"Le monde qu'on connaît": The Music of *1755* and the Construction of Acadian Identity

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Abstract

This thesis explores the role of popular music in articulating socio-cultural identities by examining the contribution of the Acadian group, 1755. As the rapid modernization of Acadians' way of life led to a sense of cultural alienation, cultural products played a prominent role in asserting their cultural specificity. Accordingly, the 1970s were not only rich in artistic production, but also saw the development of a distinctive Acadian popular music practice. Responding to fears of acculturation and folklorization, Acadian popular music embodied Acadians' desire to embrace a modern identity all the while maintaining ties with their traditional identity. 1755's music actively took part in reinventing Acadian identity by constructing a cultural narrative that reflected Acadians' contemporary reality and by renegotiating what was commonly held as "Acadian" music. As a result, it became invested with ideological significance by Acadian consumers, regarded not merely as commercial music but rather as a symbol of their cultural emancipation.

Sommaire

Cette thèse se propose d'étudier le rôle de la musique populaire dans la construction identitaire en examinant la contribution musicale du groupe acadien, 1755. La modernisation rapide du mode de vie des Acadiens ayant mené à un sentiment d'aliénation culturelle, les produits culturels ont permis aux Acadiens à affirmer leur spécificité culturelle. Conséquemment, les années 1970 constituèrent non seulement une période riche en production artistique, mais on y a aussi vu le développement d'une pratique de musique populaire propre aux Acadiens. En réaction à des craintes d'acculturation et de folklorisation, la musique populaire acadienne démontre la volonté des Acadiens d'accéder à une identité moderne sans complètement délaisser leur identité traditionnelle. La musique de 1755 a grandement contribué à la réinvention de l'identité acadienne en construisant un récit qui reflétait la réalité contemporaine des Acadiens et en renégociant ce qu'on considérait comme étant une musique « acadienne ». Ainsi, les consommateurs acadiens accordèrent une importance idéologique à cette musique qu'ils percevaient non comme une musique commerciale proprement dite, mais plutôt comme un symbole de leur émancipation culturelle.

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Introduction

A particularly interesting relationship exists between artistic production and the cultural identity of French-speaking inhabitants of Canada's Maritime Provinces, also known as Acadians. Officially Canadian citizens, Acadians have always seen themselves as a distinctive ethno-linguistic group, the descendants of the first group of French settlers to arrive in Canada. Like other French-Canadian communities, they remain a linguistic and cultural minority within the context of Canada.[1] As Acadians were only recently officially recognized as a distinct linguistic community,[2] Acadian artistic products are not only evidence of their cultural existence, but also play a prominent role in conveying a sense of collective identity.

Music as a cultural activity is capable of constructing, disseminating, and even transforming identity. In some cases, it reflects and reinforces pre-existing notions of identity. In others, it challenges established cultural narratives and even offers new

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1. According to the 2001 Census, approximately 32.88% of New Brunswick's population reported French as being their mother-tongue. Francophones represent 3.79% of Nova Scotia's population, and 4.25% of Prince Edward Island's population. See "Population by Mother Tongue, by Provinces and Territories," Statistics Canada, Census of Population, http://www.statcan.ca/, accessed August 1, 2005.

2. In New Brunswick, the *Official Languages Act of New Brunswick* of 1969 was the first constitutional document to mention the existence of Acadians, while the 1981 *Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick* officially recognized Acadians as a distinct linguistic community. Recognition for Acadian communities in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island was guaranteed by the passing of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* in 1982. See Michel Bastarache and Andréa Boudreau Ouellette, "The Linguistic and Cultural Rights of Acadians," in *Acadia of the Maritimes: Thematic Studies from the Beginning to the Present*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Chaire d'études acadiennes, Université de Moncton, 1995), 371-414.

understandings of identity. The particular strength of music in communicating identity lies in its ability to provide, as Martin Stokes argues, "a powerful affective experience in which social identity is literally 'embodied.'"[3] Therefore, it becomes a powerful cultural tool for groups in need to assert, define or even reinvent their identity.

Though topics pertaining to identity are frequently encountered in studies on Acadian culture, scholars have yet to address the relationship between music and identity. Furthermore, the limited research dealing with Acadian music has overlooked recorded, or "popular," music. According to literary scholar Maurice Lamothe, two factors account for the lack of serious scholarship investigating Acadian popular music (or what he terms "la chanson acadienne"). First of all, the "chanson acadienne" is perceived as an extension of the chanson québécoise even though both groups are considered separate cultures. The second factor is related to a prejudice regarding the value of popular music, or the idea that its content is dictated by the industry.[4] What both these arguments overlook is what this music practice may represent for Acadians, namely, its *symbolic* function. Acadian popular music constructs imaginary narratives that resonate with listeners who identify themselves as Acadians. What it "sells" is the experience of identity.

In an initial effort towards correcting this imbalance, this thesis addresses the role of Acadian popular music in the construction and dissemination of identity by examining the music of the Acadian group, 1755. The group, based in Moncton, New Brunswick,

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3. Martin Stokes, "Introduction," in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. Martin Stokes (Oxford and Providence, RI: Berg Publishers, 1994), 12.

4. Maurice Lamothe, "Modernité et identité: Vers une étude de la chanson acadienne au Canada (de 1970 à 1990)," in *Métamorphoses et avatars littéraires dans la francophonie canadienne,* ed. Louis Bélanger (Vanier: Éditions l'interligne, 2000), 73.

emerged in 1976. An appearance on an episode of Radio Canada's *Les Beaux dimanches* entitled *Ode à l'Acadie* led to a record contract with Presqu'île, a record label based in Montreal. They recorded two albums on that label: their self-titled debut album, *1755*, released in 1978 and *Vivre à la baie*, released the following year. They were immensely popular among the Acadian public, and also appealed to other Canadian francophone communities. In 1979, they won the "Palme d'or" for best song performance at the *Festival international de la francophonie* which took place in Nice, France. In 1982, despite the departure of one of their members, they recorded a third and final album, *Synergie*, which was entirely produced in Moncton. Their final project was the organization of a concert in honour of the 200th anniversary of the foundation of New Brunswick and the 100th anniversary of the Acadian flag, entitled *100 pour 200*. Eleven performers took part in the large-scale production, and a total of 25 shows were presented in the Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario. The group dismantled after the final concert.

The second phase of 1755's career began in 1994 with a reunion concert presented in the context of the first *Congrès mondial acadien*.[5] Almost ten thousand spectators attended the show, and 1755 became the first francophone group to fill the Moncton Coliseum to its maximum capacity. They also re-released their two first albums in CD format (which sold over 30 000 copies in one month).[6] They continue to perform occasionally but have yet to release any new material.[7]

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5. The purpose of the *Congrès mondial acadien*, which was held in Southeastern New Brunswick during the first two weeks of August, was to bring together Acadians from around the world through a series of conventions, conferences, concerts and "family" reunions.

6. Their third album was re-released in CD format in 1999 with a new title, *Yousque t'es rendu?*

7. Robert Duguay, *L'épopée 1755* (Moncton: Les éditions de la francophonie, 2002).

The decision to study 1755's music was based on the fact that they occupy an interesting, and I would argue privileged, position within the field of Acadian popular music. Unlike other members of the first generation of Acadian popular musicians, what distinguishes 1755 is their ongoing popularity more than twenty-five years after the release of their last album. They have been called the Acadian Beatles,[8] "the most important musical group Acadia has known," [9] and their music has been qualified as Acadia's "next folklore."[10] They have become cultural icons, their music synonymous with what is understood to be "Acadian" popular music.

More importantly, their music both embodies the struggle Acadians faced during the 1970s to maintain a distinct identity, and actively participates in *reinventing* this identity. Until the 1960s, the cultural identity of Acadians was relatively stable, mainly defined by their religious and linguistic heritage, as well as by traditional occupations, lifestyles, and values. Beginning in 1960, the government of Louis J. Robichaud (the first Acadian to be elected as New Brunswick's Premier) began modernizing economic and social institutions of Acadian society in order to improve conditions in these regions (which were under-developed compared to other areas in Canada). However, the radical lifestyle changes experienced by Acadians led to a sense of alienation from their traditional way of life, and cultural practices formed a prominent response in redefining their identity. Not only was there an explosion of artistic production by Acadian artists during the 1970s, but most of these artists displayed an explicitly Acadian content. For

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8. Christian Paquin, "Tout simplement 1755," *Ven'd'est* no. 53 (1993): 46. The passage reads: "Dans le coeur des Acadiens, 1755 a passé à l'histoire au même titre que les Beatles."

9. Herménégilde Chiasson, liner notes for 1755, *Vivre à la baie*, Isba ISB CD 5004, 1994, compact disc.

10. *Ibid.*

Acadians, the field of artistic production became a site of negotiation in which maintaining ties with their traditional character vied with the desire to embrace a modern identity.

The advent of mass communications, particularly radio and television networks destined for consumption by a large audience, established popular music from the United States and Britain as a dominant musical culture. The hegemony of Anglo-American popular music implemented a series of conventions that determined not only how "popular" music should sound – conventions of musical style – but also the manner in which it should be produced, distributed and consumed. In order to compete with the dominant music market, domestic music traditions such as Acadian music found themselves constantly struggling between preserving local idioms and embracing more universal music conventions, in other words between the development of an autonomous music practice and the integration into the field of large-scale production.[11]

The field of Acadian popular music is characterized by tensions between the desire to preserve an oral tradition of Acadian music and the need to create a product that has widespread appeal. Emerging at a time when Acadians were struggling to maintain a distinct identity all the while taking part in a larger, global culture, the development of Acadian popular music allowed them to eradicate fears of acculturation and folklorization, fears brought about by the rapid modernization of their society. As it was perceived as a modern yet distinct cultural practice, it became a symbol of their cultural vitality, or, in other words, of their "modernity."

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11. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

By examining 1755's music, I will argue that the musical text itself bears the trace of these tensions. I will illustrate how their lyrics contributed to the reinvention of Acadian identity by constructing a narrative that reflected the reality of the time rather than focusing on a mythical past and/or traditional way of life, as was generally the case with other Acadian cultural products. I will also demonstrate how they expanded what was commonly considered "Acadian" music by incorporating elements associated with traditional Acadian music into a popular music idiom.

Chapter one attempts to define and contextualize Acadian identity. It presents the factors that contributed to the emergence of a distinct identity and the nature of this "traditional" identity. It then discusses how the advent of modernity brought Acadians to challenge traditional cultural narratives and to reinvent their identity. Overall, it illustrates the struggle Acadians faced to maintain a distinct identity and at the same time take part in a larger, global culture.

Chapter two addresses the emergence of Acadian popular music. It illustrates how the diffusion of Anglo-American popular music transformed domestic music traditions, leading to the development of a distinct Acadian popular music practice. It also considers the role of music in the construction and dissemination of a collective Acadian identity, and how it contributed to reinventing their identity.

Chapter three explores 1755's lyrics. It takes into account the reception of their music and the particular attention critics devoted to addressing the song's lyrical content, arguing that 1755 "authentically" portrayed Acadian life. It also analyzes the use of identity markers in their lyrics, examining both identity markers inherent in the language of the lyrics as well as those incorporated into the song's text.

Chapter four examines 1755's music, or the details of musical style. It demonstrates how their music expanded the horizon of what was generally conceived as "Acadian" music by combining codes associated with both traditional Acadian music and Anglo-American popular music.

This thesis inadvertently focuses on New Brunswick Acadians, particularly those who reside in South-Eastern New Brunswick. I am aware that the arguments this thesis develops do not always explicitly consider the different realities between New Brunswick Acadians, who compose one third of the province's population, and Acadians living in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, who live in isolated communities. Nevertheless, I believe that even though the impact of the group 1755 was perhaps greater in New Brunswick, the conclusions drawn in this thesis are relevant on some level to all Acadians living in the Maritime Provinces, though perhaps to varying degrees.

Chapter One

Acadian Identity

Acadians are a group of people who regard themselves as culturally homogeneous. The individuals who are part of this community share a collective *identity* – a set of unique characteristics that sets them apart from other communities. When Stuart Hall writes that "identities are constructed through, not outside, difference,"[12] he is emphasizing the fluidity of identity. Acadian identity – and this applies to any other category of identity, both individual and collective – is no longer perceived by cultural theorists as something stable, as some sort of essence that transcend time. Rather, what is held in common by Acadians is constantly changing. The notion of a fixed identity has been replaced by the concept of process, viewed as something that is always "becoming" rather than "being." Therefore, understanding the nature of Acadian identity requires it to be contextualized.

This chapter examines how Acadians came to see themselves as a distinct community as well as the events that shaped and transformed their identity. The foundation of Acadian institutions, the establishment of a collective memory through historiography, and the development of a nationalist discourse with the National Conventions of the 1880s and 1890s all contributed to the construction and dissemination of a distinctive Acadian identity. The advent of modernity, understood as the moment when Acadian society made its transition from a traditional to a modern society (a

12. Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs "Identity"?," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul de Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 3.

process which largely occurred during the 1960s and 1970s), challenged their traditional identity. The radical lifestyle changes brought on by rapid rates of industrialization and urbanization gave way to a sense of cultural alienation, and cultural practices allowed Acadians to both redefine their cultural identity and preserve a sense of community.

Historical Events: 1604-1860

In 1604, Samuel de Champlain, Jean de Poutraincourt, and Pierre du Gua, Sieur de Monts, arrived on St Croix Island and founded Acadia, the first French colony in North America.[13] The colony was traded back and forth between France and Great Britain several times between 1604 and 1713, at which time it officially became the property of Great Britain.[14] When tensions began to rise between France and England, tensions that would give way to the Seven Years War, Acadians were asked to pledge their allegiance to the British Crown. They negotiated an agreement stipulating that they would remain neutral in any eventual conflict between France and Britain but refused to pledge their allegiance to the British Crown. After the eruption of the French and Indian War (1754-1763),[15] British Loyalists began deporting Acadians in 1755.

Following the end of the War in 1763, Acadians were granted permission to return to Acadia in 1764. However, the Treaty of Paris stipulated that they could not repossess their former lands which were now reserved for newly arriving British settlers,

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13. For more information on Acadian history, consult Nicholas Landry and Nicole Lang, *Histoire de l'Acadie* (Sillery, Quebec: Septentrion, 2001).

14. According to Article 12 of the Treaty of Utrecht, Great Britain acquired three territories from France: Hudson Bay, Newfoundland, and Acadia.

15. The French and Indian War (1754-1763) is the North American counterpart of the Seven Years War between France and Britain (1756-1763).

and were ordered to disperse into small communities. In addition, an oath repudiating the Catholic faith was imposed on all persons who wished to participate in public affairs. The person taking the Sermon of Test declared his allegiance to the British crown, renounced the spiritual authority of the Pope, recognizing instead the British monarch as spiritual leader, and rejected the sacrament of the Eucharist. Designed to prevent Acadians as well as other Catholics from taking part in public life and politics, the Sermon of Test was imposed to all individuals working in civil service until 1810, and remained mandatory for those entering Parliament until 1830.

As a result of their political and religious segregation, Acadians settled away from their "enemies," many of them moving to New Brunswick.[16] By distancing themselves from British settlers, Acadians were able to maintain and protect their French-Catholic heritage as well as develop a distinct culture based on their traditional values and strong sense of community.

The Birth of an "Imagined Community"[17]: 1860-1881

a) Institutional Development

Sir John A. MacDonald's project to unite Canada, first politically with the Confederation Act of 1867, and then physically with the construction of a transcontinental railway, made it more difficult for Acadians to avoid contact with Anglophone communities. However, these two events also brought together dispersed Acadian communities and

16. Before the vast migration of British Loyalists following the end of the American War of Independence (1776-1783), New Brunswick, which was officially founded in 1784, was barely populated.

17. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

contributed to the development of a collective identity. Acadians began establishing institutions that would not only protect their interests, but also cultivate a sense of unity.

From the middle of the nineteenth century until the 1960s, the Catholic Church was one of the most influential institutions in the emerging Acadian society, and it played a prominent role in the institutional development of Acadia. Among other things, Acadian clergy established a series of Classical Colleges. Saint-Thomas Seminary, the first Acadian Classical College, opened in Memramcook, NB in 1854, becoming the first French-catholic post-secondary institution outside Quebec. Its existence was short-lived due to financial difficulties and consequently, it closed its doors in 1862. It re-opened two years later under the name of Collège Saint-Joseph and remained open until it became l'Université de Moncton in 1963. The presence of this college and others[18] made post-secondary education more accessible to Acadians and contributed to the development of an educated bourgeoisie.

The new elite (with the support of the Clergy) developed a number of Acadian newspapers. Founded in 1867, the weekly newspaper *le Moniteur acadien* remained in print until 1926, bearing the motto "Notre langue, notre religion, nos coutumes" [Our language, our religion, our customs]. Others followed, the most important being *l'Évangéline* (1887-1982) which became the first Acadian daily newspaper in 1949.[19] Benedict Anderson illustrates how print capitalism developed a general consciousness

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18. Other institutions included the Collège Saint-Louis in Saint-Louis, NB (1874-1882), Collège Sainte-Anne in Pointe-de-l'église, NS (1899-present; known today as the Université Sainte-Anne), and finally the Collège Sacré-Coeur in Caraquet (1899-1963, although it moved to Bathurst in 1916). The Collège Saint-Joseph opened a wing for women in 1943, which was then moved to Moncton, while only one other college for women existed, the Collège Maillet in Saint-Basile, NB.

19. For more information on the development of Acadian media and its role in the construction of identity, consult Gérard Beaulieu, ed., *L'Évangéline: Entre l'élite et le peuple* (Moncton: Éditions d'Acadie, 1997).

among individuals that they were part of an "imagined community."[20] Likewise the establishment of "Acadian" newspapers significantly contributed to the dissemination of a distinct cultural identity.

b) Acadian Historiography

Ironically, the first efforts of constructing Acadian identity through historiography and literature were produced by two non-Acadians. The works of French historiographer Edme Rameau de Saint-Père and American writer Henry Wadsworth Longellow were the first authors to portray a single Acadian people unified by their common heritage, tradition, and culture.

Rameau traveled to North America in order to study the French colonies and published the first French-language studies of Acadian history. He published two works: *La France aux colonies: Études sur le développement de la race française hors de l'Europe: Les Français en Amérique: Acadiens et Canadiens* [France's Colonies: A Study of the Development of the French Race Outside Europe: the French in America: Acadians and Canadians], first published in 1859,[21] and *Une colonie féodale en Amérique: L'Acadie* [A Feudal Colony in America: Acadia], published in 1877.[22]

A traditionalist, Rameau's work was motivated by his reaction against the industrial revolution that was sweeping through Europe. He idealized values and structures of feudal society, such as community, religion, and social class, and

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20. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 44.

21. Edme Rameau de Saint-Père, *La France aux colonie : Etudes sur le développement de la race française hors de l'Europe: Les Français en Amérique: Acadiens et Canadiens* (Paris : A. Jouby, 1859).

22. Edme Rameau de Saint-Père, *Une colonie féodale en Amérique: l'Acadie* (Paris : Plon, 1889, first published in 1877).

condemned post-Enlightenment ideas of reason, individualism, freedom and equality, arguing that they destroyed the foundations of traditional society. Disillusioned by the disintegration of France's Old Regime following the Revolution, Rameau came to Acadia in order to study the situation of the French colonies. He saw in Acadia the "debris" of France's Old Regime and depicted Acadians as maintainers of a traditional and Catholic culture. He believed that he had found in Acadia an example of a working traditional society founded on religion and community.[23]

Rameau described Acadians as devout and humble, as a morally superior people who, unlike others, had resisted the materialistic corruption of capitalism and who, regardless of their tragic history, had never lost their Catholic faith. In his work, he suggests that Acadians should protect and maintain their distinctive culture by becoming a self-sufficient society and proposed that they cultivate their specificity through demographic growth, economic autonomy (basing their economy on agriculture), and the development of an Acadian clergy and institutions.[24]

In 1847, Longfellow wrote *Évangéline: A Tale of Acadia.* The epic poem tells the story of a young Acadian woman, Évangéline, who was separated from her lover, Gabriel, during the Deportation. She spends most of her life trying to find him, searching throughout the English colonies. They are finally reunited at the end of their lives when she finds Gabriel in Louisiana during his final hours on earth.

The poem was received in Acadia sometime between 1865 and 1887, following its first North American translation in French by Pamphile Le May, which was published

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23. Greg Allain, Isabelle McKee-Allain, and Joseph-Yvon Thériault, "Acadian Society: Interpretations and Conjunctures," in *Acadia of the Maritimes*, 333.

24. *Ibid.*, 333.

in Quebec in 1865.[25] Naomi Griffiths explains that Longfellow's narrative resonated with the Acadian elite, describing Acadians as "a simple, devout and prosperous people, whose community was unwarrantedly and brutally destroyed by the English. This disaster [the Deportation] was accepted by Longfellow's Acadians with stoic calm, Christian fortitude and resignation."[26] The romanticized account of the Deportation made *Évangéline* a powerful cultural tool to convey a sense of shared tradition. By using the poem as teaching material in classes of the newly emerging Acadian colleges and by distributing it early issues of the *Moniteur Acadien*, it not only established a collective memory, but also defined Acadian identity.[27]

c) The Institutionalization of Identity: The National Conventions

In 1880, one hundred Acadians were invited to attend the annual congress of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society in Quebec, a society whose mandate was to protect French language and Catholic religion. This event inspired them to organize a convention that would allow them to openly discuss issues pertaining to Acadian society.

The first Acadian "National Convention" took place in Memramcook during July of 1881. A few hundred men participated in a series of conferences, discussing topics ranging from problems with agriculture and emigration to the development and/or improvement of an Acadian education system, media network, and clergy. Delegates also selected a "national" holiday. Although there was a possibility of sharing Quebec's

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25. Naomi Griffiths, "Longellow's "Evangeline": The Birth and Acceptance of a Legend," *Acadienisis* 11, no. 2 (1982): 35.

26. *Ibid.*, 29.

27. *Ibid.*, 36.

national holiday, Saint-Jean Baptiste Day (June 24), they chose their own specific holiday, the Feast of the Assumption, which is celebrated on August 15.

Even though only a small percentage of Acadians took part in the actual convention, over 5 000 people attended both the Mass and picnic, illustrating that the nationalist discourse developed by the elite was on some level reaching the masses who were now also considering themselves as part of this distinct group. The event was such a success that other national conventions followed at irregular intervals between 1884 and 1908.[28] The selection of national symbols was completed at the second National Convention, at which time they chose a flag, the French tricolore with a yellow star in the upper-left-hand corner, an anthem, the religious hymn *Ave Marie Stella*, and a motto, "L'Union fait la force" [Strength in unity].

The Transformation of Acadian Identity: 1960-1980

a) Institutional Reforms and Cultural Equality

The processes that transformed Acadian society from a traditional to a modern society mostly occurred during the 1960s. The past century had been devoted to the development of a self-sufficient traditional society, thus allowing Acadians to conserve their language and culture despite their minority status. By the middle of the twentieth century, Acadian regions were economically underdeveloped compared to non-Acadian areas in the Maritimes. Alain Evan argued that the difficulty in adapting to a capitalist economy was caused by a "cultural lag." Their traditional and Catholic values had influenced their

28. Other conventions were held in 1884 (Miscouche, PEI), 1890 (Pointe-de-l'église, NS), 1900 (Arichat, NS), 1905 (Caraquet, NB), and 1908 (Saint-Basile, NB).

entrepreneurial behaviour, and their institutions were managed by an elite who lacked entrepreneurial spirit,[29] giving way to what he calls a "culture of poverty."[30] "The Church and public figures, who were the only people with a certain amount of capital, had traditionally opted for non-productive activities."[31] In response, the discourse of the 1960s would revolve around achieving cultural equality between both linguistic communities of New Brunswick.

In 1960, Louis J. Robichaud became the first Acadian elected as Premier of New Brunswick. During the course of his ten-year mandate, he attempted to reduce the inequalities between rich and poor by developing a program called "Chances égales pour tous" [Equal Opportunities]. The series of reforms implemented by the program ensured that financial resources would be evenly distributed to all municipalities. Furthermore, by having the province assume the responsibility of institutions that were previously managed by the private sector, institutions such as healthcare, education, justice and welfare, it ensured services of equal quality to all residents of New Brunswick, whether Acadian or Anglophone, living in rural areas or cities.

Aside from the Equal Opportunities program, the Robichaud government was responsible for the foundation of l'Université de Moncton. Following the recommendation put forth by the Deutsch Commission,[32] l'Université de Moncton was founded in 1963 by uniting three pre-existing classical colleges: the Collège Saint-

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29. Alain Even, "Le territoire pilote du Nouveau-Brunswick ou les blocages culturels au développement économique; contribution à une analyse socio-économique du développement" (Ph.D. diss., Faculté de droit et de sciences économiques, Université de Rennes, 1970), 396.

30. *Ibid.*, 327.

31. *Ibid.*, 355.

32. John J. Deutsch, *Report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education in New Brunswick* (Fredericton, June 1962).

Joseph, the Collège Saint-Louis, and the Collège Sacré-Coeur. The presence of a French-language university in New Brunswick improved the quality of post-secondary education for Francophones and made it more accessible to Acadians.

The final major contribution of the Robichaud government was the passing of a law protecting the linguistic rights of Francophones. The *Official Languages of New Brunswick Act* was passed in 1969 (the same year as the *Official Languages Act of Canada*), making New Brunswick the only officially bilingual province of Canada. Although it was interpreted by some as a positive step towards achieving cultural equality, it was also widely criticized by others who argued that it was too weak. The Act recognized both English and French as official languages in New Brunswick, but only applied to three sectors: provincial services, education, and justice. The adoption of bilingualism on a municipal level was not mandatory, while there were no sanctions for those who neglected to abide by the Act.[33] Furthermore, most articles were only implemented in 1977, eight years after the initial passing of the law.

Though the advent of modernity significantly improved the living standards of Acadians, it also put an end to their traditional way of life. Although the goal of the Equal Opportunities program was to ensure an equal quality of life to both linguistic communities, Acadians inadvertently lost the power to control their own institutions, which would now be managed by a primarily Anglophone government. If their own institutions were no longer capable of ensuring the protection of their identity, they became even more vulnerable to assimilation and acculturation. On the other hand, as university training became more accessible to Acadians, it gave way to a young,

33. Michel Bastarache and Andréa Boudrea Ouellet, "The Linguistic and Cultural Rights of Acadians: From 1713 to the Present," in *Acadia of the Maritimes*, 410-411.

intellectual class, who would criticize the liberalist discourse of the 1960s, arguing that the only way Acadians were to attain true equal status would be by re-gaining control of their institutions. Thus, the discourse of the 1970s, often referred to as the "neo-nationalist" discourse, would focus on affirming their cultural specificity.

b) The Critical Period or Cultural Difference

The efforts of the 1960s to achieve equality between both linguistic communities of New Brunswick had failed to recognize the distinct status of Acadians. Accordingly, the 1970s were devoted to cultivating their specificity and to establishing autonomous institutions that would be able to protect their culture. Beginning as a period of protest and contestation during which students emerging from l'Université de Moncton developed an alternative discourse challenging traditional cultural narratives, it became one of the most prosperous periods of contemporary Acadian history.

The first manifestation of cultural dissent occurred during the *Ralliement de la jeunesse Acadienne*, a youth rally which took place in April 1966 at the Collège Saint-Joseph.[34] The event, held by the Société Nationale Acadienne (one of the staple organizations of the Acadian elite), was organized in order to allow the traditional elite and the young "intellectual" elite to discuss issues pertaining to Acadian society. Unofficially, the purpose of the Rally was to recruit new members and ensure the future of the SNA. The youth attending the Rally took advantage of the opportunity to voice their opinion on the current state of Acadian society and its leaders. They criticized the nationalist "ideology" proclaimed by the elite, arguing that their nationalist discourse,

34. For more information on the Ralliement de la Jeunesse Acadienne, consult chapter 4 of Jean-Paul Hautecoeur, *L'Acadie du discous: Pour une sociologie de la culture acadienne* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1975), 196-245.

which had not changed since its establishment during the National Conventions at the end of the nineteenth century, was largely outdated and reflected the interests of the elite more so than those of the masses.[35] They also requested the retirement of traditional symbols of identity, such as the flag, national holiday, and anthem.[36]

Although the Rally in itself failed to establish a coherent discourse that would replace the dominant cultural narrative, it marked the beginning of the "neo-nationalist" period. In February 1968, the students enrolled at l'Université de Moncton held a strike in order to protest an increase in tuition.[37] The conflict quickly went beyond the issue of tuition and the students began calling into question the social inequities between both linguistic communities.[38] At the Rally, the criticism had revolved around an outdated "traditional Acadia." The students, echoing the critiques of the Rally, found a culprit for the problems Acadian society was facing: the traditional elite and the provincial government.[39] They blamed the traditional elite for perpetuating the unequal power relations. The discourse of the traditional elite and its most important source of power, the Robichaud government, had encouraged Acadians to take part in civil affairs as "equal citizens," promoting tolerance and understanding between both cultural groups. The students argued that this "integrationist" view maintained Acadians in a state of

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35. Hautecoeur, *L'Acadie du discours*, 216.

36. *Ibid.*, 214.

37. The student protests are documented in the film *L'Acadie, l'Acadie*, dir. Michel Brault and Pierre Perrault, 118 min., National Film Board of Canada, 1971, videocassette.

38. Hautecoeur, 266.

39. Camille-Antoine Richard, "L'Acadie, une société à la recherche de son identité," *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 2, no. 2 (1969): 53.

cultural inferiority and made them even more vulnerable to assimilation and acculturation.

Equally dangerous was the traditional nationalist discourse, which put Acadian culture in danger of folklorization.[40] The traditional cultural narrative of the Acadian "Renaissance," the story of a people who, because of their faith, triumphed over adversity time and time again, and even managed to protect their French-Catholic heritage, was no longer perceived as their "historical" discourse, but rather an "ideology" in the pejorative sense of the word. Acadian identity as defined by the traditional nationalist discourse was anchored in the past and no longer a symbol of an active and living culture. There was a need to redefine their identity in terms that reflected their current state.

In general, the protests of the end of the 1960s can be viewed as a desire for recognition, and the 1970s were devoted to asserting their distinctiveness. One of the most extreme actions undertaken was the foundation of the Parti acadien in 1972, a provincial political party. Though they could never aspire to take power, especially since they only represented a minority of the population, their goal was to become a source of influence by educating and politicizing the Acadian people.[41] A populist movement influenced by socialism, they fought against the exploitation of Acadians by capitalism, encouraged the return to smaller modes of production and small enterprises, and were opposed to the centralization of industries. They believed that this was the only way that Acadians could control their own economy.[42] They also promoted the decentralization of

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40. Hautecoeur, *L'Acadie du discours*, 270.

41. Roger Ouellette, *Le Parti acadien: De la fondation à la disparition, 1972-1982* (Moncton: Chaire d'études acadiennes, Université de Moncton, 1992), 34.

42. Ouellette, *Le Parti acadien*, 57.

power brought on by Robichaud's government. Overall, they created awareness that Acadians must take matters into their own hands if they are to escape the dominance of Anglophones and change the balance of power.[43] After 1976, their platform included the creation of an Acadian province by literally dividing the territory of New Brunswick in two.[44] Although they never succeeded in electing a single member of the Legislative Assembly, their ten-year existence illustrates the desire of Acadians to achieve distinctive political recognition.

The struggle for recognition was not limited to the political sphere. Sociologist Jean-Paul Hautecoeur states that the importance of the neo-nationalist movement was its desire to reconnect with Acadian culture.[45] Accordingly, the 1970s was a period rich in artistic production. Through cultural products, Acadians succeeded in achieving a balance between maintaining ties with tradition and embracing modernity, therefore putting into practice the ideals preached by the neo-nationalist discourse. Moreover, cultural products allowed them to reinsert the ethnic component in the definition of their identity and celebrate their distinctiveness. Finally, they provided a space where the renegotiation of their identity could take place, therefore putting to rest the dangers of folklorization.

c) Identity and Modernity

When submitting Acadian identity to a diachronic analysis, perhaps the most relevant issue to address, at least within the scope of this thesis, is how the advent of modernity

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43. Roger Ouellette, "Analyse de l'émergence du Parti acadien," *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 16, no. 1 (1983), 82.

44. The border would have involved tracing a diagonal between Grand Falls and Moncton.

45. Hautecoeur, *L'Acadie du discours*, 307.

affected Acadian identity. To begin, I would suggest that three aspects of modernity as a social movement have transformed Acadian identity. First of all, one of the ideals of modernity is to break free from the past. As discussed earlier, two historical narratives played a determining role in the definition of traditional Acadian identity. The "motherland" narrative, embodied in the historiographical works of Rameau de Saint-Père, focused on Acadians having preserved a French-Catholic tradition which had already been erased in France by the industrial revolution. The "Deportation" narrative, exemplified by Longfellow's *Évangéline*, established an event around which a sense of solidarity could be constructed – Acadians were all survivors of the Deportation (whether their ancestors were actually deported or not). These two historical narratives were incompatible with the modernizing discourse of the 1960s, and defining Acadian identity in terms of a common past would prevent Acadian culture from moving forward. The fear of folklorization therefore caused "modern" Acadians to reject symbols of their traditional identity. However, removing the notion of a common heritage from the definition of identity gave way to a sense of cultural alienation. Acadians responded to this cultural void by celebrating their distinctiveness through cultural products.

A second aspect of modernity that affected Acadian identity involves the notion of community. The dissolution of communities in the sociological sense led to the emergence of identity groups, which were usually defined in ethno-linguistic terms. Citing as an example the separatist movement in Quebec, Hobsbawm explains that "though Quebec nationalism insisted on separation because it claimed to be a 'distinct society,' it actually emerged as a significant force precisely when Quebec ceased to be

the 'distinct society' it had so patently and unmistakably been until the 1960s."[46] The same logic applies to Acadians. The need for a distinct Acadian identity emerged when a relatively autonomous Acadian society ceased to exist. The main difference between the cases of Quebec and Acadia lies in the fact that the Québécois could more easily adopt the traditional model of the nation-state since they were a majority within the province of Québec. Acadians, even though they saw themselves as a distinct group, remained a minority dispersed throughout the Maritime Provinces and did not have a bounded territory at their disposal. The inability to adhere to the model of the nation-state made it even more important for cultural products to assert their ethno-linguistic distinctiveness.

The third element is the notion of cultural homogeneity. In *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition,"* Charles Taylor discusses the incompatibility between what he calls the "politics of equal dignity" and the "politics of difference." "With the politics of equal dignity, what is established is meant to be universally the same, an identical basket of rights and immunities; with the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognize is the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctiveness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctness that has been ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a dominant or major identity."[47] The politics of equal dignity reflects one hegemonic culture, often at the expense of cultural minorities. "It negates identity by forcing people into a homogeneous mould that is untrue to them... As it turns out, then, only the minority or suppressed cultures are being forced to take alien form."[48]

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46. Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1995), 429.

47. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 38.

48. *Ibid.*, 43.

The focus on achieving equality brought Acadians to neglect their unique character, giving way to a sense of cultural alienation. On the other hand, measuring their differences against the ideals of a dominant culture would have led to a sense of cultural inferiority. Therefore, maintaining a balance between universal ideals and cultural differences became an issue of the utmost importance.

According to Taylor, our identity is affected by the recognition we receive from others or lack thereof – what he terms "misrecognition." "Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being."[49] Misrecognition primarily affects minority cultures, where the politics of equal dignity may lead to the homogenization of cultural difference, jeopardizing the survival of their culture. Cultural products allow minority cultures to dispose of this "imposed and destructive identity" [50] by offering alternative constructions of identity, highlighting rather than denying their difference. While misrecognition constitutes a first step towards acculturation, the opposite – overemphasizing tradition – can be equally dangerous, leading to the folklorization of the culture in question. Cultural survival depends on the ability to achieve a balance between difference and equality, between maintaining ties with tradition while remaining open to universality. By reflecting this balance, cultural products become a symbol of an active rather than folkloric culture, embodying the present rather than remaining focused on the past.

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49. Taylor, *The Politics of Recognition*, 25.

50. *Ibid.*, 26.

Most studies dealing with Acadian identity examine the discursive construction of identity.[51] Identity is dialogical in character, defined and negotiated through discourse. "We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression."[52] The problem with existing discursive studies is that they predominantly examine the discourse of the elite, addressing how intellectuals conceive Acadian identity, but not necessarily how it is perceived by the masses. Other modes of expression more widely accessible are also valuable in constructing identity, which include cultural products. If these allow the masses to experience a sense of belonging to a community, then one must examine how these products construct and convey identity.

51. Ricky G. Richard, "Discours et références identitaires: Regard critique sur l'étude de l'Acadianité moderne," *Égalité: Revue acadienne d'analyse politique* no. 44-45 (1998-1999): 239-275.

52. Taylor, *The Politics of Recognition*, 32.

Chapter Two

The Emergence of Acadian Popular Music

A significant number of Acadian oral traditions were preserved partly because of the relative isolation of Acadian communities until the second half of the twentieth-century. Scholars have collected an abundance of French-language folksongs from the Maritime Provinces, including locally-composed songs and others that were transported from France. Through the advent of mass communications, Acadians were exposed to other musics, notably Anglo-American popular music. The contact between these two music cultures gave way to a "new" music that incorporated characteristics from the dominant music practice into their domestic music. The result, Acadian popular music, emerged as Acadians were challenging their traditional identity, and it contributed to both the redefinition of their identity and the assertion of their cultural specificity. As a result, it became invested with ideological significance by Acadian consumers, as it was not merely commercial music recorded by Acadians, but a symbol of their cultural emancipation.

This chapter will discuss the factors that contributed to the emergence of a distinct Acadian popular music practice. Taking as a point of departure Edward Larkey's model for what he calls the "diffusion and tradition-formation" of popular music practices, I will explain how coming into contact with Anglo-American popular music transformed Acadian music practices, a process that, according to Larkey's model, takes place in four

steps: consumption, imitation, de-anglicization and re-ethnification. Following, (1), the arrival of the new musical culture and its consumption by the audience in question; (2) domestic musicians will then imitate the musical innovations; (3), the local musicians will then incorporate local elements into the imported style, proceeding to a "de-anglicization" of the sonic material; and (4), the final step constitutes "the re-ethnification of these styles as independent centres of creativity and innovation and the struggle for their cultural legitimacy with the 'established traditions.'"[53] Building on the theoretical writings of Simon Frith, Georgina Born, and David Hesmondhalgh, I also will consider the role of Acadian popular music in the construction and dissemination of Acadian identity.

Consumption: Mass Communications

The advent of radio and television connected Acadian communities with the outside world. By being exposed to the important events of the Western world, they also became *part* of this world. In other words, they ceased to be a "distinct society" and were converted into a "minority culture." The survival of their identity became contingent upon the recognition of their cultural differences as well as the ability to eliminate any sense of cultural inferiority that may result from the lack of recognition.

Radio and television transported sound (and later, image) into households of the developing world, expanding the musical horizons of local cultures by exposing them to

53. Edward Larkey, "Austropop: Popular Music and National Identity in Austria," *Popular Music* 11, no. 2 (1992): 151-152. Although originally designed to study the impact of Anglo-American popular music on German music practices, the generality of Larkey's model makes it easily adaptable to other situations, including the case of Acadian popular music practices.

other musics. Music that dominated mass media networks was henceforth known as popular music, "popular" meaning "well-liked by many people."[54] The establishment of popular music transformed not only the sonic material of domestic music, but also how it was produced, distributed and consumed. The diffusion of popular music affected the style of local music traditions by establishing new musical conventions against which other musics were measured. The challenge for local cultures became to adhere to the dominant model without neglecting their distinctive practices.

The consumption of Anglo-American popular music transformed domestic Acadian music, and, by adapting to these new musical standards, Acadian musicians were able to take part in the dominant music industry. Paradoxically, the development of an indigenous music practice within the dominant popular music field was brought on by the community's desire for ethno-linguistic recognition, while their participation in the dominant music industry was perceived as a symbol of their cultural modernity.

Imitation: The Revival of Folk Music

a) The American Folk Music Revival

The American folk music revival movement played a determining role in the emergence of Acadian popular music. As folk music was finding a niche within the mainstream, Acadians were "discovering" the richness of their own folk music, and this music became an important resource that allowed them to venture onto the popular music scene.

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54. Richard Middleton, "Locating the People: Music and the Popular," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* eds. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 251.

The serious interest in folksongs can be traced as far back as back the nineteenth century, when Herder argued that the music of the rural peasants bears the soul of a nation. Scholars began conducting fieldwork and collecting rural peasant songs, which eventually led to the development of folklore studies and comparative musicology, while the dissemination of these folksongs served the cause of nationalism very well.

The industrial revolution brought new reasons to idealize folksongs. Fearing the loss of values such as community and tradition while alienated masses turned to the culture industry for escape, American scholars began collecting folksongs at the beginning of the twentieth-century as a way of preserving the "traditional" heritage before it disappeared. During the 1930s and 1940s, Left-wing political activists took an interest in folk music, embracing it as a "contemporary proletarian protest about social conditions – trenchant political commentary."[55] Besides the ideological support from which folk music benefited, as it was presented as a "natural" form of art, on a practical level, its association with Communist organizations also led to many concert opportunities. Although folk music eventually turned away from Communist-affiliated politics as they became more and more dangerous in the wake of the Cold War, it remained politically involved by turning to the Civil Rights movement.

Folk music initially gained public exposure through the success of the Weavers. Their single, "Goodnight, Irene," reached number one on the pop music charts in 1950, while their reunion concert in 1955 received quite a bit of attention as did the recorded version of the concert, *The Weavers at Carnegie Hall*, which, according to Ronald

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55. Neil V. Rosenberg, "Introduction," in *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* ed. Neil V. Rosenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 7.

Cohen, "set the aesthetic standard for the folk revival."[56] However, it was the success of the Kingston Trio that brought folk music into the mainstream, beginning with the arrival of their single "Tom Dooly" at the number one position on the Billboard charts in 1958.

The folk revival movement emerged in reaction to the development of mass society, a concept which can be understood as the sense of anxiety and alienation that resulted from industrial, urban life. It appealed to an urban audience for several reasons, ranging from its "natural" sound which resulted from the use of acoustic instruments and the avoidance, when possible, of technology (limiting its involvement to amplification and recording), to its community-minded and socially-conscious lyrics. "Folk music represented a political and/or aesthetic sensibility, a search for understanding amid the commercial clatter of electric guitars, raucous lyrics and gyrating performers; it linked past to present and commented on current social, cultural and political matters."[57] Even though the folk revival movement was not entirely free from commercial elements, the promotion of music "far removed from the recording industry, radio, corruption or commercialization,"[58] reinforced a dichotomy between "traditional" and "commercial" music within the music industry.

The arrival of the Beatles in America in 1964 and the advent of the British Invasion renewed public interest in rock. The music of these groups was considered more substantial than past popular music due to its link with American rhythm and blues of the 1940s and 1950s and the fact that they generally wrote their own material. By 1967, rock

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56. Ronald D. Cohen *Rainbow Quest : The Folk Music Revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (Amherst and Boston : University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 103.

57. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 196.

58. John Connell and Chris Gibson, *Soundtracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 20.

music was recognized as a legitimate art form and thus folk music was no longer the sole "meaningful" musical practice on the market.[59]

Furthermore, folk music was undergoing a slow transformation as artists such as Bob Dylan were composing original material and turning towards personal, introspective, often confessional lyrics instead of performing traditional folksongs. This transformation culminated in 1965 when Bob Dylan arrived at the Newport Folk Festival with an electric guitar and a back-up band, a move that was hailed by some as breathing new wind into the folk revival movement, condemned by others as "selling out." The success of the Byrds's electric cover versions of Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" and Pete Seeger's "Turn, Turn, Turn" established folk-rock as an independent genre that benefited from folk's authenticity and rock's sound. The movement began losing momentum by the mid-sixties and eventually disappeared from the mainstream.

By the end of the 1960s, the folk revival movement had come to an end. Although part of its ideals lived on in rock, which derived its meaning from folk's sense of roots and its critique of mass society, its ideals of community were abandoned in favour of individuality of artistic merit. Nevertheless, it served as a catalyst for the consecration of rock, demonstrating that meaningful music can reach a mass audience and, therefore, that mainstream music is not automatically an empty commodity.

b) Acadian Ethnology and the Dissemination of Folk Music

While the American folk music revival was bringing folk music to the mainstream, Acadians were "discovering" the richness of their own traditional music. During the first

59. For an account of the process that led to the consecration of rock music, consult Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

half of the twentieth-century, ethnologists traveled throughout the Maritime Provinces and collected a significant amount of Acadian folksongs, and these were made accessible to the public through publications intended for amateur use. Before considering the influence of the American folk music revival on Acadian popular music, I will present an overview of the development of Acadian ethnology.

In 1923, Marius Barbeau, an ethnologist associated with the National Museum of Canada, traveled to the south shore of the Gaspé peninsula in order to collect folksongs from the region. Although Gaspé is officially part of Quebec, many Acadian folksongs were collected from the area due to its proximity to Northern New Brunswick, the region with the highest percentage of Acadians per capita. The following year, over one hundred folksongs collected on Prince Edward Island by two priests, Fathers Pierre Paul Arsenault and Théodore Gallant, were donated to Barbeau's collection (which is currently held at the National Museum of Canada). A few other scholars conducted fieldwork on Acadian folksongs over the next twenty years. However, serious folk scholarship began during the 1950s with the involvement of two important institutions: the folklore archives at l'Université Laval and the National Museum of Canada. Ethnologists associated with both of these institutions traveled periodically to the Maritime Provinces in order to conduct fieldwork on Acadian folklore. Finally, the opening of the Centre d'études acadiennes in 1968, and especially the establishment of its Folklore archives in 1970, made possible the local preservation and study of Acadian folklore.

The dissemination of Acadian folksongs through publications and recordings created the awareness among the masses of a distinct musical tradition. Published in 1937, Marius Barbeau's *Romancero of Canada* included several Acadian folksongs

collected during his visit to the Gaspé Peninsula as well as a few songs collected by Fathers Arsenault and Gallant. Although it is questionable whether most Acadians were aware of the existence of the *Romancero*, its importance lies in the fact that it remains the first work to publish Acadian folksongs.

The work of journalist Joseph-Thomas LeBlanc was in all likelihood more effective in disseminating Acadian folksongs to the masses. Between 1938 and 1941, he wrote a column entitled "Nos bonnes vieilles chansons" [Our Good Old Songs] in the Acadian newspaper *La voix d'Évangéline*.[60] As he had neither the time nor the means to conduct fieldwork personally, LeBlanc asked readers to send him transcriptions and/or recordings of folksongs, and managed to collect over 500 different songs and a total of 1500 variants. He published critical editions of 97 songs accompanied by a commentary discussing the variants.[61] The newspaper discontinued the column in 1941 due to financial difficulties caused by the Second World War, while the author's premature death in 1943 put an end to his work.

In 1942, Fathers Anselme Chiasson and Daniel Boudreau published the first volume of a series entitled *Chansons d'Acadie*.[62] *Chansons d'Acadie* contains transcriptions of Acadian folksongs from Chéticamp, in Cape Breton. The interest in this series lies in its accessibility to the public. Rather than compiling a critical edition intended for scholarly use, only the melody and lyrics of each song are printed. The work is designed for an amateur audience as the goal of the authors was to encourage the

60. From August 1937 to March 1944, the newspaper *L'Évangéline* changed its name to *La voix d'Évangéline*.

61. Due to the high cost of music printing, only the lyrics were published. See Charlotte Cormier and Donald Deschênes, "Joseph-Thomas LeBlanc et le romancero inachevé," *Les cahiers de la Société historique acadienne* 24, no. 4 (1993): 250-270.

62. A total of eleven volumes were published between 1942 and 1996.

performance of this music. They explained that "dès le commencement, notre but fut simplement de mettre ces chansons à la disposition du public pour qu'elles soient chantées."[63] The publication of this series made folksongs more accessible to the public. Accordingly, a number of Acadian artists began performing and recording folksongs, from choirs to singers, while music teachers began incorporating folksongs into their curriculum. Chiasson and Boudreau's work is almost single-handedly responsible for the dissemination of Acadian folksongs to the public and to this day remains the most important published collection of Acadian folksongs.

The American folk music revival inspired Acadians to explore their own folklore as a resource for popular music. In fact, two of the first recorded Acadian artists, Edith Butler and Angèle Arsenault, began their careers as folk singers. Performing folk music enabled Acadian artists to take part in the dominant culture all the while highlighting their unique musical heritage. On the other hand, because of the language barrier – Acadian folksongs were written in French – Acadian singers could not directly gain access to the dominant music industry. Rather, they would turn to Quebec's emerging music industry.

De-Anglicization: The Development of a French-language Music Industry

In Quebec, "de-anglicization" of their music involved not only the incorporation of local elements into the music and the promotion of French-language music, but also the development of a distinct musical identity made possible by the establishment of an

63. Anselme Chiasson and Donald Boudreau, *Chansons d'Acadie*, Volume Five (Moncton : Édition des Aboiteaux, 1979).

autonomous music industry. For Acadians, Quebec's music industry provided them the institutional support that they could not obtain at home.

Pinpointing the moment when the "chanson québécoise" emerged, a term that denotes commercial music recorded by Québécois, is difficult. During the first half of the twentieth century, La Bolduc and her contemporaries performed French-Canadian folksongs in an urban setting in order to entertain the masses during the Depression. Later, radio and television aired specialty shows designed to promote French-Canadian songs, one of the most important being Radio-Canada's "Concours de la chanson canadienne," a French songwriting competition which began in 1956. However, the concept of the "chanson québécoise" as it is currently understood materialized through the activities of the chansonniers which took place at the Boîtes à chansons. In 1959, a group of six chansonniers[64] formed a collective known under the name *Les Bozos*, and the group founded the first Boîte à chansons, *Chez Bozo*, in Montreal the following year. "Usually seating 50 to 100 on uncomfortable chairs, these smoke-filled rooms were casually decorated, often with a fishing net. Coffee – and rarely liquor – was served on rickety tables which were bare or sometimes covered with chequered cloths. The audience generally was made up of students, and despite the surroundings great enthusiasm was generated."[65] The success of *Chez Bozo* prompted the opening of many others throughout the province, providing a space where the "chanson québécoise" could develop independently from the Anglo-American music industry.

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64. The group was composed of Jacques Blanchet, Hervé Brousseau, Clémence Desrochers, Jean-Pierre Ferland, Claude Léveillée and Raymond Lévesque.

65. Benoît l'Herbier, "Boîtes à chansons," *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, online edition, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/, accessed June 15, 2005.

The era of the Boîte à chansons was short-lived, and by 1967 – year of the Montreal Expo – most establishments were either closed or on the verge of shutting down. Nevertheless, it played a significant role in the definition and consecration of the "chanson québécoise." First of all, the Boîtes were responsible for launching the careers of many chansonniers. In fact, one of the reasons for their demise was their inability to accommodate the chansonniers in terms of seating capacity and sound equipment once they became "stars." Second, the music of the chansonniers represented an exclusive Québécois musical practice and contributed to the construction of their distinctive identity. Finally, it enabled the "chanson québécoise" to be evaluated according to its own standards rather than adhering to models imported from the United States or France.

The period following the Boîtes à chansons was marked by two musical tendencies. Headed by Robert Charlebois and his 1968 stage show *L'Osstidcho*, one branch of artists broke with the conventions of the "chanson québécoise" and as a result are held responsible for the development of the contemporary "chanson québécoise." Influenced by psychedelic rock, these artists were open to musical experimentation and diversified their sound by turning to electric instruments as opposed to the chansonniers of the previous decade who had only used acoustic instruments.

The second musical tendency was a renewed interest in folk music. As the Quebec nationalist movement gained momentum at the turn of the 1970s, artists turned to everything Quebecois, including folk music. Stimulated by the American Folk Revival Movement, many chansonniers began recording and performing French-Canadian folksongs. Along with their interest in their own folk music, Quebecois also became fascinated with other French-language folk musics, notably Acadian and Cajun. Overall,

the development of Quebec's music industry not only gave Acadian singers the opportunity to record and perform music in French, but also provided access to institutions that were not available in Acadia.

Re-Ethnification: Acadians Bring Popular Music Home

Before the 1970s, Acadians wishing to pursue a career in the arts were generally required to move to larger urban centres in order to gain access to artistic training, recording studios and/or publishing houses, not to mention exposure to a larger market. The local market was neither substantial enough nor equipped with the necessary institutions for an artist to live solely from his/her craft. However, the cultural climate of the 1970s called for a mobilization of artists towards their community. By leaving, artists invested their talent and profits elsewhere, decreasing the chances of developing local institutions. As for the public, by supporting "exiled" artists, it sent the message that recognition outside the boundaries is a necessary condition of success. As a result of these institutional tensions, between the dependency on other markets and the desire for autonomy, artistic exile became interpreted as a commercial move that uniquely benefited the individual's career, while the decision to stay at the risk of sacrificing personal success became an indicator of the artist's sincerity and therefore a source of symbolic capital. As Marc Chouinard commented:

> La déportation n'est pas terminée. Nos gens attirés par des signes de piastres, attirés par la gloire, attirés dans les grands centres québécois, américains, européens, même canadiens privent leur peuple de leur intelligence, leurs habilletés [...] Vous me direz peut-être qu'on a pas de studios d'enregistrement, qu'on a pas de grosses imprimeries modernes. On en aura jamais si tous nos artistes les meilleurs s'en vont vendre leurs

> talents à l'extérieur. L'argent qui ressort de leurs ventes n'est pas investi dans l'économie de l'Acadie. C'est un peuple étranger qui bénéficie de notre culture.[66]

Two factors generally affected the legitimacy of Acadian artists within the field of Acadian cultural production: "Acadian" content and place of production. Regarding the incorporation of Acadian themes into one's work, two strategies seemed to prevail among artists. The first strategy was the individualist strategy, or the example of the autonomous artist. This strategy was based on the idea that the greatest contribution an artist can bring to society is by being true to his/her art. Although the artist may be inspired by Acadian themes, it remained a personal choice. The second type is the communitarian strategy, or the case of the engaged artist. According to this logic, the Acadian artist's duty was to challenge cultural narratives and propose alternative constructions of identity. Even though a work may be produced by an individual, it is consumed by a community (in which the artist takes part) and should serve a greater purpose than individual merit.[67]

The tensions that arose between the artists "of the territory" and those "of the Diaspora" also affected the legitimacy of the product. Those who displayed Acadian topics but lived elsewhere were accused of perpetuating a folkloric stereotype. How could someone accurately embody Acadian realities into an artwork if he/she did not actively take part in the community? On the other hand, the danger that those who resided within the geographic boundaries faced was to create a product that perhaps lacked a certain universal appeal and was condemned to remain an "ethnic" artwork.

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66. Marc Chouinard, "L'Acadie et l'impuissance, quoted in Lamothe, "Modernité et identité," 72.

67. Mourad Ali-Khodja and Marc Johnson, "Identité et création culturelles en Acadie: Des artistes en quête de légitimité?," *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 27, no. 2 (1994): 228-237. See also Renée Blanchar, Euclide Chiasson, Herménégilde Chiasson, France Daigle, and Jacques Savoie, "Table ronde sur l'identité et la création culturelle en Acadie," *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 27, no. 2 (1994): 207-227.

Music and the Struggle for Cultural Recognition

Acadian popular music emerged at a time when Acadians were in the process of re-evaluating their identity. The music not only reflected the struggle for cultural recognition but also actively participated in the reinvention of Acadian identity. Acadian popular music practices in the 1970s cannot be dissociated from issues of identity. Therefore, before considering the musical articulation of Acadian identity, I will briefly discuss the relation between music and identity.

Earlier studies addressing the issue of music and identity attempted to elucidate how music *reflects* underlying social structures. According to this paradigm, the relationship between music and the social group that produces and consumes it consists of a "structural homology" while the purpose of analysis is to demonstrate these homologies. This resulted in a "tight fit" between the cultural group and their product. The problem with this paradigm is that illustrating how music reflects pre-existing notions of identity denies the possibility of music playing an active role in the construction of identity as well as the ability to transform existing cultural narratives.[68]

The newer paradigm acknowledges the determining role of music in both the construction and transformation of identity, examining "what music *does* rather than what it *represents*."[69] Music both provides the means to construct and transform imaginary cultural narratives and offers the experience of placing oneself in that narrative. In modern society, identity is no longer a given, determined by birth, but rather something

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68. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, "Introduction: On Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music," in ***Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation and Appropriation in Music***, ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 31.

69. Stokes, "Introduction," 12.

that is explicitly constructed by individuals and groups. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman explains that by turning members of society into individuals, modern society has transformed identity from a "given" into a "task" and charged "the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance."[70] Therefore, music becomes a way for individuals and groups to perform and experience their identity.

In order to understand how socio-cultural identities are articulated in music, I have considered two theoretical frameworks. In "Music and Identity,"[71] Simon Frith argues that music is first and foremost an aesthetic experience that constructs an understanding of identity, both individual and collective. Rather than assuming that "a social group has beliefs which it then articulates in its music," he argues that "music, an aesthetic practice, articulates in itself an understanding of both group relations and individuality, on the basis which ethical codes and social ideologies are understood."[72] According to his model, groups only conceive of themselves as such through the experience of music (or other cultural activities): "What I want to suggest, in other words, is not that social groups agree on the values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models) but that they only get to know themselves as *groups* (as particular organizations of individual and social interest, of sameness and difference) *through* cultural activity, through aesthetic judgment."[73] Frith's model is limited in that he deals primarily with identities as they exist ***within*** the music; it

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70. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge : Polity Press, 2000), 31-32.

71. Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 108-127.

72. *Ibid.*, 111.

73. *Ibid.*

is more or less useful when dealing with pre-existing socio-cultural identities – those that can be experienced *outside* the music – and their relation to music. While he does not deny this possibility, he does not explicitly theorize this particular relation between music and identity, perhaps because of the dangers of reverting to a structural homology paradigm. Nonetheless, Frith's concept of music providing an experience of identity is useful in understanding identity in modern society.

The theoretical framework presented by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh in the introduction to *Western Music and its Others* takes into account not only how music constructs imaginary identities, but also how it affects pre-existing ones.[74] "Sociocultural identities are not simply constructed in music; there are "prior" identities that come to be embodied dynamically in musical cultures, which then also *form* the reproduction of those identities – no passive process of reflection."[75] Their model considers four different ways in which music can represent identities. The first category deals with the case of imaginary identities, those that do not exist in actuality and therefore cannot be separated from the musical experience. Primitivism, exoticism, and Orientalism are cited by the authors as examples of this type of musical articulation of identity. The fourth category is "when the musical representations of sociocultural identity come, *after the fact*, to be reinterpreted and debated discursively and, out of this process, 'reinserted' as representations into the changing social-cultural formation."[76] The second and third categories apply to the case of Acadian popular music. The second

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74. Born and Hesmondhalgh, "Introduction," 1-58. See especially section 4, "Music and the Representation/Articulation of Sociocultural identities," 31-36.

75. *Ibid.*, 31-32.

76. *Ibid.*, 36.

category constitutes the *process* model such as cases where "the musical imaginary works to *prefigure*, crystallize or potentialize *emergent*, *real* forms of sociocultural identity or alliance."[77] It considers cases where the music actively contributes to the construction of emerging identities. The third category constitutes the traditional ***homology*** model, or cases where "the musical imaginary works to *reproduce*, reinforce, actualize, or memorialize *extant* sociocultural identities."[78]

The desire to affirm Acadian identity *outside* the music inspired artists to focus on representing Acadian identity ***inside*** the music. However, cultural products did not simply reflect the socio-cultural context of the time, as the relationship between the two is one of reciprocity. The struggle for cultural recognition did not only affect artistic products, it affected all aspects of Acadian society. Under different circumstances, the music of the time would most likely not have had such an explicit Acadian content. On the other hand, viewing the evocation of Acadian themes in music as a by-product of a larger societal movement overlooks the *active* contribution of music in the "affirmation-definition"[79] of Acadian identity.

According to Frith, the reason as to why music is such a powerful tool in communicating identity resides in its ability to provide a physical experience of identity. When either listening to or performing music, we literally embody the rhythms of the song, to the point where it has the ability of making us move our bodies with the music. "Music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the

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77. Born and Hesmondhalgh, "Introduction," 35.

78. *Ibid.*, 35-36.

79. Andrée Fortin, "Pésentation," in *Produire la culture, produire l'identité?*, ed. Andrée Fortin (Sainte-Foy, les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000), XIV.

body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginary cultural narratives."[80]

Furthermore, music has the ability to do more than simply construct and communicate a sense of identity. Besides reflecting who people *are*, it allows individuals to experience a sense of *belonging* to a group. As Frith explains, "in responding to a song, we are drawn, haphazardly, into emotional alliances with the performers and with the performers' other fans."[81]

Born and Hesmondhalgh argue that music's connotative power makes it an efficient tool to evoke and communicate extra-musical meaning. In the preface to *Rationalizing Culture*, Born states that "music denotes nothing other than its musical expressivity as part of a specific musical genre" and that "it is at the level of connotation that music is particularly subject to extramusical meanings." [82] Even though the relation between music and the extra-musical meaning derived from it is cultural, it can be experienced as "immanent." Therefore, it avoids suspicions of propaganda and can equally serve to either reinforce extant identities or to oppose the dominant culture.

Finally, I would argue that the advantage of music over other types of cultural products in the context of Acadian culture is its ability to convey identity to *all* classes of Acadians. For instance, whereas Acadian literature was mostly intended for a midbrow and highbrow audience (and was not necessarily limited to Acadian consumers), Acadian popular music was accessible to a more diverse group. Article 4.6 of the Parti acadien's

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80. Frith, "Music and Identity," 124.

81. *Ibid.*, 121.

82. Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Avant-Garde* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995), 19.

constitution reads as follows: "Encourager par tous moyens à notre disposition nos artistes, nos artisans, nos poètes, nos chansonniers, nos écrivains et nos musiciens afin d'assurer la valorisation de notre identité. Rendre cette culture accessible à tout le monde."[83] Along with the idea that the valorization of Acadian identity is expressed through cultural products, this short passage expresses a populist stance on culture. Culture is not limited to education and the arts; it does not simply concern the elite. It should not highlight class inequalities but rather institute a feeling of solidarity amongst all Acadians, from working-class fishermen to the newly formed intellectual elite. If Acadians were to maintain a vibrant culture and eliminate the danger of assimilation, they needed to remain united regardless of diverging political stances. If political views were tearing the community apart, then culture would have to bring them together.

Acadian music was instrumental in reinventing Acadian identity, all the while embodying the struggle for cultural recognition. Among all musical acts of the period, one in particular stands out: the group known as 1755. Part of the first generation of Acadian popular musicians, what distinguishes 1755 from other Acadian artists is their ongoing popularity more than twenty-five years after the release of their last album. While their distinctive sound – a combination of old and new – defined contemporary Acadian popular music, they brought French-language music to the Acadian masses, proving that home-grown music, music produced by Acadians *in Acadia*, can rival Anglo-American music in terms of quality.

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83. Quoted in Ouellette, *Le Parti acadien*, 110.

The next two chapters will be devoted to the study of the 1755's music. Chapter three will analyze how lyrics constructed and articulated Acadian identity by making explicit references to Acadian regions and symbols, as well as by exploring topics that deal with Acadian realities of the 1970s. Chapter four will focus on how their music renegotiates the boundaries between a traditional and modern Acadian identity by combining musical codes associated with both Anglo-American popular music and traditional Acadian musical.

Chapter Three

Constructing the Local: The Lyrics of 1755

Attending a 1755 concert is perhaps the best way to illustrate the impact of their lyrics on the Acadian public, who appear to know every word to every song. In the liner notes for the CD release of their second album, *Vivre à la baie*, Herménégilde Chiasson wrote that their lyrics are so widely known that their songs will become part of Acadian folklore.[84] From the very beginning the Acadian public seemed to relate to their lyrics, as illustrated by the following comment from Donald Langis's review of *Vivre à la baie*: "C'est une musique qui colle à une réalité... une musique accompagnée de paroles qui, veut veut pas, traitent de sujets immédiats qui touchent monsieur-tout-le-monde."[85] For Acadians, this music embodied their reality, focusing on the present rather than the past.

This chapter examines how the lyrics of 1755 construct and convey Acadian identity. Beginning with an overview of their critical reception, I will discuss how their lyrics were perceived as "authentically" depicting Acadian reality. I will then address the identity markers inherent in the *language* of the lyrics, such as accent and regional dialects. I will also analyze the themes expressed in their songs, focusing primarily on the role of local references. I will illustrate how their songs provided Acadians with a cultural

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84. The quote reads as follows: "[...] Des chansons qui font partie de notre prochain folklore tellement on en connaît les paroles." Chiasson, liner notes for 1755, *Vivre à la baie*.

85. Donald Langis, "Sa guerre finie, 1755 vivra!" *L'Évangéline*, 9 November 1977.

narrative that represented their way of life, thus providing the means to understand their own identity.

Authenticity and the Critical Reception of 1755

Cultural practices are often evaluated according to their *authenticity*. In the context of popular music, authenticity "operates as a criterion of judgment in rock's evaluations of music and musicians," working as "a value that coordinates a whole series of calculations of cultural worth."[86] It is normally associated with musical experiences that offer "sincere expressions of genuine feeling, original creativity, or an organic sense of community."[87] The concept remains central to the stratification of popular music, separating what is perceived as "meaningful" music from something that may be dismissed as trivial.

Authenticity is not something inherent in the music but rather a quality that we associate with certain musical practices. Hence, the notion of what is authentic is not only likely to change over time, but will vary from one musical culture to another. Additionally, conflicting definitions of authenticity can emerge within a given musical culture as Keightley argues is the case in rock culture with what he calls "Romantic" and "Modern" authenticity. "Romantic" authenticity embodies notions of tradition, continuity, and a sense of community and values musical practices that are unmediated. "Modernist" authenticity values individuality, experimentation and progress, while

86. Keir Keightley, "Reconsidering Rock," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, ed. Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 132.

87. *Ibid.*, 131.

musicians are viewed as creators.[88] The presence of both forms of authenticity accounts for the contradictions that transpire in the stratification of popular music.

Alienation – the opposite of authenticity – generally results from mediation, understood as "those things which interfere with an ideal of direct communication between artist and audience."[89] Distance between the artist(s) and the audience can emanate from different circumstances, ranging from the involvement of technology to formulaic song content to heightened star status. In this sense, artists who compose as well as perform their own music will be considered more "authentic" than those who perform material written by others. The "author" status often affects the evaluation of the content, since the sincerity of a message is more convincing if an artist is expressing his or her own thoughts. Thus, the singer-songwriter became the ideal-type of authenticity, "fostering a sense that the integration of authorship and performance was evidence of ethical integrity."[90]

An "anti-star" persona can be interpreted as a sign of authenticity. Establishing a link between artists and a given community, and presenting them as "ordinary people" rather than mythical personalities, reinforces the appearance of being on the same level as their fans and reduces the perceived distance between the artists and their audience. As Cohen explains, linking artists "with particular places identifies them with roots and presents them as real people embodying artistic integrity and honesty, rather than glitzy stars representing an unreal world of glamour, commerce and marketing strategies."[91]

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88. Keightley, "Reconsidering Rock," 137.

89. *Ibid.*, 133.

90. *Ibid.*, 134.

91. Sara Cohen, "Identity, Place and the 'Liverpool Sound,'" in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music*, 118.

Authors interviewing and/or reviewing 1755 often described the members of the group as being down-to-earth individuals, as the following statement illustrates: "Rencontrer '1755,' c'est connaître la simplicité de cinq vrais Acadiens."[92] The local Anglophone press also highlighted the musicians' kindness and unpretentious nature, which was particularly significant in light of the linguistic tensions between Anglophones and Francophones living in Moncton during the 1970s. Susan Gallant wrote that "friendliness, a down-to-earth approach, and a kind of low-key enthusiasm are probably the first thing to strike you on meeting the Moncton group, 1755."[93] Many reviewers emphasized how the members remained modest despite their success. "A première vue, les members de 1755 n'ont pas la grosse tête. Ils sont peut-être des vedettes, mais ils ne le montrent pas."[94] The musicians' "common Acadian" persona presents them as being on the same level as their fans, furthering their authentic image all the while making their accomplishments seem even more impressive.

Depicting the members of 1755 as five "real" Acadians enhanced their lyrics' sincerity, while the realism perceived in their texts reinforced their authentic character. Their songs embodied the social reality of contemporary Acadians through descriptions of people, places and events. They presented Acadian life in an unpretentious and often humorous manner, and the Acadian public identified with the familiar imagery. Reviewing their first album, Donald Langis wrote that "[Le disque *1755*] est un microsillon fait de musique populaire dans lequel les Acadiens du Sud-Est pourront se

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92. Réjean Paulin, "'1755': Un coin d'Acadie," *L'Évangéline* 27 July 1978.

93. Susan Gallant, "Friendliness Keynote in Success: Moncton Group, 1755, Cut Debut Album" *Moncton Times* 1 November 1978.

94. Daniel Cuxac, "Une sacrée bataille gagnée, 1755 s'en va vers d'autres conquêtes," *L'Évangéline* 28 December 1979.

retrouver." [95] Even criticism from non-Acadian sources interpreted 1755's lyrics as accurately portraying Acadian identity. Christine L'Heureux commented in the *Montreal-Matin* that "c'est peut-être la première fois que des chansons racontent la vie actuelle des Acadiens: les femmes, la bière, l'assurance-chômage, leur façon de mêler le français et l'anglais [...] et le goût du 'party' qui se transcrit de façon merveilleuse dans leur musique."[96] The group's members never claimed to represent "authentic" Acadian identity. Nonethless, by expressing their own understanding of the events surrounding them, they constructed a narrative to which the Acadian public could relate. "Ce qu'on [1755] exprime dans nos chansons, c'est notre façon de voir comment les gens vivent. Nous isolons un phénomène comme l'assurance-chômage (U.I.C.) ou le slang et nous exprimons cette réalité dans une chanson."[97]

Group Name as Signifier

At first, "1755" may seem like an unusual name choice for an Acadian group. After all, 1755 recalls the year of the Acadian deportation. When the group officially released their name (they had been performing nameless for over a year), many fans were offended, some screaming blasphemy and sacrilege.[98] However, they later appreciated the irony and agreed that the name was fitting. Having an Acadian group named after the

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95. Donald Langis, "1755: Une autre conquête," *L'Évangéline* 20 October 1978.

96. Christine L'Heureux, "1755: Un groupe qui ne passera pas inaperçu," *Montreal-Matin* 21 October 1978.

97. Réjeanne Blais, "Le premier disque de '1755' dédié au regretté violoneux Eloi LeBlanc," *L'Évangéline* 12 October 1977.

98. Duguay, *L'épopée 1755*, 37.

deportation illustrates that the Acadian people *survived* the tragedy in question. While discussing the group's name, one of the members of 1755 commented that "we're not living in the past, though we don't want to forget it because it's part of our culture," adding that the group's slogan is simply to have a good time.[99]

The name was initially inspired from an engraving on the wall of one member's living room that portrayed a scene from the deportation. After considering other possibilities, the group unanimously chose the name "1755" for two reasons. Besides identifying them as Acadian, it could be read and pronounced in both French and English (pronounced "dix-sept cinquante-cinq" in French and "Seventeen Fifth-Five" in English). "'The name was the result of a brainstorming session we had late in March of 1977 when we decided we needed a name. It was in a list we had of possible choices and we felt that it fitted us the most.' Pierre [one of the members of 1755] explained. 'It identifies us as Acadians – not to bring any unpleasant memories to mind, and also, it can be written and read easily in both languages.'"[100]

The Language of 1755's Lyrics

Lyrics are not poetry – they are utterances pronounced in a specific manner, not simply words, but "words in performance."[101] To simply address the semantic meaning of lyrics – content analysis – ignores elements such as accent and local varieties of language,

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99. Gallant, "Friendliness," *Moncton Times.*

100. *Ibid.*

101. Simon Frith, *Performing Rite: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 166.

elements which are particularly effective in conveying identity. Furthermore, setting words to music reveals a "*choice* of meaning given in a special intensity."[102] How lyrics are delivered can alter the text's meaning, as "singers use non-verbal as well as verbal devices to make their points – emphases, sighs, hesitations, changes of tone."[103] For both these reasons, it becomes necessary to address the *use* of language before analyzing what the lyrics express.

a) Accent

Lyrics bear an audible marker of identity—the accent associated with the speaking voice—even before one absorbs the semantic content. How words are pronounced can situate the singer, as accents are normally associated with particular groups and/or places. In some cases, singers will modify their pronunciation in order to "resemble as closely as possible those of the group or groups with which from time to time we [speakers] wish to identify,"[104] as is the case with British singers who adopt an American accent or country singers who take on a rural accent. What is interesting in the case of 1755 is that they do not adopt a single "Acadian" accent (as there is no such thing), but several different accents, depending on the origins of the members. Although discussing the accents of different Acadian regions is beyond the scope of this thesis,[105] it is interesting to note that

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102. Frith, *Performing Rites*, 178.

103. Simon Frith, "Why Do Songs Have Words," in *Music for Pleasure: Essays on the Sociology of Pop* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 120.

104. Peter Trudgill, "Acts of Conflicting Ideology: The Sociolinguistics of British Pop-Star Pronunciation," in *On Dialect: Social and Geographical Perspectives* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983), 142.

105. In New Brunswick, each of the three Acadian regions (North-Eastern, South-Eastern, and North-Western New Brunswick) has a distinctive accent, all of which have their own sets of variants. Since

the different singers do not attempt to mask their local accent. Even if one is not familiar with the variants among regional accents, a deviation from "standard" oral French (if there was such a thing) can be heard. For example, Acadians have a tendency to pronounce the "h" at the beginning of a word, which is normally not audible in French (aspiré). They also have a tendency to roll their "r"s. Table 1 lists a few variants that reveal an "Acadian" accent, all taken from the second line of the song "C.B. Buddie" (from the album *1755*): "J'arrêtai ouère ma mére le long du chemin."

Table 1: Linguistic Variants Found in the Phrase "J'arrêtai ouère ma mére le long du chemin"

"Standard" pronunciation	**"Acadian" variant**	**Example**
/v/	/w/	voir - ouère
/wa/	/wɛ/	voir - ouère
/ɛ/	/e/	mère – mére

b) Language Varieties

One of the characteristics of Acadian poetry is the presence of several different languages, registers of languages, and regional varieties, within a given text.[106] Without implying that song lyrics are poetry (an argument I have already refuted), in this case certain parallels can be drawn between the two art forms. The lyrics of 1755 make use of

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most Acadian communities in Nova Scotia are dispersed throughout the province, each community will have its own accent. The same goes for Prince-Edward Island, although there are fewer different accents since most Acadians are located in the Évangéline region. Although I am aware that the previous statements are blatant generalizations that oversimplify the diversity Acadian dialects, they are intended to simply initiate the outside reader about the existence of various "Acadian" accents.

106. Raoul Boudreau, "Le rapport à la langue comme marqueur et producteur d'identités en littérature acadienne," in *Produire la culture, produire l'identité?*, 163.

several different registers and varieties of language, and as in poetry, each language carries certain ideological connotations.

According to Raoul Boudreau, the four most common "languages" encountered in Acadian poetry – and I include song in this category – are French (and its different varieties), English (and its varieties), "Acadian" French (an oral variety of French that has a certain amount of distinctive traits such as archaisms and English borrowings) and *chiac* (the oral vernacular spoken by Acadians from South-Eastern New Brunswick). This last variety is characterized as "l'intégration et la transformation, dans une matrice française, de formes lexicales, syntaxiques, morphologiques et phoniques de l'anglais pour former un système linguistique autonome."[107]

Within the context of Acadian literary (and song) production, different *meanings* can be derived from the incorporation of a specific variety of language. The deviation from "international" French is a strategy adopted by Acadian writers in order to distinguish themselves from other Francophone writers, especially those from Quebec and France, and code-switching (between English and French) is a common practice in Acadian literature and song.[108] However, if an Acadian writer were to compose a unilingual English text, it would most likely be interpreted as a betrayal of the writer's Acadian identity.[109] As for regional varieties of French, they not only serve as an indicator of identity, but also carry ideological connotations. For example, the use of "Acadian" French carries associations of folklorism and exoticism while chiac is

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107. Boudreau, "Le rapport à la langue," 163-164.

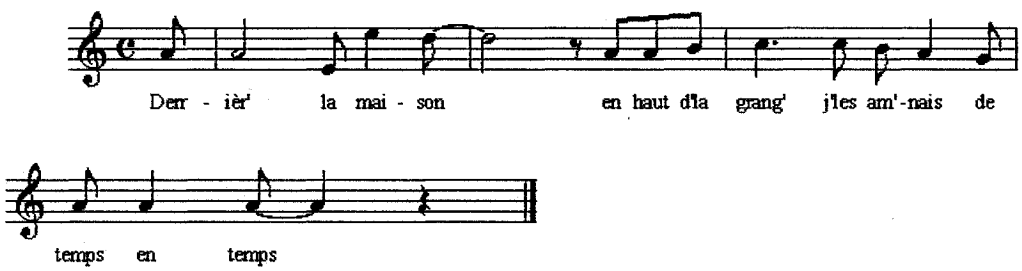
108. *Ibid.*, 169.

109. *Ibid.*, 167.

associated with a modern, urban identity all the while indicating problems of assimilation.[110]

As chiac is primarily an oral dialect, its use in song provides a conversational quality to lyrics. The act of writing lyrics de-naturalizes the language by transforming "ordinary" language into a poetic text. In an attempt to recover "part of the lost conversational 'naturalness'"[111] that result from writing lyrics, different devices can work to "re-naturalize" the language, moving away from poetry and towards speech. The recourse to chiac is in itself a "renaturalizing" device. Other devices include using contractions, which occurs frequently throughout the songs of 1755, and the tendency not to pronounce the "e" at the end of words (whereas in art song, the silent "e" is normally pronounced). Both cases are the result of the specific way the lyrics were set to music. Example 1 illustrates the musical text-setting of the phrase "Derrière la maison, en haut de la grange, je les amenais de temps en temps" taken from "Confessions" (from the album *1755*).

Musical Example 1: "Confessions," 1755, Lyrics and Melody (0:36-0:41)



110. Boudreau, "Le rapport à la langue,"166.

111. Aaron A. Fox, "The Jukebox of History: Narratives of Loss and Desire in the Discourse of Country Music," *Popular Music* 12, no. 1 (1992): 53.

c) Code-switching

According to *The Concise Encyclopedia of Sociolinguistics*, code-switching is defined as "the juxtaposition of elements from two (or more) languages or dialects."[112] There are multiple levels of code-switching, ranging from diglossia, where the use of a language or dialect becomes dependant on the situation in which the speaker finds himself, to single-word code-switching within an utterance, to code-switching within a single word. The two latter examples of code-switching are commonly found in chiac. Code-switching is often interpreted as a sign of linguistic assimilation within a minority culture, the result of a "subtractive bilingualism" which occurs when a second language overpowers the mother-tongue to the point where it affects the person's ability to speak his or her mother-tongue. [113] However, it can also reveal a certain "verbal and cultural versatility as well as cognitive flexibility"[114] when used ***consciously*** as in the case of artistic production. "Aware of the threat of assimilation for the minority culture, poets and songwriters strategically craft moments of language mixing and multiple language use to encode critical opposition, multi-voicedness and dialogical provocation."[115] In these instances, the intrusion of a language other than the original language into the text brings with it connotations of the "Other." For example, within the context of Acadian poetry and song, the use of English words and phrases in a primarily French text implicitly refers to the dominant (Anglo-American) culture.

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112. K. M. McCormick, "Code-Switching: Overview," in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Sociolinguistics*, ed. Rajend Mesthrie (Amsterdam, New York: Elsevier, 2001), 447.

113. Rodrigue Landry and Réal Allard, "Profil sociolangagier des Acadiens et francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick," *Études canadiennes/Canadian Studies* 37 (1994): 216.

114. J. Paul Boudreau and Irene Gammel, "Linguistic Schizophrenia: The Poetics of Acadian Identity Construction," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 4 (1998): 53.

115. *Ibid.*

Several songs display instances of code-switching, as is the case with the song "C.B. Buddie." The song, written in the first person, tells the story of the narrator's discontentment with his current occupation as a convoy driver and his longing for a simpler, more serene life as a fisherman (a common trade for Acadians). In general, English is used in "C.B. Buddie" (from the album 1755) for words related to the narrator's professional occupation. The code-switching is heightened during the chorus: while code-switching is limited to single words during the verses, two of the chorus's four lines are completely written in English. Code-switching in this song reflects the fact that until recently, very little employment opportunities were available to non-bilingual Francophones in the Maritime Provinces, with perhaps the exception of traditional Acadian trades (such as fishermen). Therefore, Acadians seeking other professions had no other choice but to learn to speak English. This song illustrates the reality of Acadians who were required to speak English on the jobsite.

Lyrics Example 1a: "C.B. Buddie," *1755*, lyrics by Pierre Robichaud

Chu parti de Waltham, avec une "load" dedans ma "van"
J'arrêterai *ouère* ma mere le long du chemin
A dit: "Comment ça va garcon"
"J'peux pas rester j'm'en va à Chéticamp
Pis j'arrêterai "back" quand je reviens par icitte.

ouère: *voir* (to see), written as pronounced

J'embarquerai dans mon truck, a m'a souhaité "good-luck"
J'l'ai mis en "gear" pis j'embarquai sur le "highway"
J'ai viré des coins pis des croches
Dans ce vieux truck toute *bourrée* d'broches
Qui "hangaient" des antennes sur les *miroués*

bourrés: *remplis* (filled with)
miroués: archaïc form of *miroir* (mirror)

Chorus:
J'ai crié "Salut C.B. Buddie, hello Honkey Turkey"
J'su "tired" de m'ouère promener su' le "highway"
"Ten-four there Teddy Bear"
"Right-on Rolling Vagabond"
J'su "tired" de m'ouère promener su'les "highways"

As the narrator recounts his dream of trading his truck for a boat, and especially once he fulfills this dream, the instances of code-switching greatly diminish, as illustrated in the final verse quoted below. Again, the English borrowings are terms related to his previous occupation.

Lyrics Example 1b: "C.B. Buddie" (continued)

Et ben, mon morceau d'terre, au moins j'l'ai loué	
Situé pas loin du vieux "*tchaï*" d'Cap-Pelé	tchai: archaïc form of quai (wharf)
Mon gros "truck", j'l'ai "tradé"	
Asteur j'm'installe dans mon bateau	asteur: maintenant (now)
Pis j'"switch-on" mon vieux radio,	
Pis j'pêche du homard, du hareng, pis *giguer* du maqu'reau	giguer: a traditional fishing technique used when fishing mackerel

Local References

The use of local references is an effective way of conveying a collective identity. The act of deciphering these codes establishes a relationship between the artists and their public. Furthermore, it enables these people to experience a sense of being part of a privileged group, as not everyone is able to grasp the underlying meaning of certain expressions.

1755's lyrics contain an abundance of local references. I have organized these references into four categories based on recurring thematic material. These four topics are: (1) references to places in Acadia; (2) descriptions of Acadian people and their way of life; (3) social commentaries; and, (4) celebration or what I have termed the Acadian Carnival. I have chosen to discuss songs that exemplify the topics in question. In the spirit of concision, many songs were omitted that might have served equally well as examples.

a) Acadian Places

In chapter one, I explained how the dissolution of a distinct Acadian society brought the need for recognition of their cultural specificity. According to Hobsbawm, recognition for ethno-linguistic groups was often modeled on the nation-state paradigm, "the bounded territory with its own autonomous institutions," as it was "the only actual state model available in the late twentieth century."[116] The absence of an actual territory where Acadians were the majority made it impossible for them to become a nation-state, and Acadian art and literature responded by constructing "Acadia" in the realm of the imaginary. "Many poets and singers take the reader on a tour of Acadie (*sic.*), naming and mapping geographical locations that are strongly linked to the scattered and divided landscape of Acadia."[117] Adam and Phlipponneau explained that until the *Official Languages Act of New Brunswick* (the first document to officially recognize the status of Acadians), Acadian toponyms were the only material evidence of their existence. Therefore, naming and describing Acadian places not only acknowledged their existence, but also illustrated *where* they lived.

The song "Samedi soir" from the album *Yousque t'es rendu?* names several different cities, not all of which are associated with Acadians. The references to Montreal in the first verse and Gaspésie, Lac St-Jean, Sault-Ste-Marie, and Orleans in the second are clearly indicated as not being "home." Interestingly, the narrator's "home" consists of several Acadian towns – Tracadie, Cap-Pelé, Memramcook, Petit-Rocher, Chéticamp, Caraquet, and Shédiac – implying that he feels "at home" anywhere in "Acadia."

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116. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, 425.

117. Boudreau and Gammel, "Linguistic Schizophrenia," 57.

Lyrics Example 2: "Samedi soir," *Yousque t'es rendu?*, lyrics by Gérald LeBlanc

Verse 1:

J'pourrais décoller pour n'importe y-où
Rue St-Denis ou dans **l'vieux Montréal**
Même **Chinatown** s'rait pas si mal
Mais j'aimerais mieux être chez-nous.

Tracadie ou ben **Cap-Pelé**
Memramcook ou ben **P'tit-Rocher**
Chéticamp en été
Est aussi beau qu'n'importe y-où

Verse 2:

J'pourrais décoller pour n'importe y-où
À **Caraquet** fêter le 15 août
À **Shédiac** au Festival
Ça "feel" si bien d'être chez-nous.

En **Gaspésie** et au **Lac St-Jean**
Sault-Ste-Marie et à **Orléans**
Les gens de l'ouest m'ont fait fêter
Aussi bien qu'n'importe y-où

In the song "Mon coin de l'Acadie," the first-person narrator describes his hometown of Chéticamp, a small Acadian community located in Cape Breton. The song is composed by Chéticamp native Donald Boudreau who also sings the lead vocals. Since Boudreau does not normally sing the lead, hearing him perform the song presents the narrator and performer as one person, eliminating any possible doubt as to the sincerity of the message.

Lyrics Example 3a: "Mon coin de l'Acadie," *Vivre à la baie*, lyrics by Donald Boudreau

J'aimerais vous conter une p'tite histoire
À propos de mon coin d'l'Acadie
Le monde qui en ont fait territoire
Se sont établis là pour la vie
Ils ont du bien croire et savoir
Que ceci était leur paradis

Two geographic markers indicated in the following verse begin to situate the listener, although the exact location has yet to be revealed. The reference to the "golfe St-Laurent" delimits not only the geographic location, but also indicates that the "coin de l'Acadie" is located on the shore. Second, the reference to Cape Breton gives a more

specific idea of the place in question. Terms such as "golfe," "Haute-terres," "vagues," "suète" (wind), "rochers," "montagnes," and "fougères," describe a rural landscape.

Lyrics Example 3b: "Mon coin de l'Acadie" (continued)

Se dépendant du **golfe St-Laurent**
Et des **Hautes-terres** du **Cap-Breton** [...]

Au son des **vagues** poussées par le **"suète"**
Les **trappes** détruitent sur les **rochers**
Les **pêcheurs** vont chercher leur crêpe [...]

Les **montagnes** saines just'en arrière
Ont permis à nos habitants
De faire la guerre à nos **fougères** [...]

In the final verse, the narrator both situates the town geographically and explicitly states that the town of Chéticamp is populated by Acadians.

Lyrics Example 3c: "Mon coin de l'Acadie" (continued)

Ce territoire qui m'est si tendre
Est situé au Cap-Breton
Ça m'fait plaisir de vous apprendre
Qu'on est Acadien à Chéticamp

A similar narrative form is used in "Vivre à la baie," as another member writes an ode to his hometown. The place in question is the region known as the Baie Ste-Marie, located in Nova Scotia. Rather than describing the landscape as was the case in "Mon coin de l'Acadie," the narrator takes a more nostalgic tone as he expresses the desire to return to his native place.

Lyrics Example 4: "Vivre à la baie," *Vivre à la baie*, lyrics by Kenneth Saulnier

J'veux m'en aller
Vivre à la Baie
Dans l'fond des bois
C'est là j'veux m'installer
J'y resterai l'restant d'ma vie
Y'ou c'qu'il fait beau
À la Baie Ste-Marie

Though 1755 was far from being the only Acadian group to describe Acadian places, their originality regarding the construction of place relied on their interest in urban spaces. Traditionally, Acadian scenery depicted in literary works and songs focused on rural imagery, as Acadians mostly lived in rural areas until the 1960s. After this period, a significant amount of Acadians moved to more urban areas of New Brunswick and several rural areas were urbanized. Urban spaces became part of the reality of Acadians, and therefore evoking urban spaces depicted a "modern" Acadia. Lyricist of almost half of 1755's songs, poet Gérald LeBlanc[118] expressed that "Pierre, Roland et moi [Gérald LeBlanc], on était des Acadiens de ville, dit-il. On voulait chanter cela. Je n'ai jamais pêché de ma vie, mais je savais prendre l'autobus et sauter dans un taxi. C'est une réalité purement urbaine que j'ai voulu articuler dans mes textes."[119]

Named after a street in Moncton, the song "Rue Dufferin" paints a more urban portrait. Besides the explicit reference to the city in question and the use of the word "ville," images such as "beaucoup d'monde" and "les rues sont sales" – dense population and filthy streets – evoke images normally associated with an urban landscape.

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118. Of the 27 songs with newly-composed lyrics, Gérald LeBlanc collaborated on fifteen songs – six which appeared on *1755*, two on *Vivre à la baie*, and seven on *Synergie*.

119. Quoted in Duguay, *L'épopée 1755*, 30-31.

Lyrics Example 5a: "Rue Dufferin," *1755*, lyrics by Gérald LeBlanc

Dans la ville y'a beaucoup d'monde
Dans la ville j'aime me promener
À Moncton, rue Dufferin
Y'a beaucoup d'arbres, même si les rues sont sales
Dans la ville y'a beaucoup d'monde
À Moncton, rue Dufferin

The next verse innocently alludes to the linguistic tensions in Moncton. The group had experienced first hand the extent of these tensions during their first contract at the Chris Rock Tavern. The pub's clientele consisted mostly of Anglophones, and although the group mainly performed covers of American rock songs, the crowd reacted aggressively to the few French songs included in their set, booing, screaming insults, and even demanding that they "speak white." Their short-lived contract at the Tavern made the group more sensitive to the Francophone/Acadian cause, and inspired them to incorporate more and more French material into their repertoire (and to accept engagements at more Francophone-friendly establishments).[120]

Lyrics Example 5b: "Rue Dufferin" (continued)

Les vieilles anglaises l'autr'bord de la rue
N'aiment pas mon chien ben ça fait rien
Y les aime pas lui non plus

b) Acadian People and Their Way of Life

Though the lyrics of the song "Vie de fou" do not explicitly name the place in question, the lines "la vie de ville/la vie de fou" (city life/crazy life) clearly indicate that the song portrays urban life. The use of chiac and the fact that the text is written by Gérald

120. Duguay, *L'épopée 1755*, 36.

LeBlanc point towards Moncton being the location that inspired the text, while the phrase "l'est de la ville" most likely refers to Moncton's infamous East End.[121] Whether or not the connection with Moncton is made by the listener, the place depicted in the song is clearly a city.

Rather than describing the place as was the case in the three songs previously discussed, the narrator describes the reality lived by the people of the place. Although the song is written in the first person (the term "Chu" being an oral diminutive of "je suis"), the use of indefinite pronouns when enumerating the members of the family ("*le* pére," "*la* mére" rather than "*mon* père," "*ma* mère") implies that it could be *anyone*'s family.

Lyrics Example 6: "Vie de fou," *1755*, lyrics by Gérald LeBlanc

Chu endetté	chu: je suis
Chu en maudit	
Le pére y *chiâle*	chiâle: yelling
Pis la mére bootleg	
Dans l'est de la ville	
Les soeurs sont tough	
Les fréres sont rough	
Des *cracheux*	cracheux: from cracher, to spit (literally, "spitters")
Des *pèteux*	pèteux: from pèter, to fart (literally, "farters")
Su'l welfare, su la *brosse*	su la brosse: drinking heavily, or drunk
Ma tante su la phone	
Chu stone dans la cuisine	
La T.V. *wac*	La T.V. wac: "La télévision hurle, mais ça fait rien (*sic.*) personne l'écoute"[122]
Personne l'écoute	
Y â'l cousin	
Qui veut tout défaire	
Ça fait avoir vieux garçon qui pète	
D'la bière *frette*	frette: cold

121. The first Acadians that moved to Moncton all settled in the Eastern part of the city, and the area became known as the East End. The East End also housed the most important Acadian businesses and institutions, notably the newspaper *L'Évangéline*. Until the 1970s, most inhabitants of the area were Acadian. For more information, see Régis Brun, *Les Acadiens à Moncton: Un siècle et demi de présence française au coude* (Moncton: Régis Brun, 1999).

122. Quoted from liner notes, 1755, *1755* Isba ISB CD 5003, 1994, compact disc.

La cousine *en famille* — en famille: pregnant
A déjà un p'tit pas mal élevé
J'pourrais l'tuer
Y vit su les voisins
Su les hamburgs pis les fish'n'chips
La vie de ville
La vie de fou
On *décolle* pour la taverne — décolle: to leave
On *décolle* pis on reste pris

Perhaps more than any other text written by LeBlanc, "Vie de fou" (along with "Le monde qu'on connaît" which will be discussed below) illustrates the influence of poet Guy Arsenault on his writing style. The publication of Arsenault's book of poetry *Acadie Rock* in 1972 had an enormous impact on many Acadian artists. There is an affinity between the poetic style of Arsenault and the lyrical texts of LeBlanc in terms of the topics and images evoked, as well as in the varieties of language and the literary devices used to construct these images. ***Acadie Rock*** was the first published work written almost entirely in chiac. For the first time, a work depicted the reality of urban Acadians through the use of the language spoken by the people. Following Arsenault's example, the language of "Vie de fou" reflects and reinforces the images of Acadia articulated in the song. In the epilogue of the reprinted edition of ***Acadie Rock*** (published in 1994), LeBlanc wrote that what he learned from Arsenault was that "c'était o.k. de vivre icitte et de l'écrire."[123] His own understanding of Acadian identity is thus translated into song by making use of the language by which he experiences his identity.

In the song "Le monde qu'on connaît," LeBlanc follows the example of Arsenault by using enumeration, a common literary device, as a way of re-appropriating aspects of Acadian popular culture that were previously regarded as objects of shame. Both the

123. Gérald LeBlanc, "Dérives à partir d'Acadie Rock," epilogue to *Acadie Rock* by Guy Arsenault, (Moncton: Les éditions perce-neige, 1994), 97.

poem "Acadie expérience" and the song "Le monde qu'on connaît" make use of enumeration as a way of recognizing and celebrating elements of Acadian culture that would otherwise be ignored.

Lyrics Example 7a: Excerpt of Poem "Acadie Expérience" by Guy Arsenault[124]

Pot en pot	
Pet de soeur	pet de soeur: traditional Acadian pastry
Poutine râpée	poutine râpée: traditional Acadian meal
Pelletée de neige	
Pied dans le derrière	
Vieille musique	
Sortant d'un vieux radio	
Nous parlant d'Acadiens	
Nous chantant l'Acadie	

Lyrics Example 7b: "Le monde qu'on connaît," *1755*, lyrics by Gérald LeBlanc

Des *frippeux* d'bouteilles	frippeux: from *fripper*, to lick ("bottle lickers," heavy drinkers)
Des "tchaisseux d'taweilles"	tchaisseux: from "to chase," "chaser"/taweilles: sauvagesses (uncivilized women); together: "skirt chaser"
Des avocats d'toilettes	
Des sauteux d'*bouchures*	bouchure: Acadian expression for a fence
Des buveux d' "home-brew"	buveux: from buveur, (drinker)/home-brew: homemade beer
Et des danseux de quadrilles	danseux: from danseur, (dancer)
C'est ça l'monde qu'on connaît	the word "monde" here can either mean "world" or "people"

c) Social Commentary

Some songs deal with social issues and/or problems affecting Acadians. However, these social commentaries are often presented in a humorous manner. Though these songs can be interpreted as making light of serious problems, they nonetheless recognize the problem's existence.

For example, the song "U.I.C. (Unemployment Insurance Commission)" is a light-hearted commentary on a contemporary social problem in many Acadian regions –

124. Guy Arsenault, "Acadie Expérience," *Acadie Rock*, 30-34.

the high level of unemployment. For instance, in the fishing industry, fishermen must often claim unemployment during off-season months as the revenue earned during the summer months does not sufficiently cover living expenses for the entire year. As the verse quoted below illustrates, the lyrics seem to celebrate U.I.C., describing how "fun" claiming unemployment can be. The musical accompaniment heightens the cheerful character of the lyrics as it constitutes one of the most up-beat and jovial songs on the album.

Lyrics Example 8: "U.I.C. (Unemployment Insurance Commission)," *1755*, lyrics by Ralph Williams

Ça fait un an que je suis sur le "U.I.C."
Un ami m'a dit aujourd'hui
C'est "l'fun hein" en Acadie
Sur le "U.I.C."

Boudreau and Gammel explain that the song "'U.I.C.' conjures up a reality of poverty and dependence which is turned into an object of fun within the Acadian linguistic and cultural context, strategically curtailing and containing its bitterness in the dance of the song's rhythm. The celebratory tone and rhythm of the song is, of course, ironically double-edged, poking fun at a reality of 'U.I.C.,' even while acknowledging its dominant reality."[125] Furthermore, presenting a social issue such as unemployment in a *positive* manner reinforces the severity of the problem when compared to the reality of the situation. Suggesting that being on unemployment can be "fun" emphasizes how "un-fun" it actually is.

125. Boudreau and Gammel, "Linguistic Schizophrenia," 57.

d) The Acadian Carnival

The song "Le monde qu'on connaît" explores a topic frequently encountered in the songs of 1755: celebration. Boudreau and Gammel argue that many Acadian songs are devoted to celebration, and these project an identity "related to celebration, laughter and community."[126] Among society at large, consuming excessive quantities of alcohol can be interpreted as taboo. Here, however, drinking is an integral part of the celebration, and drinking itself is celebrated. Instead of being seen as an object of low culture and of shame, it is presented in a positive light and without judgment.

Cultural products of the neo-nationalist period embraced a populist aesthetic, uncovering and celebrating "low" culture. Acadians attempted to move away from an essentializing conception of identity based on blood relations and their French-Catholic heritage, all the while retaining notions of a distinct identity; cultural products of this period therefore tended to focus on capturing the people's way of life. Embracing "low" culture also provided the means to implicitly criticize the traditional elite and their "traditional" definition of Acadian identity.

The celebration of "low" culture resonates with the work of Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, whose concept of the carnivalesque is useful in understanding minority and marginal literary works, including those produced by Acadians. Carnival during the Renaissance was a time of "liberation from established order, suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions."[127] During the festivities of carnival, all were relieved of their official rank, allowing the peasant, for example, to

126. Boudreau and Gammel, "Linguistic Schizophrenia," 55.

127. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 10.

"poke fun" at the dominant class and its institutions. It was a time when popular groups gained a voice and used it to contest societal inequalities by inverting the structure of society and ridiculing the dominant class. By evoking a "second life" where all were of equal status, carnival became a form of popular resistance to the hegemony of the elite and to the status quo.

The term "carnivalesque" refers to the reproduction of carnival principles in literature, art, song, and even everyday life. Carnivalized writing became a characteristic found in many Acadian novels and plays,[128] its purpose being to criticize existing hegemonies and provoke social change. By creating a world where power relations were inverted and/or suspended, a world where Acadians were not maintained in a state of inferiority, writers hoped that Acadians would become aware of the disparity between the constructed world and their reality, and consequently strive to establish a more equal world.

This chapter has presented an overview of the themes and language used by 1755 to construct Acadian identity. I emphasized songs that display a significant amount of identity markers, both thematic and linguistic, due to the underlying topic of this thesis. Numerous songs exhibit more universal topics than the ones included in this chapter – love and heartbreak being the most frequently encountered. In terms of language, even though most songs make use to varying degrees of either Acadian French or chiac, in many cases combining both regional languages, some songs use a more "standard" – albeit colloquial – French. As a general tendency, local themes make use of local

128. See Denis Bourque and Anne Brown, ed, *Les littératures d'expression française d'Amérique du Nord et le carnavalesque* (Moncton: Éditions d'Acadie, 1998).

varieties of language, while universal topics will tend towards standardized French. Additionally, songs that describe urban realities have a greater tendency to draw on the urban vernacular, chiac, while songs that construct rural imagery normally employ a more archaic Acadian French. Of course, these are general practices and exceptions could easily be found. Nevertheless, the choice of language is generally determined by the images to be constructed, and vice-versa. Finally, I would argue that even in songs that do not make use of local markers, neither thematic nor linguistic, the local accent of the singers remains audible and therefore works as a symbol of identity.

As words, even words set to music, do not in themselves constitute a pop song, the next chapter will examine the music which accompanies these lyrics. While the lyrics highlight localisms in a particularly clear fashion, the music combines local and global codes in an effort to extend the notion of what constitutes Acadian music, moving away from traditional-based music and towards a more "commerical" style. As lyrics reflect the desire for cultural recognition, the music reveals the openness of 1755 to outside influences.

Chapter Four

Reinventing Tradition: The Music of 1755

Music, as a cultural product, has the ability to convey, challenge, and even *transform* existing notions of identity. However, one question remains: how does music, a "quintessentially nonrepresentational medium"[129] actually articulate and transform identity? Having examined in previous chapters the social framework in which the music of 1755 was produced and consumed as well as the role of lyrics in constructing cultural narratives, this chapter turns to the details of musical style. 1755's music is marked by two "categories" of musical codes: a domestic music tradition – Acadian music – and mass-diffused commercial music – popular music. Each category embodies a different notion of identity. The first is associated with an essentializing and overall stable conception of identity based on tradition and heritage. For Acadians, the second category involves breaking with the previous notion of identity, enabling the formation of an individually constructed identity. Combining both allows 1755 to embrace a modern identity and maintain a sense of unity that emanated from the notion of a shared tradition.

I will argue that the novelty of 1755's music was described in terms of *sound*, as the following headline illustrates: "'1755': Un *nouveau son* pour l'Acadie,"[130] and that this "new sound" was attributable to two elements: ***instrumentation*** and ***genre***. First, the

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129. Born and Hesmondhalgh, "Introduction," 1.

130. Laurent Comeau, "'1755': Un nouveau son pour l'Acadie," *L'Évangéline* 2 December 1977, my emphasis.

group used a wide variety of musical instruments, including both instruments used when performing Acadian traditional music and others associated with Anglo-American popular music. Exploring their use of instrumentation will reveal how 1755 created a new "sound" that was nonetheless recognizable as "Acadian" music. Second, the group incorporated several different musical genres ranging from "traditional" genres such as instrumental reels and *complaintes* to genres commonly associated with popular music such as rock, country, bluegrass and even disco. I will illustrate that the appropriation of music marked as belonging to the dominant culture within their domestic music practices became a solution to both their struggle for cultural recognition and their fear of folklorization. By combining various genres, each of which encoded different qualities and characteristics (both musical and social), their music was able to expand the sonic quality as well as the meaning of what was generally conceived as "Acadian" music.

Sound and Genre – In Discourse

The term "Acadian music" refers to both a musical practice and a musical style. Used to designate a specific musical practice associated with a given community, the term can apply to any kind of music, independent of the musical style, produced and consumed by Acadians. This definition of Acadian music is similar to Simon Frith's notion of genre. He argues that "it is through its generic organization that music offers people, even so-called passive at-home listeners, access to a social world, a part in some sort of social narrative."[131] Genre cannot be dissociated from the community who produces and

131. Frith, *Performing Rites*, 90.

consumes the music, and thus genre analysis should "by aesthetic necessity" take into consideration this implied community.[132]

When Acadian music indicates a specific musical style (along with its defining characteristics), it evokes a specific musical heritage. The genre "Acadian music" refers to a set of conventions which have developed into a "horizon of expectations," making it possible for listeners to recognize Acadian music when they hear it. These conventions go beyond the sonic material, and other codes can also convey "Acadian" music. As Brackett explains, "genres are not defined by characteristics of musical style alone but also by performance rituals, visual appearance, the types of social and ideological connotations associated with them, and their relationship to the material conditions of production."[133]

In chapter three, I began examining the critical discourse that developed in response to 1755's music. While the previous chapter primarily addressed lyrical content and the construction of authenticity, I now turn to the writings that involve musical style. One of the first articles written on the group, which I have quoted at length, explains that:

> Les radios américaines et québécoises ont envahi notre territoire à un tel point que l'identité acadienne se cherchait dans tous (*sic.*) ce méli-mélo d'influences musicales. Mais il fallait bien que quelqu'un prenne tout ce ramassis de traditionnel acadien, de bluegrass, de western et de rock moderne et en fasse une musique qui aurait un style nouveau. On ne peut rester au traditionnel. On ne peut non plus se laisser avoir complètement par les influences. C'est le défi qu'ont relevé quatre gars d'ici, qui nous présentent depuis le début de 1977 une *musique acadienne nouvelle* qui lie le présent au passé, en assimilant les influences plutôt que de se laisser assimiler par elle.[134]

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132. Frith, *Performing Rites*, 90.

133. David Brackett, "(In Search of) Musical Meaning: Genres, Categories and Crossover," in *Popular Music Studies*, ed. David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus (London: Arnold, 2002), 67. Even though this chapter deals primarily with characteristics of musical style, I am not implying that these alone define what constitutes Acadian music.

134. Comeau, "Un nouveau son pour l'Acadie."

This article explains a phenomenon addressed in chapter two, the advent of mass communications and its impact on "Acadian" music. What is interesting is that the author credits 1755 for having created a "new Acadian music" by combining various musical genres (both traditional and popular). Their eclectic style is interpreted as a conscious assimilation of these outside influences and not as a sign that they have *been* assimilated. Non-Acadian critics also described 1755's music as eclectic, an amalgamation of several different musical genres, both traditional and popular. Writing for *The Moncton Times*, Susan Gallant stated that their music contains "a sprinkling of traditional Acadian folk, a pinch of bluegrass and a sampling of rock, including portions of country and western sounds, folk-rock, jigs and instrumentals"[135] while Nathalie Petrowski wrote in the Montreal newspaper *Le Devoir* that "1755 agence, compose et modernise, incorporant dans le bouillonnement aussi bien le blue grass, le country, le cajun que le rock et le boogie."[136] Regarding the tendency to incorporate several different styles, the members of the group explained that their intention was to accurately represent Acadia musically, not to be limited by what was stereotypically perceived as "Acadian music," but instead to include all musics that were present in Acadia. "En ensemble, ils [les membres de 1755] diront en parlant de leur répertoire, l'Acadie on la chante comme elle est. Des complaintes, des folklores traditionnels, du rock, des bluegrass, des "gigues." "Nous prenons tout ce qu'il y a ici sans oublier l'assurance-chômage!!!" clament-ils"[137]

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135. Gallant, "Friendliness."

136. Nathalie Petrowski, "1755: L'Acadie de l'humour et du bon sens," *Le Devoir* 24 November 1978.

137. Paulin, "'1755': Un coin d'Acadie."

Two general remarks can be made in regards to these passages. First of all, 1755's music combines traditional Acadian music with musical genres associated with popular music. Second, regardless of the presence of musical characteristics that do not belong to traditional Acadian music, it remains *Acadian* music. Before theorizing on the implications of these two points, I will discuss 1755's "sound" via their instrumentation and examine the generic codes that permeate their music.

Sound and Genre – In Practice

a) Instrumentation

As the five members of the group are versatile musicians, they tend to incorporate many different instruments into their songs. With the exception of drummer Ronald Dupuis, the four other members each play several instruments, which allow them to diversify their orchestration. Table 2 lists the instrumentation for each song on their three albums – instruments written in bold letters are prominently featured.

The basis of their instrumentation is the trio that became known as the standard "rock" trio: guitar, bass and drums. Electric bass and drums are present on all 34 tracks, and only three songs do not make use of the acoustic guitar. All other instruments are only employed occasionally, with the exception of the electric guitar and fiddle, the former being featured on 22 songs and the latter, 16 songs. One can observe that the electric guitar is part of the standard instrumentation of popular music, while the fiddle is commonly associated with Acadian traditional music.

Table 2: Instrumentation for the Recordings of 1755

1755	
Song Title	**Instrumentation**
1. Hallo Joe	**clarinet**, **fiddle**, acoustic guitar, woodblock, bass, drums
2. C.B. Buddie	**fiddle**, **banjo**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
3. Confessions	**clarinet**, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
4. La toune à Louis Arsenault	**banjo**, **acoustic guitar**, bass, drums
5. Le monde qu'on connaît	**electric guitar**, **fiddle**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
6. Maudite Guerre	**fiddle**, **electric guitar**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
7. Rue Dufferin	**fiddle**, acoustic guitar, mandolin, bass, drums
8. Boire ma bouteille	**electric guitar (slide)**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
9. U.I.C.	**electric guitar**, **banjo**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
10. Le monde a bien changé	**banjo**, **harmonica**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
11. Geddap Sam	**banjo**, woodblock, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
12. Vie de fou	**electric guitar (slide)**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
13. Je chante pour toi	**electric guitar**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums

Vivre à la baie	
Song Title	**Instrumentation**
1. La gang arrive	**fiddle**, acoustic guitar, woodblock, bass, drums
2. Reel du 375e	**harmonica**, **fiddle**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
3. Mon coin de l'Acadie	**fiddle**, electric guitar, bass, drums
4. Le jardinier du couvent	**mandolin**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
5. Southville	**banjo**, **acoustic guitar** (short solo), bass, drums
6. Kouchibouguac	**fiddle**, **electric guitar**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
7. Je t'aime	**electric guitar**, claves, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
8. Vivre à la baie	**electric guitar (slide)**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
9. Le pire s'en vient	**harmonica**, electric guitar, bass, drums
10. J'ai passé toute la nuit deboute	**clarinet**, **fiddle**, acoustic guita, bass, drums r
11. Disco Banjo	**banjo**, **electric guitar**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums

Yousque t'es rendu?	
Song Title	**Instrumentation**
1. P'tite fille	**keyboards**, electric guitar, bass, drums
2. Ta chanson	acoustic guitar, electric guitar, piano, fiddle, keyboards, bass, drums
3. Yousque t'es rendue?	**fiddle**, acoustic guitar, **electric guitar**, keyboards, bass, drums
4. Samedi soir	**fiddle**, **piano**, clarinet, keyboards, bass, drums
5. J'monte à Moncton	**electric guitar**, **fiddle**, **keyboards**, acoustic guitar, bass, drums
6. Rêve d'automne	acoustic guitar, electric guitar, keyboards, bass, drums
7. Soleil	**electric guitar**, acoustic guitar, keyboards, bass, drums
8. Fille	**electric guitar**, **piano**, keyboards, wind chimes, acoustic guitar, fiddle, bass, drums
9. Cambiare	**keyboards**, electric guitar, bass, drums
10. Pour elle	**electric guitar**, **fiddle**, percussion, bass, drums

The fiddle is certainly the oldest and most common instrument in Canada, while fiddle music was an important source of dance music in rural areas until the 1960s.[138] Exactly when or how the instrument arrived in Acadia is not known. It was used as a folk dance instrument in the Poitou region of France – from where many Acadians emigrated – during the seventeenth century. In 1609, Marc Lescarbot wrote in his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* that no fiddle had yet to arrive in Acadia.[139] According to the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, "the earliest written record of violins in Canada comes from the Jesuit *Relation* of 1645: at a wedding 27 November in Quebec 'there were two violins for the first time.'"[140] Ethnologists presume that Acadians played the fiddle before 1755 as fiddle makers were found in villages established after the Deportation.[141]

More than any other instrument, the fiddle represents "traditional Acadian music" for the contemporary Acadian public, a statement confirmed in Jean-Marc Robichaud's thesis "La musique comme stratégie identitaire: territorialisation de la pratique musicale du groupe acadien 1755." While conducting interviews as part of his fieldwork, Robichaud asked what made the music of 1755 "Acadian," to which many answered the use of the fiddle.[142] However, many fiddle passages incorporated in 1755's songs are not executed in a "traditional" idiom. Example 2 illustrates these differences.

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138. Anne Lederman, "Fiddling," *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, online edition http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com, accessed June 30, 2005.

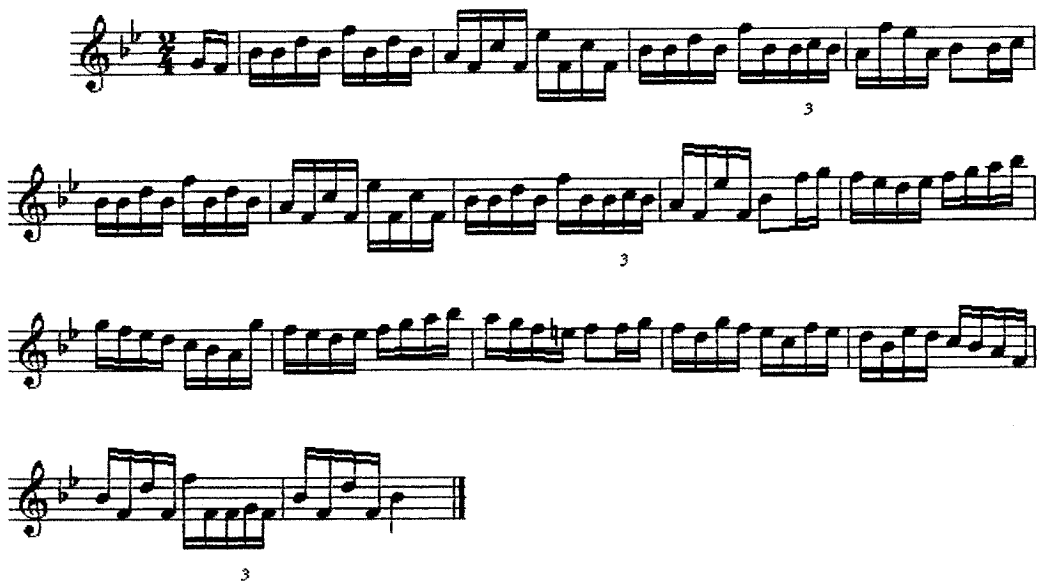
139. Gérard Dôle, *Histoire musicale des Acadiens: De la Nouvelle-France à la Louisiane: 1604-1804* (Paris: Éditions l'Hartmann, 1995), 84.

140. Lederman, "Fiddling."

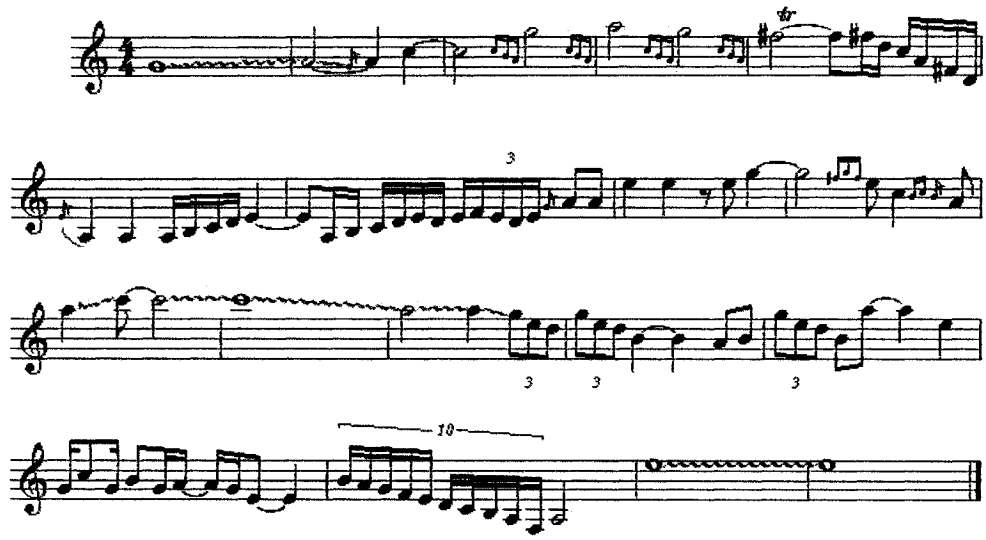
141. Anselme Chiasson *et al.*, "Acadian Folklore," in *Acadia of the Maritimes*, 673.

142. Jean-Marc Robichaud, "La musique comme stratégie identitaire: territorialisation de la pratique musicale du groupe acadien 1755," (M.A. Diss., Université de Montréal, 1998), 74.

Musical Example 2a: "Hallo Joe," *1755*, fiddle (1:03-1:18)



Musical Example 2b: "Le monde qu'on connaît," *1755*, fiddle (0:58-1:32)[143]



143. This passage contains many pitch inflections which are difficult to notate. I have indicated where these inflections occur by using glissandi symbols. A glissando between two same notes indicates an inflection in pitch.

Example 2 compares the treatment of the fiddle in "Hallo Joe" to "Le monde qu'on connaît," both songs from the album *1755*. The stylistic differences can be attributed to the fiddle's differing role in both songs. In "Hallo Joe," a traditional instrumental song, the fiddle shares with the clarinet the role of lead melodic instrument, a role carried out by the voice in the second song. Traditionally, fiddle music primarily accompanied dancing, especially reels and jigs – Scottish dances that were assimilated into the French-Canadian repertoire – as well as quadrilles, a French-Canadian dance. Later, the influence of American country music and bluegrass transformed the role of fiddler from soloist to accompanist by adding a singer "to what had been primarily an instrumental format."[144]

"Hallo Joe" constitutes an example of traditional French-Canadian fiddling style. The melody maintains an even, 16th-note pulse with small ornamentations, and the bowing is limited to single-note strokes (with occasional two-note slurs).[145] In some cases, fiddle solos incorporated in a popular music song often borrow stylistic features from traditional fiddling. In others, the fiddle moves away from traditional playing and experiments with different musical styles, effects, and so forth. The melody of the fiddle solo featured in "Le monde qu'on connaît" is much more irregular in pulse, ranging from long, sustained notes to 16th-note passages. The passage also contains embellishments such as ornaments, trills, pitch-inflections and changes in tone.

In addition, each song makes use of different types of harmony. The harmony in the first song is organized according to what Richard Middleton calls the open/closed

144. Lederman, "Fiddling."

145. *Ibid.*

principle,[146] an example of functional harmony in art music terminology. The section transcribed as example 2 contains two periods. In the first period, both phrases end with a movement from the dominant to the tonic and the resolution of the leading tone, which creates a sense of closure. This period constitutes an example of a closed/closed pairing. The second period is paired according to the more common open/closed principle. The first phrase ends on a dominant chord (preceded by a secondary dominant chord which enhances the effect) which is resolved at the beginning of the next phrase, while the cadence (or closure) arrives only at the end of the second phrase. In contrast, "Le monde qu'on connaît" does not make use of functional harmony. The solo is played over an open-ended two-bar Am-G vamp in the Dorian mode. Because the Dorian mode has no leading tone and hence no dominant chord (the basis of functional harmony), no harmonic tension is created by the succession of these two chords, and the result is an open-ended progression.

Table 3: Comparison between fiddle solos in "Hallo Joe" and "Le monde qu'on connaît": Summary of musical characteristics

Song	**"Hallo Joe"**	**"Le monde qu'on connaît"**
Role	lead melodic instrument	feature solo, accompaniment overall
Style	traditional fiddling (stylized dance song)	rock solo
Melody/pulse	regular 16th note pulse	irregular, ornaments, trills, pitch-inflection
Mode	Bb major (Ionian)	A Dorian
Harmonic progression	Functional, Open/closed principle	Non-functional, Open-ended

146. Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1990), 217.

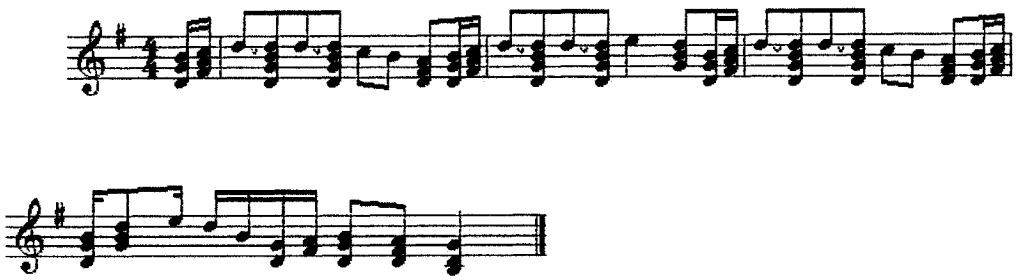
The harmonica was also commonly featured in traditional Acadian music. The instrument "came into being in Vienna in the mid-1820s"[147] and arrived in Canada during the second half of the nineteenth century, its rapid importation to Canada due to "its small size, modest cost, and relative ease of mastery."[148] Like the fiddle, the harmonica was traditionally used to accompany folkdances. However, it is also employed in popular music, especially in genres such as country music and blues, and singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan and Neil Young have incorporated harmonica passages into their songs. Therefore, it has the ability to evoke several musical genres depending on the style in which it is played. For example, in the instrumental "Reel du 375e," from the album *Vivre à la baie*, the harmonica is featured as the lead instrument (along with the fiddle). As the title reveals, the song is a reel (although it is newly-composed), and as explained earlier its traditional function was to accompany dancing. In contrast, the harmonica in "Le monde a bien changé," from *1755*, is used sparingly and in a style closer to what would be heard in popular music. Example 3, which compares the harmonica parts in "Reel du 375e" and "Le monde a bien changé," illustrates these differences. The melody of the first song generally follows a steady eight-note rhythmic pattern, and the harmonica plays full chords, since during most of the song it constitutes the only instrument besides the bass and drums. In the second song, the harmonica is used more melodically, playing one note at a time (although a third above or below the melodic note is sometimes audible). Furthermore, the melody is shaped with long, sustained notes. The

147. Ivor Beynon, G. Romani, and Christoph Wagner, "Harmonica," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 10 (New York: Macmillan Press, 2001), 852.

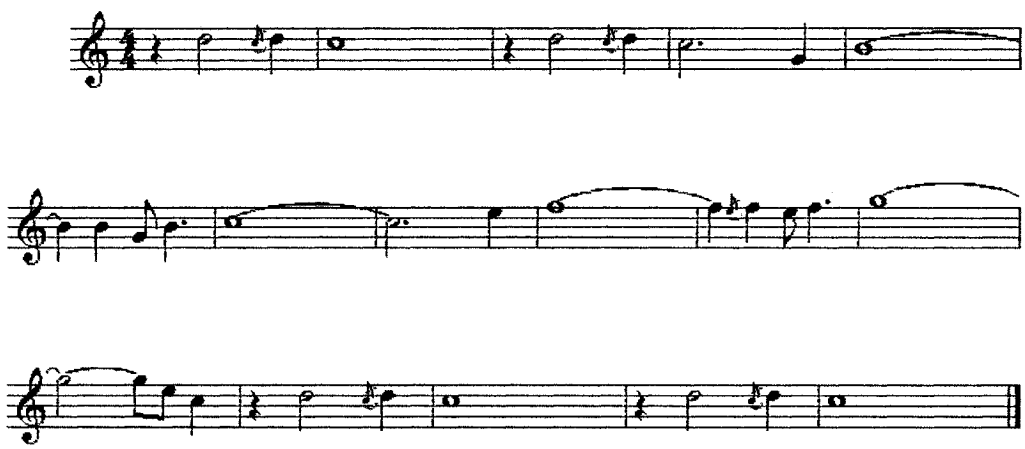
148. "Harmonica," *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, online edition.

harmonica only appears twice in the song (0:15-22 and 1:30-1:58), both times playing the same melody.

Musical Example 3a: "Reel du 375e," *Vivre à la baie*, harmonica (0:15-0:22)



Musical Example 3b: "Le monde a bien changé," *1755*, harmonica (0:34-0:53)



The mandolin is listed in *Acadia of the Maritimes* as a traditional Acadian instrument.[149] However, it is not as commonly encountered as the fiddle and the harmonica, and whether or not the Acadian public associates its use with traditional music is questionable. Most likely, the presence of the mandolin, along with the banjo which has no relation to traditional Acadian music, is attributable to the influence of bluegrass music, which was particularly popular in Nova Scotia during the 1970s.

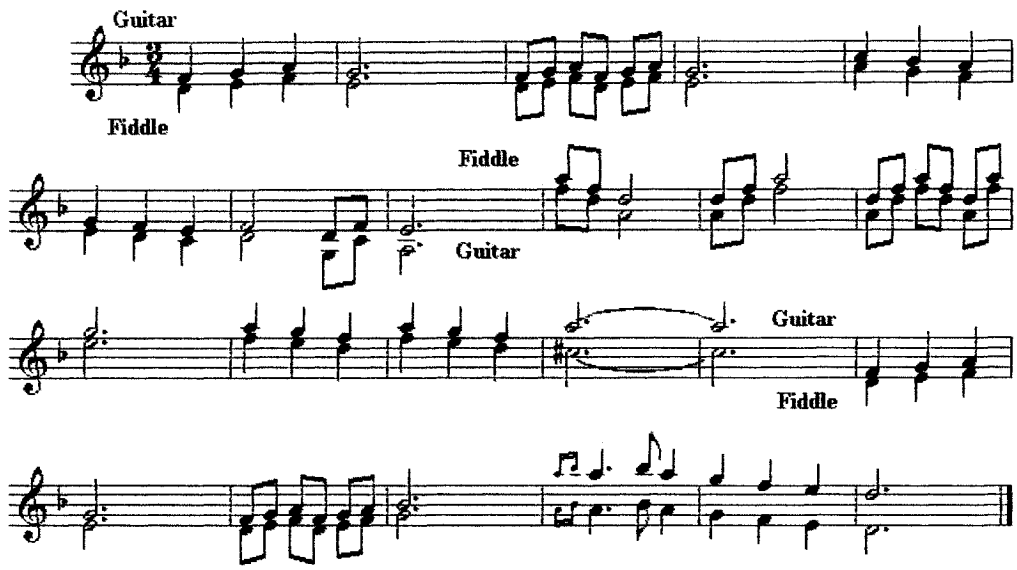
Finally, the clarinet is frequently heard in 1755's music but has no ties to either Acadian or any other genre of traditional music found in the Maritime Provinces. However, the instrument was not completely foreign to Acadians as it was part of concert bands – also known as *fanfares* or *harmonies* – which were extremely popular in Acadia until the final decades of the twentieth-century.

Besides the diversity of instruments used by the group – combining "traditional" and "non-traditional" instruments – or the specific way they are played – evoking genre conventions by either adhering to or transgressing these norms – a third element regarding instrumentation must be taken into account: the juxtaposition of different sounds. Although the simple use within a song of both "traditional" and non-traditional instruments may suffice for the song to exemplify the tradition/modern dichotomy, in some cases the dichotomy is embodied in a single sound, a sound that is the result of the juxtaposition of two different instruments. Two recurring combinations are clarinet/fiddle ("Hallo Joe," "J'ai passé toute la nuit deboute") and electric guitar/fiddle ("Le monde qu'on connaît," "La maudite guerre," "Kouchibouguac," "Fille," and "Pour elle"). Example 4 is a transcription of the electric guitar/fiddle solo featured in the song "Kouchibouguac." For the first twenty bars of the solo (which precede the passage

149. Chiasson, *et al.*, "Acadian Folklore," 674.

transcribed below), only the fiddle is featured. Once the guitar makes its entrance, both instruments are harmonized at the third until the final four bars where they play at the octave. The guitar plays the higher part during the first phrase, which consists of eight bars, and then they switch parts for the next eight bars before returning to their initial position for the final phrase. The tone of both instruments blends well together, creating a distinct sound, and it is not always clearly audible that two *different* instruments are playing simultaneously.

Musical Example 4: "Kouchibouguac," *Vivre à la baie*, fiddle and guitar (1:58-2:49)



b) Genre

As stated earlier, 1755 makes use of instruments associated with two categories of genres: genres connected to traditional Acadian music, and genres related to Anglo-

American popular music. Different genres have different conventions of instrumentation, and the use of a particular instrument (or combination of instruments) has the ability to evoke a particular genre. Depending on the idiom in which the instrument plays, it can either reinforce or challenge the genre conventions, thus complicating the possibility of meaning generated by the sound in question. Furthermore, by incorporating an instrument normally associated with "traditional" music, for example, into a "popular" genre (and vice-versa), it not only marks the presence of that instrument as "unconventional" but also distorts the standard meaning associated with the given genre.

When 1755 emerged onto the Acadian music scene, popular music within that scene was still characterized by a traditional sound. Originally, traditional music had allowed Acadians to take part in the music industry, and until 1755 there had been very few attempts to move away from a folk idiom. Perhaps more importantly, Acadian artists had only explored popular genres through imitation – country and western was particularly popular – and these cases did not carry the label of "Acadian music." 1755 was the first group that moved away from a strictly folk style and whose music continued to be considered "Acadian," thereby renegotiating the boundaries of Acadian music itself.

The music of 1755 makes use of several different genres associated with both "traditional" and "popular" music practices. The songs on the first album are difficult to classify in terms of genre. Many different generic codes are evoked throughout the album, and each individual song can contain references to more than one genre. The generic ambiguity is perhaps best illustrated by the lack of genre terminology employed in the album review of *1755*.[150] In contrast, the review for *Vivre à la baie*, which was written by the same person, contains at least one generic reference per song, which I have

150. Langis, "1755: Une autre conquête."

compiled as Table 4.[151] Although the songs on *Vivre à la baie* may seem easier to classify, the album as a whole combines a variety of genres. Furthermore, the errors contained in the review for *Vivre à la baie* regarding genre terminology illustrate the difficulty in labeling their music. For example, Langis, the reviewer, labeled "Reel du 375e" a gigue when, as the title indicates, it constitutes a reel.[152] Also, he categorized "Vivre à la baie" as a complainte, a song closer in style to a country ballad and which does not make use of any stylistic conventions associated with the genre in question, but avoided the term with "Le jardininer du couvent," which constitutes an actual complainte.

Table 4: Genre Classification in Langis's review of *Vivre à la baie*

Vivre à la baie	
Song Title	**Genre**
1. La gang arrive	country western
2. Reel du 375e	gigue
3. Mon coin de l'Acadie	country rock
4. Le jardinier du couvent	folk traditionnel
5. Southville	bluegrass
6. Kouchibouguac	complainte
7. Je t'aime	latino pop
8. Vivre à la baie	complainte
9. Le pire s'en vient	country rock
10. J'ai passé toute la nuit deboute	country western
11. Disco Banjo	pièce instrumentale (disco)

151. Langis, "1755 vivra!"

152. One of the main differences between the two genres is the meter, a reel being in duple meter and a gigue in triple. As illustrated in example 3a, "Reel du 375e" is indeed in duple meter. However, as both are instrumental dance genres, a person lacking formal musical training could easily confuse a reel for a gigue, and vice-versa.

In order to illustrate the treatment of genre conventions in the music of 1755, I will examine the case of the song "Kouchibouguac." To begin, "Kouchibouguac" is an example of a newly-composed complainte. A complainte is a locally-composed traditional genre (as opposed to a genre that was brought over from France) commonly encountered in Acadian folksongs. What characterizes the complainte in terms of lyrical content is the use of a first-person narrator who normally tells the tale of a tragic event (common themes are death, accidents, shipwrecks, sickness, and suffering). The opening line announces the genre by asking the addressees to gather around and listen as the narrator announces that he or she is going to tell a story. For example, "Le jardinier du couvent" opens with "Écoutez jeunes filles et garçons/Je vais vous chanter une chanson." In terms of musical conventions, the song is in triple meter, in strophic form, and in a minor mode, often the Dorian mode.[153]

"Kouchibouguac" was originally composed for the soundtrack of a documentary on the events that occurred in the town of Kouchibouguac in 1968. Kouchibouguac National Park, located in the town that shares its name, was scheduled to open in 1969. The previous year, a number of families (mostly Acadian) living on land which was to become part of the park were ordered to relocate by the federal government. Jackie Vautour and his family refused to leave their home unless the government gave them 150 000$ in indemnities. The federal government offered them 20 670$ and finally destroyed their home in 1976.[154] The cause of Jackie Vautour resonated with many

153. Donald Deschênes, "La chanson locale acadienne: Une expression artistique folklorique," *Francophonies d'Amérique* 5 (1995): 11-22.

154. Landry and Lang 2001, 292.

Acadians, and the situation became interpreted as a contemporary "deportation," as once again Acadians were forced to leave their land.

The song "Kouchibouguac" borrows a traditional genre to tell the tale of a contemporary "tragedy." In accordance with the generic conventions of the complainte, the narrator announces that he is going to tell a story.

Lyrics Example 9: "Kouchibouguac," *Vivre à la baie*, lyrics by Gérald LeBlanc

Écoutez tous petits et grands
La chanson d'un grand malheur
C'est l'histoire des pauvres gens
Expropriés de leurs terres

Rather than alternating between verse and chorus, as could be expected in a popular song, the song is in strophic form. In addition, the use of the Dorian mode and the triple meter enables the listener to identify the song as a complainte. However, musical elements that would normally not be associated with the genre are introduced throughout the song. Besides the use of electric guitar, bass and drums, instruments that would not normally be encountered in a complainte, an instrumental interlude and postlude make use of musical elements foreign to the genre in question. For example, the interlude (1:58-2:50) features the fiddle/electric guitar solo transcribed as example 4. In addition, the piece ends with a significant electric guitar solo that lasts over one minute (in a five-minute song). During the solo, the electric guitar explores different sound qualities commonly used by rock guitarists, such as altering the sound by increasing and diminishing the volume of each note (with the use of the volume pedal), and by using distortion. Though the same backdrop heard throughout the piece accompanies most of

the electric guitar solo, the accompaniment changes to a jazz shuffle during the second part of the solo.

Table 5: "Kouchibouguac," instrumental postlude (3:50-5:08)

Time	Melody	Sound Effects	Accompaniment
3:50-4:08	electric guitar solo	effect created by playing with volume knob	original accompaniment
4:09-4:29	solo continues	use of distortion	jazz shuffle
4:30-5:08	solo continues	less distortion	original accompaniment returns

Sound and Genre – In Theory

The diffusion of Anglo-American popular music had an important impact on domestically produced musics, including music produced in Acadia by Acadians. The result, what has been dubbed "Acadian" popular music, combined elements associated with both musical contexts. While examining the music of 1755 has illustrated the musical result of combining the codes associated with these contexts, it provided little insight into the reasons behind the hybrid nature of Acadian popular music. In order to understand the influence of Anglo-American popular music on domestic Acadian music, I will offer three theoretical explanations.

For the first explanation, I draw on literary genre theory, specifically Opacki's notion of "royal genres." According to Opacki (who was influenced by the earlier genre theories of the Russian formalists), each literary current develops a hierarchy of genres containing dominant and secondary genres. A royal genre – or dominant genre – refers to

a genre that "stood at the peak of the contemporary hierarchy of literary genres" and that "best rendered the aspirations of the period."[155] He argues that "a literary genre, entering, in the course of evolution, the field of a particular literary trend, will enter into a very close 'blood relationship' with the form of the royal genre that is particular to that current."[156] Bakhtin offers a similar explanation, stating that during the periods when the novel was the dominant genre, "almost all the remaining genres are to a greater or lesser extent 'novelized.'"[157] If we are to apply this paradigm to the context of Acadian musical production, Anglo-American popular music (and its many forms) clearly constitutes the royal/dominant "genre." Therefore, in order for Acadian music to enter the field of popular music, it would need to incorporate stylistic features from the dominant genre.

The problem with Opacki's theory is that it ignores what caused the hybridization as well as its implications. According to Opacki, the reason a genre would enter into a "close blood relationship" with a royal genre is simply that the latter is "representative for the general poetics of that trend." By examining hybridization strictly from a formalist perspective, in other words by disregarding context, it offers no explanation as to *why* a genre would incorporate some of the underlying characteristics of the royal/dominant genre, nor does it consider how this affected the underlying meaning of both genres. Examining the context in which the work (or genre) emerged could help answer questions such as why a given genre best renders the aspirations of that period, what

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155. Ireneusz Opacki, "Royal Genres," in *Modern Genre Theory* ed. David Duff (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 120.

156. *Ibid.*, 121.

157. Mikhail Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," in *Modern Genre Theory*, 71.

motivated secondary genres to venture into the field of the dominant genre, and how the hybridization transformed the significance of the genre in question.

For the second explanation, I resort to a concept familiar in cultural studies – the concept of cultural homogenization, or cultural imperialism.[158] In its simplest form, homogenization (within the musical sphere) can be defined as the disappearance of local music idioms due to the advent of a dominant musical culture, in this case, following the emergence of mass communications and the diffusion of Anglo-American popular music to a large audience. Although both theories account for the same process – the cultural homogenization paradigm could be considered the Marxist counterpart to Opacki's formalist approach – the difference with the second explanation is that it attributes the influence of the dominant cultural form to unequal power relations rather than the idea that one genre best renders the aspirations of a given period.

Cultural hybridization is often interpreted as a local music tradition's attempt to compete with the dominant music market, where incorporating the dominant musical style represents an effort "to compete economically and culturally for 'space' and 'time' – i.e. tradition – within the hegemonic structures of the prevailing industry."[159] Even though the argument of cultural homogenization can be convincing when considering the larger picture, it denies the possibility of actors *consciously* appropriating characteristics of the dominant musical trend and adapting them to their specific cultural situation. This argument inadvertently conceives of cultures as being static rather than fluid. As Larkey observes, "when imported musical and cultural innovations are mixed with domestic

158. Timothy D. Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (New York and London : Routledge, 1997).

159. Larkey, "Austropop," 153.

styles and traditions, these new styles and conventions are ultimately created. These, in turn, form a primary thrust in the cultivation and development of innovations in musical traditions, which eventually evolve into changes in the cultural identity of the particular country," or in this case the particular ethno-linguistic community.[160]

The third explanation specifically applies to the context of Acadian music and culture. As explained earlier, Acadian cultural products from the so-called neo-nationalist period were responding to fears of assimilation *and* folklorization. Furthermore, I argued in the previous chapter that Acadian poets would often resort to code-switching as a means to demarcate themselves from writers from Quebec and France as well as to make claims to a "modern" identity. According to Raoul Boudreau, "les poètes plurilingues manifestent évidemment une volonté d'autonomisation par rapport à la France et au Québec en marquant les particularités qui les différencient, et une de ces particularités, c'est la perméabilité aux influences extérieures, notamment américaines et anglophones."[161] Acadian identity has always been defined in relation to Anglophone and later Anglo-American culture. Rather than reinforce the boundaries between the two cultures, some Acadian writers have embraced Anglo-American influences as a way of distancing themselves from France – "the mother country" – and Quebec, thereby forging a defining trait of their poetics. The same argument applies to the field of popular music. The appropriation of Anglo-American music by 1755 was likely motivated by the desire to affirm a modern identity. The challenge they faced was, however, to embrace a modern music practice while continuing to convey a sense of distinctiveness, and this was achieved by incorporating traditional music traits into a popular music idiom. As a

160. Larkey, "Austropop," 151.

161. Boudreau, "Le rapport à la langue," 169.

result, they not only *reinvented* what was viewed as "Acadian" music, but also contributed to defining a modern Acadian identity.

Rather than emphasizing a collective past (while, at the same time, not denying a shared tradition), the cultural narrative constructed by 1755's music focused on the present, highlighting the distinctiveness of Acadian culture but without returning to an essentialist concept of Acadian identity. Furthermore, it began to replace a fixed notion of identity based on ethnicity with a more fluid view of identity as community. Henceforth, Acadian identity became understood as the distinct reality of a group of people living as a French-language minority in the Maritime Provinces, rather than as a question of genealogy.

Conclusion

Acadian society underwent a great deal of change over the course of the twenty years from 1960 to 1980. During the 1960s, Robichaud's objective as Premier of New Brunswick was the recognition of Acadians as *equal citizens*. Rather than seeking to protect Acadians by cultivating a self-sufficient society, he promoted their integration with existing societal structures. Through his "Equal Opportunities" program, he had the provincial government assume responsibility for institutions previously managed by the private sector in order to ensure equal services to all citizens of New Brunswick. Although the Acadian public acknowledged the necessity of Robichaud's reforms, the loss of control over their own institutions combined with the rapid transformations of their traditional way of life gave way to a sense of cultural alienation. In response to the lack of recognition of their cultural specificity, the 1970s was devoted to defining and asserting their *identity*.

Cultural products prominently contributed to the "affirmation-definition" of Acadian identity. The 1970s was a period rich in artistic production, and the need for cultural recognition encouraged Acadian artists during this period to incorporate local themes and images into their work. Music was particularly effective in conveying Acadian identity. Because people respond both physically and emotionally to music, it enables the almost-literal *feeling* of individual and collective identities. Besides providing

an understanding of *who* Acadians were, "Acadian" music also cultivated a sense of belonging to a group.

The survival of minority cultures often depends on the ability to balance tradition and modernity, in other words to maintain a distinct identity without remaining sheltered from the dominant culture. It is no coincidence that the notion of "Acadian" popular music emerged at a point when Acadians were attempting to define their identity. The emergence of "Acadian" popular music allowed Acadians to maintain a distinct identity all the while taking part in a larger cultural practice. More specifically, it enabled them to find a balance between preserving their heritage and embracing a more, modern identity.

The emergence of Acadian popular music took place in four steps. First of all, Acadians were exposed to Anglo-American popular music. Second, they began to imitate the dominant culture. Specifically, the American folk revival movement, combined with the dissemination of Acadian folklore due to advancements in ethnology, inspired Acadian artists to record their folklore, and this enabled them to take part in the music industry. Third, the development of a French-language music industry based in Quebec brought the "de-anglicization" of popular music, not only by encouraging French-language popular music, but also by evaluating this music according to its own standards rather than comparing it to Anglo-American models. Finally, the struggle for cultural survival that Acadians were facing during the 1970s brought the need for Acadian artists to contribute to their community. The legitimacy of artists became evaluated according to two factors: place of production and "Acadian" content. Those who resided outside "Acadia" were accused of perpetuating a folkloric stereotype, while those who lived within the geographic boundaries faced the danger of creating an "ethnic" artwork.

The music of 1755 significantly contributed to the construction of Acadian identity. Like other cultural products produced during the 1970s, the desire for cultural recognition inspired the group to explore what it *meant* to be Acadian, and a wide array of identity markers permeate their lyrics and music. One of the differences between 1755 and other Acadian artists was their desire to explore Acadians' contemporary way of life rather than their traditional identity, thereby providing an alternative cultural narrative. Though the past is not completely absent from their music, as the choice of a historic date as their title illustrates, their music represented their own understanding of what it meant to be Acadian in the 1970s.

In light of 1755's ongoing success, examining the cultural narratives constructed in their lyrics provided useful insight into issues of identity. An overview of their critical reception revealed that their lyrics were viewed as "authentically" portraying Acadian reality, especially that of Acadians in South-Eastern New Brunswick. Analyzing their lyrics revealed that these contained a significant amount of identity markers. Some identity markers were embodied in the language of the lyrics, or in elements such as accent and the use of regional varieties of language. Other identity markers were incorporated into the lyrics themselves, and these were organized into four categories: naming places, describing people's way of life, social commentary, and celebration. Naming and describing Acadian regions not only embedded the music in a particular place, but it also reflected a desire to re-appropriate, at least within the realm of the imaginary, the land that the Acadian people lost following the Deportation. A particular emphasis was placed on describing the reality of *urban* Acadians and their way of life. Some songs simply depicted urban landscapes, while others discussed the social

conditions related to urban life. However, even when serious social issues were evoked in a song, these were always presented in a humorous manner. By making light of a serious problem, it not only acknowledged the problem's existence, but also stressed its severity when the fictitious rendering was compared to the reality of the situation. Besides naming places and describing people, their lyrics re-appropriated and celebrated elements of popular culture that were previously regarded as objects of shame. Overall, they were perceived as expressing contemporary Acadian reality by using the language of the people. By celebrating Acadian culture, 1755's music contributed to eradicating a sense of cultural inferiority that resulted from being a minority culture.

A close examination of 1755's music revealed that it embodies two different categories of musical codes: those associated either with traditional Acadian music or with Anglo-American popular music. The group's distinctive sound is the result of combining a variety of instruments related to both "traditional" and "popular" musics. Their music, which can be described in a qualified way as eclectic, draws on a diversity of musical genres, often combining codes pertaining to different genres within a single song. In general, 1755 incorporated elements associated with traditional Acadian music into a popular music idiom. Though combining "traditional" and "commercial" music could easily have resulted in accusations of "inauthenticity," an overview of their critical reception illustrated that the Acadian public, as represented by local music critics, never doubted that this music was inherently "Acadian." Nevertheless, renegotiating the stylistic conventions of Acadian music – its sound – also affected its *meaning*. The balance between "local" and "universal" codes in 1755's music reflected an ideal Acadians were attempting to achieve in terms of their identity. As their music was part of

a "universal" cultural practice (within the Western World), it became a symbol of Acadian modernity. At the same time, it recognized, and even celebrated, Acadian distinctiveness. As 1755's music alleviated fears of acculturation and folklorization, it became perceived as a meaningful cultural product and contributed to the legitimization of Acadian popular music.

In conclusion, this thesis examined the relationship between music and Acadian identity by studying a specific case, namely 1755's music. Due to the lack of initial research on Acadian music, many different issues were addressed, most of which could have benefited from further development. Nevertheless, I am hoping that it will inspire further research on Acadian popular music in general as well as on the role of music in constructing and conveying Acadian identity, and I would like to suggest a few areas that, in my opinion, could be explored. To begin, no history of Acadian popular music currently exists, and a work addressing the chronological and stylistic evolution of Acadian music would constitute a useful tool for scholars. In addition, the role of the media in the reception of Acadian artists would be an interesting topic to pursue. Examining recurring cultural narratives, and, in particular, the construction of place, would provide insight into issues of identity. The correlation between place of production and "Acadian" content could also be further investigated. Finally, as the current generation of Acadian artists are exploring musical genres more and more diverse (genres such as hip hop, world-music, punk, jazz, along with pop, rock, and country), the notion of "Acadian" music in itself would require querying.

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