The Hollywood Soundtrack and the Québécois Coming-of-Age Film

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, Québécois films have used their soundtracks to reflect the evolving understandings of the Québécois national cultural identity. More specifically, the coming-of-age film often uses American and Anglo-European music to demonstrate how contemporary youth feel distanced from debates over national identity. In *Mommy* (Xavier Dolan, 2013), *Les êtres chers* (Anne Émond, 2015), and *Solo* (Sophie Dupuis, 2023), the music of Counting Crows, Elliot Smith, and Perfume Genius becomes for each film's main character a reliable form of escape, enabling the imaginative projection of a world outside the Québec they know. In engaged listening, the music allows these characters to reimagine their environments, deterritorialize themselves from national debates, and seek solace in the construction of worlds in which they exercise greater agency. This study closely analyzes how such musical imagination operates within these popular Québécois coming-of-age films of the past fifteen years, and brings it into conversation with studies of music, Québécois youth, and *américanité*. It argues, accordingly, that the influence of the Hollywood-Québec cinematic exchange manifests not only in a literal sense, with Québécois directors going back and forth to the United States, but also in the soundtrack of the Québécois coming-of-age film.

Keywords: Québec cinema, soundtrack, film music, Québec national identity, film sound, americanité.

Introduction: Making a Québécois Soundtrack

The changing position of music in everyday settings—on the radio, in curated spaces, on film—in Québec reflects the ways in which national, social, and political movements are experienced across different Québécois generations. For example, over the past four decades, numerous public exhibitions have sought to assemble a collective playlist that reflects Québécois life, thereby staging a long history of French-language music and culture in reflective relation to itself. In 1995, *Le Musée de la civilisation* (The Museum of Civilization) in Québec City inaugurated *Je vous entends chanter* (*I Hear You Singing*), an exhibition in which visitors, equipped with headsets, could listen to a selection of popular songs recommended by the public, ranging from Gilles Vigneault

to Claude Léveillée. Nearly three decades later, the exhibition *Music: Québec from Charlebois to Arcade Fire,* opened at the McCord Museum in Montréal, giving listeners a glimpse into how local music schools, performance venues, and recording studios instilled a distinctly "Québécois" identity in their musicians. Both exhibitions featured music that was used as part of political campaigns and protest, such as *Gens du pays* by Gilles Vigneault and *Je m'en souviens* by French B, but also songs about shared cultural history, like the folk song *La mairie à Longueuil.* As Line Grenier notes in her study of what defines Québécois music, the construction of a Québécois playlist is a "politically important phenomenon," insofar as it is "informed by the complex play of memories produced and summoned by [its] exhibition."[1]

What both exhibitions (and the playlists that emerged from them) share is a sense of specific locality. Simply put, these playlists tend to reflect the sentiments of those growing up between the 1960s and the 1990s, privileging French-language music associated with political change. Folk songs, as well as music by artists such as Ginette Reno, Robert Charlebois, and Les Cowboys Fringants, were played as one entered these exhibitions,[2] thereby rendering them especially audible to the public. In doing so, this implicitly conveys the notion that songs of protest, French-language dialects, and a reverence for the past best represent the cultural history of the Québécois people.[3]

Yet, it is worth delving deeper into these soundtracks, as they often only represent the feelings of a specific, older generation. Both museum exhibits leave out a crucial part of the evolving Québécois soundtrack—they do not incorporate the views of a younger demographic of Québécois people. While these folk songs, adult contemporary classics, and rock hits speak to the collective memory and historical cultural movements in Québec (and, indeed, an attempt was made to point to the future of Québécois music by including interviews with indie rock bands Metric and Arcade Fire), there is little perspective on what sounds are important to younger Québécois individuals.[4]

While not necessarily a new phenomenon, recent film and media made in the province depicts younger generations interacting with American and Anglo-European music with greater frequency and can be used to trace the changing national identity of Québec (as well as its evolving national soundtrack). This engaged listening is done not in a total rejection of the nation they were raised in, nor indeed a complete embrace of the increasingly dominant American culture. Rather, the soundtracks to these films suggest

how Québécois teenagers want to reimagine what the province can become, effectively deterritorializing themselves to create a no place between Québec and America into which they can escape all social expectations. This study will observe how three films translate this effect: *Mommy* (Xavier Dolan, 2013), *Les êtres chers* (Anne Émond, 2015), and *Solo* (Sophie Dupuis, 2023). These films are all set in the 2010s and 2020s, and portray protagonists who feel unsure of their place in the social and political landscape. They are also all made by directors who are part of the "renouveau" of Québécois cinema, as defined by Karine Bertrand and Mercédès Baillargeon as a movement of filmmakers who embrace transnational aesthetics of Europe and Hollywood, and "focus on questions of identity, culture and identification" in their filmmaking.[5] Additionally, all three directors were born in the mid-to-late 1980s, between the two independence referendums, and infuse their work with experiences and understandings of their home province.[6] An examination of how the protagonists of these films interact with English-language music reveals that contemporary Québécois youth use music as a means of creating an imagined space beyond the nation, engaging with imagined liberal ideals often associated with Hollywood, America, and English-speaking Europe, and ultimately contemplating whether these ideals could ever be applied in Québec. This study argues that the playlist of the Québécois soundtrack must be expanded to include American and Anglo-European music in order to reflect the sensibilities of the most recent generation. Before undertaking an in-depth study of this subject matter, however, it is first necessary to assess how the Québécois film and media soundtrack serves as a mirror to reflect national issues back to its own people.

The Soundtracks to Québécois Film and Media: A Mirror to the Nation

Even though they may not always have releases on vinyl, CD, or digital streaming, the soundtracks to Québécois films and media works also capture the constantly evolving social and political landscape, and should therefore be considered as part of this national soundtrack. The cinematic soundtrack, for the purposes of this study, is here defined as the "integrated soundtrack" described by James Buhler and Hannah Lewis, where "the various components of sound design [such as diegetic music, non-diegetic music, dialogue, sound effects, etc.] have a sense of being planned or composed" and "sound design and music are blended into a kind of conceptual unity."[7]

Québécois films often use this integrated soundtrack to reflect how musicality and song is ever present in the lives of Québécois individuals. Such an integrated soundtrack is evident in the works of Gilles Carle. *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z.* (1965) uses its soundtrack to capture the various songs that the Montréal working class would sing at work, as Léopold harmonizes various folk and religious songs with the mechanical hum of his snowplow. A similar effect is achieved in *La vraie nature de Bernadette* (1972), where the score composed by Pierre Brault captures the multiplicity of identities across Québec's shared landscape. In this film, fiddles and tambourines represent the voices of the rural farmers (as these instruments are used in place of silent exchanges between characters), while electronic keyboards playing in a minor key signify the perceived threat of the encroaching urban sprawl (as seen from the farmers' point of view when Bernadette first arrives in the farming village). The media soundtrack thus serves as a cypher for the changing Québécois experience and for the tensions embedded in the province's expansive geography.

Looking closer at the role of the cinematic soundtrack therefore provides a useful way to understand how the nation of Québec reflects itself. It occasionally harmonizes, as it does in the museum exhibits (where the several songs played together in a shared space occasionally strike a harmonious chord), and can sound discordant (as it does in *La vraie nature de Bernadette,* where the intermittent combination of fiddles and keyboards create an unsettling, screeching effect). Having examined the historical trends present in earlier Québécois works, we can perceive a gradual shift in which the songs of tradition begin to disappear. Attention can now be turned to the ways in which the contemporary youth express an increasing disinterest in the Québécois music from their parents' generation.

To better grasp this concept, it is useful to examine the presence of Québécois and French music in the three films chosen for this study. Even though Steve enjoys listening to the music of Céline Dion with his mother in *Mommy*, and sings along to her 1999 hit "On ne change pas," he nevertheless finds most French-language songs played in public spaces such as stores and offices grating and hard to connect with. In one scene set in a store, Steve hears an unnamed French-language adult contemporary song playing over the radio, and remarks that such spaces are suffocating to him, noting that he "feels he has no way to breathe." He is then shown outside with his

headphones on, listening to a different song on his mixtape. A similar effect is achieved in *Les êtres chers*, where Laurence retreats to her MP3 player when an unnamed French-language song being played aloud in a hospital waiting room becomes annoyingly repetitive for her. Meanwhile, in *Solo*, there are multiple instances of the lead character Simon avoiding French music being played in public spaces, interrupting it by putting in his earbuds or by speaking over it in English. For instance, when another drag queen performs "Dis-moi dis-moi" by Québécoise artist Mitsou at his bar, he appears visibly bored and retreats to the changing room, where he insists on listening to Britney Spears in order to drown out the sound from the stage. Taken together, these examples illustrate a new trend in Québécois cinema: soundtracks are no longer merely made up of Québécois music being blended with environmental sounds to reflect the nation's insularity. Instead, they reflect a sense of fatigue and disillusionment among Québécois youth toward the traditions of French-language culture. They instead prefer to engage with something new and different from what came previously.

In place of this uninspiring and at times irritating French-language music, American and Anglo-European music offers a desired escape. Sociologists Dave Miranda and Martin Claes noted that American music remains highly popular among younger generations of Québécois listeners, not only because of the "massive presence of American media in Quebec, combined with [a rise in] bilingualism of its people" but also because it provides young people in the process of defining themselves with an "alternative cultural identity" rooted in "non-conformist values, and convictions."[8] Likewise, Christopher M. Jones observes the popularity of English-language and American music among Québec youth, writing that Québécois music is often overly tied with "tradition," expressed through repeated themes in its lyrics—that of an unquestioning reverence for the family or a love for empty landscapes, for example.[9] Jones also notes that the instrumentation of popular Québécois music is also unchanging, with ballads often pairing a solo vocalist with piano or guitar accompaniment in a major key, and these tracks always occupy a place on the Québécois charts.[10] In contrast to these traditional songs, the trend of *yé-yé*, or the translation and dubbing of Anglo-American music into French, began to emerge, giving young Québécois individuals even greater access to the ideals expressed in American music. As Mathieu Saladin writes, *yé-yé* represents "a profound cultural shift" in young

people recognizing the social and economic power of their identities.[11] In other words, these sociological studies reflect this shift toward American and Anglo-European music, as youth no longer find meaning in the songs they have heard many times since youth. As such, it is worth bringing a closer lens to the effects of American and Anglo-European music on the Québécois national soundtrack, as it reflects an emerging transformation within the contemporary Québécois national psyche.

Yet, this shift in the musical preferences of younger on-screen generations is not just about escaping an undesired sound. Rather, for Québécois youth, it is about connecting with an imagination of what their lives (and the nation they live in) could become. Films such as *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2005), *J'ai tué ma mère* (Xavier Dolan, 2009), and *L.A. Tea Time* (Sophie Bédard Marcotte, 2019) centre artist characters who perceive Québécois music as dull, turn instead toward American music, and ultimately find creative inspiration (and even professional opportunity) through the confidence they gain by listening to musicians such as Pink Floyd, Crystal Castles, and Judy Garland. In an interview, Québécois director Jean-Marc Vallée recalls that, during his youth in the 1960s and 1970s, the music of David Bowie, Jefferson Starship, and Pink Floyd was omnipresent in his social circle, and gave children of his generation "hope."[12] Vallée credits this engaged listening to the fact that they were consistently hearing about the turmoil of Québécois politics on the radio, or listening to their parents play the same beloved Québécois songs, like the music of Robert Charlebois and Ginette Reno.[13] Although Vallée is from an older generation of Québécois filmmakers, the notions he speaks about remain true. When discussing her inspirations in *L.A. Tea Time*, Sophie Bédard Marcotte notes that the current generation of filmmakers possess:

> [a] certain anxiety [about Québec], and from which I do not exclude myself. [In the United States,] people have ingrained in them a systematic search for meaning. They use music, the cinema, to find it. As a young Québécoise person, I relate to that.[14]

Thus, for many younger Québécois filmmakers, Anglo-European and American music signifies something beyond the localized social traditions transmitted across generations: it embodies the hope of transcending these

social boundaries and reimagining the traditional Québécois identity into one with more social freedoms. This trend extends to more contemporary films and younger filmmakers, like Xavier Dolan, who has remarked that hearing the voice of Céline Dion in *Titanic* (1997), directed by James Cameron, helped him realize that Québécois voices could be heard beyond the borders of the province and reach the heart of the film industry in Hollywood.[15] Consequently, Dolan incorporates the music of many of the artists that inspired him growing up (such as Céline Dion, Oasis, and Counting Crows), in the hope that "it will allow someone else to feel seen" and escape the same provincial and national boundaries.[16] In Vallée's work, music from outsiders such as Bowie who made it to Hollywood allow his protagonists to feel powerful. In Dolan's work, the music of a Québécoise woman who made it as a celebrity in Hollywood performs a similar function for his characters. In all these films from the directors listed above, music is used as a means for young protagonists to reimagine the worlds of their Québec—from being monotonous, socially restrictive, or with no resources for them to locate adulthood—to being filled with opportunities. Thus, for contemporary Québécois directors, the development of their Québécois soundtrack relies on the use of American and Anglo-European music.

This chapter will now examine how three key Québécois coming-of-age films associated with the *"renouveau du cinéma québécois"*[17]—*Mommy*, *Les êtres chers*, and *Solo*—all use American and Anglo-European music as a form of escape through which the protagonists imagine a world beyond the Québec they know. More specifically, the following analysis will assess how these characters use such music to envision themselves in a new world, one in which the geography of Québec blends with the ideals of the Hollywood film. These films are significant in how they visually represent the psychology and imaginations of the three protagonists. In these sequences, the films abandon natural choices in acting and sonic realism for quicker editing, flashier and brighter production design, and louder sound design. In effect, the characters temporarily leave their lives in Québec in order to reimagine their worlds according to the look, feeling, and tropes of personal success characteristic of a Hollywood story. Let us now turn to a few examples of this reimagination, and review how they connect to current issues in Québécois youth culture. From there, it becomes possible to better review the cultural interchange between Québec and America (and Hollywood).

The Québécois Coming-of-Age Film and Musical Imaginations

Before this chapter defines exactly what the Hollywood effect is and more closely examines the Québécois-Hollywood exchange, it is worth reviewing how musical escapism functions in these films, and what exactly it provides each protagonist. The three films of this study each depict Québécois youth experiencing a turning point in their transition towards adulthood. To provide a brief plot description of each film: *Mommy* follows Steve, a teenager with attention deficit hyperactive disorder, who returns to his Montréal home for the first time after spending years in a behavioural institution, reconnecting both with the childhood he lost and the adulthood ahead of him; *Les êtres chers* centres on the life of Laurence, a young working-class girl who is forced to come of age quickly after her father abruptly commits suicide; and *Solo* focuses on Simon, a queer young man finds his voice through his drag persona, Glory Gore, while simultaneously navigating an abusive romantic relationship with fellow drag performer Olivier (known in drag as Dragona), as well as a distant reconciliation with his mother Claire, an opera singer who abandoned him as a child. All three films portray young Québécois protagonists as trapped in their environments, unable to find the resources necessary to help them understand or cope with their social marginalization. While Steve faces ableism and a lack of resources to help him adapt to life outside of the institution, Laurence struggles to find support for her mental health. Simon likewise becomes caught in two abusive relationships and is unable to locate the resources needed to properly articulate his need for help. Impeded by this lack of support, they have few cultural outlets through which to meaningfully connect with others, and consequently lack any real sense that they can overcome their social marginalization.

More importantly, for all three characters, music functions as a form of escapism. By tuning into their favourite artists, they are able to tune out the overwhelming soundtrack of everyday life. This includes the French-language music described earlier, but also the stressful sounds of family conflict, the noise from nearby traffic and construction. Each character uses a personal music player and is frequently seen listening to music. The personal music player is defined here as a device through which an individual can play music of their choosing whenever they desire—Steve has a Discman, Laurence has an MP3 player, and Simon has a Bluetooth speaker and earbuds that connect to his phone. Having these devices available gives them the ability to create a

soundtrack for their lives and allows them to regularly reflect on their experience. Both Simon and Laurence use music to contemplate friendships and romantic relationships, turning to their albums in an attempt to gain the confidence they need to approach their romantic interests. Meanwhile, Steve uses his homemade CD playlists to help regulate his mood when he becomes emotionally overwhelmed. Most of the time, the music is presented diegetically within the scene, with the player being physically present in the shot. However, their escapism does not necessarily depend on the music being heard diegetically. The protagonists often imagine songs playing when they are away from their players, or sing them aloud while imagining a backing track. This effect is present when Simon mouths the lyrics to "Work Bitch" by Britney Spears while putting on his make-up alone before a show, accompanied by a low 808 drum beat, seemingly emerging from nowhere. It is also present when Laurence takes a bus and imagines "Red & Yellow" by Martin Leon playing in order to make the long trip through empty fields more exciting. Anglo-European and American music is thus so omnipresent in the lives of these three protagonists that it extends beyond the boundaries of diegesis, and functions as part of their imaginations.

For Steve, Laurence, and Simon, this effect extends beyond a mere affection for English-language music. It becomes a mode of escapism in itself, through which the characters are transported out of their lives in Québec and into a high-budget Hollywood film where realist tendencies are abandoned. In these moments, the films cease to operate according to realism and instead give the appearance of suddenly adjusting to a higher budget. This phenomenon is termed here the "Hollywood effect," as coined by Barry Keith Grant in his study of the musical film, where he argues that Hollywood cinema tends to use music as a means giving characters "unhindered expression to their emotions."[18] Further, "any ordinary space is charmed" through the presence of a song, becoming almost "impossible—that is, entirely cinematic."[19] In other words, the music gives the protagonists the ability to reimagine space to be entirely cinematic in a Hollywood-style: devoid of realistic expectations, where objects and actors move entirely according to their will, and where they can authentically express their true emotions and live as the person they desire to be.

This "Hollywood effect" is evident throughout the three works, through each contains a key scene in which the world is visibly transformed by the

music. In *Solo*, Simon's relationship to drag performance in English offers him an opportunity to be heard as he desires to be. Throughout the film, Simon struggles to speak; for example, when he meets his mother, he finds her operatic voice and celebrity status intimidating, and often keeps his sentences to five words or less. At the nightclub, he similarly finds it difficult to connect meaningfully with other queer men, as they often interrupt him or dismiss his interests in drag. However, when Simon transforms into Glory Gore and performs at the local bar, he always chooses songs in English to feel power over his own voice, even when performing with other queens. In these sequences, the ambient sounds fade out almost entirely, and the sound of his voice singing with the backing track is all we hear. While many drag performances rely on lip-synching the chosen song, Glory Gore often sings along with the music, and the closeness of the camera in these performances focuses on how she enacts the song vocally. In these moments, the framing follows Glory Gore's face in close-ups or medium shots, almost never showing her full costume. The focus on her face as she sings evokes that of a music video, or a Hollywood musical performance. This is most evident at the beginning of the film, when Glory Gore performs "Voulez-Vous" by ABBA. As Glory Gore reaches the first chorus, she spins, grabbing the camera to follow her face as her wig flies in the wind and her make-up shines in the lighting. Throughout this performance, the background becomes increasingly bright and glittering, as though the audience and stage space have vanished entirely. While on stage singing in English, it is as if Simon/Glory Gore can control the camera, and thus how he/she is perceived. As Glory Gore, Simon feels a complete sense of agency that he did not have previously. Indeed, the "Hollywood effect" takes root in his musical reimagination of a world in which Simon/Glory Gore can act authentically and be heard and seen as he/she wants to.

A similar scene appears in *Mommy*, where Steve tours his neighbourhood on his skateboard for the first time since being released. Earlier in the film, when he returns home from the institution, the sounds of his neighbourhood is composed of familiar traffic noise, but also the judgements of neighbours commenting on his "strange" behaviour. When he goes outside to reacquaint himself with his neighbourhood, Steve decides to re-invent this hostile soundscape by listening to one of his childhood favourites, "Colourblind" by Counting Crows, on his Discman. As he travels down the

suburban roads, he imagines himself pushing them away, extending his arms in the direction of passers-by. Their voices are rendered completely inaudible, and they fall outside of the shot once Steve "pushes" them out of the way. Each time the piano refrain is heard, the image becomes slightly brighter, as though the music allows Steve to see the world more clearly. In both these examples, music serves as a means for the characters to escape the world they are in and imagine themselves as almighty beings in control of their own reality. The shots become less drab in color and edited in a style reminiscent of Hollywood adventure cinema, using slow motion for Steve's movements, with quick cutting between various angles. As such, Québec itself becomes a more desirable in which to exist.

The "Hollywood effect" is especially felt in *Les êtres chers*, in which Laurence comes to rely on her MP3 player as a tool to block out stressful situations. When she witnesses her only close friend, Antoine, get in an accident, her music collection becomes a tool to help her cope. While hospital staff are too preoccupied to speak with her, she turns to "Angeles" by Elliott Smith to help her process her feelings of trauma. Before, the editing is made of quick cuts, creating a disorienting and frantic effect for the viewer. Once she connects her earbuds to her MP3 and listens to "Angeles," the close-ups on Laurence's face become less grainy and clearer for the first time. It is as though the camera has shifted to a higher quality, with this apparent "upgrade" in technology reflecting Laurence's ability to find a place of security. The ambient sounds around her are also muted, allowing her to focus on her emotions in the moment. She re-interprets and transforms her experience from a poorly shot independent film to one with a Hollywood-sized budget. In all three examples, then, American and Anglo-European music functions as a tool through which these youth escape the discomforts of their Québécois lives and imagine themselves within the heightened reality of American film.

From the analysis of these three scenes, it is evident that contemporary youth draw upon a Hollywood imagination in order to feel as if they are in control of their surroundings when they in fact possess little agency over what is happening to them. These young Québécois characters experience a helplessness or lack of control over their destinies because they are trapped in repressive and even abusive environments which do not permit an authentic self-expression, and which reflect the anxieties of a nation which itself does

not have control over its political destiny. Their escape into American and Anglo-European music, then, is rooted in a desire to exist in a world where they have greater control. In other words, they seek to move beyond a rooted nation-state framework toward a more individualized space in which they can express themselves freely.

For each of these characters, the music-playing device is uniquely capable of connecting them to a Hollywood-style experience. This deep connection with music is inherent to the design of the music player itself. In his writings on portable MP3 players such as the iPod, Michael Bull writes that listening to music allows individuals to enter their "own imaginary realm" where differences between the desired and actual environment "are negated to become one with the user."[20] In other words, an individualized musical experience allows the listener to abandon the world they are currently living in and seek comfort in imagining the worlds described in their music. A similar process is described by Shuhei Hosokawa in his discussion of the "Walkman effect," where he writes that in engaging with Sony's portable music device, "not only is the subject but also the environment susceptible to transformation."[21] He provides two examples of this phenomenon: one in which a potential listener listens to a cassette tape of folk music to transform a busy and noisy commute into one that is a twenty-minute meditation, and another in which a runner uses up-tempo synthesizer music tape to transform a boring apartment space into a workout studio. He continues to argue that, when using the Walkman, the listener begins to "listen to the 'beat' of [their] body," and fall into their imaginary space, as their body "loses its balancing function through which it activates the interpenetration of self and world."[22] Thus, Hosokawa suggests that listeners begin to aestheticize and narrativize their experience as they retreat into their imaginary worlds, becoming "a mise en oeuvre in the body, through the body, of the body" as they immerse themselves in the sounds they are hearing.[23] In this sense, when these characters engage in the "Walkman effect" delineated by Hosokawa, it allows them to bring about an imagined "Hollywood effect" described by Grant. Through music, they can reimagine the world to be less realist (as their music leads them to believe) and feel the potential of what the world could become if they were possessed complete control over it.

There is a connection between listening to American (and Anglo-European) music and the "Hollywood effect," as Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow

argues in her study of the social and psychological effects of the Walkman. She writes that it promotes "apolitical [American] individualism," in which listening to artists like Aerosmith, Aqua, or the Buggles talking about "the good life" offers youth "a portal to the wider world."[24] This effect is evident in the experiences felt by these three Québécois characters, for whom music provides a means to reinterpret their lives marked by discrimination or stress as ones where they are in total control of their surroundings. Like Steve, they can claim dominance over those around them; like Laurence, they can tune out unwanted voices to find those who understand their emotions; and like Simon, they can imagine a world in which they are accepted and wanted.

The common narrative between these three films is significant, as it suggests a growing dissatisfaction and ennui with the home lives of Québécois youth, and the increasing presence of American and Anglo-European music implies that there is a need to imagine the world beyond Québec itself. While these films borrow soundtrack cues and tropes from the world of Hollywood, they also make clear that this exchange is not just a product of an industry that is increasingly leaning towards a popular Americanized aesthetic. Rather, the use of these songs indicates a larger issue about where Québécois teenagers feel they fit in the contemporary era. To explore this idea further, it is worth assessing how American and Anglo-European culture plays into Québécois filmmaking and look deeper at the use of this English-language music in all three films to question how each character reimagines a space outside of the discomforts they find in Québec.

Coming of Age in Québec: A Desire to Be Elsewhere

It is important to note that these films are not unique, as the Québécois coming-of-age film has a rich history of depicting youth engaging with cultural products from outside the province. Films such as *Les bons débarras* (Francis Manckiewicz, 1980) and *Sonatine* (Micheline Lanctôt, 1984) portray youth engaging with books, films and music of American and European origin. They turn to these cultural products for one reason: a lack of meaning in the cultural products closer to home. In both films, characters find themselves unable to connect with Québec cultural as it is presented to them. Manon in *Les bons débarras* reads all of her books assigned to her at school and finds little meaning in them, while Chantal in *Sonatine* finds her mother's soap operas uninteresting and predictable. In response, Chantal and her friend

Louisette turn to European self-help tapes to understand what the world is like outside of their hostile households, while Manon reads Romantic English literature in *Les bons débarras* as she has finished all of her Québécois books, seeking an escape from her mother's neglect.[25] Similar to the protagonists of *Mommy*, *Les êtres chers*, and *Solo*, non-Québécois cultural products serve as tools through which Québécois youth attempt to escape boredom, abuse, and a sense of shared national history that is inaccessible to younger generations. This focus on self-discovery through non-Québécois cultural objects in cinema is common. As Scott MacKenzie notes that Canada, and by extension Québec, has historically defined itself in relation to other nations across the world. The nation lacks "three essential elements of an imagined national community: a common past, a shared language, and shared imaginings."[26] Contemporary Québécois youth in cinema are consistently imagining where they might belong, using cultural products to reflect their identities and desires back to themselves.

In these examples from the 1980s and 1990s, the characters negotiate their identities amid the turbulence of Québec's independence referendums, and a resurgence of both the pride in, as well as the heated debate over, the Québécois national identity. Twenty to thirty years later, characters are still going through similar processes of escapism, but within a different cultural situation. Manon, Chantal, and Louisette exist in a time in which discussions of national identity are inescapable, and both films feature in their sound design at least one discussion among characters about Québec's social and political future (in *Sonatine*, Louisette's parents speak at the table of their opinions of a local councillor; and in *Les bons débarras*, Manon listens to a political debate on the radio while waiting for her mother outside a bar, and child welfare is discussed at several points throughout the film). A more recent example in the film *À l'ouest de Pluton* (Henry Bernadet and Myriam Verreault, 2009), in which students debate the value of Québec independence, unsure of who many of the key historical figures are. By contrast, when looking at the sound design of films made after 2010—made by directors whose childhoods were directly in the middle of this debate—this discussion is largely absent.

Instead, these contemporary directors portray today's youth as caught in a cycle of uncertainty in a more individualized and personal sense: unsure of who they are, yet largely uninterested in participating in national debates.

Mercédès Baillargeon notes that contemporary Québécois film depicts youth who "explore suburban ennui, the moroseness of the everyday, the desolation of today's youth, and the disillusionment of North American life."[27] These young characters also enjoy engaging with cultural products from other countries as a means of exploring who they are and what their worlds could look outside the boundaries of their monotonous lives. Baillargeon further notes that today's films reveal the "willingness to be open to the Other while simultaneously using the Other as a screen to project an ideal Self in a process of (dis)identification."[28] In another article on the role of the renewal of Québécois cinema (referring to the rise in Québec filmmaking that occurred post-2005), Baillargeon argues that Québécois cinema moved away from "films assessing the goal of sovereignty and turn[ed] instead to intimate questions related to the boredom and loss of meaning experienced on a daily basis—questions which, like the current political situation, are often left unanswered."[29] In other words, Québec is undergoing "a new period of identity crisis, similar to that shared by the modern West in the throes of a loss of great unifying narratives."[30] Thus, in interacting with today's cultural products (particularly from Western and English-speaking countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom), youth such as Steve, Laurence, and Simon are all shown to be in a state of ennui in which their issues are framed mainly in the realm of the personal—they do not engage in community-building or political action; instead, they retreat into music.

It is evident that the turn toward music in these films is an act of self-removal: a rejection of a status quo defined by ennui, uncertainty, and a future that offers little promise. As Québécois culture increasingly moves towards globalization, Québécois youth feel as if they want to be inspired by the promise that their world can become more connected to nations beyond Québec. In both of her studies, Baillargeon assesses the relationship between contemporary Québécois cinema and globalization, noting that the future for young Québécois characters appears "bleak," leaving them with little inspiration of what their lives might become.[31] However, these films show that contemporary characters rely on the hopes of deterritorialization as provided by Hollywood. The next section will provide closer scene analyses of other scenes in each of the three films to better comprehend how this deterritorialization occurs.

The Deterritorialization of Québec/Hollywood

Now that it is clear why the presence of Québécois cultural and material history has become less compelling to young people in recent years, it is worth examining exactly what the Hollywood effect provides for contemporary characters. The United States, and Hollywood in particular, are typically associated together, as Jean Baudrillard describes: "America is neither dream nor reality. It is hyperreality because it is a utopia which has behaved from the very beginning as though it were already achieved."[32] In Québec, this summation of American/Hollywood ideals is often termed as *americanité*, referring to the "opportunity" to disengage with localized political debates about "Québécois values" and instead embrace the presence of America and American influence.[33] There have been many debates surrounding *americanité* and its relationship to Québec. Some scholars, such as Éloïse Brière, express concern over Québécois culture increasingly moulding itself into the American model of life, where older linguistic traditions are eroded in favour of growing "Franglais" terminology.[34] Other scholars, such as Yvan Lamonde, are more cynical about Québec's future, as he notes that *americanité* has increasingly become present in Québécois media and throughout the provincial education sector, and that it "create[s] a distance—not a 'separatist' break—with Europe and France in particular, a distance in which the American component of Quebec will have a place. […] we can live neither without [the United States] nor with them."[35] For scholars like Lamonde, *americanité* is not conceived as a soft form of influence useful for reimagining a modernized Québec, but rather the full-blown Americanization of Québécois culture. He further adds that the "inclusion of Quebec's American-ness in its identity is a guarantee of the accuracy of our self-perception, as well as a constant reminder of the challenge of a true face-to-face encounter."[36] In this view, Québecois culture is expected to become less popular when competing with American media, and the films, music and lifestyle of America will become increasingly dominant among younger generations. This position is a rather pessimistic understanding of the cultural exchange between Québec and America. As we have seen in the three examples presented thus far, the young protagonists are not portrayed as wanting to entirely re-envision Québec as America, but rather want to re-envision the Québécois world around them to be more accepting.

René-Jean Raveault offers a perspective on the American-Québécois relationship that is more useful to this discussion of Québécois youth and

American culture. He describes the relationship between Québec and America as a "boomerang," in which American ideals of "consumerism, liberalism and capitalist ideologies" are exported worldwide, while Québécois individuals find ways to incorporate these ideas within their own processes of national identity.[37] In other words, while Québec struggles under the pressures of *americanité* and Americanization, young characters such as Steve, Laurence, and Simon use Anglo-European and American music as a means to reimagine their versions of Québec (figured as stagnant, traditional, at times discriminatory, and with little hope for change) as spaces instead associated with freedom, self-expression, and self-reinvention. Of course, the real United States does not embody any of these qualities to a greater extent than Québec; rather, these young characters are longing for the imagine America, shaped by Hollywood movies and the ideals they hear about in U.S. popular music. And so, as they reimagine their surroundings, they are no longer in Québec, but they are also not in America either. Raveault describes the notion of Québécois filmmaking fusing with Hollywood aesthetics to produce a Québecized America, or a place without any exact location. Jean Morency and Jimmy Thibeault also similarly suggest that much of Québécois fiction (particularly in the Québécois road novel), is not only "regionalized, as is often taken for granted, but has also branched out into new affiliations that are not only geographical in nature, but also stem from the relationship writers maintain with a collective memory and a common, shared space."[38]

In other words, the new Québécois culture still has a sustained output of regionalized culture, such as the Québécois and French-language traditions discussed earlier, but it is also becoming more globalized. This notion of contemporary Québecois cinema as one that is increasingly becoming a deterritorialized space is therefore a more productive framework, since considering the role of contemporary Québec, as the presence of America and Hollywood is not directly transposed to films set in Québec, but these young protagonists use their music devices to bring American culture and imagined liberal ideals to the spaces they inhabit. This is consistent with Michael Bull's account of listening to musical devices (such as the iPod), in which listening involves "the privatization of public space; public space is possessed through the process of auditory privatization and exclusion."[39] Jonathan Sterne further develops this notion by arguing that "the space of the auditory field has become a private property, a space for the individual to inhabit."[40] Thus, the

imaginary space created by engaged listening is designed for each protagonist to project their own desires—primarily the desire to escape from an expected routine, and live in an unclaimed space. In her survey of the use of music in Jean-Marc Vallée's oeuvre, Karine Bertrand suggests that the music used from various countries (in *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, Québécois, French, British, and American music are all heard) points to a deterritorialization effect in its key characters, where music serves as an interior space into which the characters can escape. She writes that, in Vallée's works, music signals "[t]he relationship with the body, the existential crises and, finally, the ties that bind and separate the characters from each other" as well as a mediation on "the geographical territories that propel them into the unknown."[41] Robert Schwartzwald also speaks to this effect in direct connection with *C.R.A.Z.Y.*'s use of fantasy, writing that: "[f]ar from dwelling on social confrontation and conflict, the film seems determined to create a shared affective experience of a harmonious space and time."[42] In engaging with Hollywood-style products, these protagonists are able to find comfort in a sense of the universal and create a sort of balancing act. The Québec they currently inhabit is drab, and they lack a feeling of futurity. When listening to music from Anglo-European and American stars, they are able to deterritorialize the restrictive worlds in which they are living. They do not seek to replace their worlds with Hollywood but create a more modernized world in which they can grow and be accepted.

In *Mommy*, Steve's music is not only a coping mechanism for tuning out ableist judgements, but also as a way of structuring his life as a narrative and sustaining hope in the future. Whenever he finds an avenue forward after his time in the correctional centre, he listens to many Anglo-European and American songs from the 1990s to bring back the comforts he felt in his childhood to the present moment, in order to find hope for the future. When he finds a tutor he feels comfortable working with, he plays "A Decade in Blue" by Eiffel 65 and acts out the music video, feeling a sense of achievement and visibility. This connection between 1990s Anglo-pop and Steve's optimism about his future becomes especially evident when he plays "Wonderwall" by Oasis, and his ability to have control over is surroundings is literally changed. A montage follows in which he is succeeding in life: working effectively with his tutor to breeze through what he missed in school, forming connections with others in his neighbourhood, and learning to perform adult tasks, such

as cooking and shaving. During the second chorus, he is seen on a highway with a shopping cart, throwing cans at the cars behind him. He is clearly experiencing a sense of freedom in an undefined, open space, unlike the restrictions he feels in institutional settings such as his doctor's office or the correctional centre. In these institutional scenes, Steve is always positioned next to a guard, a nurse, or a warden who is present with him in the film's claustrophobic 1:1 aspect ratio. These shots are also crowded with symbols of the state, such as a Québécois flag in the background of a shot in the correctional centre in the final scene of the film. When he is in an open space with no distinguishing signs that he is in Québec, he feels free. This sentiment is especially present after the two-bar rest following the song's second chorus, in which Steve grabs the sides of the film's 1:1 aspect ratio and pushes them outward to the widescreen 1.85:1—one of the standard aspect ratios for Hollywood films. Here, the road he is careening down becomes more open. The music, and the "Hollywood effect" help him feel more in command of his surroundings, as he is no longer cramped into an institutional space where others determine his destiny as a disabled person. In these deterritorialized open spaces, he can act authentically without fear of discrimination.

In *Les êtres chers*, Laurence finds that her music does not provide an escape from the boredom of her hometown and the occasional stresses of her family and friends, but also gives her a needed escape to a past world. As a result, she deterritorializes herself not only in spatial terms, but in temporal ones as well. In the film's penultimate scene, with the help of Elliot Smith's "Angeles," she is able to imagine talking with her father who has died by suicide a few months prior. In this scene, she is at home packing up her belongings in preparation for a journey outside of her hometown, feeling uncomfortable in her childhood home (being so close to the location where her father committed suicide). To feel more at ease, she listens to her MP3 player and returns to "Angeles" once again. She then imagines herself walking along a beach with her father, not speaking to him but acknowledging his presence when the lyrics "No one's gonna fool around with us/No one's gonna fool around with us/So glad to meet you, Angeles" play. As these are the last lyrics of that song, the MP3 player switches to the next song on her playlist, which is "Common People" by Pulp. The setting then changes to an anonymous hotel room, where she imagines Antoine entering and dancing with her. She sings the lyrics "Sing along with the common people/Sing along

and it might just get you through/Laugh along with the common people" with him as they dance. As they do, a calming wind sound effect enters the track, suggesting that Laurence has finally found a space to disconnect from traumatic experiences, and is able to make peace with the reimagined world around her. In this way, Laurence, too, finds joy in deterritorialization. Her home in Québec has become too traumatic for her, but she can find relief through music, which allows her to revisit happier times in the past, her music to giving her the words she could not otherwise express. This English-language song brings about a "Hollywood effect" in this sequence and helps her envision a world in which she is happier, and the alternate futures she might have had with her deceased friends and family.

Meanwhile, in *Solo*, Simon finds that performing English-language music by pop stars who have achieved success in Hollywood and America becomes the only way to cope with the increasing pressures of his abusive romantic relationship and his neglectful family. On the three occasions at home, Simon asks Olivier if he can direct their joint performances, noting that his chosen dance moves will be "legendary" and "fierce" in English. Each time, Olivier prevents him from taking control. He speaks loudly over Simon, reminds him to "stop speaking in franglais," or in two instances, literally covers his mouth. Olivier thus quite literally punishes Simon for talking, especially in English, as he respects speaking in the native language rather than mixing cultures. In these domestic scenes shared with Olivier, the sound design is often rendered as rather silent. Everyday noises—the hum of kitchen appliances, construction sounds from outside, and the sound of Simon smoking cigarettes—are amplified alongside Olivier's dialogue, reflecting the fear Simon has of being too loud in this landscape. He is also shown as small in these shots, with Olivier often standing above him, or taking up most of the frame. This oppressive effect is also present when Simon goes to visit his mother after her opera performance, where she criticizes Simon's conjugation of a verb in French, and remarks that it took her "so much effort" to try and remove her Québécois accent for French audiences. As the scene progresses, the sound of the room's ventilation gradually becomes louder over their dialogue, reflecting Simon's growing anxiety about his speech being deemed incorrect or overly anglicised. This uncomfortable sound design is evident in his final encounter with both Olivier and his mother, who attend his drag show in which he performs a suite from *Carmen* in French in her

honour. Although Simon has attempted to perfect his vocals and pronunciation, the overall sound quality is awful: microphone feedback distorts the high notes; the speakers crackle during louder sections; and audience members are heard shouting remarks such as "what is this?", "turn it off!", and "I can't understand her!" at a louder volume. Only when Simon/Glory Gore stops the performance, and returns to sing "Queen" by Perfume Genius does the performance regain a sense of Hollywood. The camera once again emphasizes Simon's/Glory Gore's vocal strengths through close-ups, with a glittering gold background and spotlights that follow her closely. In this moment, English-language pop music gives Simon/Glory Gore the courage to speak out against his abusers. His mother and Olivier disappear from view, as Simon/Glory Gore sings "No family is safe/when I sashay/Don't you know your queen /Gleaning, wrapped in golden leaves." These lyrics allow Simon to feel powerful—something that an older song re-arranged in French could not. At the same time, the song enables him to imagine a world in which he is neither punished for speaking, nor criticized for his relationship to the French language. His solo performances allow him to speak authentically, and literally imagine a world without his abusers critiquing his every word.

These three films therefore demonstrate a new trend in Québécois cinema, reflecting a lived realities of a new generation of Québécois youth. As characters such as Steve, Laurence, and Simon find themselves situated in a world of tradition that has become repetitive to the point of meaninglessness (and, indeed, stifling to their emerging identities), they turn to American and Anglo-European music to locate and articulate their desires. As Jocelyn Létourneau describes, it is common for young Québécois individuals to engage in processes of social dreaming through art, imagining alternative lives they could be leading, often projecting themselves into futures where they can find emotional and financial success or security. According to Létourneau, these aspirations stem from the uncertainty surrounding their socio-political identities and their limited sense of what Québécois national identity signifies in the present. Létourneau calls this effect an "alienating self-negating amnesia" or a "refusal to recognize oneself as one was, as one is […] and what one will be."[43]

While perhaps casting the Québecois identity in a universalizing and monolithic light, Létourneau usefully identifies how the dreamscape operates within a Québecois context. In defining a common Québécois experience,

Létourneau cites the imaginary as a key arena through which Québécois individuals explore questions of identity. For him, this imaginative space helps the subject to move past the status as the "hopeless loser" (a typical Québécois representation), and instead find ways to "think about the past while binding its wounds […] seeking in the past the impetus to go beyond the old torments rather than constantly coming back to them."[44] For Létourneau, escaping to the imaginary allows for the individual to be in "the cosmopolitan utopia of not being anywhere, of always being elsewhere, in transit between two free zones," a desirable non-place to inhabit when faced with, and inhabiting a province which itself has, "anxieties of the inner quest, the confusion of the universe, and the uncertainty of the future without reference or paths."[45] For youth on the brink of adulthood, there is a need for Steve, Laurence, and Simon to define themselves, and find meaningful paths to security. In these imagined spaces, without a national identity to acclimatize to, they are able to more freely explore what they want and who they desire to become.

Jocelyn Maclure also speaks to the idea of Québécois individuals using the imaginary as a means of exploring and searching for identity, but he suggests that these imagined spaces emerged as "spaces of exploration [that exist] in ambivalence."[46] For Maclure, this ambivalence means that the Québécois individual (particularly the young Québécois individual of the twenty-first century) needs to not just connect or disconnect from any particular national identity, but to learn who they are outside of social traditions. In other words, this ambivalence is "not perceived as an essence, encoded in the Québécois genes or written in their soul, but as the product of a historical process in which they have sought to mediate."[47] For characters such as Steve, Laurence, and Simon, these imaginary spaces are created as a median between Québec and America, and allows them to reflect on who they are, outside of given expectations of an expected national identity. Through deterritorializing themselves in musical listening, they are truly able to experiment with their own identities and feel a sense of authority over an imagined space detached from cultural history and societal expectation.

Conclusion: Remixing the Québécois Soundtrack

From this examination of the soundtracks of *Mommy*, *Les êtres chers*, and *Solo*, American and Anglo-European music in these films is not used as a means for Québécois youth to forget or tune out their lives entirely.

Although these characters use music to imagine new landscapes, they are not attempting to replace Québec with the idealistic liberal vistas of Hollywood and America. Nor are they using music to simply reimagine their Québécois worlds to be more exciting alternatives to the dull and repetitive landscapes to which they have become accustomed. Rather, the process of musical escapism depicted in these films is considerably more complex. These young characters seek security through new forms. They deterritorialize themselves as a means to impose a new, liberal, and controllable reality onto their own lived environments. In effect, they deterritorialize both Québec and America from their original locations, combining aspects of both in order to re-invent the possibilities for their future to be more accepting of their fragmented and emerging identities. As Shuhei Hosokawa reminds us, listening to music transforms the body. In his study, he suggests that upbeat pop music can transform a seated listener into an athlete through dance; however, as these films demonstrate, this process has become a political act in which youth imagine what the world can become.

As such, the relationship between Québec and Hollywood operates according to the "boomerang" dynamic described by Raveault. Karine Bertrand suggests that the exchange between Québec and Hollywood will always remain open, noting that the export of filmmakers like Denis Villeneuve, Xavier Dolan, and Jean-Marc Vallée to Hollywood is bringing a "Quebecized" perspective to the Hollywood machine, through their use of perspective—effectively reflecting America back onto itself through the gaze of a foreign camera.[48] At the same time, it is equally worth assessing how Hollywood is being brought into Québec. More specifically, how coming-of-age cinema is a perfect reflector of the difficulties that youth are experiencing in the present era.

It is also imperative to acknowledge that this cultural "boomerang" works in many directions. The films covered in this essay focus primarily on white, settler youth living in mostly urbanized areas during the 2010s. Yet Québec itself has experienced a growth in migration, and recent films like *Kanaval* (Henri Pardo, 2023) and *To Our Future Ancestors* (Bogdan Anifrani-Fedach and Ian Keteku, 2025) demonstrate that is not just American influences that are coming into Québec, especially into urban spaces like Montréal—there are increasing subcultures of people from the Middle East and Africa, with differing relationships to *francophonie* and their home cultures, and use music to deterritorialize and imagine a space between their two cultures.

To bring this study to its conclusion, it is useful revisit the notion of the Québécois soundtrack. Every few decades, Québec appears to reconsider its national soundtrack, searching for more meaningful ways to reflect a growing and evolving nation back onto itself. In its next iteration, it would be valuable to add in the sounds of film and media soundtracks. This would not only include the soundtracks described above from *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z.* or *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, but also the clanging of cans as Steve listens to Oasis and asserts authority over his neighbourhood, the whooshing sound effects as Laurence finds clarity through Pulp, and the victorious drag performance of "Queen" by Simon/Glory Gore, for it is clear that these moments indicate the current feelings of the contemporary generation of Québécois youth.

Biography

Claire Gray has recently received her doctorate in Film Studies from the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests surround the study of sound design and music in films representing national political movements. Her previous projects studied questions of Québécois identity, the Brexit referendum, and Indigenous sovereignty. Her work has been published in journals such as *[Inter]sections* and *Musicology.ECA*, and presented at conferences such as the Conseil International d'Études Francophones and the British Association for Film, Television and Screen Studies. She has previously worked as a research assistant at the National Film Board, and with the Arnait Case Study of the Archive/Counter-Archive project. She is also a member of the research group EPIC (Esthétique et politique de l'image cinématographique) and is currently co-editing a book on contemporary heroisms.

Notes

1. Line Grenier, "Governing 'National' Memories Through Popular Music in Québec," *Topia* no. 6 (2001): 12.
2. As discussed in Andrew DeWaard, Brian Fauteux, and Brianne Selman, "Independent Canadian Music in the Streaming Age: The sound from Above (Critical Political Economy) and Below (Ethnography of Musicians)," *Popular Music and Society* 45.3 (2022): 260.
3. For more on themes and motifs in Québécois music, see Line Grenier, "Governing 'National' Memories Through Popular Music in Québec," *Topia* no. 6 (2001): 11–19; Line Grenier, "The Aftermath of a Crisis: Quebec Music Industries in the 1980s," *Popular Music* 12.3 (1993): 209–227; and Scott Piroth, "Popular Music and Identity in Quebec," in *Scholars, Missionaries, and*

Counter-Imperialists, Andrew C. Holman and Brian Payne, eds. (London: Routledge, 2022), 151–167.

4. There was an attempt made to include some newer music in the exhibit, but the majority of songs skewed further towards the 1960s and 1970s. Here is the breakdown of songs per decade: 1950s: 3; 1960s: 28; 1970s: 39; 1980s: 11; 1990s: 13; 2000s: 20; 2010s: 12. Data from: "Music: Québec from Charlebois to Arcade Fire," McCord Museum (2018), https://www.musee-mccord-stewart.ca/app/uploads/2015/07/musique_liste_chansons_fr_en.pdf (last accessed 3 February 2026).
5. As discussed in Mercédès Baillargeon and Karine Bertrand, "Le transnationalisme du cinéma et des (nouveaux) médias québécois," *Contemporary French Civilization* 44.2–3 (2019): 137–273.
6. Dolan has spoken multiple times about the autobiographical nature of his films, in interviews such as Thomas Leblanc and Tranna Wintour, "Xavier Dolan on Fame, Film and Finding Inspiration in Unrequited Love", CBC Podcasts (October 2010), https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/xavier-dolan-q-a-1.5323212 (last accessed 27 Januray 2026). Émond has noted that *Les êtres chers* was based on her own experiences growing up rurally and contending with her fractured relationship with her parents when she moved to Montréal in Jorge Ignacio Castillo, "The Canadian Crew Podcast # 2: Anne Émond, *Les êtres chers*", The Canadian Crew Podcast (June 2016) https://www.thecanadiancrew.com/podcasts/2016/6/20/the-canadian-crew-podcast-2-anne-emond-les-tres-chers (last accessed 27 January 2026). Sophie Dupuis has discussed how she wrote in her emotional relationship to her home province in *Solo* in a panel discussion with Étienne Hansez. "Discussion with a Filmmaker: Sophie Dupuis," Main Film, Montréal (9 March 2023).
7. James Buhler and Hannah Lewis, "Voices in, of, and on the Cinema," in *Voicing the Cinema: Film Music and the Integrated Soundtrack,* James Buhler and Hannah Lewis, eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 9.
8. Dave Miranda and Michel Claes, "Rap Music Genres and Deviant Behaviors in French-Canadian Adolescents", *Journal of Youth And Adolescence* 33.2 (2004): 113–114.
9. Christopher M. Jones, "Hip-Hop Quebec: Self and Synthesis," *Popular Music and Society* 34.2 (2011): 179.
10. Jones, "Hip-Hop Quebec: Self and Synthesis," 192.
11. Mathieu Saladin, "Yéyé Covers or the Keynote to a Societal Adaptation," in *Made in France*, Jerôme Guibert and Catherine Rudent, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 23.
12. This was said by Vallée in his profile for the *Directors Guild of America Quarterly Magazine*. See Steve Challogan, "Champion of the Disenfranchised," *Directors Guild of America Quarterly* (summer 2019): 5.
13. Challogan, "Champion of the Disenfranchised," 5.
14. Helen Farajdi, "Sophie Bédard Marcotte : le cinéma comme exploration des possibles," Ici Télé: blogue cinéma (January 2020), https://ici.radio-canada.ca/tele/cinema/blogue/1473817/sophie-bedard-marcotte-le-cinema-comme-exploration-des-possibles-la-tea-time-quebecois (last accessed 28 January 2026). Author's translation.
15. This was recounted by Dolan in an interview with *Vanity Fair*. See Derek Blasberg, "How *Titanic* Changed Director Xavier Dolan's Life," *Vanity Fair*, https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/11/director-xavier-dolan-on-titanic (last accessed 20 June 2024).

16. Said by Dolan in an interview for the *Little White Lies* online journal. See Sophie Monks-Kaufman, "Xavier Dolan: 'I've Never Experienced Love as Something Calm and Tender'," *Little White Lies*, https://lwlies.com/interviews/xavier-dolan-mommy/ (last accessed 20 June 2024).
17. As defined by Mercédès Baillargeon, "Romantic Disillusionment, (Dis)Identification, and the Sublimation of National Identity in Québec's 'New Wave': *Heartbeats* by Xavier Dolan and *Night nº1* by Anne Émond," *Quebec Studies* no. 57 (2019): 216.
18. Barry Keith Grant, *The Hollywood Film Musical* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 2–3.
19. Grant, *The Hollywood Film Musical,* 3.
20. Michael Bull, "The Audio Visual iPod," in *The Sound Studies Reader*, Jonathan Sterne, ed. (London: Routledge, 2012), 198.
21. Shuhei Hosokawa, "The Walkman Effect," *Popular Music* 4.1 (January 1984): 182.
22. Hosokawa, "The Walkman Effect," 176.
23. Hosokawa, "The Walkman Effect," 176.
24. Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, *Personal Stereo* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 78.
25. It is worth acknowledging the unique case of *Maria Chapdelaine*, which demonstrates a transnational exchange of a Québécois story: it was first a novel by a French author, Louis Hémon, set in Québec, and had many notable adaptations in France (Julien Duvivier, 1934, and Marc Allegret, 1950) and in Québec (Gilles Carle, 1984, and Sébastien Pilote, 2021).
26. Scott MacKenzie, *Screening Québec: Québécois Moving Images, National Identity, and The Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 17.
27. Baillargeon, "Romantic Disillusionment," 172.
28. Baillargeon, "Romantic Disillusionment," 173.
29. Mercédès Baillargeon, "Cinéma indé et esthétique de l'ennui dans le renouveau du cinéma québécois," *Contemporary French Civilization* 44.2–3 (2019): 216.
30. Baillargeon, "Cinéma indé et esthétique de l'ennui," 216.
31. Baillargeon, "Romantic Disillusionment," 172.
32. Jean Baudrillard, *America* (London: Verso Books, 2010), 28.
33. Louis Dupont, "*L'Américanité* in Quebec in the 1980s: Political and Cultural Considerations of an Emerging Discourse," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 25.1 (1995): 30.
34. Éloïse Brière, "Langue d'écriture et transculture : le cas des Francophones des Amériques," *Québec Studies* no. 33 (2002): 141.
35. Yvan Lamonde, "Américanité et américanisation. essai de mise au point," *Globe* 7.2 (2004): 29.
36. Lamonde, "Américanité et Américanisation," 29.
37. René-Jean Raveault, *Incommunicable américanité* (Chicoutimi: J.-M. Tremblay, 2004), 40–41.
38. Jean Morency and Jimmy Thibeault, "Les fictions de la franco-américanité", *Québec Studies* no. 53 (2012): 3.
39. Michael Bull, *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and Urban Experience* (London: Routledge, 2015), 32.
40. Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 61.
41. Karine Bertrand, "De Gilles Groulx à Jean-Marc Vallée: transnationalisme, américanité et territoire dans le cinéma québécois", *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 49.1 (2019): 81.
42. Robert Schwartzwald, *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press. 2015), 99–100.

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