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Introduction

1 Today in Southwest Louisiana, monuments, museums, festivals, and family reunions commemorate the *Grand Dérangement*[1] of 1755, the displacement of the Acadians from their homeland on the east coast of Canada by British and New England soldiers. More importantly, in the Royal Proclamation of 2003 Queen Elizabeth II, after almost 250 years, officially acknowledged the forced removal of the Acadians and

declared "28 July of every year as A Day of Commemoration of the *Grand Dérangement*, commencing on 28 July 2005" (Perrin 121). This Proclamation, based on a petition initiated in 1990 by the Cajun cultural activist and attorney Warren A. Perrin from Erath, Louisiana, marks a milestone in Cajun and Acadian history and has become a meaningful symbol of the collective memory of the Cajuns, the French-speaking minority living in Southwest Louisiana Cajun Country.[2] The Cajuns trace their ancestry to the Acadians, the seventeenth-century French colonists from the *Centre-Ouest* region, who settled in present-day New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[3] Two hundred and fifty years after the expulsion, the Proclamation as formal document signifies the official end of the oblivion of the Acadian diaspora.

2 The numerous events commemorating the past testify to the great interest in Acadian and Cajun history.[4] Similarly, the recent publications related to Acadian history and the *Grand Dérangement* – obviously triggered not only by the 250th anniversary of the deportation commemorated in 2005, but also by the 400th anniversary of the birth of *Acadie* celebrated in 2004 – exemplify the boom in Memory Studies[5] and show a revisionist tendency.[6] In 1999, political and cultural groups in Canada even went so far as to compare the tragedy to an ethnic cleansing *avant la lettre* (Basque 22, Faragher 2006: 474), an analogy which some historians refuse to draw because it "carries too much present-day emotional weight and in turn overshadows much of the accommodation that the Acadians and Anglo-Americans reached" (Grenier 2008: 6). Up to the middle of the twentieth century, most Americans knew the story of the Acadians thanks to Evangeline, a literary Acadian heroine become American icon. The epic poem *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* (1847), written by New England poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, became an immediate success in both the United States and Canada (Griffiths 1982: 28), and the Acadians entered the American collective memory as wretched, tragic, and passive victims.[7] Still, the poem is anything but a truthful account of Acadian history as it contains a number of inaccuracies and dissimulates historical details. The fact that the rose-colored account, which contributed to a growing American nationalism, was adopted by the Cajuns (and French Canadians) as their founding myth, inevitably

evokes Benedict Anderson's concept of "reassuring fratricide." While recalling the Acadians' tragic fate, *Evangeline* illustrates the general forgetting of the real and complex circumstances surrounding the *Grand Derangement*. Its success turned Evangeline into a far-reaching myth, [8] to the extent that by the first half of the twentieth century Louisiana capitalized on her not only as cultural icon, but also as tourist attraction. [9]

3 The 1960s with the Cajun Renaissance, a grassroots movement fighting for the preservation of French, witnessed a restoration of cultural pride and was fundamental for subsequent cultural changes. [10] From the 1970s onwards, scholars of Cajun origin at the University of Southwestern Louisiana [11] started debunking the Evangeline myth to counter untruthful and stereotypical depictions of the Cajuns. [12] This change of attitude was also visible in Cajun culture shifting from an oral to a written culture, epitomized by the emergence of not only works on Cajun history, but also of a francophone Cajun literature. [13] This transition displayed the general urge to preserve and remember the culture. As mentioned above, major publications debating the relative guilt of the participants in the dispersal, including Warren A. Perrin's *Acadian Redemption: From Beausoleil Broussard to the Queen's Royal Proclamation* of 2004, increased especially with the turn of the twenty-first century. Focusing on the life and deeds of the Acadian Joseph Broussard, known as Beausoleil, considered today the founding father of "New Acadia" in Southwest Louisiana (Brasseaux 1987:77), Perrin, a direct descendant of Beausoleil, commemorates and honors the Acadian past. His biography of the authentic Acadian resistance fighter is the first and most accurate to date. Moreover, apart from allegorizing Perrin's own efforts to obtain an apology from Queen Elizabeth II, the narrative mirrors the general attempt to supplant the mythical Evangeline by an authentic hero – Beausoleil himself. In the end, the biography is anything but a portrayal of a reassuring fratricide; rather, it is a tale about the "redemption" of the Acadian past.

4 This article critically engages with Benedict Anderson's concept of "reassuring fratricide" in relation to the *Grand Dérangement* in the context of Cajun culture. After a brief outline of the historical circumstances of the dispersal, I will analyze how Longfellow's fictionalized rendering of the Acadian expulsion contributed to consolidating a national sentiment in the United States. I will then focus on Perrin's

biography, which stands as a contrast to Longfellow's poem, in order to assess the symbolic character of the *Grand Dérangement* in the collective memory of the Cajuns, as well as its repercussions in today's Cajun culture. The pervasive presence of the *Grand Dérangement* today suggests that time has not healed the wound. On the contrary, the event seems to have reached the dimension of a cultural trauma.[14] At the same time, with the emergence of Beausoleil as a folk hero, the Cajuns, who had distanced themselves from the American foundational myth of the Pilgrim Fathers with the adoption of the Evangeline myth as their own foundational myth, are pushing Evangeline aside, thus creating a historical past and an identity of their own.

1. The Historical Background

5 The area the Acadians settled in the early seventeenth century was called *Acadie*[15] and belonged to the extended territory of New France which stretched from the Canadian wilds to the Louisiana bayous. While the Acadians lived in peace for most of the century, the European dynastic wars, taking place from 1689 to 1763, proved fateful for them. In particular, the French and Indian War (1756-1763),[16] as the fourth and last of the Intercolonial Wars and which culminated in the removal of the Acadians, was the most devastating event for the Acadians and their descendants, the Cajuns.

6 After Acadia had changed hands between France and Great Britain more than a dozen times, it was finally conquered by the British in 1710. This so-called Conquest of Acadia foreshadowed the end of French power in North America. With the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which formally ended Queen Anne's War,[17] the province of Acadia was ceded to the British for good and renamed Nova Scotia. The Acadians were allowed to keep their lands, but they became British subjects (Perrin 2004: 101). Father Le Loutre's War (1749-1755), named after the French missionary Jean-Louis Le Loutre who rallied the Acadians to fight for the French, renewed the discord between England and France as the British feared the Acadians would remain loyal not to the British, but to the French Crown. Faragher aptly describes the Acadian dilemma, which "was not of their own making. It was created by imperial rivalry. The French pressed the inhabitants to move

from communities in which they had lived for generations. The British pressed them to swear an unconditional oath of loyalty" (Faragher 2004: 140). By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Acadians, the French, and the British, each had a different perception of the Acadians: "the Acadians [in 1748] considered themselves Acadian, the French considered them unreliable allies, and the English, unsatisfactory citizens" (Griffiths 2005: 37). After the Acadians again refused to take an unconditional oath of allegiance, the deportation order was issued in July 1755 and Nova Scotia Governor Charles Lawrence sent out troops rounding up about 7,000 Acadians, half of the Acadian population, taking them to ships, which had been waiting in the bay, to deport them to the New England colonies, France, England, and the Caribbean. The removal operation lasted till 1763, by which time more than 10,000 Acadians were scattered across the Atlantic world. Families were torn apart: children were separated from parents, wives from their husbands, brothers from their sisters, and most of them would never see their homes or families again (Faragher 2006: 82). After the break-up of the Acadian community, Acadia as a region ceased to exist and remains absent from official maps. Still, Acadia has not disappeared from discourse: through socio-historical studies, fictional narratives, and ongoing memory work such as commemorative celebrations, it has become an imaginary space – and another site of memory which connects all Acadians scattered around the world. [18]

7 Several factors contributed to the Acadians' expulsion from their homeland. First, the Acadians were the victims of colonial irresponsibility and neglect (Faragher 2005: 448), for Great Britain and especially France were preoccupied with military struggles and the resulting financial issues in Europe. During Acadia's alternating domination by the two imperial powers, the Acadians had generally good trade relations with the Natives, [19] the French, and the British. The expression *nos amis les ennemis*, used by the Acadians to refer to the English with whom they traded, stresses both the Acadians' ambivalent relationship with their neighbors and their good economic diplomacy (Faragher 2006: 86). Their wish to remain noncommittal earned them the designation of "French Neutrals" (Faragher 2005: xviii). The fact that the Acadians were "a people of the borderlands, at the crossroads of native, French, and English cultures… complicated

loyalties and interests" (Faragher 2005: 101). As a result of the constant power struggles between France and England, the Acadians requested to not be obliged to take arms against any of the parties. More than once, they refused to take an unconditional oath of allegiance to the British Crown. They considered themselves a distinct and self-reliant people, different from the French of France; so their reluctance to take sides stemmed from their sense of an Acadian national body (Griffiths 2005: 463-64). The Protestant British on their part mistrusted the Acadians' strong group-cohesiveness and their Roman Catholicism. Most of all, proving their expansionist disposition, they coveted the fertile lands the Acadians had acquired through arduous dike-building. To defend their lands, the Acadians had to keep together. Describing the Acadians' reaction to the political situation, Acadian historian Naomi Griffiths emphasizes that

> [a]lthough the colony which they built changed hands fourteen times during the seventeenth century, before being finally absorbed into the British empire, the Acadians managed to develop their own society and in so doing to cope with the demands of alien, transitory administrators, whether these were sent to them by the French or the English. From a very early stage in their development, the Acadians acted with a sense of the independent existence of their community, a belief that the life of their villages was more than just an offshoot of the life of the particular European power whose constitutional charge they at the moment happened to be (1973: 84).

8 Eventually, both the strong family ties and social cohesion of the Acadians were the foundation for the establishment of a society with a national character. Against this background, the *Grand Dérangement* functions as a turning point in Acadian and Cajun history and clearly achieves mythical status thanks to subsequent fictional interpretations of the event.

2. The *Grand Dérangement*: A Reassuring Fratricide?

9 Almost a hundred years after the expulsion, the story of the Acadians re-emerged amongst the American and Canadian public thanks to a poet from New England. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem

Evangeline: A *Tale of Acadie*, published in 1847, is a romantic depiction of the Acadian removal and recounts the tragic love story of Evangeline Bellefontaine and Gabriel Lajeunesse from Grand-Pré. Separated from her lover on their wedding day by British soldiers, Evangeline travels south to Louisiana and later into the West in search of Gabriel. They meet again in a hospital in Philadelphia, where Evangeline, now a Sister of Mercy tending to the sick, finds Gabriel on his deathbed. Their reunion is short-lived, for they are separated by Gabriel's untimely death.

10 Initially criticized by some for its outdated use of hexameter,[20] the poem was nonetheless praised for its depiction of the virtuous, stoic, and innocent Acadians, epitomized by saintly Evangeline, who became the paragon of humility and Christian fortitude in the United States.[21] What seemed to make both peoples converge was that they had experienced oppression by the British. But very soon, Longfellow's fictionalized story sparked debates regarding its truthfulness and historical accuracy. The controversy over what happened crystallized especially with the emergence of an Acadian nationalism in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century (Griffiths 1982: 35).[22] As a native of Maine, Longfellow was surely acquainted with the Acadians' history. However, Longfellow never went to either Acadia or Louisiana. The landscape Longfellow paints is mostly inspired by his trips to Europe, notably Sweden (Thorstenberg 1908: 301). Furthermore, to Longfellow, the political context provided only the background for his story. His desire was to "enshrine and celebrate a tale of heroic virtue" (Griffiths 1982: 29), and he had no interest in giving a historical account. Relying on historical sources,[23] he freely interpreted Acadian history and gave the American public a virtuous people they could adulate. At a time when the United States was engaged in the Mexican War and the divide between the North and the South was developing, ultimately leading to the Civil War, the poem fostered the growth of American nationalism.

11 Considering the nascent nationalism of the United States after the American Revolution and Longfellow's myopic remodeling of the expulsion, the comparison of *Evangeline* to what Benedict Anderson introduced as "reassuring fratricide" in his now classic *Imagined Communities* stands to reason. Referring to Ernest Renan's seminal text "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?"—in which Renan analyzes the meaning of

several historical conflicts such as the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre or the American Civil War for contemporary nations—Anderson argues that fratricidal acts within a community become reassuring, for the victors and victims are later seen as brothers. Thanks to the forgetting of the relative guilt, to the occluding of relevant details such as the real origin of the victims or the killers, the fratricide is euphemized and its memory becomes reassuring, even necessary, for a peaceful continuation of the community (Anderson 2006: 199-203). In the same vein, *Evangeline* presents the fratricide between the Acadians, who were British subjects in 1755, and the British. It simultaneously remembers and forgets the *Grand Dérangement*, in part, by manipulating important historical facts and presenting it as a conflict initiated and waged by the British. Additionally, it transforms various elements distinguishing the Acadians from the Americans and makes the two communities more alike. What is most important, the romantic poem remains silent on New England's involvement in the deportation. Thus, a fraternity between the Americans and the Acadians can be established and results in the acceptance of the Acadian Evangeline as an American icon. Today, the Acadians and the Cajuns (the descendants of the victims) belong to the two nations involved in the *Grand Dérangement*: Canada, whose current head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, and the United States, whose precursors were the New England colonies.

12 Admittedly, Anderson's motif of the fratricide might be more applicable to Canada in the context of Longfellow's *Evangeline* considering that, firstly, the state is still connected to the British Crown and, secondly, the United States itself sought independence from British oppression with the American Revolution (1775-1783). Still, the impetus for the apology came from the Cajuns who arguably took advantage of the geographical distance as well as their dissociation from the British Crown. It is because of the incentive of an American and Cajun, Warren A. Perrin, that the Canadian-Acadians adopted the debate in 2001 and the British Crown finally issued the Proclamation. The Cajun perspective then presents an interesting variation of Anderson's fratricide motif. Although the Cajuns are American citizens, they continue to feel strongly connected to the Acadian diaspora with whom they share the fateful past.

13 Eighty to one hundred years represent a time space during which personal experiences are communicated among contemporaries. Egyptologist Jan Assmann observes in his magisterial *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (2011) that this period corresponds to three to four generations in the Bible (Assmann 56); these generations are obliged to assume the blame for their misdeeds (50-1). [24] As to Longfellow's poem, there is a temporal distance of almost a hundred years between the deportation and the publication of *Evangeline*, which means that there was likely no eye-witness to tell what really happened and allow a reinterpretation of the *Grand Dérangement*. Testimonies by missionaries suggest that the material losses the Acadians suffered – loss of land, homes, goods – did not play a significant role for them. Instead, the Acadians

> made little reference to the loss of their farms or their homeland. They struck [the missionary] as indifferent to the nakedness and hunger they had suffered during their exile. Like other victims of collective trauma, they said little about their troubled past. Judging from the few traces the experience of removal left in the otherwise rich Acadian oral tradition of story and song, the response of the Chezzetcook Acadians may have been common… There was only one part of their experience, however, that they chose to talk about – the torment of family separation (Faragher 2005: 444).

14 Since Acadian as well as Cajun culture primarily relied on oral tradition and the only records on the deportation originate from colonial papers, the *Grand Dérangement* reaches back into seemingly mythical times and becomes an "already forgotten tragedy," whose continued remembrance is a key factor in constructing national genealogies (Anderson 2006: 201). Besides the dearth of eyewitness accounts, misrepresentations facilitated the fabrication of the Evangeline myth.

15 It is noteworthy, for instance, that in Longfellow's poem the Acadians' country of origin, France, is almost ignored except for three nostalgic references. The Acadian houses resemble those of Normandy: "Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and of chestnut, / such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of the Henries" (Longfellow 1970: 54). So does the outward appearance noticeable in the women's "Norman cap… brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an heirloom, / Handed down from mother to child,

through long generations" (Longfellow 1970: 55). Evangeline's father sings songs "such as at home, in the olden time, his father before him / Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards" (Longfellow 1970: 58). Interestingly, Normandy and Burgundy are named as the Acadians' region of origin. The Acadians, however, came from the *Centre-Ouest* region of France (Ancelet, Edwards, Pitre 1991: 3, 4). In referring to the "Henries"[25] and in locating the Acadians in Normandy and Burgundy, two regions known for their royal heritage, Longfellow ascribes noble qualities to the peasant Acadians.

16 Furthermore, Longfellow does not mention the *Grand Dérangement* by its commonly used name.[26] Instead, he uses "exile" and "scatter" to portray the expulsion – the Acadians are "Scattered like dust and leaves" (Longfellow 1970: 53) – and eclipses the French connection through the use of elusive references to the victims' place of origin. The beginning of the second part is probably the most telling:

> Many a weary year had passed since the burning of Grand-Pré,
> When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed,
> Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into exile,
> Exile without an end, and without an example in story.
> Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians landed;
> Scattered were they, like flakes of snow...
> Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered from city to city,...
> Friends they sought and homes (Longfellow 1970: 69).

17 Longfellow's comparisons aptly picture the Acadians' dispersal. However, the group with whom Evangeline travels takes an overland route to Louisiana. In reality, the Acadians reached Louisiana solely by ship. This myth that the Acadians arrived in Louisiana going down the Mississippi River is to be read in the light of the concept of "Manifest Destiny."[27] Owing to Evangeline as feminine ideal, her search for Gabriel across the West recalls George Berkeley's line from his *Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America* (1725): "Westward the course of empire takes its way" (Berkeley Historical Society 2010-2012). American painters of the second half of the nineteenth century would use this line as inspiration for their artistic interpretations of westward expansion. Indeed, Evangeline could well be compared to John Gast's Columbia in his painting *American Progress* (ca. 1872), leading civilization to the new West.[28] Longfellow's

poem celebrates the expanse and beauty of the land, and highlights North America (Longfellow's United States) as a land of refuge, a nation welcoming strangers to settle their promised land, welcoming the Acadians to the "Eden of Louisiana" (Longfellow 1970: 73), which then was still the Louisiana Territory. What Longfellow failed to consider, however, is that the Acadians went to Louisiana of their own free will. After hearing of a French colony with lands open to settlement, Acadians started to travel to Louisiana. When they arrived in the mid-1760s, Louisiana had changed hands and was under Spanish sovereignty.[29] It was only with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, when France sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States,[30] and with the state of Louisiana's admittance into the Union in 1812, that the Acadians became Americans. Longfellow, however, suggests that it was the United States that beckoned the Acadians to find their promised land and live there as a free people.

18 Lastly, one blatant dissimulation concerns the role played by New Englanders in the *Grand Dérangement*. In the poem, the British are the prime perpetrators. When the Acadians are tricked by the British, Basil, Gabriel's father, cries out: "'Down with the tyrants of England! We never have sworn them allegiance! / Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and our harvests!'" (Longfellow 1970: 64). Later on, when the Acadians arrive in Louisiana, Basil again refers to the British enemies: "After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow with harvests, / No King George of England shall drive you away from your homesteads, / Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your farms and your cattle" (Longfellow 1970: 76). It is striking that the poem never mentions the involvement of the New England militia in the expulsion although an anonymous letter of August 1755, dispatched from Halifax to Boston and widely reprinted in the colonial press of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland already indicated that much:

> We are now upon a great and noble Scheme of sending the neutral French out of this Province, who have always been secret Enemies, and have encouraged our Savages to cut our Throats. If we effect their Expulsion, it will be one of the greatest Things that ever the English did in America; for by all the Accounts, that Part of the Country they possess, is as good Land as any in the World: In case therefore we could get some good English Farmers in their Room, this

> Province would abound with all Kinds of Provisions (quoted in Faragher 2005: 333). [31]

19 The letter clearly indicates the ultimate goal of the British: to get rid of the Acadians to obtain their abundant lands and people them with British citizens. It also displays a desire for revenge and for possessing the land of the Acadians (Faragher 2006: 82-83). It must be noted, however, that it was the neighboring territory, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with its governor William Shirley, and the jurisdiction itself, the Council of Nova Scotia with Governor Charles Lawrence, which pushed for the plan of removal (Griffiths 2005: 463). Similarly, Faragher not only holds the British responsible, but extends that responsibility and lays the blame on New England:

> … the operation was carefully planned in conjunction with Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts. It was authorized by the Nova Scotia Governor's Council, largely made up of Yankees. It was then executed by Yankee troops led (for the most part) by Yankee officers and provisioned by Yankee merchants. The Acadians were transported in Yankee vessels, with Yankee crews and Yankee captains. And the country once possessed by Acadian farmers was eventually resettled by Yankee families from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. New Englanders were thus the principal schemers and beneficiaries of Acadian removal (Faragher 2006: 91).

20 Although American Independence would come in 1776, two decades after the dispersal, the separation of the New England colonies from Great Britain was well under way. [32] Not only does the poem remain silent about New England's share, it also completely ignores the inhumane conditions the Acadians endured in their exile. Life in France and the New England colonies was anything but comfortable. The Acadians exiled to Maryland met with anti-Catholic campaigns and raging francophobia, and quickly became a welcome scapegoat (Brasseaux 1987: 35-6). Acadians in other parts of New England such as Pennsylvania did not fare better: they were treated like prisoners of war as they were kept on the deportation ships in the harbors before they were brought to areas outside the cities where they lived in poverty (Brasseaux 1987: 43-4). In the late 1760s, the Pennsylvania and Maryland Acadians jointly departed for Louisiana by ship (Brasseaux

1987: 53-4). Longfellow's poem, however, shows how plentiful and how welcoming North America was to immigrants, and this depiction served to strengthen the young republic. As the Acadians' hardships echoed those of the Americans – both people had been oppressed by the British Empire – Evangeline was adopted as American icon. The impact of the poem on the Cajuns' self-perception and identity was such that it became the Cajuns' foundational myth and, for more than 150 years, the Cajuns' attachment to Evangeline has not abated. [33] Yet, as it seems, Evangeline is about to be dethroned.

3. Remembrance as a Means to Heal the Wound

21 In 2003, a Royal Proclamation was issued in which Queen Elizabeth II acknowledged that "the deportation of the Acadian people, commonly known as the Great Upheaval, continued until 1763 and had tragic consequences, including the deaths of many thousands of Acadians from disease, in shipwrecks, in their place of refuge and in many prison camps in Nova Scotia and England as well as in the British colonies in America… We acknowledge these historical facts and the trials and suffering experienced by the Acadian people during the Great Upheaval" (Perrin 2004: 120). This recognition can be seen in the context of what Memory Studies expert Jeffrey K. Olick has identified as a new shift of governmental principles, a shift towards what he calls the "politics of regret": "The memory boom unleashed a culture of trauma and regret, and states are allegedly now judged on how well they atone for their past misdeeds rather than how well they meet their fiscal obligations and inspire future projects" (Olick 2011: 3-4). Whereas states used to commemorate heroic and glorious events of the past, states today acknowledge their crimes committed against racial, linguistic, and cultural minorities to maintain their legitimacy. Great Britain's acknowledgment of the atrocities committed in Acadia echoes similar redeeming gestures by other states in the twentieth century such as Clinton's apology to the descendants of Africans, victims of slavery, in 1998, or, in 1988, to the Japanese-Americans for the crimes committed by the U.S. to them during WW II (Perrin 2004: 111, 113). As to the Queen's Proclamation, Great Britain did not apologize, but at least acknowledged the crimes committed

during the *Grand Dérangement* and officially repealed the order of exile in 2003.

22 The Proclamation is based on a petition Warren A. Perrin set up in 1991. His struggle for the petition shows his eager interest in Acadian history and, as a descendant of Beausoleil, in his own Acadian background. Apart from a historical – and genealogical – interest, there are other circumstances which prompted Perrin to investigate the origins of the Cajuns and Beausoleil's life. When, after telling Beausoleil's story, he was asked by his then-six-year-old son, Bruce: "You mean, our ancestors were criminals?" (qtd. in Perrin 2004: 117), Perrin realized the necessity to search for the truth. What is more, Perrin discovered that "the Acadian expulsion had not only been illegal according to international law of the period, but… [that] the expulsion order [of 1755] had never been repealed – meaning that Cajun tourists in Canada were technically defying a centuries-old military edict and were subject to prosecution" (Perrin 2004: 128). One verse especially in Longfellow's mythical story about the Acadians haunted Perrin and contributed to his decision to act (Perrin 2004: 102-103): "Many a weary year had passed since the burning of Grand-Pré / When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed, / Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into exile, / *Exile without an end, and without an example in story*" (Longfellow 1970: 69, my emphasis). Indeed, the exile would never have ended had not Perrin campaigned for redress. Thanks to his legal training, Perrin set up a petition to the British government and the Queen as representative of the British Crown. Based on the Petition which the Acadians deported to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, presented to the English King in 1760, the new Petition commemorates and perpetuates the Acadians' endeavor to right a wrong. The major claims of both petitions include the fact that the exile had begun in peacetime since the official declaration of the French and Indian War was only issued in May 1756. Moreover, there was no law providing for the penalty inflicted. Furthermore, Lawrence ignored Queen Anne's Edict according to which the Acadians were allowed to keep their lands. Lastly, Governor Charles Lawrence lacked the authority to act when he changed the orders of his predecessor as he was only appointed Governor in December 1755. [34] All these facts clearly make the British and their representatives culprits (Perrin 2004: 105-109).

23 Moreover, Perrin wanted to put paid to untruthful depictions of Beausoleil. Joseph Broussard (Beausoleil) was born in 1702 in Port Royal and, at the age of 23, married Agnès Thibaudeau, daughter of one of the most influential Acadian families, with whom he had 11 children. Before he had reached the age of 25, Beausoleil had already been involved in four civil disputes: he was accused of "assault and battery, consorting with the Indians, a land dispute and a paternity claim" (Perrin 2004: 9). For Perrin, "Beausoleil's involvement in so many legal disputes at so young an age heralds the character of a man who would become, to the British view, an outlaw, murderer and pirate, and, to the Acadian's view, a patriot and the 'father of New Acadia'" (Perrin 2004: 15-16). Together with his brother Alexandre – both received the nickname of Beausoleil, after their native village near Port Royal (Perrin 2004: 5) – he set up revolutionary campaigns against the British. Thanks to his prominent role in the Acadian resistance, Beausoleil is sometimes compared to other revolutionary figures "such as Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Gerry Adams and Thomas Jefferson" (Perrin 2004: 119). The importance of Beausoleil as a cultural icon represents the desire of the Cajuns to enshrine a hero of their own, to oppose a courageous fighter of flesh and blood to meek Evangeline, a figment.

24 It is significant that Perrin and Beausoleil display a similar fighting spirit: in his days in Acadia, Beausoleil led skirmishing warfare against the British and their urge to make the Acadians swear an unconditional oath of allegiance to the English King. Understandably, the British considered Beausoleil their archenemy and imprisoned him a number of times before he finally left Acadia in late 1764 and led a group of Acadians to Louisiana by way of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti) where they settled along the bayous of the Mississippi River to build a "New Acadia" (Brasseaux: 34). [35] Hated by the British, Beausoleil emerged from the expulsion as the symbolic leader of the Cajuns and is considered today to be *the* Acadian folk hero (Perrin 2004: 43, 57). [36] Clearly, the Acadian resistance led by Beausoleil contrasts with the passivity and resignation of the Acadians in Longfellow's poem. Although the poem created the pervading cultural icon of Evangeline, symbolizing courage and endurance, "there was," in Perrin's opinion, "a need for a tangible symbol of the Acadians' history

which all Acadians could respect" (Perrin 2004: 122-123). This symbol ended up being Beausoleil.

25 Today, Beausoleil is very much present in Cajun culture. In Broussard, Louisiana, named after its founder Valsin Broussard, a Beausoleil descendant, tourists can visit the Valsin Broussard House, the oldest house in the town, built around 1876. In Vermillionville, *La Maison Broussard*, which belonged to Armand Broussard, a son of Beausoleil, has become a historic site, and the *Famille Beausoleil Association* has an annual reunion. In 1997, this association commissioned Floyd Sonnier, a renowned Cajun pen-and-ink artist, "to design a limited edition commemorative coin of Beausoleil" (Perrin 2004: 77). Two years later, the city of Broussard erected a monument in honor of the two Broussard brothers, Beausoleil and Alexandre. Apart from these concrete sites of memory, the arts also pay tribute to Beausoleil. Painters Robert Dafford and Herb Roe imagined their own Beausoleil. Dafford depicted the arrival of the Acadians in Louisiana in his mural for the Acadian Memorial in St. Martinville, with Beausoleil as their leader in the center. Roe's portrait shows a kneeling Beausoleil whose right hand leans on an iron sword. Curiously, neither of the two artists is of Acadian origin. Art, admittedly, has a universal character, but the inclusion of non-Cajun/non-Acadian artists also shows how the figure of Beausoleil reaches beyond Cajun culture. Moreover, songs have been dedicated to the rebel's memory. Cajun singer-songwriter Zachary Richard, for instance, mentions Beausoleil along with other Acadian resistance fighters in his anthologized songs "Réveille" and "La Ballade de Beausoleil." In 2003, James Peter Louviere composed the song "Hey, Hey, Beausoleil!" which pays tribute to the Father of New Acadia: "Hey, Hey, Beausoleil, / They shot him and they jailed him / But he got away, Oh, Oh! Great, Beausoleil, / We'll ne'va ne'va let yo' mem'ry fade away!" (Perrin 2004: 51). And the internationally known Cajun music band BeauSoleil chose its name in honor of the rebellious historical character.

26 The most recent endeavor to unearth evidence on Beausoleil is the resurrection of the idea of locating the burial site of Beausoleil. This so-called "New Acadia Project" was developed by Perrin and other Beausoleil descendants in the mid-1990s (Perrin 2004: 84), especially in the context of the preparations for the *FrancoFête*'99 as well as of the Acadian World Congress 1999 held in Louisiana. In July 2013, *The*

Advocate of Baton Rouge reported on "[r]esearchers seeking to fill gaps in early Acadian history" and doing archeological work "to locate and explore the sites where the early Acadians lived and the graves where they now rest" (Burgess 2013). According to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's website, which supports the project, it is "a long-term, collaborative undertaking in public archeology, public history, and cultural resource management planning" (Rees 2013). No doubt, Beausoleil's ghost is still present and his memory will certainly not fade away. These sites of memory serve of course other purposes besides firmly rooting the Cajuns in Acadian history. In fact, the figure of Beausoleil is lent heroic dimensions which might potentially result in an inflation that becomes the basis for the creation of a new myth. [37] Again, like in the case of Evangeline, Beausoleil's figure might become distorted to serve touristic purposes which, in turn, could well prevent the Cajuns from looking to the future.

Conclusion

27 The past in Cajun culture contributes in a significant way to the construction of identity. As sociologist Jacques Henry points out: "Cajuns draw on images of the past to understand and interpret their present-day lives" (Henry 2002: 135). The best example is the enduring presence of the *Grand Dérangement*. 1755 figures as a landmark event in the Acadians' and Cajuns' collective memories, one which has gradually achieved a complex significance for the descendants of each of the involved parties (Great Britain, Canada, the United States) due to the entangled history. Considering the Acadians' status as British subjects, the atrocious act of the British deportation of them clearly presents a fratricidal act. [38] The silence of the victims fostered the development of a warped Acadian history, a "reassuring fratricide." The figure of Evangeline restored the Acadian confidence and became a welcome symbol for the Cajuns which helped create a founding history. On the one hand, in the light of the general veneration of Evangeline, her acceptance made the Cajuns part of the American nation. On the other hand, Evangeline was gradually used to distinguish Cajun Culture from American mainstream culture and developed into a tourist attraction. The Cajun emancipation process in the second half of the twentieth century helped dismantle the Evangeline myth and confronted Evangeline with Beausoleil. Finally, by re-

appropriating Beausoleil as their folk hero, the Cajuns further distance themselves from the American national identity and strengthen their link to Acadia/Canada. They re-create a history as well as a foundation myth of their own.

28 In depicting the *Grand Dérangement* and offering a first insight into the personal life of Beausoleil with unprecedented historical accuracy, Perrin's *Acadian Redemption* perpetuates the memory of the tragic expulsion and inscribes the heroic character of Beausoleil into the collective memory of the Cajuns. The biography serves as a symbol for all the other tragic family histories of fellow Acadians and Cajuns. The recent upsurge in the publication of books examining the *Grand Dérangement* recalls Benedict Anderson's remark that "[h]aving to 'have already forgotten' tragedies of which one needs unceasingly to be 'reminded' turns out to be a characteristic device in the late construction of national genealogies" (Anderson 2006: 201). Although scholars argue that "[t]here is no Cajun nationalism within America, no cultural nationalism that has a political edge" (Ostendorf 2005: 538),[39] the Cajun Renaissance starting in the 1960s brought about an ethnic nationalism,[40] still perceivable today: in 1971, the 22 parishes featuring a predominantly French Acadian cultural environment were officially recognized by the Louisiana State Legislature. This region, now known as Acadiana, boasts a Cajun flag showing three white fleurs-de-lys on a blue ground representing its French heritage, a golden castle on a red ground representing the Spanish heritage, and a golden star on a white ground, symbol of Our Lady of the Assumption, the Acadian patron saint (Bernard 2006: 79-82). Although the flag unites only the three major settler groups of Louisiana, the Cajun community is marked by its heterogeneity, including other ethnic groups. Yet, it is their Acadian heritage the Cajuns take pride in: their participation in annual world gatherings of Acadians and the mushrooming of genealogical centers and tools such as the online *Ensemble Encore* database of Acadian Genealogy of the Acadian Memorial in St. Martinville, which helps facilitate research on family ancestors and locate other family members, contribute to the development of a sense of belonging in the Cajun community.

29 Interestingly, it was a Cajun, and not an Acadian, who set the ball rolling and obtained the Royal Proclamation. The nationalist Canadian-Acadians in the Maritime Provinces of Canada also em-

brace the Royal Proclamation as commemorative symbol. There are, however, opponents like Chiasson who argue that these lobbies only contribute to the persistence of the myth of the passive Acadians and prevent the Acadians from looking to the future (Chiasson 151). As the initial reception of the Petition in Canada shows, it was primarily the Canadian Anglophones who "viewed the Petition as an attempt to embarrass their Queen and poke fun at the whole concept of royalty" (Perrin 2004: 109). The diverging attitudes confirm the persistence of the "considerable disagreement over the questions of historical culpability and guilt" (Faragher 2005: 476), questions which were also voiced by some politicians when the Canadian House of Commons debated the motion calling for an apology in 2001. Scott Reid, member of the Canadian Alliance Party, [41] argued that the motion "seemed to lay blame on the British exclusively. A more historically informed motion, he suggested, would demand apologies from the legislatures of the New England states" (Faragher 2005: 476). What is more, Reid put into question whether "an institution [could] maintain a heritage of collective guilt which is imposed upon successive generations" (qtd. in Faragher 2005: 476). Louisiana, however, provided Perrin with unconditional support and has since heralded Perrin for his achievement. In the end, it was the participation of the Cajuns in the first two *Congrès Mondiaux Acadiens*, in 1999 and 2004 respectively, which gave momentum to the Petition (Perrin 2004: 109). Without doubt, "The Royal Proclamation now stands as a model for all countries in the twenty-first century" (Perrin 2004: 124). Ultimately, Perrin's biography sheds light on the special place of Cajun culture: pushing aside the mythical Evangeline, a symbol of the Americanization of the community of the Cajuns, and celebrating the historical Beausoleil, they define themselves as an independent culture and ethnic community.

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1 The "Great Upheaval" in English.

2 "Cajun" is an Anglo-American corruption of "Acadian," *Acadien* in French, which developed in Louisiana at the end of the nineteenth century through Americanization. The Cajun community in Louisiana is characterized by its hybrid constitution which resulted from the assimilation of cultural traits of Native Americans, French Creoles (French colonists born in Louisiana), Spanish, African slaves, Germans, Italians, and Anglo-Americans. This hybridization complicates any attempt at defining the Cajun identity. Generally, Acadian ancestry, Catholicism, and, to a lesser extent these days, knowledge of French, identify somebody as Cajun.

3 Two Frenchmen, Pierre du Gua, Sieur de Mons, and Samuel de Champlain established the first settlement at Île Sainte-Croix on the north coast of the Bay of Fundy in 1604. Due to a harsh winter, they resettled on the south coast of the Bay the following summer in 1605 (Rudin 5). This place became Port Royal, Acadia's capital, today Annapolis Royal.

4 The Acadian Memorial in St. Martinville, the Acadian Museum in Erath, the Acadian Village in Lafayette as well as gatherings such as the annual *Festivals Acadiens et Créoles* in Lafayette, and the annual International Acadian Festival in Plaquemine commemorate the Acadian heritage in Louisiana. The quintennial Acadian World Congress is the largest Acadian reunion in areas inhabited by Acadian descendants.

5 The transdisciplinary field of Memory Studies is best represented by the journal *Memory Studies*, which was founded in 2008 and "examines the so-

cial, cultural, cognitive, political and technical shifts affecting how, what and why individuals, groups and societies remember and forget" ("Memory Studies").

6 For example, Naomi E. S. Griffiths' *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755* (2005), John Mack Faragher's *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Americans from Their American Homeland* (2005), John Grenier's The Far Reaches of Empire: War in Nova Scotia, 1710-1760 (2008), Ronald Rudin's Remembering and Forgetting Acadie (2009), and Christopher Hodson's Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History (2012).

7 Pamphile Le May's French translation of *Evangeline* in 1865 was even more influential in Canada as it turned *Evangeline* into a francophone founding myth for the Quebecois and the Canadian-Acadians (Morency 2011-2012: 106).

8 The numerous translations in French and German testify to *Evangeline*'s popularity across the Atlantic.

9 Almost half a century earlier, Nova Scotia had already taken advantage of the poem's success. The advertisement of the Land of Evangeline as a tourist destination contributed significantly to the consolidation of the Evangeline phenomenon (cf. McKay and Bates).

10 The Cajun Renaissance engendered the development of the academic field of Cajun Studies in the 1970s. Pioneers of Cajun history and culture among others are Carl A. Brasseaux, Barry J. Ancelet, and Shane K. Bernard.

11 The name was changed to University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 1999.

12 C. A. Brasseaux's *In Search of Evangeline* (1988) is representative of the dismantling of the Evangeline myth in Louisiana. A similar demystification movement of Evangeline occurred a little earlier in Canada with the publication of Acadian author Antonine Maillet's *La Sagouine* in Québec in 1971. Written in Acadian French, the monologue presents a counter-myth to *Evangeline*, which helped turn the figure of la Sagouine into a means of political assertion and shaping Acadian identity. Likewise, in his article "Oublier Évangéline" Acadian poet and artist Herménégilde Chiasson vehemently expresses the need to turn the page and forget Evangeline (151-152)—an injunction not easily fulfilled since even an appeal to forget Evangeline recalls the figure.

13 The recent francophone Cajun literature, inaugurated by the anthology *Cris sur le bayou: naissance d'une poésie cadienne* in 1980, continues the

French Creole literary tradition of the nineteenth century.

14 According to Jeffrey C. Alexander, "[c]ultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander 1).

15 The origin of *Acadie* might be an amalgamation of two versions: the first mentions *Arcadia*, a name given by Giovanni da Verrazano presumably because of the place's likeness to the ideal, utopian landscape of Arcadia in Greek mythology. Another version refers to the Mi'kmaq suffix *-akadie* present in a number of other place names in the Maritime Provinces (cf. Tracadie, Shubenacadie) and meaning "place of abundance" (Faragher 97).

16 The Seven Years' War in Europe.

17 The War of the Spanish Succession in Europe.

18 As an imaginary space, Acadia today exists in Cajun Country and in Maine in the United States; in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island in Canada; in South America and the Falkland Islands (Hodson 4). Despite this fragmentation, the population living in what used to be Acadia expresses a strong national sentiment. According to Jean-Paul Hautecœur's *L'Acadie du discours* (1975), Acadia has a strong presence in political and historical discourses (of the 1960s and 1970s specifically) which proves a distinct Acadian ideology (cf. Hautecœur).

19 The Mi'kmaq.

20 "… each line is by itself and rushes down with a doleful decadence that in a short time carries the reader's courage along with it" (P. 1848: 161).

21 This holds for Canada, too, where the story of Evangeline was used by the Catholic Church for propaganda purposes to portray a negative and terrifying anglophone culture endangering the souls of the noble and defenseless Acadians (Chiasson 149).

22 Griffiths points out that the literary debate on the historical truth of *Evangeline* was not just one between historians and scholars (Francis Parkman published *Montcalm and Wolfe* in 1884). She places the argument in the context of a growing Acadian nationalism which was sparked primarily by three national conventions held from 1881 to 1890 in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia (1982: 35).

23 Among others Abbé Raynal's Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes (1766) and Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1829).

24 Assmann calls this “communicative memory” as opposed to “cultural memory” (Assmann 36).

25 An allusion to Henry III and Henry IV, and probably to the Wars of Religion, known as The War of the Three Henrys.

26 The term was first used by Acadians of the Beaubassin region in 1773 (LeBlanc 12-13).

27 “Manifest Destiny,” a phrase first used by John L. O'Sullivan in 1845, refers to the nineteenth-century belief that the United States' mission was to expand throughout the North American continent. In an article in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* O'Sullivan expounded on the necessity of annexing Texas, emphasizing “our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our early multiplying millions” (O'Sullivan 5).

28 Evangeline is a paradoxical figure: while she represents the passive Acadians, leaving Acadia without a fight, she also has the – for an eighteenth-century woman – uncommon spirit of a pioneer and courageous adventurer.

29 As a result of the French and Indian War, France ceded French Louisiana west of the Mississippi to Spain in 1762.

30 Spain had secretly retroceded the Louisiana Territory to France with the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800 (Rodriguez 207).

31 Many sources, including Perrin's book, give a slightly different version: “We are now hatching the noble and great project of banishing the French Neutrals from this province; they have ever been our secret enemies and have encouraged the Indians to cut our throats. If we can accomplish this expulsion, it will have been one of the greatest deeds the English in America have achieved; for among other considerations, the part of the country which they occupy is one of the best soils in the world, and in the event, we might place some good farmers on their homesteads” (Perrin 2004: 20). Acadian historian Édouard Richard was the first of several historians to attribute this statement to Colonel John Winslow in his *Acadia: Missing Links of a Lost Chapter in American History* (1895), but he does not document it.

Faragher only found anonymous entries in colonial newspapers and stresses that the author remains unknown (525).

32 The well-known political cartoon "Join, or Die" by Benjamin Franklin was published in 1754. That same year, the Albany Congress, projecting a governmental union of the colonies to improve relations with the French and Native Americans, was rejected by the legislatures of the colonies, thus straining the colonies' relations with the mother country.

33 With the publication of Felix Voorhies' *Acadian Reminiscences: The True Story of Evangeline* in 1907, the veneration of Evangeline in Louisiana gained momentum. Assuring the reader of the authenticity of his grandmother's account (an Acadian exile who adopted Evangeline as a young orphan), Voorhies claimed that Evangeline's real name was actually Emmeline Labiche while Gabriel was in reality Louis Arceneaux. In contrast to the Longfellow ending, Emmeline finds Gabriel in Louisiana, but he is married to another woman. She dies of a broken heart and is allegedly buried under an oak tree – the Evangeline Oak Tree in St. Martinville. As the rise of "Evangeline" in company names in the early twentieth century shows, there developed a strong Evangeline cult. A parish founded in 1910 (Istra), a town, and a brand of bread were named after her. "Evangeline" as ethic code was also fostered by the release of the silent movie *Evangeline* starring Dolores del Rio in 1929 who posed for the statue of Evangeline in St. Martinville, Louisiana (Ancelet). The Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site founded in 1934 in St. Martinville is the first state park in Louisiana and invites visitors to explore the place's Acadian and Creole past. In the 1930s, Louisiana State Senator Dudley J. Leblanc took "Evangeline girls," girls and young women clad in Acadian costumes, on pilgrimages to Nova Scotia. This cult found its apex in the Bicentennial Celebration of the *Grand Dérangement* in 1955.

34 Almost five months after the deportation order was issued in July.

35 Benedict Anderson notes how discoverers and colonizers named newly discovered spaces by using the name of the mother country or hometown and adding the epithet "new" to symbolize continuity. Thus, it was possible to "feel connected to certain regions or communities, thousands of miles away…" (Anderson 187-192).

36 Beausoleil's presence, certainly because of his status as American emigrant, seems to be more conspicuous in Louisiana than in the Maritime Provinces. During the 400th anniversary celebration of the founding of *Acadie*, the *Société nationale de l'Acadie*, which promotes and protects the

rights and interests of the Acadians of Atlantic Canada gave special attention to Pierre du Gua, Sieur de Mons and founder of Acadia (Rudin 2), and not to Beausoleil, presumably because he was not representative for the English Canadians. Nonetheless, Beausoleil's figure has a significant cultural impact on Canadian-Acadian culture, given that he appears as character in several books by Acadian authors as, for instance, in Antonine Maillet's *Pélagie-la-Charrette* (1970), J. Alphones Deveau's *Le Chef des Acadiens* (1980), or Claude LeBouthilier's *Le Feu des mauvais temps* (1989) (Perrin 59).

37 Evidence for Beausoleil's marketability was given by African American singer Beyoncé Knowles who created some ado when she revealed her Beausoleil lineage (HNE).

38 Another Louisiana attorney, Shane P. Landry, supported Perrin's efforts in an unpublished document entitled "Justice pour l'Acadie" in 2001. In an epigraph preceding the text – a quote from Genesis 4, 9-10, where God blames Cain for having killed his brother Abel – Landry implicitly compares the *Grand Gérangement* to a fratricide (Landry).

39 Withough denying Ostendorf's argument, I would argue that there are undercurrents of a Cajun cultural nationalism in the works by Cajun authors and artists which have emerged since the 1980s. Special focus lies on the geographic space of Cajun Country, Cajun folk traditions such as music and food, and the connection to a wider space such as to the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and France.

40 According to Jerry Z. Muller " [t]he core of the ethnonationalist idea is that nations are defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry" (Muller).

41 A Canadian conservative political party that existed from 2000-2003. In 2003 the Canadian Alliance merged with the Progressive Conservative Party resulting in the Conservative Party of Canada (Harrison).

English

One of the most prominent characteristics of the collective memory of the Cajuns in Louisiana today is the reference to the traumatic events surrounding the dispersal of their Acadian ancestors in 1755, commonly known as the *Grand Dérangement*. The colonial New England press at the time considered the relocation "a great and noble scheme" and "one of the greatest things that ever the English did in America." Since the Acadians were British subjects by virtue of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, the comparison to a fratricide inevitably suggests itself here. Actually, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* of 1847, published almost a hundred years after the expulsion, provides a good example of Benedict Anderson's notion of a "reassuring fratricide" as it romanticizes the fateful expulsion. And yet, the proliferation of revisionist considerations of the Acadian diaspora since the turn of the twenty-first century, as for instance *Acadian Redemption: From Beausoleil Broussard to the Queen's Royal Proclamation* (2004) by Cajun cultural activist Warren A. Perrin, indicates that the historical *Grand Dérangement* in contrast to its presentation in *Evangeline* is very much present in the memory of the Cajuns. The biography by Perrin recounts the circumstances of the deportation and describes his fight on behalf of all the Acadian descendants to obtain an apology from Queen Elizabeth II to acknowledge the injustice done to the Acadians. It seems, therefore, that the *Grand Dérangement* has a haunting presence for the Cajun community and is far from being forgotten. This article explores the symbolic character of the *Grand Dérangement* in the collective memory of the Cajuns as well as its repercussions in today's Cajun culture.

Français

L'une des caractéristiques les plus marquantes de la mémoire collective des Cadiens d'aujourd'hui est l'allusion aux événements traumatiques suivant l'expulsion de leurs ancêtres acadiens en 1755, événement connu depuis sous le nom de Grand Dérangement. La presse coloniale en Nouvelle Angleterre considérait à l'époque cette expulsion comme « un projet grand et noble » et « l'une des meilleures choses que les Anglais aient faite en Amérique jusqu'à présent ». Vu que les Acadiens étaient sujets britanniques de plein droit depuis le Traité d'Utrecht de 1713, on est amené à comparer cet acte à un fratricide. D'ailleurs, le poème épique *Evangeline : A Tale of Acadie* de Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, publié en 1847, presque cent ans après l'expulsion, offre un bon exemple de « fratricide rassurant », pour reprendre l'expression de Benedict Anderson, car il romantise l'expulsion fatale. Toutefois, la prolifération des révisions historiques sur la diaspora acadienne depuis le début du vingt-et-unième siècle, comme par exemple *Acadian Redemption: From Beausoleil Broussard to the Queen's Royal Proclamation* (2004), écrit par Warren A. Perrin, un activiste culturel cadien, indique que le Grand Dérangement historique, par rapport au mythe d'*Evangeline*, est bel et bien présent dans la mémoire des Cadiens. L'œuvre traite des circonstances de la déportation et décrit le combat de l'auteur au nom de tous les Acadiens et son effort pour obtenir des excuses de la part de la Reine Elizabeth II pour les injustices commises. Il semble alors que le Grand Dérangement ait une présence lancinante dans la communauté cadienne et qu'il soit bien loin d'être tombé dans l'oubli. Cet article explore le caractère symbolique du Grand Dérangement dans la mémoire collective des Cadiens ainsi que ses répercussions dans la culture cadienne d'aujourd'hui.

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