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Marcio de Oliveira BAHIA

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE - AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. (Spanish)

GRADE - DEGREE

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT - FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

TITRE DE LA THÈSE - TITLE OF THE THESIS

The concepts “americanidad”, “américanité” and “americanidade” : peripheral perspectives

W. Moser

DIRECTEUR DE LA THÈSE - THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR DE LA THÈSE - THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS DE LA THÈSE - THESIS EXAMINERS

F. DeDiego

R. Williamson

J.-M. De Koninck, Ph.D.

LE DOYEN DE LA FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES
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**The concepts “americanidad,” “américanité” and
“americanidade”: peripheral perspectives**

Marcio de Oliveira Bahia

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA degree in Spanish

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Faculty of Arts
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The concepts “americanidad,” “américanité” and “americanidade”:
peripheral perspectives

Marcio de Oliveira Bahia

The thesis aims at discussing one of the most influential and dominant current discourses about the Americas and their identity: the concept of americanidad. Fully developed in Hispanic Latin America in the first half of the 20th century, the concept gained great popularity in Quebec in the 1980s and 1990s (*américanité*), and has started to attain a certain level of recognition in Brazilian academe (*americanidade*). However, in its journey the concept *americanidad* changed, undergoing significant metamorphosis, acquiring new meanings and nuances. The thesis attempts to show the differences, similarities and parallelisms among the sister concepts *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade*. In our attempt to map the concept and its diverse uses throughout the continent, we will also try to understand an important omission: why the analogous concept (*americanity*) has not been developed in the English-speaking portion of North Americas?

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INTRODUCTION

“What does ‘being American’ mean?”, “What is the role of the American culture in the Occident and more specifically in relation to Europe?”, “Is it possible to establish a continental cultural identity?”, “How do the diverse peoples of the continent construct their cultural identity in relation to one another?” These are only some of the broad questions that have driven the American peoples in their quest for identity over the last centuries. The current interest and extensive academic discussion on concepts such as *mestizaje/métissage/mestiçagem*, *entre-lugar/in-betweenness/entre lieu*, or yet *créolité/crioulidade/criollidad* demonstrate the contemporaneity of the cultural identity debate on the American continent.

Today, one of the strongest trends in the American search for a continental cultural identity is the development of the studies on *americanidad* in Hispanic America and its variants *américanité* in Quebec and *americanidade* in Brazil. Researchers from different areas such as literary studies, cultural studies, geography, sociology and history have faced the difficult task of conceiving an American continental identity. This difficulty certainly derives from the great cultural and economical diversity of the Americas. As Bernd says:

comment s'identifier à quelque chose qui a tant de facettes où se côtoient la richesse et la pauvreté, où les écarts sociaux et économiques sont immenses et où tant de cultures se sont entremêlées dans différents moments de son histoire?" (Bernd, 2002, p.10).

The great challenge is to establish a common identity on a continent where, for instance, the economical and political might of a country like the United States dwells alongside the smallness of a country like the Grenada Islands; where the wealth and economic strength of a country like Canada coexists with the poverty of a country like

Haiti. The challenge is even greater if we consider the cultural, linguistic and ethnic specificities which have long set apart the peoples of the continent. The proponents of *americanidad*, and its variants *américanité* and *americanidade* have attempted, in different ways, to construct a continental identity beyond all these long-established barriers. The enormous American heterogeneity certainly is an obstacle for the construction of a continental cultural identity. On the other hand, what motivates those who have tried to construct an American cultural identity is exactly the desire of effacing these differences. The American heterogeneity certainly plays the double role of being an obstacle and at the same time a catalyst for the development of the concept(s) *americanidad/américanité/americanidade*. Before presenting the specific objectives of this thesis, it is worth giving a general historic overview of the concept and presenting some of its main proponents on the continent.

The Hispanic American academia has used the term *americanidad* to refer conventionally to a broad spectrum of intellectual reflections on the American cultural identity from the 19th century to the present. In 1845 Sarmiento wrote his influential *Civilización y Barbarie* and in 1883 *Conflictos y armonías de las razas de América*. Among many other articles, the Argentinean statesman and writer proposed a reflection on the identity of his country in the context of the American continent. In 1891, José Martí wrote his classic *Nuestra América*, whose title would become a recurrent expression in subsequent studies of *americanidad*. As we will see in chapter 1, the studies revolving around the construction of a continental cultural identity proliferated in Hispanic America in the 20th century. Some prominent authors who have pursued this goal are Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Alfonso Reyes, Mariano Picón-Salas, Arturo Usler Pietri, Alejo Carpentier, Octavio Paz and José Lezama Lima. These prominent

representatives of the Hispanic American intelligentsia, among many others, have in common a desire to establish America's cultural identity, its place in History and its role in relation to other cultural models.

In the 1970s the term *américanité* started to be used by the literary milieu of Quebec. In the 1980s and 1990s, the concept became highly disseminated and came to the foreground of the intellectual debates on Quebec identity. Among other factors, the studies on the concept *américanité* in Quebec have been motivated by the desire of establishing a conceptual framework within which the province's cultural identity could be conceived in terms of its belonging to the American continent. To a certain extent, this approach is a reaction to the former cultural model, the "French-Canadian model," that stressed the Franco-Canadian historical link to France as the most important trait of its cultural identity. Thinkers from different fields such as literary studies, cultural studies, social sciences, history and geography have contributed to this discussion in Quebec. The interest for the American theme in Quebec could be first observed in the fictional writings of authors like Jacques Godbout (*Les têtes à Papineau*, *Une histoire américaine*, etc.) and Jacques Poulin (*Volkswagen Blues*), whose works from the 1970s and 1980s have been considered and studied as some of the first manifestations of *américanité* in the province. Besides these famous fictional writings, Quebec's intellectual elite has developed an intense academic debate in which the concept *américanité* has been sometimes defended and other times criticized. Today, Jean Morency, Gérard Bouchard, Maximilien Laroche and Yvan Lamonde are among the best know proponents of the concept *américanité*. On the other side, intellectuals such as Joseph Yvon Thériault, Pierre Nepveu and Jean Morisset have strongly criticized the concept. A further analysis of their criticism will be made in chapter two.

In the 1990s, the term *americanidade* started to be used in Brazil, especially among specialists of American francophone literature. For a long time, French literary studies in Brazilian universities concentrated exclusively on the study of the canonical literature from France. Since the 1990s, a group of researchers in Brazil have joined efforts to reverse this situation by developing studies that have attempted to draw attention to American francophone literatures in a comparative perspective. The literatures from Haiti, Quebec, Martinique, etc. started being compared with the Brazilian Literature in a movement of openness that was soon extended to the whole continent. In innumerable publications, intellectuals like Núbia Hanciau, Zilá Bernd, Maria Bernadete Porto and Eurídice Figueiredo, among others, have used concepts such as *americanidade*, *entre-lugar* and *mestiçagem* in order to promote inter-American comparative literary studies and break down the enormous reciprocal isolation that long marked the literatures from French America, Brazil and Hispanic America.

I have indicated the 1970s and 1990s as the decades of “origin” of the concept *américanité* and *americanidade* in Quebec and Brazil, respectively. But, as we will see in the upcoming chapters, profound reflections on American cultural identity had been pursued long before these decades. In principle, this tradition of historic reflection can be considered part of the discourse on *américanité* and *americanidade*. However, it was only during the above-mentioned decades that Quebec and Brazil started to develop, conceptualize and use the terms *américanité* and *americanidade* as intellectual constructs. Therefore, when I use the terms “*américanité*”, “studies of *américanité*”, “*americanidade*” and “studies of *americanidade*” in the upcoming chapters, I will be referring specifically to those contemporary intellectual works in Quebec and Brazil which have used and developed the concept from those decades up to nowadays. As for

americanidad, the term has been widely used by contemporary Hispanic American critics in reference to a broader body of reflection that has revolved around the cultural identity of the American continent since the 19th century (Sarmiento, Martí, Carpentier, Lezama Lima, etc). Therefore, when I use the terms “*americanidad*” and “studies of *americanidad*”, I will be referring to this larger spectrum of intellectual works developed in Hispanic America as mentioned on page iv.

This thesis has a double objective. Firstly, I propose a comparative analysis of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* taking in consideration one aspect in particular: the use of these terms as concepts of cultural resistance against Europe and the United States. This approach was adopted because certain patterns of opposition against Europe and the United States were recurrent and common to the three variants of the concept. A fundamental trait of these variants is that they were all developed by peripheral American areas in a *peripheral perspective*. The peripheral gaze of the proponents of the concept towards Europe and the United States seemed to be one of the decisive factors that determined the characteristics of the concept. Although all these concepts apparently propose a movement of continental union and proximity, we will see that they are permeated by complex relations of power and intricate dynamics of inclusion / exclusion. I will defend the thesis that the *peripheral perspective* of these discourses towards the “centers” – Europe and the United States –, combined with other factors such as ideological contexts and the particular interests of their proponents, will determine what “America” means and who is included or excluded in its referent.

One of the difficulties of using notions as “center” and “periphery” is that nowadays in the global world it is not simple to establish these dichotomous positions. From the 16th to the 19th century, the relations of power in the colonial system had a

clearly defined spatiality. The metropoli – Lisbon, Madrid, London and Paris – were geographically situated on the European continent and exercised their colonial power over the American – and other – colonies. In the contemporary global world, relations of power are still played out, but their spatiality is much more complex to be defined.

“Center” and “periphery” today always have to be put in the complex perspectives of the modern global world. As Walter Mignolo (2000) says:

Until the middle of the twentieth century the colonial difference honored the classical distinction between centers and peripheries. In the second half of the twentieth century the emergence of global colonialism, managed by transnational corporations, erased the distinction that was valid for early forms of colonialism and the coloniality of power. (Mignolo, 2000. p. ix).

An illustrative example is the province of Quebec. Taking into account different aspects, Quebec can be considered a “peripheral” area in relation to three other “centers”. As a former French colony, Quebec can be culturally regarded by some as a “periphery” in relation to the European cultures of long tradition. Like most of the world, Quebec is today invaded by all sorts of US cultural products – songs, films, books, etc. Therefore it can also be considered a “periphery” in relation to the United States. Some people regard English Canada – in control of a “centralized” federal state – as a political “center” that still dominates Quebec. Consequently, according to this vision, Quebec would constitute a peripheral area in relation to English Canada. However, if we change the perspective, Quebec can also be considered a “center”. As part of North American wealthy economy, it can be regarded as part of the economical center that dominates the relations of power between the North and the South of the Americas. The analogous logics can be applied to English Canada: “periphery” in relation to England and the United States; center in relation to Quebec. The complexity of notions such as “center” and “periphery” can also be illustrated by the recent

commercial war (1998-1999) between Bombardier, a major Canadian Aircraft Company of Quebec origins, and Embraer, a Brazilian world-class aircraft builder. At that occasion, the two biggest world rivals in the sector of the construction of small jets filed cases at the World Trade Organization (WTO), accusing each other of receiving unfair governmental subsidy. The reaction in Brazil was unprecedented. Politicians and journalists joined forces and portrayed Canada as a rich country that used its wealth and power to overwhelm Embraer, a company which has long been a symbol of national pride for Brazilians. The strategy used by the media was to depict a commercial war in asymmetrical terms. On the one side there was a peripheral Latin American country that in spite of the enormous economic struggle was able to have a world-class company like Embraer. On the other side, there was a member of the G7, part of the developed “central” economies, which in spite of all its wealth did not hesitate to engage in a ferocious battle against Embraer. What is interesting in this dichotomous representation is that it did not take into account any internal Canadian relations of power. Canada as a whole – not Quebec or English Canada – was seen as a menace for Brazilian commercial interests. Obviously, from the Brazilian point of view the difference between a supposed “peripheral” Quebec and a “dominating” English Canada was not relevant.

Taking into account these complexities why still use notions such as “center” and “periphery” for the analysis of the concepts *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade*? In this particular case, these notions are still operational because even after the political independence from the European metropoli in the 18th and 19th century, Europe continued to be regarded, on the American continent, as the aesthetical and cultural model that should be followed. For the “peripheral” American cultures, Europe continued to be the “center” that kept on dictating cultural, literary and aesthetic

standards. As we will see in the upcoming chapters the concept *americanidad* and its variants have been used to react against this paradigm up to nowadays. The use of the concept is part of an unfinished process of cultural affirmation in the Americas in which it is still necessary to fight against cultural Eurocentrism. The strong reaction of the proponents of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* against European ethnocentrism demonstrates that the old perspective in which Europe was seen as the “center” and the Americas as “periphery” still haunts contemporary cultural studies on the American continent. We will see in the forthcoming chapters that this peripheral perspective of resistance was also directed towards the United States as it started to rise as a neocolonial empire.

The comparative analysis of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* and the analysis of this basic trait that I have been calling *peripheral perspective* will be pursued in chapters one, two and three. The structure of the chapters will follow the same pattern. There will be an introductory part which will give the reader a general overview of the ideological context and the historic intellectual tradition in which *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* were “born”. Following these introductions, I will proceed to specific case studies, which will be essential to illustrate with concrete examples the discursive functioning of the concepts *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade*. These case studies will include important essays by notable proponents of the concept in Hispanic America, Quebec and Brazil. Literary fictions, films and other forms of intellectual expressions will be tangential in the corpus proposed for chapters one, two and three. The presentation through case studies will be made in order to isolate clear examples that can be used as paradigms of the discourse

americanidad and its variants *américanité* and *americanidade*. Chapters one to three will be organized as follows:

- 1) In chapter 1, which will deal with *americanidad*, our case studies will include José Lezama Lima's *La Expresión Americana* (1957) and Alejo Carpentier's *Razón de ser* (1976) as well as his prologue to *El reino de este mundo* (1949). These are bold choices due to the complex and extensive theoretical framework used by these authors for the establishment of an American cultural identity. It is important to stress that our objective in using the texts of these two consecrated Latin American intellectuals is not to perform exhaustive textual analyses. Instead, our goal is to highlight their use of concepts such as *real maravilloso*, *Barroco*, *tensión* and *plutonismo* opposing cultural Eurocentrism. As for the second "center", the United States, I will show that Carpentier and Lezama Lima present different attitudes.
- 2) Chapter 2 will analyze the concept *américanité* in Quebec. Our case study will be on Yvan Lamonde's *Ni avec eux ni sans eux. Le Québec et les Etats-Unis* (1996) and "Pourquoi penser l'américanité du Québec?" (1999). What is interesting in Lamonde's text is that he proposes a historical approach in which the intellectual debate about Quebec's cultural identity, whether "Europe-linked" or "America-linked", has been engaged since much before the 1970s. Chapter two will also show that *américanité* in Quebec has been marked by a strong ambivalence of attraction and repulsion towards the United States. In addition, the investigation in this chapter will reveal that the peripheral

perspective towards Europe and the United States is also a determinant factor for the development of the concept *américanité* in Quebec, but it has not produced the same effects as the ones observed in the Hispanic American case.

- 3) Finally, chapter three will present the development of the concept *americanidade* in Brazil. In this chapter our case study will focus on essays written by Zilá Bernd: “Literatura e americanidade” (1995), “Américanité: les transferts du concept” (2002) and “Os deslocamentos conceituais da transculturação”(2003). The presentation of this last case study will be preceded by a brief analysis of the Brazilian Romantic Movement in the 19th century, The Brazilian Modernist Movement in the 1920s and the writings of Silviano Santiago in the 1970s and 1980s. This historical overview will be important to show that the contemporary debate on *americanidade* in Brazil is part of a long cultural tradition of reactions against Eurocentrism.

The comparative analysis of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* – our first objective – will be made throughout the thesis as I present the chapters and their respective case studies.

The second objective will be developed in chapter 4. In their investigations on *américanité*, respectful researchers such as Joseph Yvon Thériault, Zilá Bernd and Jean Morisset realized that the Anglo-Saxon American academia had not developed an equivalent concept in English. The analogous “americanity” is not found in the United States and English Canada. Certainly there have been other discourses in the United

States revolving around inter-American cultural, economic and diplomatic relations – The Monroe Doctrine, Pan-Americanism, etc. However, as I will argue in chapter four, these were rather official political projects which can not be considered analogous to the intellectual endeavors on *americanidad* and its variants. This absence of the analogous “americanity” raises some intriguing questions: Why has Anglo-Saxon America not developed the concept “americanity”? What are the strategies of identity construction in the United States and English Canada? Have these strategies determined the **absence** of the analogous “americanity”? Can the notion of “peripheral perspective” help us understand the **absence** of “americanity” in the United States and English Canada? These are some of the questions that I will attempt to – at least partially – answer in chapter four. The reader will note that the *corpus* of texts used to illustrate the ideas in chapter four is formed by different types of documents when compared to the previous chapters. Instead of essays and scholarly publications, I will use TV commercials, films, jokes, documentaries, presidential speeches, etc. in order to illustrate my arguments. This difference can be explained by the nature of the investigation in chapter four. In this chapter I will be dealing with the absence of a concept. Therefore, it will be necessary to perform an indirect demonstration. The immediate and straightforward language used by TV commercials, jokes, etc. was the perfect tool to counterbalance the difficulties of this indirect demonstration. Besides, in chapter four I will defend the idea that the Canadian and the US self-representation constitute hindrances for the development of “americanity”. Again, the *corpus* elected in this chapter is formed by documents which have the power to directly illustrate these self-representations due to the immediacy of their languages which has the objective of instantaneously “sell” an idea or a product.

One last important remark before starting our discussion is about the use of the toponym America. A lot has been written about the metonymy that associates the word “America” to the United States exclusively. (Bahia, 2002, p.96, Bernd, 2003b, p. 27-28, Laroche, 1992, p.193). This important discussion will be brought up in time. By now it is necessary to establish the nomenclature that will be used when referring to different objects in our investigation. As we know, “America” and “American” have become ambiguous, imprecise terms since they can refer to the whole continent or to the United States only.

The noun presents an obvious alternative to set apart the country (United States) and the continent (America). Therefore, in order to eliminate any ambiguity, for the remainder of this thesis “America” will always refer to the whole continent, not only to the United States. As for the adjective “American”, this differentiation is more difficult to be established because there is not an evident alternative in English to set apart “pertaining to the continent” and “pertaining to the United States”. In Portuguese there is “estado-unidense”; in Spanish there is “estadounidense” and in French there is “états-unien”. It is true that these are only “alternatives”, since the common usage in these languages is to refer to a US citizen as *americano* (Portuguese and Spanish) and *américain* (French). In spite of this “secondary” usage, these alternatives can constitute useful tools in a scientific approach when it is necessary to make clear if one is referring to the whole continent or to the United States only. In English, however, there is not an analogous alternative. “Unitedstatean” does not exist and the alternative Yankee is

completely inappropriate because of its negative connotations¹. In order to avoid the inconveniences of imprecise meanings I will use “American” as a reference to the whole continent and the abbreviation US as an adjective referring to the United States, as in “US politics.”

This final remark already indicates the polemical tone of the discussion in which the belonging to a continental collectivity as proposed by the concept(s) *americanidad* / *américanité* / *americanidade* is sometimes reclaimed, sometimes refused and sometimes even ignored in complex movements of inclusion and exclusion, as we will see in the development of this thesis.

¹ The Columbia Encyclopedia says that Yankee first means “from the state of New England” and in a second acception it refers to the United States. The encyclopedia also confirms that “by 1765 it was in use as a term of contempt or derision” and that “in Latin America the term *Yanqui* is applied to U.S. citizens, often—especially after the Cuban revolution—with a note of hostility.” (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2001)

1 – *AMERICANIDAD* IN HISPANIC AMERICA: In search of a continental cultural identity

In her introduction to the Brazilian version of *La expresión americana* (Lezama Lima, 1988), Irlemar Chiampi highlights that in 1957, when the renowned Cuban intellectual gave the series of lectures that originated his famous book, Americanist thinking had already achieved over a century of strong tradition (Chiampi, 1988). According to Chiampi, over this period, questions such as “What is America? What historical place is reserved for it? What is its destiny? What is its difference in relation to the established cultural models?” prevailed in the essays of the most renowned Hispanic American writers. Chiampi says that many intellectuals have tried to answer those questions from different historical, political and ideological perspectives: from Sarmiento to Martí, including Bilbao and Lastarria in the 19th century; from Rodó to Martínez Estrada in a first contemporary spectrum that should include among many others the names of Vasconcelos, Ricardo Rojas, Pedro Henríquez Ureña and Mariátegui. Fernando Ortiz (*transculturación*), Alfonso Reyes (external influences on the American continent), Mariano Picón Salas (combination of European and Amerindian forms), Uslar Pietri (alluvial process in the American literary system) and Carpentier (*real maravilloso*) are some of the names mentioned by Chiampi, thinkers who expressed “as a single text, their ontological anguish” concerning the American identity (Chiampi, 1988, p.10). Vilma Fonseca (2001), also writing about the book *La expresión americana* and the Hispanic American tradition on the discourse of *americanidad*, corroborates Chiampi’s view:

La serie de ensayos que [Lezama] escribió y las conferencias que profirió sobre el tema, en el Centro de Altos Estudios de La Habana, apenas dos años antes de la Revolución, vinieron a acrecentar las reflexiones sobre el concepto de

americanidad que venía siendo discutido desde el siglo XIX. Podemos destacar algunas obras que tocaron este tema: *Ariel* de Rodó (1900), *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* de Fernando Ortiz (1940), *De la conquista a la Independencia* de Picón-Salas (1944), *Historia de la cultura en la América Hispánica y Corrientes literarias en la América Hispánica* (1947 y 1949) de Pedro Henríquez Ureña, entre otras. (Fonseca, 2001, p.145)

It is interesting to note that unlike what happened in Quebec or Brazil, the authors mentioned by Chiampi and Fonseca did not try to develop a methodological and conceptual tool called *americanidad*. As we will see in the forthcoming chapters of this thesis, Quebec and Brazil have developed an intellectual tradition centered on the concepts *américanité* and *americanidade*, respectively. Instead, the great names of Hispanic American thinking (Sarmiento, Martí, Rodó, Vasconcelos, etc.) contributed to the configuration of a set of theories and reflections about the American continent, not always convergent and compatible, that could be understood as a “single text” (borrowing Chiampi’s expression), which Hispanic American academia agreed to call *americanidad*. Zumbado (2001) remarks that the concept *americanidad*, in the writings of the great Hispanic American thinkers mentioned above, was not

“rigurosamente elaborada, como un constructo racionalmente concebido, en sus escritos, sino que es justamente a partir de sus disquisiciones en torno a temas diversos [transculturación, real maravilloso, etc.] que es posible derivar de ellas las tendencias de lo que hoy, en particular los cultivadores de la historiografía latinoamericana de las ideas, suelen llamar con ese nombre. (Zumbado, 2001, p.69)

Zumbado points out that although the Hispanic American greatest intellectuals of the 19th and 20th century did not attempt to construct their thoughts by developing the concept *americanidad*, this is the acclaimed term used by Hispanic American academia when referring to their writings, a concept that widely circulates in contemporary literary and cultural studies in Latin America. Given the impossibility of performing a detailed investigation of all these thinkers, I will focus my analysis on particular texts of

three different Hispanic American thinkers: José Cecilio del Valle, Alejo Carpentier and Lezama Lima. José Cecilio del Valle will historically illustrate one of the earliest manifestations of *americanidad* in Hispanic America. Carpentier and Lezama will be analyzed in order to understand how they constructed their ideas about the American continent through a peripheral perspective that, according to my thesis, determines not only their writings, but also the examples of *américanité* (Quebec) and *americanidade* (Brazil) presented here.

1.a) The historical origins of *americanidad* in Hispanic America: the case of José Cecilio del Valle and the peripheral perspective.

According to Zilá Bernd (2003b, p.38), the sign *americanidad* first started to circulate among the Hispanic-American elites in the context of 19th century Latin America national independence movements and its genesis can be associated with the Bolivarist ideas of continental integration and freedom. In the historical origins of the term *americanidad*, it is already possible to recognize the peripheral perspective of the concept that would mark the thoughts of José Cecilio del Valle, Alejo Carpentier and Lezama Lima. When I refer to a peripheral perspective in the origins of the concept, I mean that the discourse of *americanidad* was enacted from a locus of enunciation situated in a certain portion of the 19th century peripheral colonial western world (Hispanic America) and became a concept of resistance against the dominating European center. The peripheral locus of enunciation where the discourse *americanidad* was initially enacted undoubtedly imprinted in the writings of these thinkers traits that were determinant throughout their works. One of the key characteristics of the concept *americanidad* is its proposal of **continental integration** conceived for fighting,

opposing and **resisting** (European) **domination**. These characteristics are clearly present in the works of the intellectual triad I will focus in this chapter. Therefore, what I call *peripheral perspective* of the concept *americanidad* in the writings of Valle, Carpentier and Lezama is built upon a double dynamics:

- 1) From a semantic point of view, *americanidad* is a concept of continental union and refers to the common cultural and historical elements that can provide the integration of the peripheral Hispanic American peoples.
- 2) From a pragmatic point of view, *americanidad* was used by the Hispanic American elites as a tool, an ideology for promoting the break between center (Europe) and periphery (America), constituting a space of colonial resistance against the dominance of the colonizer.

Danilo Perez Zumbado identifies the political leader and thinker José Cecilio del Valle (1777-1833) as one of the first leading figures of the discourse *americanidad* in Hispanic America (Zumbado, 2001, p.68). The patriot and statesman José Cecilio del Valle was born in Honduras and became a leader and a hero of Guatemala's independence movement in 1821, and in the same year became notorious for writing the Central American Declaration of Independence, proclaiming freedom from Spain (Booth, 2004). Valle was a highly influential writer, philosopher, economist, sociologist and politician of his time (Secoff, 2004). The interest in José Cecilio del Valle comes from the fact that he perfectly illustrates the two dimensions of the peripheral perspective of *americanidad* I stressed above, that is, the desire of continental union of some of American peripheral areas and the proposition of colonial resistance against the colonizers – characteristics that result from the peripheral colonial locus of enunciation

where these discourses were enacted. In the article “José Cecilio del Valle: americanidad y otras relaciones”, Zumbado (2001) highlights that “dentro de la conformación de esta americanidad [...], Valle tiene entre sus méritos ser uno de los pioneros, incluso antes que Bolívar, de las propuestas integracionistas de América”. Zumbado states that, in 1822, Valle proposed the “Proyecto de Confederación Americana” in which all the provinces of the American continent would have a representative. Valle’s goal was to establish a great American Federation that would have two basic objectives: defend the continent against external invasions and implement an economical strategy for the enrichment of the continent². What is important in Valle’s proposition is that the desire for continental union is always accompanied by a sense of colonial defiance against the metropolis. In the first half of the 1820s Valle wrote:

La América será por último, la que debe ser. Colocada en la posición geográfica más feliz; dueña de tierras mas vastas y fecundas que las de España; señora de minerales más ricos; poblada con la multiplicación de medios más abundantes de existencia, ilustrada con todos los descubrimientos del europeo, y lo que estos mismos descubrimientos facilitarían al americano; llena de hombres, de luces, de riquezas y de poder, será en la Tierra la primera parte de ella; dará opiniones, usos y costumbres a las demás naciones; llegará a dominar por su ilustración y riqueza; será en el futuro en toda extensión del globo lo que es al presente en Europa la rica y pensadora Albión (Valle, 1982, p.220)

The confrontation with the European colonial center in Valles’ case is not simply resistance against the dominating centers, but is also empowered by a desire to reverse positions. American lands are vaster and more fruitful than Spanish lands and possess richer mineral wealth than is found in Europe. Full of wealth and power, America will

² It is interesting to note that Valle’s and Bolívar’s proposition of continental union are considered expressions of *americanidad*, but the analogous Monroe Doctrine (1823) “America to the Americans” is not thought as *americanidad*. This is so because historically, Latin America has interpreted this phrase as “Americas to the US” (Ávila, 1998). This interpretation indicates the break between the South and the North of the continent, fact that will have direct consequences on the traditional Hispanic American discourse of *americanidad*.

eventually dominate the entire world! On the one hand, Valle's text fights against European imperialism, but on the other hand it is also carried by the desire to occupy the dominant position of the other. Interestingly enough, I will demonstrate in this chapter that, one century later, two of the most influential thinkers of the discourse of *americanidad* in Hispanic America, Alejo Carpentier and Lezama Lima, present the same pattern in their writings, namely:

- 1) The proposition of continental union.
- 2) Defiance against the colonizing centers.
- 3) Desire to reverse the dominating/dominated positions occupied by Europe and America, respectively.

1.b) Alejo Carpentier: "Lo Real Maravilloso" and the Baroque as expressions of *americanidad*

While José Cecilio del Valle's discourse was explicitly political, Alejo Carpentier, more than a century later, constructed his ideas about the American continental identity in a more cultural field of studies, with the development of his well-known reflections on the "real maravilloso" and the American Baroque³.

The notion of *real maravilloso* and Carpentier's own biography seem to be closely related. The Cuban writer lived in Paris from 1928 to 1939 and, during that time, established contacts with the group of surrealists whose most prominent members were Breton, Prevert, Picasso, Dalí, etc. (Rodriguez, 1982, p.31). These artists and intellectuals had a profound influence on Carpentier, who absorbed from them the emphasis on the *marvelous*. For the French surrealists, the reality beyond the daily

³ Although the cultural dimension is predominant in Carpentier's discourse, we will see that his writings are driven by a strong and usually ulterior political sense.

routine of life was the key for the freedom of mind necessary to produce art (Rodríguez, 1982, p.32). For Breton, the marvelous and the beautiful were sister concepts: “[Lo maravilloso] es siempre bello, cualquier especie de maravilloso es bello, y no hay nada fuera de lo maravilloso que sea bello” (Breton, 1965, p.32). According to Marquez Rodríguez (1982, p.32), Breton identifies the marvelous with “lo insólito, lo extraño, lo inesperado, lo fuera de lo común”. Although Carpentier’s fascination with the Surrealist movement ended upon his return to Cuba, it is clear that his development of the notion of *real maravilloso* was influenced by the emphasis on the supra-normal that he had experienced in his contact with the French surrealists. The idea of *real maravilloso* is first articulated in 1949 in Carpentier’s prologue of *El reino de este mundo*:

A fines del año 1943 tuve la suerte de poder visitar el reino de Henri Christophe - las ruinas, tan poéticas, de Sans-Souci; la mole, imponentemente intacta a pesar de rayos y terremotos, de la Ciudadela La Ferrière- y de conocer la todavía normanda Ciudad del Cabo -el Cap Français de la antigua colonia-, donde una calle de larguísimos balcones conduce al palacio de cantería habilitado antaño por Paulina Bonaparte. Después de sentir el nada mentido sortilegio de las tierras de Haití, de haber hallado advertencias mágicas en los caminos rojos de la Meseta Central, de haber oído los tambores del Petro y del Rada, me vi llevado a acercar la maravillosa realidad recién vivida a la **agotante pretensión de suscitar lo maravilloso** que caracterizó ciertas literaturas europeas de estos últimos treinta años. (Carpentier, 1978, p.51, my emphasis).

Carpentier’s personal experience in Haiti provides him with the insight to develop his concept of *real maravilloso*. In awe of the Haitian supra-reality, Carpentier extends his amazed gaze to the whole continent: “Pero pensaba, además, que esa presencia y vigencia de lo real maravilloso no era privilegio único de Haití, sino patrimonio de la América entera” (*op.cit.* 1978, p.55)

Although the author admits the European influence on his conception of the marvelous, he stresses that in the new continent this notion takes a new, pre-eminent shape. Note that the hyper-valorization of the American marvelous in Carpentier’s

articulation is accompanied by the devaluation of the European analogous conception.

To Carpentier the fantastic in Europe is inferior because it is obtained by artificial means, while in America it is real, authentic, vibrant and palpable. When referring to the marvelous in Europe, Carpentier says:

Lo maravilloso, buscado a través de los viejos **clisés** de la selva de Brocelianda, de los caballeros de la Mesa Redonda, del encantador Merlín y del ciclo de Arturo. Lo maravilloso, **pobrementemente** sugerido por los oficios y deformidades de los personajes de feria -¿no se cansarán los jóvenes poetas franceses de los fenómenos y payasos de la *fête foraine*, de los que ya Rimbaud se había despedido en su Alquimia del Verbo? Lo maravilloso, obtenido con **trucos de prestidigitación**, reuniéndose objetos que para nada suelen encontrarse: la **vieja y embustera** historia del encuentro fortuito del paraguas y de la máquina de coser sobre una mesa de disección [...]. O, todavía, lo maravilloso literario [...] Pero a fuerza de querer suscitar lo maravilloso a todo trance, los taumaturgos se hacen **burócratas**. Invocando por medio de fórmulas consabidas que hacen de ciertas pinturas un **monótono** baratillo de relojes amelcochados [...] **Pobreza** imaginativa, decía Unamuno, es aprenderse códigos de memoria. Y hoy existen códigos de lo fantástico [...]
(*op.cit.* p.51-52, my emphasis)

It is important to stress the words used by Carpentier in this depiction of the European marvelous: cliché, poor, tricks, prestidigitation, old, deceiving, bureaucrats and monotonous! To Carpentier, the European manifestations of the fantastic will never achieve the greatness of the analogous American manifestations because in Europe they are based on the unreal. Carpentier emphasizes that, differently from Europe, America is the *lieu par excellence* of the fantastic since its history, its natural wonders and the presence of the *métis* provides endless possibilities for the flowering of mythologies that feed the fantastic in everyday life:

Y es que, por la virginidad del paisaje, por la formación, por la antología, por la presencia fáustica del indio y del negro, por la Revelación que constituyó su reciente descubrimiento, por los fecundos mestizajes que propició, América está muy lejos de haber agotado su caudal de mitologías. (Carpentier, 1949, p. 15-16)

In his examples, Carpentier insists on the artificial vs. real, inferior vs. superior dichotomy throughout the prologue when referring to Europe and America, respectively:

Pero obsérvese que cuando André Masson quiso dibujar la selva de la isla de Martinica, con el increíble entrelazamiento de sus plantas y la obscena promiscuidad de ciertos frutos, la maravillosa verdad del asunto devoró al pintor, dejándolo poco menos que impotente frente al papel en blanco. Y tuvo que ser un pintor de América, el cubano Wifredo Lam, quien nos enseñara la magia de la vegetación tropical, la desenfrenada Creación de Formas de nuestra naturaleza - con todas sus metamorfosis y simbiosis-, en cuadros monumentales de una expresión única en la pintura contemporánea. (*op.cit.* p.52)

Many other examples of the American superiority can be found in the same prologue and in other essays. For example, in “Una carta de Goethe”, Carpentier (1975) makes use of a letter written by Goethe to counterpoint “complacent, mild and circumspect” European nature to “impressive, untamable and great” American nature. In another essay, “Lo Barroco y lo real maravilloso”, Carpentier stresses once more the superiority of the *real maravilloso* in America because here “lo insólito es cotidiano, siempre fue cotidiano” (Carpentier, 1976, p.58). The examples given so far suffice to illustrate how Carpentier’s discourse partakes in the cultural resistance against dominating European centers. It is interesting to note that just like in the texts of José Cecilio del Valle, Carpentier does not attempt to destroy the power relations between the center and the periphery, but instead he strives to occupy the position of the dominating other. A more detailed analysis of these paradigms will be made in section 1.d, along with a comparative reading of Carpentier and Lezama Lima.

Besides the strong reaction against Eurocentrism, another remarkable characteristic in Carpentier’s texts was the call for an American cultural union. In fact these two traits are intrinsically related. They are complementary, in the sense that in order to resist against the colonial power, it is necessary to join forces in America, to

constitute one single unit capable of facing the strength of the other. In his essay,

“Conciencia e identidad de América”, Carpentier (1976) says:

Nuestros destinos están ligados ante los mismos enemigos internos y externos, ante iguales contingencias. Víctimas podemos ser de un mismo adversario. De ahí que la historia de **nuestra** América haya de ser estudiada como una gran unidad, como la de un conjunto de células inseparables unas de otras, para acabar de entender realmente *lo que somos, quiénes somos, y qué papeles el que habremos de desempeñar en la realidad que nos circunda y da un sentido a **nuestros** destinos*. (p. 24, my emphasis)

The use of the pronoun “nuestra” emphatically identifies the collective position of enunciation and reinforces the call for union proposed by the author. According to Carpentier, it is necessary to promote the coalition of the various American peoples, as if the continent were a set of inseparable cells that together constituted a strong organism. And this is considered necessary because these parts of the continent have the same internal and external enemies. The investigation of who these enemies are and who is included in the pronoun “nuestra” will be undertaken soon afterwards. For the moment, it is important to emphasize that, in his theoretical framework, Carpentier drew as much attention to the American Baroque as he did to the notion of “real maravilloso”, the two unifying cultural concepts that would provide the continent with converging cultural characteristics. For Carpentier, the essence of the great American cultural expression lies in the combination, the coexistence of these two phenomena on the American continent. In his essays, Carpentier analyses examples of Baroque in several parts of the globe. However, he expresses deep enthusiasm and amazement when it comes to the Baroque artistic manifestations in America, which for him is the *lieu par excellence* of this art form:

¿Y por qué es América Latina la tierra de elección del Barroco? Porque toda simbiosis, todo mestizaje, engendra un barroquismo. El barroquismo americano se acrece con la criollidad, con el sentido del criollo, con la conciencia que cobra

el hombre americano, sea hijo de blanco venido de Europa, sea hijo de negro africano, sea hijo de indio nacido en el continente [...] la conciencia de ser otra cosa, de ser una cosa nueva, de ser una simbiosis, de ser un criollo; y el espíritu criollo de por sí, es un espíritu barroco. (Carpentier, 1976, p.89)

So far I have tried to point out Carpentier's resistance against Eurocentrism. In the next paragraphs I will analyze another important aspect of his texts, namely, the use of the toponym "America" and who is included or excluded in its referent.

As the influence of the United States grew on the American continent, especially after the first signs of the new US imperialism in the 19th century, *americanidad* started to mean in Latin America a reaction to the growing power of the new empire (Bernd, 2003b, p. 38, Thériault, 2002, p. 31-32). This is an extremely important twist in the evolution of the concept, because the initial historic reluctance towards Europe is now also directed towards the United States. The emergence of the United States as the new colonizing empire, the center of the modern world, and their appropriation of the term America, adds new and even more complex facets to the concept *americanidad*.

The concept in Hispanic America starts to show anti-US features, sometimes portraying the United States as the new villain and emphasizing the necessity to overcome this new adversary (Avila, 1998). At other times, this resistance stresses the elimination, the exclusion of the United States from the concept *americanidad*, referring to the continent as *Nuestra América* (Martí, [1891] 1977), in opposition to the other "America", that is, the United States. Would this restriction, this exclusion of the United States be an attempt to recover the name America appropriated by the US? The fact is that when contemporary Hispanic American academe uses the terms *americanidad*, *americanismo*, *americanista*, *americano* and *América*, they exclude the North of the continent. As the Colombian essayist Ricardo Castro (1992) remarks, *americanidad*

refers uniquely to the “tierras al sur del Río Grande”. It is possible to recognize the exclusion of North America in the conceptual framework conceived by Carpentier. In the above quotation the techniques of exclusion are clear. The author refers to **Latin America** as the lieu *par excellence* of the Baroque. Terms like *mestizaje*, *barroquismo*, and *criollidad* promote a subtle exclusion of North America, which is not part of “**Nuestra América**”. In his essays and articles Carpentier makes reference to Havana, Mexico, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Port-au-Prince, Dominica, etc. to illustrate his analysis. There are even references to Prague and to the Far East. However, in the several articles and essays I have researched, there was not one single example using the United States as a geographical location for his illustrations. On the contrary, the only reference I found to the United States was imbued with a strong anti-US attitude. In 1975 Carpentier gave a lecture at Universidad Central de Venezuela in which he states:

Es cierto – me enorgullezco de ello – que tuve una temprana visión de América y del porvenir de América (me refiero, desde luego, a aquella América que José Martí llamara “Nuestra América”) (Carpentier, 1976, p. 21).

We can imply from this quotation that there are two “Americas” and that Carpentier is referring to just one of them, the one Martí called “Nuestra América”. The author also endorses a manifest from 1927 in which a young Carpentier writes:

“[...] *Por la independencia económica de Cuba, y **contra el imperialismo yanqui**. [...]*

Por la cordialidad y la unión latinoamericana” (*op.cit.* p. 22, my emphasis).

Some lines later, Carpentier says:

En el alba del año 1959, con el triunfo de la Revolución Cubana, y la reafirmación de ese triunfo en la decisiva y trascendental Batalla de Playa Girón, primera gran victoria de una nación de nuestra América Mestiza (como la llamara más de una vez, con orgullo, José Martí) contra el más temible de los imperialismos... (“El del gigante con botas de siete leguas **que nos desprecia**”... - y vuelvo a citar a José Martí). (*op. cit.* p. 22, 23, my emphasis)

In this quotation the restrictive use of the collective enunciator “nuestra” is even more explicit. The locus of enunciation from which Carpentier enacts his discourse imprints in his essays a clearly peripheral perspective. That is to say that Carpentier’s works inherited from the Hispanic American tradition the desire to unify the American peripheries and at the same time a strong reluctance against the dominating centers. The difference between José Cecilio del Valle and Alejo Carpentier is that the former had only Europe as the central target of his attacks, while the latter, more than a century later, had to deal with a double threat: the unresolved cultural comparison with Europe and the political US imperialism over Latin America. Besides the old continent, now there is the struggle against the country that “despises our *mestizo* America”. This peripheral perspective observed in the intellectual production of Carpentier, and its complex movements of inclusion/exclusion, openness/restriction, is essential in order to understand the forthcoming examples of *américanité* (Quebec) and *americanidade* (Brazil). In the next sections and chapters I will defend the thesis that the peripheral perspective is still present in various contemporary manifestations of the concept. However, according to the usage and the interests of each thinker, this peripheral perspective of the concept will have different effects in shaping the continental identity debate.

1.c) Lezama Lima: Baroque, *tensión* and *plutonismo* as expressions of *americanidad*.

“Sólo lo difícil es estimulante”. This is the opening phrase of Lezama Lima’s influential book “La expresión americana”. When Lezama makes this statement, he is referring to the project of the essay: the ambitious task of pointing out factors, elements,

essences that could represent the American expression. However, this opening phrase also perfectly applies to Lezama's labyrinthine, puzzling and sophisticated argumentation. The difficulties in understanding Lezama's text derive partly from the dense and vast set of cultural references used by the author; and partly because he does not set out his ideas in a didactic and simplistic way. On the contrary, his text is a strong and complex flow of thoughts and insights that does not make for easy reading. But it is exactly these characteristics that make his book so interesting, thought-provoking and stimulating, as the opening phrase suggests.

In this section we do not intend to thoroughly analyze Lezama's book. The goal here will be to use Lezama's book to explore the theme of *americanidad*, trying to use it for my own analysis of the concept. This means that from the rich and complex array of concepts and insights provided by the author, I will bring to discussion only those directly or indirectly related to Europe and the United States.

First of all, it is important to highlight that, despite the sophistication and complexity of the conceptual tools created and developed by Lezama, his final goal is as straightforward and clear as it was in the writings of José Cecilio del Valle and Alejo Carpentier, namely, to exalt and glorify the American continent to the fullest. The whole book is written to convince the reader of the greatness and splendor of the New World, especially in its cultural dimension. Lezama criticizes any American servile attitude towards any other culture, especially European cultures, the inevitable civilizations of comparison.

He ahí el germen del complejo terrible del americano: creer que su expresión no es forma alcanzada, sino problematismo, cosa a resolver. Sudoroso e inhibido por tan presuntuosos complejos, busca en la autoctonía el lujo que se le negaba y acorralado entre esa pequeñez y el espejismo de las realizaciones europeas, revisa sus datos, pero ha

olvidado lo esencial, que el plasma de su autoctonía, es tierra igual que la de Europa. (Lezama Lima, 1993, p.63).

Lezama vigorously criticizes the “terrible complex of the American”, who looks at his past and underestimates it, considering it inferior to the European history. Lezama assigned himself the task of proving the contrary. After using the whole first chapter to establish the theoretical grounds for his essay, he then spends the second chapter exploring the turning point for the continent to flourish as a great new civilization, namely, the birth of the artistic movement that indicates the preeminence of the American continent: the Baroque.

In Lezama’s argumentation, not only is the American continent comparable to Europe; it is also capable of artistic superiority to the old continent. In his line of reasoning, it is the moment of the American Baroque that provides the new continent with an artistic excellence superior to the European Baroque. In his theorization, Lezama insists that the artistic primacy of the baroque was “transferred” from Europe to America:

Después del Renacimiento la historia de España pasó a la América, y el barroco americano se alza con la primacía **por encima** de los trabajos arquitectónicos de José de Churriguera y Narciso Tomé⁴” (*op.cit.* p.100, my emphasis).

That is why the Baroque plays a central role in Lezama’s essays. The American Baroque is superior to the European Baroque because in the new world it acquired two essential characteristics that differentiated its art: tension and plutonism. These two American characteristics in the Baroque are established in opposition to the European that is marked, according to Lezama, by **accumulation without tension** and **asymmetry without plutonism**. But what is **tension**? And what is **plutonism**? Again, Lezama does

⁴ Chiampi reminds us that “Narciso Tomé y José Churriguera son los maestros de la arquitectura barroca española en los setecientos” (footnote 42 in Lezama Lima, 1993. p. 100)

not offer clear, didactic definitions for these notions. Simplifying Lezama's intricate and sophisticated ideas to a certain extent, we can say that *tension* refers to the friction caused by the encounter of the European art and the *mestizo* influence in the artistic manifestations of the American Baroque (*op.cit.* p. 82-83). In his essay the author illustrates the tension between the European legacy and the American originality by using Latin American churches: *Iglesia de Juli*, *Catedral de Puno* (Peru) and *La Catedral de Puebla* (Mexico). These churches are filled with exuberance, excess in the shapes and disorder. Yet, at the same time Lezama sees an American attempt of moderating the exuberance and putting some order in the excesses. Plutonism, on the other hand, would be the "originary fire that smashes the fragments and unifies them" (*op.cit.* p.80, my translation). Lezama exemplifies the plutonism with the Amerindian sculptor Kondori. Born in Bolivia, Kondori is considered one of the greatest colonial American artists. Lezama refers specifically to Kondori's "indiatids", caryatids in the shape of Amerindians, found at the church of *San Lorenzo* in Bolivia. Lezama highlights Kondori's ability to melt and unify the fragments from other cultures (European, Greek, etc.) into a unique and innovative form of American art. The dialectical coexistence of a tension among the innumerable cultural fragments of these pieces of art and the plutonistic capacity of unifying them is the main key for the richness of the American Baroque.

Another important aspect regarding Europe in *La expresión americana* is Lezama's opposition to Hegel. The notorious German philosopher is present throughout Lezama's essay and the attacks on Hegelian historicism are recurrent, especially in the first and the last chapter of the book. Attacking Hegel is very important because his

historicism is the exact counterpoint of Lezama's argumentation. The *imaginary era*⁵ and Lezama's vision of history as fiction are radically different from Hegel's historicism. And Lezama's conception of nature as a "gnostic space" opposes Hegel's conception of nature as inert entity⁶. Lezama's attacks on Hegel are ironic, incisive and caustic. We can see Lezama's sarcasm in the (humoristic) following quotation:

"Aseguran", dice Hegel, "que los animales comestibles no son en el Nuevo Mundo tan nutritivos como los del Viejo. Hay en América grandes rebaños de vacunos, pero la carne de vaca europea es considerada allí como un bocado exquisito" Han pasado cien años, que ya hacen irrefutables, y si ridículas, esas afirmaciones hegelianas. Queden así en su grotesco sin añadidura alguna de comentario o glosa. Y sonríen los sibaritas ingleses, casi todos lectores de Hegel, cuando se hundan en el argentino bife. (*op.cit.* p. 172)

It is easy to understand the reason of such attacks. In Hegel's thinking, America was a continent lacking history and therefore "inferior" to Europe. The exuberant nature of America is minimized in Hegel's analysis, because to him nature was an inert entity. In her introduction to the book, Irlemar Chiampi tries to understand why Lezama almost obsessively tries to refute Hegel's historicism. Chiampi is not puzzled by the reasons that motivate this reaction, which are clear, as discussed above. What intrigues Chiampi is the vehemence and passion of the attack in an essay written in 1957, when Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* had been translated to Spanish long ago in 1928 and one of Hegel's European contemporaries, Alexander von Humboldt, had already ridiculed the arrogance of the Hegelian discourse. The first and most obvious reason, as stated before, is that Hegel was an influential thinker whose Eurocentrism was obviously contrary to Lezama's attempt to praise the American continent. Chiampi points out another possible reason. The Protestantism of the Hegelian discourse was

⁵ The same difficulty of definition applies to Lezama's concept of *imaginary era*. For the purposes of my argumentation it is enough to say that Lezama uses this notion as analogous to "culture". (*op.cit.* page 57)

⁶ For a more detailed comparison of Lezama and Hegel approaches see Irlemar Chiampi's introduction to the essay, pages 15,16 and 27-33. (Chiampi, 1993.)

opposed to Lezama's Catholicism. Hegel's extreme negative vision of the Catholicism in his *Lectures* would be one more reason for Lezama to attack his discourse. But it seems to me that there is, besides the reasons pointed out by Chiampi, another less evident motive. Lezama's essay undoubtedly has a hero: American culture. It is for exalting this hero that his essay was written. And in order to magnify the greatness of a hero it is necessary to present an equally respectable opposing element, an antagonist that can indirectly make America seem stronger and more dazzling. Under this perspective Hegel takes on the part of a *quasi villain*, the perfect European intellectual opponent to be attacked. Hegel's ideas have to be ridiculed, refuted and discredited so that Lezama's hero, the American culture, can come up victorious and triumphant at the end of his essay.

My objective, so far, has been to highlight issues related to the peripheral perspective of some thinkers of *americanidad*, to show how they deal with questions of center vs. periphery and to analyze the power relations that permeate their discourses. We have seen that *La expresión americana* presents a strong opposition against Europe. And what is Lezama's attitude towards the United States? I will try to answer this question by bringing to discussion the extensive work made by Irleamar Chiampi, a leading Brazilian researcher, responsible for the introduction and notes of the Portuguese version of *La expresión americana*. Chiampi's remarks will not only help answer this question, but will also provide elements that will be useful to compare Carpentier's and Lezama's stance towards the United States.

In her introduction to the book, *La historia tejida por la imagen*, Irleamar Chiampi historically situates Lezama's essay in relation to the intellectual tradition of its time. According to Chiampi, in 1957, when Lezama publicly read what would be the

book *La expresión americana*, a long tradition of academic studies on the American cultural identity was already established (see page 1). An immediate and inevitable question arises then: what does Chiampi mean by “American” culture and identity? Does Chiampi follow the traditional convention in Hispanic American studies and exclude North America from this referent, as Carpentier had done before? The examples provided by her give a straightforward answer to the question: Sarmiento, Martí, Bilbao, Lastarria, Rodó, Martínez Estrada, Ricardo Rojas, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Fernando Ortiz, Carpentier, etc. So, it is clear that the great “American” tradition of academic studies that the author refers to is a *Hispanic Latin American* one. At a certain moment, Chiampi says that this “American” discussion had gone through different stages, such as the comparison with Europe and the comparison with the *Anglo-American* culture. Thus, we can conclude that Chiampi uses the term *American*, as a reference to the American continent, **excluding** the Anglophone North America. Later Chiampi states that Americanist discourse seemed to have solved the crucial problem of the complex of inferiority

[...] el discurso americanista parecía haber resuelto el problema crucial del complejo de inferioridad, asumiendo la heterogeneidad de su formación racial sin renunciar al ambicionado universalismo. Suponía igualmente, el hallazgo de una diferencia que permitía contrastar la complejidad de **nuestra** formación con la homogeneidad social de los Estados Unidos y los particularismos etnocentristas de los europeos. (*op.cit.* p. 10, my emphasis)

In this quotation it is evident that the United States is **not** part of the “America” Chiampi refers to. Furthermore, the tradition of the americanist discourse marks the “homogeneous” United States and the “ethnocentrist” Europe negatively while the “American” complex formation is marked positively. It is clear that the United States is aligned with Europe as the other, the opponent. At another moment Chiampi quotes

Vitier and his fear of “the threat of the dissubstantiation of the Cuban essences by the ‘corrupting influence of the American way of life’” (page 12, my translation). At other times her own anti-imperialistic historic vision of the United States becomes patent in sentences like “Cuba had become a space of use and abuse of the United States and a grotesque simulacrum of the Republican ideals” (page 13, my translation). So, Chiampi is surprised when Lezama includes in his “American Expression” the United States:

[...] la noción manejada por Lezama incluye, sorprendentemente, a los Estados Unidos. Esa inclusión puede parecer una herejía [...] en un periodo de plena vigencia del “**latino-americanismo**” en la vida continental. Más allá de las tensiones políticas que durante más de medio siglo alimentaron un **justificado sentimiento antimperalista**, el clima ideológico de la reivindicación de la latinidad [...] se afianzaba en el mito de que los Estados Unidos representaban un mundo materialista y pragmático, carente de espiritualidad, de verdaderas esencias humanas y, como tal, antagónico a **nuestra** América. Las razones de Lezama van, no obstante, al margen de los hechos y de las ideologías vigentes. Si bien hace prevalecer los ejemplos de expresión latinoamericana y toma los de América del Norte de modo complementario (y en cierto sentido “latinizando” a los Estados Unidos), la articulación conceptual del ensayo sugiere que el adjetivo “americana” del título fue intencional para establecer la idea de una totalidad indisoluble, con una doble acepción. Primero, desde el punto de vista histórico, rescata el nombre original del continente, el de su fundación; segundo refiere a una geografía única, una *naturaleza* que, anterior a la historia, la prefigura como unidad espiritual indisociable en el Occidente. (Chiampi, 1993, p. 11-12, my emphasis)

There are two different levels of anti-imperialism that are manifested in the quotations mentioned above. One is politico-economical and the other is cultural. The politico-economical dimension becomes explicit when Chiampi says that “Cuba had become a grotesque simulacrum of the Republican ideals”. However, this reluctance towards the United States transcends the politico-economical domain and seems to motivate and reinforce a certain cultural resistance against the new empire (note again the use of the pronoun “nuestra” in bold). As quoted above, Chiampi, says that “**besides** the political tensions that had been feeding for more than half a century a **justifiable**

anti-imperialist sentiment, the ideology of the time relied on the myth that the United States was [...] a world without spirituality, without true human essences”. (my translation, my emphasis). We can see here that just as in the writings of Carpentier, the political tensions between the United States and Latin America were inevitably transferred onto the cultural level, feeding and reinforcing an anti-USA sentiment. Lezama overcomes this tendency and includes in his analysis some examples of cultural production from the USA. However, this inclusion has to be put in perspective. One can argue that the inclusion of US artists in Lezama’s essay is feeble. Lezama includes two US writers, Herman Melville and Walt Whitman, as partakers of the act of “verbal nascence” of the Americas. In his praise of the American continent and in his anti-Hegelian argumentation, Lezama also mentions the musician George Gershwin as an example of cultural voracity – “incorporative protoplasm”, to use his term – proper to the Americas. However, the three pages devoted to these artists (pages 178-180), when compared to the extensive use of Latin-American artists throughout the book, confirms that this inclusion of the United States has to be seen in perspective. Besides, Chiampi herself admits that when Lezama includes the United States in his argumentation he does it in a “complementary” way. The center of his examples are Sor Juana Inés da la Cruz, Kondori and Aleijadinho who become paradigmatic figures and are dominant throughout his essay. Melville, Whitman and Gershwin occupy a complementary and peripheral position in his argumentation.

By introducing Chiampi’s analysis, I attempted to demonstrate how Carpentier and Lezama differ in their attitude towards the United States. While Carpentier is in agreement with the anti-US ideological Latin American context of the time, Lezama is an exception to the rule, including the United States under the sign “America”. The

exception and the rule confirm once more the idea that *americanidad* in Hispanic America has traditionally been a concept of resistance against Europe **and** the United States.

1.d) Carpentier and Lezama Lima: binary paradigms and the cultural eclipse.

I have insisted that the intellectual discourses analysed so far are marked by complex movements of inclusion/exclusion, openness/restriction in relation to the referent **America**. I have also proposed that these discourses have been constantly marked by the binary paradigm center-periphery. Carpentier and Lezama, with their persistent and vehement exaltation of the American continent, seem to corroborate this hypothesis. This is so because America's exaltation in the writings of these authors is always done in contrast to Europe's demotion. In their books and essays, the praise of the American continent (periphery) is accompanied by a strong criticism of Europe (center). The rise of American culture is always presented along with the decline of the European civilization, in an attempt to attack the old paradigms in which Europe is always considered the (superior) model. Both Lezama and Carpentier try to invert the paradigm (**Europe = center = superior**) / (**America = periphery = inferior**).

While Lezama does it by analyzing and comparing the American and the European Baroque, Carpentier does it by stressing the superiority of the new continent exemplified by the greatness of the American *real maravilloso* over the European surrealism, as we have discussed before. Through their arguments both Lezama and Carpentier attempt to establish a new paradigm, to take possession of the place occupied by America's "opponent":

(America = new center? = superior) / (Europe = new periphery?! = inferior).

It is clear that both Lezama and Carpentier share the desire to transfer Western cultural “primacy” from Europe to America.

One last important remark concerning the movements of openness/restriction inherent to the concept of *americanidad* in its Hispanic American tradition is the absence of Canada. This absence obviously can not be explained by the paradigm center vs. periphery, since, in our analysis, Canada is also a peripheral area when compared to the United States. Yet, in the Hispanic American discourse of *americanidad*, Canada is usually not even mentioned, perhaps constituting an example of what I have called in an earlier study “cultural eclipse” (Bahia, 2002). In this article I showed how, in the Latin American imaginary, Canada is generally eclipsed, as if it were an extension of the United States, its 51st state. As observed by the Canadian writers Graeme Gibson and Margaret Atwood in their introduction to *Desde el invierno* (anthology of Canadian short stories, originally written in English),

Los Estados Unidos de América separan a los canadienses de los países y culturas de la América Latina y el Caribe. Cuando miramos al sur – lo que en Canadá hacemos con bastante frecuencia –, los Estados Unidos bloquean nuestra mirada. Lo mismo ocurre cuando los latinoamericanos levantan la vista hacia el norte. Como resultado de ello, canadienses y latinoamericanos conocen demasiado poco uno de los otros. (Atwood and Gibson, 2000, p. 3)

The cultural eclipse is the process through which the cultural manifestations of a specific region are blocked and/or eclipsed by another, bigger, more representative and influential culture. This seems to be the case when Latin America looks up North and “can not see” Canada. An example that reinforces this notion of *cultural eclipsing* would be the use of the adjective *North-American* instead of *American* to “correct” the use of the national adjectives. The Larousse dictionary (French-Spanish) says: “Américain, sin otra indicación, se usa **abusivamente** en francés por norteamericano, de los Estados

Unidos.” (Gross, 1999, my emphasis). When we try to avoid the metonymy American = from the United States we inattentively create another one: North American = from United States. *North American* is as imprecise as *American* because it also excludes (or yet includes under the same sign) other countries geographically located in North America, like Canada and Mexico. Mexico has its specificity “protected” in the Latin American imaginary because it is undoubtedly part of “Nuestra América mestiza”. However, from the Latin American point of view it is harder to distinguish under the *North-American* sign the United States from Canada. An informal conversation with a neighbor in Brazil can also illustrate the phenomenon. Talking about the possibility of leaving the country, she said:

“The violence here in Brazil is growing. I have a cousin who lives in the United States who says that over there it is much better”

“Really?” I replied “Has your cousin lived in the United States for a long time?”

“Yeah, she’s been there for a long time. And she says she doesn’t want to come back anymore. Well, after these terrorist attacks, I don’t know...”

“And what part of the United States does your cousin live in?”

“In Canada” (?!?)

I was intrigued and surprised by the answer, especially because my interlocutor was a person with a good socio-cultural background who had a major in Business Administration. I insisted:

“Does your cousin live in Canada or in the United States?”

“Oh, yeah. It is not exactly the United States...”

The informality of the conversation and the natural way in which my interlocutor considered Canada an “extension” of the United States reveals how in her imaginary

both countries are “mixed up”, forming one single block. The dialogue can also help us understand how the phenomenon of *eclipsing* affects the process of cultural transfers on the continent. In the article I give several examples of Canadian artistic manifestations that are thought and absorbed in Brazil as “American”, that is, from the United States. One of the most popular comedy groups in Canada, *Kids in the Hall*, was announced on Brazilian TV as “the bad boys from America”, “the most irreverent group of America”, a clear allusion to the United States. At no moment the TV commercial made reference to Canada as the country of origin of the group. The eclipsing presence of the United States makes Canada “look like” its powerful neighbor.

The phenomenon can provide us hints to understand (at least partially) the absence of Canada in the discourse of *americanidad* in Hispanic America. Canada would be excluded not only because of a supposed cultural distance, but also for being obscured by the eclipsing presence of its powerful neighbor from the south. The presence of the United States has always eclipsed the gaze of Canadians towards Latin America and vice-versa, as Atwood and Gibson observe above. The attempt to see through this eclipsing presence is one of the main marks of the discourse of some thinkers of *américanité* in Quebec and *americanidade* in Brazil, as we will analyse in the upcoming chapters of this thesis.

2 – AMÉRICANITÉ IN QUEBEC: France, United States, Americas and the dynamics of ambivalence.

2.a) Américanité versus “européanité”: the shift of a paradigm.

According to Thériault (2002) the use of the concept *américanité* in Quebec started timidly in the 1970s on the academic and literary scene and intensified in the 1980s. In the 1990s, it became so widely disseminated that many consider it not only one of the dimensions of Quebec’s identity, but the most fundamental and determinant of its characteristics (p. 11-13). In Quebec the concept *américanité* has reached a high degree of circulation. Proof of such dissemination and circulation is the fact that researchers from different fields like literary studies, cultural studies, history and social sciences have worked intensively on the development of the concept. The “discovery” that the province belonged to the American continent promptly became the solution to Quebec’s identity riddle. It was proposed by Quebec’s intellectual elite, discontented with the old French-Canadian tradition that always turned its gaze towards Europe in the quest for the establishment of the province’s cultural identity (Thériault, 2002, p. 89-117). *Américanité* in Quebec as a reaction to *européanité* is an important dimension of the concept, because it unveils again how the concept is used by a peripheral American area (Quebec) to promote its break from a culturally central area (Europe, more particularly France). The discourse of “européanité” stated that Quebec’s identity was defined by its historical and cultural liaison with Europe, and most specifically with France. The French language, religion and culture were the model, the cultural source that differentiated Quebec people from Anglo-Saxon America. Therefore, it is important to stress that in the remainder of this chapter when I refer to “européanité” in Quebec, it

actually means “francité”. Despite the ambiguity of the term “européanité”, I will use it for my analysis since it is the term employed by specialists (c.f. Lamonde’s chapter “L’américanité contre l’eupéanité”, *op.cit.* p.89-117).

When commenting on the writings of Jean Lemoyne, one of the precursors of the *américanité* in Quebec, Thériault (2002) says:

L’américanité [to Lemoyne] est la véritable identité québécoise, vérité longtemps cachée par cette croyance imaginaire que le Canada français était de culture française. Une telle affirmation, on la trouvera à profusion dans tous les écrits s’identifiant à l’américanité. La découverte de l’américanité apparaît alors, pour ceux qui l’ont vécue, comme une véritable expérience cathartique qui purifie la culture québécoise de ses éléments étrangers et imaginaires. (*op.cit.* p.27)

What was considered the essence of Quebec’s culture, the French heritage, is now replaced by the notion that its belonging to the American continent is the most important component of its identity. The *américanité* takes the central place once occupied by the French-Canadian discourse in Quebec’s identity self-representation. To Gérard Bouchard (1999), one of the most prominent supporters of the *américanité* in Quebec, it is important to highlight that the former European colonies in America long lived “dans une étroite dépendance à l’endroit des métropoles européennes, ce qui est traduit par une vieille habitude d’emprunts culturels et de mises à jour un peu artificielles”. (Bouchard, 1999, p.19) To Bouchard, the search for European cultural references and the denial of *américanité* are signs of dependence and artificiality. Lamonde (1999) corroborates this vision when he proposes a “didactic” formula to explain Quebec’s identity: $Q = - (F) + (GB) + USA^2 - (R)$.

– (F) means that Quebec’s cultural and historical identity contains less of France than supposed by the old French-Canadian discourse and its representation of Quebec; +(GB) means that the British influence was more significant than the Quebec elite were

able to admit; USA² means that the US influence was so determinant that it is necessary to represent it “squared”; and finally that the (-) in (R)ome represents the failure of the catholic model that emphasized the spiritual vocation of French America, in opposition to the materialism of Anglo-Saxon America.

We have seen in the previous chapter that Carpentier’s and Lezama’s discourse of *americanidad* were indicative of a Latin American tradition which attempted to promote a break from the models which established Europe as the inevitable (and superior) cultural reference. As we can conclude from Thériault’s and Lamonde’s extracts, an analogous desire to break free from the European center is found in the discourse of *américanité* in Quebec. Both traditions are strongly marked by the perspective of peripheral areas desiring to break the cultural chains which linked them to the European metropolis. The difference is that, while Carpentier and Lezama desire the transference of the cultural centrality from Europe to America, Quebec’s proponents of *américanité* simply emphasize that the French heritage and the European route are not the most fundamental traces of Quebec’s historical and cultural identity. Instead, the supporters of *américanité* emphasize Quebec’s belonging to a cultural, political and economical **American** reality.

In a recent newspaper article, Alain Dubuc (2004) illustrated the shift in the contemporary perception of Quebec’s identity in simple terms. He says that for some years he has performed an informal survey, asking friends how they define themselves: “Comme des Nord-Américains parlant Français? Ou comme des Français d’Amérique?” Dubuc remarks that most people who identify themselves with the first group are usually young and from bigger cities like Montreal. In the second group there is a predominance of older people from smaller cities. The journalist takes a position in favor of the first

group. He asserts that the second vision, more Francophile and attached to the “motherland”, corresponds less to modern Quebec, a province he considers profoundly North American; a province that, according to him, has progressively distanced itself from European models in a continuing process still in progress. Dubuc does not propose a total break from France, recognizing its importance especially from the linguistic and cultural point of view. Nevertheless, he adds:

Mais le succès futur des rapports avec la France reposera bien plus sur nos différences que nos similitudes. Notre richesse, c’est notre **américanité**, bien plus que notre attachement nostalgique (*op.cit.* p.A29, my emphasis)

The journalist’s position is clear. On the one hand, the Francophile discourse is associated with the old, the nostalgic. On the other hand, the discourse of *américanité* indicates to him an identity that is more modern and more truthful to Quebec’s reality. It is interesting to note that Dubuc’s article does not have any academic pretension. It was written for the average newspaper reader, indicating that the debate on *américanité* in Quebec has gone beyond academic circles.

It is important to stress that the generalizations I have made so far about the discourse of *américanité* in Quebec do not have the intention of describing it as a monolithic bloc of ideas. On the contrary, this discourse has undergone an extremely wide dissemination in different fields of knowledge – literary studies, social sciences, political studies, history and cultural studies, just to mention the most notable ones – and in each of these disciplines there are voices of dissent, differences in the usage and the axiology of the concept. For example, to some contemporary researchers such as Gérard Bouchard (sociology), Yvan Lamonde (history) and Jean Morency (literature) the concept is positive, useful and accurate, while to other thinkers like Pierre Nepveu (literature), Jean Morisset (geography) and Joseph Yvon Thériault (sociology) the notion

seems inappropriate and even dangerous. In his vigorous *Critique de l'américanité*,

Yvon Thériault (2002) says:

L'américanité est un concept-poubelle. Poubelle dans le sens d'un ramassis hétéroclite d'énoncés dont on réussit difficilement à trouver la forme. Poubelle aussi dans le sens d'un concept qu'il faut rejeter, car inutile sinon dangereux, pour comprendre le parcours historique de la nation française d'Amérique (Thériault, 2002, p. 23).

Thériault's polemical tone derives from his firm belief that the discourse of *américanité* in Quebec is full of impasses and contradictions that lead it to theoretical deadlocks. One of the impasses strongly criticized by Thériault is the difference established by Yvan Lamonde between *américanité* and *américanisation*. This difference was first proposed by Lamonde in his book *Ni avec eux ni sans eux* (1996). It is worth analyzing with further detail Lamonde's book for three reasons:

1) The difference between *américanité* and *américanisation* proposed by Lamonde in his book is highly accepted and disseminated among the proponents of *américanité*. On the other hand, this difference is one of the most criticized points by the intellectuals who refuse the concept. Besides, a closer look on this difference will reveal important aspects of the relation between Quebec and its powerful neighbor, the United States, in the discourse of *américanité*.

2) Lamonde's historic approach proves that important intellectual discussions about the European or American character of Quebec were taking place in the province for many decades before the 1970s, thus giving the issue a new historic perspective.

3) It is possible to extract from Lamonde's book general directives that can help us understand the different roles the United States and the Americas have played in the construction of the concept in Quebec.

2.b) *Américanité* versus *américanisation*: the Americas and the United States in

Lamonde's text.

In 1996, Yvan Lamonde proposed in his book *Ni avec eux ni sans eux* a conceptual difference between *américanité* and *américanisation* in a very clear way:

[...] l'américanisation du Québec, concept de résistance ou de refus, est ce processus d'acculturation par lequel la culture étatsunienne influence et domine la culture autant canadienne que québécoise – et mondiale – tandis que l'américanité, qui englobe tout autant l'Amérique latine que l'Amérique saxonne, est un concept d'ouverture et de mouvance qui dit le consentement du Québec à son appartenance continentale. (*op.cit.* page 11)

In Lamonde's proposition, *américanisation* is used as a framework of anti-imperialistic resistance to refer to the process by which the culture of the United States dominates and imposes itself upon other cultures, not only on the continent, but also on a world level. In contrast, *américanité* refers to the belonging of the province to the American continent, its insertion into a geography, a history and an economy – among others – that undoubtedly make Quebec part of a bigger, continental collectivity. His definition of *américanité* has a real all-embracing dimension that explicitly includes Latin America and the Anglo-Saxon portion of the continent. To Lamonde, the concept is one of openness and movement that theorizes the inexorable belonging of Quebec to the American continent. It is evident in Lamonde's proposition that the concept of *américanité* evokes a set of positive ideas – openness, movement, inclusiveness, proximity to the rest of the continent, etc. – while *américanisation* concentrates on a set of negative aspects – domination, imperialism, cultural imposition, etc. On the theoretical level, the two concepts are clearly distinct from one another. However, on the empirical level the distinction becomes less transparent. And this is so because Lamonde restricts his historical analysis uniquely to the problematic relations between Quebec and

the United States. Furthermore, his historical portrait of *américanité* in Quebec shows that these relations with the United States have always been marked by the historic fear of *américanisation* in the province, in a complex dynamic of attraction and repulsion. In the second and first parts of the book, little or no space is given to think the *américanité* in Quebec on a continental level. The aspects of *américanité* discussed are those concerning the simultaneous fascination and reluctance Quebec has historically experienced towards its powerful neighbour to the south – aspects that seem to be more closely related to *américanisation* and its phobia of cultural domination. This fact makes it hard in practical terms to clearly set apart *américanité* and *américanisation*.

Thus, as we read Lamonde's book we come to the conclusion that there is a disproportion between its intention and its actual accomplishment: there is an intention of creating a continental discourse of inclusiveness, which is impeached by the restriction and fixation of analysing the *américanité* in relation to the United States alone; as if the whole continent were reduced to the United States of America. One of the immediate consequences of such a disproportion between intention and realization is that the terms *Amérique* and *américain* – and even *américanité!* – lack precision and sometimes one no longer knows if they refer to the whole continent or only to the United States. In spite of this, Lamonde's contribution to the discussion of *américanité* is far from worthless. In the first part of the book, he fully succeeds in showing that deep discussions about whether Quebec's cultural identity was primarily linked to Europe or America have been part of the province's history and can be dated back at least to the 19th century. In the second part of his analysis he also interestingly shows how modernity and *américanité* are intrinsically correlated in Quebec. But it is in the third and last part of his book that Lamonde's analysis becomes truly captivating and thought-

provoking, showing that the essayist was completely aware of the “disproportion” pointed out earlier. Furthermore, Lamonde invites the reader to reflect upon what *américanité* in Quebec is and what it might be in the future. Each one of these three parts will be presented in more detail in the following sections of the thesis.

2.b.1) *Américanité* and *américanisation*: the historic ambivalence.

In the first part of the book, Lamonde presents the first extensive intellectual discussion of the American character of Quebec. It took place in the 1830s during the political turmoil caused by the Rebellion of the Patriots. The discussion at the time was essentially political. The patriots saw in the old British colony a model of independence and economic prosperity. Referring to historical documents, Lamonde shows that the two main thinkers of the time, Étienne Parent and Louis-Joseph Papineau, wrote innumerable texts in which the United States was depicted as a role model. Furthermore, in the 1830s and 1840s several intellectuals even defended the idea of annexing Quebec to the United States (pages 20-23). The Patriots expected to receive ideological, diplomatic and military help from the United States and some of them hoped that such aid would lead to annexation. The expected support never came since the United States preferred then to abstain from the conflict (pages 26-30). Not surprisingly, the admiration of the United States was not unanimous and much reluctance towards the successful new nation could already be observed. An important part of Quebec’s leadership of the time saw annexation as a threat to the province. The discussion revolved around two opposing poles that can be summed up in the following citations:

[...] car la République des Etats-Unis qui nous voisine [...] tombera sur nous comme étant une des possessions anglaises qu’elle convoite depuis longtemps.

Dès lors, adieu à notre langue, à nos institutions à nos lois dont la plupart sont encore celles de l'Ancienne France. Devenu un des États de la République américaine, le Canada, pays éminemment Catholique et où cette religion s'est soutenue dans toute sa pureté [...], sera aussitôt transformé en un assemblage de toutes les sectes qui couvrent le sol des États-Unis, depuis le déisme le plus éhonté, jusqu'au fanatisme le plus ridicule des Mormons (Faribault, 1848, [cited in Lamonde, 1996, page 33]).

L'annexion n'est pas seulement un fait commercial et politique, elle est avant tout un fait géographique et physique. Nous sommes annexés déjà par nos rivières, nos lois et nos chemins de fer [...] Nous sommes américains déjà par nos mœurs [...] nous le sommes par nos intérêts nouveaux, par nos aspirations, par les tendances inévitables des sociétés modernes [...] Il faut que nous soyons avant tout américains si nous voulons vivre sur ce continent, et nous ne serons réellement américains qu'en nous incorporant à la grande république (Buies, [1874], [cited in Lamonde, 1996, page 44]).

In the discourse of these two intellectuals of the 19th century, it is possible to note some of the same elements that mark the contemporary discussion about *l'américanité québécoise*. On the one hand, there is the apprehension that the French heritage could disappear, absorbed by the powerful institutions of the United States (*américanisation*). On the other hand, there is already the conscience that the province irrefutably develops a way of life that is closer to the United States than to France (*américanité*). With many other historical documents, Lamonde convinces the reader that these questions have been discussed in Quebec long before the 1970s when the term *américanité* started to circulate slowly among intellectuals from the field of literary studies. Lamonde proves that the current discussion about *américanité* in Quebec is not a temporary fad and has been debated since the United States started to grow in importance as a nation in the 19th century. But it is from the 1920s on – especially after the Second World War – that the influence of the United States on Quebec intensified and the discussion about the *américanité* (or *américanisation*?) took a new shape.

2.b.2) *Américanité* and *américanisation*: the American way of life in Quebec.

In the second part of his book, Lamonde gives a succinct yet very comprehensive overview of the *américanisation* of everyday life of Quebecers in the 20th century. He also provides the reader with important films as well as fictional and non-fictional books which since 1965 have explicitly revolved around the theme of *américanité* in Quebec.

In the first half of the 20th century, the process of *américanisation* in Québec was intensified by the invasion of the cinema and the automobile industry, along with all the other goods *made in USA* that literally changed everyday life. In the 1920s, Paramount controlled almost all the cinema theatres in the province, especially in Montreal. 96% of the films shown at the time were made in the United States (page 56). In 1939, the ratio between automobiles and population in Quebec was 1 to 15.2. In 1959 this ratio was 1 to 6.3 (page 67). Needless to say that the automobile industry was totally dominated by US companies. By using tables and statistical data, Lamonde shows that *l'américanisation* of Quebec grew stronger in this period. *The American way of life*, which penetrated the collective imaginary, came along with modern life. As a consequence Quebec's literature started to portray the new modern=American life in several novels: *Le poids du jour* (1949) de Ringuet, *Alexandre Chenevert* (1954) de Gabriele Roy, *Les inutiles* (1956) d'Eugène Cloutier, etc. (page 69). In the same proportion, the anti-americanism and the discourse of resistance against the American imperialism grew in the province (page 76). At this point of his analysis, Lamonde shows that the idea of Quebec's *américanité* starts to be consciously and explicitly elaborated by the province's cultural milieu. It is important to mention briefly some of the cultural productions that, according to Lamonde, were important to the development of the discourse of *américanité* in Quebec for the period 1965-1995 (pages 76-80):

- a) **The series of films entitled “L’américanité”**: The NFB (National Film Board) produced in the 1980s a series of films that had in common a reflection upon the *américanité* of Quebec. From these, the most famous was *Alias Will James* directed by Jacques Godbout in 1988. It is imperative to stress that **all** the films revolved around characters and situations that had as their main theme the problematic Quebec-United States relationship. For a detailed analysis of the films see the website <http://www.revue-cinemas.umontreal.ca/vol001no0102/default.htm>
- b) ***Volkswagen Blues***: This widely known and celebrated novel written by Jacques Poulin in 1984 narrates a road trip from Quebec to California. Poulin’s characters embark on a road trip that geographically goes southwest. They go south, but not beyond the United States; they go west, but not to English Canada. Once again, one of the most famous novels of *américanité* in Quebec restricts its plot to the Quebec-United States relationship.
- c) ***Le mythe américain dans les fictions d’Amérique***: Jean Morency’s 1994 book has become one of the main references of *américanité* in Quebec’s literary milieu. As the title reveals, it proposes to identify a set of American myths that can be found in the founding novels of US and Quebec literature. Although “American” in the title of the work seems to have a continental meaning, the book actually restricts its analysis to a *corpus* selected from Quebec and the United States only. In fact, “American” in the title of the book means “from the United States” and not “from the American continent”.
- d) **Jacques Godbout’s novels**: *Le couteau sur la table* (1965), *Salut Galarneau* (1967), *Les têtes à Papineau* (1981) and *Une histoire américaine* (1986) are

some of the novels written by the author considered by many to be the most important writer of *américanité* in Quebec. Godbout's novels are filled with characters that problematically live their Quebec identity on a continent dominated by the Anglophone presence. His books, full of symbolism, depict characters with two opposing heads that speak different languages (English and French), hot dog vendors with an ambiguous attitude towards the United States, and Quebec professors who are framed by the FBI!

Lamonde gives many other examples of thinkers who worked on the theme of *américanité* in Quebec. But the examples mentioned above are sufficient to show that *américanité* in Quebec, in general, seems to be a discourse obsessed by (or at least restricted to) the influence of the United States in Quebec's identity. It is less a concept of openness, movement and inclusiveness that encompasses the whole continent (*américanité*) than a notion haunted by the idea of US cultural domination (*américanisation*). The remarkable analysis of Professor Pierre Véronneau concerning the series of films "L'américanité" sponsored by NFB seems to be applicable to the discourse of *américanité* in Quebec on a larger scale:

Au bout de cette première série, je perçois plutôt une attitude désespérée chez la plupart des cinéastes, l'impossibilité de prendre prise sur cette notion d'américanité dont le projet initial postulait **qu'elle existe mais qui fuit dès qu'on s'approche, qui se métamorphose en américanisation** [...] (Véronneau, 1990, my emphasis).

Going back to Lamonde's formula $Q = - (F) + (GB) + USA^2 - (R)$, the reference to the United States as one of the determinant components of Quebec's identity is explicit. The equation is composed by USA and not by A as in America. In 1999, the journal *Politique et sociétés* published a special issue dedicated to *américanité* in Quebec. Guy Lachapelle and Louis Balthazar (1999) in the volume's introduction make

a series of remarks that also reveals the contemporary dimension of the intellectual discussion around *américanité* in Quebec:

La relation avec **les États-Unis** s'exprime parfois de manière négative, certains groupes affirmant que nous devons "résister au péril américain".

[...]

Les intellectuels québécois se sont mis à nouveau à s'intéresser à cette notion d'américanité qui connote **l'appartenance aux Amériques** tout en se démarquant par rapport à l'américanisation, c'est-à-dire l'assimilation graduelle à la culture américaine, **une menace toujours réelle**.

[...]

Nos élites politiques québécoises auraient-elles, et bien après les citoyens, compris l'importance du lien avec **les États-Unis**? Nous avons presque envie de dire enfin!... alors que nous vivons la continentalisation économique depuis plusieurs années. (p.90, my emphasis)

In these remarks, it is possible to notice the complex ambivalence of Quebec thinkers seduced by the proposition of *américanité*, but at the same time reluctant due to the fear of *américanisation*. In the same journal Pierre-Paul Proulx (1999) signs the article "L'intégration économique dans les Amériques: quelles stratégies pour tenter d'assurer l'américanité plutôt que l'américanisation du Québec?" Proulx tries to conceive strategies that could guarantee that Quebec's inexorable belonging to the North-American economy would not result in its *américanisation* on the economic, social, cultural, linguistic and political level. Again, in this article, it is possible to perceive the ambivalence attraction vs. repulsion, *américanité* vs. *américanisation*.

Thériault corroborates the idea that empirically the contemporary studies of *américanité* do not seem to develop a concept that really encompasses both Latin America and the entire Anglo-Saxon America:

Empiriquement, au départ, il n'est pas vrai que les travaux portant sur l'américanité – à commencer par les propres études de Lamonde – tentent de définir une réalité politique, économique ou culturelle qui engloberait l'ensemble de l'Amérique et qui se distinguerait de l'américanisation – l'influence américaine sur le reste de l'Amérique. C'est l'Amérique étatsunienne qui fascine les personnages des romans dits de l'américanité. C'est parce que l'action se

déroule indistinctement entre Montreal, New York, la Californie ou la Floride [...] que ces romans sont dits de l'américanité. Dans les travaux socioéconomiques, l'intégration économique continentale dont il est question est bel et bien l'intégration aux États-Unis [...] (*op.cit.* p. 30-31)

It is true that in general the studies of *américanité* in Quebec are marked by a great ambivalence of attraction and repulsion towards the United States, leaving little or no space to the continental openness and movement proposed by Lamonde⁷. It is also true that this ambivalence makes it difficult to distinguish *américanité* and *américanisation*. Even the title of Lamonde's book reveals this ambivalence: *Ni avec eux ni sans eux. Le Québec et les États-Unis*. That is, Quebec is neither with them nor without them, unveiling a complex dynamics of ambivalence! However, it is important to stress that Lamonde is completely aware of these uncertainties and that in the third part of his book he offers the reader a new and insightful approach to the problematic ambiguities of *américanité* in Quebec.

2.b.3) The continental *américanité*.

We have seen that *américanité* and *américanisation* are neatly separated concepts on theoretical grounds, but in empirical terms, at least in Quebec, these notions are intermingled. In the third part of Lamonde's book, there is an interesting twist in his analysis. If in the two first parts the author adopts a distant position, basically documenting the historical evolution of the *américanité* in Quebec, in the third part he takes an active role in the discussion. It is towards the end of the book that the concept assumes a continental nature and the historic fear of *américanisation* becomes more

⁷ Later on Thériault adds that there are exceptions, though rare, to this general rule. One of these exceptions is Gérard Bouchard (2000) who attempts to understand *américanité* as part of the trajectory of "new societies". I would also add Maximilien Laroche who has written several articles stressing the necessity of not mistaking *américanité* for "étatsunité". (Bernd, 2003b, p. 28). Another researcher, Donald Cuccioleta, has pursued remarkable efforts to develop the notion of "américanité" in a transcontinental perspective (c.f. Cuccioleta (2001) *L'américanité et les Amériques*)

distant. For the first time, the author conceives the American identity on a continental level and recognizes the necessity of breaking through the United States barrier:

Cette dimension hémisphérique de la question américaine fait insensiblement glisser l'attention vers le Sud et permet de bien faire comprendre que, pour le Québec, **Amérique, américanité et américain ne peuvent pas être réduits aux États-Unis**. On fera sans doute un jour l'histoire des contacts du Canada et du Québec avec l'Amérique du Sud [...] (*op.cit.* p. 92, my emphasis)

We can infer from Lamonde's quotation that although today *Amérique*, *américanité* and *américain* are restricted to the United States there is space for optimism, for hoping that the discourse will eventually receive a truly continental dimension. He wishes for an intensification of the cultural exchange between the North and the South of the Americas; he longs for the day when the music from South America will be played in the radios of North America without being perceived as exotic; a day when we will compare Quebec literature with the literatures of other former colonies in the Americas; a day when the history of Latin America will be taught at universities and CEGEPs at the same level of importance as the history of Europe and The United States. Then, the author says, "le sens de l'appartenance continentale aurait fait du progrès." (page 93). This proposition may sound just like a utopian, a naive ideal. However, in another interesting twist, Lamonde closes his book by giving a very personal trajectory of the *américanité* in his life that reinforces the optimism for the prospects of the concept.

As a child Lamonde often traveled from Quebec to the United States. In these trips the American nature imprinted deep marks in the construction of his identity. The rains, the highways, the islands and the trees of his childhood are beautifully described by Lamonde. His family was francophone, but English was never a threat and his mother "n'eut jamais la moindre hésitation à parler anglais lorsque cela s'imposait" (page 94).

The author says that in his family “l’anglais ne représenta jamais ni une menace ni une barrière infranchissable.” (page 94). The music of his teenager years was Francophone and Anglophone; Elvis Presley and Jacques Brel were equally enjoyed. In his adult years “l’Amérique s’était enfin faite plus vaste que les États-Unis” (page 97). The project of a sabbatical year in Cuba, the learning of Spanish and the academic contact with Mexican, Colombian and Argentinean colleagues gave the author a new dimension of *américanité*. Lamonde is wise enough not to extend his personal experience into any general law about *américanité* in Quebec, but it is possible to see through the implicit suggestion of the analogy: the concept of *américanité* in Quebec is still growing, maturing and one day it will hopefully embrace a more continental perspective. In other words, Lamonde foresees the possibility of breaking through the cultural distance that separates Quebec and Latin America. The author seems to be aware that his initial proposition of openness and movement southbound has been hindered by the difficulty of going through, passing by the first stop. However, there is the desire in Lamonde’s thought that one day, when the thinkers of *américanité* in Quebec look south, their vision will not be blocked by the eclipsing presence of the powerful neighbor next door.

2.c) Carpentier, Lezama and Lamonde: convergences and divergences.

Carpentier wrote his famous prologue of *El reino de este mundo* in 1949 and developed his notion of *real maravilloso* in the following years. Lezama wrote the series of conferences that would be published as *La expresión americana* in 1957. Lamonde published *Ni avec eux ni sans eux* some decades later in 1996. The three of them are strongly marked by a peripheral perspective. That means that the three authors brought to their writings a gaze from the periphery (America) towards the center (Europe). And

this gaze is always permeated by complex ambivalences that reflect the American identity restlessness and discomfort in relation to its former colonizers. Carpentier and Lezama are part of a Hispanic American intellectual tradition which tries to break the paradigms that put Europe on a superior cultural plane. As we have seen in the previous chapter, beyond the idea of a break, there is a desire to invert the paradigm Europe=superior vs. America=inferior in Carpentier's and Lezama's texts. They attempt to achieve this inversion by downgrading Europe's cultural importance and praising America's cultural manifestations. Thus, America could occupy the privileged "superior" position occupied by the other. Lamonde, in contrast, comes from a different tradition. He comes from an intellectual context where academia attempts to reassess and relativize the importance of the French culture in Quebec's heritage, **without necessarily wishing to take the other's place**. Lamonde simply argues that Quebec's cultural identity is not fundamentally defined by its link with France. The strategy of break used by Lamonde does not seem to include any belief of superiority or inferiority between Europe and America. Here, we have the same vector, the peripheral perspective towards the center, but different nuances in the discourses. And this is so because the enunciator, the purpose, the time and the locus of enunciation are different. These differences are even stronger when we compare the role of the United States in the texts of these three thinkers.

Initially, the peripheral perspective of *americanidad* and *américanité* deals with the ancient European metropolis. In a second moment, these discourses have to face the political, economical and to a certain extent cultural hegemony of the United States. Carpentier is a representative example of the Latin American resistance against the US neo-colonialism, as seen in the previous chapter. This resistance is manifested in a

discourse that exalts “**nuestra América mestiza**”, the land of *barroquismo* and *criollidad* combined with a subtle exclusion of North America. Sometimes the opposition to the United States becomes explicit in his writings when he refers, for example, to the “most dangerous of the imperialisms, ‘el del gigante con botas de siete leguas que nos desprecia’” (Carpentier, 1976, p. 22-23). Lezama Lima is an exception to this pattern and deals with the United States in a different way. He also describes and emphasizes an America that is semantically filled with “tropicalismo” and “mestizaje”, but in *La expresión americana* we notice the inclusion of the United States in the act of “verbal naissance” of the continent (Lezama Lima, 1988, p.178-180). We have seen in the previous chapter that this inclusion is feeble because the presence of US artists is “peripheral” when compared to the great attention given to Latin American artists.

While in Carpentier and Lezama the peripheral perspective acts by reducing the presence and importance of the United States in their analysis, in Lamonde the effect is exactly the opposite. What interests Lamonde and the thinkers of *américanité* in Quebec from their peripheral point of view is exactly the intense and until then underestimated influence of the United States on the province. While in Latin America, the peripheral perspective of the concept turned *americanidad* into *latino-americanidad*, in Quebec *américanité* became *étatsunité*. In the next chapter I will support the thesis that the incipient notion of *americanidade* in Brazil has received influences from both Latin America and Quebec traditions, therefore constituting a case of hybridism, a crossing of the concepts *americanidad* and *américanité*.

3 – AMERICANIDADE IN BRAZIL: Ancient debate, new objectives.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a brief historical outline of important discourses in Brazil which fought Eurocentrist conceptions of the world that somehow downgraded the American continent. Just like in many other parts of the continent, Brazil has developed a long intellectual tradition in which the tension between the Old World and the New World plays a central role. An overview of this tradition is paramount to understand the second section in which we will analyze the emergence of *americanidade* as a new conceptual tool in Brazil in the 1990s. As we will see, the confluence of this Brazilian tradition and other discourses from different parts of the continent will contribute decisively to the construction of the neologism *americanidade* in Brazil.

3.a) Historical overview : from Priest Antônio Vieira to Silviano Santiago

3.a.1) Priest Antônio Vieira and the role of the Americas in the Christian World

According to Bernd (2003b, p.29), some of the earliest manifestations of americanism in Brazil can be found in the texts of Priest Antônio Vieira (1608-1697). A leading figure of the Brazilian colonial period, Priest Antônio Vieira actively participated in the political life of the colony and its metropolis. Like Bartolomé de las Casas had done one century before, Priest Antônio Vieira used his influence and prestige to denounce the mistreatments and violence against the Amerindians. The beauty and strength of his sermons have assured him a place of prime importance in the history of Brazilian literature. Born in Portugal in 1608, Priest Vieira went to Brazil at the age of six (Neves, 1998, ¶1) and adopted it as his homeland. Our interest in Priest Vieira is that

in his famous *Sermões* (Vieira, 1957) America already appears as an important theme. Bernd (2003b, p.29) indicates that especially in the *Sermão da Epifania* there is the conception of America as a whole, the New World in contrast with the Old World. A more careful analysis of this sermon will also show an important trace in Vieira's discourse: the attempt to insert America into the cultural (Christian) tradition of the Occident. The first part of the *Sermão da Epifania* brings a curious discussion that deals with the place of America in the history of the (Christian) world.

*Cum natus esset Jesus in Bethlehem Juda in diebus Herodis regis, ecce Magi ab Oriente venerunt*⁸. Estas são as primeiras palavras do Evangelho, e logo nelas parece que repugna o mesmo Evangelho a ser meu intérprete, porque a sua história e o seu mistério é da Índia Oriental: *Ab oriente venerunt* – e o meu caso é das Ocidentais. Se apelo para os reis e para o sentido místico, também está contra mim, porque totalmente exclui a América, que é a parte do mundo donde eu venho. (Vieira, 1957, ¶ 3)

Priest Vieira protests against the absence of an American representative among the wise men that came to see the Christ because they were all from the East. After all, according to priest Vieira, since the prophet Isaiah, the bible had said that the whole world would come to worship the Christ: “*ab oriente adducam semen tuum et ab occidente congregabo te*⁹”. Priest Vieira does not accept the traditional interpretation which says that three wise men representing the whole world, that is, Asia, Africa and Europe is the fulfillment of these prophecies. Such an interpretation would simply exclude the American continent from the global Christian context.

Dizem que os três reis significavam a Ásia, a África e a Europa, e onde lhes ficou a América? A América não é, também, parte do mundo, e a maior parte? Se me disserem que não apareceu no presépio, porque tardou e veio muitos séculos depois, também as outras tardaram; antes, ela tardou menos, porque se converteu e adorou a Cristo mais depressa e mais sem repugnância que todas. Pois, se cada

⁸ When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda in the days of King Herod, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem (King James version, Matthew 2.1)

⁹ I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. (Isaiah 43.5)

um das outras partes do mundo teve o seu rei que as apresentasse a Cristo, por que lhe há de faltar pobre América? (*op.cit.*, ¶ 3)

Here we have a double argument. Firstly America can not be excluded from the Christian tradition: “Isn’t America part of the world?” asks Priest Vieira. Secondly, it can not be belittled because not only is it part of the world, but also the largest part of the world. Also, the explanation that it is a belated continent is not valid to him because, comparatively, the new continent accepted conversion more willingly and faster than the other parts of the world. Just like José Cecílio del Valle, Carpentier and Lezama Lima, Priest Vieira in Brazil in the 17th century also discussed the position and value of America in the world. Priest Vieira shares with these thinkers the desire of finding a historical place for the continent. However, the resemblances end here. Priest Vieira was a loyal subject of the Portuguese Crown who wanted to praise America, because to him the exaltation of the colony would also be the exaltation of the metropolis. In the following paragraphs of his sermon, Priest Vieira acrobatically employs an argumentation in which the authority of the Bible is kept, the New World is praised and the Portuguese kings, for having brought the Gospel to Americas, are equaled to the biblical wise men! There is no desire whatsoever of a break as we have seen in the writing of the thinkers mentioned above. In his sermons, Priest Vieira frequently uses his rhetorical skills to include the New World in the large Christian occidental tradition he belongs to. However, the desire of inclusion of America in this tradition does not mean to Vieira a call for continental union and resistance against the metropolis like in the other cases. On the contrary, Priest Vieira’s strategy was to tie as much as possible the colony to the metropolis. This shows us the importance of contextualizing the locus of enunciation in each case exposed in this investigation. Valle, Carpentier, Lezama,

Lamonde and Vieira reflected about their continent, but the different historical times, ideological contexts and objectives will obviously imprint differences in their discourses.

One last interesting remark about Priest Vieira's writings is the use of the toponym America. When Priest Vieira uses the term America (or New World) in opposition to Europe, he seems to refer to the whole continent. Some other times he uses the term America to refer only to the portion of the continent conquered by the Portuguese Crown. So *America*, which should refer to the entire continent, is sometimes restrictively used as synonymous of "Portuguese America". Bernd points out that the same ambiguity in the use of the toponym America can be found centuries later in the Brazilian Romanticism as analyzed as follows (Bernd, 2003b, p. 29)

3.a.2) Brazilian Romanticism and the "appropriation" of the toponym *América*.

In the Brazilian Romantic period, *América* sometimes seems to be used as synonymous with New World, some other times as synonymous with Brazil. Gonçalves Dias (1823-1864), one of the greatest Brazilian Romantic poets of the 19th century, wrote in the prologue of his *Primeiros Cantos*, first published in 1847:

[as poesias] Foram compostas nas margens viçosas do Mondego e nos píncaros enegrecidos do Gerez - no Doiro e no Teia - sobre as vagas do Atlântico, e nas florestas virgens da América. (Dias, 1969, ¶ 3)

Mondego, Doiro and Teia are Portuguese rivers; Gerez, a Portuguese hill. To my knowledge, Gonçalves Dias never lived in or visited an American country other than Brazil. Therefore we can conclude that when he says "America" in the citation above he refers more specifically to the Brazilian territory. Although there is no error in saying that he wrote the poems in "America" (Brazil is part of America), the citation above

suggests there was, at the time, the preference for always using the name of the continent instead of the country. In the same book we can find another example. The first poems of *Primeiros Cantos* are reunited in a chapter entitled “Poesias **Americanas**” (my emphasis). It is a set of famous poems – among them, the celebrated “Canção do exílio” – which have in common the exaltation of “America”. The toponym used is America, but the description undoubtedly evokes the Brazilian landscape (sabiá¹⁰, Tupi¹¹, Caxias¹², etc.).

Besides Gonçalves Dias, we can also cite *Iracema*, the most important novel of the Romantic period in Brazil, written by José de Alencar in 1865. The brave and beautiful Amerindian Iracema was clearly a personification of America. It is not coincidence that Iracema, the name of the title character, is an anagram of America. In Alencar’s masterpiece, Iracema/America falls in love with the Portuguese colonizer Martim. From the forbidden relationship the *mestizo* Moacir, “the first Brazilian”, is born.

In a recent article, Luiz Cairo presented the results of his research on the “americanismo” in the Romantic period of the Brazilian literature:

O próprio sentimento de nacionalidade da literatura brasileira nasceu concomitante a um certo instinto de americanidade, sentimento de pertença a esse continente, que fez com que, em muitos textos literários, o Brasil fosse visto pelos nossos escritores como a própria América (Cairo, 2004, ¶ 1).

From Priest Vieira in the 17th century to the Romantics in the 19th century, Brazilian literature is filled with examples of writers who employed the figure of speech in which the whole (America) was used as synonymous with the part (Brazil).

¹⁰ A Brazilian bird that became a national symbol.

¹¹ The most important Amerindian tribe in South America when the Portuguese started colonization in the 16th century.

¹² City where Gonçalves Dias was born, in the state of Maranhão, Brazil.

According to Bernd (2003b, p. 30), this is an “unequivocal proof that [...] the ‘sin’ of usurpation committed by US Americans had already been committed by Brazilian Romantic Poets” (my translation). Again, the historical context will help us understand this particular use of the toponym “America”. Like in other parts of Latin America, the 19th century was the Brazilian moment of political independence from the European metropolis and it was necessary to mark its cultural difference in relation to the old continent. This difference was not marked with the toponym “Brazil”, because the project of a Brazilian nation was still embryonic. There was not at the time a strong sense of “brasilidade” and dichotomies like “colonizer vs. colonized”, “Europe vs. America” were still dominant. The constant use of the terms “América” and “americano” in the Romantic period instead of “Brasil” and “brasileiro” can be interpreted as a synecdoche that resulted from the dichotomous system of ideas of the time (Old World vs. New World), combined with the first efforts to create a local literary tradition. As a consequence, very often the toponym *América* is “appropriated” by the Brazilian Romantics in their project of constructing a national literature. It seems like this “appropriation” was part of the transition in the process of cultural affirmation because after the Romantic period, the toponym *America* was gradually substituted by *Brazil*. About the phenomenon Bernd says:

Não seria difícil construir hipóteses sobre o porquê e quando essa prática deixa de ser costumeira. Acreditamos que “América” e “americano” foram gradativamente substituídos por Brasil à medida que se consolidava o projeto nacional e que institucionalizar as letras brasileiras tornou-se uma urgência. Valeu enquanto significava oposição à Europa; quando os Estados Unidos passam a exercer influência sobre a América Latina, o interesse passa a ser o de se desvencilhar de um ideologema ambíguo em favor de um que representasse nossa identidade de maneira inequívoca como Brasil, brasilidade e brasileiro. (Bernd, 2003b)

Bernd, cites another hypothesis proposed by Donaldo Schüler (2001). According to Schüler, the political units in Latin America were formed in a process of mutual hostility and isolation. Following Schüler's line of reasoning, we can conclude that the transition from the *American* identity into the *Brazilian* identity took place because of this political process of reciprocated hostilities in Latin America. Since both hypotheses do not exclude each other, it is probably accurate to say that the emergence of the "brasilidade" resulted from the combination of these two factors. In any case, some decades later, from the Modernist Movement on, the terms *Brasil* and *brasileiro* were completely established, as we will see later in this chapter.

Another important remark on the "americanismo" in the Brazilian Romantic period is that the poets' exaltation of the American/Brazilian nature was often done in comparison with Europe. And the former was always considered better, more beautiful and exuberant than the latter. The celebrated "Canção do exílio" written in 1843 by Gonçalves Dias, which we have mentioned before as the best known poem among the "Poesias Americanas", is a clear example. In one of the paragraphs the poet says: "Nosso céu tem mais estrelas, / Nossas várzeas têm mais flores, / Nossos bosques têm mais vida, / Nossa vida mais amores". As we can observe the same *peripheral perspective* that drove the essays of Carpentier and Lezama Lima, that is, the desire of overcoming Europe, was also present in the poems of the Brazilian Romantics. In both cases the "subaltern" culture looks at other cultures considered "superior" and tries to reverse this uncomfortable position. Carpentier and Lezama did it by developing sophisticated theories in the 20th century, while the Brazilian Romantics did it through the exaltation of the American/Brazilian nature in their poems in the 19th century.

3.a.3) Brazilian Modernism and the affirmation of a national cultural identity.

According to Afrânio Coutinho (1969) the conflict of the relations between Europe and America, the effort to create a local tradition in opposition to the old European tradition, has been a driving force in the dynamics of the Brazilian literature since the colonial period. But to him, the peaks of such tension were the Romantic period mentioned above in the 19th century and the Modernist movement in the 20th century. About the modernist movement, Coutinho says:

Foi durante a década de 1920 a 1930 que a consciência literária brasileira atingiu a maioria. Então, perderam os brasileiros a noção de expatriamento cultural, podendo-se aí situar "o nascimento do Brasil e o conseqüente esmorecer da Europa dentro de nós" (Coutinho, 1969, ¶ 5)

Writing about the same period, Benedito Nunes, one of the most renowned intellectuals in Brazil, says:

Os manifestos (Paubrasil, 1924; Verde-amarelo, 1926; Antropófago, 1928) e revistas (Klaxon, 1922; Estética, 1924; Nova, 1926; Festa, 1927; Revista de Antropofagia, 1928/1929), de que o período, com seus distintos grupos, no Rio e, principalmente, em São Paulo, foi pródigo, atestam o conflito interno, ora estético, entre a adoção das correntes européias e a propensão nacionalista e mesmo localista do movimento, ora ideológico, com acentuado pendor político, entre discordantes e polarizadas concepções acerca da identidade brasileira. (Nunes, 1999)

As we have observed before a crucial difference between the Brazilian Romanticism and the Modernism is that the first movement often used *America* in opposition to Europe and the second one was much more concerned to developing a sense of “brasilidade”. Names like “Paubrasil¹³” and “Verde-amarelo¹⁴”, used for the manifestoes mentioned by Benedito Nunes, as well as the idea of anthropophagy

¹³ Pau-Brasil was a tree of enormous economic importance in the colonial period in Brazil. It was so valuable and abundant along the Brazilian coast that the country was named after it.

¹⁴ Green and yellow are the Brazilian national colors.

proposed by Oswald de Andrade in 1928, reveal the importance of the national theme for the modernists; the toponym “Brasil” acquires then capital importance. The anthropophagic movement also contributed to radically differentiate Modernism from Romanticism in Brazil. Brazilian anthropophagy represented a more advanced and aggressive suggestion of cultural affirmation because what is proposed now is the total assimilation of the other for the creation of new cultural paradigms. In the metaphor proposed by Oswald de Andrade the “subaltern” culture is no longer a simple imitator of the “superior” culture, but an agent of absorption and transformation of this culture.

3.a.4) Silviano Santiago and the battle against European “influence”

In his above-mentioned article “A crítica literária no Brasil, ontem e hoje”, Benedito Nunes mentions Silviano Santiago’s critical works from the 1970s and 1980s as a remarkable example of a Brazilian literary critic who takes up again the European issues explored by the modernists. However, it is interesting to note that in the writings of Santiago it is clear that Brazil is seen in a continental perspective, with constant use of terms like “América”, “América Latina” and “Novo Mundo”. In his essay “O entre-lugar do discurso Latino-Americano” (Santiago, 1978), the author pungently attempts to deconstruct any ethnocentric conception in which the European colonizing civilizations are seen as superior when compared to the colonized peoples of the New World. In 1978 Santiago still fights vehemently against the literary critic who sees Europe as the “source”, the “influence” for Latin- American thought.

Tal discurso reduz a criação dos artistas latino-americanos à condição de obra parasita, uma obra que se nutre de uma outra sem nunca a lhe acrescentar algo de próprio; uma obra cuja vida é limitada e precária, aprisionada que se encontra pelo brilho e pelo prestígio da fonte, do chefe-de-escola. A *fonte* torna-se a estrela intangível e pura que, sem se deixar contaminar, contamina, brilha para os artistas dos países da América Latina, quando estes dependem da sua luz para o seu trabalho de expressão.[...] O discurso crítico que fala das influências

estabelece a estrela como único valor que conta. Encontrar a escada e contrair a dívida que pode minimizar a distância insuportável entre ele, mortal, e a imortal estrela: tal seria o papel do artista latino-americano, sua função na sociedade ocidental. [...] O lugar do projeto parasita fica ainda e sempre sujeito ao campo magnético aberto pela estrela principal e cujo movimento de expansão esmigalha a originalidade do outro projeto e lhe empresta *a priori* um significado paralelo e inferior. (Santiago, 1978)

Santiago's discourse is one of resistance and confrontation. In this quotation Santiago resembles Lezama Lima when the latter criticizes the servile attitude of the Latin-American towards Europe (see section 1.c). As in Lezama Lima's texts (and unlike the Brazilian modernists), there is a continental approach in Santiago's writings. Brazil is not seen as an isolated cultural unit but as part of a large continent. And like Lezama Lima, Santiago uses thought-provoking images to show that Latin America can not accept the role of the "parasite", always inferior and precarious, that feeds from other "sources", other cultures which are always considered bright and superior like a star.

In another essay, Santiago wonders "Por que e para que viaja o europeu?". In this essay, the colonial historical relations between Europe and America are up again as a topic for discussion. But now he explicitly explores another important factor in these already complex relations.

Estamos vendo que, para responder à pergunta no plano cultural e nos tempos contemporâneos, a resposta se falseia à medida que os comentários são feitos, isso porque não há dúvida de que entrou uma outra mosca no mel: por que e para que viaja o norte-americano? (Santiago, 1989)

In Santiago's essays, the preoccupation with the neocolonialism represented by the United States, "the new fly in the honey", comes to the fore. From a Latin American perspective, Santiago recognizes that when dealing with relations of power it is impossible not to discuss the presence of the United States and its political and cultural

domination of the continent. Avoiding manicheistic or simplistic positions, Santiago investigates the intricate relations between Latin America, the United States and Europe in the article “Atração do mundo. Políticas de Globalização e de Identidade na Moderna Cultura Brasileira” (1995). In this essay he shows that since the 1920s there have been antagonistic attitudes in Brazil towards the United States: “on the one hand, sympathy for the presence of North-American culture in Brazil, on the other hand an antipathy for this form of neocolonialism.” (Santiago, 1995, ¶ 46) His brief exposition of this Brazilian ambivalence this time resembles Lamonde’s historical analysis of the cultural relations between Quebec and the United States. Taking into consideration Santiago’s remark we can conclude that the ambivalent coexistence of attraction and repulsion towards the United States is not a phenomenon restricted to Quebec.

The texts of Priest Antônio Vieira, the Romantics, the Modernists and Silviano Santiago in Brazil have been useful to show how the peripheral perspective of these discourses have influenced their development, creating convergences, especially the necessity to react initially against any kind of Eurocentrism and later on to respond to the US influence. However, it is important to stress that none of these discourses tried to develop a conceptual tool called “americanidade” which could guide their reflections. Also, there is no reference to Canada in these writings. When Silviano Santiago says “North-American” he is clearly referring to the United States. This will only change in the 1990s when a new group of Brazilian researchers takes up the debate again on the American continent, but now with new objectives. These objectives will be the object of analysis in the next section.

3.b) *Americanidade* in Contemporary Brazilian Academia

3.b.1) *Americanidade* and the “discovery” of French America

The concept of *americanidade* in Brazil begins to circulate in the 1990s in the context of American francophone studies in Brazilian universities. The emergence of *americanidade* in this particular intellectual milieu can be explained by the development of a new tendency. French literary studies in Brazil had long been exclusively restricted to France. Little or no space was given to other francophone cultures. Brazilian specialists of francophone literature found then in the concept *americanidade* an excellent means of changing this paradigm. The cultural distance between Brazil and French America (Haiti, Martinique, Quebec etc.) could be shortened, with the advantage of opening a dialogue with other American cultures. Therefore, the concept in Brazil is part of an attempt to break down the enormous cultural isolation between Hispanic America, French America and Brazil and to promote a movement of inclusion and proximity on the continental level. That is why francophone intellectuals like the Haitians Maximilien Laroche, Dany Laferrière, the Caribbean Édouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau as well as Quebec thinkers like Gérard Bouchard and Pierre Nepveu are always mentioned in the construction of the concept *americanidade* in Brazil. These thinkers (among others) have been part of a fruitful intellectual dialogue with Brazilian researchers such as Núbia Hanciau, Zilá Bernd, Maria Bernadette Porto, Lícia Soares de Souza, Eurídice Figueiredo and many others.

One of the first attempts to introduce the concept *americanidade* in the context of literary studies in Brazil was the release of the book *Literatura e americanidade* in 1995, organized by Zilá Bernd and Maria do Carmo Campos. The main objective of the organizers was to develop a concept that could be used as a potential heuristic tool for

the strengthening of inter-American comparative literary studies. In this volume, the concept

foi usado no sentido de pertença à América, com ênfase na possibilidade de contribuir para o esgarçamento de determinadas fronteiras **indevidamente impostas** entre as literaturas americanas, **permanecendo a Europa como comparável incontornável**” (Bernd, 2003b, p.27).

This idea is very relevant to our analysis because it unveils the concept in Brazil as also permeated by a strong peripheral perspective. In proposing continental inclusiveness and dialogue, the concept tries to overcome an old and consecrated model of literary studies that always made its reflections according to the paradigm **periphery (America) → center (Europe)**. This scheme means that the Americas, for a long time, searched for literary and cultural parameters on the European continent unidirectionally. The novelty comes with the proposition of a new model **periphery (America) ↔ periphery (America)** in which the American literatures and cultures can profit from a multidirectional dialogue. In the next section, this peripheral perspective and its consequences to the concept will be analyzed in more details in the texts of Zilá Bernd, one of the main supporters of *americanidade* in Brazil.

3.b.2) *Americanidade* and peripheral perspective in the texts of Zilá Bernd

The concept *americanidade* as proposed by Bernd is a call for Hispanic Americans, Caribbean, Brazilians and Quebecers to rediscover the continent and take advantage of the enormous possibilities of cultural exchange on the continent (c.f. Bernd, 2003b, p.26-43). According to this new paradigm, Europe is no longer a mandatory, inevitable model for comparative studies. In Bernd’s proposal, the literature and cultures of the Americas occupy the central position. Since *Literatura e americanidade* from 1995, Zilá Bernd has emphasized this line of reasoning:

[...] Wlad Godzich procurou mostrar que, em se tratando de estabelecer confluências literárias interamericanas, é o próprio conceito de Literatura Comparada que é posto em xeque, uma vez que esta disciplina vem sendo praticada tradicionalmente com o propósito de pôr em perspectiva literaturas de longa tradição, que se instituem como “centro”, e as literaturas consideradas, por via de consequência, “periféricas” (Bernd, 1995, p. 11)

By developing the concept of *americanidade*, Bernd succeeds in the attempt of bringing together literatures from the continent that had traditionally been set apart. Instead of staring with wonder at the “center” (Europe), American literatures are now invited to look at and (re)discover each other. An interesting remark is that Bernd and other collaborators have successfully promoted comparative studies between Latin America (Brazil, the Caribbean and Hispanic America) and Quebec, therefore transgressing the “US barrier” that separates these two portions of the continent. This remark raises an important question. At this point of the analysis it is clear that *americanidade* has been developed as a new strategy of resistance against Eurocentrism. But what is its attitude towards the new empire? Is the United States included in the continental discourse of inclusiveness as proposed by Bernd?

Another article written by Bernd can partially answer this question. In “Os deslocamentos conceituais da transculturação” (2003a), the author provides an overview of important American theories revolving around the process of cultural transfers on the continent. According to the author the relevance of these theories is that they correspond to the “necessity of deconstructing the myth of the cultural dependence of *Latin America* [...] and minimizing the damage to cultural diversity caused by the colonial and **neo-colonial** enterprise” (page 24, my translation, my emphasis). Under the label *Latin America* the author unites discourses from Quebec (Paul-Émile Borduas, Jocelyn Létourneau), Hispanic America (Lezama Lima, Fernando Ortiz, Angel Rama), Brazil

(the modernists and their *antropofagia*) and the French Caribbean (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant). It is interesting to note that these Latin-American discourses (note the inclusion of Quebec) are reunited in order to resist and "minimize the damage to cultural diversity caused by the colonial and *neo-colonial* enterprise". What can be implied is that the same forces of the peripheral perspective that were at work against colonialism are now also active against neo-colonialism. The cultures considered "peripheral" are called upon to join forces and unite against the colonial and neo-colonial enterprise, represented by Europe and the United States, respectively. The United States seems to be excluded from the grand project of cultural proximity on the continent due to its role as the new "metropolis" of neo-colonialism.

A remark that seems to reinforce this idea is the great resentment against the US "usurpation" of the name "America". In one of her articles, Bernd evokes a character created by Noël Audet in the book *Frontières ou tableaux d'Amérique*. The character tries to travel from Quebec to the United States, but some custom officers hinder her entrance to "America": *Sans blague, proteste-t-elle, j'habite déjà en Amérique! Elle a envie de leur crier des injures, de leur dire qu'ils ont usurpé à leur seul usage le nom d'Américains* (Audet, 1995, my emphasis, quoted in Bernd, 2002, p.11). As for the appropriation of the name America by the United States, Bernd also evokes Maximilien Laroche. Commenting Laroche's articles, she says:

O interessante no texto de Laroche é que ele não apenas constata a apropriação do termo pelos estadunidenses, como destaca os efeitos da ambiguidade que dela decorrem, passando para uma argumentação vigorosa em favor da reversão dessa situação e propondo que redescubramos a América, ou que juntos – latino-americanos, antilhanos, brasileiros, quebequenses – a reinventemos. (Bernd, 2003b, p.28)

By evoking Audet and Laroche, the researcher adds her voice to the chorus of indignation over the undue US appropriation of the toponym *America*. In this anti-US attitude lies one of the main challenges of this variant of the concept. On the one hand, the development of the concept *americanidade* represents an attempt to stretch the limits and shorten the distances that separate the cultures of the continent; it stems from a desire, an almost utopian call, for the American cultures to see each other, to discover each other and profit from the immense possibilities of mutual enrichment without necessarily having to turn the gaze to Europe; it is an attempt to overcome the colonial mentality in which the European civilisations are the cultural centers, the empires that “gave birth” to the American cultures, seen under this perspective as extensions of the European thinking, the mere results of the colonial process. On the other hand, in its trajectory it finds another political, economical and, to a certain extent, cultural center geographically located on the American continent: The United States. How to develop the ideas of openness, interchange and mutual cultural enrichment in the Americas and at the same time deal with the constant threat of cultural imperialism of the new empire? Furthermore, an empire which historically appropriated the name of the continent! The result of this tension seems to be the absence of the United States in Bernd’s discourse. In the conclusion of the article “Americanidade e americanização”, Zilá Bernd uses the metaphor of the bouquet to think the Americas: *The flowers disposed in a bouquet keep, each one, their own identity, but their beauty gets a bigger splendor in the harmony of the set.* (Bernd, 2003b, p. 41, my translation). Although there is an intention of inclusiveness and openness to the three Americas, there is inevitably a certain “Latin-American resistance” against and therefore exclusion of the United States – the big, menacing flower of the bouquet.

It is interesting to note that Bernd's *americanidade* is close to the proposition of *américanité* formulated by Lamonde in its intention of being a concept that encompasses the entire continent. Since her article "Américanité: les transferts du concept" (2002), which inspired the making of this thesis, there is the all-embracing desire to cover the whole continent in a comparatist perspective. In this article she proposes a study of the concept *americanidade* in a "trip" around the Americas: "parcours brésilien", "parcours québécois", "parcours antillais" and "parcours latino-américain", but there is not a "parcours étatsunien". However, this absence is not only due to the Latin-American resistance against the United States as I stated above. As for this specific article, there seems to be another reason. In her trip around the Americas, trying to capture the various manifestations of *americanidade*, Bernd finds out an important absence. By evoking another researcher, Jean Morisset, Zilá Bernd says:

Il [Jean Morisset] note aussi qu'il n'y a pas d'équivalent en anglais pour américanité, ce qui nous permet de conclure que le concept ne circule pas dans le contexte des États-Unis. (Bernd, 2002).

We can add that if there is not an equivalent in English for *américanité*, it is because the concept does not circulate in the United States neither in English Canada. The absence of "*americanity*" would also partially explain the absence of the Anglo-Saxon portion of the continent in the dialogue proposed by Bernd – at least in this particular article. Yvon Thériault also observes the near nonexistence of the concept in the Anglo-Saxon portion of the continent:

Cette définition de l'américanité, microcosme de la modernité, a été reprise récemment par Anibal Quijano et Immanuel Wallerstein, **dans l'un des rares textes de la littérature anglo-américaine utilisant un tel concept** (Thériault, 2002, my emphasis)

It is this absence of the concept in the United States and the English Canada that we will address in the next chapter of the thesis.

4 – THE ABSENCE OF “AMERICANITY” IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ENGLISH CANADA: Different countries, different identity strategies.

We have seen in the previous chapter that Thériault, Bernd and Morisset pointed out the absence of the corresponding concept “americanity” in the Anglo-Saxon portion of the American continent. In spite of this absence, there were other strong discourses and projects, especially in the United States, which revolved around the idea of continental unity and integration. For instance, in the early 1800s in the United States the politicians Henry Clay and the then US president Thomas Jefferson launched the basis of Pan-Americanism. First welcomed as a movement of social, political, economic, diplomatic, military and commercial cooperation among the nations of the continent, this project was soon regarded with reluctance by many Latin American nations and often associated with US neo-colonialism, especially after the beginning of the Monroe Doctrine. On December 2, 1823, US President James Monroe announced in a message to the US American congress the principles of foreign policy in which the United States opposed any European intervention on the American continent, a policy known as “The Monroe Doctrine”. Later the United States was accused of using the doctrine to justify their own imperialism on the continent. (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2001, ¶1).

Besides these two policies, in the first quarter of the 20th century US president Franklin Roosevelt inaugurated the “Good Neighbor Policy”. When his successor, President Herbert Hoover, was elected in 1928, US relations with Latin America were at a low point. In the same year US interventionism in Latin American affairs was harshly criticized at the Sixth Pan-American Conference in Havana. President Hoover then used the “Good Neighbor Policy” in an attempt to improve the deteriorated diplomatic relations between the United States and Latin America. However, these three major

policies (Pan-Americanism, Monroe Doctrine and Good Neighbor Policy), because of their being enacted by the United States, were often seen as diplomatic disguises for US imperialism on the continent. As we have seen in chapter 2, President Monroe's motto "America to the Americans" was interpreted in Latin America as "Americas to the US Americans". The US Pan-Americanism and Good Neighbor Policy were considered part of a hidden agenda to dominate the continent. Besides, there is one main difference between these policies and *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade*. The Monroe Doctrine, the US Pan-Americanism and the Good Neighbor Policy were launched in the political sphere and were never strongly developed by US academia. Unlike Spanish America, Quebec and Brazil, the United States did not produce strong and visible academic research that tried to envisage and develop the notion of "americanity". To my knowledge, there is not a widely known academic construct that uses this lexeme or a similar one to conceive the continent's cultural identity.

We have seen in the previous chapter that Thériault mentions Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein as the authors of one of the rare Anglo-American texts that use this concept. It is necessary to analyze two important aspects of Quijano and Wallerstein's text, entitled "Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system" (Quijano and Wallerstein, 1992). Firstly, the construction of the concept "americanity" by Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein is different from the studies analyzed so far, since its approach is more related to Social Sciences, while the facets of the concept *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* presented hitherto were part of an identity quest based on a literary and/or cultural perspective.

Another important aspect is the fact that Anibal Quijano is a Latin-American social scientist who simply used the English language to set forth his thesis about

“americanity” as a microcosm of modernity. His study is not a case of identity quest from an Anglo-Canadian or a US thinker who attempts, through the concept, to find a sense of continental belonging or identify literary and cultural elements that could include English-speaking North America in the contemporary debate about “americanity”. In fact, in my research I have not found thus far a single essay, article or book in English with these characteristics. The investigation which came closest to these characteristics was the intriguing article written by Deborah Altamirano (2001), “Américanité South of the Border: U.S. Student Survey Views on the Americas and ‘American’ Identity”. In an innovative approach, Altamirano confronts US students with the notion of “*américanité*” and the idea that any inhabitant of the continent is “American”. The researcher then analyzes the different reactions of sympathy, nationalism, puzzlement and chauvinism of the students in question (Cucioletta, 2001, p. 4). Note that Altamirano uses the French term “*américanité*”, not “americanity”. This lexematic choice confirms the idea that there is no equivalent term in English.

This absence raises some questions: why such a term was not developed by English Canada or by the United States? What are the strategies of identity construction in these parts of the continent that did not develop the favorable conditions for the emergence of the concept “americanity”? Despite their different nuances, are there at the core of the concepts *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* common elements that impede the flowering of the analogous term “americanity”? These are some of the questions we will try to answer in the upcoming sections of this thesis

4.a) US auto-representation and the absence of “americanity”: films, presidents and the web.

JERRY MAGUIRE

EARTH FROM SPACE

(The blue marble as seen from space. We hear the calm voice of Jerry Maguire, talking just to us).

JERRY'S VOICE

Alright so this is the world and there are five billion people on it. When I was a kid there were three. It's hard to keep up.

AMERICA FROM SPACE

(The great continent through mist and swirling skies. Satellites and other pieces of skycasting equipment float by.)

JERRY'S VOICE

That's better. That's America. See, America still sets the tone for the world...
(Crowe, 1996)

Before analyzing the absence of “americanity” in the United States, I will examine US self-representation as the leader of the modern world through films, US presidents’ speeches and the web URLs. The quotation above was taken from the script of the US film Jerry Maguire, written and directed by Cameron Crowe in 1996. The opening scene transcribed above illustrates what we believe to be part of the US self-representation concerning its economical, cultural, military and political role in the world. The first image in Crowe’s movie is the Earth seen from space. As the globe rotates, the camera pays particular attention to the United States. The Earth stops rotating and the camera gives a close-up of the United States. The rest of the world does not interest the character. The world can rotate and just pass by. What interests Jerry Maguire is the United States and when the camera stops over the US map he says with relief: “That’s better. That’s America”. The character’s satisfaction is complete when he realizes that the US position in relation to the rest of the world is a central one: “See, America still sets the tone for the world...” It is not only in Cameron Crowe’s movie we

can observe such perception of the United States as the center of the world. The self-image of the United States as a world leader can also be seen in some of the popular disaster movies of the 1990s.

In *Independence Day* (1996) the US Americans organize and mobilize the whole world against the menacing aliens. Russia, Japan, the Middle East and the entire Asian continent, under the leadership of the US president, prepare to counter-attack the extra-terrestrial enemies on a symptomatic date: the 4th of July.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

THE US PRESIDENT:

Perhaps it's fate that today, July the Fourth, we will once again fight for our freedom. Not from tyranny, persecution or oppression. But from annihilation. We're fighting for our right to live, to exist. From this day on, the fourth day of July will no longer be remembered as an American holiday but as the day that all of mankind declared we will not go quietly into the night. (Emmerich, 1996)

The US leadership and central role in mankind's resistance, combined with the emblematic day chosen for salvation gives the viewer the impression that the United States has long surpassed the simple "appropriation" of the name of the continent in their self-representation. Now, the US flag, its values and leadership are representative of the entire world. The Republican Politician Bob Dole's comment about the film became famous. After being asked about why *Independence Day* was one of his favorite movies, he proudly answered: "We won in the end. Leadership. America. Good over evil." (Rogin, 1998, p.12).

In another movie, *Armageddon* (1998), it is a brilliant US scientist who saves the world from the destruction by the impact of an asteroid. In the N.A.S.A. international press conference room, he says:

ARMAGEDDON

N.A.S.A SCIENTIST:

A little over fifty years ago we sent our Armed Forces half-way around the world to save the world from an evil empire that threatened mass extinction. The men and women of this nation united, answered the call and preserved our freedom. Once again we face a threat to our way of life. And once again we look to our military to preserve our future. The men and women selected to lead this mission are America's finest and most decorated career officers in the military.
(Bay, 1998)

In these films there is an abundant presence of US flags, brilliant US scientists, heroic US presidents and the unquestionable leadership of the United States on a world level. The greatness of the United States in these films is the only secret weapon capable of saving the world!

This self-perception as a world leader, a great country with a central role on the world scene can also be observed in various US presidents' speeches. The following extracts chosen to illustrate US self-image are all from inaugural addresses of US presidents in different historical periods.

Theodore Roosevelt: Inaugural address 1905

We have become a great nation, forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with the other nations of the earth, and we must behave as beseems a people with such responsibilities.[...] Our relations with the other powers of the world are important. [...] If we fail, the cause of free self-government throughout the world will rock to its foundations, and therefore our responsibility is heavy, to ourselves, to the world as it is today, and to the generations yet unborn.
(Roosevelt, 1905).

Theodore Roosevelt's speech shows that in the beginning of the 20th century the United States already perceived itself as a great nation, highlighting the US position as one of the great powers of the world. There is also the strong idea that the United States are the world paladins of freedom and democracy. After the end of the Second World War, in his inaugural pronouncement to the nation, President Harry Truman said:

Harry Truman: Inaugural address 1949

Since the end of hostilities, the United States has invested its substance and its energy in a great constructive effort to restore peace, stability, and freedom to the world. [...] With God's help, the future of mankind will be assured in a world of justice, harmony, and peace. (Truman, 1949)

In Theodore Roosevelt's speech there was the perception that the United States played an important role in the world relations of power. Forty eight years later, after the World War II, this leadership starts to take the shape of hegemony, only threatened by the presence of communism. All over his long speech, Truman gives specific details about how the US will fight against communism in the world, how the United States will perform Europe's reconstruction and finally how the US will play a determinant role in the newly created United Nations. What was just the exaltation of the country in Theodore Roosevelt's speech in 1905 becomes a real demonstration of world power in Truman's inaugural address in 1949. Dwight Eisenhower's address in 1953 had the same tone:

Dwight Eisenhower: Inaugural address 1953.

To produce this [international] unity, to meet the challenge of our time, destiny has laid upon our country the responsibility of the free world's leadership. [...] Knowing that only a United States that is strong and immensely productive can help defend freedom in our world, we view our Nation's strength and security as a trust upon which rests the hope of free men everywhere. (Eisenhower, 1953)

Forty years later, after the communist world collapsed and the United States seemed to emerge as a real hegemonic power, President Bill Clinton in his inaugural address to the nation reinforced US leadership and its central position in the world:

Bill Clinton: Inaugural address 1993.

Today, as an old order passes, the new world is freer but less stable. Communism's collapse has called forth old animosities and new dangers. Clearly, America must continue to lead the world we did so much to make. (Clinton, 1993)

One last point of reflection in this brief incursion in the US self-representation is the configuration of URL addresses on the web. In a thought-provoking article entitled “US Americans and ‘us’ Americans: South American perspectives on Comparative American Studies”, the Brazilian researcher Sonia Torres discusses power relations on the continent:

This brings us, of course, to the implications of cyberspace – the new international space called the web, whose default language is English. As we all know, the US is the only country that doesn’t have to be specified after the URL or email addresses. This is a particularly interesting example because, as Brazilian cultural critic Heloisa Buarque de Holanda has pointed out, it opens up the possibility of studies focusing both on the presence of new hegemonic forms and the reproduction of asymmetrical relations (in this case on the web) [...] (Torres, 2003)

Canadian web addresses are usually identified by “.ca”, Brazilian URLs are identified by “.com.br”, Mexican addresses are identified by “.com.mx”, Argentinean addresses use the extension “.com.ar” and so forth. The United States does not need to identify itself. It is simply “.com”. In the cyberspace the United States constitutes the default, the center and therefore does not need to be identified, apparently perpetuating asymmetrical relations of power, as stated by Torres above.

How does this dynamics of self-representation can help us understand the absence of the concept “americanity” in the United States? I have stressed in the previous chapters that one of the essential characteristics of the concept(s) *americanidad* / *américanité* / *americanidade* is its *peripheral perspective*. We have also seen there has always been a double dimension of this *peripheral perspective*: Firstly a response against Europe and secondly a reaction to the United States’ neo-colonialism. For the United States the development of a parallel concept is useless and pointless because it does not need to resolve any of these issues for which the concept *americanidad* and its variants have been used in other parts of the continent. In their rise as an economic,

political and cultural super power, the United States, since the Monroe Doctrine, seems to have developed an imperial mentality and attitude that has been accompanied by the idea that they occupy a central position in the contemporary world. US Americans apparently do not suffer so much from the “terrible complex of the (Latin?) American” when they compare themselves to Europe (Lezama Lima, 1993, p. 63, c.f. chapter 1, section 1.c). It seems that in the construction of their identity, US Americans have not developed a sense of inferiority in relation to Europe. On the contrary, in the international relations of power the United States has historically portrayed itself as a world leader, as exposed in the beginning of this section. Therefore, the United States did not need to develop a discourse to revert the paradigm America=inferior vs. Europe=superior, as it happened, for example, in the Latin American case, simply because they do not seem to perceive themselves nor any aspect of their society as inferior.

We have also seen that in different ways *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* have been used in discursive strategies of resistance against US neo-colonialism. These discourses somehow correspond to the desire of recovering the former use of a word that once meant belonging to a continent. They represent the longing for saying *Soy Americano*, *Je suis américain* and *Eu sou Americano* without any ambiguities. US Americans do not need to develop a concept to say that because they say “*I am American*” everyday - although they obviously do not mean the same as their comrades of the continent.

Thériault also highlights how needless it is for the United States to develop a concept analogous to *américanité*: “Les Anglo-américains ne s’intéressent habituellement pas à l’américanité, ils ne leur viendrait pas à l’esprit d’opposer

américanité et américanisation”. (Thériault, 2002). Although he uses the term “anglo-américain”, it is clear in the context of his sentence that he refers more specifically to the United States. Somehow ironically, Thériault is saying that the opposition *américanité* vs. *américanisation*, essential to the discussion in Quebec, would not “come to mind” in the United States simply because to them it would be meaningless to establish this differentiation. All these essential discussions in other parts of the continent (resistance against European ethnocentrism, appropriation of the term “America”, *américanité* vs. *américanisation*) show that the discourses of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* are fundamentally peripheral. They appear in different peripheral regions out of the necessity to solve problems which are inherent to marginal areas of the continent. These discussions seem to be of little or no interest to the United States. Apparently, the United States would not have any gain in developing the concept “americanity”. In short, for the United States what would be the point of developing a concept which is a response of the margins to the centers of the modern world if they perceive themselves as “the” center?

4.b) English Canada and the absence of “americanity”: *Canadians are not Americans.*

We have said in chapter 2 that, from a Latin American perspective, the eclipsing presence of the United States makes Canada “look like” its powerful neighbor, as if it were the “51st US State”. Taking into account Katherine Morrison’s words (2003), probably this perception is not restricted to Latin America. She says that:

To most Americans¹⁵ – and to much of the rest of the world – the two nations differ little except in climate, for they share a common British heritage and similar patterns of immigration. Subtle cultural differences appear insignificant to most Americans [...] (Morrison, 2003, p. XIII)

The cultural differences between Canada and the United States which, according to Morrison, seem “subtle” or “insignificant” to most US Americans – and to much of the rest of the world – are actually fundamental in the contemporary Canadian discourses on its national identity. The presence of the mighty country south of the 49th parallel has always been considered “threatening” by Canadians, a real menace for the Canadian cultural identity. In a perspicacious article, James Nuechterlein, an American university professor who pursued his career at Queen’s University from 1964 to 1981, says that in those days the great national preoccupation was the establishment of a national identity distinct from that of the United States:

Soon after arriving in Canada it dawned on me that for English Canadians concerned to preserve (or establish) a distinct culture in North America there was just one obstacle: the Great Leviathan to the south. How could English Canadians, in a country with one-tenth the U.S. population, most of them living within one hundred miles of the American border, withstand the onslaught of Yankee culture? (Nuechterlein, 1997, ¶ 5)

Longman’s Dictionary of English Language and Culture (1992) defines Leviathan as “a very large and frightening sea animal”. The fantastic and ominous creature described in the Bible seems to be an appropriate image to capture the Canadian perception of the United States. As an attempt to overcome the always “menacing” presence of their close neighbors from the south there were two opposite routes to be taken by Canadians:

¹⁵ Note: in this quotation, as well as in the other ones in this section, the terms “America” and “American” reflect the common English usage referring to the United States and not to the American continent. To avoid any ambiguity in the analysis I will continue to use “US American” in my own text.

- 1) either to try to assume their belonging to the continent as a whole, that is, their “americanity” or, oppositely,
- 2) stress the differentiation between Canada and the United States through a discourse that emphasizes that “Canadians are not Americans”.

The first route was taken by many members of Quebec’s academia and their recent choice of electing *américanité* as the most important dimension of their identity as exposed in chapter 2. We have seen in that chapter that it was in the 1970s that the term *américanité* slowly started to circulate in Quebec’s intellectual milieu. Afterwards, in the 1980s and 1990s, a significant part of the intelligentsia of the province pursued a real quest to discover “l’être américain québécois”. This route was a dangerous one, because it implied confronting the “Great Leviathan” of the south. The result is that, as we have argued in Chapter 2, on its way to the south, the *américanité* in Quebec did not always succeed in going beyond the enormous barrier represented by the United States.

The second route seems to be the one chosen by English-speaking Canada. This part of the country has constructed in the same period a strong identity discourse based on a negative: “Canadians are not Americans”. At least on the discursive level, Canadians insist on the institutions that link them to the British Empire: the Queen, being part of the Commonwealth, having a British parliamentary system of government, etc. In the above-mentioned article, Nuechterlein says:

Until after the Second World War, Canadian patriotism was not just anti-American but pro-British. Canadians were proud members of the British Empire. Every day in my early years at Queen’s my walk to campus through a downtown park took me past a statue of Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada’s first Prime Minister and its premier nineteenth-century statesman. It bore the inscription: “A British subject I was born; a British subject I will die.” (Nuechterlein, 1997)

As Nuechterlein observes, English Canadian patriotism was widely based on a double axis: being anti-US and pro-British. These two dimensions complement and reinforce each other: Canadians are different from US Americans because of their attachment to their British heritage; and one of the reasons for preserving this heritage is exactly the desire of being different from US Americans. In her in-depth book, entitled “Canadians are not Americans - Myths and Literary Traditions”, Katherine Morrison (2003) explores the theme, showing its profound historical roots. Using a broad literary *corpus* of texts as well as historical facts, Morrison reconstructs the elements that constituted the different myths and literary traditions of Canada and the United States. According to the author, the anti-US and pro-British dimension of Canadian identity is closely related to the US American Revolution (1775-1783). When the United States became independent, the Loyalists, faithful to the British Crown, moved up north to the colonies that remained British. While US Americans promoted a total and violent break from Europe (subsequently glorifying and deifying their new country), the Loyalists (exiles burdened with anger and bitterness) strengthened their attachment to the British Empire in the northern colonies. As a result, strong anti-US and pro-British Canadian sentiment started to flourish. It is interesting to note that unlike what happened in the United States in the 18th century or in Latin America in the 19th century, Canada never really promoted a war or a revolution to break free from colonial bonds. The last significant act of Canadian political independence was the repatriation of the Constitution signed by the Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Queen Elizabeth in a peaceful and diplomatic ceremony in Ottawa, broadcasted to the whole country in 1982! These two radically different historical experiences certainly determined two completely distinct identity representations.

The “Canadians are not Americans” discourse (the desire to have their own, distinct identity) is present everywhere in the everyday life of Canadians. Back to Nuechterlein’s personal experience, the American Social Scientist remarks that “nothing drove Canadians to greater distraction than to be told by visiting Americans, who of course meant it as a compliment, that Canada was ‘just like the U.S.’” (Nuechterlein, 1997, ¶ 5). A recent documentary just released by CBC, named *Talking Canadian* (Slaght, 2004), can also illustrate the desire of Canadians not to be mistaken for US Americans. We can see in the opening scene some English speaking teenagers from Toronto engaged in an enthusiastic conversation. The narrator says that to an untrained ear the accent may sound simply (US) “American”, but then he quickly amends saying that actually this is only a superficial impression. The documentary shows how sometimes language is also used in English Canada as part of an identity strategy to differentiate from the United States. It shows that, when compared to the United States, Canada’s English was more intensely and for a longer time exposed to the British influence, which resulted in differences in vocabulary, spelling and intonation. In an interesting scene we see a group of young teenagers who are asked how we spell the word “color”. The group seems a little confused. Some of them think that the correct spelling is “C-O-L-O-R” while others believe it is “C-O-L-O-U-R”. When one of the teenagers suggests that the first spelling is more “American” and the second one is more “Canadian”, all of them cheer and applaud, accepting “C-O-L-O-U-R” and promptly rejecting “C-O-L-O-R”. In another scene the producers themselves show their reluctance against the United States. They demonstrate the differences in pronunciation between US American English and Canadian English in common words such as “sorry”. In a humorous way they state that while Canadians pronounce the word sorry, as “sohhrry”,

Americans say it “sawwry”, “*when they say it*” the narrator adds. We also see in the documentary interviews with linguists from Canadian Universities who contentedly observe that despite the invasion of US American books, songs, films and TV programs, English Canada still manages to keep its linguistic specificities.

Molson Beer has developed a whole series of TV commercials based on the “Canadians are not Americans” sentiment. Probably the most famous of them all was the controversial “Joe’s rant” commercial, first broadcasted on Canadian TV in March 2000. The commercial features a young man in his mid 20s, casually dressed, standing on a stage, in front of a microphone. In the background we can see a movie screen showing a slide show with various Canadian images. As we see the images, Joe starts reciting his rant:

Hey. I'm not a lumberjack, or a fur trader.
 And I don't live in an igloo, or eat blubber, or own a dogsled.
 And I don't know Jimmy, Sally or Suzy from Canada, although I'm certain they're really, really nice.
 I have a Prime Minister, not a President.
 I speak English and French, NOT American. And I pronounce it 'ABOUT', NOT 'ABOOT'.
 I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack. I believe in peace keeping, NOT policing. DIVERSITY, NOT assimilation, AND THAT THE BEAVER IS A TRULY PROUD AND NOBLE ANIMAL.
 A TOQUE IS A HAT, A CHESTERFIELD IS A COUCH, AND IT IS PRONOUNCED 'ZED' NOT 'ZEE', 'ZED'!!!
 CANADA IS THE SECOND LARGEST LANDMASS! THE FIRST NATION OF HOCKEY! AND THE BEST PART OF NORTH AMERICA!
 MY NAME IS JOE!! AND I AM CANADIAN!!!!!!!!!!
 Thank you.

At first Joe speaks calmly but as he continues his “manifesto”, the speech becomes more passionate and the ardent tone of voice starts to be accompanied then by a pungent piece of classical music. The commotion caused by the commercial can

illustrate the extension of the anti-US sentiment in English Canada. According to an article published in the newspaper *Calgary Herald* on 30 April 2000:

It started in movie theatres, migrated to television and now has become such a cultural phenomenon that the Molson brewery is having it performed live at sporting events. Bar patrons now demand that the volume be turned up when the ad comes on the TV screen, so they can shout the words along with the handsome Nova Scotia actor in the plaid shirt. High-school students reportedly have begun reciting it spontaneously in corridors between classes. And when it was performed two weeks ago at the National Hockey League playoff game between the hometown Maple Leafs and the Ottawa Senators, it generated the kind of fist-in-the-air ovation usually reserved for goals scored in sudden-death. (Pearlstein, 2000)

The success of Molson commercial can certainly be explained by the ingenious ability of capturing a nationwide sentiment circulating in English Canadian society and translate it into a TV promotional commercial.

Humoristic manifestations are also a popular way of diffusing such sentiment. Recently a list called the “ten top reasons Canadians are not Americans” has widely circulated on the net. The list was created by a Canadian exchange student in England, who was tired of always being mistaken for a US American. So, the offended student decided to compile and spread the following list:

1. We are bilingual.
 2. We had no part in the war in Iraq.
 3. We are part of the Commonwealth.
 4. Our Prime Minister really won the election.
 5. We brew Molson beer.
 6. We don't have to give an arm and a leg for a university education.
 7. Our drinking age is not 21.
 8. We don't lose ten thousand citizens per year to gun violence.
 9. We always win the gold in Olympic ice hockey.
 10. Mike Myers, Jim Carrey, Bryan Adams, Alanis Morissette, the late but great John Candy, Alexander Graham Bell and more are NOT Americans.
- (Lazare, 2004)

What is interesting about these examples is that they show that “Canadians are not Americans”, and furthermore, Canadians are better than Americans!¹⁶ The examples could continue indefinitely. However, we believe that the ones given so far have sufficiently illustrated how being mistaken for a US American is a real identity “obsession” with Canadians. Now, how does the phenomenon can help us understand the absence of the concept “americanity” in English Canada?

Once more, when Brazilians, Quebecers and Hispanic Americans develop the concept of *americanidade*, *américanité* and *americanidad* in order to have the possibility to say *Eu sou americano*, *Je suis américain* and *Soy americano*, they do it from a “safe” discursive position. Their language and culture clearly makes them different from the United States and allows us to know exactly what they mean when they say that and claim their continental identity. English Canadians’ position is much more delicate. The common English use of “I am American” as synonymous with “I am from US” would represent an intricate problem to be solved if Canadians decided to “join” the discourse of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade*. While people in other parts of the continent claim their “americanity” (continental belonging), English Canadians traditional identity construction claims its “non-americanity” (being different from US Americans). It is interesting to note that the anti-US peripheral perspective that somehow feeds the discourse of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* in other parts of the continent had exactly the contrary effect in English Canada. From their peripheral perspective, like a David who is constantly mistaken for Goliath, English Canada’s strategy is to insistently cry out its “non-americanity”.

¹⁶ It is curious to note that the attempt to reverse positions with the dominant other resembles once more the strategy adopted by Carpentier and Lezama, analyzed in chapter 1.

As we have said before, part of the strategy is not only being anti-US, but also being pro-British. And here lies another factor that may at least partially explain why English Canada has not produced its own discourse of “americanity”. As exposed in the previous chapters, one of the most important characteristics of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* is the break from Eurocentrist ideas. In order to pursue this break, thinkers like Carpentier, Lezama, Lamonde and Bernd propose a movement of continental openness and union. According to them, the strength of the American continent lies on what it has in common: its cultural hybridity and newness, not its attachment to Europe. The route taken by English Canada goes exactly in the opposite direction. Canada’s link to the British Empire is an important element of differentiation vis-à-vis the Great Leviathan from the south, the Goliath that Canadians constantly have to face. How to adopt an identity discourse that seems to be the antipode of what Canada has cherished for centuries? How to accept their belonging to the American continent if to English-speaking Canadians “American” simply means “from the United States”?

CONCLUSION

In spite of their great differences, the contemporary manifestations of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade* investigated in this thesis presented a common characteristic: they were all developed in areas which can be considered “peripheral”. As we discussed in the Introduction, “periphery” is a complex relational concept. For analytical purposes we have assumed that Hispanic America, Quebec and Brazil are peripheries, marginal areas in relation to Europe and the United States. It is the marginal locus of enunciation of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade*, that is, their *peripheral perspective* towards Europe and the United States what constitutes the cornerstone for their development in Hispanic America, Quebec and Brazil, respectively. The use of the three variants of the concept is irrefutably motivated by the desire to break free from the idea that Europe still is the inevitable cultural center of the Occident, the inevitable model that has imprinted its ethnocentric mark on the Americas since colonial times.

Most of the Latin American movements of political independence from Europe took place in the 19th century. Although European political domination was gone, something else was left, something that could not be eliminated with guns and cannons: the idea that Europe was superior to America, the idea that American cultures are pale extensions, satellites of the bright European cultures. As a result, in the 1940s and 1950s, intellectuals like Carpentier and Lezama Lima were still developing constructs with the purpose of reversing the (Latin) American disadvantageous position in an intricate field of battles involving European and (Latin) American cultural roles in the Occident. The parentheses around “Latin” are justified by the fact that in Hispanic America *americanidad* actually seems to be imbued by a strong charge of *latino-*

americanidad. This restriction in the use of the concept *americanidad* seems to have been motivated by the rise of an actor that plays an important role in the complex relations of the continent. For the proposition of continental openness and proximity, this actor represents a “fly” in the American soup (borrowing and slightly adapting Santiago’s metaphor). That enormous “fly” which threatens to ruin the struggle for continental union is the United States of America. Since the United States started being perceived as a “new” center, which threatened to impose its own imperialism on the rest of the continent, it was no longer possible to see it as a “partner” for the American cause. The puzzle even became much more knotty now because in their rise as a global super power The United States of America became just “America”! US neocolonialism was soon associated with the European old colonialism and therefore the United States was perceived as a new enemy to overcome. The perception of the United States as a “new” center was also a determinant factor for the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the discourse of *americanidad*, *américanité* and *americanidade*.

With few exceptions (and as we have seen Lezama is one of them), the intellectual Latin American attitude is much more one of resistance against and exclusion of the United States than one of continental union with it. For instance, with his notion of *real maravilloso*, Carpentier (1949), a paradigmatic Latin American example, developed a construct that does not include North America. Lezama Lima surprisingly includes the United States in his analysis, but it is important to note that US culture plays a very secondary role in his *La expresión americana* (1957). Canada was absent in both reflections, a remark that can probably be extended to the great majority of intellectual reflections on *americanidad*. To explain this absence, the notion of cultural eclipse could indicate some answers. When Latin Americans look up north all

they can see is a giant mass of land called “North America”. And under the “North American” umbrella it is difficult to perceive anything different from the huge and strong United States of America. In the Latin American perception Canada is kept “out of sight”, darkened by, left in the shadow because of the too intense US brightness. That might partially explain the absence of Canada in the writings of Carpentier and Lezama Lima as well as in other texts on *americanidad*.

Some decades later, another peripheral American area also started to use the discourse of “americanity” to break its bonds with Europe. In the 1970s the neologism *américanité* began to be used by intellectuals in Quebec in an attempt to rethink the province’s cultural identity. Quebec’s link to France no longer sufficed to describe Quebec’s experience in North America.

History, politics and even geography can help us understand why *américanité* “was born” at that particular moment and became a common place in the intellectual milieu in Quebec in the 1980s and 1990s. To the east there was France and to the west there was English Canada. To the south there was an alternative: America. A large part of Quebec’s intelligentsia embraced the idea that Quebec belonged to the American continent and therefore its identity had to be based on this inexorable fact. However it has not been simple for Quebec to affirm its American cultural identity due to the fine line to be drawn between belonging to the American continent (*américanité*) and accepting the US influence on the province (*américanisation*). Notable thinkers in Quebec like Yvan Lamonde (1996) have tried to establish this difference so that *américanité* could be used as the fundamental trait of Quebec’s cultural identity. Many critics, however, say that the difficulty to draw that fine line between *américanité* and *américanisation* is one of the reasons why the development of the concept is full of

contradictions and impasses. Therefore, they claim that *américanité* is unsuitable to describe Quebec's cultural identity. One of their main criticisms is that, in their eagerness to be "out of the French frying pan", the proponents of *américanité* threw Quebec's cultural identity "into the US fire". As we have seen in chapter 2, it is accurate to say that in most cases *américanité* in Quebec simply became *étasunité*. As Thériault (2002, p.30-31) says, what interests most proponents of *américanité* in Quebec is the cultural, political and economical relations between the province and the powerful country south of the border. In contrast to what happened in Hispanic America, the *peripheral perspective* in Quebec seems to have caused a startling different effect: the discourse on *américanité* often intends to be inclusive of the whole continent but in reality only the (problematic) relations between Quebec and the United States are put in perspective. These relations can be considered problematic because Quebec's gaze towards the powerful neighbor of the south has long been marked by a strong ambivalence. In Quebec, the United States is sometimes seen as a menace due to its enormous cultural influence on Quebec's society. At the same time, Quebec also develops a certain fascination for the powerful country that somehow determines Quebecers' "way of life" on different levels. The TV that Quebecers watch, the cinema that they go to, the food that they eat, etc are significantly ruled by US influence.

This ambivalent sentiment of strong attraction and repulsion has been reflected in the studies of *américanité* in Quebec which present a certain "fixation" on the United States. As a result Latin America, when compared to the United States, occupies little space in these studies. One can say that the actual presence of Latin America in the studies of *américanité* in Quebec is a limited one, while the United States occupies a central place on most of them.

In Brazil there were two historical moments when the intellectual elites strongly attempted to break the cultural dependency established in relation to Europe: the Romantic Movement in the 19th century and the Modernism in the 20th century. The difference between the two movements is that the first one often used the terms “América” and “americano” to oppose Europe, while the second one often used “Brasil” and “brasileiro” to manifest the same opposition. The Romantics used the oppositional dichotomy Old World vs. New World, Europe vs. America because they found in the greatness of the new continent a match capable to challenge and reverse the European cultural paradigm. The Brazilian modernists also proposed to attack the idea of a supposedly European cultural superiority. But this time it was not the toponym “America” that was used to oppose Europe. Instead, a key idea developed by the modernists dominated the discussions: the “Brazilian anthropophagy”. The insightful metaphor proposed by Oswald de Andrade in 1928 took advantage of an ethnocentric conception: the “civilized” world saw the new world as a land of “barbarians” and “primitives”. The modernists assumed the role imposed by the European, but using a metaphor which violently reversed the subaltern position bestowed to the “barbarian”. The “primitives” took upon themselves the role of cannibals and became the agents of the process of devouring external cultural elements, in a reference to the cannibalistic ritual of appropriating the courage, the force and other desirable characteristics of the other. Under the anthropophagic prism, Brazilian culture was no longer a simple *object* or dumping place in the process of cultural transfers with Europe. Instead, it assumed a position of *subject* in this process. Note that the Brazilian anthropophagy did not have the pretension of being a discourse applicable for the whole continent. Unlike the Romantics, *americanismo* did not seem to be a keystone for the modernists. The

Modernists were preoccupied with developing a sense of “*brasilidade*”, not one of “*americanidade*”. However, it is essential to analyze Brazilian modernism and its strategies in relation to Europe, because it provides a panoramic view of the fundamental moments when the Brazilian intelligentsia and artistic community proposes a break from Eurocentrist cultural traditions. This anti-European perspective will be fundamental for the development of the neologism *americanidade* in the 1990s.

“Born” in the context of the francophone studies in Brazil in the 1990s, the concept *americanidade* is part of an intellectual framework which has been used to promote the cultural proximity between Brazil, Hispanic America and Francophone America (especially Quebec and the French Antilles). The notion of *americanidade* in Brazil has been strongly supported by Zilá Bernd, who sees in the concept the possibility of overcoming the cultural and literary boundaries created on the continent. “Let’s stop staring uniquely at the European cultures and let’s explore the rich possibilities of the literary and cultural inter-American studies” is her main message in the innumerable publications she dedicated to the theme.

Americanidade in Brazil is also permeated by a strong peripheral perspective. It is an explicit proposition of reversing an old and often unidirectional comparatist paradigm that can be translated as Periphery (America) → Center (Europe), and substitute it by a new one: Periphery (America) ↔ Periphery (America). This perspective impedes the inclusion of the United States because this country is perceived as the neocolonial empire, the successor of the ethnocentrism represented by Europe. Therefore it can not (or should not?) be included in the peripheral effort of promoting mutual cultural and literary exchanges.

In the article “Américanité: les transferts du concept” Bernd (2002) also notices that there is not a neologism equivalent to “*américanité*” in the United States (p.16). This absence is corroborated by other researchers, such as Joseph Yvon Thériault and Jean Morisset, and can certainly be extended to English Canada. Once more, the basic hypothesis that the peripheral perspective was determinant for the **emergence** of *americanidad* in various parts of the continent also gave us important clues to understand its **absence** in the United States and English Canada.

The US American self-perception as a world leader, the center of the modern world, seemed to be incompatible with the “peripheral” discussions developed by *americanidad/américanité/americanidade* (resistance against Eurocentrism, appropriation of the term “America”, *américanité* vs. *américanisation*, etc.). As we have discussed before, the origins of the concept are related to the necessity of fighting against the domination of two “centers”: Europe and the United States itself. Thus, a possible adoption of the concept *americanidad* by the United States would probably be hindered by its anti-US uses and features.

Each one of the variants of the concept has been developed with a specific purpose. *Americanidad* was used to exalt (Latin) America, *américanité* was developed with the intention of getting rid of the “francité” and *americanidade* opened the possibilities of including Brazil into the discussion with other peripheral areas of the Americas. For the United States none of these usages seemed to meet the needs for the construction of its self-representation as the world’s greatest power. For the United States, its position and role in the world are well defined. They are “AMERICA”, the new great nation which is not inferior to any other European nation.

As for English Canada my research indicated that the geographical proximity to the United States and the fear to be mistaken with US Americans presented hindrances for the possible adoption and development of an equivalent concept of “americanity”. Just like the rest of the world, English Canada is invaded by US films, songs, books and other cultural products. However, for English Canada the situation is aggravated by the haunting perception that “Canadians are just like Americans”. This stereotypical perception takes away from English Canada the possibility of an autonomous cultural existence. As a consequence, English Canada seems to “activate” its British heritage as an element of differentiation in relation to the United States whenever an “alliance” is necessary. Apparently, in its peripheral perspective, English Canada decided to link its cultural identity to the least “threatening” of the options. “Diplomacy with the United States and allegiance to its British heritage”; that was the formula developed by English Canada to nurture an identity of its own. In this case, all the periphery wants is not to be mistaken with the mighty US American center.

In my research on the theme “*americanidad*” I came across some surprising conclusions. At first, all the texts had in common the proposition of conceiving an American cultural identity that could go beyond the boundaries of specific nationalities. However, a closer look revealed that the different discourses all over the continent were highly heterogeneous. They were marked by strong relations of power which determined on different levels a complex movement of inclusion / exclusion of what was and still is considered “America”. As for this intricate dynamics of inclusion / exclusion, there was often a “discrepancy” between what was claimed and what was actually accomplished in the development of the discourse. The dynamics of inclusion / exclusion in the writings of the four thinkers which constituted our “study cases” could be summarized as

follows: Carpentier's *americanidad* is marked by the strong presence of Latin America and absence of United States and Canada. Lezama Lima's *americanidad* is also marked by the dominant presence of Latin America with a timid inclusion of the United States and absence of Canada. Lamonde's *américanité* is marked by the presence of Quebec and the United States with the prospects of a future inclusion of Latin America. Finally, Bernd's *americanidade* is marked by the presence of Latin America and Quebec with the absence of English Canada and the United States. In my research I attempted to demonstrate how the peripheral perspective of these thinkers combined with the intellectual traditions of which they are part could at least partially explain these dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and offer a common denominator for the discourses. Furthermore, the same logics seemed to be applicable to explain the absence of "americanity" in the United States and the English Canada.

Although these conclusions might suggest that there are some inconsistencies in their development, I would like to take a stand in favor of the discourse on "*americanidad*" and its variants "*américanité*" and "*americanidade*". Although the discourse often presented a certain disproportion between what was intended and what was realized, it did not invalidate the enormous possibilities opened by the concept. The discrepancies, ambiguities and particular interests found in the articulation of the concepts did not completely impede certain achievements towards the construction of a continental cultural identity. It is irrefutable that the works developed by thinkers such as Carpentier and Lezama Lima have had an enormous impact in Latin-American academia, constituting important driving forces for the development of comparative literary and cultural studies in this part of the continent. It is also undeniable that *americanidade* in Brazil, along with the development of other concepts such as

mestiçagem and *entre-lugar*, have been determinant to boost the literary and cultural dialogue between Brazil and other American cultural communities. It is true that there are certain barriers, exclusions and reluctances in the development of the concept. However, as Lamonde suggests with regard to the development of *américanité*, we are still in an ongoing process of mutual “discoveries” and cultural openness on the continent.

The strength of the discourse is not in its combat against cultures which are regarded as “dominant”. In fact, the battle against these centers actually reproduces and reinforces a vision of the world led by dichotomies such as periphery vs. center, dominated vs. dominating, inferior vs. superior. The vigor of “americanity” can rather be found in the semantics of the concept itself and its pragmatic use for the promotion of cultural openness and continental proximity in the Americas. From the cultural point of view, the Americas have long experienced multiple seclusions. The importance of preserving *americanity* as a project for the construction of a continental cultural identity lies in its potentiality for breaking down these seclusions. The notion of “americanity” inspires and encourages the possibility of putting side by side the literatures and the cultures of Jamaica and Brazil, Canada and Equator, the United States and Cuba, French Guiana and Uruguay, Puerto Rico and Quebec, etc. Through the concept, the cultures of the North and the South, the East and the West of the Americas can meet in multiple and countless combinations. As a matter of principle, americanity (without quotations, without reserve) goes beyond the idea of nationality. It presents the potential to open a vast field of literary and cultural studies on the continent in which the margins and the centers, the poor and the rich, the tropical and the temperate and all other nuances in-

between can (re)discover each other, break down old cultural boundaries and construct a brand new sense of American continentality.

Is this a candid, almost naïve approach? It probably is. Perhaps americanity is nothing but the recycling of old utopias that, since José Martí, have fed the dream of conceiving the American continent as something more than an agglomerated set of nations. Probably americanity will always be permeated by relations of power, by gaps, by complex processes of inclusion and exclusion on our continent. However, the possibilities and intentions will always be there, waiting to be accomplished by new Martí, Carpentiers, Lezamas, Lamondes, Santiagos and Bernds. After all, this is what utopias are made for: to be indefinitely dreamed, continuously pursued and never achieved.

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