestion regarding this step,

de façon inductive en les découpant en unités de sens, en les classant et en les synthétisant dans l'objectif de faire émerger des régularités et de découvrir des liens entre les faits accumulés (p. 196).

After having identified the main units of analysis in the interviews, I will proceed to examine it via contextualization of the filmmakers' position as diasporic subjects. This will allow me to identify power relations, periphery/centre dynamics, etc. These results will be compared with the film analysis, in order to detect discursive similarities and contradictions.

¹³ Transcripts are available upon request

3.4. Methodological limits

This study aims to look at the ways diasporic identities are practiced and represented in the context of the Latin American community in Montreal, Quebec. The specificity of the framework I used in this analysis and the specific geographical context determines my analysis, and surely restricts the generalization of the results. The specific experience of Latin Americans in Quebec may or may not resemble the experiences of the same group in other parts of Canada, however the “case study” perspective of this research allows for an in-depth analysis not only of the texts but of the context where these filmmakers are producing.

In consequence, the film corpus was quite small but it was sufficient to conduct the type of analysis sought. A larger sample of films and interviews would probably have given a more accurate panorama about the state of cinema production by Latin Americans in Quebec. Indeed, the films chosen were produced by males, between 35-60 years old, who arrived in Quebec at least 15 years ago. My corpus does not take into account the work of female artists, young emerging filmmakers, and recently arrived directors. However, I consider that given the systematic lack of research on the subject, this study represents an initial step towards more comprehensive studies on this matter.

Using critical discourse analysis as research methodology implies various considerations: (1) The single shared assumption uniting CDA practitioners is that language and power are entirely linked, and content analysis should go hand in hand with a critical contextualization of the texts. Apart from this specific consensus, there is no delineated or exact way to conduct CDA. Following Fairclough’s theory (2001), the three dimensions of analysis overlap with each other, leaving it to the researcher to evaluate the best way to undertake the analysis. For this

particular study I chose to conduct a content analysis as a first step in order to identify common themes, followed by a more in-depth contextual/discursive analysis of the units identified.

(2) As mentioned before, the researcher's own position will undoubtedly influence the way the analysis is conducted. As a Latin American filmmaker in the diaspora, this analysis is influenced by my own experiences, and in a way, it reflects my concerns regarding my own identity.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will present the main results obtained from the qualitative analysis of the films and the semi-directed interviews¹⁴. I will describe the main findings, which are divided into three main themes: the articulation of identity, cultural/discursive strategies to articulate a diasporic cinema, and film production in Montreal. For a synopsis of the films refer to Annex 1.

4.1. Diasporic documentary-filmmaking

Documentary film seems to be the preferred genre of Latin Americans producing in Montreal, or at least the one with the widest distribution. Although they do not exclusively produce documentaries, the interviewees agreed that this genre allows them to engage more actively with social issues, this is the main reason why this study specifically chose to undertake the analysis of documentary films. In regards to the films analyzed here, the filmmakers believe that it was through documentary that they felt they could best represent such topics. As Nichols (2001) argues, “filmmakers are often drawn to documentary modes of representation when they want to engage us in questions or issues that pertain directly to the historical world we all share” (p. xiv).

The type of documentary favoured by these filmmakers exists at the boundaries of mainstream documentary film. It is different from classic narrative structures because it hybridizes and transgresses them. “The imagining of community, like the genrification process, always operates dialectically, through the transformation of an already existing community/genre.” (Altman, 1999, p. 203). In this sense, Latin American documentary film in

¹⁴ Three interviews were conducted in Montreal during fall 2008. The interviewees were Diego Briceno from Colombia, Carlos Ferrand from Peru, and Patricio Henriquez from Chile. The interviews were about an hour long. The complete transcripts are found in the annex.

Quebec locates itself in and out of the Quebecois documentary tradition. It takes many elements from it but also reconfigures them within a diasporic optic. Just as the blurred themes that these films deal with, the specific genre and subject do so as well. Indeed, history and memory intertwine, in a similar way that documentary and fiction strategies, social actor and social Other inevitably blur (Nichols, 1994).

These films use strategies readily identifiable as typical of the documentary genre: being primarily expository as they involve direct address, that is, the use of voiceover narration and interviews. However, the style and mode of production could be similarly described as the 'accented cinema' considered by Naficy (2001). The author notes that existing scholarship on postcolonial cinema has tended to approach exile and diaspora as themes within films rather than as factors shaping film style (p. 20). Naficy argues that "the accented style helps us to discover commonalities among diasporic filmmakers that cut across gender, race, nationality and ethnicity, as well as across boundaries of national cinemas, genres and authorship" (p. 39). Naficy defines his use of the term "accented":

If the dominant cinema is considered universal and without accent, the films that diasporic and exilic subjects make are accented. [...] [T]he accent emanates not so much from the accented speech of the diegetic characters as from the displacement of the filmmakers and their artisanal production modes." (p. 4).

Americano, *Midnight Ballads*, and *The Dark Side* are accented documentaries because they are produced in displacement and with a clear intention to indicate the filmmaker's situation as a diasporic subject. In this sense, the films serve as means to express their concerns about their liminality, articulating the contradictions and similarities they encounter with Latin America and with Quebec and Canada. The films are accented because they are used to represent a reality normally excluded from mainstream cinema in both Latin America and Quebec. The reality of the immigrant conceived as a diasporic subject is a topic that necessarily transcends

borders and contests nationalistic discourses. In this sense, the films dispute normativity by criticizing official discourses as in the case of *The Dark Side*, or by portraying alternative realities in Quebec that clash with official discourses about multiculturalism, in *Midnight Ballads*. In *Americano*, discourse is constructed on the notion that nationalistic discourses of identity have systematically excluded fundamental elements of cultural heritage which have been conveniently erased from history. These documentaries are accented because they display their diasporic condition through the recounting of narratives; through the negotiated interactions on the planes of the self, the media, and the communities they belong to. Not only do these documentaries allow the filmmakers to voice their opinions in regards to their identities, and the various discourses that address them. They also serve as a medium through which others who have similar concerns can voice their own views: underscoring their individuality, allowing them to speak as distinct beings, as well as representatives of ideological positions and social categories.

4.2. Re-articulating an identity

The main objective of this study is to understand how diasporic identities are constructed in the film medium. Through the qualitative analysis of the texts two components were identified in the diasporic identity construction process: the questioning of fixed identities and the re-articulation of a broader identity.

4.2.1. Questioning fixed identities

The documentaries analyzed in this study exhibited a tendency to put into question, shared conventions about identities. Either by challenging nationalistic discourses of identity, or

stereotypical views of immigrants, these films served as a channel to cross and blur the boundaries of identity.

The position of the filmmakers and of many of the characters in the films is located in the margins of national identity: either because they challenge official discourses about national identity, as it is the case of the film *Dark Side*, or because it exposes practices of identity that are excluded from such a discourse, for example the case of *Americano* and its effort to represent marginalized identities generally excluded from discourses about nation and modernity, i.e. the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

These films expose how, given the movement of peoples within the American continent, the fixed notions of identity that have informed discourses about nation, religion and ethnicity are contested in the diaspora. Nationalistic discourses are set in place through their naturalization,¹⁵ which prevents the understanding of the constructed nature of such discourses, and the interests they defend. As discussed in chapter 2, regarding the two views of identity, these films evidence the fact that the very condition of the diasporic subject puts into question the essential, fixed character of identities. As Hall states,

This second position recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has intervened - 'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, [our] 'uniqueness'.

What these films expose is that a diasporic conscience is a product of rupture and displacement. Indeed, as exposed in *Midnight Ballads*, identity is a complex process, the people portrayed in the film are not at any point defining their identity; they are constantly questioning it. Their

¹⁵ Gramsci (2000) explains that hegemonic discourse mediates ideological justifications of the status quo that come to be accepted as "common sense." Similarly, anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu wrote that the ultimate objective of a discourse is the "recognition of legitimacy through the misrecognition of arbitrariness" (Bourdieu, 1994: 163). Through the proliferation of discourse, beliefs and ideas that are actually socially and historically specific are legitimized by their seemingly universal and natural appearance. Foucault (1981) has shown that once discourses become 'naturalized', they have the power to exclude those groups that are created by the texts in question.

stories are delineated by the fact that they were born somewhere else, and now they live in Quebec. The trajectories that brought them to Quebec, have made them change their perception of themselves, their communities in Latin America and in Quebec. There is no recognition of a hyphenated LatinØ-Canadian identity (Feder, 2003), but on the contrary an avoidance of categorization. For people like Mausser, Marco or Sergio in *Midnight Ballads*, who left their countries because of persecution, their identity is defined through a critical review of history and through an assessment of the ways they can re-invent themselves *anew* (hooks, 1994). Following hooks, it is precisely from the margins of traditional understandings of identity that a diasporic consciousness is represented. Briceño's production company was called Periphéria (a mix between the English, French and Spanish word), precisely because they were producing from the outside. The name of the company reveals its political and cultural dimensions, as it places the company's cinematographic project in the periphery of mainstream, national cinemas. The name necessarily reflects the diasporic space from which representations are produced, as well as the type of messages and discourses articulated in the films.

In the case of *Americano*, Ferrand explores the contradiction inherent in his idealized views of home. Confronted with a Peru that he does not recognize anymore, he re-assesses what home really means. Is Montreal his home? Does this indicate that he has to embrace a different identity? Not at all. The conclusion of the documentary is precisely that there is not such a thing as single identities. Sometimes one will feel identified with certain aspects of a culture or a community, but these points of identification may change, especially in a displacement situation. During the interview, Ferrand explained that he had always had a conflictive relation with Peru. Therefore being classified as Peruvian was, since a young age, a source of discrepancy. Now that he has lived for 30 years in Quebec, he cannot define himself as Quebecer either, even if he

relates with the political and cultural platform of Quebec nationalism. Ferrand asserts that throughout his life, he felt constrained by such categorizations and that precisely through the making of *Americano*, he was able to confront his differences and similarities with Peru, Quebec, as well as with the rest of the continent.

On his part, Henriquez also accepts to have a difficult relationship with his country of origin, not only because of the circumstances he had to flee, but because he does not affiliate with the nationalistic, elitist, and even racist discourses that have delineated through history what is to be “Chilean”. This tension is necessarily represented in *The Dark Side*, as he explores the perils of national discourses constructed to legitimize authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, with this documentary, he unveils the ways such discourses keep on permeating the borders of the Chilean imagined community. Thus the documentary plays an important role because it exposes how hegemonic discourses have directly affected and interrupted the lives of many. As Henriquez explains, “one has to end up by accepting that dictatorships do have a great power of influence in the collective memory of a country¹⁶”.

However, what is important to point out here is precisely that this realization is made from an external position. This is not to say that a critical approach of nationalist identities is only possible from displacement; but that because of the fact that the diasporic subject is located at the margins of such discourses, there is already a disposition to revise those canons that fixed identities within national, racial, and religious borders. As Hall argues, the diasporic subjects position their views of identity already “after-the-break” (2000, p. 714), that is, taking into account their liminality. The diasporic subject constructs him/herself through a critical re-appropriation of the past, and an emergent hybrid identity formation.

¹⁶ Uno tiene que terminar aceptando que las dictaduras si tienen un poder enorme de influencia en la mentalidad colectiva de un país

4.2.2. Articulating a broader identity

Given the characteristics of the identities analyzed in this study, there is a constant movement between contestation and re-articulation. That is, a continuous evaluation of the constitutive elements of one's identity. The filmic representation of the multiple elements that suture a subject's identity, allows for a re-ordering, a re-articulation of such elements. This process is clearly represented in the construction of an 'encompassing' identity that is able to integrate its multiple characters. Specifically in this context, such an identity is represented in the articulation of a Latin, Latin American or American (in the continental sense) identity. It means that the diaspora experience, for Latin Americans means to move from a single, essential identity towards an idea of identity that includes, as well as rejects certain elements that are only possible in displacement. The importance of this movement towards a broader identity is not the acquisition of a new identity but the blurring of the boundaries that normally limit our identification and belongings.

The documentaries serve as a way to represent such a movement, reflecting the specific conditions of the filmmakers as well as the subjects represented. The films provide the filmmaker with a medium to question and re-articulate issues regarding identity, here are some examples of the way this is expressed by the filmmakers:

Patricio Henriquez.- It suits me to proclaim myself to be of a wider identity, a Latin American identity. It suits me because I have friends, contacts, and an inclination for Latin American culture, which is richer than the Chilean identity by itself. It is more interesting to claim to belong from salsa to tango, and not only to Chile's Cueca;¹⁷ as well as with the cuisine, historical past, the Inca and Mayan civilization. Latin America is wide, generous, and I like that belonging, it is like a big family where I fit perfectly. And also with all the bad things it may have, with violence, with the right wing regimes, with the torturers, this is also Latin America; I don't want to idealize it...¹⁸

¹⁷ *La Cueca* is a folkloric dance of Chile

¹⁸ Me arregla proclamarme de una identidad más amplia que es la identidad latinoamericana. Me arregla porque tengo amigos, contactos, tengo un gusto por la cultura Latinoamericana, que es mucho más rica que la cultura chilena sola. Es mucho más interesante proclamarse de la salsa hasta el tango que solamente de la cueca en Chile,

Henriquez also reflects on the fact the Latin American identity is not the only kind of belonging he holds,

However I live here, not in Latin America, and at the same time, slowly, one starts to grow roots here. Then, of course I also have a Quebecer identity. Why? Because I honestly believe that this nation should be a country, because there is a specific cultural identity¹⁹.

These two passages evidence the multiple identities coexisting within the diasporic Latin American subject in Quebec. In this way, as explained in the first quote, there is a movement towards an encompassing identity that goes beyond national borders. The diasporic subject is able to conceive a Latin American consciousness as an articulation of hybridity (Garcia-Canclini, 1995). This means that the subject is able to accept, select and translate different elements of identification, in order to *become* somebody, in whom multiple identities can co-exist. In this case, Henriquez describes a double movement, one in relationship with his identification not only as a Chilean but as a Latin American; and the acceptance of a Quebec identity in dialogue with his Latin American identification. What Henriquez exposes in these two passages is the legitimacy of hybridity, as a suitable process through which the diasporic subject *chooses* what to become. He is no longer bounded by pure notions of identity. On the contrary, the diasporic subject rejoices about his condition and celebrates multiplicity. Henriquez profits from this positioning in the crossroads of identities (Chilean, Latin American, Quebecer) to represent the dangers of totalizing and pure notions of identity. Although this realization is less evident in his own film, given the specific nature of the topic, it is readily celebrated in *Americano* and

como de lo culinario, del pasado histórico, de las civilizaciones mayas, incas, América Latina es amplia, es generosa y a mi me gusta esa pertenencia, es como una gran familia en la cual me encuentro perfectamente. Y con todo lo malo que pueda tener también, con la violencia, con las derechas, con los torturadores, eso forma parte también de América, yo no la idealizo

¹⁹ Pero vivo aquí y no en América Latina, al mismo tiempo, poco a poco, muy paulatinamente, uno va echando sus propias raíces aquí, entonces claro, tengo una identidad Quebequeña. Por que? Porque creo honestamente que este país debería ser un país porque hay una identidad cultural.

Midnight Ballads. Both films construct their narratives on two stages: problematizing national identities thus exposing the anxieties of becoming a diasporic subject, and then by embracing the “pleasures of hybridity” (Görtürk, 2001). However, in all the documentaries analyzed in this study, there is an underlying recognition that identity is indeed a construction in which the subject accepts or rejects hegemonic discourses of identity, and through this process she/he is able to re-articulate the border of identity. In this sense, Briceño argues that

[Identity] is not something that you buy, something that is already tagged and ready. There is no practical guide to be a Latino, it is something like a construction, an object which is being constructed. It is an identity to which you arrive after a long process. For me it has been like a process, one that you question at the beginning and then you are able to identify with. Then you realize that there is a number of references that you recognize.²⁰

Briceño talks about the term “Latino”, which has a specific cultural connotation. In the United States, the term is used to counteract the official term “Hispanic”. This notion readily excludes other languages spoken in Latin America. For example, those countries where the official languages is Spanish, and there are many other languages alive, as in the case of Quechua and Aymara in the Andean region, Nahuatl in southern Mexico and Guatemala, and Guarani in Paraguay, among others. “Latino” is a term coined in North America to define people from the South of the Bravo River. Noriega and Lopez (1996) define the term as a form of “panethnic politics designed to redefine the national for the benefit of the specific ethnic groups subsumed under that term” (p. x). Indeed the term Latino emerges out of the efforts of civil rights struggles and grassroots social movements to achieve “radical change at the national level through the articulation of a collective identity by the Latino intelligentsia” (Noriega & Lopez, 1996, p. xii). In Canada, the official term used in defining documents like the census, is Latin

²⁰ [La identidad] No es una cosa que compras, que está ya etiquetado y está lista, y está la guía práctica de cómo ser latino, es algo que es una construcción, es un objeto en vía de construcción. Y es una identidad a la cual llegas en un proceso largo, para mí por ejemplo ha sido un proceso, un proceso, al comienzo lo cuestionas y después te identificas y te das cuenta que hay una cantidad de referentes.

American. However, as in the United States, before the re-appropriation of the concept, Latino conveyed a totalizing term, that reflected a stereotypical understanding of the community (Feder, 2003, p. 354). As Görtürk (2001) argues regarding the labeling of Turks in Germany, such concepts are problematic, because they tend to marginalize ethnic minorities by framing them as an essential Other.

Briceño is the only filmmaker who refers to the Latin American community as “Latino”, and part of this fact is due to his interactions with Latin American filmmakers in the United States. Briceño points out throughout the interview that his recent visits to the United States revealed a “different way of being Latin American” in which neither Spanish, nor the fact of having some kind of ties with Latin America are the connecting elements; on the contrary, it is the defence of a political and social project within the United States. In this sense, *Midnight Ballads* reflects Briceño’s concern about showing the reality of many Latin Americans in Quebec, and the way these people are connecting, organizing, and getting together to form a community.

The filmmakers might be voicing the experiences of the community and reflecting the conflicts raised due to their various identifications, yet, it is through their own difference, their own kind of hybridity that the filmmaker is able to *represent* a specific cultural identity. Indeed, for the filmmakers interviewed, a definitive way to make sense and explore the possibilities of their identities was possible through the making of their films. Marchetti (1998) argues that cinema aesthetics helps translate the “floating identities” of the diasporic subject. As Ferrand argues, the film aided him to both directly confront his identity, and to discover a new one that is composed of many,

I believe that the film is also a search for my own identity, it is a question, who am I? The movie has been very useful in that sense. That is, to reassure the fact that I am

Americano. I have never posed that question, so concretely; I've never been able to answer it so clearly as I did with this film. After making it, I can say I am *Americano*²¹.

For Ferrand being 'Americano' means being part of everything. Discovering, through his journey through the Americas, that he can identify with the many cultures existing from Tierra del Fuego to Nunavut. Also, as presented by the end of the film, Ferrand creates links between the people he visited, as explained in section 4.3.5., the documentary ends up describing how people from the South may identify with specific aspects of the people from the North. In this way, Ferrand ends his diasporic wandering by imagining what would happen if his friends from South America were shown pictures from the Inuits: would they recognize themselves in them? In their struggles, and their humanity?

Being a diasporic subject entails the acceptance of many identities, in this case a wider, encompassing identity. This process is not only informed by the fact of being immigrants, or by having contact with a variety of peoples and cultures, but also because they are able to make sense of this multiplicity through their films. As Hall (2000, p. 710) states, we have been trying to "theorise identity as constituted, not outside but within representation", and hence of cinema,

not as a second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists, but as that form of representation which is able to constitute us as new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak" (p. 714)

Indeed, these films allowed its creators, and the subjects they represent, a place from where to analyze their own position, by documenting and representing immigration, displacement, and cultural difference as lived by other Latin Americans.

For example, in *Midnight Ballads*, we see the case of Mauser, a geo-chemical engineer from Mexico, who was an activist in Mexico. After being tortured and blackmailed he decides to

²¹ Yo creo que la película es una búsqueda también de mi identidad, una pregunta, quién soy yo. Y la película me ha servido mucho para mí en ese sentido. O sea, de afianzar que soy americano, nunca me la había hecho la pregunta, así tan concretamente, nunca la había logrado contestar tan claramente como con esta película, al hacer esta película digo, soy un americano.

leave his country and come to Canada. He works in the cleaning business because it is the only job he was able to find, since he is still struggling with French and English. The first scene of the documentary shows Mauser going to a Latin American job agency to look for a job as a cleaner. This scene is very telling of the way identity is performed and constructed in Montreal. The owner of the company, a Peruvian, gladly receives Mauser and asks him for his work experience in cleaning. The owner assures him that working with his company is “different”, since the people who work with him are not like “Quebecers”, indeed, they care about their employees, and even organize soccer matches. This statement reveals the perception that many Latin Americans have of Quebecers, and yet it differs from the filmmaker’s view of a harmonized co-existence of Quebec and Latin American identities. The company owner who is depicted in the film places himself in a different position from the local population; he invokes the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ that excludes and demonizes the Other. Indeed, by positioning himself and Mauser on the same side, he is stating that ‘we’ have similarities, therefore share a variety of elements that position ‘us’ on the ‘same side’. The ‘we’ in the company owner’s statement stands for Latin Americans. Let us remember that Mauser is from Mexico and the owner is from Peru, even if they don’t know each other, and come from different countries, the owner strategically identifies Mauser as a Latin American. Furthermore, by stating that they care about their employees and organize activities that are familiar to Latin Americans, he is implying that they all constitute a community. The practices of identity displayed in this example consist not only in the fact that both of them speak Spanish and they play soccer, but also in that they are both in a situation of displacement. They are likely to share feelings of nostalgia for certain practices that are common there, in Latin America and which are not as common here, in Quebec.

Following this scene, Mauser enters a restaurant, which clearly displays the Colombian flag. One can infer that it is a Colombian restaurant. He orders a typical dish called 'Bandeja Paisa'²², he clearly does not know what this is because when he is brought the immense plate he seems surprised yet pleased²³. However soon after, he asks the waiter for spicy sauce (sauce that this dish will normally not have), hybridizing the plate so it accommodates both the Colombian and Mexican culinary traditions. This gesture denotes how even though there are a lot of cultural and idiosyncratic differences amongst Latin Americans, these practices are hybridized in displacement. In this case, the spicy plate serves as a symbol, of the kind of practices that compose the Latin American identity in Montreal, i.e. a myriad of different practices that come together to form a hybrid identity. Indeed, as Hall reminds us,

The diaspora experience [...] is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; Diaspora identities are those, which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (2000, 235)

Indeed, the production of a Latin American identity in Montreal comes with the recognition of similarity and difference, and the conciliation of both to create something new, a strategic positioning that allows the diasporic subject to dialogue amongst identities. Such practices are evident in the discourses the films articulate, as well as in the cinematic strategies they implement in their films, which I will explore in the following sections.

4.3. Strategies to articulate a 'diasporic' identity

The documentaries use common strategies in order to represent the particular location in which they are produced. Some of these practices have been already explored by Naficy (2001)

²² Bandeja Paisa is a plate common in N.E. Colombia, it is a copious plate composed of beans, ground meat, rice, plantain, egg and pork scratching.

²³ Let us remember that the director of this film is Colombian

in his study of 'Accented Cinemas'. Naficy argues that this type of cinema constitutes a genre in itself. I argue here that the specific characteristics that the author presents as inherent to a genre, can be found in the representational strategies that the filmmakers use to challenge genre normativity (in this case documentary), in order to articulate their particular discourses of identity. In what follows I will explore notable characteristics in both the documentaries as well as in the interviews. Six elements were identified: the presentation of social issues, multilinguality and accents, visual symbols of homeland and the past, juxtaposition of multiple spaces and times, "the journey" as a central theme and, personal memory as an empowering practice.

4.3.1. Social issues as a driving force in the articulation of an encompassing identity

A common feature of the films studied is their socio-political dimension. All of them are audiovisual representations made to document and denounce a situation of injustice, discrimination or exclusion concerning the people of Latin America living there and abroad. *The Dark Side* denounces torture practices under the Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile and the present struggle of the victims for the government to acknowledge such acts; *Americano* depicts several cases of discrimination and alienation of indigenous peoples, the murder of hundreds of women in Tijuana, Northern Mexico, as well the infamous acts of the Chilean dictatorship. *Midnight Ballads* depicts the difficulties Latin American immigrants went through while they were living in their countries of origin and when arriving in Montreal. For their part, the filmmakers firmly believe that the medium of cinema should be used to document and expose social and political issues.

This social engagement is particularly important to understand how a diasporic Latin American identity is articulated in their films. Just as their predecessors of the New Latin American Cinema, these filmmakers are using the medium to represent those people that normally are not represented, and those situations that are conveniently kept in oblivion. As I noted in chapter 2, the exile experience of a number of filmmakers in Latin America had a profound influence on the development of the New Latin American Cinema movement as it consolidated its continental appeal and informed its cultural production.

In the following passage of our interview, Patricio Henriquez explains that he is particularly interested in social documentary:

They are topics which deal with a social interpretation of reality, and with political issues. I am certainly interested in Latin America, but not exclusively, although Latin America first of all because that is where I come from. These are issues that often relate to justice, human rights, and also to questions of resistance, of people who manage to remain on their feet.²⁴

Similarly, Carlos Ferrand affirms,

Right now I am exploring the topic of exclusion: Racism, injustice, inequality among social classes. Racism has particularly obsessed me for a long time now... human kind's evil is racism. And of course, I come from a profoundly racist country such as Peru.²⁵

The interviewees felt the need to use their films to document the hardships that many people from Latin America experience. Indeed, their privileged position as diasporic subjects allows them to look at Latin America from an external perspective. The same position enables them to view Canadian and Quebecer society with a critical eye. Their "diasporic consciousness" provided them and their films with an advantageous location from where to articulate particular

²⁴ Son temas que tienen que ver con una interpretación social de la realidad, y con cuestiones políticas. Desde luego América Latina me interesa pero no solamente América Latina, pero América Latina en primer lugar porque vengo de eso. Son cuestiones que tiene que ver muchas veces con cuestiones de justicia, de derechos humanos, con cuestiones también de resistencia, de gente que se mantiene de pie.

²⁵ Ahora estoy explorando mucho el tema de la exclusión. Del racismo, de la injusticia, de la desigualdad entre las clases sociales. El racismo en particular es algo me obsesiona desde hace mucho tiempo ... el mal de la humanidad es el racismo. Y vengo de un país profundamente racista que es el Perú.

discourses of identity. The point of view through which social realities are analyzed is necessarily influenced by the position of the filmmaker. As diasporic subjects, the filmmakers are located in the interstices of cultures, which allow them to see both home and host land with a different view, a diasporic optic, “a sideways glance that looks constantly at two or more worlds and moves in different directions at once” (Moorti, 2003, p. 356). This special position becomes pivotal in the representation of Latin America and of Canada. It allows the filmmakers’ a special stand from where to look, with a critical eye, the past and the present.

For example, in *Midnight Ballads* social justice mobilization is a central issue. We see Mausser, who is a social activist, engaged with the vindication of the student and Zapatista movement in Mexico, and who, in spite of the trauma which was caused by tortures, is still engaged in informing the public about the abuses committed in Mexico. Thus we see him at an event held in French, discussing about the struggle in Chiapas. Another example is Elizabeth, engaged with the rights of workers in the cleaning industry. Even though she has a bachelor’s degree in sociology, she keeps on working as a cleaner; in this way she can be involved with the union leadership. Members of her union will try to help Marco, when he denounces his unjust lay off, and sexual discrimination suffered while working in a cleaning services company. Finally, the film follows Sergio, a former gang member in L.A. who has now become an evangelical pastor, and works for the well being of the community through his church. *Midnight Ballads* puts an accent on individuals that at first sight may seem alienated from society, but actually are community builders.

An example of the use of film as a social justice tool is without a doubt embodied in the work of Patricio Henriquez. His whole career since arriving in Montreal in 1973 has been devoted to such topics. Even if his ‘Chilean trilogy’ has been most recognized, he has produced

documentaries regarding all kinds of issues such as ideological discrimination, sexual discrimination, torture, power abuse, resistance movements, etc. However, the most recurrent topic in his work is the history of Chile after the military coup. Henriquez arrived in Canada due to political persecution, and firmly believes that as a filmmaker he has the duty to expose and document the many atrocities committed in that South American country. *The Dark Side* is indeed an instrument for denouncing. The characters depicted in the documentary have all dedicated their whole life to obtain some kind of acknowledgement from the navy about an event that institution continues to deny, as if it had never happened. Forced oblivion is the source of the great pain that these characters embody. Indeed, it is not only about the physical abuses and the humiliation suffered during the weeks when they were detained, but the official denial of the truth. Henriquez portrays the struggle of the marginalized citizens that desperately have tried to make their claim to the deaf ears of those in power. As Hall (2000) observes, "Hidden histories have played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time - feminist, anti-colonial and anti-racist" (p. 716). In this sense, this film is made to portray resistance to hegemonic and alienating discourses that have done nothing but deny the humanity of those who were savagely abused. It does so by providing a space for them to speak, to narrate the horrible acts they were subjected to, and also to document their present struggle.

As noted on chapter two, the social documentary and the New Latin American Cinema have been crucial in the production of a Latin American artistic movement. There is a long tradition regarding this type of cinema and many filmmakers²⁶ found in Quebec not only a desirable place to produce but also a niche audience. Indeed, the use of documentary, as well as the evident alignment of the filmmakers' discourse (regarding the role of cinema as a propeller

²⁶ Some of these filmmakers are Marilú Mallet, German Guitierrez, Carmen Garcia, and the ones presented in this study, Patricio Henriquez, Carlos Ferrand y Diego Briceño.

of social change) with that of the New Latin American Cinema has influenced the development of a kind of representation directed to generate questions about the social conditions of people in Canada and Latin America.

4.3.2. Multilinguality and Accents

One of the common aspects found in the analysis of both types of texts was the presence of at least two languages. Spanish was the common language used in the films. The possibility of speaking Spanish, of communicating and expressing thoughts in Spanish constitutes an empowering practice for the filmmakers. Communicating in a common language enables a special relationship, as it not only allows cultural production, but also activates structures of feeling (Grossberg, 1996). This was confirmed not only in the course of the interviews with the filmmakers (the fact that the researcher spoke Spanish played a significant role), but also in their explanations about interactions with the characters in their films. For instance, the subjects in *Midnight Ballads* still had difficulty communicating in either French or English, and the fact of having an opportunity to express their thoughts, doubts and fears in Spanish helped them articulate such issues more freely. Indeed, their skill to communicate in Spanish with the filmmaker created a 'familiar' ambience, that enabled the director to gain the confidence of his subjects and thus facilitated the 'intrusion' of the camera into their private lives. The connection was enabled by a shared language in a key factor in the formation of a Latin American belongingness. It creates an almost instantaneous affinity, which facilitates a sense of shared experience.

The conscious or unconscious inclusion of other languages was a prime factor of distinction. Conscious introduction of other languages is evident in the films; those films using

voice over narration used either French or English as the narrative language. In fact, all films released two versions: one in English and one in French. However, the narrator, who was in both cases the filmmaker himself had an ‘accented’ voice. Although narrations were grammatically correct, one could not help noticing the phonetic accents of the narrators. The sonority and rhythm of Spanish inevitably permeated their talk and gave them a particular character that necessarily exposed the narrator to be a non-native speaker of Canada’s official languages. Their accents are the prime markers of the filmmakers’ hybrid position (Naficy, 2001) between Latin America and Canada. The accent in their films also represents a transgressive practice, since it challenges the standard neutral and ‘native’ language mainly present in mainstream or national documentary. Naficy (2001) observes that the accented voices are loaded with cultural value, “as a result, accent is one of the most intimate and powerful markers of group identity and solidarity, as well as of individual difference and personality” (2001, p. 23). The accent in this case does not represent the shame of not being able to pronounce ‘correctly’ as a native. On the contrary, it is the marker of the way the narrator ‘plays’ with languages, and how he is able to transform them into his own.

This manipulation of languages is also evident in the unconscious use of multiple languages at a time. Polyglossia seemed to be a foreseeable path of the diasporic subject in Canada. Indeed, in all texts analysed there was a prominent use of multiple languages, a back-and-forth between them that enables the creation of multilingual texts. However, such multilingualism also created certain confusion. For example, all of the interviewees asked what language to use in the interviews, still all of them repeatedly used at least two languages during the interviews. Here is an example,

Diego Briceño- A person told me, very sincerely, during a job interview that in the sets, in the *plateaux de tournage*... In what language are you writing this?

ZM.-You can use whatever language you want

Diego Briceño.- Good! She told me, the worst thing we can do is to hire students at the film sets, the *plateaux de tournage*, because we don't need people to be thinking in the sets.²⁷

Note that in this passage the interviewee used two different languages for the first time, he immediately asked in what language the interview was going to be written, which denotes, not only the 'crossing' of various languages, but also a condition very much engrained in Montreal, and in the Canadian 'Official Languages' policy (Germain and Rose, 2000: 213). This switching between languages is also evident in the films, not only for the English/French narrator and Spanish-speaking characters described previously, but also in the subjects of the film themselves. An example of this is Marco, the cook/cleaner in *Midnight Ballads*. He receives a package from his family in Colombia with pictures from his adolescence, he says:

M.-This is a surprise because I've always had zero contact with my family. This is like a Pandora box

He sees one of the pictures

M.- Oh my God! (In English, but pronounced with a heavy Spanish accent, normally dropping the d at the end of the word God – Z.M.); Oh my goodness! (Pronounced "Oh my gooness" – Z.M.)

He takes another one:

M.-Oh my Go', oh my Go'²⁸.

In this example we see how Marcos combines and switches languages. Even though he was speaking in Spanish, he expressed feelings of surprise and joy in English: in an 'accented' and hybridized English. As Hall (2000) states "the subversive force of this

²⁷ The original text, DB.-Una persona me dijo muy sinceramente, durante una entrevista de trabajo, me dijo es que en los sets de filmacion, en *los plateaux de tournage*, en que idioma estás escribiendo todo esto?

ZM.-Tu utiliza todos los que quieras

DB.-Ah bueno, me dijo sabes que, lo peor que nosotros podemos hacer es contratar estudiantes de cine, en *los plateaux de tournage*, porque no necesitamos a gente que piense en los sets.

²⁸ M.-Esta es una sorpresa porque siempre he tenido cero contanto con mi familia. Es como una caja de Pandora!

- Oh my God! Oh my Goodness

Takes another one

-Oh my Go'

hybridizing tendency is most apparent at the level of language” (p. 712). In his analyses of Caribbean diasporic films, he explains that this practices “decentre, destabilize and carnivalize the linguistic domination of ‘English’ ... through strategic inflections, re-accentuations and other performative moves in semantic, syntactic and lexical codes” (Hall, 2000, p. 714). Marcos’ ‘appropriation’ of English to express his joy, not only makes evident his hybrid character, floating between English and Spanish, but also starts to map the ways he ‘plays’ with and adjusts English.

Another example of multiple languages was found in *The Dark Side*, Patricia Woodward the sister of the murdered priest in La Esmeralda, is the typical case of an exile. Even though she has evident English roots, she was born and raised in Chile. Following the *coup*, she lived in Spain, and the film documents her final return to Chile. She addresses the camera in both English and Spanish. Her husband, however, who is British, always addresses the camera in Spanish with a thick English accent. Patricia has a marked English accent when speaking Spanish as well, however, she seems to prefer to speak in Spanish when talking about her brother, and the instances she speaks in English, she does in a sort of *mise-en-scène*. One cannot but notice that these scenes are not ‘natural’, as if the director had specifically asked her to speak in English for the potential Canadian audience of the film.

In sum, the use of Spanish, as well of multiple languages, of hybrid linguistic codes, and polyglossia, are some of the characteristics, or strategies used by Latin American diasporic subjects to ‘perform’ their identity.

4.3.3. Objects/Images of homeland and the past

All documentaries analyzed in this study share a noticeable use of objects endowed with accented feelings. The portrayal of certain landscapes, monuments, photographs, souvenirs, or

letters is prominent, as they are tangible representations of the diasporic subject's longing. Accordingly, Naficy (2001) observes that they serve as "visual markers of difference and belonging" (p. 24). In *Americano*, for example, the landscape becomes the main subject of this regard. Long shots of the Andean and coastal regions are the norm, and constitute the main sections of the film. The camera acts as a silent witness to the beauty of the mountains and the sea. It moves along from one breathtaking passage to the other, in a sort of natural symphony of visual delight. This portrayal of the mountains and its inhabitants is a marker of Ferrand's longing for a land that he remembers but where he does not live any longer. This sequence is then accentuated by the appearance of a condor, a mythical symbol of the Andes, which stands for the Andes' magnificence. The condor image is also used in *The Dark Side*, it is in fact the first, establishing scene. This bird is indeed a powerful image in South America. The Incas believed that it was immortal; it was responsible for the sun to come out every morning. The condor was then adopted as national symbol in such countries as Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia, and we see it displayed in each country's shield of arms.

Aragon's (2000) explanation of the "diasporic gaze" adjusts the type of visual approach analyzed in this study: "to endow with a poetic value that which does not yet possess it, to wilfully restrict the field of vision so as to intensify expression" (p. 51). *Americano* celebrates a "diasporic gaze" of Latin American objects that constitute, for the narrator, the very representations of his memory, and what he believes is most representative of the lands he visited. Such particular representations are possible because of dislocation. These images of home are central to the way diasporic subjects mobilize memory, they embed different kinds of longings and definitions of home. This desire is represented in the aspiration to go back, and the 'comforting' images of home.

Photographs are a powerful sign in all films as they are bearers of the past; they hold within, they exist as a proof, as a reminder of other times and spaces. The photograph immobilizes a moment and embodies a desire. It does so not only by fixing an image in time, but also by setting off structures of feeling rooted in profound experiences of deterritorialization (Naficy, 2001). For instance in *Midnight Ballads*, photographs play a fundamental role in the representation of the past. The spectator is allowed into their domestic life by being guided through images of 'happier times', as it is the case of the scene when Marcos exposes to the camera a number of pictures recently received from Colombia, or when after being 'welcomed' to the Donis-Florez home (the evangelical pastors), we are immediately shown pictures of their life in California and El Salvador.

In *The Dark Side*, Maria Eliana, the activist who is also an amateur photographer, has an enormous collection of pictures of the White Lady. When she is introduced in the film, we see her in a dark room, developing a massive photo of the vessel. She jokes by saying that she thinks she has the largest collection of pictures of the White Lady: around 5000. For her, taking pictures was a tactic to defy oblivion. She states that photography has no sense if is not exposed publicly, however she has never shown her pictures to anybody, because of the fear people will think she is crazy. Due to her conflictive relationship with the vessel, Maria Eliana feels the necessity to hold to the material evidence of what happened on board. Her pictures bear witness of a truth that is publicly denied. When introducing another character, Patricia Woodward, the sister of the reverend murdered on the ship, she is holding a photograph of her brother. It is a long scene that demonstrates the strong feelings she has for her brother. While she is looking at the pictures, her voice (in off) explains the story of her brother, and her present struggle to know

the whereabouts of her brother's corpse. In this instance, the photograph serves as a reminder and a motivation to carry on with her cause, which has taken her to exile.

For the diasporic subjects, such images may sometimes be the source of internal conflict, especially when confronted with an image of 'home' that does not correspond to that longing. This case is exemplified in *Americano*, when Ferrand encounters his nanny. She represents for him the happiest, purest idea of Peru. After the first exciting moment of his arrival, one witnesses the disappointment. We start by seeing the nanny, with black hair and full of energy, remembering the years when she worked for the filmmakers' family. However, after she invites him for a tour of her humble house, where she lives with her daughter's family, we note the poor conditions she is living in. She complains that after spending her whole life taking care of others, nobody takes care of her now that she is old. The scene jumps to a second visit, where we see her with white hair (she obviously dyed her hair for the first visit), and when touring the house again, we realize that it is half-built, as she explains they have not had the money to finish it. This scene, which is placed almost at the beginning of the film is telling about the contradictions within the diasporic subject when confronted with the fading façade of an idealized home. The nanny's deterioration serves as a representation of the narrator's disillusionment in regards to his glorified memory and Peru, and quickly positions him as an 'exile', incapable of recognizing his home.

Indeed, not all images of home are a celebration; in fact, some of these images become also a site of contestation. For example, *The Dark Side* develops around one object: the Chilean training navy boat 'La Esmeralda' or 'White Lady', a prominent image of Chilean national militaristic pride, which in this case becomes the object symbolizing the tortures perpetrated on board. The film opens with the ship's arrival to the port of Valparaiso in 2004. The cheering

crowds at the pier are disrupted by a small group of protestors. We learn that in the weeks following the military coup many of these protesters or their relatives were tortured and even assassinated. We get to know a handful of the survivors, hear their harrowing stories and share their frustrations as they pursue the tireless, quixotic quest to hold the naval authorities accountable for the torture. The boat, as in *Quixote*,²⁹ appears as a giant windmill against whom the tortured people of Valparaiso are fighting against. In the most poignant moments of Maria Elena and Sergio's account of their torture, we see images of the ship through either a blue or red filter. These images are accompanied by mysterious sounds of wood cracking and boats being hit by waves. Such aesthetical strategy is widely used in horror films to accentuate feelings of suspense and desperation. However, this particular choice of filters also represents the colours of the Chilean flag. In this sense the national symbols, that many seem to be so proud of, also represent the blood of so many innocents scattered in the sea, and the fear that so many citizens had to go through, especially because of the military coup.

The images of Chile and of Latin America in general produced in these films are shaped by and respond to conditions, which exist 'here' in the diaspora. During the dictatorship years, cinema in exile constituted a major dissidence tool, and helped create international awareness of the country's situation³⁰. A considerable number of documentaries have been produced in Canada, regarding this topic. The Chilean community in Montreal has been particularly active during and after the dictatorship years. Politically speaking, the Chilean community has stood out for its political activism (Del Pozo, 2002). Henriquez's *The Dark Side* is no exception, for it not only reflects the critical dialogue that Chileans in Montreal have engaged concerning their home country, but it also addresses local audiences to engage within this process.

²⁹ *Don Quixote* or *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote of La Mancha* was written in 1604 by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. It is considered one of the landmarks of Spanish Literature.

³⁰ For more information on Chilean cinema in exile see Zuzana Pick's *Chilean cinema: Ten years of Exile (1973-83)*

4.3.3. Juxtaposition of multiple spaces and times

A common trait amongst the documentaries was indeed the transgression of traditional documentary structures for one that enables multiple representations of spaces, times and voices. The display of several spaces is evident in the way the characters or the narrator occupies at least two spaces at a given time. This basic dichotomy of home and host land, of an imagined 'home' which could be the country of origin, like the case of *The Dark Side*, or an imagined Latin America in *Americano*, is always engaging in dialogue with a 'here', a host land that also became home: Montreal. This juxtaposition is represented through the use of multiple temporalities that 'play' within the narrations.

In these films, it is mostly through the narration that this multiplicity is exposed. We see it exposed in the lack of linearity of the narrative structure, where past and present concur in a constant flow. This non-linear structure is telling of the kind of representation of identity depicted in the films. As Hall (2000) reminds us, 'identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past' (p. 707).

Some filmmakers decided to revisit that past, and go back to the original 'home'. Such is the case of *The Dark Side*, and the trilogy about Chile that this documentary completes. The documentary itself is always moving between the tragic memories of those who had to suffer torture on board the White Lady, and their tenacious attempts not to let Chilean society forget about what happened. By suggesting that the characters depicted were in fact exiles, Henriquez exposes the formation of a particular vision of Chile from the outside. This story inevitably reflects the director's dialogue between his own past in Chile and his attempt (through the documentary) to recapture memory in order to make sense of the present. Henriquez argues,

Even if we are working in issues that nowadays appear to us as if they are part of the past, or things that seem to be in the present, we are always working with memory³¹.

Briceño describes his narrative strategy as an 'onion structure' consisting in layers that necessarily are juxtaposed in order to create a whole. Just as the structures of the documentaries reveal, the constitution of a diasporic identity within and outside the films consists precisely in the layering of experiences, practices and subjectivities that constitute a coherent identity. In all cases, the documentaries work as a catharsis, between the past and the present, between here and there. These cinematic representations help create a dialogue between the visions of a 'there' in the past, and a 'here' and now. This does not necessarily traduce in a glorification of the past and a disdain for the present. Moorti (2003) suggests that "as a primary site of identification, [home] resists the multiple affiliations and shared identities that are characteristic of the diasporic experience (p. 360). However, what we see in most of the documentaries analyzed, 'home' is the prime site of dialogue and revision.

In *Americano*, the juxtaposition of spaces is also translated in the tension between South and North (America). The narrator explains that the origin of his blurred vision is his nostalgia for the South,

As soon as I step into the brand new gate in the rich north, I find myself missing the energy of the south. I film one bridge, but I'm thinking about another. In the south although melancholy is far away, the camera sniffs out the right image like a well-trained dog. Filming in the north is not easy, the camera must see through things like an x-ray machine finding reality in abstraction. In the south, my eyes take it all in, is it the fragility of life which makes it so intransient? I don't want to live in this chaos, yet it is here that I feel most alive.

³¹ Entonces como sea, que estemos trabajando en cosas que hoy día, en el presente nos parecen del pasado, o que estemos trabajando en cosas que son parte del presente actual, estamos de alguna manera trabajando con la memoria

As the previous example suggests, the concurrence of images is recorded through the camera lenses, which translate 'reality' as a sort of hybrid mix between multiple spaces and times. Henriquez comments,

Even if I didn't want to, the duality will always be there. It is unavoidable... The two lenses juxtapose and provides you with a vision of a different colour. In the same way as I could represent things from Quebec so they could be understood in Latin America. This is embedded in everything I produce. I cannot deny it, I was born in a different place and I live in another³².

4.3.4. Music and Performance

Music is the means by which Latin American expression has been most present in North American cultural consciousness. Its appeal, widespread distribution, and commercial success are witness to this trend. At the same time, music is an essential element of identification in Latin American culture, and its development runs parallel to particular politics of identity³³. From tango, to merengue, passing through Andean music and mariachi, it is simply impossible to proclaim the existence of a 'Latin American sound'; however through commoditization of popular music, there have been particular types of 'Latin American music' promoted in global markets. For example, one might take a closer look to the 'discovery,' by United States' musician Ry Cooder, of traditional bolero music recorded in the popular albums of the *Buena Vista Social Club*, and further immortalize in a documentary by Wim Wenders.

Although supposedly lost to the world after 1959 Cuban Revolution, the melodies and rhythms of this recording, and many of the featured musicians, have been familiar to Latin American audiences for several decades (Den Tandt & Young, 2004, p. 252).

³² Aun cuando no quisiera, estaría allí esa dualidad, lo que quiero decir es que es inevitable, en un momento dado las dos cosas, y que uno se haga una reflexión demasiado sabia. Si no que los dos lentes se superponen y te dan una visión con un color diferente. De la misma manera con la que podría reflejar historias de aquí que talvez podrían ser entendidas en América Latina. Esta en todo lo que hago. No puedo negarlo, osea nací en un lugar diferente y vivo en otro.

³³ For more information on the history of music in Latin America see Den Tandt, C. and Young, R.A. (2004) Tradition and Transformation in Latin American Music, in J. King (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Latin American Culture* (pp. 236-257).

In the first sequences in *Americano*, when Ferrand arrives to Lima, Peru, he portrays in two scenes a black Peruvian singer. Even if the African-Peruvian music tradition is very strong in the country, as Ferrand himself affirms during the interview, the black Peruvian singer performs bolero. In this scene, Ferrand declares that fortunately in Peru he still has family and *fiesta*. We then see a close-up of the singer interpreting *Hola Soledad* (Hello Solitude) a classic bolero composed by an Argentinean but immortalized by mythical Cuban singer Rolando Laserie. In the next scene, we see the singer in a boat along the coast of Lima singing another bolero, *Ahora Seremos Felices* (Now we will be happy) also from the same bolero music wave that permeated all Latin America. This specific musical choice for Lima, a city that he describes as being Peruvian and not Peruvian as the city of the internal exiles of the country, contrasts with the more 'traditional' musical choice in his visits to Santa Cruz in Bolivia, or to Ciudad Juarez in Mexico. Lima is where he most feels as an exile; it is the city he hates and loves, and the musical selection has more to do with his re-appropriation of identity through a wider identification, a Latin American belonging through music. On the contrary, in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, we witness a long shot of a musical performance by young indigenous men. They are playing typical instruments of Andean music (quena, flauta de pan) and they serve as introduction to his visit to a country whose population is mostly indigenous, and where the first indigenous president in the history of South America has been recently elected. In this case, Ferrand uses musical performance both to re-affirm the country's cultural heritage, and to expose linkages amongst indigenous peoples of the Americas. This contradiction reveals Ferrand's different levels of identification: In Lima, his birthplace, he feels uneasy. It is there where his condition as an outsider is most evident, and the musical theme that accompanies his visit is something as hybrid as himself. However, when visiting other places in the Andean region, he emphasizes the musical traditions, a sort of glorified past that keeps on connecting him to that land. Thus, music performance in *Americano* serves as an element of cultural re-appropriation and connection.

In *Midnight Ballads* music plays an important identification element. Remberto, a musician and Marco, a transvestite singer, meet and share the longing for Latin American music, the longing for the rhythms produced by drums and clarinets, and their desire to sing in Spanish. It is through dancing, through singing, through music playing, that Marco and Remberto have an encounter. They get together even if in their countries of origin they would probably have never met, given their different class, race and sexual orientation. It is in Montreal that all those 'differences' will be reconsidered and translated into something new, into new belongings.

When telling his story, Marco laments how he decided to leave Colombia given that his family rejected him because of his sexual preference. Although Marco also experiences discrimination in Montreal, he feels that in the city, he is able to express elements of his identity that in Colombia he had to hide. We hear the stories about his turbulent past as a stripper, the continuous feeling of being discriminated against, but also how through music he was able to free himself from all those worries. In the bar scenes, we see Marco being able to enact his identity through music: First, he is dancing to the rhythms of Remberto's band, wearing a scarf displaying the colours of the Colombian flag. In a latter scene, Marco is performing a drag show in the same bar. Both Latin Americans and Quebecers compose the audience. The latter scene constitutes the last one of the documentary: Marco, who has been struggling throughout the film, is finally able to reveal himself to the camera. This scene exposes the very condition of staging and performing one's identity that gradually gained ground in the film. Indeed, Marco's ultimate performance sums up the fact that identity construction is made through performance: "to perform oneself in films is to remember, to memorialize yourself (and your community), and to remind others that you were there –even if you were in disguise" (Naficy 2001, p. 282). This act enables Marco to defy Latin American gender normativity, in the sense that it positions him in

opposition to Latin American male stereotypes and 'traditional' gender roles of Latin American identities. Muñoz (1999) explains that hybridity and queerness are spaces of productivity where identity's fragmentary nature is accepted and negotiated (Muñoz, 1999). Indeed, Marco's case exemplifies this study's understanding of identity, because a Latin American identity representation in Quebec *is* able to articulate multiple and oppositional identifications that constitute a form of critique of a fixed Latin American identity. Through performance, Marco is able to undertake a process of self-actualization. By doing so, he defies essentializing notions of identity, and he embraces hybridity and difference. Furthermore, in the most dramatic section of the performance, Marco's face is placed (by editing) in front of one of the members of the audience, a Quebecer. He looks at his performance attentively and respectfully, as he delivers him/herself to world. This composed scene denotes the filmmaker's position about the openness of Quebecer culture.

However, it is worth noting that these musical performances also serve as a critique of the level of contact between Latin Americans and Quebecers. This is reflected in the fact that the only place where there is interaction is the bar. The acceptance of Latin American culture is only present as a form of entertainment. This fact contrasts with the filmmaker's own perception of Quebec society as open and inviting. It seems that there are different levels of acceptance, and that within that process, cultural producers are either invited to join forces (as in the case of the filmmakers) or simply regarded as picturesque performers (as the characters in *Midnight Ballads*).

Examples like these reveal the importance of music in the construction of a diasporic Latin American identity. Nostalgic longing accentuates the role of music in such a process. Indeed, music becomes the anchor point between nostalgia for their countries of origin and their new life in Montreal. Through it they *are able* to relate to each other (Latin Americans and Quebecers alike).

4.3.5. "The journey" as a central theme

We previously saw that the movement between multiple spaces and temporalities constitutes a significant element in the construction of a diasporic identity and its cinematic representation. This movement is best represented in "the journey". Indeed the journey, either physical or psychological, constitutes the central theme of the documentaries analyzed as well as a recurrent notion amongst the filmmakers. Clifford (1997) describes the journey as a figure for different modes of dwelling and displacement, "for trajectories and identities, for storytelling and theorizing in a postcolonial world of global contacts" (p. 7). He also describes it as a variety of practices "for situating the self in a space or spaces grown too large, a form both of exploration and discipline" (p. 60). From this conceptualization of travel, we can infer why the journey constitutes such a pivotal role in diasporic cinema.

These films integrate elements of "road movies", with the generic tradition of parallel journeys of internal and external discovery. The journey that structures these films is often motivated by a quest, although as a rule the experience of the journey itself proves more important, and movement functions as a catalyst for personal development.

In *Americano*, the central theme is the filmmaker's voyage, both physically throughout the continent, and psychologically through his past, in order to convey an identity. The journey offers a temporary freedom to wander in-between worlds, and to face the reality of an idealized realm. The journey was pivotal in the construction of Ferrand's identity; it serves as a symbolic link to the peoples of the Americas. The idea of the travel through the Americas is something already explored in films like *The Journey* (1992) by New Latin American cinema pioneer Fernando Solanas, and more recently in the pan-American co-production *Motorcycle Diaries*

(2004) by Brazilian director Walter Salles, about the life of guerrilla leader Ernesto “Che” Guevara.

The journey represents the possibility of connections between peoples that are geographically apart. Crossing the continent from southern Chile to Nunavut, enables Ferrand to make a link between the different people he met throughout his trip. In a sequence showing close-up portraits of Inuits, the narrator makes the synthesis of his journey,

Ayuba and his son (Quechua Indians who blessed his trip in Machu Pichu) will identify with the Inuits’ history, Fortunata (His Peruvian nanny) will see herself in them, Pablo (The Chilean filmmaker making a documentary on the disappearance of a tribe in the south of Chile) will understand that they risk to disappear like the Selkam, Cesar (his ancient DOP) will see Asia here, Carol and Fred (social workers in California) would love to give them a hand, Huppa and Taraumara (Indigenous group he encountered) will feel that they have the same blood rushing through their veins, and the women of Juarez (Women who have been massively murdered in the border town of Juarez) will recognize the onslaught of savage progress against an age-old culture, whose language and culture are being eroded at an astonishing speed.³⁴

The journey in *Americano* does not end with an arrival to ‘home’. In fact the last image shows Elisha Pijut, Ferrand’s Inuit friend, going away on a dog-slay, as if the journey will keep on going. The film ends up with a sense that there is no real ‘home’ to go to, no settled identity, but a compilation of multiple homes and belongings.

The Dark Side is a journey back to the homeland to denounce not only what happened in the past, but also to document how the past still affects the present. It seeks to document how injustice and resistance still play a fundamental role in Chilean society. For these filmmakers, the voyage helped precisely to re-discover the past through a “diasporic optic” (Moorti, 2003); to evaluate the present not in light of a longing or nostalgia, but of a critical assessment of life in Latin America. Henriquez affirms that this journey is a necessary and inevitable task of the

³⁴ Text in parenthesis added by ZM

filmmaker in the diaspora, and just as when in displacement one journeys back to the past through memory, most of the journey in the film goes on in an oneiric style.

The movie is a bit strange, from the stylistic point of view because the first part is dedicated to uncover that dark side, through a dream-like experience we tried to illustrate the events from the internal psychological world of the people that had been tortured, of those who lived through that. The second part has a *cinema verité* treatment, there is a nervous camera that follows those people tortured 30 years ago, it follows them in their present battles to obtain justice³⁵.

Henriquez introduces an interesting point as the journey I had tried to describe up until now happens on various levels: The actual trip back to Latin America, or homecoming journey, but also a psychological journey, a home-seeking journey that feeds the diasporic consciousness.

In *Midnight Ballads*, we witness a journey of a slightly different kind. The journey here is lived through the characters' memory, as they describe their journey to Canada. The audience witness their stories in a series of medium shot sequences, normally in the intimacy of their homes. Images of the past (pictures or archival footage) complement this sequences to enable the viewer to imagine the conditions of their journey to Canada. These sequences are normally interrupted with images of their work, in a sort of reality check. In opposition to the other two documentaries analyzed, *Midnight Ballads* is not a journey back home, but one of remembrance and description of the multiple journeys that compose the imagined community of Latin Americans in Canada.

All filmmakers agree that the journey theme is important since their own journeys set them off from their homes and profoundly shaped both their experiences and their identities henceforward. It is worth mentioning that all interviewees, at some point, deviated the

³⁵ Entonces la película es un poco extraña , desde el punto de vista del estilo, porque la primera parte está destinada a descubrir ese lado oscuro, a través de una experiencia un poco onírica, tratamos de ilustrar e paisaje de una manera digamos desde el lado psicológico interior de las personas que habían sido torturadas, que vivieron eso. Y la segunda parte es mas bien un tratamiento de cine real, es una cámara muy nerviosa que sigue a esa gente, que fue torturada hace 30 años atrás en sus combates actuales para obtener justicia.

conversation to describe the journey that brought them to Montreal, as well as the journeys back to their countries of origin. As for the documentaries, once the journey starts they often change character, in *The Dark Side*, the journey, which started with the arrival of the White Lady to Valparaiso, ended up being an exploration of the dictatorship victims' movement in Chile. In *Americano*, a film that started as a personal home-seeking journey ended up being a document about injustice and social inequality throughout the Americas.

4.3.6. Personal memory as an empowering practice

The style of these films provides both the filmmakers and its subjects with a distinctive voice. In this context, personal memory becomes a political intervention. Individual narratives and autobiography are central features in these documentaries; they are also an empowering strategy to contest the present through personal memory. Thus by allowing us to “see and recognize the different parts and histories of ourselves, to construct those points of identification, those positionalities” (Hall, 2000, p. 714) we are able to articulate a cultural identity.

The clearest case of this is *Americano*, which is constructed around the filmmakers' own life. The filmmaker readily identifies himself to the audience, making it clear that this film is about revisiting *his* past in order to assess the present. The film is about tracing the steps and the places he has connections with in the Americas. This fact works as a sort of excuse to portray at the same time the stories (past and present) of those people he crossed before coming to Canada.

In the same way, *Midnight Ballads* and *The Dark Side* favour the representation and enactment of personal memory, as key features of the films. The construction of identity is possible through personal narrative. In this sense, it is through the performance of one's own history that the diasporic subject is able to articulate a distinctive voice, a self-restorative

discourse through the ability to represent his own experience, doubts and anxieties. This is particularly important in *The Dark Side*, where remembering not only entails the recollection of memories but the naming, the recognition through narrative of a painful past. For example, Maria Eliana, the activist, retells the tragic events of the days she was abducted at the White Lady. She recognizes at the end of her tale that it was the first time she has told the complete story of those days, as she has kept them like “ghosts in the closets”. This intimate atmosphere that enabled her to “tell” it all is achieved by two different strategies: First, by conducting the interview in her own house; this provides her with a sense of familiarity and security. This scene is a medium shot of her seated by the dining table; she is nervously caressing her photographic camera, the same one with which she has taken thousands of pictures of the White Lady which she has never shown to anybody, and thus she keeps in a drawer, also like a ghost. Two elements are important in this scene: The dinner table represents a sort of domesticity. She is in her home, where no one can harm her. Second, as she starts telling her story of torture and rape, she holds on to the camera, the only means by which she has been able up until then to express her anxiety, by obsessively taking pictures of the vessel.

The *mise-en-scène* of a police interrogation constitutes another subversive strategy. The scene starts in black and the camera moves to the right, we see Maria Eliana, sitting by a table in front of a microphone. A spotlight illuminates her face. She starts reading from a piece of paper she is holding. The story is the account, as written in a diary; she recounts the events during the 12 days she was on board of the White Lady. The camera continues to move to the right, but always back to her as in a cycle of darkness and light. However, Maria Eliana’s voice is always guiding us, taking us through her pain. In the most terrible parts of her tale, the camera always seems to turn to black, as it leaves the spectator the initiative to imagine the atrocious acts

described. This apparent questioning becomes a subversive act as she is not answering the questions of the officers, but describing her feelings, her impressions, her accounts of a story that officials tried to take away from her.

Through this exercise (also staged with Sergio, Valparaiso's ex-mayor) Henriquez attempts to reconstitute the past through remembrance. Henriquez exposes the urgency to rewrite the past, whether it is an individual identity or a community's past, in situations like the Chilean dictatorship. Thus, the work of rectification is never ending because subjects recognize themselves in the stories they tell about themselves (Valdés, 1998, p.49).

The notion of personal memory as self-restorative has been especially important for many cultures throughout the Americas. For indigenous people, African descendants and many other groups, this 'genre' offers the opportunity to 'speak up' and talk from their own perspectives³⁶. Through personal histories, they have been able to challenge hegemonic normativity and official discourses. In the same way, for the immigrants, to be able to represent themselves and their personal histories constitutes an act of vindication. The interviewees agreed that the choice to portray personal histories and memories represents a step to recuperate and display marginalized voices, and also, to construct, from the personal level, a collective imaginary.

Personal memory is a key feature to represent the diaspora perspective, not only because it allows Other voices to be heard and seen in a different manner, but because, as Garcia Canclini (1999) argues, the public existence of these histories show the 'intimacy' of intercultural contacts. These representations perform a critical function that exposes the heterogeneity of experiences that make up the 'imagined community' not only of Latin Americans, but also of Canadian and Quebecer societies.

³⁶ For a complete analysis of the role of personal testimony in Latin America see John Beverly study on *Testimonio*

4.4. Producing in Montreal

This section analyses the main aspects of Latin American filmmakers' production in Montreal. A notorious aspect of the interviews was the repeated mention of the socio-economic conditions for documentary production in Montreal. Two elements emerged from the interviews: Montreal's documentary scene and funding formulas.

4.2.3. Montreal's documentary scene

Documentary filmmaking is widely recognized as one of the strongholds of Canadian and Quebecer cinema. The National Film Board, and other federal and provincial agencies have widely promoted the emergence of this genre (Gittings, 2002; Marshal, 2001). In addition, in Montreal numerous festivals, and similar events have greatly promoted documentary film³⁷, not to mention the additional incentive of television channels based in the city, which foment documentary production. In fact, the filmmakers found both a niche and a community, since their first incursions, they have worked jointly with Quebec filmmakers, and it was within this group that they found the less amount of discrimination, if any at all. Patricio Henriquez affirms,

I believe that for the Latin American filmmakers who are working here, we have experienced an attitude of openness from the part of the cinematographic community. Nobody has made me feel that my past is something necessarily negative. The fact that I was born in another country is sometimes considered as a contribution to the sort of things we do here, but it doesn't put me in a situation of inequality. I've never had this impression. I think there is a lot of filmmakers that probably would tell you the same thing. It isn't because we have a different accent that we have to have problems. On the contrary, I'm telling you there is an attitude of friendliness or affection towards us that is very heart-warming. This fact inevitably ties you affectively to a certain reality.³⁸

³⁷ Some of the festivals dedicated or prominently featuring documentary film are Les Rencontres Internationales du documentaire de Montréal, Festival of Film on Arts, The Montreal human Rights Film Festival, Festival de Nouveau cinema e t nouveaux medias de Montréal, Rendez-vous du cinema Quebecois, CinemaPolitica, etc.

³⁸ "Yo creo que para los realizadores latinoamericanos que trabajan aquí, me parece que hemos tenido una actitud de apertura de la comunidad cinematográfica, a mi nadie me hace sentir en lo cotidiano mi pasado como una cuestión necesariamente negativa... El hecho de que yo haya nacido en otro país, si ellos lo consideran como un aporte al tipo de cosas que hacemos aquí, pero no me pone en absoluto en una situación de desigualdad. Y nunca he

The affinity between the Latin American and Quebec documentary film community is directly linked to the fact that in Quebec the question of identity is one of the uttermost importance. Their minority condition in regards to the rest of Canada, and the particular development of Quebec nationalism, has made of identity an unavoidable topic. This has been evident in their film production, as Poirier (2004) asserts, “Il semble exister, au Québec, un lien étroit entre cinéma et politique, entre le cinéma et l’identité collective québécoise” (p. 2). Most of this nationalistic feeling has been translated into film, and indeed documentary film has accompanied such developments. Carlos Ferrand affirms that such questioning is very stimulating,

What I like about living in Quebec is that everybody is asking him/herself who he/she is. Quebecers, indigenous people, Colombians, everybody is asking what am I. This appears to me to be very sound, even more so than the answer. To ask oneself who am I? is one of the most enriching questions one can ask; not so much because of the answer but because of the doubt itself.³⁹

Montreal is one of the most cosmopolitan cities of Canada, and indeed very diverse in terms of ‘multiculturalism’. Language and identity in Montreal are important issues, which are constantly negotiated. One cannot evade to question if this kind of dynamic similarly occurs in Quebec city, Gatineau or Sherbrooke. Indeed, figures from the Government of Quebec indicate that among the immigrants coming to the province between 1997 and 2006, 78.4% live in the Montreal Metropolitan region. (Ministère de l’immigration et communautés culturelles du Québec, 2008).

tenido esa impresión. Yo creo que hay bastantes otros cineastas que probablemente van a decirte lo mismo, no es porque tengamos un acento diferente que tengamos problemas. Al contrario, yo te digo que hay una actitud de simpatía hacia nosotros que es acogedora. Eso naturalmente te amarra afectivamente a una realidad”.

³⁹ “Lo que me gusta de vivir en Québec es que todo el mundo se pregunta quién es. Los Quebecois, los indios, los colombianos, todo el mundo dice, qué soy yo. Eso me parece muy saludable, más que la respuesta. Preguntarse quien soy yo, es una las preguntas enriquecedoras que uno puede tener. No tanto por la respuesta sino por esa duda”.

Quebec's cinematographic industry mainly concentrates in Montreal. For example, the NFB and its French counterpart the ONF are based in Montreal, as well as important funding institutions like SODEC and TELEFILM have their branches located in Montreal is a definitive incentive to facilitate and stimulate cinematographic production in the city. Following a report from the Montreal municipality, Montreal is the fifth film production centre in North America. Montreal hosts 92% of film shootings and 98% of the technical infrastructure (Ville de Montréal, 2002).

The filmmakers understand and celebrate Quebec nationalist movement, and its cinematographic expressions. However Patricio Henriquez notes that,

There is, of course, a narrow nationalism, but I don't identify myself with that one. There is an inclusive nationalism, one that invites the other, that does not have an inferiority complex; that's the one I embrace.⁴⁰

Most of the interviewees created companies or have worked in partnership with Quebec filmmakers. As an example, the film's producers analyzed here are all from Quebec,⁴¹ and the crew (except the ones on location) is mostly composed of Quebecers as well.

In general, Latin American directors have found a welcoming atmosphere amongst fellow documentary filmmakers, which by no means mirrors most immigrants' experience, or even their own experiences trying to gain access to other circuits, like the fiction cinema industry. Their immigration journey was described as "easier" in comparison, for example, with that of the immigrants portrayed in *Midnight Ballads*. The fact that they all received a post-secondary education (in Belgium, Chile and Canada, respectively) greatly improved their situation as immigrants. Carlos Ferrand affirms that the fact that he is "white, male and bourgeois" was a

⁴⁰ "Desde luego que hay un nacionalismo estrecho, pero no es con ese que yo me identifico. Hay un nacionalismo que incluye, que invita, que no tiene complejos de inferioridad, entonces eso sí".

⁴¹ *Americano* was produced by Sylvain L'Espérance, *Midnight Ballads* was produced by Yannick Létourneau, and *The Dark Side* was produced by an NFB producer, Colette Loumède.

definitive asset; in fact, he says that probably if he had been a “poor woman of colour”, his situation would have been very different. Indeed, these filmmakers have an advantaged position because of their education, class, and even gender, which might have facilitated the access to Montreal’s artistic community.

4.2.4. Funding Formulas

Producing cinema in Quebec, and in Canada involves the direct funding of films at the provincial and federal level, in the form of grants and bursaries. Public aid for artists is the base of cinematic production in the country. However, due to recent cutbacks in the cultural and arts sector, filmmakers have had to look for different ways of funding their films. Typical ‘funding formulas’ were readily described by the interviewees consisting normally on a combination of funding from -but not exclusively-, SODEC (Société de développement économique des entreprises culturelles), Arts council of Canada, Arts council of Quebec, National Film Board (or its French branch the ONF), and the now extinct Independent Film Fund. To define Quebec cinema as a “nationalized” cinema, a cinema which depends upon a financial intervention of the state for its survival, entails that we take into account the discourses around which the state, which subsidizes the films, imagines the nation it wishes to govern. Furthermore, Marks (2000) argues that multicultural public funding policies at least assured some access to financial support. However with increasing cuts in culture “it is exceptionally difficult for them to gain support from private and commercial sources” (p. 3).

Are the films represented in this study part of the corpus of Quebec film, or would they be classified into the more generic ‘Canadian cinema’? Part of this question may be answered by taking into account the source of funding. Indeed, all films have been mostly funded through the

formula described above. However, in an era where public funding is critically declining, these filmmakers will probe the degree to which public institutions are willing to support the creation of images “by Canadians, for Canadians” as described in the NFB mission statement.

Due to cutbacks in the cultural sector, documentary filmmakers have been driven to co-produce their films with television channels, normally sponsored by state-owned broadcasters like CBC and Radio-Canada at the federal level and Télé-Québec at the provincial level. These co-production agreements have undoubtedly transformed the format in which these films are produced, since they have to follow television standards. All directors agreed that documentary filmmakers in Quebec are increasingly producing for television. Due to the privatization of channels, there is more demand for independent productions.

Being able to fund an audiovisual project through public grants, means that there is recognition of the filmmaker’s work. Briceño, for example explains that receiving his first grant helped him not only economically but also emotionally, “It helped to reaffirm myself here, and to visualize, that it was possible to have a space here”. He received funding for shooting a short documentary about his grandfather in Colombia. The discovery that when correctly pitched, one could obtain funds to shoot something outside Canada, and in another language, was a revelation for the director.

However, getting into the ‘funding circuit’ is not an easy task. Public funding is correlated with the filmmakers’ notoriety, that is, recognition by their peers. This is by no means simple, especially for immigrants. This process took years for many, even if they had consolidated careers elsewhere. As any other emerging artist, the ones who studied here had to go through a series of low-paid, even unrelated jobs before getting into the industry, Ferrand describes his early stages as a ‘director of washing the floors’, Briceño describes it as first

developing a career of "cable-carrier". It took years for most of them to be able to direct their own films. Before that they worked as cameramen, editor, etc, in order to be able to push forward their own agendas.

5. CONCLUSION

With this research I wanted to explore the representation of identities in the cinema made by Latin American filmmakers in Quebec. What do these representations tell us about the immigration and settlement of this community? Do they reveal the filmmaker's position between various belongings? What kind of identities do they propose? What are the motivations behind the construction of these images, and what strategies do they use to convey their political message? In order to answer these questions, I conducted an analysis of the works of three filmmakers of Latin American descent living in Quebec. This approach enabled me to verify my initial research proposal that intended to identify how in displacement, the filmmakers of Latin American origin represent different types of identification, and the articulation of a diasporic Latin American identity. This identity not only multiplies the connections with people and communities coming from that region, but also enables a dialogue with Quebecer and Canadian culture. To finalize I will summarize the obtained results and will suggest future research elements that will allow further exploration on the subject.

5.1. Results summary

Taking into account the results obtained, it appears that the practices of identity represented in the films do articulate new forms of identifications proper of the diasporic condition. This form of identity is by no means homogeneous to all Latin Americans, it is a strategic positioning through which multiple belongings are negotiated. The various dimensions and contradictions that accompany the intersections of identity and the arts in diasporic communities become evident in the development of its cinema. In this way, film constitutes a

space of negotiation underlined by a diasporic consciousness and an accented mode of production. The Latin American diasporic films produced in Quebec are also in dialogue with Canadian and Québécois cinema, as well as with Latin American cinematic traditions. Through this exchange, a new hybrid form is constructed which incorporates elements from both national and immigrant's cinemas, and also generates novel forms of representation and genres.

Throughout the study of these three cases I was able to map some strategies that the filmmakers in Quebec use in order to display their multiple belongings. Such identifications serve as a stand point from which to criticize the variety of discourses that converge within the diasporic subject and the communities they integrate. The films were used to contest 'traditional' understanding of identities in order to represent something that is broader in its denotation and that is defined beyond national borders.

The specific narratives and the narrative structures of these films enabled the representation of many issues at stake when recognizing to be a diasporic subject. Time confluence and space juxtaposition is one of such cinematographic strategies. Through an interplay of past and present, as well as imagined 'homes', the filmmakers were able to represent their feelings towards their liminal position, as well as the feelings of the subjects represented. Among other strategies identified, there was the presence of multiple languages and polyglossia. On the one hand, the confluence of English, French and Spanish is almost inevitable for Latin American immigrants living in Montreal; the filmmakers inhabit at least three languages and the effects of such co-habitation are necessarily represented in the films. On the other hand, producing in Canada entails delivering a final product that must be understood in at least one of the official languages. The filmmakers feel compelled to express in the language of origin, but

acknowledging their Canadian audience. As a result the films also navigate between languages, depending on the target audience and funding institutions.

Another element identified in this analysis is the importance of the journey. It functions metaphorically, as it evokes the desire to go back, as well as the constant movement, and border-crossing between identities. In two of the films there is an actual trip back to Latin America, in which the filmmakers are confronted with their visions of home. Moorti's (2003) concept of 'diasporic optic' became crucial, as it describes the sideways glance that the diasporic subject possesses, which is cinematographically represented in the films analysed. This is achieved by a confluence of time and spaces, in a constant movement between past and present, a "here and there". This strategy allows both the filmmaker and the audience to understand the endemic *dislocation* of the diasporic subject, as well as the inevitable incorporation of multiple voices, languages, cultures, and rhythms.

The images and objects from home play a crucial role in the way the diasporic optic is presented. Landscapes and photographs are particularly important in these films as they serve as material connections to the idea of home. For example, photographs are key objects in the films as they are objects of remembrance and representations of feelings that refuse to be lost. They actualize and inform the diasporic subject's identity by allowing them to confront the past.

Music and performance were also important elements in the analysis. The performance of identity through music expression represented a fundamental factor in the articulation of a diasporic identity. The role of music in these films goes beyond a mere background sound; it contributes to the construction of individual and collective identities. According to Lipsitz (1994), music is perhaps the cultural product that has crossed boundaries and frontiers the most

frequently, just as it has helped establish local cultural spaces. In the documentaries music is indeed a facilitator for exchange and connection.

The performance of identity in these films is played at the individual/personal level. The base of a diasporic consciousness lies in the intimate retrospection and the ability to represent a “story of one’s own”. For the diasporic subject, personal memory constitutes an empowering practice of self-actualization. It opens up spaces for digression, interruption, and deferral of dominant discourses.

In this study, I attempted to describe the relationship between Latin Americans and Quebecers from the perspective of the filmmakers and from that of the documentary’s representations. In sum, all filmmakers described the Quebec film community, especially those dedicated to documentary filmmaking, to be generally open and accessible to Latin American filmmakers.

However, the films produced reveal a more complex dynamic. This dynamic is constituted by identity formation, and diasporic articulation. What is at stake is not the inclusion or exclusion of the filmmakers in the production circuit, it is the legitimization of specific forms of representations that transcend national boundaries. Such representations have the ability to reshape traditional understandings of identity in the different locations they are ascribed to. By doing so, diasporic films create a space through which the filmmakers and the communities they want to represent are heard and understood, and at the same time it questions fixed canons about national myths and narratives. The result is the creation of transnational connections that enrich and develop national cinemas. Diasporic filmmakers play an important role in the construction of community and national identities. They *translate* the nuances and realities of multiculturalism. Thus the diasporic Latin American identity represented in these documentaries

is precisely a strategic positioning through which negotiate multiple belongings. It is articulated as a broadening cultural strategy that creates connections with the people whose origin is located south of the Bravo River. It also allows the Latin American diasporic subject to construct an inclusive identity that incorporates elements beyond national discourses. Finally, the Latin American diasporic identity in Quebec, represented in the documentaries, enables a dialogue between the Latin American, Quebecer and Canadian communities.

5.2. Future Research

This research attempted to analyse diasporic films taking into account the filmmaker's perspective through a critical discourse point of view. However, it is crucial to remember that films are often used, talked about, critiqued, and appropriated in ways the filmmaker could never have imagined. In future research, it will be important to examine the inter-relationship between the cinema and other discourses within the private and public spheres of culture. One must pay particular attention to the ways in which cinematic texts are used and appropriated by a culture in its quest for self-definition. In this regard, it is also essential to consider the reception of these types of films within the larger national scope, and how are they perceived in both Quebec and Canada.

Moreover, future studies may analyse the impact diasporic films have in community construction processes. For example, What is the influence that these films had in the Latin American community in Quebec? How do they consume and make meaning out of them? Does the production of these films enable the creation a Latin American artistic community?

Future research may also look at other Latin Americans communities in Canada. My initial aim for this project was to compare the films made in Montreal with those made in

Toronto (the city hosting the largest Latin American community in Canada). I conducted an exploratory interview with a number of filmmakers in Toronto, and at first sight, there seems to be a different dynamic for audiovisual producers in the two cities. It seems that the particular conditions of documentary filmmakers in Quebec are different from those in the rest of the country. As Patricio Henriquez asserted, he doubts that he would have been able to “make it” in Anglophone Canada, because of the specific circumstances surrounding his arrival and his professional development in Quebec. In fact, various pan-Canadian meetings of Latin American filmmakers have been organized, and there seems to be quite a different dynamic for audiovisual producers in Anglophone and Francophone Canada.

As I acknowledged in the methodology section, a more comprehensive sample of films and director is needed. This study limited its scope in order to conduct an in-depth analysis of the films, at the cost of excluding certain parts of the Latin American filmmaking community. A broader sample should take into account the contribution of women filmmakers, newly arrived artists, and filmmakers working in different genres and alternative multimedia formats.

Finally, I would like to highlight the contribution of this research in the study of cinematographic production by Latin Americans in Quebec. This research is the first one of its kind and represents a first step to understand the contributions of Latin American artists into the Quebecer and Canadian culture.

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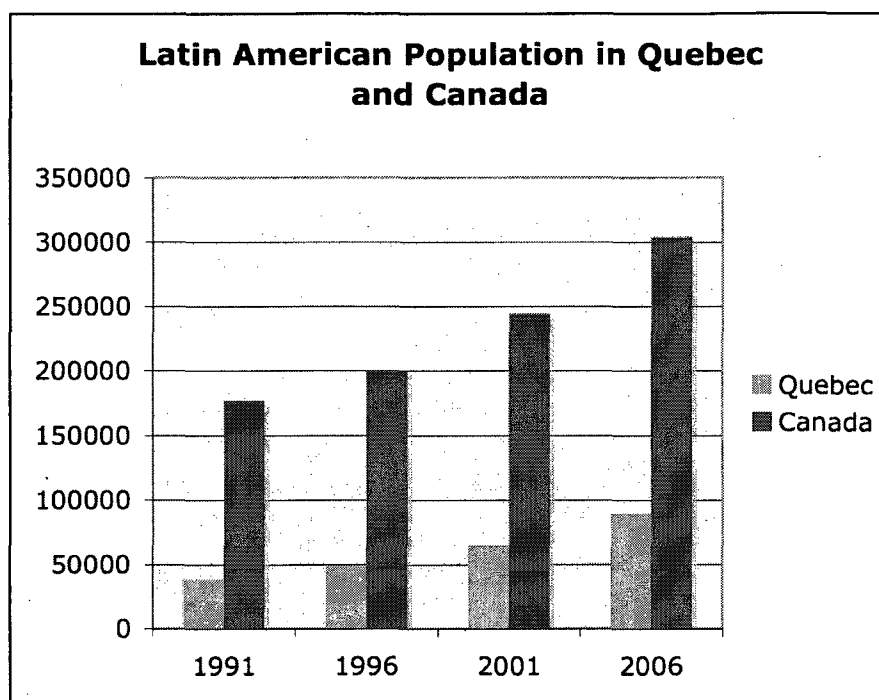
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7. TABLES AND GRAPHICS

Figure 1

Source: Statistics Canada Census 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006

Table 1
Latin American Immigration to Quebec by Immigration Period

Immigration Period	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Avant 1961	60	0,3	50	0,3	110	0,3
1961-1970	445	2,0	305	1,5	750	1,8
1971-1980	3 380	15,4	2 880	14,6	6 260	15,0
1981-1990	7 115	32,5	7 100	36,0	14 215	34,1
1991-1995	6 095	27,8	5 600	28,4	11 695	28,1
1996-2001	4 810	22,0	3 800	19,3	8 610	20,7
Immigrant Population	21 910	100,0	19 730	100,0	41 640	100,0

Source: Ministère de l'Immigration du Québec (2005), *Portrait statistique de la population d'origine ethnique latino-américaine, recensée au Québec en 2001*.

8. ANNEXES

8.1. ANNEX 1: Film synopsis

I will present a brief description of the films, in order to better understand the results of this research, and present the reader with the films' main themes and the filmmaker's vision.

8.1.1 *Midnight Ballads* (2008) by Diego Briceno⁴²,

This documentary gives a glimpse of the life of five Latin Americans working as cleaners. It traces their story, their links to their countries of origin, and their lives as immigrants in Quebec. Apart from their night job as cleaners, these people share the experience of immigration, and the subsequent quest to define their identity. While some have a problematic, sometimes traumatizing relationship with their countries of origin, due to the circumstances in which they had to leave (discrimination, torture, legal issues, economic condition), others have trouble integrating into Quebecer society. Indeed, their line of work is considered to earn low wages and therefore to be menial. Furthermore, as the participants themselves state, these jobs are 'invisible', as they are done at night, without much or any interaction with other people. These are jobs that go unperceived, since these people work outside 'normal' office hours.

The stories of these five individuals exemplify the variety of causes to immigrate to Canada, as well as the hardships of the immigration process. The film follows Remberto, a musician from Colombia, single father of three daughters, who works cleaning schools; Marco, a performer from Colombia, who has been unjustly driven out of his job as cleaner allegedly because of his sexual orientation; Mausser, a geo-physicist and student activist from Mexico,

⁴² Diego Briceño is a filmmaker of Colombian origin. He studied film production both in Colombia and in Montreal. He has been working in the industry since the mid 90s, and *Midnight Ballads* is his third full-length documentary. For more information see complete filmography in Annex

who was tortured by the Mexican police and who works cleaning hotels; Elizabeth, a second-generation Brazilian, who holds a university degree in sociology but works as a cleaner to be able to work for the cleaners' union; and finally Sergio and ex-gang member from El Salvador, who became both an evangelic pastor and a supermarket cleaning staff.

The director portrays the challenges of arrival and integration, as well as the difficulties to find a stable job. We also understand the different motivations these people have for working and enduring a job with an 'abnormal schedule', and the circumstances that pushed them to work in such an occupation, given that the majority of them were doing completely different tasks when in their countries of origin. This documentary not only depicts the life of many Latin-Americans in Quebec, it serves as a quasi-sociological essay on the ways in which Latin Americans question, challenge, and reconfigure their identities. *Midnight Ballads* gives us a hint about how people coming from different countries reunite and position themselves as Latin Americans, given their situation of displacement, and the conflictive relationship with their countries of origin.

8.1.2. *Americano* (2007) by Carlos Ferrand⁴³

This documentary is a journey throughout the Americas. It is the personal search of the director to come to terms with his identity. Through this voyage along the continent, the director encounters a number of friends from his childhood and adolescence. This film also documents the various struggles of the people of the Americas in order to achieve social justice. His trip begins in Peru, his country of origin, a country he has always been in conflict with. In Peru, he shows the multiple faces of the nation: indigenous, African descent, European, and even Chinese. For the director, the fact that he belongs to an oppressive minority (that he identifies as

⁴³ Carlos Ferrand is a Peruvian filmmaker. He studied Cinema in the Institut national d'études cinématographiques in Brussels and moved to Montreal 30 years ago. He has worked as director, cinematographer, camera assistant and scriptwriter. *Americano* is his most recent feature documentary. For a complete filmography refer to the Annex.

the whites) creates a conflict with his own identity. The first stop in his journey is a visit his Quechua-speaking nanny, he goes to her humble home in the slums of Lima, the capital of Peru. What he finds is the lamentable conditions that many indigenous who come to the capital live in. He then travels to Chile, to Tierra del Fuego accompanied by a university colleague who wants to make a documentary on the extermination of a specific indigenous tribe in this Southern area of the continent. He continues his travel in Bolivia, Mexico, the United States and he finishes it in Canada, although not precisely in his 'home', Montreal, but in Nunavut.

This voyage is a quest not only to define himself as an exile, but also to link the people of the Americas under an umbrella identity that reclaims not only the usurped right to call themselves Americans (since they all live in the same continent), but also the rights of all the groups co-existing within it for dignity and justice.

Ferrand attempts to portray and denounce the adverse circumstances that many groups have to go through (for example the victims of the dictatorship in Chile, the struggle for indigenous rights in Bolivia, and the condition of Afro-Americans in Brooklyn), as well as the many people working to denounce and alleviate these situations of exclusion and injustice.

Americano attempts to trace a kind of commonality amongst discriminated, exploited, and excluded peoples of America. The 'American identity' that it intends to represent is based on a common history of oppression and exclusion of the majority of the continent's inhabitants. The documentary is the result of both an individual and collective identity that integrates within it a common history of struggle against injustice and discrimination in terms of race, gender, and political views (especially those identified with the 'left' or with human rights movements).

This journey exposes the adverse situations lived by the people of this continent, but it is also an internal dialogue of the director, in order to find his place, his own position in the place

he has now chosen to live, Montreal, Canada. Going back to visit friends of the past was an attempt to trace his history, to understand his present, and in doing so he ended up doing not an individual quest but a collective one in which a new identity, an American identity is articulated.

8.1.3. *The Dark Side of the White Lady*⁴⁴ (2006) by Patricio Henriquez⁴⁵

This documentary follows the story of “La Esmeralda” a Chilean navy’s training vessel where dozens of people were held hostage, tortured, and even murdered, in the first week of Pinochet’s coup d’état in 1973. The film portrays the lives of three activists in Valparaiso who were either direct victims of torture on board the vessel, or whose relatives ‘disappeared’⁴⁶ after being taken hostage to the Esmeralda. Until now, the Chilean navy has not recognized the atrocities committed in the ‘white lady’, as the vessel is popularly referred to. The people this documentary follows have been relentlessly struggling for the past thirty years, for the navy and the government to accept the atrocious acts committed on the ship. The film shows how neither the government, nor many people in Chilean society are willing to accept the abuses committed and repair the victims.

⁴⁴ From now on referred to as *The Dark Side*

⁴⁵ Patricio Henriquez is a video and cinema director. He was born in Chili and moved to Montreal after the military coup in 1973. He has worked extensively for Télé-Québec, where he collaborated with the program North-South. He has a large career in both television and film. His trilogy about Chili (*The Last Stand of Salvador Allende*, *Images of a Dictatorship* and *The Dark Side of the White Lady*) was awarded with a number of awards in Canada and France. For a complete filmography, refer to the Annex

⁴⁶ The term "disappeared" has become associated with Latin America's military dictatorships in the 1970s and '80s. In battles against political dissidents, the governments of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil and elsewhere developed a strategy aimed not only at eliminating opposition but also at terrorizing the population at large. As a form of human rights abuse, disappearances erase a person from life as well as death--denying relatives the very body over which to grieve. Indeed, the families of the disappeared have been forced to live with the unique anguish of perpetual uncertainty, creating a challenge of mourning and remembering. Thousands of ‘disappearances’ were perpetrated by the state forces, and just until recently the truth about human right abuses during these years has started to be unveiled. An article in the New York Times summarizes the numbers: In Argentina for example, according to the National Commission on the Disappeared, about 9800 people disappeared during the military government. In Chile, the Rettig Commission and its successor, the National Corporation on Reparation and Reconciliation, a government panel created to investigate human right abuses, indicated that 1073 people disappeared at the hands of state agents or their associates.

http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2005/08/09/international/20050810_COLO_GRAPHIC.html.

The documentary recreates the past through the stories of the interviewees, but also captures the present, and the continuous fight of many in Chile, to obtain justice, or at least recognition. The film travels between past and present in order to unveil not only the actions committed during the dictatorship, but also the uninterrupted policy of military institutions to deny the now obvious abuses perpetrated between 1973 and 1990. It also questions Chilean nationalistic symbols and discourses: those that for many years served not only to keep Pinochet's regime in power, but also to engage society as a whole, as a silent witness. As the director describes it, *The Dark Side* portrays the tension "that simmers below the surface of a country still unable to accept and move beyond the traumas of the past"⁴⁷.

The Dark Side portrays the case of Maria Eliana Cumené, Sergio Vuskovic Rojo, and Patricia Woodward. Maria Elena is an activist and represents a group of victims that campaign for the navy not only to acknowledge the facts, but to provide the names of the ones who were responsible for these violent deeds, so they could be persecuted by justice. Sergio is a philosophy professor, and former mayor of Valparaiso, who was also abducted and tortured in the vessel. Patricia is the sister of father Woodward who was murdered on the White Lady. She has led a campaign to find out the whereabouts of her brother's corpse. All of these characters were forced to exile, and they recently returned to Chile in order to obtain justice.

This film is the last of a trilogy about Chile's painful years during the dictatorship of Pinochet between 1973 and 1990. The first of this series deals with the last day in power of elected president Salvador Allende, it is entitled *The Last Stand of Salvador Allende*. The second documentary is entitled *Images of a Dictatorship* revisits Chileans' daily life under the

⁴⁷ In <http://www3.onf.ca/webextension/esmeralda/team.php>

dictatorship, and civil society's efforts to resist military power; it won the 2000 Jutra⁴⁸ for best Quebec documentary.

⁴⁸ The Jutra award is the most important film award in Québec. It recognizes Québec's talent in feature-length film, documentary and animation.

ANNEX 2: INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Hello, I would like to thank you again for granting me this interview that will last around an hour. Before starting I would like to remind you what is the interview about. The objective of this interview is to understand the ways you represent issues of identity in your films, as well as your own vision regarding identity.

Do you have any question before starting the interview? (If there are, I will answer them before continuing).

I am now going to read the consent form that you received previously, to ensure you understood its content.

1. When did you arrive to Canada? And why did you decide to come here.
2. What were you doing before arriving?
3. What attracted you about filmmaking?
4. What kind of genre do you work with?
5. Tell me about you experience as a filmmaker in Quebec
6. Who is your audience?
7. What are the main topics that you represent in your films?

7. How do you define yourself to be?
8. How do you define to be Latin American?
9. What do you think about the Latin American community in Quebec?
10. Do you think there is a Latin American artistic community?
11. Do you have contact with Latin American filmmakers living in Latin America?

11. Tell me about you film, what was the motivation behind it?
12. What was the process to conceive the film?
13. How was the production and editing stages?
14. Why did you decide to be the narrator?
15. How did you choose the music?
16. Where was this film showed?
17. What are your next projects?

Thank you for granting me this interview

ANNEX 3: DIEGO BRICEÑO'S FILMOGRAPHY

- 2009: **"The Gospel According to Camilo"**. - Documentary (In progress)
- 2008: **"Midnight Ballads"** – Documentary
 Producer: Periphéria. Yannick Letourneau
- 2005 : **"Souvenir Kids"** - a feature length documentary for RDI, Radio-Canada,
 and CBC World, Producer: Periphéria. Yannick Letourneau
- 2001: **"Things Never Said in Playa Perdida"** (2001) 25 min. short fiction film
 Producer: Periphéria. Yannick Letourneau
- 2000: **"A Saddletree"** (2000), 49 min. Documentary.
 Producer: Diego Briceño

ANNEX 4: CARLOS FERRAND'S FILMOGRAPHY

- 2007: **"Americano"** feature-length documentary.
 Production : Les films du Trycicle. Sylvain L'Espérance.
"Tele Sur" documentary.
 Production: Cité-Amérique. Orlando Arriagada
- 2005: **"The Magic Touch"** documentary, 52 min
 Production: Information
"Poste restante, le ciel"
 Production: Les films de l'autre.
- 2004: **"Flores"** essay, 5 min.
"A-3", essay. 9 min.
 Production : Les Films de l'Autre.
- 2003: **"People of the ice"** documentary. 52min.
 Production: NFB/Glacialis.
"A-3", essay. 9 min.
 Production : Les Films de l'Autre.
- 2002: **"Casa Loma log book"** (Documentary, feature length)
 Producer: Sylvain Lespérance. Films du trycicle
"Il parle avec les loups" (Documentaire)
 Production: NFB-Novamedia
"École de danse" (Docu-soap (6 episodes)
 Co-directed with Jean-Philippe Duval. Production: Gala Film

- 2000: **"Babbling Annie"** (Fiction)
 Production: Paul Cadieux.
"Fête au Coeur" (Documentary)
 Production: Pierre Touchette. Spectra
"Histoires Oubliés" (Documentaire)
 Production: Vic Pelletier.
"To the Max!" (Magazine)
 Prod. Jonathan Filkenstein. Motion Internationale.
- 1999: **"Ajawajiwesi"**
 Producer: Stéphanie Larrue. Digame. NFB
"Cuba si, si" (52 min.)
"Cigars, the scent of Havana" (95.min.)
 Producer: Josette Gauthier. Coscient.
- 1998: **"The Ocean"** (35mm)
 Producer: Lambert Multimédia. Expo 98 Lisbonne.
"Scattering of Seeds" (Series, "Karl Lévêque's Montreal")
 Producer: White Pine.
- 1997: **"Histoires des musées"**
 Producer: Publivision.
"Accès Interdit"
 Producer: Ostar
- 1994: **"The Future of aging"** (Documentary, 60 min.)
 Producer: Informaction. Diffusion: Radio-Canada, PBS
- 1991: **"Voodoo Taxi"** (Fiction, 16mm, 24 min.)
 Producer: Gala Film for CBC (series "Inside Story")
- 1989: **"Cuervo"** (Feature film, fiction, 16mm, 80 min.)
 Producer: Vision 4
- 1988: **"The Gift"** (Fiction, 1", 15 min.)
 Producer: Maggie Sherman.
- 1987: **"Willie: A Dream"** (Fiction, 1", 60 min.)
 Writer-Producer: Dr Joseph Lella
"Le Tunnel" (Betacam, 30 min.)
 Producer: Lambert Communications
- 1986: **"Fenêtre sur ça"** (16mm, 24 min.)
 Producer: Producciones 20-P
- 1985: **"Inventez"** (16mm, 60 min.)

Producer: Imageries. Diffusion: Radio-Québec

- 1984: **"Madonna, Niño & San Juan"** (1")
 Producer: Producciones 20-P
- 1982: **"Cimarrones"** (35 mm, 28 min. B&W)
 Producer: Carlos Ferrand
"Le Premier Peuple" (3/4", 15 min.) Tel Quel
- 1978: **"The Double"** (Fiction, 3/4", 45 min., B&W)
"Dream Machine" (Fiction, 3/4", 12 min., B&W)
"Ilanga" (fiction, 16 min., B&W) Producer: Video Heads
- 1973 - 76: **Co-director and cameraman**
 Grupo de cine Liberacion sin Rodeos, Lima (Peru):
"No Alineados" (35mm, 12 min., color)
"Javier Heraud" (35mm, 19 min., color)
"Somos mas de lo que se piensa" (35mm, 12 min., B&W, fiction)
"Delfin" (35mm, 17 min., B&W)
"Vision de la Selva" (16mm, 20 min., B&W)
"Racrachacra" (16mm, 18 min., B&W)
- 1971 - 73: **Screenwriter, director, cameraman, editor**
 Filmmaker of the Agrarian Reform, Lima (Perou):
"Niños" (35mm, 18 min., B&W, fiction)
"Trabajo voluntario" (35mm, 20 min., B&W)
"Voto del Analfabeto" (35mm, 15 min., B&W)
"Con la reforma Agraria" (16mm, 9 min., B&W)
"Casa de Madera" (16mm, 17 min., B&W)

ANNEX 5: PATRICIO HENRIQUEZ FILMOGRAPHY

- 2008: **“Under the Hood, A Voyage into the World of Torture”**, Documentary
 Producer: Macumba International
 Winner of the Jutra Award for best documentary 2009
- 2006: **“The Dark Side of the White Lady”**, Documentary
 Producer: National Film Board
- 2005: **“To Disobey”**, TV Documentary
 Producer: Macumba International
- 2003: **“Washed Away”**. Documentary
 Producer: Glacialis, NFB
- 2002: **“Juchitan, Queer Paradise”**, Documentary
 Producer: Macumba International
- 1999: **“Images of a dictatorship”**, Documentary
 Produced by Macumba International
- 1998: **“The Last Stand of Salvador Allende”**, Documentary
 Produced by Macumba International
- 1996: **“L’Afrique sans remèdes”**. Documentary
- 1995: **“Les filles aux allumettes”**. Docudrama
 Producer: ONF, Les Productions Virage
- 1980: **“Yasser Arafat et les Palestiniens”**, Documentary

* Filmmography before 1980 was not available