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Ursula Mathis-Moser, Günter Bischof (dirs.)

Acadians and Cajuns. The Politics and Culture of French Minorities in North America

Acadiens et Cajuns. Politique et culture de minorités francophones en Amérique du Nord

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Introduction – Avant-propos

The Canadian Studies Centre at the University of Innsbruck and CenterAustria at the University of New Orleans, supported by the International Association of Acadian Studies and the Institute of Acadian Studies of the University of Moncton, jointly organized the symposium "Acadians and Cajuns. The Politics and Culture of French Minorities in North America" that was held in Innsbruck, Austria, on September 6 and 7, 2007. This symposium on the Acadians of eastern Maritime Canada and the Cajuns of southern Louisiana fit well into the long tradition of exchanges across the Atlantic, which form part of the partnership agenda between the University of Innsbruck and the University of New Orleans, starting in February 1982 with a first international conference on federalism. The lively scholarly meeting of September 2007, under the auspices of Lieutenant Governor Herménégilde Chiasson from New Brunswick, accomplished the remarkable task of questioning some of the old mythologies about Cajuns and Acadians. On neutral Austrian terrain, the entire proceedings were conducted in English or French, whatever the speaker's preference, and the same holds true for the proceedings of the symposium published in this volume.

French émigrés to Acadie, the Maritime provinces of today's Canada, which were part of France's burgeoning North American empire in the early 17th century, are the starting point of our journey through the comparative history of two North American French speaking minorities. These French émigrés, of course, were part of a much larger transatlantic migration from Europe to the Americas, which Harvard historian Bernard Bailyn has appropriately called "the peopling of America".[1] In the 17th and 18th centuries the European powers France and Great Britain vied for a global hegemonic position in the world.[2] As a result of that interminable struggle to improve their imperial positions in North America, the Protestant British prevailed in the mid-18th century and displaced the Catholic inhabitants of the French maritime provinces. Yale historian John Mack Faragher has recently called this expulsion, in 20th-century diction, an "ethnic cleansing", with the ugly subtext of torture, murder, rape, land theft, and cultural homogenization as part of that process.[3] The "Cajuns" of South Louisiana were part of the diaspora of the displaced Acadians.

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1 Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1986.

2 David B. Abernathy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance: European Overseas Empires 1414-1980*, New Haven (CT), Yale University Press, 2000.

3 John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2005.

The starting point of the present volume is Canadian historian Maurice Basque's (University of Moncton) critical reflection on the terms "Acadiens", "Cadiens", and "Cajuns", which for most people are interchangeable words and supposed to describe the same identities with regional variations depending on the Acadian or Louisiana context. Recent scholarship, however, has shed a new light on these identities and proposes that today's Acadian identity found in the Atlantic Provinces of Canada is very different from the Cadien and Cajun identities that are intimately linked to the history of Louisiana. By way of an introduction M. Basque presents the two dominant visions of Acadian identity: the genealogical, "virtual" one and the one based on today's realities and contemporary Acadian society. He discusses recent studies that deal with these complexities and focus on the use of French as a possible marker of the three identities; however, M. Basque also makes the point that popular discourse is far from integrating these scholarly insights.

The chapter "History and Politics" opens with historical perspectives. In her endeavour to adequately describe what Benedict Anderson[4] has called "an imagined community", German historian Ursula Lehmkuhl (John F. Kennedy Institute of North American Studies, Free University of Berlin) combines three approaches to Acadian history: The first one subdivides Acadian history into the time before deportation and after, stressing how the entire trajectory of Acadian history and memory is defined by the traumatic expulsion of the French settlers from Acadie in 1755. The second approach takes the dominant metropolitan power as a criterion of subdivision whereas the third one, in line with Naomi Griffiths, focuses on such critical time-space constellations as the 1680s, the 1730s, 1748–55, or 1755–84. U. Lehmkuhl concludes by discussing Acadian history in the light of cultural encounters, of cultural transfer and transculturality, and of colonial governance, which induced Acadians to develop a self-help system based on extended family networks. In so doing she takes up contemporary concepts of how to describe cultures in contact and makes a remarkable contribution to a new interpretation of Acadian history.

With Fitzhugh Brundage's (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) contribution the reader's attention is drawn to Louisiana and the construction of "authenticity". F. Brundage concentrates on three champions of the Cajun identity revival in Louisiana who "exploited" Acadian memory and culture, partly in reaction to urban Creoles, who looked down upon the poor rural Cajuns. American poet William Wadsworth Longfellow's heroic poem "Evangeline" played a pivotal role in Acadian mythology, an account embraced by the Acadian elites who were confronted with assimilation to Anglo life in Louisiana. From the 1920s to the 1960s, Susan Evangeline Walker Anding, Dudley LeBlanc, and Louise Olivier became

[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London–New York, Verso, ²1991.

dedicated Cajun boosters and public activists that led the crusade for the revival of Cajun identity through the preservation of language and folklore. An Association of Louisiana Acadians was formed; "pilgrimages" were organized to the Canadian Maritimes; the language was revived, and the historical narrative of Acadian "victimhood" was codified. The romance of cultural authenticity was reaffirmed and cultural modernity rejected: The Cajuns were neither Southerners nor Americans but exiles in the American South.

In his paper American political scientist Charles Hadley (University of New Orleans) analyzes the Cajuns' role in Louisiana politics: The colorful four-time Cajun Governor Edwin Edwards dominated Louisiana politics from 1972; the recent Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (2003–2007) also hails from "Acadiana", the Cajun provinces of South Louisiana, as did long-term U.S. Senator John Breaux. U.S. Senator Allen J. Ellender from Acadiana was the longest serving Cajun politician in Washington after World War II. Prior to this recent rise of Cajun politicians, Catholic South Louisiana Cajun and French-Creole influences were more subtle. The Louisiana Constitution of 1812 was still handwritten in French; the Constitution of 1845 called for an education system in both English and French, and debates in the Louisiana House of Representatives were still conducted in French. The Civil War and Reconstruction, however, destroyed the French influence. The Constitution of 1879, e.g., mandated that in public schools students be taught exclusively in English, which initiated the decline of French in Louisiana. Nevertheless, Cajuns are clearly not *a quantité négligeable* in Louisiana politics but have contributed significantly to its political culture.

Chapter III of the proceedings, "Language and Literature", continues in the vein of questioning commonly held topoi, concentrating on questions of linguistic influence and reciprocal perceptions of "the Other" in literary texts. American linguist Tom Klingler (Tulane University) argues that even today the pervasive myth of Acadian origins continues to shape views of Louisiana francophone history and culture, despite evidence from the historical records that Acadians were only one of several groups that played a role in forging a new ethnic group known today as Cajuns. The lexical relationship of the words *Cajun* and *Acadian* explains why it is so difficult to move beyond the "Acadian myth" although Louisiana French has only few affinities with the French spoken in the Maritime provinces of Canada. T. Klingler concludes with the assumption that Louisiana French is the heterogeneous result of a complex process of language contact that had many components, only one of which was the French of the Acadian exiles. Moreover T. Klingler also shatters another myth by pleading for a more generic use of the term "Louisiana French".

German linguist Ingrid Neumannn-Holzschuh (University of Regensburg), for her part, also deconstructs the "Acadian myth" although she does so from a slightly different perspective. Looking at linguistic patterns in the French idioms of Canada and Louisiana, she sees the varieties of Acadian French as an interlinguistic continuum based on the structural space which separates them. In this hypothetical continuum, Cajun French occupies a special position: Since in southern Louisiana Acadian French has always been in close contact with other varieties of French, some of the characteristic Acadian features have either been lost or only survived in specific areas. Linguistically speaking, I. Neumann-Holzschuh states that Cajun French thus appears to be the most distant "cousin" within the family of Acadian French varieties.

The image of the distant cousin is also reflected in literary texts, at least as far as the works of Acadian authors are concerned. Canadian literary historian and critic Raoul Boudreau (University of Moncton) explores hitherto untrodden paths when analyzing the literary exchanges between writers and literary institutions in Louisiana and Acadie. After examining the complexities of editorial exchanges between Louisiana and Acadie and paying tribute to such Louisiana authors as Barry Ancelet or Zachary Richard, R. Boudreau focuses on the few relevant representations of Louisiana in recent Acadian texts. After "la grande dame" of Acadian literature, Antonine Maillet, who depicted Louisiana as a source of Acadian linguistic and cultural heritage, as a place where traditions are being preserved, Gérald Leblanc, Dyane Léger, and Rose Després considered Louisiana the emblem of liberty and sensuality, and a powerful stimulant to creative writing. R. Boudreau then turns to the literary institutions of France which quite obviously attach more importance to Louisiana than to Acadie, being quite obviously more fascinated by the exotic flavour of texts belonging to a southern "diaspora" than by those evolving in the modern French-speaking society of today's Acadie.

Canadian literary historian and critic Fançois Paré's contribution (University of Waterloo) completes this section with a paper on Michel Roy's essay *L'Acadie perdue* (1979), which he interprets as a starting point for the construction of a continental Acadian identity that places nomadism and urban itinerancy at its core. If Roy condemned the narrow nationalism of the traditional Acadian elite, he at the same time tried to shift the identity debate in Acadia from the search of genealogical roots to the deployment of an open territoriality. Although Roy failed to see the importance of urban Moncton, his essay had an enormous impact on authors of the Moncton area such as Gérald Leblanc or Herménégilde Chiasson. It encouraged them to explore the multiple facets of "Americanness", to establish contacts with the American literary scene and the counter-cultural movement. Identity was furthermore experienced as an openness for the virtuality of landscapes, and poetry became its privileged medium of expression. Acadian history,

F. Paré concludes, thus represents a key paradigm in the cultural geography of small nations.

Chapter IV addresses “Popular Culture”, in particular music and cuisine. In his contribution American anthropologist and ethnographer John Laudun (University of Louisiana, Lafayette) analyzes Cajun foodways and “gumbo on our minds” and thus tells us a great deal about cultural patterns. Louisianians are little inclined to accept the notions of African and Asian influences in their cuisine, yet it is the trope “gumbo” that defines South Louisiana food. At the same time J. Laudun warns against the “essentialization of difference” that the gumbo trope might imply. A blend of different ingredients, Cajun foodways are hybrid, and J. Laudun goes to great lengths to demonstrate how the so-called “gumbo lines” in South Louisiana, the “seafood line”, the “smoke line”, and “garlic line”, are themselves intersected by other vectors. The new ethnography stresses micro systems and that is how Cajun foodways have to be understood. Even the old folk wisdom that “first you make the roux” is not true. Early gumbo was served on corn mush; only when rice came to Louisiana agriculture did it become the staple of choice. Native Americans used to “brown” corn as their “roux” and, without question, Louisiana cuisine has also seen many West African influences. “Native American parching, European roasting, and West African frying” – far from defining the Cajuns’ essential difference, gumbo has come to symbolize that there has always been a high degree of cultural integration in the South even when social segregation, as J. Laudun puts it, was the law of the land.

The contributions of British music lecturer, conductor, and performer Jeanette Gallant (University of Oxford) and of folklorist and historian Ronald Labelle (University of Moncton) round off the present volume. They bring us back to the North and illustrate the changing face of the Acadian folk song from the 1880s to the present day. While J. Gallant argues that the traditional Acadian folksong has played an important role in upholding national pride and that it has even contributed to the Acadians being accepted as a linguistic minority within the Canadian federal state, she also deplores that traditional Acadian music has gradually lost its social function and risks becoming a pure artefact. Ronald Labelle takes up this line of argument and explains why traditional music is still marginalized in Acadie despite the fact that Acadian folksingers are internationally acclaimed at World Music festivals: For “moral” reasons, the educated elite of the early 20th century preferred newly composed patriotic songs to traditional folksongs while at the same time new musical styles, such as Country and Western, filled the air. By the mid-century chansonniers like Édith Butler appeared on the scene and popularized folksongs, and in the 1970s the band 1755 combined folksong with Country, Bluegrass, and Rock. A real folk revival, however, did not take place until 1990

and was limited to smaller communities in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island rather than New Brunswick. The struggle against oblivion still goes on.

If the essays assembled in this volume challenge myths and make a strong plea for a more sophisticated understanding of the two French-speaking minorities in North America, if the tenor of most of them is a reconsideration of established topoi or a reinterpretation of facts and data in the light of current scholarly findings, this introduction would be incomplete if the cultural events that accompanied the symposium were not mentioned. The conference was concluded with film screenings of Herménégilde Chiasson's 1995 documentary *L'Acadie retrouvée* and Glen Pitre's romantic feature film *Belizaire the Cajun* (1986), both of them premieres in Austria. Both H. Chiasson and G. Pitre – with his wife and collaborator Michelle Benoît – were present to discuss the nature of Acadian and Cajun film-making on a panel. All three of them are multi-talented artists who also write fiction and/or poetry.

G. Pitre stressed that Cajun film-makers have an obligation to tell the story of the retreating Louisiana coastline to the world, as he did in a number of post-Katrina documentaries (*Hurricane on the Bayou*, 2006; *American Creole*, 2006). H. Chiasson, the current Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, gave a reading of poetry in English, French, and German. Since the publication of his first volume of poems, *Mourir à Scoudouc* (1974), he has not ceased to create, recreate and transform what is Acadie's identity today. He does so in many ways: as a poet, a dramatist, a university teacher, and a film-maker; as an artist, a diplomat, and a politician. It is to him that we owe the reproductions of a series of impressive works of art and it is with his permission that we include extracts from his most recent volumes of poetry, *BéatitudeS* and *Beatitudes*, both published in 2007, as chapter openings.

The Canadian Studies Centre at the University of Innsbruck and CenterAustria at the University of New Orleans organized the symposium. Both these centres are small units but active bodies in sponsoring and encouraging innovative international discourses at their respective universities. This conference was part of their tenth anniversary celebrations. Both centres are grateful for the support they received from the Institute of Acadian Studies of the University of Moncton and the International Association of Acadian Studies. They are grateful for the enormous help from their respective hard-working staffs and the generous financial support they received from many sides.

At the Canadian Studies Centre, Julia Stiebellehner and Ingrid Niederwieser, the two office coordinators, did a wonderful job preparing the conference, organizing the academic and cultural events, and looking after the participants' well-being in

Innsbruck. They were supported by Kathrin Fleisch, Sonja Schöpf, Paula Weitlaner, and webmaster Mark Löffler. The Canadian Studies Centre's special thanks go to Mathias Schennach, the director of the International Relations Office, to the Public Relations Office, and to the Service Centre of the Faculty of Theology. The Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Literatures, Hans Moser, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Jozef Niewiadomski, the Vice-Rector for Research, Tilmann Märk, and both the outgoing Rector Manfried Gantner as well as the current Rector Karlheinz Töchterle have greatly supported the symposium and the publication of the proceedings.

At CenterAustria Gertraud Griessner, the office coordinator, and webmaster Hannes Richter were particularly helpful in the early organization phase. Sandra Scherl and Marion Wieser, two University of Innsbruck fellows at CenterAustria, also lent a helping hand, as did Ellen Palli, Margaret Davidson-Steininger, and Franz Mathis in Innsbruck. Robert L. Dupont, outgoing Dean of Metropolitan College, and Susan Krantz, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at UNO also helped guide the project and approved UNO's financial contributions to the symposium and book production. UNO's Chancellor Timothy Ryan always was and still is a strong supporter of our partnership agenda.

Financing international conferences is always a costly affair. Thankfully there are institutions that see the necessity for and the intellectual benefits of such a scholarly endeavour. Financial support came from the Canadian Studies Centre's regular funding, the Canadian Government – we would like to express our particular gratitude to Ambassador Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Jennifer May, and Roswitha Fritscher –, the Association of Canadian Studies in the German-Speaking Countries, the University of Innsbruck, the UNO, the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation, the Österreichische Forschungsgemeinschaft, and the Federal Ministry of Science, which has been giving special grants through the Austrian Academic Exchange Service. Ambassador Emil Brix, director of cultural programs in the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also helped with a grant and his advice. Barbara Weitgruber, Christoph Ramoser, Josef Leidenfrost, Alois Söhn, Florian Gerhardus, Eugen Stark, and Wolfgang Stoiber were all generous with their help and encouragement. The American Embassy in Austria provided a grant to support the screening of a Cajun film in Innsbruck – we would like to thank Ambassador Susan McCaw and Karin Schmid-Gerlich from the Embassy's Cultural Division for their help. We equally express our gratitude to Herménégilde Chiasson and the National Film Board of Canada for providing us with an Acadian film and Helmut Groschup for both screenings in the Leokino. We would also like to thank Hilde Zach, Mayor of the City of Innsbruck, and Horst Burmann from the Cultural Office for their hospitality.

As to the publication of the proceedings, financial support came from the UNO, the University of Innsbruck, and the International Association of Acadian Studies – we would especially like to thank Maurice Basque. Last but not least, we are particularly grateful to Doris Eibl for the translations into French, to Sonja Bahn, Hilde Wolfmeyer, Julia Pröll, and Hemma Allemann for proof-reading and corrections, to Birgit Holzner from "*innsbruck* university press" for editorial supervision, and to Ellen and Wolfgang Palli for their excellent layout and formatting of the book.

Without the support of these institutions and the loyalty and friendship of the very special people mentioned above the conference would not have taken place and there would not be a book to present to the public that will hopefully spark off more scholarly discourse on two of the most interesting minorities in North America.

Du 6 au 7 septembre 2007, le Centre d'études canadiennes de l'Université d'Innsbruck et le CenterAustria de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans, soutenus par l'Association internationale des études acadiennes et l'Institut d'études acadiennes de l'Université de Moncton, organisèrent le colloque "Acadiens et Cajuns. Politique et culture de minorités francophones en Amérique du Nord".[5] *En adoptant une perspective comparatiste ce colloque s'inscrivit dans une longue tradition d'échanges transatlantiques qui font partie du programme de partenariat entre l'Université d'Innsbruck et l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans, inauguré en février 1982 avec un colloque sur le fédéralisme. La rencontre scientifique de septembre 2007, qui eut lieu sous les auspices du Lieutenant-gouverneur Herménégilde Chiasson, s'engagea à questionner avec succès quelques-uns des mythes les plus coriaces sur les Cajuns et les Acadiens. Sur "terrain neutre", pour ainsi dire, les communications furent présentées, suivant les préférences des intervenants, soit en français soit en anglais, et ce principe fut également poursuivi pour les actes du colloques.*

L'émigration française en Acadie (les provinces maritimes du Canada actuel), partie intégrante de cette Nouvelle-France naissant au début du 17e siècle, est le point de départ de notre voyage à travers l'histoire de deux minorités francophones en Amérique du Nord. Les émigrés français de l'époque faisaient partie, bien entendu, d'une migration transatlantique plus importante que l'historien Bernard Bailyn (Université d'Havard) taxe si pertinemment de "peopling of the Americas".[6] *Aux 17e et 18e siècles, les grandes puissances européennes, la France et la Grande Bretagne, se disputent la suprématie dans le monde.*[7] *Dans le but d'affermir leurs*

5 Nous remercions Doris Eibl pour la traduction en français.

6 Cf. Bailyn 1986.

7 Cf. Abernathy 2000.

positions impériales en Amérique du Nord, l'interminable conflit entre les deux puissances déboucha, au milieu du 18e siècle, en une victoire des protestants britanniques qui, par la suite, déplacèrent les habitants catholiques des provinces maritimes francophones. Récemment, l'historien John Mack Faragher (Université Yale) désigna cette expulsion comme "ethnic cleansing"[8] et, par l'emploi d'une terminologie propre au 20e siècle, en releva son horrible subtexte, à savoir la torture, le meurtre, le viol, le vol et l'homogénéisation culturelle. Les "Cajuns" de la Louisiane du Sud faisaient partie de la diaspora des Acadiens déplacés.

La première contribution de ce volume, celle de l'historien canadien Maurice Basque (Université de Moncton), analyse l'emploi des termes "Acadiens", "Cadiens" et "Cajuns" qui, pour la plupart des gens, sont interchangeables et renvoient à une seule et même identité avec des variantes régionales dépendant du contexte acadien ou louisianais. Cependant, des recherches récentes démontrent que l'identité de l'Acadie actuelle des provinces maritimes du Canada est profondément différente des identités cadienne et cajun, ces dernières étant profondément liées à l'histoire de la Louisiane. En guise d'introduction, M. Basque présente les deux visions dominantes de l'identité acadienne, l'une généalogique, "virtuelle", l'autre inspirée des réalités actuelles et de la société civile acadienne. Il discute des études récentes portant sur les complexités invoquées et focalise sur l'emploi du français comme un des marqueurs possibles pour les trois identités en question. M. Basque nous avertit, cependant, que le discours populaire est loin d'intégrer ces vues scientifiques.

Le chapitre "Histoire et politique" s'ouvre sur des perspectives historiques. La contribution de l'historienne allemande Ursula Lehmkuhl (John F. Kennedy Institute of North American Studies, Université libre de Berlin) combine trois approches de l'histoire acadienne qui lui permettent d'illustrer ce que Benedict Anderson[9] qualifie de "communauté imaginaire": la première approche divise l'histoire acadienne en une époque d'avant la déportation et d'après, soulignant à quel point l'entière trajectoire de l'histoire et de la mémoire acadiennes est investie du trauma de l'expulsion de l'Acadie des colons français en 1755. La seconde appuie ses subdivisions sur la puissance métropolitaine dominante du moment alors que la troisième, en suivant les prémisses de Naomi Griffiths, focalise sur des constellations spatio-temporelles importantes dont celles des années 1680, 1730, 1748–55 ou 1755–84. U. Lehmkuhl conclut en analysant l'histoire acadienne sous le jour de rencontres culturelles, du transfert culturel et de la transculturalité et enfin sous celui de la gouvernance coloniale. Celle-ci incita les Acadiens à se prendre en charge, à développer un réseau d'aide basé sur des liens de parenté.

8 Cf. Faragher 2005.

9 Anderson ²1991.

Ainsi, en s'appuyant sur des concepts contemporains d'analyse de cultures en contact, U. Lehmkuhl contribue de façon remarquable à une nouvelle interprétation de l'histoire acadienne.

L'étude de Fitzhugh Brundage (Université de la Caroline du Nord, Chapel Hill) se concentre sur la Louisiane et la question de la construction d' "authenticité". F. Brundage renvoie à trois représentants de la relève cajun en Louisiane qui tous puisèrent dans la mémoire et la culture acadiennes, en partie en réaction au dédain des Créoles urbains face à la pauvreté des habitants cajuns. Le poème héroïque "Evangeline" de l'américain William Wadsworth Longfellow jouait un rôle central dans la mythologie acadienne. Menacées d'assimilation à la vie anglaise en Louisiane, les élites acadiennes adoptèrent de bon gré cette légende. Des années 1920 aux années 1940, les activistes Susan Evangeline Walker Anding, Dudley LeBlanc et Louise Olivier se consacrèrent à la cause cajun, prônant une relève de l'identité cajun appuyée sur la préservation de la langue et des traditions populaires. Cette relève mena à la fondation d'une Association of Louisiana Acadians, l'organisation de "pélérinages" dans les provinces maritimes du Canada, la revitalisation de la langue et la codification de la narration historique de la "victime" acadienne. La légende de l'authenticité culturelle fut réaffirmée et toute modernité culturelle réfutée: les Cajuns étaient ni des "Southerners" ni des Américains; ils étaient des exilés dans le Sud américain.

La contribution du politologue Charles D. Hadley (Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans) examine le rôle des Cajuns dans la politique louisianaise: le Cajun Edwin Edwards fut élu gouverneur quatre fois et domina le champ politique à partir de 1972; tout comme John Breaux qui fut sénateur des États-Unis pendant longtemps, la gouverneure Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (2003-2007) vient d'"Acadiana", c'est-à-dire des provinces cajuns du sud de la Louisiane. Le sénateur Allen J. Ellender from Acadiana fut l'homme politique cajun qui a le plus longtemps travaillé à Washington après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Avant cette suite de réussites de nombreux professionnels politiques cajuns, l'influence exercée par les Cajuns et les Franco-Créoles catholiques du Sud de la Louisiane fut plus subtile. La constitution de la Louisiane de 1812 fut encore manuscrite en français; la constitution de 1845 réclama un système scolaire bilingue et les débats du parlement furent tenus en français. Cependant, la guerre civile et la reconstruction abolirent l'influence française. La constitution de 1879, par exemple, décréta que, désormais, les élèves des écoles publiques seraient exclusivement enseignés en anglais, ce qui engendra le déclin du français en Louisiane. Il n'empêche que, dans leur ensemble, les Cajuns ont contribué de manière significative à la culture politique de la Louisiane.

Le troisième chapitre, "Langue et littérature", relance la mise en question de certains lieux communs et pose des questions portant sur l'influence linguistique et les perceptions mutuelles, c'est-à-dire les perceptions de " l'Autre" dans des textes littéraires. Le linguiste américain Tom Klingler (Université Tulane) démontre que le mythe omniprésent des origines acadiennes continue, de nos jours même, à marquer la perception de l'histoire et de la culture de la Louisiane francophone, et cela malgré les documents historiques mettant en évidence que plusieurs autres groupes jouèrent un rôle important dans la constitution de cette nouvelle communauté ethnique que nous appelons aujourd'hui les Cajuns. La parenté lexicale des notions Cajun *et* Acadien *explique pourquoi il est si difficile de surmonter le "mythe acadien", et cela malgré le fait que les affinités avec le français parlé dans les provinces maritimes du Canada sont minimes. En conclusion, T. Klingler avance que la Louisiane française est le résultat hétérogène d'un processus complexe de contact linguistique investi de nombreux éléments dont le français des Acadiens exilés. De plus, T. Klingler s'attaque à un autre mythe encore en revendiquant l'emploi plus générique de l'expression "Louisiana French".*

La linguiste Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh (Université de Regensburg), de son côté, déconstruit, elle aussi, le "mythe acadien" mais d'une perspective quelque peu différente. Examinant des schémas caractéristiques des idiomes français du Canada et de la Louisiane, elle vient à concevoir les variétés du français acadien comme une suite interlinguistique basée sur l'espace structurel qui les sépare. Dans ce continuum hypothétique, le français cajun occupe une place spéciale: étant donné que le français acadien du sud de la Louisiane fut toujours en contact avec d'autres variétés du français, quelques particularités proprement acadiennes furent perdues ou ne survécurent que dans des régions spécifiques. I. Neumann-Holzschuh souligne que, d'un point de vue linguistique, le français cajun est le "cousin" le plus lointain dans la famille des variétés du français acadien.

L'image du cousin lointain, on la retrouve également dans des textes littéraires, en tout cas dans ceux d'auteurs acadiens. Le chercheur canadien en littérature Raoul Boudreau (Université de Moncton) explore des terrains inconnus en analysant les échanges littéraires entre des écrivains et institutions d'Acadie et de Louisiane. Examinant d'abord les complexités des échanges entre l'Acadie et la Louisiane au niveau de l'édition et rendant hommage à des auteurs louisianais tels que Barry Ancelet ou Zachary Richard, R. Boudreau focalise par la suite sur les quelques représentations importantes de la Louisiane dans la littérature acadienne actuelle. Après "la grande dame" de la littérature acadienne, Antonine Maillet, pour qui la Louisiane est la source du patrimoine acadien linguistique et culturel, un lieu aussi où les traditions furent préservées, Gérald Leblanc, Dyane Léger et Rose Després conçoivent une Louisiane emblème de liberté et de sensualité, inspiratrice puissante et muse littéraire. R. Boudreau passe alors aux

institutions littéraires de la France qui, pour des raisons d'exotisme littéraire, s'intéresse plus aux textes émergeant de la diaspora de la Louisiane qu'à ceux en français moderne de l'Acadie contemporaine.

En dernière contribution à ce chapitre, le chercheur canadien en littérature François Paré (Université de Waterloo) propose une analyse de l'essai L'Acadie perdue *(1979) de Michel Roy. Selon F. Paré, cet essai constitue le point de départ de la construction d'une identité acadienne continentale au cœur de laquelle figurent le nomadisme et le vagabondage urbain. Tout en condamnant le nationalisme borné de l'élite acadienne traditionnelle, Roy s'efforce de déplacer le débat identitaire acadien de la recherche des racines généalogiques vers le déploiement d'une territorialité ouverte. Même si Roy n'arriva pas à voir l'importance de l'urbanité de Moncton, son essai influença largement les auteurs de la région de Moncton, dont Gérald Leblanc et Herménégilde Chiasson. Il les encouragea à explorer les multiples facettes de " l'américanité", à entrer en contact avec la scène littéraire américaine et la contre-culture. L'identité fut vécue désormais comme une ouverture à la virtualité des paysages et la poésie devint son mode d'expression privilégié. F. Paré conclut en soulignant que l'histoire acadienne représente un paradigme clé dans la géographie culturelle des petites nations.*

Le quatrième chapitre est consacré à la "Culture populaire" et plus particulièrement à la musique et à la cuisine. La contribution de l'anthropologue et ethnographe américain John Laudun (Université de la Louisiane, Lafayette) analyse les habitudes alimentaires cajuns et "gumbo on our minds" et, par cette voie, élucide des spécificités culturelles. Généralement, les Louisianais réfutent l'idée d'influences africaines ou asiatiques dans leur cuisine mais dans le cas du "gumbo" il y a unanimité: ce trope paraît apte à définir la cuisine de la Louisiane du sud. En même temps, J. Laudun nous avertit des dangers de "l'essentialisation de la différence" impliquée par le trope de "gumbo". Dans la mesure où les habitudes alimentaires cajuns sont un mélange de différents ingrédients, elles méritent d'être qualifiées d'hybrides, et J. Laudun démontre comment lesdites "gumbo lines" dans le sud de la Louisiane, la "seafood line" (fruits de mer), la "smoke line" (aliments fumés) et la "garlic line" (à base d'ail), sont elles-mêmes croisées par d'autres vecteurs. La nouvelle ethnographie s'intéresse plus particulièrement à l'étude de micro-systèmes, et c'est dans ce sens qu'il s'agit de comprendre la portée signifiante des habitudes alimentaires cajuns. Même si le folklore dit que "first you make the roux", ceci n'est pas correct. Dans les temps, gumbo fut servi avec de la broye; lorsque le riz fut introduit en Louisiane, celui-ci devint un aliment de base pour le gumbo; les Amérindiens, de leur côté–, avaient l'habitude de rissoler/frire le maïs pour le transformer en "roux", et il est certain que la cuisine louisianaise subit également l'influence de l'Afrique de l'ouest. "Native American parching, European roasting, and West African frying": loin de définir la différence essentielle des

Cajuns, gumbo finit par représenter l'importance de l'intégration culturelle dans le Sud et cela même aux pires moments de la ségrégation.

Les contributions de Jeanette Gallant (Université d'Oxford), professeure de musique, chef d'orchestre et chanteuse, et de Roland Labelle (Université de Moncton), folkloriste et historien, complètent le présent volume. Elles nous ramènent dans le Nord et présentent l'évolution de la chanson populaire acadienne des années 1880 à nos jours. Tout en démontrant que la chanson acadienne traditionnelle joua un rôle important pour le maintien de la fierté nationale et contribua à l'acceptation des Acadiens comme minorité linguistique à l'intérieur de la fédération canadienne, J. Gallant déplore que la musique acadienne traditionnelle ait graduellement perdu sa fonction sociale et risque de devenir un pur artefact. Suivant les propos de J. Gallant, Ronald Labelle explique pourquoi la musique traditionnelle reste marginalisée en Acadie et cela malgré le succès international de nombreux chanteurs acadiens, notamment à l'occasion de festivals de world music. Pour des raisons "morales", l'élite intellectuelle du début du 20e siècle préférait les chansons patriotiques nouvellement composées aux chansons populaires traditionnelles, alors que, au même moment, des styles nouveaux comme le country and western s'imposaient. Au milieu du siècle, des chansonniers comme Édith Butler parurent sur scène et contribuèrent au succès de la chanson populaire, et dans les années 1970, le groupe 1755 combina la chanson populaire avec le country, le bluegrass et le rock. Cependant, une vraie relève de la chanson populaire n'eut lieu qu'en 1990 et se limita à des petites communautés en Nouvelle-Écosse et sur l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard; elle n'atteignit pas le Nouveau-Brunswick. La lutte contre l'oubli continue.

Les essais rassemblés dans ce volume remettent en cause certains mythes et revendiquent une compréhension plus sophistiquée des deux minorités francophones en Amérique du Nord. La plupart des contributions insistent à ce que l'on reconsidère les topiques établis ou exigent une réinterprétation des faits et documents en tenant compte de l'état actuel de la recherche. Cependant, cet avant-propos serait incomplet si les événements culturels ayant accompagné le symposium passaient sous silence. Le colloque se termina par les projections d'abord du documentaire L'Acadie retrouvée *(19995) d'Herménégilde Chiasson et du long métrage de fiction* Belizaire the Cajun *(1986) de Glen Pitre, deux premières en Autriche. Lors d'une table ronde, H. Chiasson, G. Pitre et Michelle Benoît, femme et collaboratrice de ce dernier, discutèrent les conditions de la production cinématographique acadienne et cajun. D'ailleurs, tous les trois excellent dans plusieurs domaines artistiques et sont aussi écrivains et/ou poètes.*

G. Pitre souligna que les réalisateurs cajuns avaient l'obligation de dire l'histoire du recul de la côte louisianaise, qu'il raconta, de son côté, dans plusieurs docu-

*mentaires réalisés après Katrina (*Hurricane on the Bayou*, 2006;* American Creole*, 2006). Herménégilde Chiasson, l'actuel Lieutenant-gouverneur du Nouveau-Brunswick, fit une lecture de ses poèmes en anglais, en français et en allemand. Depuis la publication de son premier recueil de poèmes,* Mourir à Scoudouc *(1974), il n'a jamais arrêté de travailler à créer, à recréer et à transformer l'identité acadienne de nos jours: en tant que poète, dramaturge, professeur d'université et réalisateur; en tant qu'artiste, diplomate et homme politique. C'est grâce à sa généreuse collaboration que nous pouvons inclure à ce volume les reproductions d'une série d'œuvres d'art fort impressionnante ainsi que quelques extraits de ses derniers recueils de poèmes,* BéatitudeS *et* Beatitudes*, tous les deux publiés en 2007, qui figurent en début de chaque chapitre.*

Le Centre d'études canadiennes de l'Université d'Innsbruck et le CenterAustria de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans ont co-organisé ce colloque. Malgré leur petite taille, les deux centres travaillent à encourager les discours internationaux et innovateurs dans leurs universités respectives et les soutiennent financièrement. Ce colloque fit partie des festivités organisées à l'occasion de leur dixième anniversaire. Les deux centres sont très reconnaissants de l'aide de la part de l'Institut d'études acadiennes de l'Université de Moncton et de l'Association internationale des études acadiennes. Ils sont très reconnaissants de l'aide de leurs collaborateurs infatigables et du généreux support financier de tous les côtés.

Julia Stiebellehner et Ingrid Niederwieser du Centre d'études canadiennes de l'Université d'Innsbruck firent un travail magnifique, préparant la conférence, organisant les événements académiques et culturels et faisant tout leur possible pour assurer le bien-être des participants à Innsbruck. Elles furent soutenues par Kathrin Fleisch, Sonja Schöpf, Paula Weitlaner et le webmestre Mark Löffler. Le Centre d'études canadiennes remercie Mathias Schennach, le directeur du Bureau de relations internationales, le Bureau de relations publiques et le Bureau de la faculté de théologie. Un grand merci également au doyen de la faculté des langues et littératures, Hans Moser, au doyen de la faculté de théologie, Jozef Niewiadomski, au vice-recteur pour la recherche, Tilmann Märk, et à l'ancien recteur Manfried Ganter ainsi qu'à son successeur Karlheinz Töchterle pour avoir si généreusement soutenu le colloque et la publication des actes.

Gertraud Griessner, secrétaire du CenterAustria, et le webmestre Hannes Richter nous épaulèrent, notamment au début de la phase d'organisation. Sandra Scherl et Marion Wieser, en 2007 en programme d'échange à l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans, ainsi que Ellen Palli, Margaret Davidson-Steininger et Franz Mathis à Innsbruck, nous ont aidés à maints égards. Robert L. Dupont, l'ancien doyen du Metropolitan College, et Susan Krantz, doyenne du Collège des arts libéraux de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans, nous accordèrent leurs précieux conseils et

approuvèrent le support financier pour le colloque et la publication de la part de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans. Le chancelier Timothey Ryan soutient depuis toujours le programme de partenariat entre les deux universités.

Il est invariablement difficile de financer des colloques. Heureusement, il y a des institutions qui comprennent leur nécessité et saisissent leur bénéfice intellectuel. Le colloque fut en partie financé grâce aux fonds réguliers du Centre d'études canadiennes, au soutien du Gouvernement du Canada – nous tenons à remercier l'ambassadrice Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Jennifer May et Roswitha Fritscher –, de l'Association d'études canadiennes dans les pays de langue allemande, de l'Université d'Innsbruck, de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans, de l'Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation, de la Österreichische Forschungsgemeinschaft et du Ministère fédéral des sciences qui nous accorda des subventions supplémentaires par le Service d'échange académique autrichien. Nous remercions l'ambassadeur Emil Brix, directeur des programmes culturels au Ministère des affaires étrangères, pour ses précieux conseils et son soutien financier. Un grand merci à Barbara Weitgruber, Christoph Ramoser, Josef Leidenfrost, Alois Söhn, Florian Gerhardus, Eugen Stark et Wolfang Stoiber pour leur aide et les mots d'encouragement. L'ambassade des États-Unis à Vienne nous donna une subvention pour la projection d'un film cajun – nous remercions l'ambassadrice Susan McCaw et Karin Schmid-Gerlich. De même nous tenons à dire merci à Herménégilde Chiasson et à l'Office national du film du Canada pour avoir mis à notre disposition un film acadien et à Helmut Groschup pour les deux projections au Leokino. Un grand merci également à Hilde Zach, la maire d'Innsbruck, et à Horst Burmann de l'Office culturel de la ville d'Innsbruck pour leur hospitalité.

*Pour ce qui est de la publication des actes, elle fut financée grâce au soutien de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans, de l'Université d'Innsbruck et de l'Association internationale des études acadiennes, et nous remercions particulièrement Maurice Basque. Enfin merci à Doris Eibl pour les traductions en français, à Sonja Bahn, Hilde Wolfmeyer, Julia Pröll et Hemma Allemann pour les corrections et le travail rédactionnel, à Birgit Holzner de l' "*innsbruck *university press" pour la supervision et à Ellen et Wolfgang Palli pour la parfaite mise en page de ce livre.*

Sans le support des institutions et l'amitié loyale de toutes les personnes mentionnées, la conférence n'aurait pas eu lieu et le livre n'aurait pas vu le jour. Nous espérons que ce livre engendrera d'autres discours scientifiques sur deux des plus fascinantes minorités en Amérique du Nord.

Ursula Mathis-Moser, Canadian Studies Centre, University of Innsbruck
Günter Bischof, CenterAustria, University of New Orleans

By Way of an Introduction
En guise d'introduction

ceux qui échafaudent de vastes systèmes en vue de
justifier une fois pour toutes la nécessité et le besoin des rêves
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Herménégilde Chiasson, *BéatitudeS*.
Sudbury, Prise de parole, 2007, 48.

those who build vast systems of scaffolds to justify
once and for all the need for dreams and ideas in the face of
work's brutal devotion to deny the most fundamental rights
of conscience, memory, and beauty

Herménégilde Chiasson, *Beatitudes*.
Fredericton, Goose Lane Edition, 2007, 44.

Herménégilde Chiasson,
Soirs d'hiver

Acadiens, Cadiens et Cajuns: identités communes ou distinctes?[1]

Maurice Basque
Université de Moncton

Abstract

For most people, Acadians, *Cadiens* and Cajuns are interchangeable words that have the same meaning since they are supposed to describe the same identities with regional variations depending on the Acadian or Louisiana context. Recent scholarship has shed a new light on the historical evolution of those identities and proposes that the Acadian identity found mostly in the Atlantic Provinces of Canada is very different from the Cadien and Cajun identities that are intimately linked to the history of Louisiana. This paper examines how recent studies present the complexities of this question by focusing, among other markers of identity, on the important role played by the French language in the definition of what makes an Acadian or a Cajun. As will be argued, competing definitions of Acadian and Cajun identities are not very well integrated in the popular discourse.

Acadiens, Cadiens et Cajuns. Pour plusieurs, ces mots sont des synonymes, des termes interchangeables qui réfèrent à ce qui est communément appelé la "grande famille acadienne" ou diaspora acadienne, et qui serait composée, sans pour autant qu'une étude sérieuse ait jamais été effectuée afin de vérifier cette affirmation,[2] de quelques millions de personnes. Cependant, plusieurs chercheurs ont établi des distinctions entre Acadiens, Cadiens et Cajuns et l'objectif de ce texte est de les présenter et de les comparer brièvement. La grande majorité de ces chercheurs proviennent de la Louisiane et du Québec, car très peu de chercheurs en Acadie de l'Atlantique[3] se sont penchés sur une lecture comparative

[1] Ce texte est une version modifiée d'une communication présentée au colloque international *Acadiens et Cajuns. Politique et culture de minorités francophones en Amérique du Nord*. Ce colloque, organisé par le Centre d'études canadiennes de l'Université d'Innsbruck et le CenterAustria de la University of New Orleans, a eu lieu à Innsbruck les 6 et 7 septembre 2007.

[2] Joseph Yvon Thériault, *Faire société. Société civile et espaces francophones*, Sudbury, Prise de Parole, 2007, 106. Le regretté poète acadien Gérald Leblanc était très critique de ces estimations qu'il jugeait comme appartenant à ce que l'on pourrait qualifier de délire démographique. Cf. Herménégilde Chiasson, "Visions de Gérald", in: *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 30, 7 (2007), 12.

[3] L'Acadie de l'Atlantique correspond aux régions acadiennes et francophones des quatre provinces du Canada atlantique, soit le Nouveau-Brunswick, la Nouvelle-Écosse, l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et Terre-Neuve et Labrador. À ce sujet, cf. Maurice Basque – Nicole Barrieau – Stéphanie Côté, *L'Acadie de l'Atlantique*, Moncton, Société Nationale de l'Acadie–Centre d'études acadiennes–Centre international de recherche et de documentation de la francophonie–Année francophone internationale, 1999. Pour une critique de ce concept, cf. Julien Massicotte, "Le territoire acadien. Contextes et perceptions", in: Martin Pâquet – Stéphane Savard (dirs.), *Balises et références. Acadies, francophonies*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007, 79–103.

entre l'identité acadienne, cadienne et cajun. De plus, d'importantes divergences d'opinion se retrouvent dans les différentes disciplines qui se sont intéressées à la question, notamment la géographie, l'histoire et la sociologie. Ce texte en présentera les grandes lignes, tout en précisant qu'il n'existe pas d'unanimité au sujet d'une définition identitaire claire touchant à ces trois groupes, qui pour certains, rappelons-le, n'en font qu'un.[4]

La majorité des historiennes et des historiens s'entendent sur le fait qu'une identité acadienne existait en Acadie coloniale avant les années du Grand Dérangement. C'est le cas par exemple de Naomi E.S. Griffiths, qui développe la thèse d'une identité acadienne dans son œuvre magistrale *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People 1604-1755* publiée en 2005.[5] L'historiographie reconnaît donc que cette identité acadienne est née dans le contexte de l'expérience coloniale en terre d'Amérique qui a contribué à façonner les grands traits identitaires du peuple acadien, comme par exemple le fait de l'importance de la langue française, des réseaux familiaux, de la religion catholique et de l'appartenance à un milieu rural. Le Grand Dérangement renforce cette identité acadienne, qu'il vient cristalliser, puisque les victimes de cet événement sont identifiées comme faisant partie d'un groupe distinct dont les Britanniques veulent débarrasser leur colonie de la Nouvelle-Écosse.[6]

Malgré les conséquences dévastatrices du Grand Dérangement, l'identité acadienne ne disparaît pas; elle continue à être à la base de plusieurs nouveaux villages qui naissent à la fin du 18e siècle dans le sud-est, le nord-ouest et le nord-est du Nouveau-Brunswick, dans le sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse et au Cap-Breton, dans la région Évangéline de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, aux Îles de la Madeleine, dans le sud de la Gaspésie, dans le nord de l'État du Maine et dans l'archipel français de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon. En Louisiane, les familles acadiennes qui s'y installent vont donner naissance au 19e siècle à une nouvelle culture nord-américaine, les Cadiens. Vers la fin du 19e siècle et surtout au 20e, la grande majorité des Cadiens sont devenus des Cajuns. D'ailleurs, des publi-

[4] Il existe de très nombreuses publications sur la question identitaire acadienne. Hormis celle du sociologue Joseph Yvon Thériault, citée dans la note 2, nous pensons entre autres à André Magord (avec la collaboration de Maurice Basque et Amélie Giroux), *L'Acadie plurielle: dynamiques identitaires collectives et développement au sein des réalités acadiennes*, Moncton–Poitiers, Institut d'Etudes Acadiennes et Québécoises–Centre d'études acadiennes, 2003; André Magord (dir.), *Adaptation et innovation: expériences acadiennes contemporaines*, Bruxelles, P. Lang, 2006; Patrick D. Clarke, "Pêche et identité en Acadie: nouveaux regards sur la culture et la ruralité en milieu maritime", in: *Recherches sociographiques* 39, 1 (1998), 59–101, et *Études canadiennes / Canadian Studies* 37 (1994).

[5] Cf. également John Reid – Maurice Basque – Elizabeth Mancke et al., *The 'Conquest' of Acadia, 1710. Imperial, Colonial, and Aboriginal Constructions*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004.

[6] Cf. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc (dir.), *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques*, Moncton, Chaire d'études acadiennes, 2005.

cations récentes, dont celles de l'historien cajun Shane K. Bernard[7], proposent que l'identité des Cajuns est différente aujourd'hui de l'identité acadienne que l'on retrouve au Canada atlantique, entre autres parce que la très grande majorité des Cajuns sont maintenant des anglophones.

Au 19e siècle, surtout dans les Provinces maritimes[8] du Canada, l'identité acadienne va commencer à se transformer en incluant dans le groupe acadien, des individus ou des familles dont les ancêtres n'ont pas nécessairement été liés aux événements tragiques de la Déportation. C'est le cas par exemple des très nombreuses familles d'origine canadienne-française qui se sont établies aux Maritimes à partir de la fin du 18e siècle, ainsi qu'aux nombreux anglophones d'origine britannique (Anglais, Écossais et Irlandais) qui se sont assimilés au groupe acadien.[9] C'est donc dire que même si un certain discours identitaire acadien du 19e et du 20e siècle prônait l'importance de la filiation avec les déportés de Grand-Pré pour se considérer un véritable acadien, la réalité était toute autre. Ainsi, au Madawaska, dans le nord-ouest du Nouveau-Brunswick, une forte identité régionale s'est développée au 20e siècle, l'identité brayonne, dont une partie des adhérents n'avait pas justement des racines généalogiques acadiennes, mais professait quand même une appartenance au groupe acadien.[10]

Pour leur part, certains sociologues, notamment Joseph Yvon Thériault, vont plutôt insister sur le fait que l'identité acadienne est une production des premières élites acadiennes du 19e siècle, grand siècle des nationalismes. Ils accordent moins d'importance aux expériences historiques de l'identité acadienne documentée dans des textes de la fin du 17e et du 18e siècle.

À l'heure actuelle, deux grandes thèses semblent s'affronter en ce qui concerne l'identité acadienne. La première met de l'avant une définition généalogique de l'identité acadienne puisqu'elle confère à tous les descendantes et descendants des déportés, où qu'ils soient dans le monde, notamment en Louisiane, le statut d'Acadien. Cette définition minimise l'importance du groupe acadien qui existe au

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7 Shane K. Bernard, *The Cajuns: Americanization of a People*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2003, et, du même auteur, *Cajuns and Their Acadian Ancestors. A Young Reader's History*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2008. Cf. également Carl A. Brasseaux, *Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People, 1803-1877*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1992.

8 Il s'agit de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, du Nouveau-Brunswick et de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

9 Cf. Sylvain Godin – Maurice Basque, *Histoire des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick*, Tracadie-Sheila, La Grande Marée, 2007, 96–97. Cf. également Patrick D. Clarke, "Région et régionalismes en Acadie. Culture, espace, appartenance", in: *Recherches sociographiques* 41, 2 (2000), 299–365.

10 Jacques Paul Couturier, "La République du Madawaska et l'Acadie: la construction identitaire d'une région néo-brunswickoise au XXe siècle", in: Maurice Basque – Jacques Paul Couturier, *Les territoires de l'identité: perspectives acadiennes et françaises, XVIIe-XXe siècles*, Moncton, Chaire d'études acadiennes, 2005, 25–54.

Canada atlantique et de son projet de société d'y vivre en français, en mettant l'accent sur une Acadie virtuelle qui compterait quelques millions d'Acadiennes et d'Acadiens dispersés à travers le monde. La méthode utilisée pour en arriver à ce chiffre, rappelons-le, n'est, à ce jour, pas encore connue. Cette définition de l'identité acadienne se retrouve célébrée lors des grands congrès mondiaux acadiens qui ont lieu depuis 1994. D'ailleurs, les organisateurs du Congrès mondial acadien 2009, qui doit avoir lieu dans la Péninsule acadienne, dans le nord-est du Nouveau-Brunswick, véhiculent le discours suivant: " [...] les Acadiens du Sud, et plus particulièrement les Cadiens de la Louisiane, sont Acadiens au même titre que nous ici, les francophones vivant dans l'est du Canada."[11]

La deuxième thèse véhiculée au sujet de l'identité acadienne repose beaucoup plus sur la notion d'une société civile acadienne, qui existe dans les communautés de langue française des quatre provinces du Canada atlantique. C'est dans ces régions géographiques qu'une partie très importante des survivantes et des survivants du Grand Dérangement a reconstruit une nouvelle Acadie. Cette nouvelle société acadienne est donc ancrée dans une continuité historique et géographique qu'elle fait démarrer en 1604, année de l'arrivée des premiers pionniers français dans la région.[12] Cette identité ne limite cependant pas l'appartenance à son groupe à l'obligation de porter un nom de famille "canonique" du Grand Dérangement. Elle refuse ainsi l'image d'une Acadie virtuelle pour embrasser celle d'une Acadie réelle, dynamisée par, entre autres, un réseau associatif fort et une complétude institutionnelle qui fait l'envie des autres sociétés francophones minoritaires du Canada et d'ailleurs.[13]

Cette Acadie de l'Atlantique présente la langue française comme étant le dénominateur commun de l'identité acadienne contemporaine. Peuvent donc être considérés comme Acadiennes et Acadiens toutes les personnes qui veulent vivre dans cette société et y participer pleinement.[14] Les Jeux de l'Acadie sont l'un des meilleurs exemples à citer: depuis 1979, ils ont annuellement lieu dans l'une des régions de l'Acadie de l'Atlantique et tous les élèves des écoles de langue française peuvent y participer.[15] Ces jeux ont également eu lieu dans des grandes

11 Cf. Carol Doucet, "Une délégation du CMA 2009 bientôt en Louisiane: les Acadiens du Nord invitent les Acadiens du Sud", in: *Chronique du CMA* (2009); *Chronique* 12 (semaine du 14 avril 2008). Cf. le site web du Congrès mondial acadien 2009, consulté le 24 septembre 2008, à l'adresse suivante: http://www.cma2009.ca/img/imgtiny/CHRONIQUES/Chronique12.pdf.

12 Nicolas Landry – Nicole Lang, *Histoire de l'Acadie*, Sillery, Septentrion, 2001, 13–21.

13 Greg Allain, "Fragmentation ou vitalité? Regard sociologique sur l'Acadie actuelle et ses réseaux associatifs", in: Simon Langlois – Jocelyn Létourneau, *Aspects de la nouvelle francophonie canadienne* (= Collection Culture française d'Amérique), Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2004, 231–254. Cf. aussi Basque – Barrieau – Côté 1999.

14 Cf. James Laxer, *The Acadians. In Search of a Homeland*, Toronto, Doubleday, 2006, 282–285.

15 Cf. Greg Allain, "Genèse, structure et bilan d'une manifestation sportive et identitaire pour la jeunesse acadienne: Les Jeux de l'Acadie dans les Provinces maritimes du Canada", in: Jean-Pierre

villes à majorité anglophone du Canada atlantique, tel que Saint-Jean au Nouveau-Brunswick et Halifax en Nouvelle-Écosse, puisque d'importantes concentrations d'Acadiennes et d'Acadiens existent maintenant dans ces milieux urbains et qu'elles se réclament membres à part entière de l'Acadie de l'Atlantique.[16]

La lecture de cette définition de l'identité acadienne de l'Acadie de l'Atlantique fait peu de place aux Cadiens et aux Cajuns de la Louisiane. Même s'ils sont souvent présentés comme étant des synonymes, Cadien et Cajun renvoient à deux mondes différents. Le Cadien parle français et se rattache beaucoup plus aux discours identitaires véhiculés en Acadie de l'Atlantique où être Acadien et francophone sont des réalités indissociables. Le discours identitaire cadien est fortement entretenu par le CODOFIL (Council for the Development of French in Louisiana), un organisme créé par l'état de la Louisiane en 1968, afin d'y promouvoir entre autres la langue française. L'influence du CODOFIL fut si grande que d'autres francophones de la Louisiane ainsi que des personnes ayant une ascendance française se sont mises à s'identifier comme faisant partie du groupe cadien ou cajun.[17] Mais avec la naissance de l'organisme Action Cadienne fondé en avril 1996 par l'auteur-compositeur-interprète et activiste cadien Zachary Richard, une certaine rupture s'est établie entre Cadien et Cajun puisque selon cet organisme, l'avenir des Cadiens en Louisiane passe par l'utilisation du français, langue de leurs ancêtres, par de nouvelles générations de jeunes.[18] En plus de Zachary Richard, un petit groupe de Cadiens, dont le regretté Richard Guidry, décédé en 2008, et le professeur Barry J. Ancelet, de l'Université de la Louisiane à Lafayette, ainsi que David Cheramie, directeur du CODOFIL, portent haut le flambeau de la langue française en Louisiane cadienne.[19]

Augustin – Christine Dallaire (dirs.), *Jeux, sports et francophonie. L'exemple du Canada*, Pessac, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine, 2007, 95–137.

16 En collaboration avec le sociologue Greg Allain de l'Université de Moncton, nous avons écrit trois livres sur des communautés acadiennes en milieu urbain majoritairement anglophone du Nouveau-Brunswick, soit celles de Fredericton, Miramichi et Saint-Jean. Cf. Greg Allain, "Les conditions de la vitalité socioculturelle chez les minorités francophones en milieu urbain: deux cas en Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick", in: *Francophonies d'Amérique* 20 (automne 2005), 133–146.

17 Cécyle Trépanier, "The Cajunization of French Louisiana: Forging a Regional Identity", in: *The Geographical Journal* 157, 2 (juillet 1991), 161–171.

18 Bernard 2003, 149.

19 Il existe de très nombreux articles, livres et thèses portant sur les réalités cadiennes de la Louisiane. Cf., par exemple, Sara LeMenestrel, *La voie des Cadiens. Tourisme et identité en Louisiane*, Paris, Belin, 1999; Jacques Henry – Sara LeMenestrel (dirs.), *Working the Field. Accounts from French Louisiana*, Westport, Praeger, 2003; Chantal K. Saucier, *Acadie tropicale: colonisation et assimilation*, Thèse de doctorat en études francophones, Lafayette, Université de la Louisiane à Lafayette, 2004; Dianne Guenin-Lelle, "The Birth of Cajun Poetry: An Analysis of Cris sur le bayou: naissance d'une poésie acadienne en Louisiane", in: *The French Review* 70, 3 (février 1997), 439–451; Richard Guidry, "Mémoires d'un Cadien passionné", in: Dean Louder – Eric Waddell (dirs.), *Franco-Amérique*, Sillery, Septentrion, 2008, 169–196; Zachary Richard, "L'émergence d'une littérature francophone en Louisiane", in: Magord 2003, 497–505; Bertille Beaulieu, "Comment peut-on être Cadien? Ou 'Quoi ça ein Cadjin?'", in: Robert Viau (dir.), *La création littéraire dans le contexte de l'exiguïté*, Beauport, MNH, 2000, 259–270; David Cheramie, "Contre l'oubli: la raison d'être de la littérature cadienne", in: Robert

Mais ces Cadiens sont bien minoritaires en Louisiane, car la très grande majorité des personnes ayant un lien historique réel ou construit avec l'Acadie de l'Atlantique s'identifient comme Cajuns, c'est-à-dire des anglophones pour qui le fait d'être cajun ne repose pas sur la pratique de la langue française, mais plutôt sur une participation à une culture très dynamique, la culture cajun, connue à travers le monde pour sa cuisine et sa musique. C'est ce groupe qu'a très bien décrit l'historien Shane K. Bernard dans son ouvrage *The Cajuns*. Comme d'autres intellectuels cajuns, Bernard propose, rappelons-le, que l'identité acadienne est l'une des nombreuses identités qui a donné naissance à l'identité contemporaine des Cajuns.[20]

Bref, nombreuses sont les définitions qui tentent de cerner les dimensions identitaires des Acadiens, des Cadiens et des Cajuns. Vouloir les associer à un seul groupe nous semble faire fi des processus historiques, culturels, linguistiques et sociopolitiques qui ont transformé l'identité acadienne, dont la genèse remonte au tournant du 18e siècle en terre d'Acadie, en au moins trois nouvelles identités en Amérique du Nord. Le premier groupe est constitué par les Acadiens, que l'on retrouve principalement en Acadie de l'Atlantique; le deuxième, les Cadiens, ce petit groupe de Louisianais d'ascendance acadienne qui veulent maintenir la langue française, soit comme langue maternelle ou comme langue seconde; et finalement, les Cajuns, pour qui la formule américaine du "melting pot" leur a permis d'assimiler plusieurs autres identités à la leur. Ce qui est certain, c'est que les définitions au sujet des identités acadiennes, cadiennes et cajuns ne cessent d'évoluer afin de répondre au nombre grandissant de personnes qui se revendiquent de ces groupes.[21]

En 1755, les autorités coloniales de la Nouvelle-Écosse pensaient avoir mis au point une solution radicale afin d'assimiler et d'acculturer la population acadienne: ironie du sort, leur geste a contribué à multiplier les identités qui tirent leur origine de l'Acadie coloniale dans des territoires aussi différents que le Canada atlantique, la Louisiane, le Québec, Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon et Belle-Île-en-Mer. Aujourd'hui, les chercheurs continuent de travailler à résoudre ce casse-tête identitaire, dont l'une des clefs se retrouve peut-être dans les paroles de la chanson

Viau 2000, 271–279; Clint Bruce, "La trahison du trahi: vers une traduction du poète cadien Jean Arceneaux", in: *Equinoxes* 2 (automne/hiver 2003-2004), et André Magord – Rodrigue Landry – Réal Allard, "Identités acadiennes en Louisiane, en Poitou et à Belle-Île", in: *Études canadiennes/Canadian Studies* 37 (1994), 159–180.

20 Cf. également, par exemple, Michael James Foret, "Acadian Versus Cajun: What's In a Name? An Essay Review", in: *Louisiana History* 33, 4 (automne 1992), 417–421.

21 Par exemple, de plus en plus d'anglophones aux ascendances acadiennes se réclament du groupe acadien même s'ils ne parlent pas nécessairement la langue française. À ce sujet, cf. Clive Doucet, *Lost and Found in Acadie*, Halifax, Nimbus, 2004, et, du même auteur, *Acadian Homecoming: Congrès mondial acadien*, Halifax, Nimbus, 2005.

“Si longtemps séparés”, chanson thème du 2e Congrès mondial acadien qui a eu lieu en Louisiane en 1999:

Et quand la famille se rassemble
Je vois même qu’on se ressemble
Quand l’Acadien joue du violon
Et le Cadien l’accordéon

Chère Acadie
Je pense souvent à toi
Mais je ne peux pas me détacher
Du pays où je suis né
Ceux qui ne sont pas Acadiens
Ne peuvent pas comprendre
Qu’est-ce que c’est d’avoir
Le coeur en Acadie
Et les pieds en la Louisiane.[22]

[22] Extrait de la chanson thème du 2e Congrès mondial acadien, 1999, composée par Sheryl Collins, Waylon Thibodeaux, Roland Gauvin et Jac Gautreau, musique de Waylon Thibodeaux et interprétée par Waylon Thibodeaux et Roland Gauvin.

History and Politics
Histoire et politique

those who put on their glasses and contentedly watch
the world take shape again, impeccably meaningful and
immensely seductive, like the sun on the sea when it plays
with water that was once so blue, covering it with a thin
golden film on which all believe they might find their lost
halo

Herménégilde Chiasson, *Beatitudes*.
Fredericton, Goose Lane Edition, 2007, 54.

celles qui remettent leurs lunettes, revoyant le monde
reprendre tranquillement forme, impeccablement signifiant et
immensément séduisant, semblable au soleil sur la mer quand
il s'amuse à déposer sur l'eau jadis si bleue une fine pellicule
d'or où chacun croit retrouver son auréole perdue

Herménégilde Chiasson, *BéatitudeS*.
Sudbury, Prise de parole, 2007, 59.

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Acadia: A History of Cultural Encounter and Cultural Transfer[1]

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Résumé

Ce travail présente un tour d'horizon de l'histoire de l'Acadie et sert de base historique aux discussions présentées dans ce volume. La période traitée va de 1631 à la fin du 19e siècle, avec le Grand Dérangement de 1758 comme axe historique. Il étudie le problème de l'identité acadienne et utilise, comme principe d'organisation du texte et de l'argumentation, les efforts de la population coloniale et de ceux qui sont retournés en Acadie dans les années 1780–1790, pour établir une identité culturelle, sociale et – dans la seconde moitié du 19e siècle – nationale. En conclusion, l'article constate que l'histoire acadienne est un exemple modèle de l'histoire des rencontres culturelles, les influences françaises, anglaises et amérindiennes se reflétant très visiblement dans les symboles, les mythes et les cosmologies qui constituent le fondement socioculturel du peuple. En même temps, l'histoire acadienne est un laboratoire de l'histoire des transferts culturels et de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui " histoire croisée ".

To talk about the history of Acadia is as Léon Thériault argues "a paradox in itself and in some ways constitutes an 'act of faith"[2]. It is a paradox in itself because since 1763 Acadia has no official territory and no political status. Nevertheless, it did not cease to exist. Being a nation without a territory or state and a cultural community that experienced existential threats throughout its history are conditions and characteristics of Acadian history. These traits are dealt with and reflected especially by the early historical work presented during the first half of the 20th century, like Antoine Bernard's *Histoire de la survivance acadienne*, published in 1935, Arthur G. Doughty's *The Acadian Exiles*, published in 1916, Emile Lauvrière's *La Tragédie d'un Peuple*, published in 1924, or John Bartlet Brebner's *New*

[1] This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the Innsbruck Conference "Acadians and Cajuns. The Politics and Culture of French Minorities in North America", 6.–7.9.2007. I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me and for thus giving me the opportunity to enrich my knowledge of Acadian history. The following text is not based on original research. It is written to provide a tour d'horizon about Acadian history and thus lay the historical bases for the papers following in this volume. Most of the arguments presented in the paper were originally developed and published by Naomi Griffiths to whom I owe a lot regarding my own understanding of Acadian history.

[2] Léon Thériault, "Acadia from 1763 to 1990. A Historical Synthesis", in: Jean Daigle (dir.), *Acadia of the Maritimes. Thematic Studies from the Beginning to the Present*, Moncton, Université de Moncton, 1995, 45.

England's Outpost: Acadia Before the Conquest of Canada, published in 1927.[3] These studies started from a historical perspective that today is criticized for being based on methodological nationalism. They tried to tell the story of a nation which at least until 1884 was missing the fundamental prerequisites of a nation state. Acadia was and is a construct that may be best described by what Benedict Anderson has called "an imagined community"[4].

If Acadia is a nation without territory or a community without state, what kind of political and cultural existence does it have? Is Acadia something like the "mythical Norumbega, more stuff of legend than history", as Charles Mahaffie suggests?[5] And if we cannot write the history of Acadia as political or national history, how are we going to approach the "history of Acadians" or of "Canadians or Americans of Acadian origin"? In order to be able to discuss these and other questions I would like to begin by suggesting an outline of some basic facts about *l'Acadie* and Acadian history.

Acadians and *Acadie*: Historical Background

From *The Canadian Encyclopedia* we learn that Acadians are "descendants of the French settlers in *Acadie*. It is estimated that there are at least 1.000.000 of them living in various parts of North America, with the larger number settled in the Maritime Provinces and Louisiana. In the Maritimes they form a distinct community; and in Louisiana they have partly succeeded in preserving their culture against strong assimilative pressures."[6] It is interesting to note that this short definition already mentions one significant characteristic of the ethnic group called "Acadians" that helps us to answer the question of how to approach their history: Acadians are a distinct community struggling against strong assimilative pres-

[3] Antoine Bernard, *Histoire de la survivance acadienne, 1755–1935*, Montréal, Les Clercs de Saint Viateur, 1935; John Bartlet Brebner, *New England's Outpost: Acadia Before the Conquest of Canada* (= Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, 293), New York–London, Columbia University Press–P.S. King & Son Ltd., 1927; Arthur George Doughty, *The Acadian Exiles: A Chronicle of the Land of Evangeline*, Toronto–Glasgow, Brook & Company, 1916; James Hannay, *The History of Acadia, from Its First Discovery to Its Surrender to England*, St. John (N.B.), McMillan, 1879; Edouard Richard, *Acadia, Missing Links of a Lost Chapter in American History*, 2 vols, New York–Montréal, Home Book Co.–J. Lovell, 1895; Philip Henry Smith, *Acadia. A Lost Chapter in American History*, Pawling (N.Y.), chez l'auteur, 1884; Emile Lauvrière, *Brève Histoire tragique du peuple Acadien: son martyre et sa résurrection*, Paris, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1947.

[4] Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 1983.

[5] Charles D. Mahaffie, *A land of discord always: Acadia from its beginnings to the expulsion of its people, 1604–1755*, Halifax, Nimbus, 2003, 7.

[6] *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Year 2000 Edition, Toronto–Ontario, McClelland and Stewart, 1999, entrance "Acadia". For further information cf. also Gerald Hallowell, *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, entrance "Acadia". If not otherwise indicated the information provided on the following pages is based on these two entrances.

sures. This community has been scattered across North America with large pockets in the Maritimes and in Louisiana. Parts of this community thus live in diasporic situations that change over time.

This, however, leads to another fundamental question: If Acadians live in diasporic situations, how can we talk about "Acadia" understood as the territory of the Acadian people? *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History* gives a very clear answer: The article "Acadia" affirmatively states that "Acadia is the homeland of the Acadian people", consisting of what are today the Maritime Provinces of Canada – namely, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Hence we find two seemingly conflicting interpretations – homeland and diaspora.

The name *Acadie* was given by France to her Atlantic seaboard possessions in the New World – i.e. the eastern or maritime part of New France, in order to distinguish this part from the western part, which began with the Saint Lawrence valley and was called Canada. The origin of the name *Acadie* has never been definitively traced. Most of the historians now agree that the name *Acadia* stems from "Akade", a word meaning "Paradise" in the region's Micmac language. The name was first applied to a New World locale by the Florentine explorer Giovanni da Verrazano, who around 1524 used it to identify what is today Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The name gradually made its way up North America's eastern seaboard. Already Gastaldi's map of 1548 shows the territory as *Larcadie*, and after 1604 it was normally referred to as *Acadie*. The boundaries of the colony were never clearly defined but probably were intended to include what are now the Maritime Provinces and parts of Maine and Quebec. They overlapped the territories claimed by England as a result of John Cabot's and Humphrey Gilbert's voyages and thus became involved in the century-long struggle between England und France that ended with the Seven Years' War (1756–63). The colony itself was not founded until 1604, when France granted a ten-year monopoly on the region's fisheries and fur trade to Pierre Duguay, Sieur de Monts.

De Monts' proprietorship was revoked in 1605, however, and the colony (with its seat at Port Royal) languished from 1607 to 1610. In 1610 its former governor, Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt, assumed control again, however without developing the colony. In 1628–29 Sir William Alexander and a group of Scottish Calvinists seized Port Royal, ousting the French until 1632, when the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye restored the colony to France. That same year three hundred French settlers, the "first families" of Acadia, arrived at Port Royal. This is the date that is usually referred to as the foundation of Acadia.[7]

[7] David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain's dream*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2008; Ingo Kolboom – Roberto Mann – Maurice Basque – Eva Bense – Georg Bense, *Akadien: ein französischer Traum in Amerika: vier Jahrhunderte Geschichte und Literatur der Akadier. Eine Publikation des CIFRAQS*,

After having identified a starting point, historians usually look for historical markers that help to structure the story they are telling. What then are characteristic periods in the history of Acadia and what events had a structuring impact on the development of Acadia and Acadians? A first and very rough way of periodization is to subdivide Acadian History into the time before deportation and after. A second way of structuring the history of Acadia is to take the dominant metropolitan power as a criterion. This is what for example Nicolas Landry and Nicole Lang do in their *Histoire de l'Acadie*. They analyse "L'Acadie française" (1604–1713), "L'Acadie anglaise" (1713–1763), "Reconstruction territoriale et sociale, 1763–1850" under British domination, "Intégration sociale, économique et politique, 1850–1880" in the early Dominion, and "Transformations sociales et économiques, 1880–1914" in the Dominion of Canada dominated by Prime Minister Macdonald and his policy of Canadian nationalism.[8] Naomi Griffiths, in her admirably concise volume *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686 to 1784*, although only looking at the early period of Acadian history, offers a third approach by organizing her research along critical junctures in Acadian history, thereby pinpointing certain time-space constellations: the 1680s, when the French settlements in the areas now known as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick first achieved permanence; the 1730s, by which time European immigrants and their descendants had acquired a coherent identity; 1748–55, when Acadian society reached its apex only to have most of its members expelled by British governors; and 1755–84, when many exiles returned and began the slow work of re-creating much of the culture that they had constructed before their expulsion.[9]

What I would like to present is a combination of the three approaches. It makes sense to start from the two eras of pre- and post-deportation, meaning 1604 to 1758 and 1758 to the end of the 19th century when Acadian national identity was consolidated, and then to ask what kind of time-space constellations were particularly influential for certain time periods helping to explain crucial developments in the history of Acadia. In identifying these time-space constellations the question of the dominant metropolitan power is of importance, but so are the characteristics of the community as such: the way the settlers organized their colony, their way of living, the interaction between the settlers and the indigenous population, situations of cultural encounter, and processes of cultural transfer.

Heidelberg, Synchron, 2005; Léopold Lanctôt, *L'Acadie des origines, 1603–1771*, Montréal, Éditions du Fleuve, 1988; Nicolas Landry – Nicole Lang, Histoire de l'Acadie, Sillery, Septentrion, 2001.

8 Landry – Lang 2001.

9 Naomi Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686–1784*, Montreal–Buffalo, McGill–Queen's University Press, 1992.

Critical Junctures and Time-Space Constellations in Acadian History

In order to tell Acadian history as a history of an imagined community characterized by multifarious experiences of transculturation, by the experience of cultural encounter, and by a pattern of colonial governance that differed from the ones we find in Nouvelle-France or New England[10], and to subdivide it into critical time-space constellations which are of explanatory significance for Acadian history, I would like to propose the following structure:

Pre-Deportation History (1604–1758)
Indian-Acadian Cohabitation (1604–1713)
The Thirty Years Peace (1713–1748)
"Le Grand Dérangement" (1755–1762)
Post-Deportation History (1758–1914)
Living in the Diaspora
The Dynamism of "l'Acadie du Silence" (1758–1864)
The Acadian Renaissance (1864–1884)
The Consolidation of an Acadian National Identity (1880–1914)

Pre-Deportation History (1604–1758)

Indian-Acadian Cohabitation (1604–1713)

Historically Acadians can be traced to the early Huguenot settlement at Passamaquoddy Bay in 1604, but as only a few of these survived, their real ancestors are the 300 settlers brought from France to Port Royal between 1632 and 1635. There existed three major Indian tribes in the area when the French arrived, 4.000 Micmacs, mostly in Nova Scotia, 5.000 Maliseet in New Brunswick, and 10.000 Abenakis in Maine. Compared to these numbers the population of Acadia, New France, and New England looks small.

Comparative Populations of New France, Acadia, New England

Year	New France	Acadia	New England
1608	28	10	-
1670	8.000	500	51.900
1710	16.000	1.700	115.100
1750	55.000	12.000	360.000

Source: Sleeper-Smith 2002

Acadians faced serious obstacles from the beginning. They were raided by English colonists from the South, and they became embroiled in the conflicting inter-

[10] Cf. Sheila Nelson, *Britain's Canada, 1613–1770*, Philadelphia, Mason Crest Publishers, 2006; Sheila Nelson, *The settlement of New France and Acadia, 1524–1701*, Philadelphia, Mason Crest Publishers, 2006.

ests of France and England. Despite its marginal position, the Acadian population, far from being isolated from the outside world, established a modus vivendi with its English neighbours to the South and maintained solid contacts with the Native Peoples. Jean Daigle explains: "United by ties of blood and affection, the large network of Acadian families preferred to concentrate on their own interests and devote all their energy to strengthening a lifestyle that was totally unique in North America."[11] Acadia served, as Gustav Lanctot described it, as a "Wall of China"[12] between New France and the Thirteen Colonies. Acadia developed as a minority in North America.[13]

The Thirty Years Peace (1713–1748)

The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 changed the balance of power in North America. According to Article 12 of the treaty, three French territories were ceded to Great Britain: Hudson Bay, Newfoundland, and Acadia. France retained the colony of Île Royale (present-day Cape Breton Island) in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and planned to develop it. Although the year 1713 marked the loss of important colonies for France, it ushered in a new era for the Acadians. For the first time since their arrival in North America, they experienced a period of peace that lasted more than 30 years. In 1700 the colony was both demographically self-generating and economically self-sustaining. While newcomers were still arriving in the colony, population increase was largely due to the natural increase of those already settled. At the end of the 17th century one can distinguish in Acadia many of the social customs, religious beliefs, political norms, economic practices, and artistic traditions that would blend in a unique fashion to form the distinctive Acadian identity.[14]

"Le Grand Dérangement" (1755–1762)

A new era began for Nova Scotia and the Acadians when Edward Cornwallis arrived in 1749 with some 2.500 English colonists and a plan to build a fortress at Halifax to counter the French stronghold at Louisbourg. This was the beginning of the story that led to "le Grand Dérangement", i.e. the British decision to move out the Acadians and disperse them among the British colonies, taken on July 28, 1755. The new rulers soon discovered that the Acadians might become a security problem. Their settlements did not fit into the defensive strategy of the British. First ideas to do something about this problem were launched by Peregrine Hopkins who assumed governorship in 1752; the following year he was succeeded by Charles Lawrence. Under his rule the Acadians were forcibly expelled from their

11 Jean Daigle, "Acadia from 1604 to 1763: A Historical Synthesis", in: Daigle 1995, 2.

12 Gustave Lanctot, "L'Acadie et la Nouvelle-France, 1603–1763", in: *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 11 (1941), 193.

13 Cf. also John G. Reid, The *"Conquest" of Acadia, 1710: Imperial, Colonial, and Aboriginal Constructions*, Toronto–Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, 2004.

14 Griffiths 1992, 35.

native land; and their persecution did not cease until the peace of 1763 when France relinquished claims to North American territories.

In a circular letter from Governor Lawrence to the Governors on the Continent of August 11, 1755 the following reasons for the deportation were given: It should become impossible for the Acadians to organize themselves as a distinct and separate community; Acadians should be assimilated within the context of each separate colony and become undifferentiated from the majority within each colony; and above all Acadians should cease to exist as a coherent and separate society and become absorbed into the mass of the other culture. Lawrence explained:

> After mature consideration it was unanimously agreed, that, to prevent as much as possible their attempting to return and molest the settlers that may be set down on their lands, it would be most proper to send them to be distributed amongst the several colonies on the continent, and that a sufficient number of vessels should be hired with all possible expedition for that purpose.[15]

The policy carried out by Lawrence both succeeded and failed. It destroyed Acadian power but not Acadian identity.

Post-Deportation History (1758–1914)

Living in the Diaspora[16]

The Acadians suffered appalling losses in consequence of the deportation, first on board ship and second on arrival at their various destinations. "The Deportation", "the time of exile", or "le Grand Dérangement" have become central to the self-definition of later generations of Acadians. For more than a hundred years, the Acadians had been the dominant society of European descent within the territory covered by the present-day provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. In 1755 this pre-eminence was ended. It took more than seventy

[15] As quoted by John Bartlet Brebner, *New England's Outpost: Acadia before the Conquest of Canada*, New York, B. Franklin, 1973, 221.

[16] For the diasporic history of Acadians cf. e.g. Bernard 1935; Carl A. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765–1803*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1987; Gérard-Marc Braud, *From Nantes to Louisiana. In 1785, 1.600 Acadians leave the old continent, their destination New Orleans: The History of Acadia, the Odyssey of an Exiled People*, English ed., Lafayette, La Rainette, 1999; Doughty 1916; Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *From migrant to Acadian: A North American border people, 1604–1755*, Montreal, McGill–Queen's University Press, 2005; Janet B. Jehn, *Acadian exiles in the Colonies*, Covington, Jehn, 1977; Lanctôt 1988; Milton P. Rieder – Norma Gaudet Rieder, *The Acadian exiles in the American Colonies*, 1755–1768, Metairie, Rieder, 1977; Albert J. Robichaux, *The Acadian exiles in Chatellerault, 1773–1785*, Eunice (LA), Hebert Publications, 1983; Albert J. Robichaux, *The Acadian exiles in Nantes, 1775–1785*, Harvey (LA), Robichaux, 1978; Albert J. Robichaux, *The Acadian exiles in Saint-Malo, 1758–1785*, Eunice (LA), Hebert Publications, 1981; William Faulkner Rushton, *The Cajuns: from Acadia to Louisiana*, New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979.

years for the Acadian population within the Maritimes to reach the level that it had in the summer months before deportation.[17]

The time of deportation and exile is of eminent importance for the development of Acadian history. And here it is not so much the history of what actually occurred but the Acadians' interpretation of the deportation and its aftermath that helps to explain the development of an Acadian identity at the end of the 18th century. As Naomi Griffiths has shown in her numerous studies, by the end of the 18th century a shared Acadian belief had evolved about why the deportation had occurred and what it had meant for the Acadian community. The most important resources that the Acadians took with them into exile were social and political strength. Acadian society was built on the extended family. Thus, while brutal family separations did take place during the exile, there always remained a web of family linkages which supported the individuals in the strange new lands. The political experience of Acadians before 1755 gave the exiles not only a known pattern of leadership, but forged a people accustomed to arguing with authority. A community developed that believed that the Acadians were a people distinct from others and that their legitimate country was "Acadia or Nova Scotia".[18]

The Dynamism of "l'Acadie du Silence" (1758–1864)

Between deportation and the re-emergence of Acadians as a distinct community lies a period that Léon Thériault has described as "l'Acadie du Silence".[19] This characterization has been strongly criticized. And indeed the period 1758–1864 was not a silent but a very dynamic period in Acadian history, leading to a revival of Acadian community structures, and Acadian culture, and promoting the development of a self-consciousness expressing itself in the development of a distinct literary and musical tradition. The 18th-century Acadians were not a nation, but they were a distinct culture. They were a society possessing both a group identity and the right to live in a particular place. This allowed the Acadians to surmount the exile and later rebuild their community in the Maritimes, as well as to establish another in Louisiana.[20]

The Acadian Renaissance (1864–1884)

From the 1860s onward there were considerable structural changes in the Maritime Provinces in both the political and economic fields. These structural changes characterize the third time-space constellation in the post-deportation period. In

17 Griffiths 1992, 95.

18 Griffiths 1992; Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a people*, Toronto–New York, McGraw–Hill Ryerson, 1973.

19 Léon Thériault, *La question du pouvoir en Acadie: essai*, Moncton, Éditions d'Acadie, ²1982.

20 Griffiths 1992, 124 f.

Acadia the elites began to pay attention to higher education; in the field of politics the Acadians began to speak out, but their influence was still not very strong. Finally, the union of the Maritime Provinces with Canada in a federation constituted a challenge to the sense of identity that had developed since the 1780s. New Brunswick Acadians were united in rejecting Confederation in 1867 whereas the Anglophones rallied to it. Acadian society was moving more and more towards taking control of its destiny, especially in the cultural domain.

The Consolidation of an Acadian National Identity (1880–1914)

The consolidation of an Acadian national identity was finally spurred by the creation of collective cultural tools, like the founding of Le Moniteur acadien, the first French-language newspaper in the Maritimes, the production of French-language textbooks (*Guide de l'instituteur*, 1852; *Grammaire élémentaire française*, 1857; *Traité d'arithmétique commerciale*, 1877). Finally at the beginning of the 1880s Acadian leaders felt that they were in a strong enough position to develop a comprehensive program in a "national" direction. It should be noted that some impetus and encouragement came from Quebec in 1880, when the *Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Québec* extended an invitation to Acadians to join with other Francophones in America at a major meeting to be held in June of that year. At that meeting it was decided to hold a major national convention of Acadians the following year in Memramcook. The main themes of this meeting were agriculture, colonization, problems of emigration, education, journalism, and the role of the church. Decisions were made about directions to take and standing committees were set up, one of which was the Société nationale de l'Assomption, resembling a sort of mini-government of Maritime Acadians. One of the most hotly debated subjects was the choice of a national Acadian holiday. The assembly finally agreed to celebrate such a holiday on August 15. Subsequently, other major conventions were held at irregular intervals in different regions of the Maritimes. In 1884 efforts were made in Miscouche to complete the process of choosing national symbols that had been started three years earlier in Memramcook. The flag chosen was the French tricolour, with a golden star in the blue field expressing the specificity of Acadia. The choice of a national anthem was also considered, but those attending were less well prepared for such a discussion. After debating the merits of *Un Acadien errant* and *La Marseillaise*, it was decided quite spontaneously to make do with *Ave Maris Stella*, a religious hymn. The discussion of national symbols ended with the choice of an insignia to be worn as a lapel pin, and a motto, "L'Union fait la force". Until World War I, the nationalist agenda manifested itself in most Acadian undertakings of a collective nature. One of the major concerns of Acadian leaders was the Acadianization of the church. Acadian journalism and education constituted another theme for the nationalists.[21] Lastly, in the field of lit-

[21] In this context it is quite surprising that the question of French language education in the Maritimes has not been studied in any comparable way to what we find with regard to Quebec. For the

erature, certain Acadians began to recover their heritage. History, genealogy, and the Acadian language were the main preoccupations of these intellectuals.[22]

After this tour de force through Acadian history focusing on certain events and developments that had a significant influence or impact on the development of the colony and the emergence of Acadian identity, I would now like to discuss three research perspectives that I think are especially well suited for analyzing and understanding the specific historical experience of Acadiens: first "Acadian history as a history of cultural encounter"; second "Acadian history as a history of cultural transfer and transculturality", and third "Colonial governance in Acadia".

Acadian History as a History of Cultural Encounter

The perspective of the history of cultural encounter developed in the context of colonial history, the history of westward expansion and the history of Indian-White relations.[23] Instead of focusing on group boundaries and cultural clashes and conflicts, this perspective tries to trace the formation of alliances, the amalgamation and splintering characteristic of social relations in general. It starts from the assumption that when European colonization of the Americas began in earnest, there were no meaningful racial categories. Race did not connote the evolutionary, Darwinian meanings that it would come to reflect by the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The dispossession of indigenous peoples, the institution of slavery, and the denial of equal rights to those perceived as being non-European, non-American, non-White, or non-Indian changed all this. The history of cultural encounters reflects this transformation process. It focuses on interaction processes between different cultural groups that, for one, change the participating groups and, secondly, also encourage "the evolution of strategic behaviors that ensured cultural continuity" as Sleeper-Smith shows in her thought-provoking book on *Indi-*

history of nationalization of Acadia cf. e.g. Bernard 1935; Ghislain Clermont – Janine Gallant, *La modernité en Acadie* (= Collection Mouvange, 12), Moncton, Chaire d'études acadiennes, Université de Moncton, 2005; Kolboom – Mann – Basque – Bense – Bense 2005.

22 Cf. Thériault 21982.

23 Cf. especially Richard White, *The middle ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650–1815* (= Cambridge Studies in North American Indian History), Cambridge–New York, Cambridge University Press, 1991; for more general information cf. J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers hide the heavens: A history of Indian-White relations in Canada*, Toronto–Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, ³2000; J. R. Miller, *Sweet promises: A reader on Indian-White relations in Canada*, Toronto–Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, 1991; Francis Paul Prucha, *Indian-White relations in the United States: A bibliography of works published 1975–1980*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1982; Jane F. Smith – Robert M. Kvasnicka – United States National Archives and Records Service, *Indian-White relations: A persistent paradox [papers and proceedings of the National Archives Conference on Research in the History of Indian-White Relations, June 15–16, 1972, The National Archives Building/Washington, D.C.]*, Washington, Howard University Press, 1976; Leslie Francis Stokes Upton, *Micmacs and colonists: Indian-White relations in the Maritimes, 1713–1867*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1979.

an Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes, published in 2001.[24]

Acadia was a peopled land when the Europeans arrived. Acadians settled in an area that was populated by three Indian tribes. Their bands inhabited the eastern lands. They lived in more or less constant warfare against each other. Acadians established close relations especially with the Micmac bands. Acadians and the Micmac lived side by side for more than one hundred years before the British took nominal sovereignty over the province in 1710. A web of friendships, family ties, and commercial connections linked the Micmac and the Acadians, and the pattern of interaction they had established proved resistant to change. As Geoffrey Plank demonstrates in his study *An Unsettled Conquest. The British Campaign against the Peoples of Acadia*[25], from 1710 through the 1750s the British colonial governors and the council of Nova Scotia consistently sought to sever the ties that bound the Micmac to the Acadians. The provincial council issued orders prohibiting the villagers from trading with the Micmac, providing them lodging, or supporting them in any other way. The provincial authorities believed that separating the two groups would establish peace in the region, increase the political power, cultural influence, and economic position of English-speakers in Nova Scotia, and assist the government in its ongoing effort to recruit Protestant, English-speaking settlers. It is these and other aspects of Acadian history that historians have written extensively about: Anglo-Micmac relations and the position of the Micmac in the imperial rivalry between Britain and France; Micmac polity and lifeways; the articulation and development of Acadian culture based on the interaction with the indigenous people. Griffiths explains, that "Micmac were certainly positive contributors to the survival and flourishing of the Acadians"[26].

Although the history of Indian-White cultural encounter in the Maritimes has been the focus of research for many years, we definitely need more of this and we need studies focusing on the first century of Acadian settlement, starting from 1604 to the treaty of Utrecht in 1713. I have not yet found a convincing answer, for example, for explaining the cordial relationship that was built between the two peoples, Acadian and Micmac, during the early 17th century. Analysing interaction patterns, studying the history of everyday life of Acadians in their interaction with the Amerindians, will help us to understand how the settlers in the early 17th century survived, how they created their community while being constantly chal-

[24] Rebecca Kugel – Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *Native women's history in eastern North America before 1900: A guide to research and writing*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2007; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes. Native Americans of the Northeast*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.

[25] Geoffrey Gilbert Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign against the Peoples of Acadia,* Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

[26] Griffiths 1992, 25.

lenged by new situations in the New World, demanding new patterns of behaviour and new interaction patterns. We have to ask ourselves what explains the open-mindedness of the early Acadian settlers. What were their world views and how did they perceive the indigenous people living on the land that they tried to settle? Why were they able to establish trust and friendship with the indigenous people whereas the English settlers in New England started their lives in the New World with a very different and above all conflictual attitude?

Acadian History as a History of Cultural Transfer and Transculturality

Acadian migrants brought a true heritage of diversity from Europe to North America. The extraordinary multiplicity of custom and language in 17th-century France has, however, not yet been given enough scholarly attention. The migrants brought with them a considerable amount of material culture from their former lives, as well as European cosmological beliefs.[27] The use of tools such as axes and guns, ploughs and spades, was only part of what was transferred. Patterns of clothes, techniques of cooking, ways of working wood and of spinning nets, and the new art of knitting was part of the migrants' repertoire of skills from Europe, in varying degrees and in varying ways. Equally the migrants brought with them a diversity of social traditions. We already know that e.g. the expectations for women differed widely.[28] We do not know, however, how the variety of family structures and kin networks melded the various individual inheritances together. And we do not know enough about how cultural encounters and cultural transfer processes reinforced and influenced each other, developing into new interaction patterns and new cultural elements that we could qualify as "transcultural".

The programmatic discussion about the history of cultural transfer points out several research perspectives which will not be elaborated here in detail.[29] Instead I

27 Cf. Griffiths 2005.

28 Cf. Sleeper-Smith 2001.

29 For an overview cf. Michel Espagne, "Kulturtransfer und Fachgeschichte der Geisteswissenschaft", in: *Comparativ* 10, 1 (2000), 42–61; Michel Espagne, *Les tranferts culturels franco-allemands*, Paris, PuF, 1999; Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in contact: World migrations in the second millennium. Comparative and international working-class history*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002; Ursula Lehmkuhl, "Creating Anglo-American Friendship: The Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Social Construction of the Special Relationship", in: Ursula Lehmkuhl – Gustav Schmidt (dirs.), *From Enmity to Friendship: Anglo-American Relations in the 19th and 20th Century*, Augsburg, Wißner Verlag, 2005, 27–51; Ursula Lehmkuhl, "Una mietitrice come catalizzatore: la Great Exhibition del 1851 e la costruzione sociale della relazione speciale anglo-americana", in: Alexander C.T. Geppert – Massimo Baioni (dirs.), *Esposizioni in Europa tra otto e novecento: spazi, organizzazione, rappresentazioni*, Mailand, Franco Angeli, 2004, 141–64; Matthias Middell, "Kulturtransfer und Historische Komparatistik – Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis", in: *Comparativ* 10, 1 (2000), 7–41; Jürgen Osterhammel, "Transferanalyse und Vergleich im Fernverhältnis", in: Hartmut Kaelble – Jürgen Schriewer, *Vergleich und Transfer. Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt–New York, Campus, 2003, 439–468; Johannes Paulmann, "Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer. Zwei Forschungsansätze

would like to highlight one significant argument: Transfer history distances itself from the quite common research perspective on mutual influence; hence it is not concerned with chronicling influences between two historical actors, like France and Britain, or the United States and Germany, or in our case between the Acadians and the British Settlers, or the Indian tribes. Instead transfer history tries to elucidate which elements of the respective "extraneous culture" are rejected and which are included or assimilated by way of a productive process of appropriation. Hence, it conceptualizes history as processes of cultural convergence carried by inter-cultural transfer.[30] This research perspective runs very much counter to the master narrative of Acadian history, a history of a permanent struggle to keep and develop ethnic and later on national identity and to remain and uphold a distinct community against the negative external influences trying to integrate and amalgamate Acadian traditions into those of the dominant society. Studying Acadian history as a history of cultural transfer changes this master narrative considerably. And I think that we need this different perspective in order to understand the particular nature and the distinctiveness of Acadian culture as an example of several transculturalisms coexisting and reinforcing each other. It is again Naomi Griffiths who pointed in this direction when she surveyed the diverse geographical origins of the French immigrants. Her findings dismissed claims that Acadian distinctiveness rested on "the transferance of an identity already forged in Europe"[31]. Rather, she shows that distinctiveness emerged slowly out of immigrant efforts to bring their diverse heritages to bear upon the potentialities of their new home and to come to terms with a shifting international political context that eventually – in 1713 – placed them under British jurisdiction.[32]

The concept of transculturality raises several sets of questions. With regard to the history of Acadia and Acadians, the most interesting one for me is pointing at the entanglement and reflexivity of the history of the metropoles and the history of the peripheries. How have European constructions of the other been shaped by those others? And how has European history been shaped by the development in the colonies? Especially the history of "le grand dérangement" lends itself as a laboratory for transcultural studies.

zur europäischen Geschichte des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts", in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 267 (1998), 649–685.

30 Ursula Lehmkuhl, "Ein Kristallpalast für New York: Kulturtransfer und nationale Identitätskonstruktion in den USA vor dem Bürgerkrieg", in: *Rechtsgeschichte* 9 (2006), 12–35.

31 Griffiths 1992, 78.

32 Griffiths 2005; Griffiths 1992.

Colonial Governance in Acadia

Naomi Griffiths rejected traditional images of Acadians as being either an isolated or "a united, contented peasantry"[33]. With an economy based on agriculture, fishing, and trade, and a pattern of land occupation that was "relatively unfettered by ideas of a rank-ordered system of land ownership" and had "almost nothing in common" with the seigneurial system that developed in New France, Acadians formed communities not of habitants but of "yeoman and tenant farmers, fishermen and craftsmen"[34]. They lived in nuclear households and dispersed farms, moved about freely, and had wide contacts with the outside worlds of Cape Breton, New England, and the West Indies. With regard to patterns of colonial governance, Acadia differed not only from the system in Nouvelle France but also from the New England type. The establishment of the seigneurial system in North America had little effect on the socio-economic landscape of the colony. In the final analysis, Jean Daigle argues: "The seigneurial system did not prompt Acadian tenants to fulfil their obligations, since it failed to provide an organizational and supportive framework."[35]

Instead Acadians developed a self-help system based on the extended family networks. Acadians were actively engaged in "rural politics" and manifested deep concerns about accumulation and protecting property.[36] By the mid-18th century Acadians had achieved a considerable measure of self-governance through a system of representation by delegates that allowed them to pursue a "distinctive policy of neutrality"[37]. Those delegates, and not the clergy, Griffiths writes in challenging yet another cliché of Acadian history, "were the indispensable arbiters of community life"[38]. Acadians developed specific ways of organizing community life – one could perhaps talk about an early form of civil society. Settlers organized the provision of food and shelter, education, and the establishment of infrastructure. It was this political action around which the concept of identity revolved. Their achievements as "a free and flourishing people" provided Acadians with a powerful sense of commonality that enabled them to resist assimilation during their exile.[39] And it is perhaps this specific element of Acadian culture and community life that helps to explain the paradox mentioned at the beginning of this article: Since 1763, Acadia has had no official territory and no political status. Nevertheless, it did not cease to exist.

33 Griffiths 1992, 31.

34 Griffiths 1992, 21.

35 Jean Daigle, "Acadia from 1604 to 1763: A Historical Synthesis", in: Daigle 1995, 20.

36 Griffiths 1992, 31.

37 Griffiths 1992, 95–96.

38 Griffiths 1992, 71.

39 Griffiths 1992, 33, 91.

Historic New Orleans Collection

Memory and Acadian Identity, 1920–1960: Susan Evangeline Walker Anding, Dudley LeBlanc, and Louise Olivier, or the Pursuit of Authenticity

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Résumé

Au début du 20e siècle, les activistes cajuns ont préconisé une relève de l'identité acadienne dans le sud-ouest de la Louisiane en profitant de la fascination pour l'authentique dans la région. Pour les promoteurs de cette relève, il était facile de l'associer à la relève régionaliste et à l'idée d'une culture distincte tout en proposant, par cette voie, une mise à distance par rapport à la politique raciale du Sud ségrégationniste. Ainsi ils se distinguaient non seulement de la majorité anglo-protestante, mais niaient également toute relation culturelle ou historique avec leurs voisins afro-américains. Dans les années 1960, les promoteurs de la relève acadienne ont enfin réussi à inscrire dans l'imaginaire régional et national l'idée du peuple cajun non pas comme un peuple *du* mais comme un peuple *dans* le Sud et dans les Etats-Unis.

Susan Evangeline Walker Anding, Dudley LeBlanc, and Louise Olivier participated in a defining project of 20th-century culture – the pursuit and celebration of the authentic. They catalogued what they believed to be the authentic culture of southwestern Louisiana and they labored to promote awareness of it. Their campaign of cultural preservation and revival is an appropriate focus for a reconsideration of the historical memory of their beloved Acadia and of the persisting interest in its culture during the 20th century. The Acadian Revival of the 20th century warrants careful consideration for several reasons. First, Acadian (né Cajun) culture has gained a striking visibility in the United States and the world during the past century. Second, it has inspired countless practitioners and enthusiasts in almost every genre of cultural expression. Third, now that the Jim Crow "solid" South has given way to the desegregated "Sunbelt" South, now that immigrants from Latin America and Asia have flocked to Dixie, now that evangelical churches associated with the South have spread their influence across the nation, now that suburbanization has transformed large swaths of the South into landscapes indistinguishable from those elsewhere, and now that the effects of Katrina are transforming New Orleans, the nation's most unique city, the larger South that surrounds Acadian Louisiana seems less and less distinct from the rest of the nation. Thus, Acadian Louisiana seems more, not less, exotic with each passing year.

My contention, simply put, is that Acadian memory and culture since the dawn of the 20th century have been exploited to affirm purportedly primordial, innate, and enduring divisions among the region's and the nation's peoples. Central to this conception of Acadian culture was the pursuit of the authentic. Here we confront the challenge of definition. An intellectually compelling definition of "authentic" culture may not be possible. Any definition is likely to provoke the response, "authentic compared to what?" Those Americans who have been keenest to find authentic culture, whether in southwestern Louisiana or the hollows of West Virginia, are unlikely to provide much guidance or clarity about the proper measure of "authentic" culture. Nor do I intend to offer a definition. Instead I propose that we ponder why both residents of southwestern Louisiana and Americans outside the region have found it useful to locate and tap what they insist is the "authentic" culture of the Acadians in Louisiana.[1]

Let me pass over the history of Louisiana's Acadians prior to the late 19th century. Suffice to say that they were part of that extraordinarily jarring, unpredictable, and precarious peopling of North America by Europeans. Yet, for all the changes and hardships that overtook the Acadians who settled in Louisiana during the 18th and 19th centuries, they nevertheless acquired a reputation as tradition-bound peasants. In the eyes of urbane Louisiana Creoles, who took pride in their continued cultural ties with France, the Acadians lacked cosmopolitan refinement. Likewise, Anglo observers ridiculed the rustic Acadians for their alleged lack of ambition and resulting poverty. In addition, their alleged hedonism, manifested in dancing, feasting, gambling and drinking, grated on the sensibilities of many Protestant Anglos.[2]

These early negative depictions of Acadians were offset partially by competing, romantic renderings, especially Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's exceptionally popular poem "Evangeline", published in 1847. Longfellow recounted the exile of the Acadians from their idyllic homeland by tracing the ill-fated romance of

1 The starting point for the history of "authenticity" in 20th-century United States is Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880–1940*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

2 On the expulsion, cf. Carl A. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765–1803*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1987; John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland*, New York, Norton, 2005; Naomi E. S. Griffith, *The Acadian Deportation: Deliberate Perfidy or Cruel Necessity?*, Toronto, Copp Clark, 1969; Naomi E. S. Griffith, "The Golden Age: Acadian Life, 1713–1748", in: *Histoire Sociale – Social History* 17 (May 1984), 21–34. On the early years of the Acadians in Louisiana, cf. Carl A. Brasseaux, *From Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People, 1803–1877*, Jackson (Ms.), University Press of Mississippi, 1992; James H. Dormon, *The People Called Cajuns: An Introduction to an Ethnohistory*, Lafayette, Center for Louisiana Studies, 1983, 63–69; Lawrence E. Estaville Jr., "Changeless Cajuns: Nineteenth-Century Reality or Myth?", in: *Louisiana History* 28 (Spring 1987), 117–140; Donald J. Millet, *The Economic Development of Southwest Louisiana, 1865–1900*, Ph.D. diss., Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 1964.

two Acadians, Evangeline and Gabriel: Separated on their wedding day by the notorious expulsion of the Acadians by the British, Evangeline and Gabriel endure the hardships of their people's dispersal. Even so, Longfellow's resilient heroine tracks her Gabriel to Louisiana where he has fled. To her dismay, she discovers that he has departed shortly before her arrival. After years of fruitless searching for him, Evangeline eventually devotes herself to nursing at a Philadelphia hospital. There, at the close of Longfellow's poem of pathetic and unfulfilled romance, she discovers her fiancé on his deathbed.

However much Longfellow's poetic epic deviated from the recorded history of the Acadians, it nevertheless created a powerful and enduring depiction of Acadian culture that reached audiences around the world. The poem revived awareness of the deportation of the Acadians and the figure of Evangeline came to personify Acadian tenacity and devotion to tradition. Not surprisingly, those Acadians in Canada and Louisiana who were eager to refute pejorative stereotypes of Acadians adopted Longfellow's Evangeline as their Jeanne d'Arc. Louisiana Acadians revised Longfellow's mythic account in order to accentuate the romance of their history in Louisiana. Whereas the mythic Evangeline had lingered only briefly in Louisiana, Acadian activists during the 1890s proclaimed that she had been an actual person who had lived in exile in Louisiana. Leading the campaign to establish the historical authenticity of Evangeline was a prominent St. Martinville lawyer. On the basis of the reported recollections of his grandmother, he published newspaper columns and eventually a book, *Acadian Reminiscences*[3], that recounted the tragic saga of the love-lorn Acadian exile who had tracked Louis Arcenueax, the Gabriel of Longfellow's poem, to St. Martinville only to discover that he had married. The real-life heroine then had died of grief and been buried in the quaint town.[4]

That members of the white elite in southwestern Louisiana enthusiastically embraced this account of Evangeline in part reflected their anxieties about the waning of Acadian traditions. Members of the regional elite, like their counterparts elsewhere in the country, evinced worry about the threat that rapid economic and social change posed to inherited values. These concerns appear to have been especially acute among elite Acadians – merchants, planters, lawyers, and public officials – who moved back and forth between Acadian communities and the larger Anglo world of Louisiana. Almost certainly their exposure to and assimilation into "American" life made them keenly aware of both the distance that separated them

3 Felix Voorhies, *Acadian Reminiscences*, Boston, The Palmer Company, 1907.

4 For an excellent discussion of Longfellow's poem and its impact, cf. Carl A. Brasseaux, *In Search of Evangeline: Birth and Evolution of the Evangeline Myth*, Thibodaux (La.), Blue Heron Press, 1988, 9–14, passim. Cf. also Barry J. Ancelet, "Elements of Folklore, History and Literature in Longfellow's *Evangeline*", in: *Louisiana Review* 11 (Spring 1982), 118–126; Naomi Griffiths, "Longfellow's *Evangeline*: The Birth and Acceptance of a Legend", in: *Acadiensis* 11 (1982), 28–41.

from their ancestors and the condescension of both Creoles and Anglos toward their heritage. Acadian elites, like elites elsewhere, equated culture with ancestry. By resurrecting Acadian heritage and culture they sought to validate their personal and regional identity. Thus, their interest in celebrating their heritage did not imply hidebound opposition to modernity or progress. To the contrary. For genteel Acadians, who were clustered in the towns of the region, especially Lafayette, the promotion of Acadian heritage went hand in hand with local boosterism.

These Acadian boosters and antiquarians recognized the need to extend the influence of their nostalgia to the larger population who were essential to the perpetuation of Acadian culture. Public festivals seemed well suited to this task. As early as 1914 members of the Lafayette Forum established the Acadian Pageant Company, which, by means of a "presentation of history through history, allegory, poetry and the stage"[5], proposed to demonstrate that nowhere in America was there a "more picturesque, romantic, or distinctive history" than in the "land of Evangeline". Their planned pageant, to be staged by a cast of hundreds of the "lineal descendants of the Acadians", would portray a history "of thrift and peaceful contentment" in Nova Scotia and subsequent British "TYRANNY" and forced exile. Like pageant enthusiasts elsewhere during the early 20th century, the Lafayette planners intended their celebration to be an avowedly didactic spectacle that would promote community unity while enabling residents to teach themselves and others about their heritage.

Nearly a decade passed before pageant boosters fulfilled their ambition to create a communal spectacle. The centennial celebration of Lafayette Parish in 1923 provided the pretext for their historical production. On April 6, 1923, between 4.000 and 6.000 spectators (at a time when the population of the town was about 10.000) watched the cast of approximately 2.000 perform the three-and-a-half hour long pageant. The 19th-century history of the Acadians and their role in the Civil War apparently merited little attention. One pageant planner had suggested to the pageant supervisor, "How much of the Civil War you want to emphasize, you know. I would recommend very little." Instead, the pageant focused on the romantic tragedy of Evangeline as a personification of Acadian perseverance and valor, and the "the simple village life of the Acadians", their quaint domestic traditions, and old village dances.[6]

No matter how impressive the Lafayette Pageant was, it remained a single event that could not long sustain a collective identity. In keeping with the tenor of the

[5] For this and the following quotations, cf. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Le Réveil de la Louisiane: Memory and Acadian Identity, 1920–1960", in: W. Fitzhugh Brundage (dir.), *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Regional Identity in the American South*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000, 276.

[6] Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 276–277.

times, Acadian boosters took tentative steps toward forming enduring organizations to promote their cultural identity. This impulse drew upon many sources of inspiration, including the Catholic Church. Some of the French Canadian priests who served the region introduced Acadians to the linguistic and cultural nationalism then developing among French Canadians. Tourism provided another, albeit decidedly secular and commercial, inspiration for the promotion of Acadian identity. The Louisiana landscape immortalized by Longfellow had attracted sightseers throughout the late 19th century, but the inconveniences of travel to and in the region had limited their numbers. Automobile travel now enabled affluent northern refugees from winter to flock to the region's attractions. Residents of southwestern Louisiana looked to tourism as a way simultaneously to promote their heritage and to pad their wallets.

No one better appreciated the potential significance of the Acadian past as a draw for tourists than Susan Evangeline Walker Anding. Although she could not claim Acadian ancestry, she nevertheless nurtured a strong attachment to all things Acadian which she traced to her lifelong exposure to Acadian culture and a sentimental bond with her fictional namesake, Longfellow's Evangeline. The epitome of the industrious club woman of the era, she earned a regional reputation as an irrepressible promoter of civic organizations and good roads. In 1925 she proposed establishing a permanent national monument to Evangeline and the Acadians in St. Martinville. Anding simultaneously hitched the apparatus of civic organizing and applied the techniques of advertising to the cause of Acadian cultural identity. Employing uncanny promotional skills, she coaxed newspaper editors, public officials, and members of the Acadian, Anglo and Creole elites to join her Longfellow-Evangeline National Monument Association. As early as 1925 she broadcast her monument plans to radio listeners across the Deep South. Borrowing an idea from the campaign to fund a monument to the Confederacy at Stone Mountain, Georgia, she appealed to school children in Louisiana to contribute their pennies to the construction fund for the Evangeline park. She also organized booths at state and local fairs to raise money for the monument.[7]

Her most successful publicity ploy was her use of "charming costumes of the period when Evangeline lived" to arouse interest in and evoke the romance of the Acadian past. She first experimented with representing a life-like Evangeline in 1926 when she exhibited a mannequin clothed in an Evangeline costume at the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exposition. So popular was the exhibit and so well suited to the commercial atmosphere of the era that it subsequently was moved to the window of a New York City department store. In 1928, in what a local

[7] Glenn R. Conrad, "Susan Evangeline Walker Anding", in: *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, Lafayette, Louisiana Historical Association, 1988, 14. Mrs. Anding's campaign may be followed in the *St. Martinville Weekly Gazette* from 1925 to 1931. For a summary of her efforts, cf. Brasseaux 1988, 36–39.

newspaper saluted as “a progressive stunt”[8], she chaperoned a group of real-life “Evangeline girls” to the Republican and Democratic national conventions. Wherever the “Evangeline girls” went, their quaint garb of “prim white hats, tight black bodices, loving blue satin dresses, and wooden shoes” attracted attention and stirred interest in the history of “Evangeline Country”.

The success of Evangeline as a motif for Acadian identity was hardly happenstance. Longfellow’s Evangeline, of course, was an established icon. But the impulse to personify Evangeline bespoke the publicity crazed tenor of the era. Anding’s genius was to adapt the parlor game of *tableaux vivants* to serve the ends of a modern publicity campaign. By swaddling the “Evangeline girls” in historically accurate attire, she catered to the contemporary nostalgia for the authenticity and charms of yesteryear. If Acadian “girls” induced nostalgia, their “tight black bodices” and perky demeanor simultaneously radiated a sex appeal attuned to the modern taste for beauty queens. Moreover, the icon of the Acadian revival almost necessarily had to be feminine. Like other images of women in contemporary advertising, the idealized Acadian girls remained static in time, seemingly sheltering traditions from the rush of progress. The combination of the girls’ old-fashioned attire and props of domesticity, such as spinning wheels, conjured timeless values of family, community, and heritage that encouraged Acadians and others to acknowledge those traditions even as they withered. Moreover, no mythic male Acadian figure could have evoked romance the way the “Evangeline girls” did. Men powerless to protect their dependants, such as the Acadian patriarchs who were expelled from Nova Scotia, could not easily be turned into heroic figures. But a romantic heroine like Evangeline, who was buffeted by historical forces she could not have been expected to control, actually proved her womanly virtue through her victimization during the expulsion. Thus, she, far better than any male figure, could become an allegory for Acadians in general.

Anding’s campaign was remarkable for the publicity it garnered, for its propagation of many of the tropes of the Acadian revival, and for its legacy on the landscape. Anding’s vision of a tourist landscape, complete with a park commemorating Evangeline, came to pass during the 1930s. By the end of the decade park managers boasted that the park housed “more relics and antiques of real Acadian articles [than can] be found anywhere [else]”[9]. In addition, they made the convenient (and mistaken) discovery that an old house on the park grounds was the home of Louis Arceneaux, the reputed inspiration for Longfellow’s Gabriel. When Anding set in motion the permanent inscription of Acadian historical memory onto the landscape, she encouraged her Acadian neighbors to imagine themselves as united by their shared Acadian heritage. Thus, when the Chambers of Commerce

8 For this and the following quotations, cf. Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 279.

9 Brasseaux 1988, 46.

in the five counties surrounding the proposed Evangeline monument issued public announcements claiming the title of the "Acadian heartland" in 1927, they made manifest the "imagined community" that Susan Anding had labored to foster.[10]

If Anding's promotional campaign helped to infuse the public spaces of southwestern Louisiana with symbols of Acadian memory, Dudley LeBlanc, an Acadian entrepreneur of spectacular ability, forged the link between the Acadian identity, the distant past, and the international Acadian diaspora. Unlike Anding, LeBlanc was a descendant of Acadian exiles and had lived in the French-speaking world until he entered Southwestern Louisiana Institute (now the University of Southwestern Louisiana) in Lafayette. After graduating he became rich by peddling everything from patent medicines and tobacco products to burial insurance.[11]

LeBlanc's interest in his ethnic heritage fueled his enthusiasm for forging ties between Acadians in Louisiana and in Canada. Almost certainly LeBlanc's friendship with a French-Canadian priest in Louisiana who had a long-standing interest in French Canadian nationalism was a catalyst for LeBlanc's project. In addition, LeBlanc's knowledge that his ancestors had been prominent Acadian exiles in the 18th century urged on his activism. In 1928 he led a delegation of four Acadians to a convention of North American Acadians held in Massachusetts. Addressing the 6.000 gathered delegates, LeBlanc described the Louisiana brethren as the "most romantic and tragically unfortunate of all the [Acadian] exiles"[12]. So well received was his speech that the Democratic National Committee recruited him to campaign in the French-speaking communities of New England on behalf of Democratic candidates. Beyond deepening his appreciation of the uniqueness of Louisiana Acadians, the experience motivated LeBlanc to advocate the cultural union of French communities in North America.[13]

LeBlanc's widening ties with the North American Acadian community brought him into contact with Acadian activists in Canada. Following a visit by Acadians from the Canadian Maritimes in 1930, LeBlanc organized a "pilgrimage" of Louisiana Acadians to the 175th anniversary memorial of the Acadian expulsion from Nova Scotia. LeBlanc enthusiastically took up the cause and organized mass meetings that drew French-speaking audiences from across southwestern Louisiana.

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10 *St. Martinville Weekly Messenger*, 13 July, 3 August, 17 August 1929, 8 February 1930; *Opelousas Clarion-News*, 23 January 1930; *Second Biennial Report of the State Parks Commission of Louisiana, 1936–1937*, New Orleans, State Parks Commission, 1937, 65; *Fourth Biennial Report of the State Parks Commission of Louisiana, 1936–1937*, New Orleans, State Parks Commission, 1941, 28; Brasseaux 1988, 46.

11 Floyd Martin Clay, *Coozan Dudley LeBlanc: From Huey Long to Hadacol*, Gretna (La.), Pelican Publishing Co., 1973, Chapter One.

12 Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 282.

13 *Lafayette Tribune*, 31 August 1928; *St. Martinville Weekly Messenger*, 8 September 1928; *Abbeville Meridional*, 8 September 1928, 27 October 1928.

He also founded the Association of Louisiana Acadians, whose membership was limited to descendants of the Acadian exiles. Borrowing from Anding's publicity techniques, he and his association invited each Acadian community to appoint an Acadian girl as its representative at the Canadian celebrations.

In August 1930 thirty-eight Louisianans, including twenty five costumed "Evangeline girls", began a two week pilgrimage to Canada. The colorfully costumed Acadians attracted widespread publicity. A news service filmed the spectacle that the girls presented throughout the trip; national newspapers reported their visit with President Hoover at the White House; and banners on the sides of their Pullman cars announced them as "Acadians of the Evangeline Country". Beyond garnering national publicity, the trip intensified the identification of the "pilgrims" with their Acadian heritage. One of the returning Evangeline girls raved that the trip "helped to cement us closer to the land from whence we came to the north". To be in Nova Scotia, she continued, "brought back to me the stories of our earlier exile often heard from the older people ... I never felt that I was anywhere else but at home".[14]

LeBlanc and his Canadian partners were eager to perpetuate this revived sense of shared cross-border identity. In the following April, LeBlanc organized a visit by 138 French Canadians to Louisiana. Throughout their five-day tour of the region, the Canadians were greeted by young men dressed as Gabriel and the Evangeline girls who had toured Canada the previous year and other costumed women. The shared faith and language of the Acadians also figured prominently in the celebrations. One measure of the importance attached to Catholicism as a core element of Acadian identity was the 28 Canadian clerics, including a bishop, who joined the pilgrimage. And at a time of declining French proficiency in Louisiana, the Canadian visitors and their Louisiana chaperones pointedly delivered most of their public speeches in French. LeBlanc scheduled a region-wide French language contest to coincide with the visit. With the Canadian visitors watching during the unveiling of a monument commemorating Evangeline in St. Martinville, he awarded medals to young Acadian essayists who had recounted "the peaceful life in Acadia before the exile; the cruelties and sufferings of the Acadians when they were exiled; how they settled in Louisiana; [and] their present modes and customs".[15] Trans-national Acadian exchanges continued in subsequent years. In 1936 LeBlanc led another pilgrimage to Canada. Ten years later, after an inter-

[14] Both quotations from Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 282–283. Cf. also *Abbeville Meridional*, 1 March 1930, 28 June 1930, 19 July 1930, 16 August 1930; *St. Martinville Weekly Messenger*, 15 March 1930, 26 July 1930, 16 August 1930; *New Iberia Enterprise*, 12–19 July 1930, 16 August 1930; *New Iberia Weekly Iberian*, 17 July 1930, 4 September 1930; *Lafayette Daily Advertiser*, 13, 25 August 1930; *Opelousas Clarion-News*, 14, 21 August 1930. For the perspective of one of the Pilgrimage participants, cf. James T. Vocelle, *The Triumph of the Acadians: A True Story of Evangeline's People*, Vero Beach (Fl.), n.p., 1930.

[15] Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 284.

ruption caused by World War II, he escorted twenty Canadian "Acadian girls" on a grueling tour of southwestern Louisiana.[16]

Beyond promoting Acadian awareness by organizing on-going contacts between Louisiana Acadians and their cousins to the north, LeBlanc's signal contribution to the Acadian revival was to codify a historical narrative of Acadian victimhood. In 1927, he published *The True Story of the Acadians*[17], which he subsequently revised and re-published in 1932 and again in 1967. LeBlanc intended his book to be a manifesto of Acadian historical consciousness. The hardships of exile, of course, had figured prominently in both Longfellow's "Evangeline" and in *Acadian Reminiscences*. But no previous account claimed the precision or asserted the credibility of formal historical scholarship. He complained that previous accounts of the Acadian experience had "distorted the facts in order to shield the British government from the responsibility of having committed the crime"[18]. He, in contrast, insisted upon the credibility of his account: "Every controversial statement in this work is supported by authorities with appropriate citations" and "these statements cannot be successfully contradicted". His narrative of the Acadian "persecutions" was a pastiche of lengthy quotes from published histories and primary sources interspersed with breathless celebrations of Acadian heritage. LeBlanc recounted the tragedy of the "simple", "moral", "temperate", "happy", "peaceful", "chaste", and "noble" Acadians who fell victim to a perfidious and cruel British campaign to condemn "a noble race into utter oblivion". While the survival of the Acadians in the decades immediately following their expulsion from Nova Scotia was "a miracle", their subsequent century and a half in Louisiana held little interest for him. He denied any rupture between Acadian tradition and modernity and ignored the effects of change upon his people. He was satisfied to vouch for the integrity of Acadian culture by pointing to Acadians' continuing fealty to Catholicism. And LeBlanc, like enthusiasts for Appalachian culture who boasted of the Elizabethan authenticity of mountain dialects, touted the French spoken by the Louisiana Acadians as "actually classical". "If you are an Acadian", he triumphantly concluded, "you have just cause to be proud of your ancestors ... No other race of people in the world ever could claim what you can justly and proudly boast for yours."

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16 *St. Martinville Weekly Messenger*, 4 April 1931; *New Iberia Weekly Iberian*, 16 April 1931; *New Iberia Enterprise*, 18 April 1931; *Lafayette Daily Advertiser*, 9–22 October 1946; *Opelousas Clarion-News*, 10, 24 October 1946; *New Iberia Enterprise*, 10 October 1946; *St. Martinville Weekly Messenger*, 11–25 October 1946, 25 October 1946; *Abbeville Progress*, 12 October 1946; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 12 October 1946; *Crowley Weekly Acadian*, 17 October 1946; *Opelousas Daily World*, 18, 20 October 1946; *Abbeville Meridional*, 19 October 1946; Clément Cormier, "Tournée triomphale en Louisiane: Octobre 1946", in: *Les cahiers de la Société historique acadienne* 17 (October-December 1986), 133–143.

17 Dudley J. LeBlanc, *The True Story of the Acadians*, Reprint, Pawtucket (Rhode Island), Quintin Publications, 1998.

18 For this and the following quotations, cf. Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 285–286.

LeBlanc's Association of Louisiana Acadians represented, in principle, the institutionalization of the Acadian revival. But, in reality, the organization was little more than a vehicle for LeBlanc's caprices. It endured in a state of suspended animation until temporarily revived during his pilgrimages. He displayed little interest in either sustained or comprehensive cultural preservation. Instead, his compulsive hucksterism was always conspicuous in his celebrations of Acadian identity; without fail LeBlanc's promotion of all things Acadian coincided with either his latest business enterprise or his candidacy for public office. And yet his hagiography of the Louisiana Acadians and promotion of Acadian pride were conspicuous contributions to the nascent Acadian revival. His periodic pilgrimages became ritualized expressions of historical memory that explicitly asserted historical continuity between the mythic era of Evangeline and the present.

Without the contributions of Louise Olivier, an Acadian activist, a skeptic might dismiss the Acadian revival as LeBlanc's ethnic chest-thumping and Anding's publicity stunts. Most early promoters of Acadian heritage, including LeBlanc, displayed little concern for preserving traditional folkways. Aside from the mythic attire sported by women dressed as Evangeline and the retelling of some Acadian stories, the marrow of Acadian culture – handicrafts, music, food-ways, and folkways – had been virtually ignored by previous Acadian boosters. Olivier, in contrast, waged a long campaign to revive "authentic" Acadian folkways. She was, by no means, unique in her deep affection for the French language and Acadian culture. But, unlike other enthusiasts, she was a professional cultural activist who brought specialized training and endless stamina to the crusade.

Olivier, like LeBlanc, had a deep personal attachment to the Acadian community she pledged to serve. Born in an Acadian village and educated at Catholic convents there and in New Orleans, she earned degrees in music and French. After teaching French in public schools and at the Louisiana State University, she received an appointment in 1938 as the field representative of an LSU-sponsored program to promote French throughout Louisiana. The position called upon her expertise in both music and French while also encouraging her interest in Acadian folk culture.

Her teaching experience made her keenly aware of what she perceived to be the erosion of traditional Acadian culture. "Personally", she explained in 1943, "I feel we are outstanding people saturated with relics of a passing culture!"[19] "Unfortunately", she lamented, "within the last fifty years there has been such a rapid change in the new generations of the descendants of the Acadians brought by modern progress – The customs and even the language of the Acadians are fast disappearing." Traditional Acadians needed to be reinforced in their presumed

[19] For this and the following quotations, cf. Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 286 f.

struggle to hold onto their culture in the face of "progress". Because of her standing as an expert on Acadian folkways, Olivier exerted considerable influence over the value attached to various expressions of Acadian culture. Her self-appointed task was to moderate the destructive impact of modernity by re-educating Acadians to value their traditional culture. She, for instance, advocated purging vulgar modern influences from Acadian music and helped organize a national folk festival to honor the musical traditions she valued. Old Acadian songs were good; newer music was not. Her taste and principles similarly led her to value such essentially archaic artifacts as braided palmetto fans and woven baby bonnets above other forms of Acadian handicrafts.[20]

Her early efforts included pioneering one of the first sustained and widespread campaigns to preserve French in Louisiana. Building on LeBlanc's precedent of broadcasting weekly French language radio programs, Olivier launched an ongoing series of French broadcasts. Over time, she expanded her "Assemblées" by recruiting public school administrators, teachers, and community activists in French-speaking parishes to stage festivities that focused on local traditions. Her more enduring contribution to the revival was her promotion of Acadian handicrafts. Gasoline rationing and other wartime exigencies sharply curtailed her ability to travel and promote French throughout the state. Consequently, she redirected her energies to an ambitious campaign to "preserve as a culture the traditional crafts of our Acadian ancestors"; "to furnish an outlet for the self-expression of our women of Acadian ancestry" and "to find a market for the handicraft objects produced"[21]. Beginning in 1942, she enlisted traditional weavers, quilters, sunbonnet makers, and palmetto braiders to produce items for traveling displays of Acadian crafts which were exhibited at public libraries, club meetings, and fairs. Convinced of the value of establishing "THIS MOVEMENT AS AN INDUSTRY", she installed permanent exhibits, including craft demonstrations by Acadian women dressed in Evangeline attire, at the Longfellow-Evangeline State Park and other state facilities. She coaxed organizers of local festivals, such as the Crowley Rice Festival and the Abbeville Dairy Festival, to incorporate the preservation of "the French language, customs, etc." into their annual celebrations. Through these measures, Olivier by the 1950s earned national recognition for her campaign to preserve Acadian folkways.[22]

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[20] Louise Olivier to H. B. Wright, 23 April 1943. Acadian Handicrafts Project Records (hereafter AHPR), Box 1, LSU; Olivier to Henry D. Larcade Jr., 11 August 1949. AHPR, Box 5, LSU; Olivier to Clay Shaw, 23 March 1953. AHPR, Box 4, LSU.

[21] For these and the following quotations, cf. Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 288 f.

[22] "Resume of Louisiana State University French Project Activities, 1938–1944", undated [1944?]. AHPR, Box 1, LSU; Elizabeth Mae Roberts, "French Radio Broadcasting in Louisiana, 1935–1958" (MA thesis, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 1959), 88–89.

Yet, Olivier was not entirely successful in imposing her sensibilities or zeal for "authentic" Acadian culture on the Acadian revival. She, like Anding and LeBlanc before her, employed Evangeline outfits to arouse public interest in her campaign. She comforted herself that although the women she recruited to staff the craft displays wore clothes intended to evoke romance, they at least, unlike previous "Evangeline Girls", were actual artisans. Although she was largely responsible for the incorporation of Acadian culture in the fairs and festivals that proliferated during the 1940s and 1950s, she nevertheless resented the superficial respect accorded to it. Her frustration with frivolous evocations of Acadian heritage mounted during the Louisiana bicentennial celebrations of the Acadian expulsion in 1955 when she complained that "all that seems to count consists of noise and glitter. I am so tired of hearing 'a pretty girl on a shiny float' and police escorts and brass bands, etc. that I could scream"[23].

The significance of Olivier's labors cannot be measured solely by the actual sales of the Acadian crafts that she promoted. Such sales were never large. A better gauge was her success at attracting wide publicity for Acadian crafts and encouraging merchants to develop their own sources of Acadian crafts. Her project encouraged thirty-some Acadian craftswomen to revive and perpetuate trades which otherwise had little marketable value. Most important, her signal contribution to the Acadian revival was to institutionalize systematic cultural intervention in southern Louisiana and to introduce there the techniques of cultural preservation that had been applied in other "folk" communities in the United States and Europe. By doing so, she established a precedent for continuing state funded support for the promotion of the French language and Acadian folkways.

The Acadian identity has attained an influence and stature far beyond the ambitions of the earliest boosters. Taken together, the cultural revivals promoted by Anding, LeBlanc, Olivier, and their allies had far-reaching effects on southern Louisiana and the Acadian diaspora in the United States. Despite the rapid and often tumultuous changes that beset the South following World War II, the cultural revival and the institutions that sustained it endured. A century ago Acadians were obscure if exotic figures overshadowed in the American consciousness by the romantic and cosmopolitan Creoles of New Orleans. Since then, the success of the Acadian revivalists has been so great that much ink now is devoted to reminding Louisianans and outsiders alike that the region's French culture includes white and black Creole as well as Cajun traditions.[24]

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[23] Olivier to Sarah [Gertrude Knott], undated [1956?], AHPR, correspondence 1955–56, Box 7, LSU. Olivier to "Keed", 15 March 1955. AHPR, Box 5, LSU.

[24] On more recent developments in Cajun cultural preservation, cf. Brundage, in: Brundage 2000, 291–294; Robert Lewis, "L'Acadie Retrouvée: The Remaking of Cajun Identity in Southwestern Louisiana, 1968–1994", in: Richard H. King – Helen Taylor (dirs.), *Dixie Debates: Perspectives on Southern Cultures*, New York, New York University Press, 1996, 67–84.

Acadian revivalists forged an identity for the region and its residents that set them apart and outside of the familiar story of the American South. Given the context in which the Acadians labored, they faced knotty questions and severe obstacles when they strove to distinguish themselves from other white southerners. In a region that had no modern history of pluralism, the challenge for Acadians was to stake out a collective identity that acknowledged their cultural heritage without at the same time arousing suspicions or provoking repression from white Anglo elites in Louisiana and the South. The violent scapegoating of Italian immigrants in New Orleans as inveterate criminals offered a cautionary example of white intolerance. Likewise, the violence directed against Mexican-Americans in neighboring Texas underscored that many Anglos were deeply suspicious of unfamiliar ethnic and linguistic communities. White southern elites during the late 19th and early 20th centuries codified white supremacy in law and tradition and were openly suspicious of any identity that might threaten white racial solidarity. Moreover, white southern Protestants harbored powerful anti-Catholic sentiments that periodically surfaced in violence and bigotry. The vigor of the revived Ku Klux Klan, with its rabid anti-Catholic message, in post World War I South provided the backdrop to the Acadian revivalism of Anding and LeBlanc.

It is hardly surprising that the Acadian revivalists elevated the most romantic and apparently timeless aspects of their identity and heritage. By doing so they exploited the power and prestige of Longfellow and his canonical account of Evangeline. And by doing so they distinguished themselves from the surrounding Anglo majority without in any way implying any cultural or historical connection with the most reviled community in the region – African Americans. Indeed, a striking aspect of the Acadian revival was that it distanced Acadians in Louisiana from all aspects of African American culture. Acadian revivalists downplayed any role that Acadians had in either slavery before the Civil War or the Confederate cause. Despite the obvious incorporation of African American (and other) influences in Acadian music and cuisine, Acadian revivalists played up exclusively those cultural traits that had pristine “Old Country” origins. The Acadian movement institutionalized a Cajun ethnic consciousness that divided them from their white non-Cajun neighbors in Louisiana. Cajuns, the revivalists told themselves and others, were not really of the South; the peasant-like Acadians had no place in the familiar narrative of southern history as told by other white southerners. The historical twists and turns of the region’s past – slavery, sectionalism, and the traumas of the New South – happened to other people elsewhere.

We can only marvel at how deftly the Acadian revivalists carved out a place for themselves in the regional and national imagination by exploiting the allure of their apparently uncorrupted culture. They, admittedly, were not unique in this regard. Like other pockets of pure “folk” culture among the Gullah of South Carolina, Mis-

sissippi Delta bluesmen, and white Appalachian bards, the Acadians provided to seekers of authenticity evidence that some American folkways were resistant to the solvent of modernity. Acadian revivalists, however, faced some unique challenges. The romance of white Appalachian culture was bound up in the notion that the residents in the hollows of the South had preserved undiluted Anglo-Saxon culture that elsewhere had been debased by modernity and immigration. And the fascination with exotic African-American subcultures cannot be easily disentangled from white racist assumptions about innate black primitivism. Unable (because of their ethnic origins) and unwilling to shoehorn their history into a national saga of triumphant Anglo-Saxonism, yet anxious to avoid the marginalization and oppression that accompanied any association with African-Americans, the Acadian revivalists instead yoked one of the signal cultural enthusiasms of their era – the pursuit of authenticity – to the defense and preservation of their identity.

Herménégilde Chiasson,
Ange

Cajun Politics in Louisiana: *Laissez les bons temps rouler*

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Résumé

La Louisiane est née française, un statut renforcé par les immigrants canadiens francophones – finalement appelés les Cajuns – qui se sont installés dans le sud-ouest rural de la Louisiane. Quelques quarante-cinq ans plus tard, la colonie fut cédée à l'Espagne pour le restant de la période coloniale (à l'exception des vingt derniers jours pendant lesquels l'acquisition de la Louisiane fut négociée et conclue par les États-Unis). Avec "statehood", la Louisiane fut confrontée à l'immigration européenne, notamment par le port de la Nouvelle-Orléans. La Nouvelle-Orléans étant alors la plus grande ville après New York, l'immigration fut importante, et la Louisiane d'avant la Guerre civile s'avérait comme un vrai "melting pot" d'immigrants. Sa culture et ses coutumes, cependant, restaient largement françaises ce qui affectait non seulement sa législature mais aussi son système scolaire public. De plus, sa population africaine, principalement des esclaves, se métissa avec la culture dominante. Cet article propose d'abord une analyse de ce contexte pour ensuite approfondir, en trois étapes, à la fois la question de la politique cajun et celle de la place des Cajuns dans la politique: 1) les premières années de "statehood" furent marquées par la domination des Français et par la transition d'une politique essentiellement franco-créole à une politique dominée par les Franco-Cajuns ; 2) la politique de deux partis simulée pendant le siècle après la Guerre civile, une politique agencée à l'intérieur du parti démocratique et deux factions politiques – les "Longs" et les "Anti-Longs"; et 3) l'émergence de la norme contemporaine des deux partis. Sera relevé ce qui lie les trois périodes, c'est-à-dire la présence des Cajuns dans la politique: le fait qu'il y avait des gouverneurs cajuns dans chacune des périodes, des US sénateurs cajuns et des membres cajuns de la US House of Representatives. Même dans l'histoire politique récente, les Cajuns sont liés à la fois au Parti démocratique et au Parti républicain. Les Cajuns venus du Canada en Louisiane pendant la période coloniale ont donc réussi à occuper des positions politiques importantes et ont même élargi leur sphère d'influence du Parti démocratique au Parti républicain.

Setting the Context

Louisiana politics is unique because of its roots as a colony of France (1718–1763) and Spain (1763–1803), hence its ubiquitous Roman Catholic religion in contrast to the Protestantism of the East Coast colonies ruled by Great Britain. Although the immigration of Acadians began in 1754 directly from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Canada, it continued indirectly from Canada by way of the states of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. In fact, "Louisiana was founded mainly by Canadians, along with some Frenchmen

and some pirates from the Caribbean".[1] There also was an immigration of "Foreign French" from Saint Domingue (renamed Haiti), the French West Indies, and France.[2] The Acadians or Cajuns as they came to be known even established a French language newspaper, *Le Moniteur de la Louisiane*, in 1794.[3]

Louisiana, moreover, was unique because of the presence of New Orleans, a cosmopolitan French-speaking city in the European tradition established to protect Mississippi River trade from foreign encroachment. While New Orleans was the focus of negotiations set in motion by President Thomas Jefferson, the negotiations for it ended with the purchase that included the vast Louisiana Territory from France which only got it back from Spain 20 days before the 1803 transaction.[4] The Louisiana Purchase literally doubled the physical size of the relatively newly independent United States, and Louisiana statehood opened the door to the migration of "Americans", more specifically Anglo-Americans, who moved to Louisiana in great numbers from the surrounding states and the Atlantic Coast to make their fortunes in New Orleans and Louisiana. Anglo-Americans were outnumbered seven to one by Franco-Americans in 1806, but the gap was cut to two to one by 1830 and Anglo-Americans were in the majority by 1840.[5] While the Anglo-American migration surge was dramatic for the 1820 to 1840 period, it was even more prominent between 1840 and 1860, especially for North Louisiana: For the most part, Anglo-American migrants were small farmers by profession and Protestants by religion.[6]

Its Roman Catholic religious bias was reinforced because New Orleans was second only to New York as a port of immigration from Europe. Those who immigrated through the Port of New Orleans had religion as a common attribute – the Germans and Irish who came before the Civil War and the Italians who came in large numbers afterward were Roman Catholics who "drew solace from the well-rooted Catholic church in New Orleans [and its environs] and adopted the habits of cuisine and festivity, but they showed little interest in learning the French

1 Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, "The Formation of Afro-Creole Culture", in: Arnold R. Hirsch – Joseph Logsdon (dirs.), *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1992, 61.

2 Paul F. Lachance, "The Foreign French", in: Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 101–130. German farmers, moreover, were recruited to immigrate to colonial Louisiana, and they settled up river from New Orleans beginning in 1721 to grow the crops necessary to give the city's residents a dependable food source; J. Hanno Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana and The Creoles of German Descent*, Philadelphia, Americana Germanica Press, 1909.

3 Compiled from William Faulkner Rushton, *The Cajuns: From Acadia to Louisiana*, New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979, 316–323.

4 Rushton 1979, 323.

5 Wayne Parent, *Inside the Carnival: Unmasking Louisiana Politics*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2004, 12.

6 Perry H. Howard, *Political Tendencies in Louisiana*, revised and expanded edition, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1971, 14–15; 22–26; 40–44.

language"[7]. Not unlike the French and Spanish before them, the new arrivals kept their own native language and customs. Collectively, the Catholic population maintained its foothold in – and came to dominate – South Louisiana.[8]

Early Statehood[9]

The Political System

Louisiana gained statehood by an Act of the United States Congress on April 8, 1812, effective on the April 30 anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase, and it was accomplished with a printed English translation of its Constitution written by hand in French[10], at a constitutional convention with a French Creole majority and modeled after the 1799 Kentucky Constitution,[11] hence the use of the word "county" rather than "parish" in it. Collectively the General Assembly included the House of Representatives, which had members elected from districts based on population for two year terms of office, and the Senate, which had half of its members elected every two years from district units. Sitting together, members of the General Assembly selected the Governor[12] for a non-renewable four year term of office from the two highest vote getters in the general election. The Louisiana Constitution of 1812 was designed to keep Creoles in power; it "gave Franco-Louisianans almost unassailable control over state politics"[13].

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7 Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 97.

8 New Orleans, in fact, was the fourth largest city in the United States in 1840, and Louisiana the richest agrarian state by 1860; Parent 2004, 22.

9 Cf. Howard for an excellent political history through the 1960s: Howard 1971, 197; Perry H. Howard, "Louisiana: Resistance and Change", in: William C. Havard (dir.), *The Changing Politics of the South*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1972, 525–587.

10 The Constitution handwritten in French bore the signatures of the constitutional convention delegates. For commentary on the 1812 Constitution along with facsimile copies of the printed French and English versions, cf. Cecil Morgan, *The First Constitution of the State of Louisiana*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press for the Historic New Orleans Collection, 1975.

11 Morgan 1975, 3–15.

12 Louisiana Governors (2007) and Louisiana Senators (2007) respectively provide chronological lists of Louisiana's Governors and U.S. Senators beginning with statehood. Because one third of the members of the Senate were appointed/are elected every two years in conjunction with elections for members of the House of Representatives, Senators for Louisiana are in Classes 2 and 3. Biographies for all of the Governors and United States Senators are linked to their names on these lists and can be accessed for each by a click of the mouse; Louisiana Governors, "Governors of Louisiana" (Statehood/Antebellum Period [1812–1861] through the present), http://www.sos.louisiana.gov/gov-1.htm. Accessed August 8, 2007. Click on a specific Governor to access a brief biography. Louisiana Senators: "List of United States Senators from Louisiana." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_Senators_from_Louisiana. Accessed August 8, 2007. Click on a specific U.S. Senator to access a brief biography.

13 Judith K. Schafer, "Reform or Experiment? The Louisiana Constitution of 1845", in: Warren M. Billings – Edward F. Haas (dirs.), *In Search of Fundamental Law: Louisiana's Constitutions*, *1812–1974*, Lafayette, Center for Louisiana Studies, 1993, 22.

The Louisiana Constitution of 1845 modified the 1812 document to drop the property qualification to vote, a phenomenon which vastly increased the franchise. It also was modified to permit the direct election of the Governor and to give equal representation to the parishes in the Senate (up to four members). Moreover, it permitted legislative debate in *either* French or English, and it established a system of bilingual French-English public education, the expectation being that "Graduates of the schools were expected to become fluent in both languages"[14]. The General Assembly was dominated by Creoles defined variously to include those of French or Spanish ancestry born in Louisiana, regardless of race, especially given the large numbers of Free Blacks and racial intermarriage.[15] It is important to note that Free Blacks were the heart of a well established New Orleans middle class,[16] numbering some 20.000 by 1840 and holding approximately $ 2.5 million in real estate in 1850 (approximately 50 times the holdings of those in Boston and 20 times of those in Baltimore to give one a perspective).[17]

The Legal System

The Louisiana legal system rested on a Civil Code that reflected its colonial past – a blend of French and Spanish codes – unique to the new Creole-dominated state although often mistakenly thought to be the Code Napoleon (Orleans Territorial Governor William C.C. Claiborne attempted for force the adoption of a legal system based on English common law by vetoing the Civil Code passed by the Legislature in 1806, but he was forced to bow to public pressure and let the Civil Code stand). Written in French and translated into English side by side, the Legislature adopted a Civil Code based principally on that of France ordered by Napoleon, but it was rejected by the Louisiana Supreme Court in an 1817 case and its revision was rejected a second time by the Court in 1827. The Civil War and a new constitution forced another revision of the Civil Code authorized by the Legislature on October 21, 1868, and this time it was written only in English to blend the French and Spanish civil codes and American criminal law. It subsequently was adopted by the Legislature in 1870. The Louisiana legal system remains the same today.[18]

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14 Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 93.

15 Hall, in: Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 63.

16 Parent 2004, 15.

17 Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 192, 100.

18 Charles D. Hadley – Ralph E. Thayer, "Louisiana State Courts in State Politics" (paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of The American Political Science Association, The San Francisco Hilton, August 30–September 2, 1990, 1–3); cf. also Honorable John T. Hood Jr., Judge, Fourteenth Judicial District, "The Adoption and Development of the Louisiana Civil Code", in: *Louisiana Reports* 236 (1958–59), 42–60; Richard Holcombe Kilbourne Jr., *A History of the Louisiana Civil Code: The Formative Years, 1803–1839*, Baton Rouge, The Publications Institute of the Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Louisiana State University, 1987.

Cajuns in Politics

The first Cajun Governor was Alexander Mouton (1843–1846), who first served in the United States Senate (1837–1842) after having been a state legislator from Lafayette Parish. Technically elected with 60% of the popular vote to become the first Democratic Governor of Louisiana,[19] Mouton had to have been appointed by majority vote of the General Assembly[20] from among the two highest vote getters under the Constitution of 1812. The first democratically elected Louisiana Governor, then, was Democrat Paul Octave Hébert (1853–1856), who won the first off-year gubernatorial election provided for in the Louisiana Constitution of 1852 with 52,35% of the vote. He was born in Plaquemine, the seat of Iberville Parish, where he lived at the time of his election.

It is interesting that "Acadians such as Alexander Mouton and Paul O. Hébert, native [Louisianans] no less than A. B. Roman of St. James or Bernard Marigny of New Orleans, claimed a place as creoles without question, while foreign-born such as Frenchmen Pierre Derbigny and Etienne Mazureau, or the San Domingan Louis Moreau Lislet, despite their impeccable Gallic credentials, remained always outside the creole circle."[21] This phenomenon might well explain the selection of Mouton as United States Senator and Governor by a Creole dominated General Assembly. Two other United States Senators meet this expectation. National Republican Dominique Bouligny, Louisiana born French, was selected by the General Assembly (1837–1842) while Democrat Pierre Soulé, born in Castillion-en-Couserans, France, and therefore considered Foreign French, was democratically elected in 1847 for a partial term of three months and to a full term from which he resigned before its completion (1849–1853), perhaps French being more important generally in electoral politics than place of origin and/or race when Creoles were no longer in the numerical majority.

The End of an Era

The Civil War and events surrounding it precipitated two drastic social changes enshrined in the Louisiana constitutions, one impacting French-speaking Louisianans and the other impacting Black or Afro-Louisianans. According to Morgan, "Louisiana remained bilingual until the post-Civil War 'Carpet Bag' Constitution of 1868."[22] While that constitution provided for the integration of public schools and for the enfranchisement of former slaves, it was the Constitution of 1879 that required English as the language of instruction in mandated parish public schools,

19 Howard 1971, 45.

20 Members of the House of Representatives and Senate sit together to form the General Assembly.

21 Joseph G. Tregle Jr., "Creoles and Americans", in: Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 138.

22 Morgan 1975, 5–6.

"but in parishes where French was the predominant language, the exercises might also be taught in French if it could be done without extra expense"[23]. However, the gains made by the former slaves were short-lived because the Constitution of 1898 mandated segregated public schools. That constitution also imposed a residency requirement, literacy test, and property ownership as prerequisites for voter registration. In round numbers, black voter registration plummeted from 130.000 in 1897 to 5.320 in 1900 and to 1.342 in 1904 (a reduction of nearly 99%), the comparable voter registration figures for Whites, more specifically poor Whites, being 164.000, 125.000, and 92.000 or a reduction of 44% for those years.[24] By the late 1880s, moreover, creoles had become identified with racial purity (white) "and an implicit white supremacy"[25]. The effort to remove Blacks from the voter rolls removed poor Whites as well, and it left the state under the control of its Bourbon elite – merchants, bankers, and planters – for the time being.

Simulated Two-Party Politics

When V.O. Key Jr. wrote about Louisiana in his classic *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, he observed that state's "Populism was repressed with a violence unparalleled in the South", and its neo-Populism was smothered by a potent ruling oligarchy because "the presence of a large French Catholic population" introduced crosscurrents that "contributed to the prevention of the social catharsis of expression of discontent".[26] It was the "[d]ifferences between the Protestant north and the Catholic south [that] furnished a convenient advantage" for the oligarchy to divide and rule.[27] Key, moreover, saw Louisiana positioned on "the seamy side of democracy" as he subtitled his chapter on the state,[28] an argument that surfaces in Bass and DeVries'[29] discussion of Huey Long; they wrote, "[T]here is no question of a traditional public tolerance for political corruption and a record of exposure on a scale perhaps grander than anywhere else in the United States."[30]

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23 Lee Hargrave, *The Louisiana State Constitution: A Reference Guide*, Westport (CT), Greenwood Press, 1991, 11.

24 Hargrave 1991, 11–12. Cf. Howard 1971, 422, for Louisiana voter registration by race, 1900–1964. Howard's table includes the United States Census numbers for voting age Blacks and Whites. The lowest number of Blacks registered to vote was 886 in 1940, less than one tenth of one percent.

25 Tregle, in: Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 181.

26 V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1949, 156–182.

27 Key 1949, 160. The diocese of Lafayette was split off from the diocese of New Orleans in 1918 to serve the Roman Catholics in Southwest Louisiana; Rushton 1979, 11.

28 Key 1949, 156.

29 Jack Bass – Walter DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequences Since 1945*, New York, Basic Books, 1976.

30 Bass – De Vries 1976, 160.

Democrat Huey P. Long, a self-styled populist and champion of the poor, wrestled control of the state away from its Bourbon oligarchy. From the vantage point of governor (1928–1932), the Longs, Huey and his brother Earl, who himself was governor (1939–1940; 1948–1952), built a ruthless political machine with the powers of that office and fashioned a bi-factional political system complete with faction tickets that *simulated* two-party politics under the rubric of the Longs and the Anti-Longs or the "liberal" Long faction[31] versus the "conservative good government" faction. Long had taxes imposed on the fledgling oil and gas industry, timber, and others to supply textbooks to children regardless of the type of school attended (public, private, or Catholic) and to build roads, bridges, and other public works projects, e.g., the system of Charity Hospitals.

Even though the Longs and members of their faction benefited financially from these projects, they earned the political support of the poor and uneducated who were direct beneficiaries of these projects.[32] While the administration of Governor John J. McKeithen[33], a Long candidate and first two-term governor who was reelected with 81% of the vote (1964–1968 and 1968–1972), may have been the transitional one for the state's black population, it was the election of Edwin Washington Edwards in 1972 that ended the era of bi-factional politics.[34]

Like religion, race re-emerged to play a prominent role in contemporary Louisiana politics. Four years after *Smith versus Allwright* (1944) ended white primary elections and in the early years of the Civil Rights Movement, only 5,8% of age-eligible Blacks were registered to vote, a percentage that increased to 22,5 by 1952 and to 31,1 by 1960.[35] This was a very high proportion of registered Blacks in comparison with the other secessionist states, and two scholars attributed it to the tolerance of Louisiana Catholics.[36] In contrast, the 1960 voter registration for Whites was two and a half times greater (76,9%).[37] Aided by the efforts of rapidly

[31] Organized labor and the few Blacks who could vote were not part of the Long faction, but they supported it; Key 1949, 165, note 15.

[32] Key 1949, 156–182. Cf. also Allan P. Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956; T. Harry Williams, *Huey Long*, New York, Knopf, 1970; A.J. Liebling, *The Earl of Louisiana*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1961; Michael L. Kurtz – Morgan D. Peoples, *Earl K. Long: The Saga of Uncle Earl and Louisiana Politics*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1990.

[33] For a discussion of McKeithen and his political leadership, cf. Bass – DeVries 1976, 166–171.

[34] John K. Wildgen, "Voting Behavior in Gubernatorial Elections", in: James Bolner (dir.), *Louisiana Politics: Festival in a Labyrinth*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1982, 319–344.

[35] Charles D. Hadley, "The Transformation of the Role of Black Ministers and Black Political Organizations in Louisiana Politics", in: Laurence W. Moreland – Robert P. Steed – Tod A. Baker (dirs.), *Blacks in Southern Politics*, Westport (CT), Praeger, 1987, 136.

[36] John H. Fenton – Kenneth N. Vines, "Negro Voter Registration in Louisiana", in: *American Political Science Review* 60 (1957), 704–713.

[37] Charles D. Hadley, "Louisiana", in: Robert P. Steed – Laurence W. Moreland – Tod A. Baker (dirs.), *The 1984 Presidential Election in the South*, New York, Praeger, 1986, 23.

expanding black political and/or community organizations led largely by black ministers,[38] the implementation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 pushed the proportion of age-eligible Blacks registered to vote to 61,6 % in 1972 and by the 1992 presidential contest it was at near parity with Whites, the respective percentages being 75,9 and 77,9. When Blacks registered to vote, moreover, they overwhelmingly selected the Democratic Party (98,9%).[39]

Yet, at the same time, Louisiana remains somewhat unique among the states. Certainly, its South-North division between Catholics and Protestants depicted in Figure 1 below sets it apart from all of the former secessionist states, and in the 1960 presidential election its Catholicism "was a political asset [for U.S. Senator John F. Kennedy] because roughly 45 percent of the whites are Catholic"[40]. The strength of party organization, moreover, is another factor that sets Louisiana apart from its former secessionist partners in the South, making it more like Maryland,[41] another state with large immigrant and black populations.[42] Another factor influencing Louisiana political parties and politics is its unique Open Elections System put in place at the behest of Governor Edwin W. Edwards in 1975 for state elections and in 1976 for the election of its federal officeholders.[43] Moreover, Louisiana remains on "the seamy side of democracy", to use the subtitle that Key gave to his Louisiana chapter.[44] *Laissez les bons temps rouler* describes the

[38] Hadley, in: Moreland – Steed – Baker 1987, 133–148; cf. also Bass – DeVries 1976, 176–179. Cf. the excellent examination by Hirsch, although it is New Orleans specific: Arnold R. Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White: The Transformation of Race and Politics in Twentieth-Century New Orleans", in: Hirsch – Logsdon 1992, 262–319.

[39] The information in this paragraph is from Charles D. Hadley – Jennifer Horan, "Louisiana: Two-Party Conservatism", in: Charles D. Hadley – Lewis Bowman (dirs.), *Southern State Party Organizations and Activists*, Westport (CT), Praeger, 1995, 145–146. Louisiana maintains voter registration records by race and political party among other factors.

[40] Bass – DeVries 1976, 164–165. A substantial number of Blacks in South Louisiana are Catholics, as well, and Catholicism is attributed to the unusually large number of Blacks registered to vote in the state before the Civil Rights Movement, cf. Fenton – Vines 1957, 704–713.

[41] David R. Mayhew, *Placing Parties in American Politics*, Princeton (NJ), Princeton University Press, 1986, 104–105.

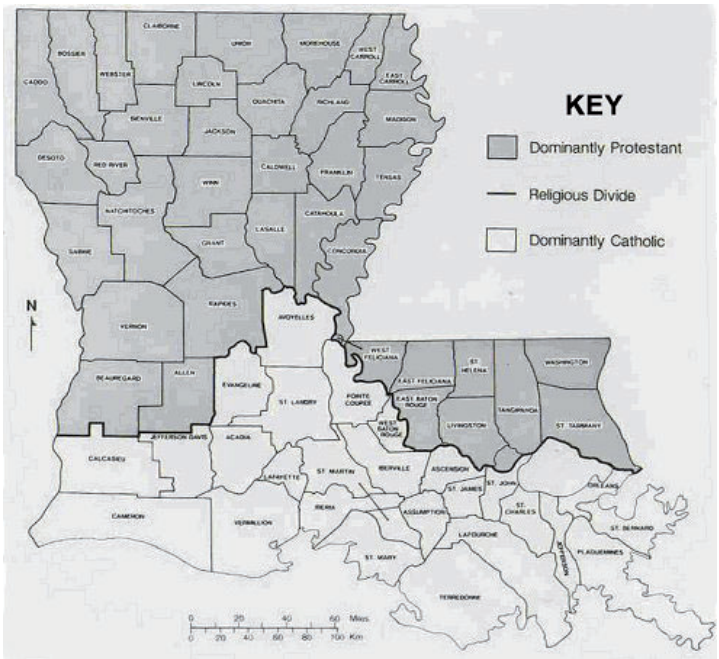
[42] Parent 2004, 12–13.

[43] Charles D. Hadley, "The Impact of the Louisiana Open Elections System Reform", in: *State Government* 58 (Winter 1986), 152–157. The system replaced the general election with an open primary election where all candidates for an office run in a "free-for-all" primary, and, if no candidate gets a majority of the vote, the top two vote getters, regardless of political party affiliation if any, face each other in a runoff primary. After experience with the system, surveyed state Democratic Party officials overwhelmingly considered it a mistake to have changed from the closed party primary, closed party runoff primary, general election system; Charles D. Hadley, "Support for the Return to Closed Primary Elections: Louisiana Party Professionals on the Open Elections System", in: *Southeastern Political Review* 13 (Fall 1985), 167–177. It also ended the practice of "ticketing", where Democrats for state office ran under the symbol of the rooster and those for national office ran under the symbol of the donkey. The Louisiana Legislature, moreover, began to change the election system back to its original form during its 2007 session.

[44] Key 1949, 156.

Cajun culture,[45] but it somewhat uniquely describes all facets of Louisiana political life including its tumultuous political campaigns.[46]

Figure 1[47]: Religious Distribution for Louisiana Parishes by the Dominant Religion, Roman Catholic or Protestant, 1957



Source: National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Bureau of Research and Survey, *Churches and Church Membership in the United States: An Enumeration and Analysis by Counties, States and Regions*, Series C, Number 45 (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ, 1957).

45 Rushton 1979, 241–259.

46 Charles D. Hadley – Jonathan O. Knuckey, "Louisiana: *Laissez les bon [sic] temps rouler!*", in: Laurence W. Moreland – Robert P. Steed (dirs.), *The 1996 Presidential Election in the South*, Westport (CT), Praeger, 1997, 77–93. Variants of the term captured in titles and subtitles include "Hot and Spicy": Jonathan O. Knuckey – Christine L. Day – Charles D. Hadley, "Louisiana: Hot and Spicy!", in: Laurence W. Moreland – Robert P. Steed (Special Issue Editors): The 2002 Presidential Election and Southern Politics, *The American Review of Politics* 26 (Spring 2005), 65–84; "Inside the Carnival": Parent 2004; "The Final Throes of Freewheeling Ways?": Charles D. Hadley – Charles J. Barrilleaux, "Lobbying Louisiana: The Final Throes of Freewheeling Ways?", in: Clive S. Thomas – Ronald J. Hrebenar (dirs.), *Interest Groups in the Southern States*, Tuscaloosa, The University of Alabama Press, 1992, 295–317; "Festival in a Labyrinth": James Bolner, *Louisiana Politics: Festival in a Labyrinth*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1982.

47 Figure 1 is from Charles D. Hadley – Ralph E. Thayer, "Louisiana: The Unfolding of its Political Culture" (paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of The American Political Science Association, The Washington Hilton, August 31–September 4, 1988, 23).

A Contemporary Two-Party Norm

As the state neared the end of its period of bi-factional politics,[48] it witnessed the beginning of a period of competitive two-party politics. Three factors to varying degrees were important to its contemporary politics: its religious division between its North Louisiana Protestants who tended to be conservative and Republican and its South Louisiana Catholics who tended to be somewhat liberal and Democratic, the latter being the electoral base for Cajuns in Louisiana politics. Finally, Louisiana witnessed the re-enfranchisement of its black citizens who cross-cut both religious geographic divisions. Little noticed, however, was the fact that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its extensions also re-enfranchised Louisiana's much larger group of poor white citizens. In fact, more than four Whites (4,36) were registered to vote for every black citizen in 1966, a ratio that dropped to 3 to 1 by 1984.[49]

Republicans

In 1979, Louisiana elected its first Republican Governor since Reconstruction, David C. Treen (1980–1984). Treen was followed by Republican Governors Charles E. "Buddy" Roemer, III[50] (1988–1992) and Murphy J. "Mike" Foster, who served two terms (1996–2000; 2000–2004). At the beginning of 2008, Republicans held the statewide offices of Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Insurance, and one of the state's two U.S. Senate seats. Republicans also held five of the state's seven seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, including the traditionally Democratic seat in the heart of Cajun country centered in Lafayette. In the Legislature, Republicans hold 49 of 105 seats (47%) in the House of Representatives and 16 of 39 seats in the Senate (41%), and they captured the position of Speaker of the House of Representatives with the intervention of newly elected Republican Governor Bobby Jindal regardless of its minority party status in the chamber. While voter registration does not reflect its electoral strength, Democrats have sunk from 97% of the registered voters in 1968 to 54% in mid-2006 (nearly half of whom are black – 44%), the growth being among both Republican (2% to 25%) and "Other" (0,6 to 21%).[51]

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48 Hadley, in: Steed – Moreland – Baker 1986, 22–29.

49 Computed from Hadley, in: Steed – Moreland – Baker 1986, 23. Cf. also Parent 2004, 7–30. Parent concludes his description of Louisiana political culture with the facts that "North Louisiana is home to a rural American South culture. South Louisiana contains a French Acadian culture. African Americans are found throughout most of the state. All three coexist and are aware of the others' presence. All three are also aware that none dominates." (Parent 2004, 29)

50 Roemer changed political parties from Democrat to Republican while in office. Both Treen and Roemer were defeated for re-election by Cajun Democrat Edwin W. Edwards discussed below.

51 Hadley, in: Steed – Moreland –Baker 1986, 24–29; Hadley – Horan, in: Hadley – Bowman 1995 145–151. I have argued that the Open Elections System retards Republican voter registration because

Cajun Democrats

Cajun Democrats were the lynchpin of their party's electoral success in the contemporary period. U.S. Senator Allen J. Ellender (1937–1972), from Terrebonne Parish, was in the right place at the right time. After the assassination of U.S. Senator Huey P. Long in 1935, his wife Rose McConnell Long was appointed to complete his Senate term by Governor Oscar K. (O.K.) Allen, a Long ally who was expected to run for and be elected to the seat with the support of the Long organization. Fortunately for Ellender, a floor leader in the Legislature for Governor Huey P. Long and a member of the Long faction, Allen died unexpectedly after winning the Democratic nomination for the vacant seat, paving the way for him to use his position as Speaker of the House of Representatives to secure the nomination in Allen's place in the Democratic runoff primary tantamount to election in the general election.

The only Cajun Governor elected in the 20th century was the charismatic and controversial Edwin W. Edwards who served four terms of office (1972–1976, 1976–1980, 1984–1988, and 1992–1996). Fluent in French from early childhood and a practicing lawyer by age 21, the handsome and flamboyant Edwards noted that he was "one of only two attorneys who could write a French will". In recalling the early 1960s, Edwards noted that "older clients would flock to his office because he continued to conduct his practice in French" and the "[e]lderly witnesses in simple land-title suits or divorce actions or auto-accidents […] were often questioned in French" with English interpreters being used to prepare a final legal record.[52] His endearment to his Cajun constituents was parlayed into election to the Crowley City Council, Louisiana Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives before moving on the governorship where he took his first-term oath of office in French.

According to Bass and DeVries, Edwards ran for governor as a reform candidate and won the closest election ever held for governor (in 1971).[53] His victory came from

> the 22 parishes of Acadiana, or Cajun country,… [where he] not only polled 68 percent of the vote ... [but, he also had a] turnout more than 5 percentage points higher than the statewide average. While only about one-fourth of the voting-age population (26,8 percent) reside in Acadiana, they constituted 31,5 percent of those who actually voted in the runoff. With a new ethnic pride reflected in bumper stickers that read "Cajun

it removed the incentive to register in that party to participate in primary elections; Hadley, in: Steed – Moreland – Baker 1986, 21–44. Again that is about to change in the near future. The figures cited in the paragraph were ascertained from the following web sites: www.house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps_Demographics.asp, www.senate.legis.state.la/Senators/Data.asp, and www.sos.louisiana.gov/stats/Quarterly_Statistics/Statewide/, accessed January 16, 2008.

[52] Rushton 1979, 284.

[53] Bass – DeVries, 1976.

> Power," 76,2 percent of the voters there turned out, compared with 71,1 percent statewide.[54]

Characterized as a "skillful politician" with a "first rate mind"[55], Edwards seized the moment by utilizing his Southwest Louisiana congressional district as a base and putting together a biracial coalition that included the newly re-enfranchised Blacks who provided the necessary votes for him to win the hard fought and very closely contested gubernatorial election. As he himself said, "I was elected by a coalition of blacks, farmers, and people from South Louisiana of French Cajun descent." He went on to note, "I was making overtures and had a record as a city councilman, state senator, and member of Congress [as one] who showed a willingness to accommodate black needs, which in most instances were the same as the needs of the poor whites."[56]

Reminiscent of the colorful gubernatorial campaigns of the past, Edwards mounted a whirlwind campaign stump in his 1983 bid for an unprecedented third term, a campaign that touched all 64 parishes in some 80 campaign stops in nine days and ended a week before the election. On the stump Edwards assumed the role of savior. He told the hundreds who greeted him at each stop:

> You that are elderly and have seen your funds cut, you that are crippled, blind, poor, disabled, you that have suffered these long three and a half years [under incumbent Republican Governor David C. Treen], take heart. Take heart, for ... the great healer shall returneth and make ye well.[57]

Edwards considered himself "a poor man's friend, a little man's God". Responding to a debate question, Treen said, "I'd rather be inept than dishonest." Never at a loss for words, the quick-witted Edwards shot back, "I'd rather be inept than dishonest, too. But since I am neither, I have a hard time commenting on the question." The audience laughed. The 1983 gubernatorial campaign, which cost Treen and Edwards $ 19 million excluding in-kind contributions, would have made the Longs proud, especially with the election of Edwards for an unprecedented third term.[58]

Opportunity knocked again in 1991 when incumbent Democrat-turned-Republican Governor Charles E. "Buddy" Roemer unexpectedly finished third after Edwards and David Duke,[59] neo-Nazi and former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, who received

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54 Bass – De Vries 1976, 171–172.

55 Bass – DeVries 1976, 171.

56 Quoted in Alexander P. Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1984, 111–112. On Edwards' biracial coalition, cf. also Bass – DeVries 1976, 172.

57 For this and the following quotations cf. Hadley, in: Steed – Moreland –Baker 1986, 22.

58 Quoted in Hadley, in: Steed – Moreland – Baker 1986, 22.

59 Their respective percentages of the vote were 34, 32, and 27.

celebrity status from the national and international media when he took advantage of the free-for-all Open Elections System and the looseness of party affiliation to get elected to the state House of Representatives as a Republican in a very low turnout special election. In another national and international media extravaganza, Duke entered the gubernatorial runoff election against former Governor Edwin Edwards as much from outside as within the state given his appearances on Larry King Live, Phil Donahue, The Today Show, and Meet the Press.[60]

Louisiana voters received an intense and sustained anti-Duke media barrage from a united business community, the tourism and hospitality industries, and prominent people from all walks of life – professional sports stars, military personnel, and even old political adversaries like former Republican Governor David C. Treen and then Republican President George H. W. Bush, among others. Left between a rock and a hard place, citizens, many out of sheer fear, took to heart the bumper stickers "Vote For The Crook. It's Important" and "Better A Lizard Than A Wizard" by handing a 61 to 39% victory to the three-term former Governor Edwin Edwards who had survived a near year-long federal trial for allegedly selling hospital need certifications during that third term.[61]

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (2004–2008), another Cajun and the first woman governor of the state, appears to have ended her political career due to the severe criticism she received over her handling of the multitude of problems created by Hurricane Katrina (the worst natural disaster in the history of the United States), especially her unpopular handling of the immediate aftermath of the storm, and of Louisiana's recovery effort. It did not help to have popular former U.S. Senator John B. Breaux (1987–2005), a protégé of Edwards and a Cajun himself, who was elected to Edwards former seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in a 1972 special election where he served until his move to the Senate in 1987, making noises about running for governor. Breaux was urged to come out of political retirement and return to Louisiana from Maryland to run for governor in the place of Blanco by prominent Louisiana Democrats. He ultimately chose not to run for governor after much media speculation, but Governor Blanco, extremely unpopular in public opinion polls, did decide to opt out of a re-election bid.

Five Cajun Members of Congress are of note: W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (1980–2005), Charles J. "Charlie" Melancon (2005–continuing), James A. "Jimmy" Hayes (1986–

60 Douglas D. Rose – Gary Esolen, "DuKKKe for Governor: 'Vote for the Crook. It's Important'", in: Douglas D. Rose (dir.), *The Emergence of David Duke and the Politics of Race*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992, 197–241.

61 From Charles D. Hadley, "Louisiana: The Continuing Saga of Race, Religion, and Rebellion", in: *The 1992 Presidential Election in the South*, Westport (CT), Praeger, 1994. Today the flamboyant former governor, arguably the most popular governor in the history of the state, is in the middle of a 10 year term in federal prison having been found guilty in 1998 on 17 of 26 charges including wire fraud, racketeering, mail fraud, and extortion.

1996), Christopher C. "Chris" John (1997–2005), and Charles W. Boustany Jr. (2005–continuing). Tauzin changed political parties from Democrat to Republican in 1995 after Democrats lost majority control of the U.S. House of Representatives, ostensibly because conservatives like him were unwelcome among the Democrats. In making the change, however, the new Republican majority let him retain his seniority in the chamber and gave him the Standing Committee assignments of his choice, instantly making him a powerbroker in Washington, D.C., until he left to become a lobbyist for the pharmaceutical industry. Democrat Melancon succeeded Tauzin who tried to pass his seat on to his son with the same name.

Hayes, like Tauzin, was elected as a Democrat and became a Republican in 1995, but he ended his political career the following year when he ran for the U.S. Senate seat won by Democrat Mary Landrieu who, at the time, had a statewide constituency as a two-term State Treasurer. Democrat Christopher "Chris" John (1997–2005) was elected to Congress in 1996 and left his safe Cajun seat to run for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by John Breaux, who endorsed him; however, John was defeated by Republican congressman David Vitter, who successfully parlayed his conservative South Louisiana base with the North Louisiana Republican stronghold to win in the first primary. Republican Boustany now holds the Lafayette-based seat in Congress that went from Democrats Edwards to Breaux to Hayes to John.

Conclusion

Cajuns have been a force in Louisiana electoral politics, especially as Democrats, beginning in the Jacksonian period when governors became elected by people rather than the state General Assembly, a period just before the Civil War. They returned as force in Louisiana politics in the period of bi-factional politics with the election of U.S. Senator Allen J. Ellender, and they held sway in the modern era that began in 1972. With this said, it appears that Cajun politicians have begun to follow the Republican trend long evident in the South[62] and Louisiana politics.

The state remains on the seamy side of democracy, tolerant of political corruption. As noted in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*,

> This celebration of cleansing Louisiana started early this century with the racketeering convictions of Edwin Edwards and son, which [U.S.] government lawyers hailed as the beginning of the end of the "Louisiana Way." And yet, after years of scrubbing, the

[62] Earl Black – Merle Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, Cambridge (MA), Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

> Louisiana Way does not seem to be going away, as each new indictment reveals how much more room we have for improvement.[63]

In fact, the most recent politician to plead guilty in federal district court was the very popular New Orleans Councilman-at-Large Oliver Thomas thought by many to be the next New Orleans mayor. Pleading guilty not long before him was a former Orleans Parish School Board President. In federal prison already, in addition to Edwards, are two successive Louisiana Commissioners of Insurance and a Secretary of State among others, all of whom were Democrats prosecuted by Republican U.S. Attorneys who worked for the U.S. Department of Justice. Louisiana politics continue. *Laissez les bons temps rouler!*

[63] John Maginnis, "The 'Louisiana Way' isn't going away", in: *The [New Orleans] Times-Picayune*, August 22, 2007, B-7.

Language and Literature
Langue et littérature

those who read out loud, their voices seduced by
words that come to them like unexpected lifeboats, words
that transform themselves into precious gems embedded in
the glossy white pages they venerate with effusiveness and
the naive sincerity of children awed by the magic power of
words that take them to the other side of the looking glass

Herménégilde Chiasson, *Beatitudes.*
Fredericton, Goose Lane Edition, 2007, 43.

celles qui lisent tout haut, leurs voix séduites par des
paroles qui leur arrivent tels des secours inespérés, les mots se
métamorphosant en bijoux précieux sertis dans le blanc
luisant de pages qu'elles vénèrent avec la profusion et la
sincérité naïves d'enfants étonnés du pouvoir magique qu'ont
sur eux les paroles qui leur font traverser les miroirs

Herménégilde Chiasson, *BéatitudeS.*
Sudbury, Prise de parole, 2007, 47.

Herménégilde Chiasson,
9 French Poets – Apollinaire

How Much Acadian is There in Cajun?

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Résumé

Ce travail met en cause le mythe selon lequel les Cadiens seraient avant tout les descendants des exilés acadiens arrivés en Louisiane au 18e siècle, ainsi que le corollaire de ce mythe, qui voudrait que le français cadien dérive principalement du français acadien. Je démontre que les Acadiens et leurs descendants n'ont jamais constitué qu'une minorité des francophones en Louisiane, même si l'extension sémantique du terme "cadien" au 19e siècle a fait qu'on désigne par ce nom la plupart des francophones louisianais aujourd'hui, peu importe leur origine. À la lumière de ce fait, il n'est pas surprenant que des études linguistiques comparatives révèlent relativement peu d'affinités entre le français louisianais et le français des provinces maritimes du Canada.

Introduction

When I was first asked to participate in the Cajuns and Acadians conference, I was apprehensive. The conference, I assumed, would be the occasion for an uncritical reaffirmation and celebration of the fundamentally Acadian roots of Louisiana "Cajun" culture. And while the historical links between Louisiana and Acadia are well documented and, indeed, cause for celebration, I was afraid that my current research, which is concerned with exploring the limits of those links and the exaggerated importance that they have assumed in our understanding of Louisiana's francophone culture, would sound an unwelcome sour note in an otherwise harmonious chorus of celebration. By the time my turn to present had come, however, I had heard Herménégilde Chiasson speak of the "myth" of Acadian origins, Fitzhugh Brundage explain how the Acadian element in Louisiana's history had been consciously and skillfully promoted in the early to mid 20th century by a series of Acadian "boosters", in no small part for commercial purposes, and Maurice Basque make the audacious assertion that Louisiana's Cajuns should not even be considered part of the Acadian diaspora, so dramatic was the cultural evolution that the Acadian exiles underwent after their arrival in Louisiana. At that point, instead of being concerned that my remarks would shock the audience and other participants, I worried that they would seem banal. But at least I knew then that I was in good company, and it was something of a relief to see that the path had already been cleared for questioning the Acadian-ness of Cajun culture.

My own small contribution to this endeavor is focused on the French language in Louisiana, and more specifically, on examining the extent to which French as it is spoken in Louisiana today ought to be considered the descendant of the language variety that the Acadian exiles brought with them in the late 18th century. I propose to approach this problem from two angles, looking first at the demographic history of Louisiana to see where the Acadians fit into the broader picture of francophone settlement, before turning to the available linguistic data to search for possible correspondences between Louisiana French and Acadian French. First, however, it is necessary to consider the confusion that surrounds the use of the labels "Acadian" and "Cajun" and the ways in which this confusion (mis)informs our view of who Louisiana's francophones are and what type of French they speak.

The Cajun Label and the Myth of Acadian Origins

It is a well-established fact that the word "Cajun" – *Cadien* [kɑʤɛ̃] in Louisiana French – is historically related to *Acadien* and *Acadie* and thus owes its existence in Louisiana to the Acadian exiles who settled along the bayous and marshes of the then-Spanish colony.[1] I would argue, however, that the general awareness of the etymology of the word "Cajun" and of the way it was brought to Louisiana has blurred our view of the history of Cajun people, culture, and language by singling out its properly Acadian element and focusing undue attention on it, to the exclusion of other important historical sources. A brief review of the demographic history of francophone Louisiana makes this clear by placing the Acadian element in its proper context.

It is important to remember that, whereas the Louisiana colony was founded in 1699, the Acadians did not begin arriving until sixty-five years later, after Louisiana had been ceded to Spain. According to the best estimates, at most 3.000 Acadian exiles made their way to Louisiana between 1764 and 1785. They settled first along the Mississippi River, Bayou Teche, and at the Opelousas post,[2] while later arrivals settled primarily along Bayou Lafourche. In both cases, the Acadians tended to remain near their original areas of settlement; only a small minority ventured to peripheral areas.

Table 1 shows that, in 1766 – well before most of the Acadians had arrived – the free population of Louisiana numbered 5.611, and the total population, including

[1] But for evidence that the original form of *l'Acadie* was in fact *la Cadie*, cf. Pascal Poirier, *Le glossaire acadien*, Édition critique établie par Pierre M. Gérin, Moncton, Éditions d'Acadie, 1993, 14–15.

[2] Carl A. Brasseaux, *The founding of New Acadia: The beginnings of Acadian life in Louisiana, 1765–1803*, Baton Rouge–London, Louisiana State University Press, 1987, 93.

slaves, numbered 11.410. Since the Spanish made little effort to populate the colony with Spanish-speaking colonists beyond soldiers and administrators, we may assume that the vast majority of free persons, as well as many slaves, spoke some variety of French. In 1788, three years after the last Acadians arrived, Louisiana's population had swelled to 42.621, of whom 19.455 were free and 23.166 were enslaved.

Table 1: Free and enslaved population in Louisiana around the time of the Acadians' arrival

	1766	1788
Free	5.611	19.455
Enslaved	5.799	23.166
TOTAL	11.410	42.621

Source: Rodríguez (1979, 413; cuadro 1.2 A; 438, cuadro 1.8 A; 440, cuadro 2.2 A; 458, cuadro 2.8 A).[3]

The Acadians, then, arrived as a minority in a colony with well-established French-speaking populations that had originally come from France, Quebec, and, in the case of French-speaking slaves, Africa. Moreover, in the ensuing years, the number of Acadian immigrants was dwarfed by that of new francophone groups arriving from France and from the former French colony of St. Domingue, following the slave revolt there that resulted in the founding of the republic of Haiti. In the years 1809–10 alone, more than 10.000 persons – approximately one third of them slaves, one third free people of color, and one third Whites – arrived in New Orleans from former St. Domingue via Cuba. Immigration from France continued until the Civil War, further reinforcing the francophone population of what had become the American state of Louisiana at a time when English was quickly becoming the dominant language.

It is true that, as minorities go, the Acadians were particularly influential, as they had numerous offspring and readily assimilated other cultural groups. But there is no reason to believe that they overwhelmed and subsumed the other francophone populations; indeed, it is likely that some Acadians were themselves assimilated, in particular when they found themselves in the minority. This was the case, for example, in parishes outside the core areas of Acadian settlement, such as Avoyelles, Pointe Coupee, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist. Table 2 presents figures from the 1870 Census showing that residents of Acadian descent constituted tiny minorities in these heavily French-speaking parishes. In such circumstances, notes Carl Brasseaux, the most authoritative historian of the Cajuns, the Acadians

[3] Antonia Acosta Rodríguez, *La población de Luisiana española (1763–1803)*, Madrid, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Dirección General de Relaciones Culturales, 1979.

were “vulnerable to rapid assimilation into the dominant Anglo- and Creole-based cultures” [4].

Table 2: Residents of Acadian origin in parishes peripheral to the Acadian core, 1870

Parish	Number of residents of Acadian origin in 1870
Pointe Coupee	237 (1.8%)
Avoyelles	220 (1.6%)
St. John	44
St. Charles	20

Source: Brasseaux (1992, 107).

It may seem curious, then, that these parishes form part of the region officially designated as “Acadiana” by the Louisiana legislature in 1970, and that many of their residents today consider themselves to be Cajuns. These apparent anomalies are explained if we look at developments that occurred in the 19th century, and in particular at the evolution that the meaning of the term “Cajun” underwent. Once again, the work of Brasseaux provides the relevant background information. It is important to understand, first, that as the Acadians and their descendants entered into contact with other groups – including Whites of French, Spanish, or Anglo extraction, but also people of African and American Indian descent – a process of cultural and ethnic mixing occurred such that the lines separating these groups became blurred. This blurring was especially likely to take place in the case of poor white Creoles who, linguistically and socio-economically, already had much in common with the Acadians. At the same time, the semantic range of the term “Cajun” was considerably expanded, in particular as growing numbers of Anglos, who did not understand the complex nuances of Louisiana’s ethnic mosaic, poured into the region after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. Their broader use of the term brought about an even greater blurring of ethnic boundaries, at least as viewed by outsiders. As Brasseaux explains:

> [...] *Cajun* was used by Anglos to refer to all persons of French descent and low economic standing, regardless of their ethnic affiliation. By the end of the nineteenth century, this class alone retained its linguistic heritage. Hence poor Creoles of the prairie and bayou regions came to be permanently identified as Cajun, joining the Acadian ever poor and *nouveau pauvre* ... The term *Cajun* thus became a socioeconomic classification for the multicultural amalgam of several culturally and linguistically distinct groups.[5]

[4] Carl A. Brasseaux, *Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People, 1803–1877*, Jackson–London, University Press of Mississippi, 1992, 107. “Creole” is used here in reference to settlers and descendants of settlers having come to Louisiana directly from France.

[5] Brasseaux 1992, 104–105.

Eventually, this broadened use of "Cajun" took hold among many Louisiana francophones, as well. While it is still possible to find older white francophones who refuse the Cajun label and continue to refer to themselves as Creoles, it is increasingly common for younger people in the same communities to consider themselves Cajuns, even if they do not have Acadian ancestry.

Such processes of ethnic redefinition are common in the history of societies and are not necessarily cause for concern. What is troubling in the case of the Cajuns, however, is how a narrow focus by scholars and cultural activists on the Acadian aspects of Cajun history has helped to fashion a contemporary vision of the Cajuns that excludes other groups who also played an important role in constituting Cajun ethnicity and culture. Fitzhugh Brundage's contribution to the present volume is illuminating for the insight it provides into the crucial role that a series of local and regional Acadian "boosters" played in highlighting and reinforcing the links between Louisiana and Acadia in the early to mid-20th century. The emphasis on Acadian origins constituted an essential component of their efforts to preserve, promote, and commercialize Cajun culture, and it is in no small measure to those efforts that we owe our current, widely accepted views of who the Cajuns are.

Scholars have often bought into this view and, in turn, consecrated it through their own work. This phenomenon has been examined by Waddell, who notes in particular how it is exacerbated by the use of labels. He observes that "scholarly writing has served to reinforce and legitimate the myth by focusing almost exclusively on the Acadian aspect of the history, settlement, and culture of French Louisiana and by constantly interchanging the terms *Cajun* and *Acadian*, thereby rendering them synonymous"[6]. Waddell's characterization of the prevailing view of Cajun origins and culture as a myth is apt, because it helps to explain its irresistible appeal. Like many myths of origin, that of the Cajuns makes a compelling narrative, beginning with an idyllic life in Acadia that is disrupted by the tragedy of exile but regained through the founding of a new homeland in Louisiana. Also like many myths of origins, that of the Cajuns, though grossly oversimplified, is rooted in historic events. The obvious relatedness of the labels "Cajun" and "Acadian" makes it all the easier to equate the two and appears to legitimate an explanation of Cajun origins that, by obscuring their complexity, is clear and easy to understand. It is the apparent clarity and simplicity of the Acadian-to-Cajun narrative that have led to its becoming a kind of schema for understanding the Cajuns, a ready-made package of knowledge that is so widely accepted that it needs no explaining, but can simply be invoked or, at most, retraced in its broad outlines, whenever needed.

[6] Eric Waddell, "French Louisiana: An outpost of *l'Amérique française* or another country and another culture?", in: Dean Louder – Eric Waddell (dirs.), *French America: Mobility, identity, and minority experience across the continent*, Baton Rouge–London, Louisiana State University Press, 1993, 239.

Since linguists working on francophone Louisiana are primarily concerned with studying the French language and, understandably, are less concerned with untangling the complex history of the region's populations, it should come as no surprise that some readily adopt the schema of Acadian origins perpetuated by other scholars, which has the advantage of allowing them to move quickly from questions of history to questions of language, their main object of study. One doesn't have to look far, for example, to find linguists engaging in the kind of terminological equivalency Waddell laments. Bodin's 1987 dissertation[7] is titled *The Dialectal Origins of Louisiana* ***Acadian*** *French* (my emphasis), and throughout, she uses the label "Acadian" in reference to the French spoken by the people she calls Acadians rather than Cajuns. A decade later, in her study of French speakers in four Louisiana parishes, Dubois[8] uses the same labels interchangeably to refer to the participants in her survey. And in a particularly striking example of the time-saving invocation of the Acadian-origins schema, Dubois and Horvath[9] begin an article on Cajuns and Creoles by declaring succinctly that "Cajuns are descendants of Acadians from the province of Nova Scotia in Canada who originally settled in Louisiana between 1765 and 1785", thus in a sentence circumscribing the origins of the Cajuns to the single group that is their namesake and dispensing with the need for further elaboration.

If linguists are prone to adopt the Acadian-origins schema in dealing with – or avoiding having to deal with – the history of the Cajuns, it is perhaps inevitable that their view of the language of the Cajuns should also be informed by the schema. I offer by way of illustration my own words, published just a few years ago, shortly before I began seriously questioning the myth of Cajuns as (primarily) the descendants of Acadians. While my characterization of "Cajun" French was nuanced enough to encompass more than Acadian French, it nevertheless placed what I now believe to be undue emphasis on its Acadian source:

> The label "Cajun French" encompasses a number of speech varieties that differ, sometimes significantly, from region to region. While **the main source of these was the dialect brought to Louisiana in the eighteenth century by the Acadians fleeing British repression in Nova Scotia**, Cajun is also spoken by people who trace their ancestry directly to France and has been adopted by Louisianans of other origins, as well (emphasis added here).[10]

[7] Catherine Claire Bodin, *The dialectal origins of Louisiana Acadian French*, Ph.D. diss., Chapel Hill (NC), University of North Carolina, 1987.

[8] Sylvie Dubois, "Field method in four Cajun communities in Louisiana", in: Albert Valdman (dir.), *French and Creole in Louisiana*, New York–London, Plenum Press, 1997, 47–70.

[9] Sylvie Dubois – Barbara M. Horvath, "Creoles and Cajuns: A portrait in black and white", in: *American Speech* 78,2 (2003), 192.

[10] Thomas A. Klingler, *If I could turn my tongue like that: The Creole language of Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana*, Baton Rouge–London, Louisiana State University Press, 2003, xxix.

In rereading the words in boldface type today, I have to admit that the claim they make was not based on any scientific evidence, but rather on my extension to the linguistic domain of the myth of the Cajuns' Acadian origins, reinforced by my understanding of the etymology of the word "Cajun": If, "as we all know" and as their name implies, the Cajuns come from Acadians, then surely Cajun French must come from the French of their Acadian ancestors. Dubois[11] appears to make a similar assumption in examining what she calls "traditional Acadian features" in the speech of Louisiana francophones in four parishes. However, at least one of the parishes under consideration – Avoyelles – was, as we have seen, never a center for Acadian settlement. Although Dubois acknowledges that Avoyelles is "geographically isolated from the Acadian heartland", she speculates that "isolation, poverty, and close-knit [Acadian social] networks" encouraged the preservation of Acadian linguistic features that, in other areas, were abandoned because they were neither "especially salient, nor prestigious"[12]. Yet many of the purported Acadian features she studies – such as the confusion of /ɑ̃/ and /ɔ̃/ and the raising of /œ/ to /Ø/ – are also attested in other varieties of French, and it seems a stretch to attribute to an Acadian source their presence today in a region where in 1870, more than 100 years after the Acadians began arriving in Louisiana, their descendants constituted only 1,6% of the population.

As I will show below, recent work on Louisiana French, including that of Dubois, has begun to move away from the Acadian-origins myth by devoting considerably more attention to the French of other groups present in Louisiana prior to and following the Acadians' arrival. Yet it is apparent that the myth continues to shape some characterizations of French spoken in Louisiana, as can be seen in a recent study by Caldas[13]. The author begins auspiciously enough with a nuanced treatment of the variety of sources of French found in early colonial Louisiana.[14] Yet he quickly runs into difficulty when he tries to reconcile this diversity with the myth of Acadian origins, which requires that today's Cajuns and their language be traced back to the Acadian exiles. Like an invisible hand that guides his analysis, the force of the myth manifests itself at the first mention of the Acadians:

> The Acadians who began arriving in Louisiana following their deportation from Nova Scotia by the British between 1755 and 1759 introduced another dialect of French to the then Spanish territory of Louisiana, **a variety now termed Cajun French**.[15] (my emphasis)

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11 Sylvie Dubois, "The Cajun French Project", LSU OSR Final Report. NSF grant SBR-9514831. Louisiana State University web site, http://www.artsci.lsu.edu/fai/Cajun/CF_report_final.pdf, n.d. Downloaded April 11, 2004.

12 Dubois, "The Cajun French Project", 2004, 4.

13 Stephen J. Caldas, "French in Louisiana: A view from the ground", in: Dalila Ayoun (dir.), *Applied French Linguistics*, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 2007, 450–477.

14 Caldas 2007, 451.

15 Caldas 2007, 451.

The strategy for reconciling the diversity of sources of Louisiana French with the Acadian-origins myth is now apparent: Only the French of the Acadians will be considered to have gone on to be labeled "Cajun French". What, then, of the other varieties of French that came before and after the Acadians? Apparently, with just a couple of exceptions, they have simply disappeared: "By the turn of the twenty-first century, essentially only two varieties of French are still spoken in the state to any extent, Cajun and Creole [...]."[16] Cajun French, it would seem, has survived thanks to the relative isolation of its speakers, whereas the French of other groups was simply given up as they assimilated to their English-speaking surroundings:

> Many of the Acadian French-speaking communities outside of New Orleans were relatively isolated, some only accessible by boat, with inhabitants only infrequently making trips to the city to buy and sell goods. This is precisely why the major native variety of French still spoken in Louisiana today is Cajun French. The other French-speaking communities in Louisiana have long ago assimilated into the majority English-speaking population, especially those francophone communities that lived in New Orleans.[17]

Such a scenario cannot account for the fact that French is still widely spoken today in many regions that were never settled by significant numbers of Acadians, including Avoyelles, Evangeline, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist parishes. A more plausible explanation is that, by the process of semantic extension described by Brasseaux, the term "Cajun" came to be applied to all poor, white French speakers, regardless of origin, as well as to the type of French they spoke. At the same time – and this is a point that has been the subject of much speculation but requires further investigation – it is likely that a widespread process of linguistic leveling reduced the distance between the various types of French spoken in Louisiana, such that today it is possible to speak of a single, generalized variety of Louisiana French (in addition to Louisiana Creole, which is clearly different) that shows a certain amount of regional variation.

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16 Caldas 2007, 452. There is one other exception – a variety of French that apparently, because it is not spoken by people who consider themselves Cajuns, cannot be considered Cajun French: "There is also a variety of French spoken in Terrebonne parish among the Houma Indians (Picone 1997)" (Caldas 2007, 452; Michael D. Picone, "Enclave Dialect Contraction: An External Overview of Louisiana French", in: *American Speech* 72,2 [1997], 117–153). Yet linguistic work among the Indians of Terrebonne Parish suggests that their French differs very little from that of their Cajun neighbors (Kevin J. Rottet, *Language shift in the coastal marshes of Louisiana*, New York, Peter Lang, 2001; Nathalie Dajko, personal communication). This is a striking example of a serious problem with the term Cajun when applied to language: Because the term is so inextricably linked to a particular ethnic group, the Cajuns (even when broadly defined to include more than just the descendants of the Acadians), it is difficult to apply it to the French of non-Cajuns, such as Indians and Creoles of color. Yet significant numbers of both groups do, in fact, speak a variety of French that is too close to that of the people called Cajuns to be considered a separate dialect.

17 Caldas 2007, 458.

Acadian Features in Cajun French

Bodin was surprised when her study of the phonology of Louisiana "Acadian" French turned up few traces of the Northern Acadian French of Nova Scotia. Indeed, since she was operating within the framework of the Acadian myth of Cajun origins, she found it "inexplicable" that, whereas Northern Acadian had preserved "a coherent phonological system and dialect lexicon", these had somehow been lost in the "Acadian" French of Louisiana.[18] Her findings are less surprising in the light of what we have just seen regarding the multiple sources of Louisiana French and the fairly modest demographic contribution of the Acadians to the Louisiana population.

More recently, other linguistic studies have tended to confirm Bodin's findings of rather limited Acadian influence in Louisiana French and the widespread presence of non-Acadian forms. Rottet[19] examines the geographic distribution of the inanimate interrogative terms *qui* and *quoi*, both of which are found in Louisiana. The form *qui* is attested in several French dialects, but not in Acadian; *quoi* is the only form attested in Acadia, but is also found in other varieties of French. Examples of these forms from Louisiana French include

(1) *Qui* ce qui va m'arriver demain? 'What is going to happen to me tomorrow?' (Lafourche Parish)
(2) *Quoi* ce qui se brasse là-bas? 'What is going on over there?' (Vermilion Parish[20])
(3) *Qui* vous-autres aurait fait si j'avais pas de license? 'What would you all have done if I didn't have a license?' (Lafourche Parish)
(4) *Quoi* tu veux je te fais cuire? 'What do you want me to cook for you?'[21]

Rottet is able to show that the presence of one form or the other in a particular region tends to correlate with the settlement patterns of that region: *quoi* is used mainly in areas where Acadian settlement was heavy, such as Vermilion Parish, while *qui* is found in areas that were settled by Creoles who came directly from France. Yet all of the regions he examines are today considered part of Acadiana, and the French spoken in them is widely known as "Cajun" French. Moreover, while it is not unreasonable to attribute the presence of *quoi* to Acadian influence in regions that were heavily populated by Acadians, the fact that *quoi* is also widely attested in non-Acadian varieties of French means that Acadian French is not the only possible source of this form in Louisiana. Indeed, the presence of *quoi* to the exclusion of *qui* in Natchitoches Parish, which was never a site of Acadian

18 Bodin 1987, abstract.

19 Kevin J. Rottet, "Inanimate interrogatives and settlement patterns in Francophone Louisiana", in: *Journal of French Language Studies* 14,2 (2004), 169–188.

20 James D. Faulk, *Cajun French I*, Abbeville (Louisiana), Cajun Press Inc., 1977, 276.

21 Marilyn J. Conwell – Alphonse Juilland, *Louisiana French Grammar*, Vol. 1, The Hague, Mouton, 1963, 151.

settlement, cannot easily be attributed to an Acadian source and suggests the likelihood that this form, no doubt like other putative Acadian forms, existed in Louisiana independently of the Acadian exiles.[22]

Recent work by Dubois[23] and by Neumann-Holzschuh and Wiesmath[24] has also shown a relative paucity of Acadian features in Louisiana French. The latter work includes a revealing table, based mainly on data from Dubois[25] and Flikeid[26], that compares the presence of six typically Acadian features in Louisiana and in four regions of Acadia: inanimate interrogative *quoi* (just seen above), the ending *-ont* in the third person plural (e.g., *ils chantont*), the pronoun *je* used with the verbal ending *-ons* in the first person plural, the imperfect subjunctive, the passé simple, and negation with *point* rather than *pas*. Their table is reproduced here as Table 3:

Table 3: Preservation of dialectal and archaic features in Acadian and Louisiana French

	Louis.	N.B.	NF	N.S. east	N.B. west
quoi	**+/0**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**
ils... -(i)ont	**+/0**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**
je...-ons	0	+/0	+	+	+
imperfect subjunctive	0	+/0	+/0	+	+
passé simple	0	0	0	+	+
negation with *point*	0	0	0	0	+

Adapted from Neumann-Holschuh – Wiesmath 2006, 242, which in turn is based on Flikeid 1997 and Dubois 2005.
Louis. = Louisiana; N.B. = New Brunswick; NF = New Foundland; N.S. = Nova Scotia. For Louisiana, '+ / 0' indicates that the feature is found variably, but not necessarily in every parish.

22 The attestation of inanimate interrogative *quoi* in Natchitoches Parish comes from my own fieldwork there, conducted in 2002 and, in collaboration with Nathalie Dajko, in 2003. Examples from our corpus include "Je connais pas quoi ça c'était" 'I don't know what that was'; "Tu connais quoi t'appelles un chari?" 'Do you know what you call a plow?'

23 Sylvie Dubois, "Un siècle de français cadien parlé en Louisiane", in: Albert Valdman – Julie Auger – Deborah Piston-Hatlen (dirs.), *Le français en Amérique du Nord: état présent*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005, 287–305.

24 Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh – Raphaële Wiesmath, "Les parlers acadiens: un continuum discontinu", in *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 9,2 (2006) / *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 37,2 (2006), 233–249.

25 Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005.

26 Karen Flikeid, "Structural aspects and current sociolinguistic situation of Acadian French", in: Albert Valdman (dir.), *French and Creole in Louisiana*, New York and London, Plenum Press, 1997, 255–286.

What emerges from it is that, of the six features represented, only two are attested at all in Louisiana French today (*je* ... *-ons* is attested sporadically in the 19th century), and even then only in certain regions. These features are inanimate interrogative *quoi* and the verbal ending *-ont* in the third person plural. Although Neumann-Holzschuh and Wiesmath[27], citing Byers[28] and Rottet[29], claim that the third person plural *-ont* ending (which appears as *-iont* in the imperfect) in Louisiana is restricted to the parishes of Lafayette, Vermilion, Acadia, Assumption, and Lafourche, all of which saw significant Acadian settlement, my own corpus also shows the frequent occurrence of the form in Avoyelles, Evangeline, and Natchitoches parishes, none of which ever had substantial Acadian populations.[30] This means that both of the two "Acadian" features in Table 3 that are found in Louisiana are unlikely to have had a purely Acadian source, but instead must also have been present in the French of non-Acadians during the colonial period. The geographical distribution of these features highlights the necessity of considering multiple sources for a given feature of Louisiana French, and the danger of assuming that a feature must come from Acadian simply because it is attested in that variety.

Indeed, what is interesting about these recent works is that they in fact acknowledge the complexity of sources of Louisiana French[31] and, based on linguistic analysis, conclude that this variety today shows relatively little affinity with Acadian French, yet they start from the premise that Louisiana French is, or ought logically to be, a variety of Acadian. Thus Dubois[32] speaks of "dédialectalisation" to explain the absence of large numbers of Acadian features in Louisiana French, which supposes that at one time it must have been much closer to a presumed Acadian source, and Neumann-Holzschuh and Wiesmath[33] attempt to situate Louisiana French along a continuum of Acadian varieties, an enterprise that presupposes its status as a variety of Acadian French. Similar observations may be made about Salmon's recent dissertation[34], whose title, *Français acadien, fran-*

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27 Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath 2006, 241.

28 Bruce Byers, *Defining norms for a non-standard language: A study of verb and pronoun variation in Cajun French*, Ph.D. diss., Bloomington, Indiana University, 1988.

29 Rottet 2004, 169–188.

30 Examples include "les docteurs ségrets ils faisiont leur médecine" 'the folk healers made their (own) medecine' (Avoyelles Parish); "les 'tits enfants étiont là pour manger" 'the grand-children were there to eat' (Evangeline Parish); "ils faisiont" 'they made' (Natchitoches Parish).

31 Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 301, for example, notes that, while the Acadians constituted a distinct ethnic group in Louisiana, "leur variété n'était qu'un usage vernaculaire parmi tous les parlers populaires en Louisiane".

32 Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 302.

33 Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath 2006, 233–249.

34 Carole Salmon, *Français acadian, français cadien: variation stylistique et maintenance de formes phonétiques dans le parler de quatre générations de femmes cadiennes*, Ph.D. diss., Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University 2007.

çais cadien: variance stylistique et maintenance de formes phonétiques dans le parler de quatre générations de femmes cadiennes, explicitly connects Acadian and Cajun French, and which states simplistically that "[l]es Cadiens de Louisiane sont les descendants des déportés acadiens exilés dans différentes colonies dès 1755 et ultérieurement"[35] and that "[l]a communauté cadienne de Louisiane est issue de la diaspora acadienne"[36]. Yet this last statement comes after a lengthy consideration of the numerically and culturally significant immigration to Louisiana from France in the 19th century, and in spite of Salmon's acknowledgement that significant francophone populations in Louisiana also preceded the arrival of the Acadians. It is apparent, then, that Salmon, too, is very much prey to the myth of Acadian origins, which clearly motivates her decision to examine the maintenance of *Acadian* dialectal features in Louisiana French, rather than non-standard features in general. To her credit, in spite of these presuppositions, her research leads her to give full consideration to non-Acadian sources for Cajun French and to conclude that Acadian influence on Cajun is in fact somewhat limited.

Conclusion

The pervasive myth of Acadian origins continues to shape views of Louisiana francophone history and culture, whether seen from the perspective of Cajuns themselves, casual outside observers, or researchers. Despite evidence from the historical record that Acadians were only one of several groups that played an important role in forging a new ethnic group known today as the Cajuns, the appealing convenience and simplicity of a unitary explanation of the origin of the Cajuns, reinforced by the obvious lexical relationship of *Cajun* to *Acadian*, explain why it is so difficult to move beyond the Acadian myth. As concerns language, the tenacity of the Acadian myth can lead to absurd results, such as Caldas' claim that Acadian French, become Cajun, is, along with Creole and the (supposedly distinct) variety of the Houma Indians, the only French-related variety to have survived in Louisiana. Our survey of recent linguistic work on Louisiana French, however, turns up a paradox: While this work does justice to the multiplicity of sources of Louisiana French and ends up revealing its rather un-Acadian nature, these results appear to conflict with the authors' assumption – implicit or explicit – that the Cajuns have an essentially Acadian origin. It seems this paradox will persist until linguists are able fully to disabuse themselves of the Acadian myth and accept for the French language in Louisiana what Maurice Basque has accepted for Cajun people and culture in general. For if, as Basque claims, the Cajuns of Louisiana are not truly part of the Acadian diaspora, then perhaps it is time to recognize that the French language spoken by the Cajuns is not the descendant of Aca-

[35] Salmon 2007, 33.

[36] Salmon 2007, 51.

dian French. Freeing ourselves of the Acadian myth would make it less tempting to look at Cajun French as a “de-dialectized” form of Acadian or as an outlying component of a geo-linguistic continuum of Acadian varieties, which in turn would render less surprising the growing evidence that Louisiana French bears only limited traces of influence from Acadian French. Such a finding would seem natural if we began our investigations with the assumption – supported by the historical record – that Louisiana French is the heterogeneous result of a complex process of language contact that had many components, only one of which was the French of the Acadian exiles.

Historic New Orleans Collection

La diaspora acadienne dans une perspective linguistique

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Abstract

In this paper, the hypothesis is adopted that the varieties of Acadian French, geographically distant from one another in North America for quite some time, constitute an interlinguistic continuum based on the structural space which separates them. Furthermore, all varieties of Acadian French show a high degree of internal variation. Based on an analysis of chosen grammatical features the paper concludes that the variational space of Acadian French is a complex example of continuities and discontinuities to which a scalar model can only be partially applied. The factors responsible for this evolution seem to be language contact, isolation and language death. In this hypothetical continuum, Louisiana Cajun French adopts a special position: Since in Southern Louisiana Acadian French has always been in close contact with other varieties of French, some of the characteristic Acadian features have either been lost or have only been maintained in specific areas. Linguistically speaking, Cajun French thus appears to be the most distant "cousin" within the family of Acadian French varieties.

La diaspora acadienne

Depuis quelques années le français acadien tel qu'il est parlé dans les Provinces Maritimes, à Terre-Neuve, aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine ainsi que – avec certaines restrictions – en Louisiane, a reçu l'attention de nombreux chercheurs des deux côtés de l'Atlantique.[1] Il est bien connu que l'espace variationnel acadien tel

[1] Cet article s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche initié par Raphaële Wiesmath (Munich), Patrice Brasseur (Avignon) et moi-même: *Grammaire comparée des variétés du français acadien* (GraCoPAc). Pour quelques premiers résultats cf. Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh, "Le subjonctif en français acadien", in: Patrice Brasseur – Anika Falkert: *Français d'Amérique: approches morphosyntaxiques*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005, 125–144; Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh – Patrice Brasseur – Raphaële Wiesmath, "Le français acadien au Canada et en Louisiane: affinités et divergences", in: Albert Valdman – Julie Auger – Deborah Piston-Hatlen (dirs.), *Le français en Amérique du Nord. État présent*, Saint-Nicolas, Presse de l'Université Laval, 2005, 47–504; Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh – Raphaële Wiesmath, "Les parlers acadiens: un continuum discontinu", in: Robert A. Papen – Gisèle Chevalier (dirs.), *Les variétés de français en Amérique du Nord. Évolution, innovations et description*, RCLA 9,2 (2006) / RUM 37,2, 233–249; Raphaële Wiesmath, "Les périphrases verbales en français acadien", in: Brasseur – Falkert 2005, 145–158.

Pour préciser l'origine de chacune des variétés acadiennes citées, nous employons les abréviations suivantes: Nouveau-Brunswick (NB), Nouvelle-Écosse (NÉ), Île-du-Prince-Édouard (IPE), Terre-Neuve (TN), Louisiane (LOU). La base de données se compose de plusieurs corpus, soit recueillis par les chercheurs eux-mêmes, soit mis à disposition par d'autres chercheurs. Pour le NB, nous disposons entre autres du corpus de Raphaële Wiesmath, *Le français acadien. Analyse syntaxique d'un corpus oral recueilli au Nouveau-Brunswick / Canada*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2006. Pour la NÉ nous remercions Julia Hennemann d'avoir mis à notre disposition ses données, collectées dans le cadre de sa thèse de

qu'il se présente aujourd'hui est le résultat de l'une des premières purifications ethniques de l'ère moderne, le Grand Dérangement de 1755, qui vit les Britanniques déporter brutalement des milliers d'Acadiens. Après des pérégrinations s'étalant parfois sur des décennies, quelques exilés revinrent dans leur ancien pays, d'autres s'établirent en France; la principale colonie de réfugiés acadiens s'installa dans le Sud de l'État actuel de Louisiane.[2] Après le Grand Dérangement, l'unité acadienne se défit et les variétés de l'acadien, géographiquement très éloignées les unes des autres, évoluèrent de façon autonome durant 250 ans.[3]

Du point de vue des études sur la migration, la diaspora acadienne est sans aucun doute une "victim diaspora"[4], c'est-à-dire qu'il s'agit d'un cas d'"émigration forcée"[5] qui remonte parfois à une date très ancienne. Ces diasporas se distinguent sous de nombreux aspects des diasporas postcoloniales, qui sont, dans leur majorité, le résultat d'une migration de travail. Tout comme les Sépharades/Sefardim, les Acadiens ont, jusqu'à aujourd'hui, gardé "a collective memory and myth about the homeland"[6], c'est-à-dire que le déracinement et la dépossession ont favorisé la construction identitaire passant par l'affirmation de la mémoire collective et la recherche des origines. Si l'on consulte, cependant, le catalogue des critères de Cohen, les deux facteurs "development of a return movement that gains collective approbation" ainsi qu'une "troubled relationship with host societies"[7] ne s'appli-

doctorat. Le parler terre-neuvien est largement documenté dans le corpus établi par Patrice Brasseur (cf. aussi Patrice Brasseur, *Dictionnaire des régionalismes franco-terreneuviens*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 2001). Pour la Louisiane, nous nous appuyons surtout sur les corpus de Cynthia Stäbler, *La vie dans le temps et asteur. Ein Korpus von Gesprächen mit Cadiens in Louisiana*, Tübingen, Narr, 1995a; John Guilbeau, *The French spoken in La Fourche Parish, Louisiana*, Ph.D. diss., Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1950; et Jane S. Smith, *A morphosyntactic analysis of the verbal group in Cajun French*, Thèse de docorat, Seattle, University of Washington, 1994, ainsi que sur les données figurant dans Kevin Rottet, *Language shift and language death in the Cajun French speaking communities of Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes, Louisiana*, Thèse de doctorat, Bloomington, Indiana University, 1995, et Kevin Rottet, *Language Shift in the Coastal Marshes of Louisiana*, Frankfurt a. M., Lang, 2001. À ceux-ci s'ajoute également le corpus constitué par Valdman et son équipe dans le cadre du dictionnaire cadien *À la découverte du français cadien à travers la parole / Discovering Cajun French through the spoken word*, CD-ROM 2004, éd. par Indiana University Creole Institute, Bloomington: **L**(ouisian)**F**(rench)**L**(anguage)**D**(atabase).

2 Pour l'histoire des Acadiens cf. Ingo Kolboom, "Die Akadier – Frankreichs vergessene Kinder. Der lange Weg zu einer Nation ohne Grenzen", in: Ingo Kolboom – Roberto Mann (dirs.), *Akadien: ein französischer Traum in Amerika*, Heidelberg, Synchron Publishers, 2005, 5–322.

3 Dans la Romania, le destin des Acadiens n'est pas un cas exceptionnel. Mais contrairement à d'autres groupes comme les Sépharades/Sefardim, le peuple diasporique peut-être le plus connu, les Acadiens, ne sont guère mentionnés dans les travaux portant sur le phénomène "langue et migration".

4 Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas. An Introduction*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1997.

5 Paul Kerswill, "Migration and Language", in: Ulrich Ammon et al. (dirs.), *Handbook of Sociolinguistics 3.3*, Berlin–New York, de Gruyter, 2004, 2271–2285.

6 Cohen 1997, 26.

7 Cohen 1997, 26.

quent pas vraiment aux Acadiens. Pour ce qui est de la langue, cependant – et là les parallèles avec les Sépharades/Sefardim sont assez nets –, celle-ci a continué d'être un facteur important d'identité jusqu'au 20e siècle. Au siècle dernier, l'importance de la langue a diminué considérablement, ce qui n'implique toutefois ni chez les Acadiens, ni chez les Sépharades/Sefardim, une perte de l'identité ethnique. Le sentiment de continuité entre les variétés acadiennes repose, du point de vue de l'identité linguistique, avant tout sur une réminiscence plus ou moins vague de l'origine commune ("ancestry").[8]

Du point de vue linguistique, la diaspora acadienne est caractérisée par les aspects suivants:[9] Le Grand Dérangement en tant que "purification ethnique" a constitué le début d'une migration en plusieurs vagues. Ainsi le nombre de contacts sociaux et linguistiques des différents groupes de réfugiés s'est multiplié dans le temps et dans l'espace, ce qui n'est pas sans importance pour l'histoire interne de cet idiome. Le sort qu'a connu l'acadien dans la diaspora a été très variable. Mis à part l'assimilation totale des Acadiens dans l'Ouest de la France, chaque région abritant une population de souche acadienne (Louisiane, Terre-Neuve, Îles-de-la-Madeleine) a son propre profil sociolinguistique et linguistique. En raison de la rupture du contact avec le territoire de la langue de départ et des différents contacts avec d'autres langues et cultures, la désintégration de l'acadien et l'émergence de nouveaux dialectes locaux étaient inévitables. Ces évolutions purement linguistiques se sont accompagnées de l'émergence de nouvelles identités sociales et culturelles dans les nouveaux environnements – ou, pour parler comme le créoliste Salikoko Mufwene[10]: les *écologies nouvelles* auxquelles les Acadiens étaient confrontés dans la diaspora ont favorisé des changements linguistiques et identitaires.

Ce n'est pas ici le lieu de réfléchir en détail sur les répercussions de l'arrière-plan historique sur la construction identitaire dans les différentes régions de l'espace acadien. Il est hors de doute que les sociétés diasporiques, produits de la diversité, se sont elles-mêmes diversifiées et que ce pluralisme interne se traduit par la diversité des productions identitaires. Parler de l'identité acadienne en général serait donc inapproprié: du fait de la discontinuité géographique, être acadien aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine, à Terre-Neuve, au Nouveau-Brunswick et en Louisiane ne

8 Cf. Sylvie Dubois – Megan Melançon, "Cajun is dead – Long live Cajun: Shifting from a linguistic to a cultural community", in: *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 1,1 (1997), 63–93; Edith Szlezák, "*La langue elle part avec les gens*". *Franco-Americans in Massachussetts*, Thèse de doctorat, Regensburg, Université de Regensburg, 2007; pour les Sépharades/Sefardim cf., par exemple, Tracy Harris, "The sociolinguistic situation of Judeo-Spanish in the 20th century in the United States and Israel", in: *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana* IV,2 (2006), 115–133; Aldina Quintana Rodríguez, *Geográfica lingüística del judéoespañol. Estudio sincrónico y diacrónico*, Bern, Lang, 2002.

9 Cf. aussi Kolboom, in: Kolboom – Mann 2005.

10 Salikoko S. Mufwene, "The Founder Principle in creole genesis", in: *Diachronica* 13 (1996), 83–134.

signifie pas forcément la même chose. Prenons par exemple les Îles-de-la-Madeleine et la Louisiane, deux sous-espaces particulièrement intéressants.

Pour ce qui est des Acadiens des Îles-de-la-Madeleine,[11] le sentiment de "ne pas être comme les autres" est une conséquence de l'éloignement du continent et du rattachement à la province du Québec. En tant qu'Acadiens faisant partie du Québec, les Madelinots sont à la fois étrangers pour les Acadiens et pour les Québécois, ce qui confère à cet archipel un statut tout à fait particulier.[12] Néanmoins, ces mêmes Madelinots s'identifient à la langue acadienne, qui – contrairement à la situation des autres communautés acadiennes – n'est pas minoritaire. Selon Falkert, il n'y a pas vraiment d'interférences entre anglais et français; de plus, on observe une forte résistance de la population à l'assimilation au français québécois.

Pour ce qui est de la Louisiane, la situation est différente. Contrairement aux autres sous-espaces de la diaspora acadienne, le parler acadien en Louisiane s'est dès le début trouvé dans une situation minoritaire, étant donné la coexistence directe avec d'autres variétés du français, plus prestigieuses, au 18e siècle.[13] Plus nettement que dans les autres sous-espaces, on est ici confronté à une situation spéciale de "chapeautage linguistique", c'est-à-dire que la langue des réfugiés a été partiellement "coiffée" par les idiomes voisins, plus proches du standard, gardant très nettement et très longuement un statut fortement marqué du point de vue diatopique et diastratique; cette situation a nécessairement eu des conséquences sur la langue elle-même, ainsi que sur les attitudes langagières des Cadiens.[14]

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11 Anika Falkert, *Le français acadien des Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Étude de la variation phonétique*, Thèse de doctorat, Regensburg, Université de Regensburg, 2007.

12 Falkert (2007) parle à juste titre d'une "identité mosaïque" des Madelinots.

13 Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh, "Externe Sprachgeschichte des Französischen in den Vereinigten Staaten. Histoire externe du français aux États-Unis", in: Gerhard Ernst et al. (dirs.), *Romanische Sprachgeschichte / Histoire linguistique de la Romania. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Geschichte der romanischen Sprachen*, Berlin–New York, de Gruyter, 2003, 911–921; Sylvie Dubois, "Un siècle de français cadien parlé en Louisiane", in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 287-305; Michael Picone – Albert Valdman, "La situation du français en Louisiane", in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 143–165.

14 J'emprunte ces expressions à Koch – Oesterreicher et Grübl qui se réfèrent aux termes "Überdachung/überdachen" de Heinz Kloss, *Die Entwicklung neuer germanischer Kultursprachen seit 1800*, Düsseldorf, Schwann, ²1978. Cf. Peter Koch – Wulf Oesterreicher, "Comparaison historique de l'architecture des langues romanes", in: Gerhard Ernst et al. (dirs.), *Romanische Sprachgeschichte / Histoire linguistique de la Romania. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Geschichte der romanischen Sprachen*, Vol. 3, Berlin–New York, de Gruyter (sous presse); Klaus Grübl, "Les multiples origines du standard: à propos du concept de koinéisation en linguistique diachronique", in: *Actes du XXVe Congrès International de Linguistique et Philologie Romanes*, Innsbruck, 3–8 septembre 2007, Tübingen, Niemeyer (sous presse).

Dans quelle mesure la discontinuité géographique a-t-elle provoqué des évolutions divergentes et déclenché des discontinuités linguistiques? Du point de vue de la linguistique variationnelle, l'espace acadien se présente comme un ensemble complexe de continuités et de discontinuités, ainsi que d'innovations et d'archaïsmes. Les recherches récentes[15] ont considérablement contribué à préciser le statut particulier du français louisianais qui, du point de vue structurel, n'appartient que de façon périphérique à l'espace variationnel de l'acadien. En effet, le cadien n'est pas un rejeton direct de l'acadien, et c'est là un fait qui n'a pas toujours été suffisamment souligné par les linguistes[16]; il n'en reste pas moins que le sentiment linguistique des locuteurs repose sur une certaine surévaluation de la composante acadienne dans le peuplement du Sud de la Louisiane.

Les discontinuités linguistiques

"The difference that space makes" – l'importance pour la linguistique de ce topos de la géographie a été démontrée depuis longtemps par la linguistique variationnelle et la géolinguistique. Depuis toujours, la distance dans l'espace et dans le temps a été un paramètre important pour l'analyse du changement linguistique; les conséquences concrètes du facteur "espace" sur la langue ainsi que la communauté linguistique nouvelle ("new spatialities"[17]) varient pourtant d'une "écologie" à l'autre. Pour un espace variationnel aussi morcelé et dépourvu de centre normatif que celui de l'acadien, il faut partir du principe que des forces centrifuges ont toujours été et sont encore à l'œuvre, et que les discontinuités sont inévitables. En Acadie, l'unité linguistique est définitivement dissoute en 1755 à la suite du Grand Dérangement, et le nombre des discontinuités linguistiques observables est à mettre sur le compte de l'isolement géographique, mais aussi du contact avec d'autres groupes linguistiques. On peut partir de l'hypothèse que cet espace variationnel peut être appréhendé comme un ensemble de plusieurs continuums de nature spatiale et sociolinguistique, en utilisant le concept de continuum aussi bien pour l'ensemble de l'espace variationnel que pour certains sous-espaces

[15] Kevin Rottet, "Inanimate interrogatives and settlement patterns in Francophone Louisiana", in: *Journal of French Language Studies* 14 (2004), 169–188; Kevin Rottet, "Évolution différente de deux traits de contact interdialectal en français louisianais: les cas de *quoi* et *j'avons*", in: Papen – Chevalier 2006, 173–192; Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005; Michael Picone, "Le français louisianais hors de l'Acadiana", in: Papen – Chevalier 2006, 233–249; cf. aussi Tom Klingler dans ce volume.

[16] Je ne fais pas moi-même exception à la règle! Cf. aussi Tom Klingler, "Beyond Cajun: Towards an Expanded View of Regional French in Louisiana" (sous presse): "But the dominance of the *Acadian* component in the development of *Cajun* French cannot simply be assumed, in particular if such an assumption is based on little more than false equating of the two terms and a flawed understanding of the origins of the speakers of Cajun."

[17] David Britain, "Space and Spatial Diffusion", in: J.K. Chambers – Peter Trudgill – Nathalie Schilling-Estes (dirs.), *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, Malden, Blackwell, 2002, 616 (603–637).

comme la Nouvelle-Écosse ou la Louisiane, dans lesquels la variation interne est particulièrement prononcée. En d'autres termes, des discontinuités s'observent (a) dans l'ensemble de l'espace variationnel de l'acadien ainsi que (b) à l'intérieur d'une variété donnée. Dans Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath (2006)[18], nous avons essayé d'établir un "continuum interlectal" selon le degré d'acadianité des différentes variétés (voir ci-dessous), bien qu'il soit bien entendu difficile de définir un point de référence précis pour les variétés de l'acadien telles qu'elles se présentent aujourd'hui; en effet, l'acadien historique, c'est-à-dire la variété parlée avant la déportation – elle-même sans doute fort variable – est mal connu.[19] On peut éventuellement avoir recours à ce que Flikeid[20] appelle la "Maritime acadian baseline", à savoir les variétés de l'acadien parlées dans les Provinces Maritimes, surtout en Nouvelle Écosse, plus conservatrices que le louisianais.[21] La place de chaque variété sur ce continuum dépendrait donc de l'absence ou de la présence de traits acadiens censés être typiques, comme la terminaison verbale de la 3e personne du pluriel *–(i)ont* , le pronom interrogatif *quoi* à la place de *que*, ainsi que le "*je*-collectif"; cependant, vu la difficulté qu'il y a à déterminer ce qu'est un trait typiquement acadien, la fréquence relative de certains phénomènes est un facteur assez important.[22] Pour ce qui est de la variabilité interne des parlers acadiens, les travaux de Rottet et de Dubois sur le cadien louisianais ainsi que ceux de Flikeid sur la Nouvelle-Écosse permettent, cependant, de penser qu'il existe en effet quelque chose comme des continuums intralectaux et ce dans un double sens: variation topolectale d'une part, intergénérationelle de l'autre. Ainsi, Flikeid a pu montrer que l'acadien de la Baie Ste Marie occupe une place particulière

18 Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006.

19 Pour une langue historique comme le français, c'est le standard qui sert de référence à toutes les variétés, dans la mesure où c'est lui qui leur assigne leur place au sein de l'espace variationnel. Pour une variété diatopique, elle-même morcelée en plusieurs sous-systèmes, il est beaucoup plus difficile de discerner un point de référence et un espace variationnel bien délimité.

20 Karin Flikeid, "Structural Aspects and Current Sociolinguistic Situation of Acadian French", in: Albert Valdman (dir.), *French and Creole in Louisiana*, New York, Plenum, 1997, 283 (255–286).

21 Karin Flikeid, "Origines et évolution du français acadien à la lumière de la diversité contemporaine", in: Raymond Mougeon – Édouard Beniak (dirs.): *Les origines du français québécois*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1994, 275–326; Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997; Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005.

22 Bien qu'il semble possible d'évaluer, à partir d'un certain nombre de paramètres linguistiques, la distance intersystémique qui sépare les unes des autres les variétés de l'acadien, il faut cependant se rendre compte qu'il n'y a que très peu de traits qui soient attestés exclusivement en acadien. Pour ce qui est du seul cadien, Picone observe avec justesse qu'"il est également possible que tous les parlers louisianais aient été assez similaires dès l'origine. En d'autres termes, le profil linguistique des populations francophones hors de l'Acadiana pourrait suggérer que ce que nous appelons le français 'cadien', en y cherchant des particularités dialectales acadiennes, correspond en fait à un français populaire assez répandu, tel qu'il se parlait à l'époque de la colonisation initiale au dix-huitième siècle." (Picone 2006, 223)

dans l'espace variationnel néo-écossais,[23] en Louisiane, on peut observer un net fossé intergénérationnel en ce qui concerne la compétence linguistique.[24]

Dans quelle mesure la discontinuité spatiale qui existe depuis 250 ans dans le monde acadien a-t-elle donc eu pour conséquences des discontinuités au niveau langagier?[25] Mis à part le fait, évident, que toutes les langues changent continuellement, notamment celles échappant à toute influence normative,[26] plusieurs types d'évolution linguistique peuvent être distingués:

- la perte totale de la langue: les Acadiens qui sont restés dans l'Ouest de la France après 1775 (25 familles) se sont assimilés au français tel qu'il était parlé dans leur région respective;[27]
- des changements linguistiques sous l'influence d'autres variétés du français hexagonal ou nord-américain comme en Louisiane et à Terre-Neuve ainsi qu'aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine,[28]
- des changements linguistiques internes, dont quelques-uns sous l'influence de l'anglais, comme en Louisiane, Massachusetts et dans le chiac du Nouveau Brunswick,[29]
- la conservation d'archaïsmes grâce à l'isolement de certaines communautés linguistiques notamment en Nouvelle-Écosse et à Terre-Neuve,[30]
- l'érosion linguistique graduelle en Louisiane et dans le Massachusetts.[31]

Chacun de ces processus a conduit à sa façon à des divergences et par là-même au modelage de l'espace variationnel de l'acadien, l'étendue et la rapidité des processus évolutifs pouvant varier considérablement d'un sous-espace à l'autre.

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23 Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997.

24 Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005; Rottet 2004; Kevin Rottet, "Variation et étiolement en français cadien: perspectives comparées", in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 243–259.

25 Cf. aussi Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh, "*The difference that space makes*… Die Varietäten des Akadischen zwischen Kontinuität und Diskontinuität", in: Sabine Heinemann (dir.), *Sprachwandel und (Dis-)Kontinuität in der Romania*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 2008, 41–55.

26 Selon Eugenio Coseriu, *Synchronie, Diachronie und Geschichte. Das Problem des Sprachwandels*, München, Fink, 1974, 58, la variabilité (*Veränderlich*-Sein) est inhérente à la nature de la langue en tant qu'*energeia*.

27 Kolboom, in: Kolboom – Mann 2005, 144.

28 Pour le nivellement linguistique en Louisiane, cf. Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh, "Nivellement linguistique et koinéisation en Louisiane", in: *Actes du XXV^e Congrès International de Linguistique et Philologie Romanes*, Innsbruck, 3–8 septembre 2007, Tübingen, Niemeyer (sous presse).

29 Marie-Eve Perrot, "Le français acadien en contact avec l'anglais: analyse de situations distinctes", in: André Magord (dir.), *L'Acadie plurielle. Dynamiques identitaires collectives et développement au sein des réalités acadiennes*, Moncton, Centre d'études acadiennes, 2003, 267–279; Szlezák 2007.

30 Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997.

31 Rottet 2001; Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh, "*Si la langue disparaît*... – Das akadische Französisch in Kanada und Louisiana", in: Kolboom – Mann 2005, 795–821; Szlezák 2007.

Selon nous, les trois facteurs externes ayant déclenché ces processus sont les suivants:

- le contact des langues,
- l'isolement d'un sous-espace,
- l'abandon graduel de la langue dans une situation minoritaire.

Quelles sont les particularités linguistiques qui peuvent être attribuées aux facteurs mentionnés?

Contact des langues

C'est un fait bien connu que chacune des variétés acadiennes est entrée en contact, non seulement avec l'anglais,[32] mais aussi avec d'autres variétés du français. En Louisiane, où le parler des Acadiens a été – au moins dans certaines régions – dès le début en présence de différentes variétés du français colonial[33] ou des variétés du français hexagonal parlées par les réfugiés à la fin du 18e siècle[34] – plus prestigieuses que l'acadien –, cette situation est particulièrement prononcée. Le caractère spécifique du français louisianais est partiellement attribuable à cette coprésence d'une morphologie de type non-acadien et d'une morphologie dite "acadienne" ayant eu pour conséquence la perte, dans certaines paroisses, de quelques traits censés être typiquement acadiens. Cette "*dédialectalisation*"[35] – ou plus précisément, cette "*désacadianisation*" – confère au cadien une place particulière dans l'espace variationnel acadien. S'ajoute à cela le fait que, dans quelques paroisses, notamment dans le Nord (Avoyelles, Évangéline), la proportion d'Acadiens a toujours été relativement faible, de sorte que le français n'a sans doute jamais été marqué par l'acadien dans la même mesure que dans les paroisses de l'Ouest comme Vermilion, Acadie, Assumption ou Lafayette.[36]

[32] Sur l'influence de l'anglais, que l'on n'approfondira pas ici, cf. Ruth King, *The lexical basis of grammatical borrowing: A Prince Edward Island French case study*, Amsterdam, Benjamins, 2000; Rottet 2001; Wiesmath 2006. Pour le *chiac* du NB, fortement anglicisé, cf. Perrot, in: Magord 2003.

[33] Pour le *français colonial* parlé en Louisiane, cf. Picone – Valdman, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 143–165, et Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005.

[34] Cf. Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 301: "Avant l'arrivée des Acadiens, le français louisianais correspondait à une continuation d'usages qui avaient cours en France […]. Les immigrants acadiens étaient certainement un groupe ethnique distinct, mais leur variété n'était qu'un usage vernaculaire parmi tous les parlers populaires en Louisiane. Les Acadiens déportés en France avant de se réfugier en Louisiane avaient été eux aussi en contact avec le français hexagonal de l'époque. À ces variétés s'ajoute le français parlé par les colons venant en Louisiane après la Révolution."

[35] Cf. Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 302.

[36] Cf. Carl Brasseaux, *Acadian to Cajun: transformation of a people, 1803–1877*, Jackson–London, University Press of Mississippi, 1992; Klingler (sous presse). Avoyelles, notamment, n'a jamais été colonisée par les Acadiens, les francophones établis à cet endroit se désignant encore souvent eux-mêmes comme 'Créoles'.

Ainsi, les traits caractéristiques des variétés acadiennes traditionnelles ont connu un double sort en Louisiane: soit ils n'ont pas survécu; soit ils coexistent aujourd'hui avec les variantes plus communes. La question de savoir si la dénomination *cadien* ne perturbe pas l'interprétation adéquate des faits linguistiques a été, comme on l'a dit, posée à juste titre et de plus en plus souvent au cours des dernières années.

La "désacadianisation" du cadien peut être illustré par les phénomènes suivants:[37]

(a) Le pronom *je* en tant que pronom sujet de la 1ère personne du pluriel (+ désinence *–ons*) est absent aujourd'hui en cadien mais très fréquent au Canada.

(1) Je savions pas faire de bière avant que les français a venu par ici (TN – MH 059202)
(2) Pis là je faisons toutes les pâtes (NÉ – Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997, 267)

La forme 'je + *–ons*' est toutefois attestée en Louisiane au 19e siècle, mais surtout pour exprimer la première personne du singulier.[38]

(b) La désinence verbale de la troisième personne du pluriel *–(i)ont* (type: *i donnont* 'ils donnent'), caractéristique des parlers acadiens du Canada, n'apparaît que dans les paroisses dites "acadiennes" du Sud-Ouest (Vermilion, Acadia, Lafayette, ainsi que, dans l'Est, à Assumption).[39] Dans les autres paroisses (surtout à Avoyelles et Évangéline), la forme verbale correspond au standard.[40]

(3) Les plus jeunes, y a beaucoup de quoi que zeux se souvenont point qu'ils ont jamais vu, pis les plus vieux venont et ils parlont de tout sortes de choses (NÉ – Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997, 265)
(4) des femmes faisiont de l'étoffe (NB – Wiesmath 2006, 4, MB 393)
(5) au Canada ils di/euh en Acadie ils disont aussi du blé d'Inde (LOU – Stäbler 1995a, 7)
(6) quand ils commencionts à tirer la vache. ils laissaient plus le veau téter (LOU – Stäbler 1995a, 15)[41]

(c) La répartition topolectale des pronoms interrogatifs inanimés *qui* / *quoi* exprimant tous deux un référent inanimé (français standard: 'qu'est-ce qui/que, ce qui/que') suit le même principe: la forme typiquement acadienne *quoi* prédo-

37 Cf. aussi Bruce Byers, *Defining norms for a non-standardized language: A study of verb and pronoun variation in Cajun French*, Ph.D. diss., Bloomington, Indiana University, 1988; Rottet 2004; Rottet, in: Valdmann – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005; Kevin Rottet, "Attestation et disparition du type *j'avons* en français cadien", in: Brasseur – Falkert 2005, 213–227; Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005.

38 Rottet, in: Brasseur – Falkert 2005; Rottet, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006.

39 Byers 1988; Rottet 2004.

40 Dans la paroisse de Lafourche, les deux formes sont attestées.

41 À l'occasion, un même locuteur emploie les deux formes.

mine dans le Sud-Ouest, le pronom *qui* à référent inanimé, forme répandue dans le français des "créoles" au 18e siècle, a été relevé à Avoyelles, Évangéline et à Terrebonne et Lafourche.[42]

(7) *Quoi c'est qui* se brasse là-bas (LOU Vermilion – Rottet 2004)
(8) *Quoi* tu *veux* je te fais cuire (LOU Lafayette – Conwell–Juilland 1963, 151[43])
(9) *Qui-ce qui* va m'arriver demain (LOU Lafourche – Rottet 2004)
(10) *Qui* vous-autres aurait fait si j'avais pas de licence (LOU Lafourche – Rottet 2004)

D'autres traits (pas nécessairement spécifiquement acadiens) qui, eux aussi, illustrent le caractère particulier du cadien dans l'ensemble des variétés acadiennes sont les suivants:

(d) Contrairement à l'acadien des Maritimes, le cadien préfère – au moins aujourd'hui – la construction interrogative avec *est-ce que* ou l'intonation dans la question directe. Dans des sources non-contemporaines, la construction avec la particule *ti* n'est que rarement attestée.

(e) En acadien les formes traditionnelles des adverbes interrogatifs apparaissent majoritairement sous une forme périphrastique (*quand ce que, coumment ce que*). En Louisiane ces formes sont clairement concurrencées par les formes non périphrastiques.

(f) La forme typiquement acadienne (et québécoise) du pronom démonstratif *c'ti-là/-citte*

(11) oui, ça c'était une belle journée ç'ti-là (NÉ – corpus Hennemann BSM, RL)
(12) As-tu jamais vu un pareil maudit veau pour manger du beurre comme ç'ti-là (TN – Brasseur 2001, 138b)

n'est pas attestée dans la majorité des paroisses louisianaises ou prédominent les formes du français parlé (*çui-là, celui-là, lui-là, ça-là; cette-là*).

Quant aux cooccurrences de traits acadiens et non acadiens ainsi que la répartition topolectale, la situation linguistique de la Louisiane est particulièrement complexe, et Flikeid avait donc raison de constater il y a dix ans: "The Louisiana context is one of complex, long-term dialect contact and levelling."[44] Étant donné la trajectoire temporelle du français cadien,[45] on devrait en tirer la conclusion que la coexistence de formes acadiennes et non acadiennes est certainement un phénomène ancien. Toutefois, la dimension diachronique est loin d'être claire, parce qu'il n'est pas du tout certain que les formes dialectales identifiées aujourd'hui comme acadiennes n'aient pas été également utilisées dans d'autres variétés de

[42] Les paroisses de Saint-Landry, de Saint-Martin et d'Iberia sont des paroisses transitoires.

[43] Marilyn Conwell – Alphonse Juilland, *Louisiana French Grammar I, Phonology, Morphology and Syntax*, La Haye, Mouton, 1963.

[44] Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997, 283.

[45] Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 300.

français parlées par la population louisianaise au moment où les Acadiens arrivèrent en Louisiane.

Comme en Louisiane, la situation linguistique à *Terre-Neuve*, plus précisément sur la presqu'île de Port-au-Port, se caractérise également par la coexistence de plusieurs variétés de français depuis le début du 19e siècle: la population se compose de Français originaires du Nord de la Bretagne et de la Normandie, venus à partir de 1830 sur la "côte française", d'immigrants de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon et de familles acadiennes, immigrant de façon constante entre 1825 et 1860. Celles-ci venaient de l'île du Cap-Breton (Nouvelle-Écosse) où elles s'étaient installées suite au Grand Dérangement.[46] Bien que le nivellement linguistique ne semble pas être aussi prononcé à Terre-Neuve qu'en Louisiane,[47] on y trouve, là aussi, des formes nettement dialectales à côté de formes plus proches du français de référence (parlé) comme les désinences verbales *–ont / –ent*[48], les pronoms démonstratifs *c'ti* et *çui-là / çu-là* 'celui-là'[49]; de plus, la forme *leu(r)* s'utilise en tant que pronom objet indirect (à côté de *yeux*, *les* comme en Louisiane et Nouveau-Brunswick) et la forme pronominale *elle* (à côté de *a, alle*) est assez fréquente.

Au *Nouveau-Brunswick*, l'influence du français standard et, surtout dans le Nord, l'apport du français québécois sont importants aujourd'hui. Dans certains cas – comme la coexistence de *je* et *nous/on* ou de *–ont/–ent* terminaison verbale de la 3e personne – il est donc difficile de trancher pour savoir s'il s'agit d'une influence récente ou simplement de la coprésence de deux variantes qui ont toujours été en usage.[50] En *Nouvelle-Écosse* le contact avec le québécois est moins prononcé.[51]

Isolement

Parmi les régions ayant un pourcentage élevé de population acadienne, certaines communautés particulièrement isolées présentent la conservation de certains phénomènes linguistiques, désormais inconnus ailleurs. Les travaux de Flikeid montrent que quelques régions isolées de l'Ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse[52] font preuve d'une "strong 18th century continuity"[53] et que c'est là que l'on trouve enco-

46 Cf. King 2000, 17: "The history of New Foundland's Acadian population differs from those of the Maritime Provinces in that they were joined in Newfoundland, from the 1830s on, by substantial numbers of French from France."

47 King 2000, 40.

48 Brasseur 2001, xxxviii.

49 Brasseur 2001, 138–139.

50 Wiesmath 2006.

51 King 2000, 40; Ruth King – Gary Butler, "Les Franco-Terreneuviens et le franco-terreneuvien", in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005, 169–185.

52 N.B.: d'un point de vue diatopique, la Nouvelle-Écosse est très morcelée (Chéticamp, Baie Ste Marie, Île Madame).

53 Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997, 264.

re des phénomènes rares, voire inexistants dans d'autres régions appartenant à l'espace variationnel acadien. Ainsi, la Nouvelle-Écosse représente, selon Flikeid, le pôle le plus conservateur d'un hypothétique continuum interlinguistique. Ainsi

- la négation avec *point* est particulièrement fréquente dans l'Ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse (à la Baie Ste Marie et à Pubnico), aussi attestée sur Île-du-Prince-Édouard.[54]

  (13) Les pus jeunes, y a beaucoup de quoi que zeux se souvenont point qu'ils ont jamais vu (NÉ – Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997, 265)

- Le *passé simple* avec *i/ir (arrivit, donnirent)* est assez bien vivant dans toutes les régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse; dans les autres parlers, il n'existe pas.[55]

  (14) pis euh je *furent* coumme euh y avait coumme une montant sus l'autobus je *montirent* là-bas en haut (NÉ – Corpus Wiesmath Chéticamp)
  (15) Ils me *donnirent* quatre piastres et demie (NÉ – Gesner 1979, 36[56])
  (16) Le lendemain son homme *arrivit* […] Puis je *restit* là neuf semaines… (NÉ – Gesner 1979, 36)

- le *subjonctif imparfait* est encore bien attesté en Nouvelle-Écosse, mais il est rare au Nouveau-Brunswick et à Terre-Neuve; en Louisiane il n'existe pas.[57]

  (17) si tu voulais manger faulit tu te *plantis* ton jardinage pour l'hiver faulit qu'on *fût* pêcher euh du poisson pour manger dans l'hiver faulit qu'on *prît* la larme à feu pis on *fût fût* au chevreuil pis euh chasser (NÉ – Corpus Wiesmath Île Madame)[58]
  (18) j'aimais pas ça la chasse aux MOOSE faulait trop que tu *travelis* (NB – Wiesmath 2006, D227)
  (19) Faulait qu'alle *allisse* sus une montagne (TN – Brasseur, corpus inédit: GT 017701)

L'abandon graduel de la langue[59]

Pour ce qui est de l'érosion linguistique, il s'agit d'un facteur supplémentaire d'ordre sociolinguistique plutôt que spatial. L'étiolement linguistique a accéléré l'évolution linguistique, contribuant à conférer surtout au cadien louisianais une place particulière sur le continuum des variétés acadiennes en le faisant par-

54 Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997; King 2000.

55 Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006, 240.

56 Edward B. Gesner, *Étude morphosyntaxique du parler acadien de la Baie Sainte-Marie, Nouvelle-Écosse* (Canada), Québec, CIRB, 1979.

57 Neumann-Holzschuh, in: Brasseur – Falkert 2005, Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006, 240.

58 Etant donné que les formes du subjonctif imparfait et du passé simple sont parfois homophones, les formes *fût* et *prît* peuvent aussi être un passé simple, qui, lui, remplace le subjonctif.

59 Ce facteur est pour ainsi dire perpendiculaire aux facteurs précédemment étudiés, "contact linguistique" et "isolement", relatifs, eux, à l'espace. Ce niveau d'analyse est avant tout de nature sociolinguistique et se réfère au déclin de la compétence linguistique au sein des différentes générations et des groupes de locuteurs.

fois apparaître comme plus "innovateur" à certains égards. Rottet (2001) a décrit ce phénomène d'une façon exemplaire pour les *semi-speakers* de la Louisiane. Outre les changements également répandus dans les autres variétés, comme la régularisation des paradigmes verbaux et l'affaiblissement du subjonctif,[60] on peut citer:

(a) la substitution des pronoms *moi, toi* aux pronoms faibles *je, tu*[61]:

(20) Mon s'a pris les prières en anglais, mais s'connais le Salut Marie le HAIL MARY en français. Là mon s'connais (…) Ø Veux apprendre les autres, mais c'est pour m'assir là, aller dire que *mon* Ø vas lé apprendre (LOU – Rottet 2001, 195)

(b) la simplification syntaxique par exemple dans la relative, où le pronom neutre *ça* peut remplacer un pronom relatif objet:

(21) le BILL *ça* ils vont te donner ça ça va finir de tuer ça (LOU – Stäbler 1995a, 206)
(22) I voulait manger du dinne *ça* m'sieur le roi avait (LOU – Brandon 1955, 452[62])
(23) l'homme *ça* son garçon est mort (LOU – Rottet 1995, 224)

(c) la tendance à remplacer une forme finie par des formes non-finies, phénomène qui me paraît particulièrement prononcé en cadien:[63]

(24) ça fait un gros arbre. Faut tu vas puis le couper (LOU – Stäbler 1995a, 55)
(25) Je veux qu'eusse avoir eine bonne vie (LOU – Rottet 2001, 250)

(d) le conditionnel après *si*: dans les trois variétés, l'emploi du conditionnel et dans la protase et dans l'apodose est répandu, mais c'est en cadien qu'il est quasi généralisé:[64]

(26) là-là devant les grouilles-là et je veux voir quoi ce qui cogne. *si* ça *cognerait* je / je *dormirais* pas là (LOU Stäbler 1995a, 67)
(27) mais I CAN DANCE THE WALTZ. je crois je *pourrais* toujours si mes jambes me *faiseraient* pas mal (LOU – Stäbler 1995b, 179[65]).

Cadien: une étiquette trompeuse

(a) L'espace variationnel de l'acadien se présente donc comme un ensemble complexe de continuités et de discontinuités ainsi que d'innovations et d'archaïsmes.

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60 Neumann-Holzschuh, in: Brasseur – Falkert 2005.

61 Cf. Sylvie Dubois, "Attrition linguistique ou convergence dialectale: JE, MOI / JE et MOI en français cadien", in: Anaïd Donabédian (dir.), *Langues de diaspora, langues en contact*, Paris, Ophrys, 2001, 149–165.

62 Elizabeth Brandon, *Mœurs et langue de la paroisse de Vermillon en Louisiane*, Ph.D. diss., Québec, Université Laval, 1955.

63 Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006, 239.

64 Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006.

65 Cynthia Stäbler, *Entwicklung mündlicher romanischer Syntax*. *Das* français cadien *in Louisiana*, Tübingen, Narr, 1995b.

Les raisons de la désintégration de l'acadien sont multiples: le manque de toute influence normative, l'éloignement géographique et l'isolement de certaines communautés acadiennes, le contact avec d'autres langues et d'autres variétés de français, et – *last but not least* – l'érosion linguistique notamment en Louisiane.

Cela soulève toutefois plusieurs problèmes d'ordre méthodologique: pour décrire le degré de nivellement dialectal ou d'érosion linguistique, il faudrait commencer par disposer d'une meilleure connaissance des variétés anciennes de l'acadien, seul moyen d'établir le degré réel de l'unité cadienne. S'ajoute à cela que pour la langue contemporaine aussi, les modèles langagiers propres à chaque génération devraient être étudiés de façon plus approfondie qu'ils ne l'ont été jusqu'ici. Pour ce qui est de la Louisiane par exemple, certaines discontinuités existent probablement depuis longtemps (l'abandon de *je* comme première personne du pluriel), d'autres sont venues s'ajouter plus tard pour des raisons diverses (par exemple l'abandon du subjonctif ou l'effacement plus systématique du joncteur *que*[66]). Pour chaque aire dialectale, il est donc de première importance de décrire séparément le langage des locuteurs jeunes et âgés, car si celui des anciens laisse encore parfois transparaître une continuité acadienne, ce n'est souvent plus le cas pour les jeunes.

(b) Il est difficile de dire si l'on peut vraiment parler d'une échelle d'acadianité selon le degré de "désacadianisation"[67]: alors que l'acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse se présente en effet comme la variété la plus conservatrice – au moins au niveau de la morphosyntaxe –, le français louisianais apparaît, en diachronie comme en synchronie, comme la variété la plus éloignée du groupe acadien, bien qu'il partage toujours quelques traits avec l'acadien traditionnel. Étant donné ce tableau assez complexe,[68] nous avons proposé de décrire l'espace variationnel comme

[66] Cf. Raphaële Wiesmath, "Présence et absence du relatif et conjonctif *que* dans le français acadien: tendances contradictoires?", in: Claus D. Pusch – Wolfgang Raible (dirs.), *Romanistische Korpuslinguistik. Korpora und gesprochene Sprache*, Tübingen, Narr, 2002, 393–408.

[67] Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006.

[68] Cf. Neumann-Holzschuh – Wiesmath, in: Papen – Chevalier 2006, 242:

	LOU	NB	TN	NÉ (Est)	NÉ (Ouest)
quoi	+ / 0	+	+	+	+
i(ls)… -ont	+ / 0	+	+	+	+
je…-ons	0	+ / 0	+	+	+
subj. imparfait	0	+ / 0	+ / 0	+	+
passé simple	0	0	0	+	+
négation *point*	0	0	0	0	+

Tableau récapitulatif concernant la préservation de formes morphosyntaxiques dialectales et archaïques dans les parlers acadiens (adapté d'après Flikeid, in: Valdman 1997, Dubois 2005 et les données de GraCoPAc). – Flikeid distingue trois niveaux par rapport au conservatisme des régions dans les Provinces Maritimes: niveau I: le moins conservateur = NB; II: l'Est de la Nouvelle-Écosse et

un *continuum discontinu*, mêlant continuités et discontinuités et ce, tant en synchronie qu'en diachronie. Même si une telle interprétation scalaire risque d'être simpliste, notamment à cause de la forte variabilité de chaque variété individuelle, un tel schéma peut donner une première idée de la complexité de l'espace variationnel de l'acadien et du statut des différents sous-espaces.

(c) Quant à la Louisiane en particulier, il faut se rendre compte, en outre, que la *désacadianisation* ne touche nullement toutes les catégories de la même manière, si bien qu'il est impossible de considérer une variété en bloc comme la "plus conservatrice" ou la "plus innovatrice". Chacune des catégories observées plus haut a sa propre histoire et la césure se fait souvent au sein même d'une catégorie. Dans la majorité des cas, la présence des traits acadiens est donc plutôt une question de degré et de localité, et non de présence ou d'absence, comme l'observe à juste titre Dubois (2005)[69]. J'ose affirmer qu'en Louisiane, nous sommes donc en présence d'une *désacadianisation/dédialectalisation différentielle*, à la suite d'un nivellement dialectal considérable.[70] Dans une perspective non seulement ethnographique, mais aussi strictement linguistique, le terme *cadien* est donc trompeur et devrait, je rejoins ici totalement Klingler[71], être considéré comme une simple étiquette (*label*), établie à cause de plusieurs facteurs d'ordre sociolinguistique, mais ne reflétant que d'une façon limitée la réalité linguistique. Du point de vue linguistique, les termes de *français louisianais*[72] ou *Louisiana regional French*[73] sont sans aucun doute plus appropriés pour désigner cette nouvelle variété du français nord-américain, qui combine les caractéristiques de divers sous-systèmes du français tel qu'il était parlé dans les colonies aux 17e et 18e siècles et qui, de la sorte, s'est partiellement éloigné du groupe des variétés acadiennes. Le cadien, cependant, et cela ne facilite pas sa description du point de vue de la recherche sur le changement linguistique, constitue une variété nullement homogène ou stable, enracinée depuis des siècles dans le domaine de l'oral et, qui plus est, régionalement diversifiée.

Si le terme "cadien" continue néanmoins à être employé en linguistique, c'est qu'en dépit des évolutions spécifiques des différentes variétés, on peut malgré

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l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard; III: le plus conservateur : la région de la Baie Ste Marie en Nouvelle-Écosse. Pour ce qui est de la Louisiane, nous n'avons pas encore fait de distinction selon les paroisses et ne donnons pas d'indication sur la fréquence de la forme respective. + / 0 signifie que la forme est attestée mais pas forcément dans toutes les paroisses.

69 Dubois, in: Valdman – Auger – Piston-Hatlen 2005.

70 Cf. Neumann-Holzschuh (sous presse).

71 Klingler (sous presse).

72 Dan Golembeski – Kevin Rottet, "Régularisation de l'imparfait dans certaines variétés de français parlées aux Amériques", in: Aidan Coveney et al. (dirs.), *Variation et francophonie*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004, 131–154.

73 Klingler (sous presse).

tout identifier une base linguistique commune permettant aux linguistes de supposer une “unité descriptive”, même abstraite. De plus, l’acadien d’avant la déportation reste important, non seulement pour la question, d’ordre linguistique, de l’existence d’une “Acadia continua”, mais aussi pour l’image que se font d’eux-mêmes les Acadiens et les Cadiens; en effet, le sentiment identitaire d’une continuité entre les variétés acadiennes repose avant tout sur la réminiscence, plus ou moins précise, d’une origine commune.

Herménégilde Chiasson,
Considering the Curve of the Universe

Présence / absence de la Louisiane en littérature acadienne contemporaine

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Abstract

This article examines literary exchanges between authors of Louisiana and of Acadie of the Maritimes. It also focuses on references to and representations of Louisiana in recent Acadian literature of the Maritimes. Generally, Louisiana is not very present in this literature but for Antonine Maillet, Louisiana is, even more so than Acadie itself, the reserve of Acadian linguistic and cultural heritage. For Gérald Leblanc, Dyane Léger, and Rose Després, Louisiana represents the symbol of liberty and sensuality and a powerful stimulant to creative writing. The publication of a selection of texts of authors from Acadie and Louisiana in the Parisian periodical *Europe* illustrates how France typically attaches more importance to Louisiana than to Acadie, even though it is in the latter that a French-speaking society has developed.

La tenue des congrès mondiaux acadiens dans le sud-est du Nouveau-Brunswick en 1994, en Louisiane en 1999 et en Nouvelle-Écosse en 2004 ont permis de véritables retrouvailles entres Acadiens du Nord et Cadiens de Louisiane notamment. Ces retrouvailles ont été marquées par une très grande émotion et la révélation d'un sentiment d'affection familiale et fraternelle malgré des décennies de contacts peu fréquents en raison de la distance séparant les deux communautés. Des liens ont été rétablis entre ces descendants de souches communes[1] comme on a pu le constater par l'importante participation des Acadiens du Nord aux campagnes d'aide aux victimes des ouragans Katrina et Rita en 2005. Il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce que les Acadiens et les Cadiens entretiennent des relations étroites puisque leur parenté historique est réelle. Cependant le contexte dans lequel chacun des groupes a évolué depuis la déportation est certes très différent et ces différences conditionnent aussi les échanges et les contacts entre les deux groupes. Par exemple, le rapport à la langue française ou plus précisément à la variété acadienne de la langue française, comme élément fondamental de l'identité acadienne, n'a pu évoluer de la même façon en Acadie du Nord et en Louisiane, ne serait-ce qu'en raison du poids démographique relatif très différent de ces francophones dans leur milieu respectif. Alors qu'au Nouveau-Brunswick, en s'appuyant sur les lois fédérales et provinciales sur le bilinguisme et l'égalité

[1] En partie seulement, car les francophones de Louisiane qu'on a tendance à désigner aujourd'hui de manière générique comme des "Cadiens" ont en fait des origines bien plus diverses et qui ne se limitent pas à l'Acadie.

des communautés linguistiques, les Acadiens ont pu obtenir dans le domaine économique, éducatif et culturel des institutions qui leur permettent de vivre en français[2], la situation est toute autre en Louisiane où le français a une existence publique très limitée.

Les rapports réciproques entre Acadiens et Cadiens peuvent sembler "naturels", mais en fait ils ne sont pas si simples. Pour ma part, je m'attacherai à un aspect très limité de ces rapports en examinant les échanges et les relations entre écrivains et institutions littéraires de Louisiane et d'Acadie. J'examinerai aussi les références à la Louisiane et les représentations qu'on en donne dans la littérature acadienne contemporaine. Pour conclure, je m'attarderai à un exemple de la vision de la France sur l'Acadie et la Louisiane. Il faut préciser que dans cet article, pour les besoins d'une catégorisation différentielle, quand je parle de littérature acadienne, je désigne la littérature acadienne du Nord, c'est-à-dire des trois Provinces maritimes du Canada. J'utiliserai les termes de littérature de Louisiane ou de littérature cadienne pour désigner celle du Sud. Cependant, il est évident que, selon une autre catégorisation, la littérature de Louisiane peut aussi être considérée comme faisant partie de la littérature acadienne.

Le corpus retenu pour cet examen est loin d'être exhaustif, même si on verra que les œuvres acadiennes faisant référence à la Louisiane sont relativement peu nombreuses. Seules les œuvres les plus significatives et les plus originales par rapport au sujet ont fait l'objet d'un commentaire un peu développé.[3] Puisqu'il s'agit d'une première exploration de ce champ d'études, on se contentera de relever quelques tendances et de proposer quelques voies d'explication. Pour compléter le tableau il faudrait la contrepartie, c'est-à-dire le relevé des références à l'Acadie du Nord dans la littérature de Louisiane et éventuellement la comparai-

[2] Je suis bien conscient de la relativité d'une telle expression. Que veut dire "vivre en français"? Certains affirmeront qu'il n'est pas possible de vivre en français à Moncton, mais qu'il est tout à fait possible de le faire à Caraquet dans le Nord du Nouveau-Brunswick. Toutes les grandes capitales du monde sont cosmopolites et le citoyen y est confronté à de nombreuses langues, tout en étant capable de vivre dans la langue nationale de son pays. Est-ce un idéal de vivre exclusivement dans une langue à l'ère de l'interaction généralisée entre les cultures? Dans ce sens, est-ce qu'on ne peut pas affirmer qu'on peut vivre en français à Moncton, c'est-à-dire lire des journaux, écouter la radio et la télévision, assister à des spectacles, faire du sport et travailler en français, même si on y est quotidiennement confronté à l'anglais?

[3] Ainsi, je n'ai pas retenu le roman *Le complexe d'Évangéline* de Melvin Gallant (Moncton, Éditions de la Francophonie, 2001) qui entretient de nombreux rapports avec le poème "Evangeline" de Longfellow, mais assez peu avec la Louisiane. Seul le dernier chapitre se passe en Louisiane, dont on dit très peu de chose. Le passage par la Louisiane était simplement nécessaire pour mieux mimer le parcours d'"Evangeline" de Longfellow. Je n'ai pas non plus pris en considération la trilogie de Lili Maxime, *Ma chère Louisiane*, dont le premier volet, *Ouragan sur le bayou* (Tracadie-Sheila [N.B.], Éditions de la Grande Marée, 2004) a remporté le prix France-Acadie en 2005. Cette trilogie, écrite par une Québécoise et mettant en scène une sociologue québécoise, établit de nombreux rapports entre le Québec et la Louisiane, mais peu avec l'Acadie. C'est par un hasard d'édition, le livre ayant été publié par un éditeur du Nouveau-Brunswick, que le roman a pu être considéré pour le prix France-Acadie.

son du traitement de thèmes similaires s'ils existent. On peut penser au rôle de l'oralité dans chacune de ces littératures ou au thème de l'américanité. Il faudrait aussi comparer les représentations de la Louisiane dans l'Acadie du Nord à celles qui ont cours dans la littérature louisianaise elle-même.

La revue *Études francophones* de l'Université de la Louisiane à Lafayette a fêté, en 2006, ses vingt ans d'existence en publiant un numéro thématique sur la Louisiane.[4] Ce numéro comporte deux articles sur la littérature de Louisiane qui situent très bien celle-ci par rapport à ses origines, son développement et son avenir.[5] Ces textes présentent un recensement complet des ouvrages publiés qui permet de constater certains échanges entre l'Acadie du Sud et l'Acadie du Nord. Après avoir montré le travail accompli par les Éditions de la Nouvelle Acadie dans la publication d'ouvrages louisianais, Olivier Marteau écrit: "L'autre éditeur important de la littérature cadienne – Les Éditions Perce-Neige – est canadien et basé à Moncton au Nouveau-Brunswick."[6] L'auteur constate que la maison d'édition a une collection qui porte le nom d'Acadie tropicale et il poursuit: "Cette dernière propose les œuvres de Louisianais: *Faire récolte* (1997) de Zachary Richard, *Suite du loup* (1998) de Jean Arceneaux et *À cette heure, la louve* (1999) de la créole Deborah J. Clifton. Il faut aussi signaler l'existence des Éditions d'Acadie (Moncton), aujourd'hui disparues, qui ont publié *Lait à mère* (1997) de David Cheramie."[7] Il y a donc eu une collaboration réelle et concrète entre ces deux espaces acadiens. L'existence d'une collection réservée à la Louisiane aux Éditions Perce-Neige témoigne de la volonté de donner permanence et régularité à cette collaboration. La publication d'un ouvrage en créole, celui de Deborah J. Clifton, témoigne aussi d'une ouverture indispensable à la différence linguistique louisianaise.[8]

Les auteurs louisianais ont aussi eu recours à des éditeurs québécois, pour faire paraître, par exemple, *Cris sur le bayou* (1980), textes recueillis par Barry Jean

[4] *Études francophones* (Université de Louisiane à Lafayette) 21, 1–2 (printemps et automne 2006), Dossier thématique: Louisiane.

[5] Olivier Marteau, "Les Éditions de la Nouvelle Acadie, instances de diffusion pour une littérature émergeante [sic]", in: *Études francophones* 21, 1–2 (2006), 172–179; May Rush Gwyn Waggoner, "Separate but Equal: état présent des recherches sur la littérature francophone louisianaise", in: *Études francophones* 21, 1–2 (2006), 158–171.

[6] Marteau 2006, 176–177.

[7] Marteau 2006, 177; Zachary Richard, *Faire récolte*, Moncton Éditions Perce-Neige, 1997; Jean Arceneaux, *Suite du loup*. *Poèmes, chansons et autres textes*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 1998; Deborah J. Clifton, *Et à cette heure, la louve*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 1998; David Cheramie, *Lait à mère*, Moncton, Éditions d'Acadie, 1997.

[8] Cette ouverture à la différence linguistique aux Éditions Perce-Neige se vérifie aussi par la publication de deux ouvrages qui utilisent à divers degrés la langue acadjonne de la Nouvelle-Écosse: André Muise, *La falaise à la fin des marées* (Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 2002), et Georgette LeBlanc, *Alma* (Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 2006).

Ancelet (éd.)[9] et publiés aux Éditions Intermède de Montréal, et *Feu* (2001)[10] de Zachary Richard publié chez Intouchables, également de Montréal. Mais le fait d'avoir accès à des éditeurs canadiens ou même acadiens ne résout pas tous les problèmes pour les auteurs de Louisiane, comme ne manque pas de le souligner Olivier Marteau: "Les maisons canadiennes, très présentes pour éditer la jeune littérature louisianaise, posent donc le problème vital de l'autonomie. Paradoxalement, le fait d'éditer à l'étranger fait aussi partie des stratégies de reconnaissance d'une littérature qui cherche à s'imposer, à être consacrée par l'Autre non-louisianais."[11] La littérature francophone de Louisiane est donc prise dans le même dilemme que toutes les littératures émergentes, partagées entre, d'une part, le désir d'autonomie et d'avoir ses propres institutions et, d'autre part, le besoin de reconnaissance extérieure. C'est une donnée que ne doit pas ignorer l'institution littéraire de l'Acadie du Nord dans ses rapports avec la littérature louisianaise si elle ne veut pas reproduire le type de domination qu'elle subit et qu'elle déplore par rapport à l'institution littéraire québécoise.[12]

Un autre exemple d'échange concret du point de vue littéraire entre la Louisiane et l'Acadie du Nord est le numéro de la revue *Éloizes* (1994)[13] de Moncton consacré à la Louisiane. Ce numéro date de 1994 et il donne l'occasion à douze auteurs cadiens de publier leurs textes et de partager ce numéro avec neuf auteurs acadiens. Les premiers occupent les deux tiers de la revue. On peut déplorer qu'il n'y ait pas plus d'interactions directes entre auteurs acadiens et cadiens. Chacun écrit ses textes de son côté sans aucune référence à la réalité de l'autre. On constate néanmoins que les textes cadiens, plus militants, sont davantage tournés vers le passé et les traditions et parlent davantage de la langue. Il serait cependant intéressant de comparer le recours à l'oralité très présent dans les deux ensembles et le mélange du français et de l'anglais qu'on remarque dans les deux séries de texte.

Si on cherche les références à la Louisiane dans les textes littéraires de l'Acadie des Maritimes, on constate d'abord que celles-ci sont relativement peu nombreuses, ce qui confirme la distance psychologique qui s'est établie entre les deux communautés acadiennes au cours des siècles qui ont suivi la déportation

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9 Barry Jean Ancelet, *Cris sur le bayou. Naissance d'une poésie acadienne en Louisiane*, Montréal, Éditions Intermède, 1980.

10 Zachary Richard, *Feu*, Montréal, Intouchables, 2001.

11 Marteau 2006, 177.

12 Cf. mes articles, "La littérature acadienne face au Québec et à la France: une double relation centre/périphérie", in: Madeleine Frédéric – Serge Jaumain (dirs.), *Regards croisés sur l'histoire et la littérature acadiennes*, Bruxelles, P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2006, 33–46, et "Les rapports Acadie/Québec dans les essais d'Herménégilde Chiasson", in: *Quebec Studies* 43 (Spring–Summer 2007), 3–21.

13 *Éloizes. Revue de l'Association des écrivains acadiens* 22 (automne 1994), Dossier: La Louisiane… paroles en éveil.

et qui montre que la Louisiane n'est pas une préoccupation de premier ordre pour les auteurs acadiens. Les contacts étant dorénavant plus fréquents, surtout avec les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, ces retrouvailles se manifesteront peut-être dans la littérature au cours des prochaines années.

À tout seigneur tout honneur. Commençons donc par l'œuvre d'Antonine Maillet. La saga acadienne de Maillet se déroule sur les côtes et dans les terres des environs de Bouctouche et les lieux imaginaires ou réels qui jalonnent ses récits appartiennent d'abord à cet espace. L'Irlande, la France, les États y sont ponctuellement évoqués, mais la Louisiane très peu. Une évocation est cependant significative dans la mesure où elle est tout à fait liée et semblable à la vision de l'Acadie du Nord chez Antonine Maillet. Ce passage assez important, puisqu'il s'étend sur quatre pages entières du roman, se trouve dans *Le chemin Saint-Jacques* (1996)[14] alors que la narratrice raconte à la quasi-centenaire Sophie ses périples à travers le monde à la recherche de l'origine des traditions orales de son peuple. La séquence s'amorce sur ces mots: "Tout a commencé avec Madame Primeau, perdue au fond des marais de la Louisiane." (*CSJ*, 259) La narratrice poursuit: "Et je m'envolai vers la Louisiane, la Nouvelle-Orléans, Bâton-Rouge, La Fayette, les créoles, le jazz, les bayous... le fin fond des bayous. Pour y rencontrer [...] une Cadjenne de quatre-vingt-six ans ..." (*CSJ*, 260) Remarquons déjà le caractère excentré donné à la Louisiane connotée par les expressions "au fond des marais" et "le fin fond des bayous". Le portrait de la Cadjenne donne aussi dans le pittoresque, d'abord dans la langue, encore plus oralisée dans sa transcription phonétique que celle des autres personnages d'Antonine Maillet. "Je parle pas autèr chouse que le français. J'ai besoin d'un entreprêtre pour m'en fure sus le dentisse." (*CSJ*, 261) Le pittoresque est étendu à l'apparence physique du personnage par cette remarque de la narratrice: "J'ai jeté un coup d'œil à ses dents d'en haut et je me suis dit que madame Primeau ne faisait pas vivre les interprètes." (*CSJ*, 261) Mais la narratrice déduit, du fait que son témoin ne parle pas l'anglais, qu'elle n'a jamais été à l'école et que son français descend en ligne droite d'un français des origines. Elle est donc en présence d'une informatrice privilégiée et, comble de bonheur, pas le moins du monde récalcitrante, qui commence à raconter: "[...] Renart, un bon matin, rentra sus son onque, les yeux troublés, la peltrie hérissée." (*CSJ*, 262) Et le récit se poursuit longuement où il est question de dame Hersin, de messire Constant Danois, de Goupil, de Chanteclerc le coq. La narratrice en a le souffle coupé et conclut:

> Son récit dura près d'une heure. Elle savait par cœur de grands pans du Roman de Renart, le chef-d'œuvre du XII^e^ siècle que ses ancêtres avaient passé ou dérobé à la littérature écrite, transmis parallèlement de bouche à oreille, de l'aïeul au rejeton durant huit cent ans [...], un chef d'œuvre que les savants maniaient avec des pincettes dans les facultés et qu'une femme de quatre-vingt-six ans, qui n'avait de sa vie mis les

[14] Antonine Maillet, *Le chemin Saint-Jacques*, Montréal, Leméac, 1996. Toutes les citations tirées de cet ouvrage seront suivies du sigle *CSJ* suivi du numéro de la page.

> pieds dans une école, m'offrait gratuitement, gracieusement, dans le plus pur accent des origines, sans échapper une maille de son récit. (*CSJ*, 263)

La Louisiane est donc présentée ici comme un lieu unique, inégalé de la conservation de la mémoire. Dans ce passage du roman d'Antonine Maillet, la Louisiane surenchérit sur l'Acadie, car l'Acadie est aussi le réservoir privilégié de la mémoire et des traditions orales. La Louisiane est une sur-Acadie, une super-Acadie où a pu se conserver intacte la mémoire collective, le récit commun. Notons au passage le mythe de la pureté originelle, construction imaginaire à visées légitimantes qui n'a aucune assise dans la réalité puisque aussi loin qu'on remonte dans le temps, on ne trouvera jamais un moment de production d'une langue pure et sans mélange. La langue est toujours le produit de mélanges, de croisements, d'emprunts, d'amalgames et d'influences. Puisque les linguistes les plus rigoureux avouent leur incapacité à dire avec précision qu'elle était l'accent du 17e siècle et encore moins celui de l'Acadie du 17e siècle, comment pourrait-on prétendre le reconnaître aujourd'hui et dans sa pureté de surcroît?[15]

Les qualités qu'Antonine Maillet prête à la Louisiane, comme celles qu'elle prête à l'Acadie d'ailleurs, sont celles que le centre projette sur la périphérie: alors que le centre s'arroge le droit de définir la modernité et l'avant-garde, il marque sa distance avec la périphérie en lui donnant le rôle de conservatrice de la tradition et du folklore.[16] Il l'imprègne de l'exotisme et du pittoresque du passé miraculeusement préservé, d'un lieu qui a échappé au passage du temps et qui permet en quelque sorte une remontée dans l'histoire. De ce point de vue, la Louisiane est pour Antonine Maillet une Acadie superlative et il ne faut pas s'étonner du succès que ces images rencontrent dans l'institution littéraire française parce qu'elles correspondent exactement à ce que celle-ci attend d'une littérature régionale de langue française.

L'œuvre de Gérald Leblanc est une de celles qui comptent le plus de références à la Louisiane. Ce ne sont souvent que des allusions brèves et ponctuelles, mais presque aucun de ces recueils n'en est dépourvu. Ce qu'on remarque d'abord chez Leblanc c'est que la Louisiane est synonyme d'émotion par l'attachement sentimental profond que le poète manifeste à son égard. La rencontre de Zachary Richard racontée dans *Moncton Mantra* (1997) cristallise ces sentiments.

> Zachary Richard arrive avec sa guitare et son petit accordéon. [...] Je regarde ce jeune homme avec son grand chapeau blanc. Je sens un courant très fort m'envahir la conscience. Quand je lui serre la main, une vibration me traverse le corps, et je dois me faire violence pour ne pas éclater en sanglots devant l'émotion de retrouver ici à Moncton, un Acadien de la Louisiane du même âge que nous. Au moment où il

[15] Cf. à ce sujet le livre de Bernard Cerquiglini, *Une langue orpheline*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2007.

[16] Cf. Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres*, Paris, Seuil, 1999, 218, 298–300.

prend la guitare et se met à chanter, c'est la rumeur des bayous qui monte en nous, cette longue complainte de l'histoire écorchée qui revient et qui nous rappelle les liens profonds qui demeurent entre nous. Je reconnais qu'une partie de nous-mêmes nous est retournée.[17]

Cette rencontre est marquante comme l'a souvent affirmé Gérald Leblanc et dans son œuvre les références à la Louisiane se confondent fréquemment avec les références à Zachary Richard. Les noms toponymiques hantent la poésie de Gérald Leblanc: de nombreux lieux mythiques sont objets de fascination et servent à relancer l'écriture. La Louisiane fait régulièrement partie de ces énumérations: "ma Louisiane, mon Acadie chaude / mon Mexique, mon Québec / ma Californie, mon Bouctouche / mon Edmundston...".[18] Dans le poème "Visions de Rimbaud", Leblanc prête à son ami imaginaire sa propre fascination pour certaines villes: "parfois nous descendions jusqu'au Cap-Pelé où on passait l'après-midi, les orteils dans le sable, à énumérer toutes les villes qui nous fascinaient: San Francisco, Barcelone, New Orleans, Tokyo."[19]

Dans le recueil *Je n'en connais pas la fin* (1999) se trouve la plus longue suite de poèmes consacrés à la Louisiane de toute son œuvre. Elle s'intitule "Louisiane au cœur" ce qui connote bien l'attachement mentionné plus haut. Ces poèmes présentent une Louisiane moderne où la mémoire occupe néanmoins une place importante. Sa principale caractéristique est la sensualité induite par le rythme et la musique:

ce matin près de la piscine sous un soleil tropical
les cèdres et les cyprès s'élancent majestueusement
comme des icônes vertes sur le ciel céruléen
des refrains afro-américains s'insinuent dans mon corps
l'air glisse lentement sur ma peau chaude.[20]

La Louisiane devient dans l'œuvre de Gérald Leblanc la métaphore du désir, de l'intensité, comme dans le recueil *Techgnose* (2004): "mois d'août à 30º Celsius / un moment louisianais /.../ le désir à portée de la parole."[21] C'est aussi l'image de l'abandon – "l'œuvre du désir et nous rêvant / d'une Louisiane d'abandon"[22] – et de la liberté: "un air langoureux / le genre de chanson / qui encourage / l'école buissonnière / à quitter sa job / à partir pour la Louisiane / de Zachary."[23]

17 Gérald Leblanc, *Moncton Mantra*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 1997, 94–95.

18 Gérald Leblanc, *Géographie de la nuit rouge*, Moncton, Éditions d'Acadie, 1984, 44.

19 Gérald Leblanc, *Lieux transitoires*, Moncton, Michel Henry, 1986, 42.

20 Gérald Leblanc, *Je n'en connais pas la fin*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 1999, 49.

21 Gérald Leblanc, *Techgnose*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 2004, 72.

22 Leblanc 2004, 75.

23 Gérald Leblanc, *Poèmes new-yorkais*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 2006, 24.

La représentation que construit Gérald Leblanc de la Louisiane est donc plutôt moderne et ne tombe pas dans l'éloge indifférencié du passé. Cependant il n'échappe pas entièrement à la vision folklorique et la toute première référence à la Louisiane dans son œuvre présente quelque parenté avec celle qu'on a vue chez Antonine Maillet. Dans *Géographie de la nuit rouge* (1984), il fait un voyage imaginaire dans le Sud des États-Unis, se retrouve en Louisiane et capte un poste de radio:

> un air cajun inonde la voiture. je reconnais les frères Balfa. c'est une complainte du fond des âges qui réveille la mémoire de Bouctouche, du Fond de la baie. la senteur vive d'un poêle à bois, une soirée de noces où j'étais caché derrière la porte pour regarder le grand monde danser. j'entends distinctement les pieds qui frottent le plancher d'une quadrille, le violon sur un autre rythme, une autre tristesse. c'est la Louisiane qui me ramène chez moi...[24]

On ne peut parler de la Louisiane en littérature acadienne sans s'arrêter au recueil *Les anges en transit* (1992) de Dyane Léger dont toute la deuxième partie, c'est-à-dire plus de la moitié du livre s'intitule "La Nouvelle-Orléans". La vision proposée ici est "légérienne" avant d'être louisianaise. On reconnaît certes la Louisiane avec ses jazzmen et ses crocodiles, mais tous ces éléments sont insérés dans un récit surréaliste et onirique où se promènent les démons et les sorciers, typique de la manière de Dyane Léger. Ce qu'elle raconte avant tout dans ce poème écrit "avec du sang"[25], c'est une expérience de création et d'écriture où transparaissent des réalités louisianaises comme la condition des Noirs, ici dénoncée par l'écrivaine. Elle établit des rapports entre l'esclavage des Noirs et les conditions de vie des Acadiens, entre la lâcheté qui permet l'esclavage et la lâcheté universelle pour laquelle elle éprouve elle-même des remords. C'est une véritable révolte qu'elle exprime face à la condition des Noirs. Seule la rencontre avec l'écrivain, le parfum des magnolias et le rythme de la musique mettent un peu de calme dans cette tempête pleine de violence et de cruauté. La Nouvelle-Orléans libère le chant du poète aux prises avec la mort et ses visions macabres. Elle renouvelle le discours poétique en suscitant de multiples associations entre l'univers familier du poète et l'espace nouveau auquel elle est confrontée. Les pensées suicidaires de son père se mêlent à la dénonciation du racisme anti-Noir et de la discrimination envers le français en Louisiane. Le mélange des registres sert d'esthétique et les évocations surréalistes côtoient la banalité du quotidien. Le récit se résume lui-même quand il affirme: "Il y a définitivement quelque chose de vampirique dans ce voyage appelé 'New Orleans'. Des choses qui ne se passent pas ailleurs. Dans les autres villes."[26]

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24 Leblanc 1984, 36.

25 Dyane Léger, *Les anges en transit*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 1992, 47, 81.

26 Léger 1992, 79.

La Louisiane est donc l'occasion pour Dyane Léger d'une création des plus débridée, violente, macabre, psychédélique, qui évidemment n'a rien à voir avec une représentation conventionnelle et stéréotypée de la Louisiane, même si elle en intègre des éléments caractéristiques qui permettent de la reconnaître. Ce texte est la preuve que la Nouvelle-Orléans a agi comme un puissant stimulant à l'écriture sur Dyane Léger.

La Louisiane a aussi été un stimulant à l'écriture pour Rose Després dans le recueil *Gymnastique pour un soir d'anguilles* (1996) dont six poèmes portent des titres qui font référence à la Louisiane. Dans ce recueil, plusieurs poèmes se présentent comme des lettres adressées à des personnes. Deux de ceux-ci sont adressés à "Cher Barry"[27], et "Cher Zachary"[28], où on reconnaîtra Barry Ancelet et Zachary Richard, deux icônes de la Louisiane. Ces poèmes font état d'une complicité certaine dans les souvenirs communs dont plusieurs évoquent une Louisiane de la volupté et de la frénésie du désir. Trois poèmes successifs[29] qui portent des noms de villes louisianaises, "Nouvelle-Orléans", "Bâton Rouge" et "Lafayette", poursuivent dans la même veine: dans ces "univers flamboyants" où "le sang commence à bouillir [...] dégèle une passion [...] le feu mijote, possède le corps dans l'inattendu où l'avenir incendie tout."[30] Pour Gérald Leblanc, pour Dyane Léger et pour Rose Després, la Louisiane a été une rencontre marquante, éprouvée comme fraternelle et connotée par une sensualité libérée.

Pour terminer, l'évocation d'une publication en France de textes de l'Acadie et de la Louisiane permettra d'illustrer certains rapports entre ces deux communautés par le biais de la vision que la France porte sur elles. Il s'agit du numéro de la revue parisienne *Europe* qui, en l'an 2000, a présenté un dossier de création sur les écrivains d'Acadie, dossier que j'ai préparé avec mon collègue Jean Morency.[31] Dans notre esprit, le dossier portait essentiellement sur les écrivains acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick, mais nous avons décidé d'inclure aussi deux écrivains de Louisiane. C'est donc une sélection de textes de sept écrivains acadiens (A. Maillet, H. Chiasson, F. Daigle, G. Leblanc, S.-P. Thibodeau, R. Després et F.G. Comeau) et de deux écrivains de Louisiane (Jean Arceneaux et Zachary Richard) avec les biographies des écrivains et un texte de présentation que nous avons envoyés aux éditeurs de la revue *Europe*. Notre envoi comportait beaucoup plus de textes que le dossier final pouvait en contenir et nous laissions aux éditeurs de la revue le soin de faire le choix définitif. Nous avons donc été un peu étonnés

27 Rose Després, *Gymnastique pour un soir d'anguilles*, Moncton, Éditions Perce-Neige, 1996, 15.

28 Després 1996, 17.

29 Després 1996, 38, 39, 40.

30 Després 1996, 38, 39.

31 Raoul Boudreau – Jean Morency, "Auteurs de l'Acadie du Nord et du Sud", in: *Europe* 853 (mai 2000), 177–226.

de constater que sur un dossier de 40 pages de textes de création, les éditeurs en ont réservé 16 aux deux écrivains louisianais et les 24 restantes aux sept écrivains du Nouveau-Brunswick, accordant ainsi proportionnellement presque trois fois plus de place à chacun des écrivains louisianais qu'à chacun des écrivains du Nouveau-Brunswick, parmi lesquels on comptait quand même une gagnante du prix Goncourt et deux lauréats du prix du Gouverneur général du Canada.[32] Comment expliquer ce choix puisque la variété des textes soumis permettait une répartition égale entre les auteurs? On peut avancer comme hypothèse que le sujet des textes louisianais a été jugé plus intéressant par les éditeurs français. Or les textes louisianais parlent du combat pour la langue française en Louisiane et de sa lente agonie, de la persécution subie par les Cadiens qui se font traiter de "coonass" et qui doivent écrire des centaines de fois: "I will not speak French on the schoolgrounds." En revanche, les textes de l'Acadie du Nord ne mentionnent presque pas l'Acadie, sauf celui d'Antonine Maillet narrant le voyage en France de la narratrice du *Chemin Saint-Jacques* (1996) en quête de ses origines. France Daigle présente une écrivaine acadienne, elle-même en l'occurrence, faisant une prestation fictive très réussie à l'émission "Bouillon de culture" de Bernard Pivot. Si Gérald Leblanc parle du chiac[33], c'est pour faire son éloge et revendiquer en quelque sorte sa souveraineté. Il n'y a dans tout ceci aucune trace de discours de victimes, aucun signe d'apitoiement sur soi. Les textes des autres écrivains de l'Acadie du Nord pourraient presque avoir été écrits par un écrivain de l'Hexagone. En l'an 2000, la littérature acadienne du Nord est certes rendue plus loin sur la voie de l'autonomie par rapport aux revendications identitaires – qui constituent partout la première phase des littératures émergentes[34] – que ne l'est la littérature acadienne de Louisiane. Au tournant du 21e siècle, la littérature cadienne de Louisiane ressemble plutôt à ce qui se publiait en Acadie au cours des années 1970. Mais le centre parisien aime bien trouver dans les littératures "régionales" de langue française des thèmes régionalistes. Sinon, comment la distinguera-t-on de sa propre littérature et comment justifiera-t-on ses prérogatives de centre?

Tout Acadien voyageant en France et se présentant comme tel a pu constater que l'Acadie pour un Français, c'est plus souvent la Louisiane que l'Acadie des Maritimes. Plusieurs raisons, qui ne se réduisent pas à la chanson de Michel Fugain[35], qui serait plutôt un effet qu'une cause, peuvent expliquer ce phénomène. Il y a

32 Antonine Maillet a remporté le prix Goncourt en 1979 avec le roman *Pélagie-la-Charrette* (Montréal, Leméac, 1979) et Serge-Patrice Thibodeau a remporté le Prix du Gouverneur général en 1996 avec *Le quatuor de l'errance: suivi de La traversée du désert* (Montréal, Hexagone, 1995). Herménégilde Chiasson a remporté le Prix du Gouverneur général en 1999 avec *Conversations* (Moncton, Éditions d'Acadie, 1998).

33 Le chiac est la langue vernaculaire de nombreux Acadiens du sud-est du Nouveau-Brunswick caractérisée par un mélange de français et d'anglais.

34 Cf. Casanova 1999, 265.

35 "Les Acadiens".

bien sûr Napoléon, figure mythique de l'histoire de France s'il en est, qui fait le lien avec la Louisiane. Il y a sans doute aussi l'attrait des États-Unis, toujours puissant, malgré les divergences politiques conjoncturelles, et peut-être aussi l'attrait de l'exotisme tropical sur lequel peut aussi jouer la Louisiane. L'histoire de France semble donc avoir accordé une place bien plus importante à la Louisiane qu'à l'Acadie des Maritimes. En revanche, ce qui joue contre l'Acadie du Nord, c'est le fait que pour un Français, un Canadien qui parle français, c'est un Québécois et que, vues de si loin, les différences entre Québécois et Acadiens s'estompent. En France, l'Acadie est cachée par le Québec et tout artiste acadien qui tente d'y percer doit commencer par expliquer qu'il n'est pas Québécois, et ensuite qu'il n'est pas de Louisiane.

Le regard de la France sur la Louisiane brouille les rapports entre l'Acadie du Nord et l'Acadie du Sud. Alors que pour les Acadiens du Nord, la Louisiane peut être vue comme sa périphérie ou même une diaspora, ce que confirme la revendication louisianaise d'autonomie par rapport aux éditeurs du Nouveau-Brunswick, la France semble parfois accorder plus d'importance à cette diaspora qu'à l'Acadie qui a les moyens politiques et culturels de "faire société"[36] et de concevoir un projet d'avenir collectif pour les Acadiens.

Pour conclure trop rapidement, il faut faire état de tout ce qui reste à faire pour une étude vraiment conséquente des rapports entre Acadiens et Cadiens du point de vue de leur littérature. L'analyse des rapports institutionnels est primordiale et la relative absence de la Louisiane des textes acadiens laisse entendre que celle-ci n'est pas considérée comme un partenaire à part égale, mais comme la périphérie de la littérature acadienne du Nord. Il faudrait également examiner les raisons des échanges plus nombreux entre la Louisiane et les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse qu'entre la Louisiane et les Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick. Ces deux espaces ont-ils trouvé des affinités dans une commune opposition à la domination des Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick, plus nombreux et mieux organisés et qui dictent souvent les orientations de la société acadienne?

[36] Expression empruntée à Joseph-Yvon Thériault dans son livre *Faire société: société civile et espaces francophones*, Sudbury (Ont.), Éditions Prise de parole, 2007.

Herménégilde Chiasson,
Passion de S

Michel Roy's Lost Acadia and the Continental Paradigm

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Résumé

Cet article cherche à décrire, à partir d'une lecture de l'essai fondamental de Michel Roy, *L'Acadie perdue* (1979), la construction progressive depuis une trentaine d'années d'une identité acadienne continentale, ayant prise dans un ensemble de lieux diasporaux partout en Amérique du Nord. Si, dans son ouvrage, Roy disait n'entrevoir l'avenir de l'Acadie que dans le seul chapelet des petites villes de la péninsule acadienne dans le nord-est du Nouveau-Brunswick, c'est qu'il n'avait pas saisi la vague de fond qui ferait de Moncton le foyer d'une Acadie plus radicalement urbaine, liée autant au Québec qu'à la Louisiane et aux États américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre. Elle mettrait en œuvre une identité fondée sur des schèmes diasporaux qui permettraient à l'Acadie de transcender sa lecture victimaire de l'histoire. Les œuvres de Gérald Leblanc, de Fredric Gary Comeau et de Serge Patrice Thibodeau servent ici de témoignages de ces transformations profondes de l'espace identitaire acadien.

According to Christian Rioux in the introduction to his book *Voyage à l'intérieur des petites nations* [A journey inside small nations], a fairly large number of linguistic or national communities continue to impose on an increasingly homogenized economic world a "peaceful debate" on cultural traditions, linguistic differences, and autonomy.[1] Rioux sees in this worldwide movement a particularly salient feature of the geo-political alliances in the second part of the last century. To a large extent, contemporary Acadia constitutes one such "small nation", although its access to a tangible and well-defined homeland remains problematic. In Acadian culture, territoriality is inscribed in powerful, albeit fragile, fictions. Anglophone cultural geographers prefer the convenience of the word "landscape" to describe the fluid embodiment of culture into spatial configurations. As Don Mitchell points out in the conclusion of his book on new identity spaces in a world of transforming relationships, the ultimate objective is to understand the cultural inscription of spatial identities as a fluctuating process: It is "the dialectic between constant change, the ever-present flux of social relationships, and the relative permanence of reified ways of knowing, standardized 'maps of meaning', and solidified cultural

[1] Christian Rioux, *Voyage à l'intérieur des petites nations*, Montreal, Boréal, 2000, 18. Rioux writes of smaller nations: " [...] tous ces peuples poursuivent par des voies pacifiques un débat qui aurait fait tonner les canons il n'y a pas si longtemps. Ce n'est pas rien. C'est même un fait qu'il faudra un jour inscrire quelque part en rouge dans le calendrier de l'histoire."

productions"[2]. "Maps of meaning": This expression stigmatizes the role language and especially literature play in shaping issues of space, distance, departure, dispersion, return, and loss, not only in Acadia, but for all minority cultures alike.

In a fascinating book published in 1998 and entitled *The Garden of Distances*[3], Tyrolean visual artist Brigitte Mahlknecht and American poet Robert Kelly respond to each other's mapping of contemporary communities. Mahlknecht's intricate representations of urban cartographies emphasize borderline spaces and a displaced (but not uprooted) consciousness. Kelly's poetry, always written collaboratively, stresses the need for alterity and interconnectedness as founding principles for renegotiated identities. From the Alps to the wide plains of the Petitcodiac River Valley in southern New Brunswick, the real and figurative distance is indeed enormous, but we must search for areas of strategic convergence, and continue to stress the need for a common anthropological outlook on local cultural affirmation movements.

In this context, the Mahlknecht-Kelly epistolary book and the intermedial distances it seeks to draw symbolize a new network of constructive tensions between dominant and dominated cultures. There are many ways to open up space and to create shifting, and yet enduring, memberships. People living in conditions of cultural minorization are particularly sensitive to their relative position within the global discourse on human development and progress. The study of minority and diasporic communities, such as contemporary Acadia, inevitably shifts critical attention to much larger issues such as the development of locally-based open identities, the sustainability of regions, the access to a fair representation in the media, the future of threatened languages, and the role literature and the arts can play in shaping communal bonds.

L'Acadie perdue: "We lost the keys to the continent"

Nowhere are these issues more pressing than in Michel Roy's 1978 essay *L'Acadie perdue*, which served as a significant backdrop for most of the Acadian literary and cultural movement of the early 1980s.[4] During that period, Acadian nationalism, largely based in New Brunswick, was somewhat blind to the figures of displacement and expropriation at the heart of the history and culture of Acadia. Soon, however, these concepts would become central, as contemporary Acadian cul-

[2] Don Mitchell, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford–Malden (Massachusetts), Blackwell Publishing, 2000, 294.

[3] Brigitte Mahlknecht – Robert Kelly, *The Garden of Distances*, Kingston (New York), McPherson & Company, 2001. The book was also published in Germany.

[4] Michel Roy, *L'Acadie perdue*, Montréal, Québec/Amérique, 1978. References to this book appear as *AP*, followed by the page number.

ture increasingly appeared to be driven by diasporic continental forces. Poets like Gérald Leblanc and Serge Patrice Thibodeau, among others, rejected traditional references to the nation in order to emphasize nomadism and homelessness at the core of the Acadian subject: "Ever since we have been evicted from this place, [...] we have become distance itself (*nous sommes l'éloignement*)", writes Serge Patrice Thibodeau in his emblematic book of poetry *Nous, l'étranger*.[5] For Gérald Leblanc, urban itinerancy lies at the core of the Acadian specificity:

> we are not distinct
> alive we are
> like so many jews and gipsies
> and so many acadians
> in the streets of today[6]

For Leblanc as for Thibodeau, identity is an exercise in the mind, an openness to the virtuality of landscapes. And, as a primary *mindscape*, poetry is fashioned by the homelessness of the culture itself.

In *L'Acadie perdue*, Michel Roy unequivocally condemned what he called the narrow nationalism of the traditional Acadian elite, yet he failed to transform the historical impact of displacement and dispersion into a series of positive propositions towards a renewed collective identity. While Acadians had always been fascinated and reassured by the cyclical reunions in which they had been able to reassemble around certain national symbols, these *retrouvailles* failed to resolve the shifting tensions raised by the absence of a consensus on a national territory. The struggle for recognition and dignity within the fragmented Canadian political state, in Acadia as well as other areas of the country, sought to legitimize history, drawing attention on those forces of dispersion that had helped shape a highly diverse identity. Although a number of intellectuals denounced its oppressive nature, Acadian nationalism could not be entirely normative, especially when compared to Québec's independence movement.[7] Acadia seemed to be the prime example of what we often call a "cultural nation".

A searing condemnation of the Acadian leadership and of Moncton's dominance in the Acadian space, Roy's *L'Acadie perdue* remains one of the most eloquent reflections on the symbolic tensions and inequalities that tend to divide and define contemporary minority cultures. In his recent reading of the "diasporic sub-

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5 Serge Patrice Thibodeau, *Nous, l'étranger*, Trois-Rivières–Echternach (Luxembourg), Écrits des Forges–Editions Phi, 1995, 21 (my translation).

6 Gérald Leblanc, *Éloge du chiac*, Moncton, Perce-Neige, 1995, 28 (my translation).

7 I borrow the concept of normativity proposed in Geneviève Nootens's article on nationalism in a minority context: "Nation, démocratie et légitimité: la question des sources de la volonté démocratique à l'heure de la 'société des identités'", in: Jacques Beauchemin – Mathieu Bock-Côté (dirs.), *La cité identitaire*, Montreal, Athéna, 2007, 139–152.

consciousness" at play in the works of France Daigle, Jean Babineau, Daniel Poliquin and Nicolas Dickner, Jean Morency[8] comments on the uniqueness of Roy's *L'Acadie perdue*, and sees in the book both an attempt to rewrite Acadian history and a denunciation of a national identity based on monologic assumptions: "Toute notre élite fait un nationalisme étriqué, axé sur la dualité des institutions. N'arrive pas à exorciser le passé. La rupture avec certaines données fondamentales de notre pensée traditionnelle est pourtant nécessaire." (*AP*, 141) Roy, Morency writes, offers the first coherent attempt to shift the identity debate in Acadia from the search for genealogical roots to the deployment of an open territoriality. Today's discussions on Acadian identity seem rooted, therefore, in the book's fundamental ambiguity: its defence of a highly localized Acadian territory and, at the same time, its clear denunciation of Acadia's intellectually impoverished frames of reference, weakened by a long history of victimization and a sterile idealization of the past.

In the last sections of his book, Roy locates the centre of a diverse, more genuine, Acadian space in Northern New Brunswick, near the Baie des Chaleurs. There, the proximity of Québec and the homogeneity of the local French-speaking culture bode well for the future of Acadia. Elsewhere, the "rescapés de la grande débâcle" (*AP*, 101) seem to vacillate between complacency and assimilation. In his analysis, Roy fails, however, to anticipate the enormous pole of attraction, both real and imaginary, that the city of Moncton would become from the end of the 20th century onward. Instead, Roy complains, the Acadians consistently fail to transcend the boundaries of their tragic history: "Ceux qui s'autorisent à élaborer des projets d'avenir pour l'Acadie semblent incapables d'imaginer pour elle plus grand et plus consistant que les vagues accommodements avec les circonstances de notre histoire." (*AP*, 141) Contemporary Acadian culture, Roy contends, is not threatened by dispersion, but by the involution of its national institutions.

After its publication, *L'Acadie perdue* created a certain embarrassment in the Acadian leadership. Yet, as Jean Morency notes, Roy's book would ultimately have a significant impact on a number of Moncton-area writers, including Gérald Leblanc and Herménégilde Chiasson, and on the Acadian discourse as a whole, especially in New Brunswick. Coupled with spectacular events such as the first Acadian World Congress in 1994 and subsequent international gatherings and festivals, Roy's pessimism paradoxically allowed for a more open and more transient concept of Acadianness, one that would be rooted in cultural diversity and fragmented territorialities. In the last pages of his book, Roy himself admits the possibility of a new Acadian construct: "L'acadianité ce n'est pas un acquis. C'est

[8] Jean Morency, "Perdus dans l'espace-temps: figures spatio-temporelles et l'inconscient diasporal dans les romans de France Daigle, Jean Babineau, Daniel Poliquin et Nicolas Dickner", in: Martin Pâquet – Stéphane Savard (dirs.), *Balises et références. Acadies, francophonies*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007, 487–509.

un devenir." (*AP*, 168) By deconstructing the stultified stories of victimization often repeated by Acadian historians and cultural leaders, Roy implicitly called for a more dialogic discourse about the minority culture, one in which the historical trauma of the deportation would become the condition for a stunning transfiguration of space. Merging images of loss and abandonment into the expansiveness of the entire continental totemic space, from Campbellton, New Brunswick, to Lafayette, Louisiana, the new Acadian subject would find solace in the very absence of a territorial identity. In fact, Roy's call for a more dialogic identity meant, in that context, a reconfiguration of the homeland. As a response to Roy's assertion that true Acadia could only be found in the Northern Peninsula along the Baie des Chaleurs, a new Acadian territoriality would soon be crafted both within and outside its traditional boundaries by writers, singers, film makers, and other artists. A diagonal line would eventually link Moncton with its various diasporic polarities, including France, Québec, and Louisiana.

The transforming of Acadian identity in the late 1970s and early 1980s, although appearing to emerge from and make sense within the Acadian context itself, followed similar patterns of transformation visible throughout North America. In many ways, the idea of a continent-wide Acadia, although present as early as in Rameau de Saint-Père's writings, gained momentum in the 1970s from increased contacts between Moncton's new generation of poets and songwriters and their counterparts in many other urban centres in Canada and especially in the United States. In Canada alone, every one of the splintered French Canadian communities in that period emphasized what seemed to be crucial connections with the notion of *américanité*, as both a real and symbolic sense of belonging to American popular and literate cultures. The same 1970–1990 period also saw, for instance, the redevelopment in a positive mode of the Chicano migrant identity using the same intellectual energy derived from diasporic cultural models.[9] In looking at Acadian identity in the late 20th century, we should keep in mind that "communal ethnicity", in the words of Richard Alba, did not really disappear; in fact, the sense of belonging appears to be reinforced and called upon by the very centrifugal movement towards continent-wide territorialities.[10] The reason for this must lie in the creation of an Acadian, a Franco-Ontarian or a Chicano symbolic identity (rather than ethnic), based on ritualized cultural mediations such as texts, events, and visual displays. This is the vision that so clearly prevails in the works of Gérald Leblanc, Fredric Gary Comeau and Franco-Ontarian poet Patrice Desbiens, for instance.

[9] Cf., for instance, Isidro Ortiz – Paula Timmerman, "Contemporary Chicano Struggles", in: Dean A. Harris (dir.), *Multiculturalism from the Margins: Non-Dominant Voices on Difference and Diversity*, Westport (Connecticut), Bergin & Garvey, 1995, 87–102.

[10] Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990, 306–307.

In Michel Roy's *L'Acadie perdue*, a retrenched Acadian culture could not find solace at first in the openness of the road. Space remained for Roy a narrow borderline between the coast and the sea. The diagonal fracture across the continent, Jack Kerouac's drifting redemption could only lead Acadian identity, in the essayist's vision, to its historical birth in silence and oppression. Instead, Roy, like the poets of an earlier generation, liked to celebrate the sea. Only from its liminal position along the seashore could post-deportation Acadia gain symbolic ascendance over its disastrous history. Roy shared a fascination for the sea with many contemporary Acadian poets, filmmakers and novelists. However, in *L'Acadie perdue*, Roy turned his back on the territory within. In his eyes, the continental landscape was viewed with suspicion, in that its unending road motif could only elicit once again images of separation and exile. The sea, on the contrary, could not offer the same contemplation of loss.

In many ways, with the organization in 1994 of the first Acadian World Congress and with the subsequent development of strategic and symbolic links with Louisiana's Cadian and Cajun communities, one could say that the last fifteen to twenty years have been a resounding response to Roy's pessimism. If the Grand Dérangement had broken the unity of the Acadian chronotope, the reconciliation with the diversity of the concept of *américanité* was bound to mend the historical fracture. Many Acadian poets worked on that assumption. Eventually, the World Congress, however controversial, would indeed replace the Congrès eucharistiques so bitterly decried by Roy in his book. Ties would develop with the Acadian historical diaspora and with countercultural forces in the Northeastern United States. A new connectedness with a particular brand of Americanness would be bound to move Acadian identity well beyond its linguistic and historical confines.

L'Acadie retrouvée: A Continent Regained

Having gained considerable momentum recently, this rather significant transformation was indeed predetermined by a number of cultural trends in the late 1960s. As early as 1970, Moncton writers and artists started circulating between New York, Boston and Lafayette, fascinated by the vibrancy of minority cultures in the United States and among them the resurgence on the world scene of Louisiana's Cajun community. In looking at this period in Acadian literary history, we quite often refer to a number of significant factors, such as the increased structuring of nationalist politics in New Brunswick, the founding of the Université de Moncton, the first Nuits de la poésie in Montreal and other prominent manifestations of cultural affirmation in which the likes of Gérald Leblanc, Dyane Léger and Herménégilde Chiasson participated. However, this is only part of the picture. Between 1970 and 1990 approximately, when the affirmative energy of the countercultural movement

began to wane, throughout North America the quest for a radical reshaping of cultural and social minority spaces was much wider and much more intricate.

It is likely through their numerous contacts with the American literary scene in Boston and New York that poets like Gérald Leblanc and Dyane Léger developed a deep interest for Cadian and Creole cultures in the South of the United States. For many, music would be a determining factor in re-imagining Acadian identity along continental lines. Such American iconic figures as Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg, embodying the ontological concept of the road found in popular culture, crisscrossed the land, galvanizing campus crowds with their love and defence of all marginalities. For Ginsberg as it would be for Leblanc, root music would become the uncovered missing link between the creolized cultures of North America. Those were moments of fascination and intense discovery. What would be Acadia's destiny as it sought to face its particularly tragic history, now a vocal fringe in the continental patchwork of emerging identities? What role would be assigned to poetry in what appeared to be an unstoppable quest for collective affirmation?

Such an interest for the American countercultural movement was in no way limited to Acadia, as the movement found a deep resonance throughout the Western world. In the Acadian cultural sphere, however, it gained particular importance because of the continental dimension of the Acadian deportation, widely depicted and fictionalized in American culture itself from the 19th century onward. In the 1970s and 1980s, Moncton poets travelled to New Orleans and Lafayette to participate in literary and musical festivals. Barry Ancelet has recreated in details the history of this movement from the earlier Tribute to Cajun Music Festival in Lafayette to the later Festival de musique acadienne in Lafayette's Girard Park in 1984. Changing the name of this festival was significant as it drew attention to the Acadianness of the entire continental movement.[11]

Eventually, as both Zachary Richard and Gérald Leblanc recalled in a 2001 roundtable at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, the exchanges along the diagonal continental fracture would explode, involving not only Acadian institutions, but many Québec literary and academic centres as well. Barry Ancelet would then publish his important bilingual study entitled *The Makers of Cajun Music / Musiciens cadiens et créoles* at the Presses de l'Université du Québec in 1984. Moreover, Gérald Leblanc's unfailing fascination for "tropical Acadia" after 1980 was a determining factor in the establishment of North-South permanent institutional and symbolic ties. Leblanc, himself, chose to publish four important Cajun poets in his own Éditions Perce-Neige (Jean Arceneaux, David Cheramie, Zach-

[11] Cf. Barry Jean Ancelet, *Cajun Music: Origins and Development*, Lafayette, Center for Louisiana Studies Publications, 1989.

ary Richard and Debbie Clifton). Among these poets, I suspect that Leblanc's affinities with Jean Arceneaux's caustic "schizophrénie linguistique" had the greatest impact.

For poets like Gérald Leblanc and Fredric Gary Comeau, the overall objective is in no way linked to the rediscovery after 1990 of the historical Acadian diaspora and to the hype of the periodic World Congresses. A renewed Acadian identity would rather be based on loosened ties with the history of victimization, denounced in Michel Roy's book as an oppressive and stale cultural space. Instead, modern Acadia will reach out to a much larger continental community in which diverse contiguous spaces coexist and feed on each other. In the words of Fredric Gary Comeau in *Routes*, the new cultural subject would seek transgressive spaces:

> toujours la transgression nous attend
> au bout d'une nuit trop longue
> remplie de rage et de musique imaginaire[12]

Building on the powerful intertext of the road, Comeau eventually sees his writing as the inscription of a drifting self in the excessive space of a new quest:

> je me moquerai de la mort
> je serai sauvage et énigmatique
> mobile et vorace
> fragile et fulgurant[13]

Each time, Comeau remains faithful to the idea of transience. In 2000, an important collection of poems entitled *Fuites*, set in part in Mexico, evokes once again the "epiphany of the road", as the poet uses fetish words like "dérive", "horizon" and "doute":

> il n'y a rien de plus nourrissant que le doute
> j'habite un lieu où les énigmes chuchotent
> pour mieux évoquer les voix
> qui font chavirer nos rêves rauques
> certaines nuits où la mémoire de nos gestes
> dérive[14]

Comeau's poetry and his most recent songwriting offer one of the most striking examples of the new "inconscient diasporal", to use Jean Morency's terms, found in contemporary Acadian culture. Comeau's poetic impulse leads to a shifting impatient self engaged in the search for a transfiguring inscription in the landscape.

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12 Fredric Gary Comeau, *Routes*, Trois-Rivières, Écrits des Forges, 1997, 41.

13 Comeau 1997, 49.

14 Fredric Gary Comeau, *Fuites*, Trois-Rivières, Écrits des Forges, 2000, 45.

Comeau's work is also a commentary on the limits of the Moncton urban setting celebrated by writers such as Guy Arsenault and especially Gérald Leblanc. I will not examine in great detail Leblanc's intricate metaphors of the city, developed in the 1990s around the publication of *Complaintes du continent* and *Éloge du chiac*. There is no doubt that Leblanc is the first to associate the future of Acadian identity with the continental drift and with the overarching notion of *américanité*. The "culture d'ici", as Leblanc says so clearly in *Éloge du chiac*, is made of rhythms borrowed from a mental territory that the poet can only sense through the irony of his search for a migrant North-South cultural osmosis.

During that period, Acadian writers were not alone in this redefinition of the minority cultural landscape. In Québec, René Lapierre in *Écrire l'Amérique*, Louis Hamelin in the road novel structure he gave to most of his fiction, and Guillaume Vigneault in *Chercher le vent*, to name just those three writers, all sought to describe the redemptive quality of the diasporic continental space. American popular and literary culture, from Bob Dylan to Cormac McCarthy, celebrated the deep psychological and political relevance of the road, both as pilgrimage to one's birthplace and liberation from the restrictions of collective and personal history. Jean Morency, among many critics, has devoted much of his recent research to the American intertext in Québec and French Canadian literatures. What we must continue to stress, however, is that contemporary Acadian cultural production may be understood, not only in terms of its participation in the Francophone sphere, but also in the wider context of North American continental territorialities. While Michel Roy's lost nation would remain nestled in the coastline of northern New Brunswick and in the string of small towns and villages facing the sea, another kind of Acadia, categorically urban, would follow the diagonal path across America.

Much like other French Canadian communities outside of Québec in the last thirty years, it seems that the Acadians themselves saw with a degree of unease the inscription of their modern affirmation as a part of the wider *Francophonie*. I realize, of course, that the Eighth Francophone summit held in Moncton in 1999 had a profound impact on the Acadians of Moncton, forcing a transformation of the public space in that city. Nonetheless, the emerging ties with Francophonie could only be seen as part of a new balancing act between complementary, and in no way overlapping, allegiances.

Of course, nowhere more than in recent Acadian writing has the notion of diasporic culture been so obviously prevalent. The shift from a historical paradigm of dispersion, loss and *retrouvailles* to the intensely composite and interlocking spaces of *Roots/Routes* described by James Clifford in his seminal study of di-

asporas in North America[15] continues to resonate throughout Acadia, from the Internet portal Acadie.net which developed new pages on the diaspora sometime in 2000 to the Université Sainte-Anne's summer seminar on the continental Acadian landscape also in 2000. In their 2007 superb book on plural *Acadies*, Martin Pâquet and Stéphane Savard offer, with the help of a good dozen academics, the best multidisciplinary approaches to these new territorialities shaping identity and culture from New Brunswick to Louisiana.[16]

Conclusion

In 1978, Michel Roy's *L'Acadie perdue* was a devastatingly insightful book. Roy's essay came out at a time when a fragile Acadian renaissance was gaining momentum and recognition. Its mixture of passion and pessimism and Roy's admission that he could not possibly express the Acadian "condition" with adequate words contrasted with the enthusiasm of the moment and its jazz-like overtures to incessant variations. In *L'Acadie perdue*, the intolerable figure of oppression described in the last fifty pages of the book compromises the essayist's attempt to represent collective powerlessness: "Mais il est vain de circonscrire ce phénomène avec des mots. J'éprouve la plus grande difficulté à préciser ce que je ressens de l'intérieur. Toute définition me paraît futile." (*AP*, 174) Roy's remarkable postcolonial analysis of the "tragically disfigured" Acadian identity and the resulting "desolation of the landscape" presented disturbing images of loss and historical doom.

With Hubert Aquin's "La fatigue culturelle du Canada français", Gaston Miron's "Recours didactiques" and Roger Levac's *L'anglistrose, L'Acadie perdue* ranks among the most eloquent contributions to late 20th-century postcolonial writing in Québec and French Canada. Roy's book served as a powerful *récit identitaire*, providing a counter-narrative to what was seen as a fossilized self-definition of Acadian identity. Roy sought to understand the particular destiny of the Acadian people, whose difficult history no textbook on postcolonialism could describe adequately. At the same time, the essayist failed to recognize the redemptive quality of Moncton's hybrid urbanity – the power of those "villes d'errance et d'émerveillement" celebrated by Leblanc – and dismissed as tragically misguided the city's tentative openness to the diagonal lifeline of the continent.

In *L'Acadie perdue* (as in Gaston Miron's didactic essays, for instance), hybrid cultures are seen as agents of division and fracture, leading to a symbolic dis-

15 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 1997.

16 Martin Pâquet – Stéphane Savard (dirs.), *Balises et références. Acadies. Francophonies*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007.

persion more damaging than the historical deportation itself. Contemporary Acadian, Cadian, and Cajun artists, poets and songwriters take another stance on the intersecting roads between Moncton, Montreal, Boston and Lafayette. In the face of Roy's Menaud-like sentiment that the margins are dying landscapes, inhabited by dispossessed landlords ("les seigneurs presque hiératiques d'une Acadie perdue", *AP*, 185), modern-day Acadia is, for writers such as Gérald Leblanc, Fredric Gary Comeau and others, the borderline piece of a larger continental puzzle. Acadian voices are operating from and alongside the margins of the entire North American space, and continue to exploit its transgressive paradox: Through a series of interlocking tensions and cross-feedings, Acadia thrives on shifting "maps of meaning", borrowing from the continent's vibrant sustainability – space is a "meditation on movement", as Leblanc writes in *Éloge du chiac* – and resisting its hyperbolic figures of dispersion and silence. In the end, Acadian history serves as a key paradigm in the cultural geography of small nations.

Popular Culture: Cuisine and Music
Culture populaire: cuisine et musique

ceux qui offrent le fruit de leur travail sans autre espoir
que celui de participer à l'éclosion d'une œuvre commune,
d'un travail dont la grandeur leur échappe, sinon dans un
désir partagé d'atteindre une plénitude pour laquelle ils n'ont
pas encore trouvé de nom, ni de lieu, ni de temps mais dont
ils anticipent le point d'achoppement, la lumière et le repos

Herménégilde Chiasson, *BéatitudeS*.
Sudbury, Prise de parole, 2007, 67.

those who offer the fruit of their labour with no hope
other than to contribute to the blossoming of a common
effort, to the work whose grandeur escapes them except
in a shared desire to see its fulfillment, its growth into
something they can't name, can't locate, can't schedule, but
which they can visualize, complete with its stumbling block,
its brilliance, and its satisfaction

Herménégilde Chiasson, *Beatitudes*.
Fredericton, Goose Lane Edition, 2007, 61.

Historic New Orleans Collection

Gumbo This: The State of a Dish

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Résumé

Gumbo a fini par représenter la Louisiane, en partie parce qu'il reflète et réfracte si parfaitement les complexités historiques d'où est né ce plat. La plupart des observateurs, peu importe s'il s'agit d'initiés ou de profanes, ont tendance à réduire le plat à une liste d'ingrédients. Cet article se propose de compliquer l'histoire et la nature du gumbo et, ceci faisant, affirmera que le " browning " est essentiel pour ce plat à la fois en termes de goût et en termes d'origines et de sens.

Introduction

When most people think of gumbo, they associate it with the Cajun and Creole peoples of South Louisiana. While the dish is most often associated with Louisiana, neither the name nor the idea for the dish itself is unique to the area.

The French word *gombo* comes to the New World from West Africa, where the plant was known as *(ki) ngombo* along much of the coast. Unlike the American word, *okra*, which derives from those African languages that knew the plant as *nkruma*, the French word does not refer only to the plant itself but to a larger cultural complex of practices and ideas that bear some elucidation below. Because of the African connection, there are also gumbos to be found in other parts of the United States, the Carolinas[1], for example, and Puerto Rico.

Gumbo has come to stand for Louisiana in part because it reflects and refracts so well the historical complexities out of which the dish emanates. Louisiana's colonial period saw the immediate introduction of enslaved Africans, who brought not only seeds for plants with them but ideas about what and how to prepare food.[2] The French and African settlers were, of course, pressing outward onto a landscape already occupied by Native Americans, who called the ground sassafras they used *kombo*, now known as filé, which begins to reveal the potential for linguistic and cultural mixing.

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1 Cf. Stan Woodward, *Southern Stews: A Taste of the South*, n.p., Woodward Studio Limited, 2001.

2 New Orleans was founded in 1718 and the first slave ship arrived in 1719.

Into this colonial mix of peoples and ideas came two great surges: the Acadians and the Haitians. The impact of the latter group on the culture in general and the foodways in particular of New Orleans is not to be underestimated. Whites, slaves, and freed people of color doubled the population of the city overnight. They brought with them their preference for highly-seasoned food, probably the result of an Afro-Caribbean matrix, and for a pulse and starch dish which is similarly iconic in Louisiana: red beans and rice. The culinary revolution that took place as a result of the widespread employment of still enslaved Haitians as domestic help throughout New Orleans can only be compared to a similar phenomenon that took place in Italy in the 13th century when enslaved Mongolian domestics were the fashion which resulted in the pasta revolution according to at least one foodways historian.[3]

The first mentions of gumbo in the historical record appear right as the colonial period ends and the American one begins, which underlines the fact that the exact origins of Louisiana gumbo may be irretrievable.[4] Its form and nature, however, appear to have been established before the end of the colonial period: a thick, brown soup served over a starch. Since its development as a commercial crop in the late 19th century, rice has been the starch at the bottom of gumbo bowls. Before that, Louisiana cleft more closely to the rest of the South and the starch that gumbo covered was corn meal mush, known at first by the Native American term *sagamité* and later by the African-influenced *couche couche*, derived most probably from *cous cous*, which had been introduced in West Africa with the influx of Islam into the region. The tradition of a mush as the base starch in gumbo is maintained in some parts of Louisiana, with potato salad sometimes being scooped into a gumbo bowl to "soak up the rest of the gravy", as more than one individual interviewed has commented. The brownness of gumbo is really its essence, but how that brown is achieved varies by region and by dish. In some areas, cooks get the browning from the meat, in others from the roux. The color, consistency, and amount of roux is wildly variable, as is its place in the cooking process: Some cooks begin making gumbo with making the roux, then adding seasoning vegetables, and then water. Others already have a roux made, often a large bowl of it

3 Reay Tannahill, *Food in History*, New York, Methuen, 1973.

4 In commenting upon a party thrown in honor of the acting Spanish governor, Pierre Clément de Laussat noted, "You never saw anything more brilliant. A lovely atmosphere prevailed in all the drawing rooms. Entertainment lasted twelve hours. The guests danced boleros, gavottes, English dances, French and English quadrilles, and galopades. Eight tables accommodated card players and high-stake gamblers. Twenty oil lamps and 220 wax candles were burned. Sixty places were set at the main table, 24 at the small table, and 146 on 32 small round tables. In addition, hundreds ate standing up here and there. As a local touch, twenty-four gumbos were served, six or eight of which were sea turtle." Cf. Pierre Clément de Laussat, *Memoirs of My Life to My Son During the Years 1803 and After, Which I Spent in Public Service in Louisiana as Commissioner of the French Government for the Retrocession to France of That Colony and for Its Transfer to the United States*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1978, 86.

sitting in the refrigerator, and add the roux to boiling water, dissolving it spoonful by spoonful.[5]

Even this brief discussion of a few aspects of gumbo reveals the extreme variability and flexibility of the dish. It is, like any cultural touchstone, as much a focus for arguments as it is for agreement, with differences often being distinct across regions, towns, and even families. These differences are, in point of fact, more consistent than any of the more sweeping claims sometimes made between Cajun and Creole versions of the dish. It is more likely that Cajun and Creole neighbors in Lawtell will make gumbo in the same way, than it is that the Creoles of Lawtell and those of New Orleans will do so. As is the case with any number of folklore forms, gumbo reveals that there has always been a high degree of cultural integration in the South, even when social segregation was the law of the land.

The Gumbo Difference

It was, perhaps, inevitable that gumbo has become one of the most prominent icons of, and metaphors for, South Louisiana, and all this talk of food and difference is one way to prefigure a discussion of Cajun and Creole folkways, which have themselves largely been marked as different within the larger stream of American culture.

The exact origin of gumbo as trope is not entirely clear, but folklorists were some of the first to press it into service. In 1983, Barry Jean Ancelet deferred the origin of the idea to Marc Savoy when he noted that "Cajun music is a Louisiana hybrid, a blend of cultural influences with an identity which accordion maker and musician Marc Savoy of Eunice describes in culinary terms: 'It's a blend of ingredients, like a gumbo in which different spices and flavors combine to make a new taste'."[6] Later he would make the idea his own and use it in places like Pat Mire's film *Dance for a Chicken* (1993).[7] Nick Spitzer also used the idea of *gumbo* to mark a difference between Louisiana's own "gumbo culture" and the larger American impulses toward either a tessellated patchwork quilt or a homogenized melting pot, when he noted:

> Our own notion of cultural creolization need be neither classic liberal pluralism of bounded mosaic-like diversity and its sometimes inchoate spinoff into multiculturalism, nor the assimilationist melting pot of the prior generation. Instead it could be gumbo pots that hold the potential ingredients for creation and remaking of American

[5] In these latter areas pre-packaged rouxs have arisen and now appear on store shelves throughout South Louisiana: *Savoie's* is from Eunice and *Karey's* from Ville Platte.

[6] Barry Jean Ancelet, "Cajun Music: Its Roots and Development", in: Glenn Conrad (dir.), *The Cajuns: Essays on Their History and Culture*, Lafayette, Center for Louisiana Studies, 1983, 195.

[7] Pat Mire, *Dance for a Chicken*, Pat Mire Films, 1993.

> culture(s). Pots of foreign ingredients – okra from Africa, sassafras from Native America, peppers from the Spanish circum-Caribbean, now all homegrown and stirred with a French sensibility – combined in a new domestic, or even virtual, common space, contributing to the creation of a sauce or roux while retaining essential aspects of their own group primordia.[8]

It is not entirely clear in this cultural kitchen how all this stirring and combining and saucing and spicing is supposed to work, let alone how it is different from any other place. But the idea of Louisiana's singular difference, as seen through the murky prism of gumbo, has taken root – roux? – and become so quotidian as to be the foundation for public sector marketing campaigns. For a time the state had as its appeal to tourists: "Come as you are; leave different." Closer to my own home, in the middle of the area billed as "Cajun Country" by many, the appeal is more direct: Saint Landry Parish promotes itself as "gumbo for your soul". Intertwined in these corrective offerings to whatever ails a potential visitor is the suggestion that Louisiana is different, that the difference cuts across a number of dimensions, and that the difference can be as easily consumed, and digested, as a dish.

Essential Wisdom

I note all this in order to begin to get us thinking about the essentialization of difference that the gumbo trope risks. Perhaps I am overly sensitive to the topic, since I am a member of a discipline that has, in its history, trafficked in essentialisms that have led to some unfortunate results. The tendency to imagine Cajuns as isolated and thus uniquely different is one such essentialism against which we must guard.

For one, Cajuns and Creoles are not alone in possessing the secret of gumbo in the New World. There are, as I noted earlier, gumbos in the Carolinas and guigumbos in Puerto Rico. For another, even during their most deeply "insulated" periods, Cajuns and Creoles were well aware of larger national or global trends. I remember looking through the famous Vermilion parish fiddler Varise Conner's record collection and noting his love of blues and jazz. And those who have heard the Louisiana Folk Masters CD of Conner have heard him play a polka, a mazurka, and a tune with the title of "You Better See Your Momma Every Night or You Won't Have No Momma At All". The song is a blues; the family name is Irish; the language he spoke was French. During the same time that this musical mixing occurred, the Federal Writers Project collected recipes from around the region, many of which reveal that the most popular fish among Cajuns and Creoles in the 1930s was not catfish nor crawfish but canned salmon. It appears in a variety

[8] Nicholas Spitzer, "Monde Créole: The Cultural World of French Louisiana Creoles and the Creolization of World Cultures", in: *Journal of American Folklore* 116 (2003), 69–70.

of dishes: salmon cakes, salmon balls, salmon croquettes, salmon bisque. All of them are traditional in form, but obviously the forms themselves are more open to new contents than our discussions about them would indicate.

And yet, essentialisms live on. Even recent reference texts like the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* reveal a willingness to treat a nuanced cultural domain like cuisine as something easily swallowed whole. Opening up the current edition of the *Encyclopedia*, one finds:

> The heady, aromatic soup that goes by the name of gumbo is the product of varied cultures that produced this hybrid of southern cuisine. From Africa comes its name – ngombo, the Bantu word for okra. The herbs, spices, the carefully chopped and sautéed seasoning vegetables, the seafoods, meat, fowl, and the rice with which it is always served come together in a nourishing and enticing amalgam that is unique to the region.[9]

It's a pretty good beginning: The laundry list of ingredients suggest the diverseness of the dish. The author, however, quickly shrinks the diversity down to two, Cajun and Creole, limiting Creole cooking to a style "practiced in the areas in and around New Orleans" (this particular essentialism drives the Cane River Creoles and the Creoles of the Louisiana Prairies to no end of distraction). Given such a limited perspective, it is no surprise that what the author ends up with is the conventional bifurcation of South Louisiana cooking:

> As in any kitchen dispute, there are as many theories as there are cooks, but the usual difference between a Cajun and a Creole gumbo lies in the "roux." Browning flour in fat (slowly, slowly stirring all the while) creates a roux and in Cajun gumbos this is a necessary thickener. Creole gumbos rely mainly on vegetable aids for thickening, with a much thinner roux if one is used.[10]

Such sweeping generalizations about the adjectival form of "Cajun" and "Creole" completely ignore the actual people who, using the singular and bounded nominal form, call themselves "a Cajun" or "a Creole". In either case, individuals tend to practice traditions that have more in common with their geographic neighbors than with a larger imagined, and super-local, ethnic community. As noted above, Creoles living in Lawtell make a gumbo that has more in common with their Cajun neighbors than Creoles living in Lake Charles, let alone the Creoles of New Orleans or the Creoles of Cane River.

The rest of the *Encyclopedia* entry is much the same, a goodly mix of food writing with an eye to some of the recent scholarship. In all honesty, the limited nature of the writer's perspective merely echoes our own oversights in this area. The prob-

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9 Carolyn Kolb, "Gumbo", in: Charles Reagan Wilson – William Ferris (dirs.), *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1989, 502.

10 Kolb, in: Wilson – Ferris 1989, 502–503.

lem with foodways is that they tend to blur distinctions and differences, making claims about ethnicity and authenticity a lot more difficult. Ethnicity and authenticity have been the focus of a good deal of scholarly discourse, which has tended to seek them out in order to support claims to resources for the groups with whom they work. The *Encylopedia* entry participates in this scholarly tradition. It is also representative of the larger food writing tradition, which regularly extends the bifurcation beyond the simply ethnic into the geographic. In a number of cookbooks I examined over the course of my research, Cajun cuisine was often described as something like "rustic", "hearty", and "simple". Creole cuisine, reflecting the trend to imagine Creole as restricted to New Orleans, was often described as "complex", "sophisticated", and "urban".

The Nature of Variation

My home discipline of folklore studies has, as one of its founding precepts, the idea that people are, or were, arranged on the landscape into something like "natural" groups, that geographic boundaries or limiting features would focus people's interactions in such a way that discrete cultures would develop and be maintained. Such a binding of the historic to the geographic has seemed to hold true across a number of folklore forms in South Louisiana. Barry Jean Ancelet, and a number of others, have investigated various dimensions of historic-geographic phenomena over the years. One of the most visible, in a spectacular way, is *le courir de Mardi Gras*, the Mardi Gras run, found in and around the towns of Mamou, Eunice, Church Point, and elsewhere. Many readers will be familiar with the spectacular urban carnival form of New Orleans Mardi Gras. The country Mardi Gras is more like the mumming traditions of Europe: a rural procession that moves from house to house within a communally-determined territory and performs various kinds of small dramas in exchange for money or other forms of wealth which will help the touring group to host a gumbo to which all who contribute are invited.

Ancelet had, in his work on the *courir de Mardi Gras*, begun to develop an idea about the territories marked that he called *petits mondes*. When I first set out to trace the gumbo lines of Louisiana, I imagined they existed like Ancelet's *mondes*. He and I even sketched out some of the possible territories based on previous fieldwork, travels, and experiences, demarcating the zones with bounding lines where a certain behavior or ingredient seemed to drop out. There would be a seafood line, which would mark the outer limit of access to fresh coastal goods up to the moment of readily-available refrigeration. There was, to our minds, a smoke line, which reflected what we perceived was a northern Acadiana preference for smoked sausage and a southern regional preference for fresh, often called *green*, sausage in gumbos. Somewhere there was a garlic line, because we had both no-

ticed that garlic was fairly prevalent on the eastern side of the Atchafalaya Basin and on its western edge, but that by the time one got to Crowley, any attempt to put garlic in gumbo could provoke a fight.

Over the next few years I conducted dozens of interviews with older cooks, mostly women but also a number of men, and with their audiences, trying to map patterns of ingredients, preparation, and consumption. I also conducted literally hundreds of smaller interviews, read through a fair amount of archival material, and polled students about family foodways.

What I eventually discerned was that while there were certainly larger cultural geographies to be glimpsed, on the ground regional differences were less clear. I came to think less and less in terms of lines and more and more in terms of vectors, impulses, horizons. That is, there is no line, physical or imaginary, that one crosses and the use of garlic drops. Instead, I can, with a fair amount of certainty, tell you that as one moves closer to the Bayou Téche, the chances of garlic being a basic ingredient in gumbo rises exponentially. Conversely, as you move away from the bayou and westward across the Louisiana prairies, garlic drops out.

The presence of garlic along the Bayou Teche, on the western side of the basin, and its paired presence along the Bayou Lafourche on the eastern side of the basin is rather readily explained by the presence of Italian immigrants. It also explains the more *mire poix*-like seasoning ingredients of onions, celery, and bell pepper, a medley preferred by Italian American cooks across the nation. And the presence of smoked meats in the northern part of Acadiana is probably not a result of the Germans who settled in the area, as was long thought, but more likely dates back to the settlement of what is now northern Saint Landry Parish by immigrants from Fort Toulouse in Alabama, as Carl Brasseaux has documented so clearly.[11]

All assertions about larger foodways trends must, then, be qualified by the movement of families and of individuals around the landscape. People move for any number of reasons – the Alabamons foreshadowed the Acadians in being settled in one area and quickly declaring their preference to be elsewhere. When people move, they bring with them a certain set of traditions that they can cause to spread and they simultaneously acculturate to the traditions of their new neighbors. Over the last twenty years, a number of Louisiana studies have begun to make clear that a more thorough ethnography of the region really reveals something like microecosystems of ideas and behaviors that are, much to the chagrin for any analyst desiring a comprehensive and complete landscape, always already in motion.

[11] Carl Brasseaux, "Opelousas and Alabama Immigrants", in: Carl Brasseaux (dir.), *A Refuge for All Ages: Immigration in Louisiana History*, Lafayette, Center for Louisiana Studies, 1996, 103–116.

There are, however, some larger assertions to be made within the frame of a history difficult to discover and a geography too jumpy to do justice. Some of that work has been done in C. Paige Gutierrez's *Cajun Foodways* and in Brasseaux's *Stir the Pot*.[12] Gutierrez's work is admirable in attempting a kind of synthesis of a folklore form, especially something as complex as a foodway. Her survey is contemporaneous in scope, trying to capture what was the state of Cajun foodways at the time of her study, though in seeking a synthesis she misses some of the distinctions already mentioned above.

Both Gutierrez and Brasseaux occasionally admit that Cajun foodways might be part of larger trends. Both recognize, for example, that pork and one-pot, stewed dishes are part of a larger Southern pattern. Brasseaux is particularly good about distinct trends that affected Cajuns on the western side of the Atchafalaya Basin, an area he knows extremely well. One of the best examples of this, and perhaps the greatest shift in Cajun foodways since the arrival in Louisiana and their initial adaptation to the local ecologies, is the displacement of corn by rice as the base cereal, or starch, in the Cajun diet.

The corn mush consumed by the colonial French and later by the Cajuns was in fact a Native American inheritance. Its later appellation of *couche-couche* is surely derived, as I noted above, from the name that some West Africans would have used, comparing it to the dish they knew, *couscous* (in an interesting twist of fate, *couscous* in Mali was made from rice). The word that the colonial French used was *sagamite*, which appears to be a word that spans a number of native language families, suggesting a late introduction to North America. Early gumbos were served over this corn mush, a situation that did not change until "Midwesterners in search of economic opportunities in the South relocated to Cajun country and helped to transform the region's agricultural base from corn production and ranching to rice cultivation"[13].

The Gumbo Engine

Returning to my previous comments about impulses often left out of inventories of ingredients, methods, and dishes is a delineation of a rather consistent culinary aesthetic. The conventional wisdom among the literati about gumbo is that "first you make a roux". A more careful survey of gumbo preparation reveals that this is simply not true. And it is not true across a wide span of gumbos. Ignoring gumbo *des herbes* for a moment, the first thing you do in any gumbo is brown something.

[12] C. Paige Gutierrez, *Cajun Foodways*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1992; Marcelle Bienvenu – Carl Brasseaux – Ryan Brasseaux, *Stir the Pot: The History of Cajun Cuisine*, New York, Hippocrene Books, 2005.

[13] Bienvenu – Brasseaux – Brasseaux 2005, 111.

What you brown, how you brown it, and how much of that browning reveals itself in the final dish varies across regions, cooks, and kinds of gumbos. Browning is the one aesthetic impulse that transcends all gumbos. It is the gumbo engine, the thing that makes food go in Cajun foodways.

During the early colonial exchange, browning served as a convergence point for the three folk cookeries (Native, French, and African).[14] While the French and Africans arrived with the practice of browning in roasting meats, it was the Native Americans who perhaps suggested that cereals could be browned. While on a war trip with the Arkansas, Jean-Bernard Bossu noted:

> They do not worry much about food supplies. Everyone is provided with a little sack of corn flour or maize roasted in just about the way we roast our coffee. When they are hungry, they mix some of the flour with a spoonful of water, but generally do not eat it until they have come close to the enemy.[15]

We know from Bossu's account as well as from others that European settlers quickly took over many Indian folkways.[16] Within a short time of the colony's establishment, Europeans were raising plants like maize and tobacco. They used the same waterways for the same reasons as the Indians did and selected the same places for establishing settlements. There was considerable continuity from Indians to Europeans. This description of a grain being browned may be the origin of the Louisiana roux, where the flour itself changes color and not the butter, as in the classical French roux. What happens in a Louisiana roux is that the flour grains themselves are browned in the fat before liquid is added. The browned grains still behave as normal when liquids are added, absorbing and expanding to cause the characteristic thickening of many gumbos.

So what does browning do? When vegetables like onions, which are high in sugars, are browned, caramelization results. When meats are exposed to high heat, something called the Maillard Reaction occurs. During the Maillard reaction, carbohydrates and amino acids combine in a number of new compounds. Some

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[14] For fuller accounts of the Acadian and African immigrants, cf. Carl Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life, 1765-1803*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana University Press, 1987, and also Carl Brasseaux, *Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People, 1803-1877*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1992, as well as Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

[15] Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751–1762*, translated and edited by Seymour Feiler, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1962, 64.

[16] For those interested in a larger history of the indigenous roots of Southern stews, cf. a later remark in Bossu's text which discusses his encounters with a dish called chili: "The natives, as I have already said, lived on dried and smoked game, roasted or boiled with corn ground in a hardwood mortar. This food, called chili, is very tasty and healthful. When I went up the Mobile River with the Indians, I lived for about two months on this food. I can assure you I never felt better than I did during this period." Cf. Bossu 1962, 218.

create flavor. Others create color. “Burned” is the wrong end of this spectrum of possibilities, but everything short of it adds depth to the dish’s flavor. Taking a little bit of food and making it go a long way both in terms of nutrition as well as in terms of flavor is something Louisiana cooks all seemed to have agreed upon early in the colony’s existence.

Throughout my research, what I came across again and again is that browning is foundational to Cajun and Creole foodways. In some ways, the *ur*-dish of the region is not gumbo but rice and gravy. Pork steak. Brisket. Meatballs. Even cowboy stew with potatoes: All are served over rice and with gravy. What distinguishes one region from another are the stages of browning. In the northern Acadiana parishes, for example, the meat of a gumbo is typically browned and then it can be kept in the pot or set aside when water is added. A roux is prepared in a second pot, or at a different time (and kept in a bowl in the refrigerator) and then it is slowly added to the water and stirred in, dissolved thoroughly. In the southern parishes, west of the basin, “first you make a roux” and then you add seasoning vegetables, then water, then meat: The notion of “first you make a roux” is so famous that it was the title of a 1954 cookbook published locally in Lafayette.

This preference for browning may, in part, come from the roasting practices of 17th-century French cookery. The other method for cooking meat during this time would have been, of course, the *chaudron*, or kettle, in which one would have cooked soups or stews. This was the cookery that the people who were to become Acadians took with them to the New World. Over the next one hundred and twenty years, Acadians would continue to raise certain old world crops and develop tastes for new ones. By the time of the deportation, Acadian lands yielded bumper crops of wheat, cabbage, apples, grapes, carrots, and corn and supported hundreds of heads of cattle. The Acadians had also learned, from the MicMacs, how to use bear oil as a seasoning and as a cooking fat whereas in France the fat of choice would have been butter or goose fat. In Louisiana, they would come face to face with a very different cookery, one in which fat has a third use, frying. With the addition of West African foodways to the mix, the browning triumvirate – Native American parching, European roasting, and West African frying – was complete.

Conclusion

With the storms of 2005 and the emergence of yet another diaspora – one reminiscent of *le Grand Derangement* and the Middle Passage in scope –, I decided to shelve my research into the state of gumbo in Louisiana. Initial media distortions about criminal acts – e.g., snipers shooting at rescue helicopters or people looting stores – became national clichés, which ignored on the ground realities that some

people were taking diapers and baby formula and some people were shooting guns in a desperate attempt to signal their need for help (the use of guns as signaling devices is part of a number of southern folk cultures). No one seemed to care that the bleaching of the city was also a draining of the city's chief cultural engine. The billboard on Interstate 49 that proclaimed "gumbo for your soul" seemed a lie designed only to lure in tourists and feed them a watered-down soup with no meat worth eating.

It reminded me of that moment in Ada Jack Carver's short story "The Old One" first published in 1926.[17] The story is told from the point of view of an old woman, Nicolette, who is battling her grandson's avaricious wife. The grandmother has raised her grandson, Balthazar, in the Creole community of Isle Brevelle, along the Cane River of northwest Louisiana. The grandson's wife, Rose, something of an upstart from outside the community, desires to sell the old woman's bed in order to buy a car, a device Nicolette sees only as a vehicle for the young woman to be even looser than she already is. The grandson, and husband, is of course unaware of the power struggle and is for the most part firmly under his wife's sway. At one point in the story, the two women have reached an impasse and both await Balthazar's return to plead their cases. Nicolette waits outside, where she has taken up residence since being moved, along with her bed, to the back of the house. The granddaughter waits inside, where the narrative voice, closely allied with the grandmother, tells us she "moved about in the kitchen, lifting potlids and rattling dishes. She was knowing and sly, that Rose; and Granny knew what she was up to. She was making gumbo for Balthazar. Rose could be sweet when she wanted to."[18]

The narration of the events of that evening are not given. Nothing else needs to be said. The passage makes clear that the power of persuasion lies with the gumbo. The phrasing underlines the intertwining of Rose's womanly wiles with the dish: We are told not that she was making a gumbo but that "she was making gumbo for Balthazar". Rose's slyness and cunningness are not served directly to her husband, but in a dish. In common parlance, Rose is "cooking up something", and to be most effective, that something is a gumbo.

Such a mordant view of things might seem dramatic, but it serves to balance the sometimes overly cheerful rendering of gumbo itself as a kind of localized-to-Louisiana version of the American patchwork, where everybody cheerfully adds something to the pot from which everyone will happily, and fully, draw his fill. Such renderings flatten out the interesting interleavings of peoples and cultures. The

17 Ada Jack, "The Old One", in: Mary Dell Fletcher (ed.), *The Collected Works of Ada Jack Carver*, Natchitoches, Northwest State University Press, 1980, 119–134.

18 Carver 1980, 110.

gumbo exchange falls hard on the heels of the Columbian exchange, which itself follows the exchanges that took place between Africa, Europe, and the Near East during the expansion of Islam and later the early European explorations. I leave this essay with a possible beginning for further study: Is it possible that okra itself got to West Africa through Muslim travelers? There are many more connections to explore, many more questions to answer.

Historic New Orleans Collection

The Changing Face of Acadian Folk Song

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Résumé

La chanson folklorique n'a pas seulement servi à propager un sens de fierté nationale dans l'Acadie de la première moitié du 20e siècle mais elle a également contribué à la reconnaissance des Acadiens comme minorité linguistique au sein des structures fédérales canadiennes pendant les années 1970. De nos jours, cependant, la chanson folklorique court le risque de devenir un simple artefact au lieu de faire partie d'une culture vivante, transmise par les institutions de formation et par l'industrie du spectacle. Notre contribution aborde ce fait dans une perspective historique, mesurant à quel point la chanson folklorique a agi sur le social dans trois contextes historiques différents et à quel point elle a réussi à exprimer des concepts ethniques changeants.

Introduction

Acadian folk song today[1] struggles with making the transition from being orally transmitted to being passed down through educational institutions or the entertainment industry. The question is why. When an oral tradition moves from our past to our present, when it becomes collected, printed, disseminated, and promoted within a society, when it moves from the museum to becoming a tool of revival, it becomes a tool to express social identity. The "social basis" of folk song therefore is in a continuous process of transformation not only as it is redefined in relation to constructions of identity,[2] but also as identity is reconfigured to reflect changing ideologies. This paper demonstrates these processes by analyzing Acadian folk song alongside wider processes of ethnicity, identity, and nationalism in three different historical contexts. By focussing on the discourse of Acadian musicians in the province of New Brunswick in Canada, it outlines how folk song has been

[1] Acadia was established by French colonists in 1604 as a trading post on Saint Croix Island at the mouth of the St. Croix River. When this post was moved to Port Royal in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley in 1605, Port Royal became North America's first French colony, expanding its area with the arrival of new colonists during the 1630s. The Acadian territory has included parts of present-day Maine, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Cape Breton Island, as well as the Gaspé Peninsula on the eastern tip of Québec, St. Pierre et Miquelon off the south coast of Newfoundland, and the Magdalen Islands off the northern tip of Maine in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Cf. Maurice Basque – Nicole Barrieau – Stéphanie Côté, *L'Acadie de l'Atlantique*, Moncton, Société Nationale de l'Acadie–Centre d'études acadiennes–Centre international de recherche et de documentation de la francophonie–Année francophone internationale, 1999, 15–19.

[2] Philip V. Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988, 64.

ideologically positioned to negotiate power relations locally and nationally from the end of the 19th century to the present day. It reveals that as folk song has been targeted to symbolize the Acadian identity in the public realm, its reception inside Acadian society has fluctuated according to its ability to articulate the Acadian identity in different socially defined periods.

Methodology

The construction of minorities is both a historical and a social process. Anthropologist Thomas Eriksen (2002) points to the "ambiguity" we recognize in constructions of identity as being linked "with a negotiable history and a negotiable cultural content"[3]. Since social identities are not solely utility based – "formed in situations of competition over scarce resources"[4] – he suggests ethnicity and nationhood be viewed alongside "ideology production" because this provides a way of understanding the role that "ethnic groups themselves have played"[5] in constructing new ethnic concepts in different historical moments.

Other anthropologists such as Raymond Grew (2001) illustrate how perceived differences, having arisen from larger historical processes, are reinforced by governmental policies which either protect, privilege, or exclude particular groups. He describes how "public distinctions are constructed […] whereby differences – once they have been socially or politically defined – take on a life of their own"[6]. Thus, although ethnic constructions are bolstered by "social discrimination, spatial separation, or legislation", assessments of social identity also need to include "responses within the minority as well as the larger society" because of the ways in which different groups "absorb each other's tactics and arguments".[7]

The following discussion explores the social and historical aspects of identity construction in Acadia by introducing three scenarios which not only demonstrate how folk song became subsumed within Canadian cultural politics historically, but also how folk song has absorbed various meanings associated with shifts in Acadia's social consciousness. This not only illustrates how these processes have impacted Acadia's relationship with folk song, but affects choices of identity today.

3 Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, London, Pluto Press, 2002, 73.

4 Eriksen 2002, 73.

5 Eriksen 2002, 93.

6 Raymond Grew, *The Construction of Minorities: Cases for Comparison Across Time and Around the World*, Ann Arbour, University of Michigan Press, 2001, 2.

7 Grew 2001, 12–13.

Clerico-Nationalism (1880s–1960s)

Clerico-nationalism can be defined as an emotional type of nationalism, imbued with patriotic sentiments, which fostered group solidarity through cultural narratives and simple histories. It became linked with ultramontanism[8] at the end of the 19th century, an ideology brought over to Quebec and Acadia by Catholic missionaries from France which placed the church at the centre of society. Ultramontanist thought created insular communities which idealized the past and extolled the virtues of faith, ancestry, language, heritage, and tradition,[9] and it eventually became an effective means of unifying disperse agrarian Acadian communities. As ultramontanism gained popularity in French Canada, all forms of national song – Gregorian chant, patriotic songs, national anthems, and folk song – were used to maintain boundaries between the French and the English, acting as cultural symbols to create a sense of belonging, teach Christian values, and build Acadian society.[10]

However, as my conversation with international folk singer Edith Butler elucidates, elitist musical perceptions meant that the status of folk song in Acadia was low at this time because art music was held in greater esteem:

> […] I knew lots of folk songs but I didn't dare sing that because in our head all Acadian people were taught that was […] just low, not interesting music, but just our own music […] if we didn't sing something that was written with beautiful poetry […] that was it.[11]

Therefore, from the 1940s two priests – Father Anselme Chiasson, Acadia's main folk song collector, and Father Leandré Brault, Acadia's first choral director – worked

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8 The ultramontanist movement, reintroduced in France around the time of the French Revolution, supported the infallibility of papal authority. Through French missionaries, it was implanted in Canada through churches, schools, newspapers, and national conventions and became associated with French Canadian nationalism. It strove to avoid profanity in the arts to reflect the "genius" of the French nation and introduced the conception of a "new piety" through music, encouraging Acadians to use forgiveness and personal "zeal" to improve their social and economic circumstances. Cf. Nive Voisine, "Ultramontanism", in: *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, available: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com, accessed 06/10/2006, and Philippe Sylvain – Nive Voisine, *Histoire du Catholicisme québécois*, Québec, Boréal, 1991, 415–18.

9 Cf. Voisine, "Ultramontanism", in: *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, available: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com, accessed 06/10/2006.

10 There was an increase in the number of patriotic songs and national anthems being composed in Canada at this time, as well as a growing acceptance that folk and popular song represented the ethos of a particular people. In other words, collectively, music served the same purpose. Religious, patriotic, and folk repertoires were being performed in reaction to other ethnic minorities, particularly as Canada's preoccupation with defining the nation-state grew during the 19th century. As a result, certain songs became symbolic of different cultural groups, even though many of them lacked patriotic or nationalistic themes. Cf. Helmut Kallman, "Patriotic Songs", in: *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, available: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com, accessed 10/08/2007.

11 Personal communication, 8 August, 2004, 1:31–32.

to raise the status of folk song through "popularization and politicization"[12]. Inside Acadian society, they combated Acadia's negative linguistic identity by valorizing Acadian folk traditions in Acadia's classical colleges, while at the national level they promoted the local and international festival successes of Acadian choirs to gain political recognition for Acadia in Canada's federal structure. They drew on the ultramontanist belief that changing one's self-concept could change one's socio-economic circumstances, using the idea of *fierté* or pride to instil a sense of dignity, value, self-respect, and satisfaction for one's achievements.

Following is a conversation with Neil Michaud, former priest and conductor of the Chorale de l'Université de Moncton, who spoke with me about Father Chiasson's activities in Acadian society:

> Jeanette: […] I know that Father Chiasson played other roles in Acadian society besides collecting folklore and folk song. What was he trying to do for Acadian society?
> Neil: He was trying to get them out of the gutter and he would use all the means he had.
> Jeanette: You mean economically helping them or helping with their identity? What was he trying to do?
> Neil: Yes, the identity because he collected all the folk songs he could from his part of the country and from other parts. He brought back the belief in themselves for the Acadians. That's quite a gift […] He could have left them money but what he left them that count [sic] the most is *fierté*. That is priceless.[13]

Neil Michaud also revealed that only the more "upbeat" or positive songs from Father Chiasson's printed collections[14] were popularized by Acadian choirs, while many of the slower ballads, called les *complaintes*, were excluded from public performance:

> Neil: […] we had to go through the books in order to find appealing songs and lively ones.[15]
> Neil: […] some of them [folk songs] are not very good music [sic]. They're just so sad, sorrowful, and what do you do with that? We don't sing that in front of a crowd.[16]

These new canon-formations exemplify the clergy's desire to redirect Acadians from being a society of victimization, to being one of social action. Indeed, Florine Després, former nun and conductor of La Chorale Notre Dame d'Acadie, who worked closely with Father Brault during his stay in Acadia, also remembers how

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12 Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History*, Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2004, 49.

13 Personal communication, 13 May, 2004, 2:44–51.

14 Father Anselme Chiasson published five earlier collections in 1942, 1944, 1946, 1969, and 1979 with his cousin Father Daniel Boudreau. Six other books were published between 1983 and 1993, mostly through the efforts of Father Daniel Boudreau.

15 Personal communication, 13 May, 2004, 1:8.

16 Personal communication, 13 May, 2004, 2:9.

the choral repertory moved away from patriotic song to focus on promoting folk song and Gregorian chant in Acadia's classical colleges:

> It started with Father Brault […] we never had any choirs going outside of the convent before that. We were singing for the church and sometimes we would have a little meeting or something and we'd sing […] *Les Chants acadiens* [a collection of patriotic songs] I never remember singing other things than "Évangeline" and "Le Pêcheur acadien".[17] Folk songs was [sic] not in our tradition […] But when he came, Father Brault, it was Gregorian chant and folk song.[18]

Indeed, from the end of the 19th century ultramontanist ideologies adopted creation and dissemination theories from European folk song scholarship, forming misconceptions about the historical link between folk song and Gregorian chant.[19] Since these ideas were disseminated in seminaries in Quebec where Father Brault was trained, he introduced them to Acadian classical colleges, using elite musical perceptions to elevate folk song's public image. Florine Després reveals how Father Brault influenced the way she taught and performed folk song, describing how folk song imitated the rhythmic flexibility of Gregorian chant and emphasized the connection between text and melody: "[…] to me a folk song – I always regarded singing it the same way as I did Gregorian. There's a certain line, not measured, it's the words that guide us."[20] She also underscores how the music festival became Father Brault's most powerful social tool because of the way in which the festival's "competitive potential" targeted social and political change.[21] By using the media to document Acadia's choral successes in the folk song categories, Father Brault successfully transformed folk song's social status:

> Florine: […] we would not have been renowned if it had not been for the Festival. We used to sing for the church. Otherwise I mean the students would have their classical

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17 Various patriotic songs, portraying the Acadians as poor exiles or "les pauvres exilés", were written at the turn of the 20th century. Many songs upheld Acadia's national flag, national anthem, and patron saint Marie, as symbols of hope for a more promising future. Using the ultramontanist conception of a "new piety" and personal "zeal" these songs generally encouraged Acadians to change their fortunes by modeling themselves on their forefathers, staying in Acadia, and by conserving their faith, language, and traditions.

18 Personal communication, 7 April, 2004, 1:197–207.

19 Based on the theory of assonance, Quebec composer Ernest Gagnon tried to prove that there was a relationship between Gregorian chant and French Canadian folk music, believing scales had a moral character determined by their sound. Positing that the folk music of rural French Canada was "modal" in nature, this proved that French Canadians must be of moral character because they avoided leading tones and chromaticism. His theories were developed in relation to two things. The first was France's chant revival where Benedictine monks at Solemnes Abbey used philology, the science of language, as a model to try and reconstruct and restore Gregorian chant to its medieval origins. The second involved the debates in the 19th century on the origins of the eight-fold system of modality found in plainchant.

20 Personal communication, 7 April, 2004, 2:43.

21 Bohlman 2004, 119.

> course but that wouldn't be shown in the papers while this was a public thing. Everybody wanted to come to Notre Dame d'Acadie to be in the choir and to take music.[22]

Both Father Chiasson and Father Brault thus fostered national pride and changed Acadia's negative self-perceptions by allowing the folk song repertory to work in "service to the nation"[23]. They not only promoted the literary language of the Acadian nation, but helped raise Acadia's national profile by actively participating in constructing knowledge of local musical practice.[24]

Neo-Nationalism (1960s–1980s)

When traditional Acadian society in New Brunswick shifted from being governed by the clergy to the provincial government in the 1960s, upheavals in Acadian society occurred. This new period in Acadia soon began to define how politics, economics, and ideas of nationhood sculpted Acadian culture in the 1970s, depicting Acadia as an independent nation in Canada's federal political structure.[25] This occurred in reaction to new federal laws which privileged the French linguistic minority in the province of Quebec, while excluding other francophone linguistic minorities living either inside or outside Quebec's national borders. Thus, although Acadia had no geo-political boundaries, the notion of an Acadian nation now was commonly assumed. It referred to a cultural and emotional nation that Acadians imagine is made up of only Acadians living in Canada's Maritime Provinces, and is culturally and linguistically separate from the rest of Canada.

This process was achieved politically by creating an oppositional identity to Quebec. Initially, it began with the student movement's rejection of the ultramontane ideologies of the Catholic Church, leading Acadians away from their folkloric past. Yet, when Antonine Maillet's book *La Sagouine* and Pierre Perrault's film *L'Acadie*, *l'Acadie* were released in 1971, a fresh perspective on Acadian traditions emerged, allowing folklore to act as a cultural shield against anglophone domination.[26]

Indeed, to ensure cultural survival pressure groups such as Moncton's main cultural organization, the Conseil de la promotion et diffusion de la culture (CPDC),

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22 Personal communication, 7 April, 2004, 2:9–13.

23 Bohlman 2004, 51.

24 Jocelyne Guilbault, "Racial Projects and Musical Discourses in Trinidad, West Indies", in: Ronald Radano – Philip V. Bohlman (dirs.), *Music and the Racial Imagination*, Chicago–London, University of Chicago Press, 2000, 437.

25 For a further discussion on the "fragmented character of Canadian musical culture", cf. Michael Daley, "Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood", in: Ellen Kosoff (dir.), *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol. 3, New York–London, Garland Publishing, 2001, 172–73.

26 Mathilda Blanchard, "L'Acadie reprend ses habitants", in: *L'Action Nationale* 67, 10 (1978), 853.

later named Conseil provincial des sociétés culturelles (CPSC), began trying to create the concept of an Acadian nation through cultural means, using the French language as a political tool. The question was which language best represented Acadia. There was a choice between the standardized French of the educated class, the language of traditional Acadian society, or a regional dialect called *chiac* found in cities and towns in South East New Brunswick including Moncton, Memramcook, and Shediac. This debate found fertile ground in the musical arena. Chansonnier Calixte Duguay, for instance, represented educated Acadians because he composed using standardized French. Frustrated with being "pulled down" by folklore in his compositional process, the following excerpt from a newspaper article from 1972 reflects the student movement's rejection of clerico-nationalism in the later half of the 1960s and early 1970s. Calixte Duguay states, "Ce qui me gène aussi, c'est d'être obligé de me rabattre sur le folklore pour pouvoir parler de mon pays. Mais nous sommes obligés."[27] Donat Lacroix, on the other hand, represented working class Acadians by creating a performance guise as an old folkloric character named Jos Manigau who spoke using the old Acadian dialect. In a newspaper interview Donat Lacroix describes his folkloric character Jos Manigau as "un pêcheur […] âgé de 60 à 65 ans, plein d'humour et de bons sens […] un gars qui savait pas écrire mais […] Tout d'abord, il ne parle pas chiac, mais en vieux patois de cheu nous."[28]

Yet, as faithfulness to Acadian ancestry began to represent a refusal to give into the anglophone way of life, a virtual folklorization began to occur in urban Acadian society.[29] Pressure groups like the CPDC became focussed on promoting the "Acadian nation", using artists like Donat Lacroix who were seen to be upholding their past, religion, language, and traditions. Folklore became integral to the Acadian identity, as the idea of cultural prestige became synonymous with patriotism and gave Acadia a more defined political face. The question of the Acadian diaspora, caused by the Acadian exile in 1755 during the French-English colonial wars, also became highly sentimentalized as consciousness about the marginalization of ethnic groups and linguistic minorities was being raised at festival and university campus venues world-wide. Important musical ties thus began forming between Acadians from the Maritimes and the Cajuns from Louisiana during this period.[30]

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27 Anon., "Qui êtes-vous Calixte Duguay", in: *L'Évangeline*, 21 janvier 1972, 16.

28 Anon., "Jos Manigau à cœur ouvert. Qui êtes-vous Donat Lacroix?", in: *Le Progrès*, 25 juin 1971, 7–8.

29 Blanchard 1978, 853.

30 A grassroots music festival called *Les Frolics* was started in 1972 for young Acadian musicians in New Brunswick. It became institutionalized by 1973 and by 1975 Cajun groups began participating. Zachary Richard was one of the first Cajun singer song-writers to be invited. Cf. "Fond 53: Survol historique", in: *Répertoire numérique détaillé du fonds du Frolic Acadien: Leblanc, Rose-Anna 1973–1977*, Moncton, Centre d'études acadiennes, 1988.

However, when a new Acadian band called 1755 came to the forefront in 1976, the issue of Acadia's language identity took on another dimension. Although 1755 had been influenced by folklore,[31] they became well-known for writing lyrics using a regional dialect called *chiac*.[32] They therefore were embraced by the press and Acadian youths because they represented an authentic picture of the "Acadian nation" at this time. Indeed, with the *chiac* dialect becoming popularized by Acadian poets like the late Gérald Leblanc,[33] language began to signify a unique sense of "place" in political terms. The intersection of American popular music trends and Acadia's newly accepted linguistic identity thus became a musical solution to a political problem, offering emancipation from the constraints of Acadia's past. Suddenly, the concept of Acadia could move from simply being an extension of Québecois francophone identity toward becoming the cultural homeland to Acadians of the diaspora. As a result, the course of Acadian popular song shifted; musicians began to shed the confines of folk song and access the limitless ways in which American popular music styles could articulate Acadia's newly found sense of nationhood and language identity.

The Present Day

The sense of ownership that the neo-nationalist project fostered during the 1970s not only enabled music to "map" the Acadian nation, but allows Acadians to continue to claim this space today. The currency and persistence of the local dialect *chiac* is what "justifie[d]" this sense of territoriality and "inscribe[d] it directly onto the map of the imagination"[34]. However, Acadian voices at the first Acadian World Congress in 1994, and those I interviewed during my fieldwork at the third Acadian World Congress in Nova Scotia in 2004, while seeing the exclusion of folk song as problematic, suggest that this linguistic identity is in no way identified with folklore. Roland Gauvin, former member of the band 1755, for instance, made the following observation from a modernist stance, "I didn't play traditional music or folk music before I was a rocker. For me Acadian music can be rap music, it can be anything. It depends what you're saying in the song and where

31 Zachary Richard had a great influence on 1755 in terms of politics and folklore. His song "La Maudite guerre" is a folk song based on the American civil war, that reminded the band 1755 of the situation in Acadia one hundred years earlier. Cf. Robert Duguay, *L'épopée 1755*, Québec, Éditions de la Francophonie, 2002, 44.

32 *Chiac*, found in South East New Brunswick in the areas around Moncton, Memramcook, and Shediac, mixes the local French vernacular with English, while retaining certain nautical terms and what are believed to be French archaisms. The word *chiac* is thought to have been derived from shortening the name of the small coastal town outside of Moncton called *Shédiac*.

33 Duguay 2002, 10.

34 Philip V. Bohlman, "The Remembrance of Things Past: Music, Race, and the End of History in Modern Europe", in: Radano – Bohlman 2000, 649.

it comes from."[35] During a round table discussion at the 1994 Acadian World Congress, Acadian student Gino LeBlanc spoke about being frustrated with how television broadcasts on Radio Canada still portrayed Acadians as "folklorique[s]" and "misérabiliste[s]"[36], while newspaper director Lise Bissonnette described how Acadian artists no longer wanted to be limited by a "caractère national"[37]. Yet, the choice to extend Acadia's cultural boundaries toward *americanité* has produced a cultural ambiguity which, in terms of majority/minority power relations, has caused Acadian musicians certain difficulties. For instance, since Acadia's identity has been constructed in opposition to Quebec, tensions have been created between these two artistic communities as they compete for cultural funding and recognition in Canada's federal structure. Indeed, Roland Gauvin explains the ways in which Acadian musicians are being asked to define Acadian song in the context of Canadian cultural politics:

> I'll tell you one of the biggest questions I have a hard time defining is "What is Acadian music?" I've seen myself having my foot in my mouth two or three times, trying to explain this thing and noticing that what I'm saying does not make any sense […] Like they'd say, "Well is Danny Boudreau an Acadian artist? Does he sing Acadian music?" And I'd say, "Well the way he's singing it, what he's saying, for me is very universal. It could be somebody living in Paris, could be somebody living in Montreal." But what I'm saying with my chiac and certain things and the way I'm saying it, it's a way people think around here.[38]
>
> […] what I'm trying to say is that who I am, where I was brought up, the things I do, and the way I do 'em make [sic] me different than another francophone that lives in Alberta and Quebec […] It's these differences that […] makes my music unique.[39]

From a traditional standpoint, musician Ronald Bourgeois spoke at the Acadian World Congress in 1994 saying that since there were no "artistic models" of song composition in Acadia, "[l]a chanson acadienne, qui se veut un reflet de l'Acadie, est néanmoins teintée de ces influences extérieures"[40]. Yet, when I tried to determine what the status of folk song was in musical circles today, Roland Gauvin painted a picture that seemed to portray a sense of social obligation rather than of artistic desire:

> […] we can't let that musical genre [folk song] die but we cannot let our identity die. Already I'm getting a lot of comments from kids, "Oh yeah, l'Acadie that was a long time ago." It's because we're keeping these symbols alive; but we have to add the new ones. We have to show them what we are today, too.[41]

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35 Personal communication, 28 April, 2004, 3:32–33.

36 *Le Congrès mondial acadien: L'Acadie en 2004: actes des conférences et des tables rondes*, Moncton, Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1996, 122.

37 *Le Congrès mondial acadien* 1996, 125.

38 Personal communication, 28 April, 2004, 2:45–46.

39 Personal communication, 28 April, 2004, 2:8–10.

40 *Le Congrès mondial acadien* 1996, 248.

41 Personal communication, 28 April, 2004, 3:96–102.

Therefore, I asked musician Jac Gautreau if Acadian musicians were interested in performing folk song these days and he said:

> Some are and some aren't you know. I mean folk song – I've always imagined that to be a wider description than maybe most people, in the sense if it talks about my relationship to the world and it's coloured by my cultural identity, then it's a folk song. There's certainly some groups that are interested in writing in the spirit of traditional Acadian song. There are a few that are spending a lot of time researching and celebrating that […]. I remain convinced that the way to preserving Acadian identity is as much through Marie-Jo Thério as it is through père Anselme Chiasson. Where it falls apart to me is when we remove the sense of place from the person that we offer up as a model, then it stops having value.[42]

What these discourses reveal is that the North-South expansiveness of Acadia's ethnic concept not only does not resonate with the linguistic confines of folk song, but with folk song connected to Acadia's past; it carries a certain amount of religious, socio-economic, and socio-political baggage. In other words, it reveals the conflict between an internal ideology that wishes to avoid nationalist symbols, and an external ideology that recognizes folk song as having historic weight in terms of political currency. Therefore, although modern Acadian bands such as Blou and Grand Dérangement present folkloric material, they achieve this through musical meaning and representation[43] – be that in choices of costume and/or instrumentation – rather than through musical adaptations of folk song. Indeed, according to Roland Gauvin there are very few groups currently doing traditional folk song:

> Well, there's Vishten…'cause there's a lot of groups that have an influence but I will not say it's traditional; even Vishten when you listen to them, their music is traditional but like their arrangements and that are becoming very, very like I guess world beat […].[44]

However, these musical hybrids enable Acadian musicians to sonically articulate their support for Canada's multi-cultural project in that musicians can express their Acadian identity through language, but experiment with outside musical elements to reveal their support for Canadian federalism. Thus, as Acadia's music market has expanded in relation to the cultural industries, musicians use folk elements to expand or contract their cultural boundaries as the situation dictates. This, however, leaves some Acadians feeling as if Acadia's folkloric identity is being commercially misrepresented in accordance with world-wide market demands.

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42 Personal communication, 29 April, 2004, 2:33–38.

43 Caroline Bithell, "Shared Imaginations: Celtic and Corsican Encounters in the Soundscape of the Soul", in: Martin Stokes – Philip V. Bohlman (dirs.), *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, Lanham–Maryland–Oxford, The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2003, 43.

44 Personal communication, 28 April, 2004, 2:77–78.

Conclusion

Today, Acadian song is tied to an ethnic concept, preoccupied with reinforcing the concept of Acadia, the place. Philip Bohlman suggests that when the "concept of place predominates, folk music responds to […] external developments", be that in relation to "nationalism" or to outside influences that are "not specific to the group".[45] However, this points to but one of the changes in folk song's social basis as outlined in this paper. Each of them reflects a "dynamic interrelation of core and boundaries", a dialectic of identity construction which binds "persistent change" with "conservative tendencies".[46] Indeed, this discussion underscores the interchange between social and historical components of identity construction not only to identify how folk song impacts the social, but to understand the way in which folk song absorbs meaning as a result of changing social circumstances. This process allows us to recognize that if choices of repertory or canon-formations do not echo important aesthetic and cultural values in the present historical moment, choices of identity may be unable to reconcile how folk song will operate in each new context. This defines the current situation in Acadia. Folk song is not being transmitted successfully through educational institutions or by the entertainment industry because, as a symbol of the past, it does not resonate with Acadia's modern sense of ethnicity or nationhood in today's context.

45 Bohlman 1988, 53.

46 Bohlman 1988, 67.

Herménégilde Chiasson,
Un homme et une femme regardent un arbre en fleurs

La chanson traditionnelle dans l'Acadie contemporaine

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Abstract

In the early 20th century, few Acadian folksongs were popularized in print or otherwise. Part of the problem was that the educated elite preferred to present the public with newly composed patriotic songs, while they considered many traditional songs to have dubious moral content. At the same time, the general population was becoming increasingly exposed to new musical styles, such as the Country & Western sounds they heard on radio. Folksongs that weren't easily adapted to a style that included guitar accompaniment tended to be put aside. By the mid-century, several musical troubadours or "chansonniers" appeared on the scene. Édith Butler, for example, not only composed songs that became lasting favourites, but also popularized some little known folksongs. During the 1970s, the band named 1755 created a new sound combining Country, Bluegrass, Rock, and traditional influences. While their repertoire included a small number of traditional songs, no true folk revival happened in Acadie until the 1990s. Acadians living in small communities in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have maintained their musical traditions better than those living in larger centres in New Brunswick, and most of today's traditional singers and fiddlers are from those areas. Still, it is difficult for Acadian musicians to represent adequately the folksongs of their ancestors, because the tradition was largely forgotten during the 20th century, as folklore was given an inferior status to contemporary culture. Folk singing is still marginalized by the mainstream mass media, and only on local community radio stations can traditional music be heard, despite the fact that today's talented Acadian folksingers are widely acclaimed at World Music festivals internationally.

Nous avons vu, dans l'article de Jeanette Gallant, comment la musique traditionnelle acadienne a perdu sa fonction sociale au cours du temps, pour devenir un outil de production symbolique, ce qui entraîne à la fois une transformation répondant à une volonté de construction identitaire mais aussi un malaise chez les individus et groupes qui n'arrivent pas à profiter de la valorisation des traditions musicales. Le problème est donc bien situé dans son contexte social et historique, mais la question demeure: pourquoi un peuple qui possède une tradition musicale si riche n'arrive-t-il pas à apprécier cette richesse culturelle? Étant donné la fierté exprimée par les Acadiens envers tout ce qu'ils ont réussi à accomplir malgré les vicissitudes de leur histoire, la question est très pertinente.

Revenons d'abord sur la période clérico-nationaliste. En Acadie, comme au Québec, l'élite cléricale réactionnaire voyait le folklore comme un des éléments d'une culture conservatrice correspondant à un idéal de vie paysanne que l'on proposait à une population aux prises avec de nouvelles influences. En 1947, Fernand Biron écrivait dans *Vie Française* que suite à la collecte des chansons traditionnelles

entreprise au Canada français, un triage s'imposait. Je cite: "Une chanson vaudra la peine d'être réapprise si elle est moralement bonne et musicalement belle."[1] Biron écrit même que parmi les milliers de chansons recueillies par les folkloristes, il y avait "des déchets". Il résulte de ce mépris vis-à-vis certains éléments de la culture populaire qu'une série de recueils largement diffusée au Canada français intitulée *La bonne chanson* présente une vision très épurée de la tradition orale. En Acadie, où les *Chansons d'Acadie* des pères Anselme Chiasson et Daniel Boudreau ont été le pendant de *La bonne chanson*, une censure inévitable s'est aussi opérée. Il ne pouvait en être autrement dans le contexte des années 1940.

Les recueils de chansons publiés à cette époque s'adressaient surtout aux écoliers et aux jeunes en général, ce qui explique en partie la sélection que l'on a faite parmi le répertoire folklorique. Avant son décès prématuré en 1943, le journaliste et collecteur de chansons acadiennes Joseph-Thomas LeBlanc avait l'intention de publier un recueil plus exhaustif, mais il craignait que le peuple ne s'intéresse pas au projet. Dans une lettre adressée au père Anselme Chiasson en 1941, il écrivait: "Le Romancero que je voudrais publier n'intéresserait peut-être pas la masse du peuple qui, malheureusement, n'attache aujourd'hui que très peu d'importance aux chansons de 'sur l'en premier'. Ce serait un livre qui s'adresserait plutôt aux intellectuels."[2]

Pour comprendre les remarques de J.-T. LeBlanc, il faut se rappeler qu'à l'époque où il écrivait, les courants musicaux modernes s'imposaient rapidement en Acadie, dû surtout à la popularité d'émissions radiophoniques diffusées à partir des États-Unis ou encore du Québec. Il serait toutefois difficile d'identifier les intellectuels auxquels songeait LeBlanc, puisque l'élite acadienne s'était détournée de la tradition depuis longtemps, préférant les chansons patriotiques pseudo-folkloriques comme "La fleur du souvenir", "Le pêcheur acadien" et bien sûr la chanson "Évangéline". Ces deux dernières sont d'ailleurs celles citées par Florine Després lorsqu'elle décrit à Jeanette Gallant la culture musicale des couvents du passé. En 1928, dans *Le parler acadien et ses origines*, le nationaliste acadien Pascal Poirier avait écrit:

> La génération acadienne d'aujourd'hui ne chante plus guère les vieilles chansons de France […] quoique les anciens se les remémorent toujours. L'Angleterre les a noyées dans les larmes des proscrits de 1755. Les chants liturgiques, quelques cantiques de l'*empremier*, d'autres plus récents […], voilà à peu près tout ce qui reste du répertoire musical de l'ancienne Acadie.[3]

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1 Fernand Biron, "Folklore et loisirs", in: *Vie Française* 6 (mars 1947), 325.

2 Cité dans Charlotte Cormier – Donald Deschênes, "Joseph-Thomas LeBlanc et le romancero inachevé", in: *Canadian Folklore Canadien* 13, 2 (1991), 64.

3 Pascal Poirier, *Le parler acadien et ses origines*, Québec, Imprimerie Franciscaine Missionnaire, 1928, 328.

Cette citation nous indique à quel point s'était creusé le fossé entre la culture populaire acadienne et celle de l'élite au début du 20e siècle. La "génération actuelle" à laquelle se référait Poirier était sans doute celle qui acquérait une culture livresque dans les couvents et collèges de l'Acadie, alors que la très grande majorité de la population connaissait une évolution culturelle tout à fait différente.

Si l'élite acadienne avait oublié les chansons traditionnelles et que la masse du peuple ne s'y intéressait plus, quelles étaient alors les formes musicales en vogue en Acadie avant les années 1960? Les enquêtes ethnographiques révèlent que de nouveaux courants musicaux se sont imposés très rapidement vers les années 1930, avec l'arrivée de la radio et de l'industrie du disque. Les Acadiens, comme la population anglophone des Provinces maritimes, sont vite devenus des adeptes de la musique Country & Western, apprenant des chansons anglaises qu'ils accompagnèrent à la guitare, à laquelle s'ajoutèrent la mandoline, le banjo et d'autres instruments.

De puissantes stations radiophoniques étaient alors captées en provenance soit de la côte est des États-Unis ou de la Gaspésie québécoise, dépendant d'où on se situait. On a vite appris que la musique Country pouvait être chantée en français, suivant l'exemple d'artistes québécois comme Ti-Blanc Richard. Certaines mélodies de chansons traditionnelles ont alors été adaptées au nouveau rythme Country & Western. Un exemple serait "Le moine tremblant et la dame" que le chanteur populaire québécois Oscar Thiffault a endisqué en 1954 pour en faire un énorme succès populaire ayant comme titre "Le Rapide Blanc". L'adaptation de cette chanson ancienne au style Country & Western a fait l'objet d'un article de l'ethnologue Luc Lacourcière.[4] Ce dernier a démontré qu'en y ajoutant un accompagnement instrumental de style Country, Oscar Thiffault lui aurait en effet redonné le caractère de chanson à danser qu'elle avait en France au 18e siècle.[5] Le succès de la chanson "Le Rapide Blanc" a été tellement grand qu'un duo de musique Country Acadien des années 1980 avait même choisi de s'appeler "La Wing à Hein", expression tirée du refrain archiconnu.

La transmission orale du répertoire traditionnel acadien s'est poursuivie jusqu'à un certain point pendant les années 1940 et 1950, mais beaucoup de chansons ont été écartées parce qu'elles ne cadraient pas avec les nouveaux courants musicaux. À partir des années 1950, la culture musicale de l'Acadie éclate, suivant les influences venues de toute part. Alors que dans les collèges et couvents, les chorales ont un répertoire formé de chants classiques et patriotiques, auxquels s'ajoutent quelques chansons folkloriques épurées, un nouveau mouvement de

4 Luc Lacourcière, "Du moine tremblant au Rapide Blanc", in: *Recherches Sociographiques* 1, 4 (1960), 401–434.

5 Lacourcière 1960, 426.

chanson poétique apparaît. La génération d'Acadiens instruits s'intéresse à la chanson poétique.

Calixte Duguay incarne le mieux la chanson poétique en Acadie, mais alors que les chansonniers québécois avaient un public assez nombreux, en Acadie une mince couche de la population est sensibilisée à autre chose que le Country, le folklore ou encore la musique Bluegrass, qui arrive elle aussi par la voix des ondes radiophoniques américaines. On comprend alors le succès phénoménal qu'a connu l'ensemble 1755 pendant les années 1970. Cet ensemble musical a créé un son combinant le violon traditionnel, le banjo style Bluegrass, la guitare Country, la batterie style Rock et de plus, 1755 chante en français acadien des textes composés par le poète Gérald Leblanc. C'est une formule qui a constamment été imitée depuis et l'on peut affirmer que l'amalgame musical créé par 1755 est devenu un courant important dans la culture musicale acadienne.

Le répertoire de 1755 comprend peu de chants traditionnels, bien qu'un de leurs grands succès, "Le jardinier du couvent", soit tiré directement du folklore acadien. Malgré leur grand succès à la fin des années 1970, 1755 n'a pas pu traverser la décennie des années 1980, alors que les médias et l'industrie de la musique populaire rejetaient tout ce qui semblait venir du passé. La chanteuse populaire Édith Butler a connu le même sort après avoir eu un succès international pendant les années 1970 en interprétant des arrangements originaux de chansons folkloriques acadiennes. Édith Butler avait étudié l'ethnologie à l'Université Laval et puisait son répertoire dans les archives de folklore, ainsi que dans des recueils comme les *Chansons d'Acadie*.

La situation demeure inchangée pendant une vingtaine d'années, jusqu'à ce que les traditions musicales soient valorisées de nouveau vers l'an 2000, dans la foulée de la mondialisation et de la World Music. Il en résulte que toute une génération d'Acadiens a été coupée non seulement de la tradition orale de leurs aïeux, mais aussi de la chanson traditionnelle tout court, aucun *folk revival* n'ayant existé en Acadie pendant leurs années formatives. Tess Le Blanc, une des rares chanteuses traditionnelles des années 1990, a choisi de se rendre au Québec où elle a mené des études en ethnologie à l'Université Laval et elle y est demeurée pour s'intégrer au mouvement de valorisation du patrimoine québécois.

Heureusement, il existe toujours des milieux ruraux où l'on a continué à transmettre la chanson traditionnelle et ce phénomène persiste surtout en marge de l'Acadie contemporaine, dans des communautés dispersées à l'intérieur de régions à majorité anglophone. Paradoxalement, ce sont les musiciens et chanteurs issus des milieux minoritaires en Nouvelle-Écosse et à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard qui sont les mieux placés pour aller représenter l'Acadie aujourd'hui dans les

festivals internationaux de musique folklorique. Le meilleur exemple à citer serait celui du groupe Vishten, formé de jeunes originaires de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine. On pourrait aussi mentionner les ensembles Grand Dérangement, de la Nouvelle-Écosse, et Barachois, de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Ce dernier groupe musical a connu un succès international important pendant toute une décennie, avant de cesser ses activités en 2004.

Il ne faut cependant pas croire que les jeunes musiciens qui interprètent aujourd'hui le folklore acadien sont les héritiers d'une tradition orale ininterrompue. Tous ont fait le pèlerinage incontournable aux archives de folklore de l'Université de Moncton ou de l'Université Laval pour constituer leur répertoire. Venant de milieux où le folklore n'avait pas disparu, ils ont acquis une appréciation pour la richesse musicale traditionnelle, mais ont quand même dû puiser dans les collections recueillies auprès des générations précédentes pour bâtir leur répertoire.

Une expérience que j'ai menée à l'hiver 2007 m'a permis de constater à quel point la transmission orale musicale était chose du passé dans l'Acadie contemporaine. Dans le cadre d'une série radiophonique sur les ondes de Radio-Canada Atlantique, j'ai présenté quatorze chroniques hebdomadaires consacrées à des chansons traditionnelles acadiennes. Je proposais chaque semaine une chanson dont au moins une version était assez bien connue du public; j'expliquais ensuite son origine et je présentais enfin des enregistrements tirés des archives où sont interprétées des versions différentes.

Le public, ainsi que l'animatrice de l'émission, étaient surpris chaque fois d'apprendre que les archives regorgeaient d'enregistrements de belles variantes de chansons, peu connues puisqu'elles n'avaient jamais été popularisées par des chansonniers, des chorales ou d'autres ensembles musicaux. Pour citer quelques exemples, tout le monde connaît la chanson "À la claire fontaine" aujourd'hui parce qu'elle faisait partie du célèbre recueil *Chansons populaires du Canada français*, d'Ernest Gagnon, dont la première édition parut entre 1865 et 1867.[6] En Acadie, comme ailleurs au Canada français, la version publiée par Gagnon a été reprise et interprétée quantité de fois. Un deuxième exemple serait "Au chant de l'alouette", d'abord publiée dans la série *Chansons d'Acadie* en 1944,[7] et reproduite dans deux recueils largement diffusés, *Vive la Canadienne*[8], paru en 1962, et *Chante rossignolet!* [9], publié deux ans plus tard. Cette dernière chanson s'est

[6] Ernest Gagnon, *Chansons populaires du Canada français*, Bureau du "Foyer Canadien", 1865–1867.

[7] Anselme Chiasson – Daniel Boudreau, *Chansons d'Acadie: 2e série*, Montréal, Éditions de La Réparation, 1944, 15.

[8] Hélène Baillargeon, *Vive la Canadienne*, Montréal, Éditions du Jour, 1964.

[9] *Chante rossignolet!*, Québec, Éditions Ferland, 1964.

fait connaître en partie parce que l'ensemble québécois Les Carrick l'a reprise pour en faire un succès commercial pendant les années 1960.

Si "Au chant de l'alouette" n'avait pas d'abord été publiée dans les *Chansons d'Acadie*, il est certain qu'on ne la connaîtrait pas aujourd'hui. Il en est de même pour d'autres chansons très connues comme "Wing tra la" et "En montant la rivière". Somme toute, au plus une vingtaine de chansons traditionnelles sont connues chez la population en général aujourd'hui et dans chaque cas ce n'est pas la tradition orale qui nous les a léguées, mais plutôt l'auteur d'un recueil imprimé qui les a diffusé par l'écrit, d'où elles sont entrées dans le répertoire des chansonniers.

On entend souvent louanger les efforts du père Anselme Chiasson qui a recueilli et diffusé des centaines de chansons traditionnelles acadiennes, mais la nouvelle génération de musiciens acadiens a été coupée de ses racines musicales à un point tel que même les classiques du folklore acadien leur sont parfois étrangers. À titre d'exemple, dans le cadre du spectacle "Ode à l'Acadie", créé en 2004, on rend hommage au père Anselme Chiasson, pour ses recherches en chanson traditionnelle, mais les musiciens n'interprètent aucune des chansons qu'il a recueillies. La seule chanson traditionnelle du spectacle, "Marie Caissie", est une chanson locale provenant de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard qui est connue parce qu'Édith Butler l'a chantée après l'avoir repérée en archives dans la collection Georges Arsenault.[10] L'interprétation qu'en font les participants au spectacle "Ode à l'Acadie" est d'ailleurs directement influencée par l'arrangement d'Édith Butler.

On ne doit pas se surprendre de constater que les jeunes Acadiens ne connaissent pas le folklore de leurs aïeux. La musique traditionnelle est méprisée dans les médias et en particulier sur les ondes de Radio-Canada, où une vision culturelle centrée sur Montréal est imposée à la grandeur du pays. Depuis plusieurs années maintenant, aucune émission consacrée aux traditions orales du Canada français n'est diffusée de façon régulière ni sur les ondes radiophoniques ni à la télévision d'état, bien qu'on accorde quand même une place à la musique Country à la télévision de Radio-Canada, avec des émissions comme "Pour l'amour du Country".

Lors d'une table ronde qui eut lieu dans le cadre du Festival international des arts traditionnels de Québec en 2002, Monique Jutras faisait remarquer qu'en Amérique Latine et dans plusieurs pays d'Europe, la tradition orale fait l'objet

[10] Centre d'études acadiennes, collection Georges Arsenault, enreg. no 1015 (1975).

d'une grande fierté, alors qu'ici, "il faut souvent s'excuser de faire une chanson de folklore"[11].

Le nouvel intérêt que connaît la musique traditionnelle aujourd'hui stimule les radios communautaires acadiennes à prendre des initiatives dans ce domaine, comblant en partie le vide laissé par l'abandon de la culture populaire par le réseau national public. À certains endroits, les radios communautaires mènent des projets ambitieux visant la diffusion de la musique traditionnelle. C'est le cas particulièrement en Nouvelle-Écosse. À Chéticamp, au Cap-Breton, la radio communautaire a participé à un projet d'enregistrement du répertoire de Léo Aucoin, un des derniers héritiers de la chanson traditionnelle acadienne, en plus de produire un enregistrement sonore des 528 chansons publiées dans les onze cahiers de *Chansons d'Acadie*, interprétées par nul autre que le père Daniel Boudreau, le collaborateur du père Anselme Chiasson.[12] À l'autre extrémité de la province, dans la Baie Sainte-Marie, un recueil de 120 chansons traditionnelles intitulé *Nos vieilles chansons du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse*[13] a récemment été produit par la radio communautaire et diffusé avec un coffret de six disques compacts présentant des copies de documents d'archives sonores.

Des initiatives de ce genre contribuent au développement musical en Acadie, mais leur impact ne dépasse pas le cadre régional, car les radios communautaires possèdent une zone de diffusion limitée. Un seul poste de radio communautaire peut être capté dans la région urbaine de Moncton, soit Radio Beauséjour, mais ce poste situé à Shédiac s'adresse principalement aux auditeurs des communautés rurales du sud-est du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Les musiciens acadiens possèdent quand même aujourd'hui de bons outils de promotion leur permettant de se faire entendre à l'extérieur de leur région d'origine. Je cite l'exemple de la Franco-fête en Acadie, anciennement le Contact-Acadie, un rassemblement annuel qui existe depuis plus de vingt ans et où les promoteurs de concerts ont l'opportunité d'entendre les artistes et d'initier des projets de tournées. Cet événement est subventionné par des organismes gouvernementaux qui appuient les efforts pour stimuler une industrie musicale en Acadie. Les promoteurs européens en particulier y cherchent chaque année des artistes aptes à représenter la riche culture musicale acadienne à l'étranger et ils sont souvent déçus d'y entendre peu de musique qui puise sa source dans la tradition orale acadienne. Les rares ensembles musicaux acadiens qui, comme

[11] "Table ronde: les voies / voix de la tradition: faire du neuf avec du vieux", in: *Rabaska* 1 (2003), 147.

[12] *Collection Chansons d'Acadie*, disponible sur le site internet de la Coopérative Radio-Chéticamp, Chéticamp (Nouvelle-Écosse), URL: http://www.ckjm.ca (29.12.2008).

[13] Dave Le Blanc, *Nos vieilles chansons du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse*, Association Radio-Clare, 2003.

Vishten, réinterprètent la chanson traditionnelle française de chez nous, sont tout de suite happés par les promoteurs et se font toujours remarquer par les journalistes européens présents. Quant aux nombreux ensembles acadiens du genre Country, la plupart évoluent en dehors de l'industrie du spectacle francophone. Certains se contentent de jouer dans des salles de danse ou de participer à des concerts locaux, alors que d'autres sont attirés par Nashville, la Mecque de la musique Country nord-américaine.

Malgré l'intérêt suscité par la musique traditionnelle acadienne au niveau international, on entend encore dans les médias le message que l'Acadie ce n'est pas que le folklore et qu'il faut dépasser ces vieilleries pour se tourner vers la culture contemporaine. De telles plaintes reflètent une ignorance à propos de la nature même de la musique folklorique. C'est un peu comme si un Acadien anglicisé disait que l'Acadie ce n'est rien d'autre que la culture d'expression française et qu'il est grand temps qu'on laisse de côté le français pour s'intégrer à une Amérique contemporaine de langue anglaise. Un tel argument ne serait pas plus absurde que celui des critiques qui s'opposent à la valorisation de l'héritage traditionnel acadien.

Je constate que trop souvent il faut se placer à l'extérieur de l'Acadie pour y jeter un regard lucide. Un exemple à citer serait celui de Suzie LeBlanc, la soprano de renommée internationale, qui, après plusieurs années de carrière en Europe, revient en Acadie puiser des mélodies folkloriques dans les archives pour les interpréter sur scène et sur disque, en plus de participer à un film sur son retour aux souces. Jeanette Gallant nous fournit un autre exemple du même genre, car elle a choisi de mener une étude importante sur le thème de la culture musicale acadienne alors qu'elle fait carrière depuis longtemps en dehors du Canada.

Jeanette Gallant concluait que la chanson traditionnelle est vue aujourd'hui comme un beau symbole du passé mais que l'on n'arrive pas à l'incorporer dans la culture acadienne actuelle. On peut critiquer le fait que les médias, les institutions d'enseignement et les organismes publics n'ont pas encore reconnu l'importance d'encourager le maintien d'une culture musicale authentiquement acadienne. Mais il faut reconnaître aussi que les traditions orales sont menacées partout au monde. C'est d'ailleurs en réponse à ce phénomène que l'UNESCO a adopté en 2007 une Convention pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine immatériel mondial. Quand suffisamment de personnes seront venues en Acadie nous dire que nos traditions orales représentent un précieux apport au patrimoine musical de l'humanité, peut-être commencerons nous alors à considérer la musique traditionnelle non seulement comme un souvenir du mode de vie de nos ancêtres, mais comme une forme d'expression culturelle qui peut nous aider nous épanouir en tant que peuple dans le monde contemporain.

Herménégilde Chiasson,
Evangeline Beach, an American Tragedy, peinture no. 2

Contributors – Auteurs

Maurice Basque

Maurice Basque, historian, is the current director of the Institut d'études acadiennes at the Université de Moncton in New Brunswick, Canada. His research interests include Acadian colonial history and the history of Acadian political culture. He has published numerous articles, and one of his books, *De Marc Lescarbot à l'AEEFNB. Histoire de la profession enseignante au Nouveau-Brunswick* (Éditions Marévie, Edmundston) was awarded the France-Acadie prize in 1995. Maurice Basque is a member of several national scholarly committees and has participated in the production of many documentary films, including *Evangeline's Quest* (National Film Board of Canada, 1994) by director Ginette Pellerin and *Épopée* (NFB, 1995) by director Herménégilde Chiasson, which was awarded the TV5 prize for the best documentary presented at the 11th Festival international du film francophone de Namur, in Belgium, in 1996. Maurice Basque also works as a radio commentator for the Société Radio-Canada. In 2002, France made him a Chevalier des Palmes académiques and in 2003, a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. He is the current chairperson of the Order of New Brunswick advisory council and outgoing president of the Association for Canadian Studies.

Maurice Basque est directeur de l'Institut d'études acadiennes à l'Université de Moncton. Historien, il est spécialiste de l'Acadie coloniale et de l'histoire de la culture politique acadienne. Il a publié de nombreux articles et livres et en 1995, il a reçu le prix France-Acadie pour son livre *De Marc Lescarbot à l'AEEFNB. Histoire de la profession enseignante acadienne au Nouveau-Brunswick*, publié aux Éditions Marévie d'Edmundston. Maurice Basque siège à de nombreux comités scientifiques nationaux et il a participé à la réalisation de nombreux documentaires historiques, dont *Évangéline en Quête* (ONF, 1994) de la cinéaste Ginette Pellerin et *Épopée* (ONF, 1995) du cinéaste Herménégilde Chiasson qui a remporté le prix TV5 pour le meilleur documentaire présenté au 11e Festival international du film francophone de Namur en Belgique en 1996. Maurice Basque est également chroniqueur à la radio de la Société Radio-Canada. En 2002, la France l'a fait Chevalier des Palmes académiques et en 2003, Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. Maurice Basque est président du Conseil consultatif de l'Ordre du Nouveau-Brunswick et président de l'Association d'études canadiennes.

Günter Bischof

Günter Bischof is a native of Austria. He has lived in the United States for 30 years, a dozen of which he has lived with his Cajun wife and three Austro-Cajun kids in Larose, Louisiana, on Bayou Lafourche. He studied American studies, history and international relations at the universities of Innsbruck, Vienna, New Orleans, and Harvard. He is the Marshall Plan Professor of History and Director of CenterAustria at the University of New Orleans, where he teaches international contemporary history. CenterAustria coordinates the numerous student and faculty exchanges, publications and conference activities that are part of the model transatlantic partnership between the University of New Orleans and the University of Innsbruck, as well as the cooperations with many other Austrian institutions. In his academic life, he is a specialist on World War II and the Cold War, on both of which he has published widely, especially on the treatment of prisoners of war during World War II and the Cold War in Central Europe. He published *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55* (1999) and co-edited 17 volumes of *Contemporary Austrian Studies* (1993-2009) with colleagues from the University of Innsbruck. He is the co-editor of 20 more books. He serves as a Presidential Counselor at the National World War II Museum and is a member of the scholarly advisory board of the Botstiber Institute on Austrian-American Relations.

D'origine autrichienne, Günter Bischof vit aux États-Unis depuis trente ans. Depuis douze ans, il habite à Larose, Louisiana, aux bords du bayou Lafourche, avec sa femme cajun et ses enfants austro-cajuns. Diplômé en études américaines, il a également fait des études d'histoire et de relations internationales à Innsbruck, à Vienne, à la Nouvelle-Orléans et à Harvard. Actuellement, il est professeur d'histoire (Marshall Plan Professor) et dirige le CenterAustria à l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans. Le CenterAustria assure la coordination des nombreux échanges d'étudiants et universitaires, des projets de publication et des conférences qui sont le résultat d'une coopération exemplaire entre l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans et l'Université d'Innsbruck ainsi que d'autres institutions autrichiennes. Günter Bischof est spécialiste de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et de la guerre froide, ayant publié de nombreux articles sur les deux périodes, notamment sur le traitement des prisonniers de guerre pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et la guerre froide en Europe centrale. Il a publié *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55* (1999) et co-dirigé, avec des collègues de l'Université d'Innsbruck, 17 volumes de *Contemporary Austrian Studies* (1993-2009). Il est co-éditeur de plus de vingt livres, "Presidential Counselor" du musée national de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et membre du conseil académique de l'Institut Botstiber pour les relations austro-américaines.

Raoul Boudreau

Raoul Boudreau is professor of Acadian and French literature and currently Chair of the Department of French Studies at the University of Moncton. His research interests include contemporary Acadian literature from a sociological point of view. He has published widely on the relationship of language and literature in Acadian literature and the relations between literary institutions in Acadie, Québec, and France. His current research project examines the critical discourse produced in Acadie, Québec, and France on Acadian literature. He has directed or co-directed the publication of a number of special dossiers on Acadian literature in *Tangence, Dialogues francophones, Liaison*, and *Québec Studies* and he has co-directed, with Jean Morency, a special edition (2007) of the *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* on the Acadian poet Gérald Leblanc.

Raoul Boudreau est professeur titulaire et directeur du département d'études françaises de l'Université de Moncton. Ses recherces portent principalement sur la littérature acadienne contemporaine qu'il examine d'un point de vue institutionnel. Il a publié plusieurs travaux sur le rapport à la langue en littérature acadienne et sur les rapports institutionnels entre littératures acadienne, québécoise et française. Il travaille présentement à une recherche sur les discours critiques portant sur la littérature acadienne en Acadie, au Québec et en France. Il a dirigé ou codirigé la publication de plusieurs dossiers sur la littérature acadienne, notamment dans *Tangence, Dialogues francophones, Liaison* et *Québec Studies* et il a codirigé, avec Jean Morency, la publication d'un numéro de la *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* paru en 2007 sur le poète Gérald Leblanc.

Fitzhugh Brundage

Fitzhugh Brundage received his B.A. from the University of Chicago (1981) and his Ph.D. from Harvard University (1988). He taught at Queen's University and at the University of Florida, where he also served as chair of the department. Since 1992 he has been the William B. Umstead Professor of History at the University of North Carolina. His publications include *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (1993), *A Socialist Utopia in the New South: The Ruskin Colonies in Tennessee and Georgia, 1894–1901* (1996), and *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (2005), as well as three edited collections. His books have been awarded the Lilian Smith Award from the Southern Regional Council, the Charles Sydnor Award from the Southern Historical Association, and the Merle Curti Award from the Organization of American Historians. He is currently completing an edited collection on African Americans and the creation of American mass culture.

Fitzhugh Brundage a fait ses études à l'Université de Chicago (B.A. 1981) et à l'Université de Harvard (Ph.D. 1988). Il a enseigné à Queen's University et à l'Université de Floride. Actuellement, il est professeur d'histoire (William B. Umstead Professor) à l'Université de la Caroline du Nord. En plus des trois volumes qu'il a dirigés, Fitzhugh Bundage a publié de nombreux articles et livres dont *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (1993), *A Socialist Utopia in the New South: The Ruskin Colonies in Tennessee and Georgia, 1894-1901* (1996), and *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (2005). Pour ses livres, il a obtenu le prix Lilian Smith de la part du Southern Regional Council et le prix Merle Curti de la part de l'Organization of American Historians. En ce moment, il mène à bout l'édition d'une collection portant sur les Afro-américains et la création de la culture de masse américaine.

Jeanette Gallant

Jeanette Gallant has 23 years of diverse experience as a music lecturer, voice teacher, conductor, administrator, and performer in Canada, South-East Asia, and England. After leaving her post as a Senior Voice Lecturer at the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts, she began her doctoral studies in ethnomusicology at the University of Oxford under the supervision of Dr. Martin Stokes. Her thesis analyzes folk song in relation to changing practices of governance from the end of the 19th century to the present day. It explores the relationship between music and subjectification, assessing how identity is informed by the different meanings assigned to folk song, created and recreated in the public sphere. She currently teaches ethnomusicology at various Oxford colleges, vocal physiology at the University of Reading, and remains an active conductor and performer.

Depuis 23 ans, Jeanette Gallant enseigne la musique et le chant et travaille comme chef d'orchestre, dans l'administration ou monte sur scène elle-même au Canada, en Asie du Sud-Est et en Angleterre. Après avoir renoncé à un poste de professeur de chant à la Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts, elle a commencé un doctorat en ethnomusicologie sous la tutelle de Dr. Martin Stokes à l'Université d'Oxford. Sa thèse de doctorat examine le chant populaire par rapport aux changements de gouvernance de la fin du 19e siècle jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Elle explore la relation entre la musique et l'émergence du sujet, évaluant dans quelle mesure l'identité est investie des différentes significations assignées au chant populaire et créées et recréées dans l'espace public. Actuellement, Jeanette Gallant enseigne l'ethnomusicologie dans plusieurs collèges de l'Université d'Oxford et la phonation à l'Université de Reading tout en continuant la carrière de chef d'orchestre et de chanteuse.

Charles D. Hadley

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Charles D. Hadley est professeur émérite de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans où il a dirigé le département de sciences politiques de 1998 à 2006. Il a obtenu un B.A. et un M.A. de l'Université du Massachusetts/Amherst et un Ph.D. en sciences politiques de l'Université du Connecticut/Storrs. Il a enseigné les sciences politiques à l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans depuis 1970 et, en 1987, était professeur invité à l'Université d'Innsbruck. Charles D. Hadley a été président de la Southern Political Science Association et secrétaire-trésorier de la section "Political Organizations & Parties" de la même association. Il a édité *The American Review of Politics*. Il est le co-auteur des études *Political Parties and Political Issues: Patterns of Differentiation Since the New Deal* et *Transformations of the American Party System: Political Coalitions from the New Deal to the 1970s*; il est le co-éditeur de l'ouvrage *Political Parties in the Southern States: Party Activists in Partisan Coalitions* ainsi que des trois volumes de *Southern State Party Organizations and Activists*, dont deux ont obtenu le 1999 V.O. Key Book Award de la Southern Political Science Association. En collaboration avec sa collègue Christine L. Day de l'Université de la Nouvelle-Orléans, il a publié *Women's PACs: Abortion and Elections* (2005).

Tom Klingler

Thomas A. Klingler is Associate Professor of French and Linguistics and Chair of the Department of French and Italian at Tulane University in New Orleans. He received his Ph.D. in French linguistics from Indiana University. His most recent research focuses on the relationship between language and ethnicity in Louisiana's multiethnic francophone communities. He is the author of the book *'If I Could Turn My Tongue Like That': The Creole Language of Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana*, published by Louisiana State University Press in 2003 and co-editor of the *Dictionary of Louisiana Creole*, published by Indiana University Press in 1998. He is currently collaborating with other scholars on two major projects: the *Dictionary of Louisiana French as Spoken in Cajun, Creole and American Indian Communities* and a website to provide online courses in Louisiana French and Louisiana Creole.

Thomas A. Klingler est professeur agrégé de français et de linguistique et directeur du département de français et d'italien à l'Université Tulane (Nouvelle-Orléans). Il a obtenu son doctorat en linguistique française de l'Université d'Indiana. Ses recherches récentes portent sur le rapport entre langue et ethnicité dans les communautés multiethniques francophones de Louisiane. Il est l'auteur de *'If I Could Turn My Tongue Like That': The Creole Language of Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana* (Louisiana State University Press, 2003) et co-éditeur du *Dictionary of Louisiana Creole* (Indiana University Press, 2008). Il travaille actuellement avec d'autres chercheurs sur deux projets collectifs: le *Dictionary of Louisiana French as Spoken in Cajun, Creole and American Indian Communities* et un site web dont l'objectif est d'offrir des cours de français louisianais et de créole louisianais en ligne.

Ronald Labelle

Ronald Labelle completed doctoral studies in Ethnology at the Université Laval. He was in charge of the folklore archives at the Centre d'études acadiennes at the Université de Moncton from 1979 until 2005, and presently holds the McCain Research Chair in Acadian Ethnology and Folklore. His publications include *The Acadians of Chezzetcook* and *Au Village-du-Bois – Mémoires d'une communauté acadienne*. He was awarded the France-Acadie literary prize for this last work in 1986. He also edited a collection of studies in Acadian folklore published in honour of Father Anselme Chiasson, as well as a collection of songs from the Helen Creighton Collection entitled *La fleur du rosier – Acadian Folksongs*. He has been a member of the editorial staff of *Rabaska. Revue d'ethnologie de l'Amérique*

française since the journal's founding in 2003, and is currently president of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada.

Ronald Labelle détient un doctorat en ethnologie de l'Université Laval. Il a été le responsable des archives de folklore du Centre d'études acadiennes à l'Université de Moncton à partir de 1979 jusqu'en 2005 et il est présentement titulaire de la Chaire de recherche McCain en ethnologie acadienne. Ses publications comprennent *Les Acadiens de Chezzetcook* et *Au Village-du-Bois – Mémoires d'une communauté acadienne*, ouvrage pour lequel il a remporté le Prix France-Acadie en 1986. Il a également dirigé la publication de *La fleur du rosier – chansons folkloriques d'Acadie* tirées de la collection Helen Creighton et *En r'montant la tradition – Hommage au père Anselme Chiasson*. Il est membre du comité de direction de *Rabaska. Revue d'ethnologie de l'Amérique française* depuis sa fondation en 2003 et il est actuellement président de l'Association canadienne d'ethnologie et de folklore.

John Laudun

John Laudun returned to his native Louisiana nine years ago in order to take a faculty position in the Department of English at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Prior to that, he was a Jacob K. Javits Fellow at Syracuse University and Indiana University/Bloomington, where he was later also a MacArthur Scholar with the Indiana Center for World Peace and Global Change. While pursuing his Ph.D. in Folklore Studies in Indiana, he took a position with Kelley Executive Partners, where he worked with Fortune 500 companies, among others, to develop strategic global capabilities within their organizations. He has published on a variety of folklore and folklife topics, focusing on ways of speaking in Midwestern and South Louisiana communities. His work has appeared in *Folklore Forum, Midwestern Folklore*, the *African American Review*, the *Journal of Folklore Research*, and the *Journal of American Folklore*. His current research focuses on a contemporary folk boat form and its significance for understanding the Louisiana landscape from a native perspective. He is also the editor of the American Folklore Society website and the University of Louisiana's liaison for digital humanities initiatives.

Il y a neuf ans, John Laudun est rentré en Louisiane pour y assumer un poste au département d'anglais de l'Université de Louisiane à Lafayette. Avant de retourner dans sa région natale, il était Jacob K. Javits Fellow à l'Université de Syracuse et à l'Université d'Indiana/Bloomington où, plus tard, il était également MacArthur Scholar à l'Indiana Center for World Peace and Global Change. Après avoir travaillé, pendant un certain temps, avec Kelley Executive Partners, il a

publié de nombreux articles portant sur le folklore et la vie populaire, notamment sur les parlers des communautés de la Louisiane du Centre-Ouest et du Sud. Ses études ont été publiées dans *Folklore Forum, Midwestern Folklore*, la *African American Review*, le *Journal of Folklore Research* et le *Journal of American Folklore*. Actuellement, il fait des recherches sur la forme d'un bateau populaire utilisé de nos jours et en quoi celle-ci nous permet de mieux comprendre le paysage de la Louisiane à partir d'un point de vue autochtone. John Laudun est également l'éditeur du site web de l'American Folklore Society ainsi que l'agent de liaison de l'Université de la Louisiane pour "humanities initiatives" en ligne.

Ursula Lehmkuhl

Ursula Lehmkuhl is professor of Modern History and Chair of the History Department of the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at the Free University of Berlin. She teaches 19th-century American cultural and social history, 20th-century American and Canadian diplomatic history, and the history of American and Canadian foreign relations. She published several books, among them *Canada's Overtures towards Asia: The Colombo Plan, the New Commonwealth and the Reconstruction of the Sterling Area, 1947-1952* (1990), *Enemy Images in American History* (1997), *Theorien Internationaler Politik* (^{3}2000), *Pax Anglo-Americana: Machtstrukturelle Grundlagen anglo-amerikanischer Asien- und Fernostpolitik in den 1950er Jahren* (1999), and *Atlantic Communications: The Media in American and German History from the 17th to the 20th Century* (2004). Her research interests include German immigrant letters of the 19th and 20th centuries, the history of Anglo-American relations during the 19th century, Canadian-American relations after September 11, and colonial governance in British and French North America. Since February 2007 she has served as First Vice President of FU Berlin.

Ursula Lehmkuhl est professeure d'histoire moderne et dirige le département d'histoire du John F. Kennedy Institute for Northern American Studies à la l'Université libre de Berlin. Elle enseigne la culture américaine et l'histoire sociale du 19e siècle, l'histoire diplomatique américaine et canadienne du 20e siècle et l'histoire des relations étrangères américaines et canadiennes. Elle a publié plusieurs livres dont *Canada's Overtures towards Asia: The Colombo Plan, the New Commonwealth and the Reconstruction of the Sterling Area, 1947-1952* (1990), *Enemy Images in American History* (1997), *Theorien Internationaler Politik* (^{3}2000), *Pax Anglo-Americana: Machtstrukturelle Grundlagen anglo-amerikanischer Asien- und Fernostpolitik in den 1950er Jahren* (1999) et *Atlantic Communications: The Media in American and German History from the 17th to the 20th Century* (2004). Ses recherches portent également sur les lettres des immigrants allemands du

19e et du 20e siècle, les relations anglo-américaines au 19e siècle, les relations entre le Canada et les États-Unis après le 11 septembre et la gouvernance coloniale dans l'Amérique du Nord britannique et français. Depuis février 2007, Ursula Lehmkuhl est la première vice-rectrice de la FU Berlin.

Ursula Mathis-Moser

Ursula Mathis-Moser is professor at the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Innsbruck and speaker and coordinator of the interdisciplinary research group "Cultures in Contact". Her main areas of research include French, Quebec (poetry, women writers, migration authors, chanson) and Spanish literatures, transculturality, migrant literatures, and issues of intermediality. After her "Promotio sub auspiciis Praesidentis rei publicae" in 1976, she was awarded the Theodor-Körner prize (1982) and the Liechtenstein prize (1985) for her habilitation and, in 2004, the Jean Éthier-Blais prize for her monograph *Dany Laferrière. La dérive américaine* (2003). She is the editor of a collection called *canadiana oenipontana* and is currently an associate editor of the *International Journal of Canadian Studies*. Since 1995 (1997) Ursula Mathis-Moser has acted as the director of the Canadian Studies Centre and the Centre d'Étude de la chanson québécoise, both located at the University of Innsbruck, and has served as (vice-)president of the German Association for Canadian Studies from 1993 to 1997. In 1996, France made her an Officier de l'Ordre des Palmes académiques. She has authored and edited a number of books, the most recent titles including *Austria-Canada. Cultural and Knowledge Transfer 1990-2000* (2003), *Nouveaux regards sur la littérature québécoise* (2004), *La littérature 'française' contemporaine. Contact de cultures et créativité* (2007), and *Fremde(s) schreiben* (2008).

Ursula Mathis-Moser est professeure titulaire au département de langues et littératures romanes de l'Université d'Innsbruck où elle préside, depuis 2005, au groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire "Cultures en Contact". Ses recherches portent principalement sur la littérature française, la littérature québécoise (poésie, écriture au féminin, auteurs de la migration, chanson) et la littérature espagnole, sur la transculturalité, les littératures de la migration et l'intermédialité. Après sa "Promotio sub auspiciis Praesidentis rei publicae" en 1976, elle a obtenu les prix Theodor-Körner (1982) et Liechtenstein (1985) pour sa habilitation et, en 2004, le prix Jean Éthier-Blais pour son ouvrage *Dany Laferrière. La dérive américaine* (2003). Elle édite la collection *canadiana oenipontana* et est actuellement rédactrice adjointe du *Journal International d'études canadiennes*. Elle dirige le Centre d'études canadiennes et le Centre d'étude de la chanson québécoise de l'Université d'Innsbruck et a été (vice-)présidente de l'Association d'études canadiennes dans les pays germanophones de 1993 à 1997. Depuis 1996, elle est Officier

de l'Ordre des Palmes académiques. Elle a publié et dirigé plusieurs livres, dont les plus récents: *Autriche-Canada. Le transfert culturel et scientifique 1990-2000* (2003), *Nouveaux regards sur la littérature québécoise* (2004), *La littérature 'française' contemporaine. Contact de cultures et créativité* (2007) et *Fremde(s) schreiben* (2008).

Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh

Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh was born in Osterode (Germany). She studied Romance Philology and English Philology at the Universities of Cologne, Tours (France), Kiel, and Bamberg, where she completed her doctoral exam as well as her habilitation. Since 1995 she has been full professor of Romance Linguistics (French and Spanish) at the University of Regensburg (Germany). She is chief editor of the *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* as well as a member of the Conseil International des Études Créoles. Her academic interests can be summarized as follows: a) Creole studies: She has published the first comprehensive grammar of Louisiana Creole (*Le créole de Breaux Bridge, Louisiane. Étude morphosyntaxique – textes – vocabulaire*, Hamburg 1985) as well as numerous articles on French-based creoles. b) The varieties of French in North America: She is the director of the research project *Grammaire comparée des parlers acadiens* (GraCoPAc) financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (her special focus being Cajun French). c) Spanish diachronic linguistics: She is co-author of a history of the Spanish language (with Annegret Bollée), author of a monograph on Spanish syntax (*Die Satzgliedanordnung im Spanischen. Eine diachrone Analyse*, Tübingen 1997), as well as of various articles on the evolution of Spanish. d) Language change and language contact.

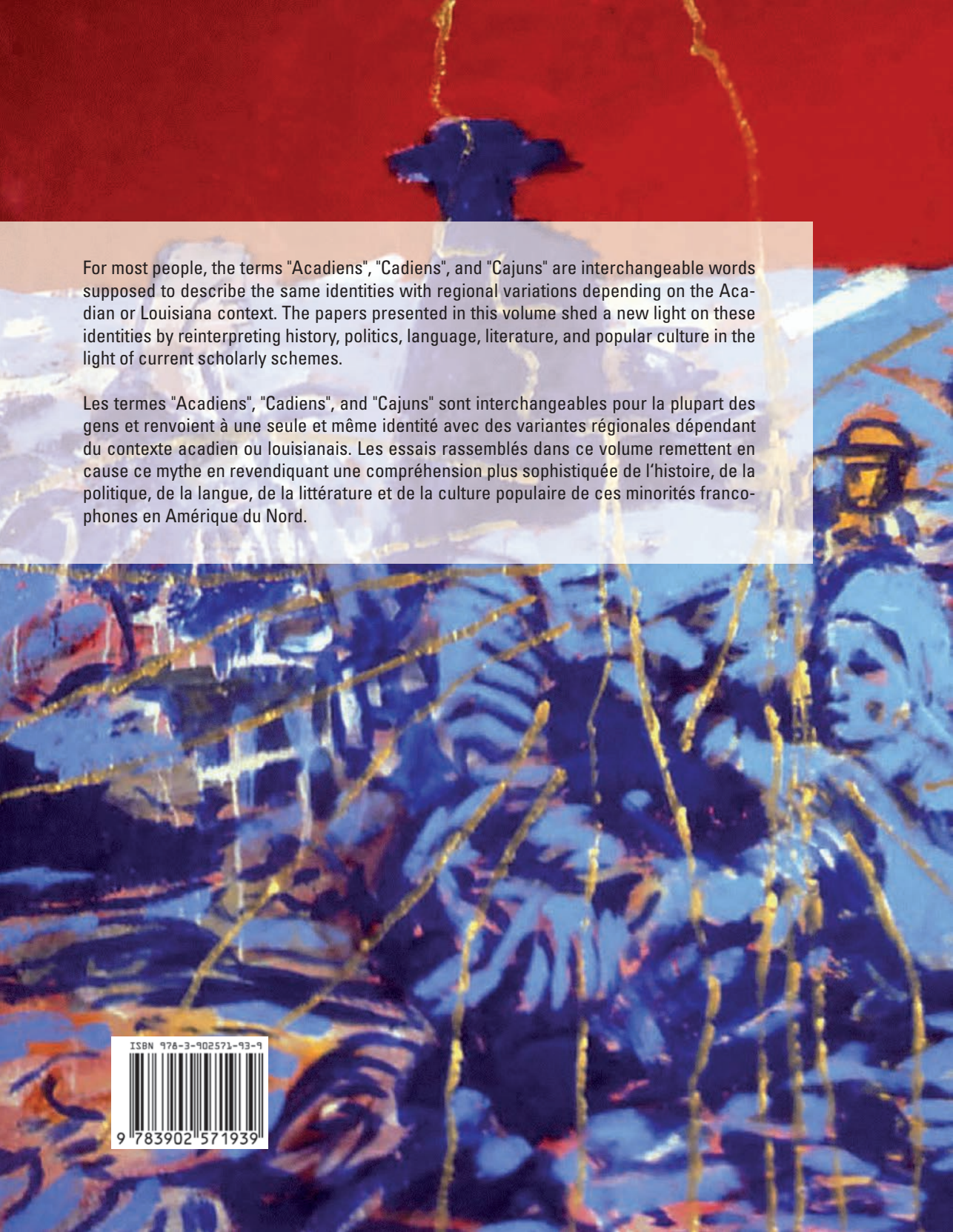
Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh est née à Osterode (Allemagne). Elle a fait ses études (philologie romane, philologie anglaise) aux universités de Cologne, Tours, Kiel ainsi qu'à Bamberg, où elle a fait son doctorat de troisième cycle et obtenu l'habilitation à diriger les recherches. Depuis 1995, elle est professeure de linguistique romane (français et espagnol) à l'Université de Regensburg (Allemagne). Elle est l'éditrice en chef de la *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* et elle est membre du Conseil International des Études Créoles. Ses domaines de recherche sont les suivants : (a) Les études créoles: elle est l'auteure d'une grammaire du créole louisianais (*Le créole de Breaux Bridge, Louisiane. Étude morphosyntaxique – textes – vocabulaire*, Hamburg 1985) et elle a publié de nombreux articles sur les créoles à base lexicale française. (b) Les variétés du français en Amérique du Nord: elle est la directrice d'un projet de recherche intitulé *Grammaire comparée des parlers acadiens* (GraCoPAc) financé par la Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. Dans le cadre de ce projet, ses travaux se concentrent sur le cadien parlé

en Louisiane. (c) La description diachronique de l'espagnol: elle est co-auteure d'une *Histoire de la langue espagnole* (avec Annegret Bollée) et auteure d'une monographie (*Die Satzgliedanordnung im Spanischen. Eine diachrone Analyse*, Tübingen 1997) ainsi que de plusieurs études sur l'évolution de l'espagnol. (d) Le changement linguistique et les langues en contact.

François Paré

François Paré is professor of French and Chair of the Department of French Studies at the University of Waterloo. He is the author of several books and journal articles on cultural and linguistic diversity, and on Francophone minorities in Canada. His first book, *Les littératures de l'exiguïté* (Le Nordir, 1992), won the 1993 Governor General's Award for non-fiction in French. In 1997, a translation of this book appeared at Wilfrid Laurier University Press under the title *Exiguity: Reflections on the Margins of Literature*. This book was also translated in Italian, Romanian, Italian, and Uzbek. His 2003 book, *La distance habitée* (Ottawa, Le Nordir), won the Trillium Book Award offered by the Ontario government and the Prix Victor-Barbeau presented by the Académie des Arts et des Lettres du Québec. In addition to *Traversées*, an epistolary essay with François Ouellet (Le Nordir, 2000), *Shifting Boundaries/Frontières flottantes* with Jaap Lintvelt (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2001), and *Le fantasme d'Escanaba* (Nota Bene, 2007), Paré also published, in collaboration with Stéphanie Nutting, a collection of articles on Franco-Ontarian playwright and novelist Jean Marc Dalpé (*Jean Marc Dalpé. Ouvrier d'un dire*, Prise de Parole, 2006). His latest book, written jointly with François Ouellet, is an epistolary essay on Québec novelist Louis Hamelin (*Louis Hamelin et ses doubles*, Nota Bene, 2008).

Né à Longueuil (Québec), François Paré est professeur titulaire et directeur du département d'études françaises de l'Université de Waterloo (Ontario). En 1993, son livre *Les littératures de l'exiguïté* lui a valu le Prix du Gouverneur général du Canada. Cet ouvrage est aujourd'hui traduit en anglais, en italien, en roumain et en ouzbek. Il est aussi l'auteur de *Théories de la fragilité* (Le Nordir, 1994), puis avec François Ouellet, de *Traversées* (Le Nordir, 2000), et, avec Jaap Lintvelt, de *Frontières flottantes: Lieu et espace dans les cultures francophones du Canada* (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2001). Son ouvrage *La distance habitée* (Le Nordir, 2003) lui a valu le Prix Trillium, offert par le gouvernement de l'Ontario, et le Prix Victor-Barbeau de l'Académie des Lettres du Québec. Il a publié, en compagnie de Stéphanie Nutting un recueil collectif, *Jean Marc Dalpé: ouvrier d'un dire* (Prise de parole, 2006), et *Le fantasme d'Escanaba*, un essai sur les cultures de la diaspora québécoise en Amérique, est paru chez Nota Bene en 2007. Enfin, un ouvrage sur le romancier Louis Hamelin, en collaboration avec François Ouellet, vient tout juste de paraître chez le même éditeur.



For most people, the terms "Acadiens", "Cadiens", and "Cajuns" are interchangeable words supposed to describe the same identities with regional variations depending on the Acadian or Louisiana context. The papers presented in this volume shed a new light on these identities by reinterpreting history, politics, language, literature, and popular culture in the light of current scholarly schemes.

Les termes "Acadiens", "Cadiens", and "Cajuns" sont interchangeables pour la plupart des gens et renvoient à une seule et même identité avec des variantes régionales dépendant du contexte acadien ou louisianais. Les essais rassemblés dans ce volume remettent en cause ce mythe en revendiquant une compréhension plus sophistiquée de l'histoire, de la politique, de la langue, de la littérature et de la culture populaire de ces minorités francophones en Amérique du Nord.

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