Markers of Collective Identity in Loyalist and Acadian Speeches of the 1880s: A Comparative Analysis[1]

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a research project comparing the speeches and sermons of Acadians and descendants of the Saint John Loyalists in the 1880s. At this pivotal moment in New Brunswick history, Loyalist descendants were celebrating a century of survival and progress while Acadians were regrouping after a century of silence. Each group sought to assert its place in a rapidly evolving society. Since neither group could claim for itself a specific geographic territory or a centralized government, a collective identity could be shaped only through the recognition of common values, a shared past, and a collective future. Using text analysis software programs Hyperbase and Sphinx, we explore the lexical worlds by which Loyalist descendants and Acadians expressed their collective identities, and we compare the specific traits and discursive strategies in each of these groups.

Résumé

Cet article présente les résultats d'un projet de recherche qui avait pour objectif de comparer les sermons et discours des Acadiens et des descendants des Loyalistes de Saint-Jean (N.-B.) pendant les années 1880. Il s'agit d'un moment déterminant dans l'histoire des deux peuples; les descendants des Loyalistes commémoraient leur arrivée à Saint-Jean en 1783 et les Acadiens mettaient fin à cent ans de silence collectif par les Conventions nationales acadiennes (1881, 1884 et 1890). Chaque groupe tentait de se forger une place au sein d'une société en évolution en cette fin de siècle. Cependant, puisque ces groupes sociaux ne pouvaient rattacher leur identité à un territoire officiel ou un gouvernement centralisé, leur identité collective reposait fondamentalement sur la reconnaissance de valeurs communes, d'un passé partagé et d'un avenir collectif. Par les logiciels d'analyse de données textuelles Sphinx et Hyperbase, nous explorons les mondes lexicaux par lesquels les descendants de Loyalistes et les Acadiens exprimaient leur identité collective et nous comparons les traits et les stratégies discursives spécifiques à chaque groupe.

Introduction

In the second half of the eighteenth century, two diasporas redefined the Maritime region of what is now Canada. These were the deportation of the Acadians from the former colony of New France, Acadie, and the exile of the Loyalists from the newly established United States of America. Such dramatic experiences inevitably invoked reflection by the descendants of the survivors, who drew upon their troubled pasts to establish their identity and sense of agency as Acadians and Loyalists. Although these two social groups shared similar preoccupations around the preservation of the past (Reid 139–42), Acadians and the descendants of the New Brunswick Loyalists created very different historical narratives. In this article, we explore their discursive strategies and what those reveal about how these two peoples conceptualized their collective identities.

Theoretical Background

Pérez-Agote, in his study of collective European identities, specifies that national identity is usually assumed to refer to a centralized government and a geographically defined territory. He also recognizes the existence of another type of nationalism, one that is more subtle and complex, which he names "peripheral nationalism." This type of nationalism is characterized by a movement to politicize ethnic identity in the context of a failed nation. It can be applied to ethnic groups (sharing a common language and culture) who do not succeed in creating a nation or whose nation is lost. Since they lack a geographic or political identity, these groups must rely on other means of ensuring social cohesion. These means may include expressing a shared past (a shared story, in the sense of oral or written transmission), shared values, and shared goals for the future.

A number of studies of political and nationalistic discourse, which have guided this study, have been published in the field of computer-aided text analysis. In Quebec and Canada, Labbé and Monière ("Les mots," "Quelle") have analyzed the speeches of Quebec premiers as well as Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper; in France, Damon Mayaffre ("1781," "Paroles," "Quand") has published numerous lexical analyses of French politicians; and Pascal Marchand as well as Monnoyer and Marchand have examined political speeches of the French prime ministers of the Fifth Republic. Studies of American and British politicians using computer-aided text analysis include the recent analysis of Barack Obama's speeches by MacMurray and Jacques Savoy and a study of the speeches of Tony Blair by Arnold. All of the above studies are based on computer-aided text analysis methods and, as such, have informed our theoretical approach, but none are of political discourse from peripheral nations, nor do they compare texts written in two distinct languages by different populations within the same nation.

Conceptualizing Loyalist descendants and Acadians as coexisting peripheral nations in New Brunswick at the end of the nineteenth century offers a new way of perceiving Canada's only bilingual province. While there is research on the evolution of the Loyalist myth in New Brunswick (Barkley), and on the ideology informing the Acadian Renaissance (Hautecœur; C.-A. Richard), there is no work that compares the national discourses and discursive strategies of Loyalist descendants and Acadians. We recognize that such a comparison is tricky given the cultural and linguistic differences, but it can offer insights into how these two groups perceived themselves. It also serves as a starting point for a broader research project that will eventually examine other expressions of collective identity among Acadians and Loyalist descendants into the 1930s. Such analyses not only inform our understanding of New Brunswick's past, but also offer insights into how New Brunswickers continue to understand themselves in the present.

The challenges of comparing the collective discourses of these two distinct New Brunswick cultures in this way are twofold. First, as we elaborate below, the documents we analyzed differ in their nature: the Loyalist Centennial is a commemorative occasion while the *Conventions nationales acadiennes* (hereafter CNA) are nation-building events complete with commissions and reports on various issues. Secondly, in a general sense, during the 1880s, Acadians and Loyalist descendants occupied different socioeconomic ranks in New Brunswick and neither group was internally homogeneous. Indeed, since most Acadians had very limited access to political power, they developed a national identity centred on a unifying ideology and symbolic markers. While descendants of the Saint John Loyalists also faced economic challenges and uncertainties generated by New Brunswick's integration into the Canadian economy, they nonetheless expressed

considerable optimism that they would thrive in an increasingly industrialized world (Jones). Because Loyalist descendants were over-represented in the ranks of the civic elite in the late nineteenth century (Jones), they had access to power structures in New Brunswick and used them to sustain their ascendancy.[2] They did not comprise a *nation* in the same way that Acadians perceived themselves, but their Loyalist ancestors such as Edward Winslow had expressed an interest in creating in New Brunswick a society that would be the envy of the American states (Condon). Within a generation of arriving in New Brunswick, most Loyalists had abandoned such unrealistic dreams, lacking the resources to sustain them. Moreover, although the Loyalist myth in New Brunswick has consistently portrayed the Loyalists as a homogenous elite transplanted from the Atlantic seaboard, they were from the beginning a very heterogeneous population. Thus, by the 1880s, Loyalist descendants, like the Acadians, were trying to reimagine themselves in ways that legitimized their status, particularly in the context of a rapidly changing industrial, political, and social order.

It is in this environment that Acadians began to emerge from a century of silence and exile. In an attempt to remedy their exclusion from most power structures of the time, a small group of educated Acadians set about creating their own social, political, and economic structures (Robidoux xvii). With the help of their French-Canadian neighbours, they began to shape an ideology that would preserve a distinct Acadian culture based on language, religion, and common French roots.[3] The lack of a geographic territory was not a hindrance to their persistent sense of cultural and historical identity. In practical terms, gains were slow and hard-earned, but a handful of politicians and priests began putting in place elements of an Acadian nationalism largely based on a past of mythical proportions (C. Richard). This would lay the foundation for literary, artistic, and cultural expressions that still persist to this day.

How Acadians and Loyalists conceptualized their collective identities thus provides insight not only into how many New Brunswickers imagine themselves, but also into the process of nation-building among discrete components of a larger Canadian society. By capturing the main themes that Loyalist descendants and Acadians prioritized in their discourse through our extraction of keywords, we can begin to analyze the specific and common preoccupations of each group. Specific morphosyntactic traits, including the prevalence of certain verb tenses and the use of deictic words such as pronouns, can reveal a great deal about how the speakers positioned themselves in relation to their perceived audience.

Historical Context

Acadians and Loyalists in New Brunswick have a similar and parallel history. Both groups were persecuted in the second half of the eighteenth century when they refused to accommodate themselves to prevailing power structures. On the losing side of North Atlantic struggles for ascendancy, each suffered the loss or abandonment of their homeland and saw their families torn asunder. Both groups had been exposed to similar Western European cultural models, in which religion and state formation figured prominently, and each was obliged to reconstruct communities and identities within the shadows of their former enemies. Collective narratives around historical memory of a traumatic event in the past offered a unique way for each group to redefine itself.

Since the establishment of the first French colony in North America in 1604, Acadians have had a long history of political instability which, at least in part, came to define them. This political instability lasted more than a century, as the people living in the borderland variously called Mi'kma'ki, Acadia, and Nova Scotia found themselves passed back and forth between England and

France. In 1713, France ceded mainland Acadia to the British by the Treaty of Utrecht, but the colony remained a bone of contention and became a battleground in a two-decade long struggle for control of North America in the mid-eighteenth century. Acadians were caught in the crossfire. During the expulsions that began in 1755 and continued until 1762, nearly eleven thousand of the approximately fourteen thousand Acadians were deported (White 56). Following the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Acadians were allowed to return to the Maritimes and many did so only to find their land occupied by settlers from New England and Great Britain. They settled in marginal areas of the region and planted deep roots. Initially, their numbers were small, only about 8,400 in the Maritimes by 1803 (Roy 143), and their communities were poor and isolated, but isolation bred cohesion and purpose. A period that began in the 1860s, now referred to as the *Renaissance acadienne*, marked a turning point for Acadians and other francophone peoples who settled in New Brunswick. With the support of the Roman Catholic Church, they founded colleges, newspapers, and, in 1881, organized their first CNA. Two more conventions were held in 1884 and 1890, and it was during these gatherings of the emerging Acadian elite that they chose their collective symbols: a flag, a patron saint, a national hymn, and a holiday. They contentiously chose *l'Assomption* (celebrated 15 August) over *la Saint-Jean-Baptiste* (24 June), the French-Canadian holiday, arguing that they needed to have a distinct identity in order to survive.

The Loyalists, meanwhile, faced their own upheaval as the War of American Independence (1775–1783) defined who could and could not be an American. About seventy-five thousand people, who for various reasons found themselves in the British camp, left the United States during and after the war, and approximately thirty thousand of them fetched up in what are now the Maritime provinces of Canada (Jasanoff 353). In 1784, Great Britain carved out of the old colony of Nova Scotia a separate colony named New Brunswick to accommodate the Loyalists. The Acadians living on the southern reaches of the St. John River were once again expelled by the Loyalist influx, this time to northern areas of the colony; others settled in Memramcook, the only pre-Expulsion community re-settled by Acadians. Approximately fourteen thousand Loyalists settled in New Brunswick (Jasanoff 353), most of them arriving in the port city of Saint John. It was from Saint John, incorporated in 1785, that many of them moved to their free land grants. Although the Loyalists, like the Acadians, experienced hardships in re-establishing their communities, they, along with immigrants coming directly from Great Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century, built a promising commercial and industrial society. By the 1880s, the citizens of Saint John were in a position to celebrate the significant progress of their city. Unlike the Acadian communities, which were more or less homogeneous in language and religion, Saint John was no longer dominated by descendants of the Loyalists. By 1851, nearly three-quarters of the heads of household in Saint John had been born in the British Isles, with native New Brunswickers (including descendants of Loyalists and pre-Loyalists) making up the remaining one-quarter. Moreover, three out of five household heads in Saint John were Irish (Acheson 113). Nonetheless, having Loyalist ancestry remained a status symbol, much like being a *Mayflower* descendant in the United States (Barkley).

The decade of the 1880s is a significant landmark of survival and even progress for both Acadians and Loyalists in New Brunswick. Many secular and religious leaders took part in the CNA and the Loyalist Centennial celebrations and, in doing so, expressed an official collective voice in the name of each group. Most of the speakers and organizers of the Loyalist Centennial in Saint John were members of the civic and provincial elite. During the festivities in May 1883, events were planned for the masses, including a re-enactment of the landing of the Loyalists, parades, and

footraces, while civic and provincial elites gathered at the city's public venues and churches to deliver more rarified orations on the importance of the Loyalists (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Large crowd gathered at the foot of King Street, Saint John for the Loyalist Centennial celebration in 1883 (Photo credit: Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Jason and Jessalyn Wright Collection: P338–138).

On 18 May 1883, an interdenominational watch night service was held at Centenary Queen's Square Church in Saint John, where speeches were delivered by dignitaries such as Chief Justice John Campbell Allen, Judge Charles N. Skinner, Lieutenant Governor R.D. Wilmot, and Reverend Duncan D. Currie, Chair of the Saint John District of the Methodist Conference of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. A service was later held at Trinity Anglican Church and attended by a similar cohort. Like the civic and provincial elite to which they belonged, many of these luminaries were Loyalist descendants. Even those who were not Loyalist descendants supported the promotion of Loyalist heritage. A good example is J.W. Lawrence, manufacturer, undertaker, and politician, who took a leading role in organizing the commemorations. Although of Scottish antecedents, he delivered a speech at Centenary Queen's Square Church, and coordinated a presentation on the history of the Loyalists at the Mechanics Institute. Lawrence was also a founding member of the New Brunswick Historical Society (NBHS), which took an active role in the commemorations. The NBHS emerged in 1874 to promote public history in response to commemorations of the American Revolution in the United States (Jones). In its ongoing work, the NBHS was to project "a vision of local and provincial history in which the Loyalists dominated" (Marquis 24).

In 1880, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste invited a small group of influential Acadian men to their "Convention nationale" in Quebec (Robidoux ix). These men resolved to organize their own

congress the following year in Memramcook, the birthplace of the Acadian Renaissance. Newspaper reports indicate that five thousand Acadians attended the first CNA in 1881 (Robidoux16). The mood was festive, even exuberant, as participants listened to speeches about their long-lost Acadie well into the night over the course of three days. The CNA of 1884 (see Figure 2) and 1890 were also well-attended celebrations that attracted a great deal of public attention.
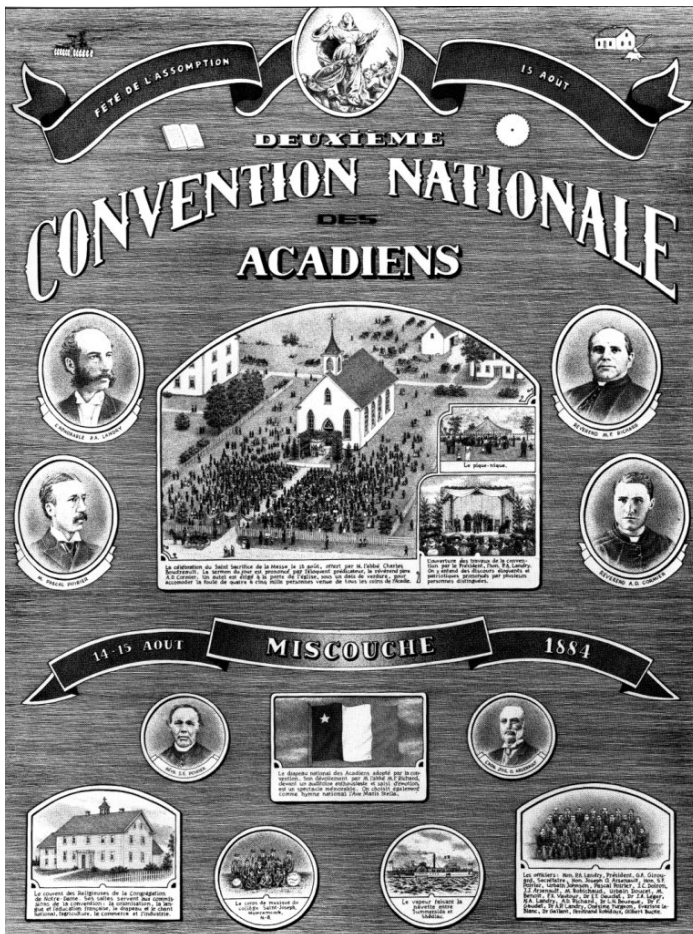

Figure 2 – Poster for the second Convention nationale acadienne (1884) drawn by Bernard LeBlanc (photo by the Centre d'études acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson, printed in La petite souvenance, Publication de la Société historique acadienne de l'I.-P.-É., Special Issue 10: Un peuple à unir : Centenaire du drapeau acadien 1884–1984, 1984, p. 11.

Among the twenty-three speakers at the first three CNA, the majority were from New Brunswick, and it is worth noting that roughly half were natives of the southeastern part of the province (with a high concentration from the Memramcook area). Indeed, almost all the speakers at the first three CNA were either directly involved in the Collège Saint-Joseph at Memramcook or had studied there. Having a college in the community undoubtedly allowed a disproportionate number of Acadians living in this area to have access to a higher education and to become influential figures among the Acadian elite of this period. Five orators were from Quebec, but, of those five, three had immigrated permanently to New Brunswick, including père Camille Lefebvre, founder of the Collège Saint-Joseph. Not surprisingly, about half of the speakers were priests. Among them, three eventually became bishops, including Marcel François Richard who was to become known for his promotion of agriculture and colonization. The secular speakers at the CNA were mostly political figures, such as

Pascal Poirier, a judge and a well-known senator. Valentin Landry and Ferdinand Robidoux, founders of two of New Brunswick's first French-language newspapers, *Le Moniteur Acadien* and *L'Évangéline*, were also present—testimony to the freshly emerged Acadian press that would be an important ally in promoting national identity.

Since the speeches of both the Acadian and the Loyalist orators were printed in several French and English-language newspapers, this collective discourse was widely circulated to all interested citizens of New Brunswick and beyond (Andrew). Furthermore, in recognition of the significance of these events, the first three CNA were published in book form by Robidoux in 1907 and, in Saint John, a *Loyalist Centennial Souvenir* book was produced in 1887. It likely that these speeches and sermons, published in French and in English, respectively, played an important role in the construction of a collective identity within Acadian and Loyalist-descended groups still residing in New Brunswick.

Corpora and Methodology

In the "Vocabularies of Cultural Identity" project, speeches were collected by consulting three English-language newspapers published in Saint John (*The Daily Evening News*, *The Saint John Globe,* and *The Daily Telegraph*), and two French-language newspapers (*L'Évangéline* and *Le Moniteur acadien*). This yielded thirty-four speeches and sermons for the Acadian Congress of 1881, 1884, and 1890, and forty speeches and sermons around the Loyalist Centennial celebrations (about a hundred pages of text for each). To overcome the challenge of comparing texts in two languages, two teams worked on separate sets of texts in their original language. This was achieved through thematic and content analysis[4] following a methodology established by scholars of the European computer-aided text analysis network who meet around the Journées d'Analyse de Données Textuelles (JADT). Although words are not always equivalent (for example, the word *nation* is common to both groups, but denotes different concepts for different populations), it is possible to compare the major preoccupations of each group regardless of language. A further analysis of the lemmatized versions of each corpus, focusing on the use of personal pronouns and verb tenses, completed the profiles of each social group.

Thematic Analysis

The keyword lists generated by the software programs were based on high frequency forms and their most frequently associated forms through the study of co-occurrences. For example, among the hundred most frequent forms present in the CNA speeches extracted by the software Hyperbase, the word *fête* was ranked at number fifty-three (this software considers punctuation and common grammatical words as forms, therefore most of the first fifty forms are prepositions, articles, punctuation, and other less semantically loaded words). This word (*fête*) occurred a total of 188 times in this corpus. By accessing a function called "Contexte" it is possible to examine each paragraph in which the word occurs. Subsequently, by utilizing another function called "Thème," it is possible to draw up a list of the forms that occur most frequently in the same paragraph.[5] These are listed in hierarchical order, starting with the form most frequently associated with the keyword. In the case of *fête*, the first word to top the list was *nationale,* not surprisingly. Other forms included (in hierarchical order) *saint*, *canadiens*, *jean*, *baptiste*, *patronale*, *choix*, *une*, *assomption*, and *adoption*. One of the weaknesses of this software is that it removes all capitalization when it processes the text; therefore some of these forms refer to proper nouns, such as la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, the Québécois national holiday proposed as an alternative to l'Assomption, which was ultimately chosen as the Acadian national holiday.

These lists of co-occurring words were then examined by the readers; forms were added and removed according to their relevance to the analysis of collective identity. Some forms had to be disambiguated (for example, the word *China* could mean either a country or a teacup) and others were simply too vague (articles and prepositions, for example). This process was repeated until each team had examined the co-occurrences of all high-frequency words and compiled lists of these words. As such, the approach was text-based and text-driven. Finally, each team independently came up with tentative categories for these lists, checking each word to understand its context using Hyperbase as required. This led the teams to observe that these were sufficiently similar to allow a direct comparison with very little rearranging. In this way, seven overarching themes were extracted from the speeches and sermons. Table 1 lists each theme along with examples of words extracted for each group (the complete lists are much more extensive and space does not allow us to reproduce them in their entirety).

Table 1 –Themes and Keywords for the Acadian and Loyalist Sermons and Speeches of the 1880s

Theme	Acadians (keywords)	Loyalists (keywords)
Purpose of Gathering	**Choice of national symbols:** *fête, convention, drapeau, adopter, distinct, monument, assemblée, tricolore, enthousiasme, légitime, étoile…*	**Commemoration:** *18th, anniversary, commemorate, War, forefathers, memorial, 1783, Parrtown, Victoria, 1883, Institute, Regiment…*
Progress and the Future	*avancement, intérêts, droits, développement, sauvegarde, surmonter, triomphant, amélioration, combattre…*	*advancement, building, cities, commerce, development, establishment, factories, library, harbour, hotels, industrial…*
References to the Past	*colonie, histoire, perdu, ancêtres, origine, persécutés, misère, pères, mort, larmes, souvenir, infortune, isolement, ruine…*	*abandoned, bitterness, choice, confiscated, defence, hardship, duty, heroes, rugged, struggle…*
National and International Relations	*compatriotes, anglais, union, sympathie, ennemi, confédération, Américains, fusion, puissance, Louisiane, préjugés…*	*alliance, annexation, constitution, Independence, monarchy, government, King, Mother, protection…*
Characteristics associated with Acadians or Loyalists	*grand, bonheur, malheur, honneur, digne, noble, devoir, courage, petit, difficultés, persévérance, faible, pauvre, humble…*	*active, brave, brotherhood, conservative, determination, intelligent, deserving, strength, confidence, gallantly, firm, heart, zeal, purpose…*
Race and Culture	*peuple, nation, race, patriotisme, sang, Acadie, patrie, âmes, usages, traits…*	*civil, civilized, humanity, race, superior, Anglo-Saxon, elevate, blood…*
Religion	*saint, religieuses, frères, foi, patron, Dieu, Marie, Église, Assomption, chrétien…*	*God, Bibles, bless, Christian, churches, devotion, Faith, morality, temperance…*

The fact that two teams working independently came up with similar categories of words suggests the main preoccupations of each group are similar. Nonetheless, a closer examination of the forms making up each group reveals significant differences. These differences were first explored by measuring the importance of each theme for each group (e.g., was "religion" more important than "race and culture" for the descendants of the Loyalists? Were Acadian speakers at the conventions spending more time talking about the past than they were about the future?), and then describing the semantic content of the most significant categories (e.g., which words did they use to talk about the past?).

Once keywords were categorized within the seven overarching themes in each corpus, these words were coded using content analysis by the software program Sphinx. Content analysis is a function specific to this software, which adds a variable to the text by counting the number of times a form occurs within it. This allowed us to measure the frequency and relative weight of each theme in proportion to other themes. Figure 3 shows the relative importance of each theme in the speeches and sermons around the Loyalist Centennial celebrations.
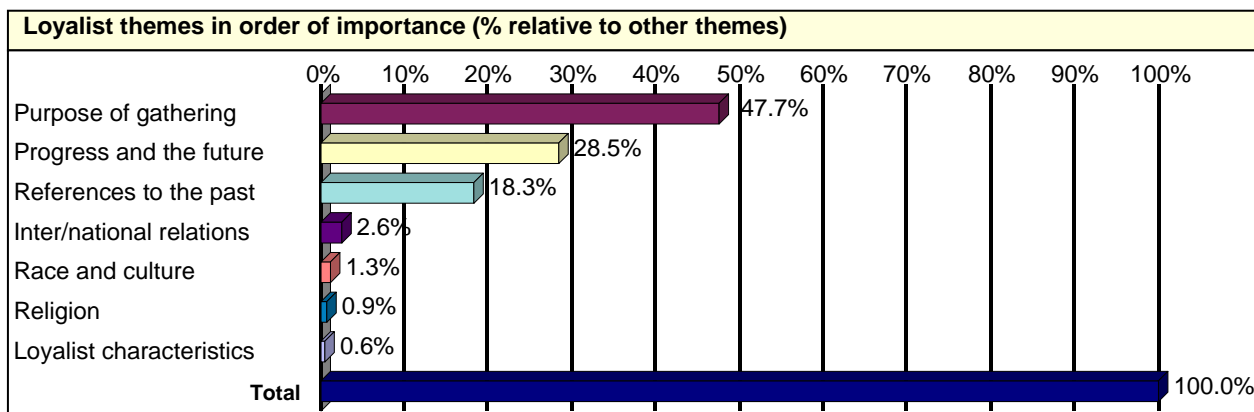

Loyalist themes in order of importance (% relative to other themes)

Theme	Value
Purpose of gathering	47.7%
Progress and the future	28.5%
References to the past	18.3%
Inter/national relations	2.6%
Race and culture	1.3%
Religion	0.9%
Loyalist characteristics	0.6%
Total	100.0%

Figure 3 – Relative importance of themes in the Loyalist Centennial speeches and sermons.

The graph clearly reveals that the main preoccupation of the speakers participating in the Loyalist Centennial was the commemorative act itself ("Purpose of Gathering" accounts for 47.7% of the total number of occurrences of all extracted keywords in the corpus). An examination of the keywords from this thematic group suggests that it was mainly evoked through the frequent mention of people, place names, and important dates. Indeed, it has been argued that the Centennial organizers in 1883 used Saint John's "Loyalist heritage and tradition to justify their positions and retain control of the urban population" (Jones 7). Loyalists expressed this past in an historical and factual manner, as the following quotation shows:

> The articles of peace arrived in New York in March, 1783, from which date large detachments of those who were determined not to abandon the crown of Great Britain, nor to cast in their lot with those whom they regarded as rebels, left as they could, many of whom, as you know, arrived on these shores, on May 18th, and founded this city. (Brigstocke)

It is worth noting the resolve (they were "determined not to abandon") and the moral fortitude expressed by this speaker who portrayed the Loyalists as leaving behind the unruly "rebels." This

emphasis on the resolve of the Loyalists to thwart the ambitions of their enemies reflects the general approach to nationalist history in this period, which was often presented as a "struggle of grand principles." Boosters of Loyalist history focused on such themes as "triumph (physical, moral, political, economic) and 'liberty,' the degree to which the Loyalists, by sewing 'the seeds of empire,' contributed to the enlargement of British freedom" (Marquis 24).

Two other themes that have a strong presence are "Progress and the Future" (28.5%), and "References to the Past" (18.3%). The theme of Progress and the Future was decidedly focused on material, industrial, and commercial advancements for the Loyalist descendants. This focus on progress and advancement was by no means new for Saint John, for nineteenth-century boosters often portrayed the city as "the Liverpool of North America." The decision by Saint John promoters to adopt Loyalist heritage as an emblem of the city's identity was not a finite move: the image of Saint John remained Janus-faced, looking backward and forward, with the emphasis shifting depending on the circumstances (Jones 2). The theme of "the future" in the Loyalist texts also reinforces Marquis's argument that Loyalist identity and mythology was not necessarily anti-modernist (24). While references to the past in the texts are characterized by forms that suggest suffering (*bleed, destitute, hardship, persecution*), these only accentuate the many positive attributes of those who overcame this past (*heroes, confidence, daring, courage, determination, enterprising, fought, endurance*). Another, less visible theme found in this corpus is "National and International Relations" (2.6%), which mostly served to reinforce the Loyalists' relationship with the British Empire, a common theme in late nineteenth-century Loyalist mythology (Marquis). "Race and Culture" (1.3%) (*civil, civilized, humanity, race, superior, Anglo-Saxon)* and Loyalist characteristics (0.6%) (*active, brave, brotherhood, conservative, determination, intelligent, deserving*) show a confident and proud people. Religion (0.9%) is also present to a lesser degree. Overall, the speakers of the Loyalist Centennial celebrations were most preoccupied with the commemoration of the founding myth, which was given a positive spin that included underlining remarkable material progress.

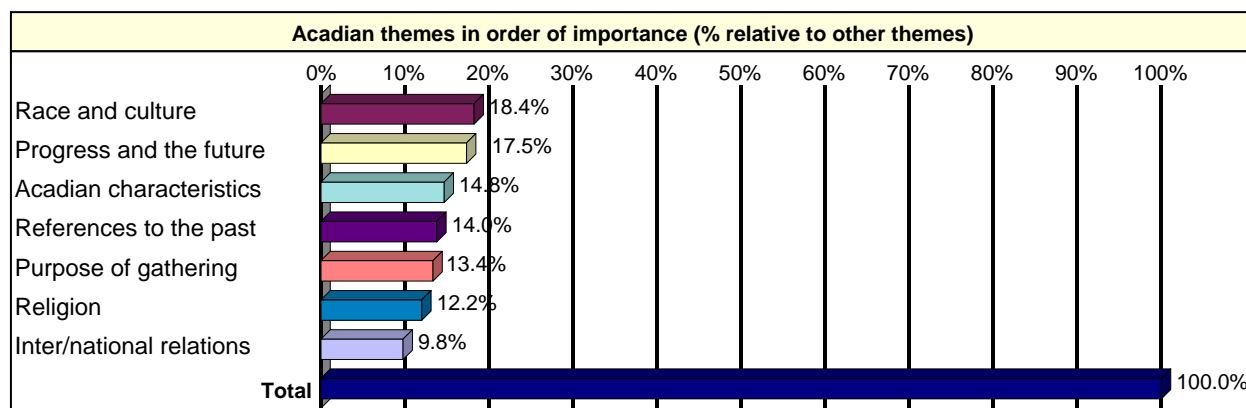A similar graph was produced for the Acadian speeches and sermons.

Figure 4 – Relative importance of themes in the Acadian speeches and sermons.

Although Acadians were assembling with the express purpose of choosing national symbols, Figure 4 illustrates the importance of conceptualizing the nation itself and what defined it. "Race and Culture" is the most important theme (18.4%) and is represented by forms such as *Acadie, Acadiennes, peuple, nationales, pays, français, langue, tradition, coutumes, sang, héritage, traits,*

usages. The main preoccupation of Acadians was therefore ontological and centred on the importance of ensuring the cohesiveness of the group. Similarly, the second most important theme, "Progress and the Future" (17.5%), is not linked, as it is in the Loyalist texts, to industrial and commercial progress, but rather to the preservation and perpetuation of a collective memory for future generations. Speakers emphasized the importance of ensuring the survival of the social group as a way of paying homage to the ancestors having suffered so dearly (*progrès, succès, obstacles, aspirants, combat, sauvegarde, triomphant, espérance, marche, amélioration, augmenter, obtenir, surmonter*). The theme of "Acadian Characteristics" (14.8%) shows which traits were considered desirable or undesirable by Acadians. Among these keywords can be found many pairs of opposites (*grand-petit, bonheur-malheur, gloire-difficultés, ambition-faible, pauvre-riche, orgueil-honte*) and references to the qualities that allowed Acadians to survive adversity: *persévérance, zèle, encouragé, effort, devoir, patience, soumis, courage*. "References to the Past" (14%), not surprisingly, refer to the collective trauma of the upheaval and its consequences (*persécutés, épreuve, dispersa, exil, perdu, sacrifices, infortune, oubliés, larmes, mort, douleur, abandon, lutte, martyre, misère, isolement, ruine*). These words are used as euphemisms for the Deportation, which is rarely referred to directly.

The "Purpose of Gathering" for Acadians (in this case, the choice of national symbols at 13.4%) may seem to take a backseat to the discussion around national identity, but these themes are closely interrelated, which is why the discrepancy is less marked in Acadian than in Loyalist themes. The choice of national symbols is arguably another way to shape collective identity. As was the case for Loyalists, "Religion" (12.2%) was also an integral part of social identity and plays a stronger part in the Acadian narrative about identity than in the Loyalist narrative. The degree to which the Roman Catholic Church was influential in the re-emergence of Acadian society may explain this difference. It is through the Church that French-Canadian priests were sent to educate rural Acadians and religion entered into every sphere of Acadian life (Poirier). Finally, "National and International Relations" (9.8%) shows an awareness of being in a minority context and a desire for *bonne entente*—goodwill—to prevail. Overall, Acadians were mainly concerned with defining a nation in reference to a traumatic past without focusing very much on material progress as did their Loyalist counterparts, while viewing "Progress and the Future" as tools to preserve collective memory.

It is worth noting that in almost every category the themes that emerged in one discourse had their equivalent in the other discourse, though they may have been organized slightly differently. It seems that these two social groups, who shared a time and place, expressed very similar preoccupations with regard to their collective identities, even though they may have approached them in different ways.

Morphosyntactic Analysis

Although the lexicon can reveal a great deal about the preoccupations of Loyalist descendants and Acadians in the 1880s, a morphosyntactic analysis can shed some light on the discursive strategies as well as on the point of view of the speakers—and that of the audience—on the construction of a collective identity.

Personal pronouns are deictic words which position the speaker and the listener within an utterance. In nationalist discourse, personal pronouns can illustrate a greater or lesser degree of social cohesion. Specifically, first-person pronouns have frequently been studied as key indicators in nationalist discourse analysis (Billig; de Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak; Ricento; Íñigo-Mora). For example, Patrick Charaudeau (159), a renowned specialist in discourse analysis, recognizes in the use

of first-person plural pronouns (*we*) "the establishment of a mutual alliance which institutes the participating subjects as collective heroes" (our translation). Indeed, both Fowler and Mayaffre ("1781") show that the use of *we* in this type of discourse implies a consensus between the speaker and the listener, and therefore we should expect it to be dominant in any nationalist discourse.
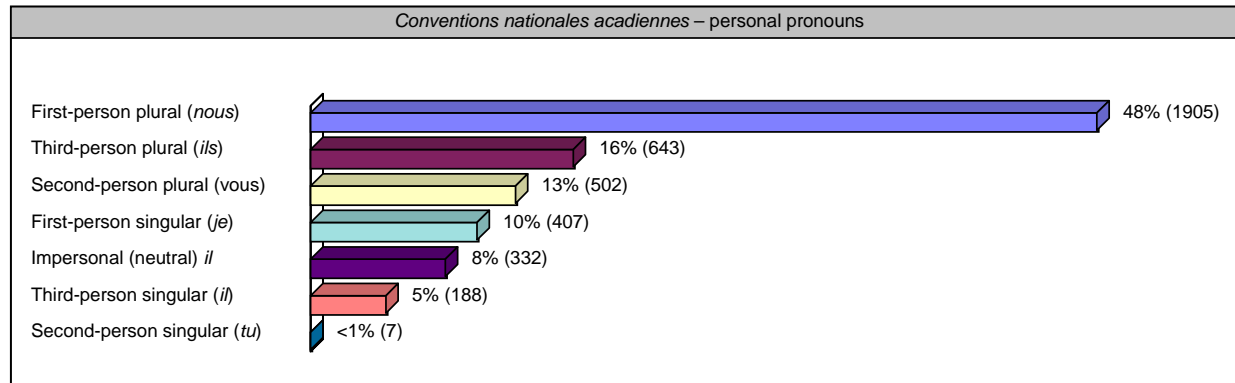

Figure 5 – Distribution of personal pronouns in the CNA speeches and sermons.

Figure 5, produced with Sphinx, illustrates the use of pronouns in the CNA. For the purposes of this graph, pronouns have been grouped by person and include possessive adjectives so that, for example, the first-person plural group includes word forms *nous, notre, nos, nous-mêmes, nôtre* and *nôtres* (*we*, *us*, *our*, *ourselves*, and *ours)*. It is evident from the graph that the first-person plural (*nous*) is by far the most common type of pronoun in the speeches and sermons at the Acadian congresses. This graph would tend to indicate that these were very inclusive speeches in which the people were both addressee and referent, and in which the speaker included himself in the group.

The second most common type of pronoun is the third-person plural: *eux, ils, leur, leurs, eux-mêmes* (*they, their, theirs, them, themselves*). While the inclusive *nous*/*we* shows a degree of consensus between speaker and audience, the third person shows a distance between the speaker and the referent (Petersoo). According to Charaudeau, in political speeches the third person usually designates an absent third party or an enemy. This opposition between *nous* and *ils* (*they*) was explored further in the Acadian speeches and sermons by examining the contexts of each form making up the groups. This study confirmed that 90% of the time *nous, notre,* and *nos* were referring to contemporary Acadians whereas *ils* was associated 60% of the time with Acadian ancestors, and *leur, leurs,* and *eux* were each associated 80–90% of the time with those same ancestors.[6] In other words, the distance between *nous* and *ils* is not related to the deictic referent to create a dichotomy (*us* versus *them*), but, rather, it marks a temporal distance between the Acadians of 1881–1890 and their Acadian ancestors.

As shown in Figure 6, in the Loyalist Centennial speeches and sermons, the third-person plural is by far the most common, followed by the third-person singular. This finding can be explained by a historical discourse centred on known, but absent, third parties (the original Loyalist settlers).
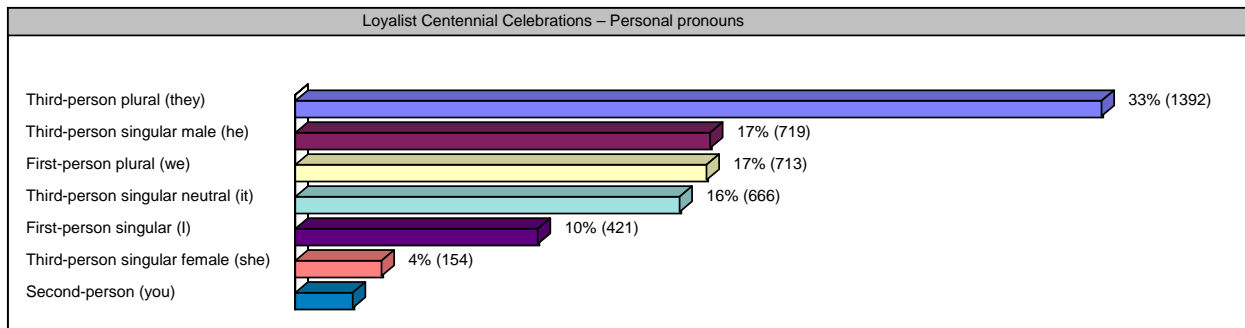
Figure 6 – Distribution of personal pronouns in Loyalist Centennial speeches and sermons.

The third-person plural is almost twice as frequent as the first-person plural. This third person includes *they, their, them* and *themselves*; a study of the contexts surrounding these forms showed that, as was the case in the Acadian texts, the speakers were referring to the Loyalists who arrived in 1783: their founding ancestors. The use of *we* designates contemporary participants in the commemorative events or the descendants of the Loyalists. Therefore the abundance of third-person plural pronouns indicates a temporal distance and would suggest that the discourse of preserving a collective identity for Loyalists is centred on past events.

Loyalists	Acadians
Past (preterit simple past and past perfect) tense: 47%	*Present tense verbs: 43%*
Present tense: 23%	*Past tense verbs: 26%* *(of these, 19% are passé composé or passive voice)*
Infinitives (often preceded by modal verbs): 15%	*Infinitive verbs (often preceded by modal verbs): 23%*

Figure 7 – Most frequent verb tenses in Loyalist and Acadian speeches and sermons.

This hypothesis is supported by an analysis of verb tenses, which reveals a discourse focused heavily on the past in the Loyalist speeches. Figure 7 lists the most common verb tenses for both groups (from the lemmatized version created by Hyperbase). In the Loyalist texts, the most frequent verbs are in the past tense, accounting for 47% of all verb tenses, whereas present tense verbs account for only 23% of all verb tenses. There are many infinitive forms and modal verbs (*would, could, shall, must*), which are often used to express obligation and necessity. In the Acadian texts, however, verbs in the present tense are most frequent, accounting for 43% of all verb tenses. Infinitive verbs (often accompanied by modal verbs) are second, followed by past tenses that account for 26% of verbs.

In sum, the morphosyntactic analysis shows that in the CNA the discourse presents a collective identity based in the present and expressed by an inclusive *nous* (*we*) typical of nationalist discourse. When third-person plural pronouns are used, they refer to Acadian ancestors. A close reading suggests that past events are being relived collectively on an ongoing basis and therefore belong to a sacred, mythical time:

> Oh! Quelle déchirante séparation! L'époux est forcé de se séparer de son épouse et de ses enfants. On ne tient aucun compte des pleurs de tous ces infortunés, et ces vaisseaux s'éloignant de ces rivages autrefois si heureux, sont dirigés vers les différentes colonies anglaises. L'Acadie sera-t-elle anéantie? Ce petit peuple est donc destiné à périr! Non, elle survivra encore et elle prendra son rang au nombre des peuples les plus heureux et les plus prospères. (Bourque and Richard 107)

> Oh what a heartbreaking separation! The husband is forcibly separated from his wife and children. No one listens to the cries of all these poor souls, and the ships sailing away from these once-joyful shores, are being sent to various English colonies. Will Acadie be destroyed? Is this small nation destined to disappear! No, it will survive and will take its place among the happiest and most prosperous people. [our translation]

This scene is described as if it were happening right before the speaker's eyes and the use of the passive voice ("is separated from" and "are being sent to") reinforces the powerlessness of the people. Compare the pathetic overtones of this speaker to the neutral, even proud tone of the Loyalist extract cited above that mentioned dates and historical events and portrayed the Loyalists as active defenders of good.

The Acadian speeches and sermons are a popular discourse centred on the present. Charaudeau refers to this use of the present as a "generic present," which designates an action that is "not necessarily being realized at the same moment as the speaker is talking," but which "acquires a pantemporal" [all times] value (453). This generic present represents immobility and permanence, and can refer to a sacred past. Indeed, the collective identity expressed in these texts seems to function on a mythical level (C. Richard).

In contrast, the collective identity in the Loyalist speeches and sermons is linked to a completed past ("un passé révolu," according to Charaudeau 460) that displays a "hierarchy of facts" ("la 'hiérarchie' des faits," 468) by frequent recourse to preterit ("-ed") verbs. Third-person plural pronouns referring to Loyalist ancestors are most frequent in these texts relating a heroic past. Certainly, the fact that these sermons and speeches about Loyalists are in the context of a commemorative event may explain the prevalence of third-person plural pronouns and past tense verbs. Whether they were aware of it or not, speakers at the Loyalist Centennial celebrations were not allowing for or promoting the formation of a cohesive group akin to a peripheral nation. It may be that as the dominant culture of New Brunswick at the time, there was no need to do so. The result of this, however, is a collective identity that exists only in the past.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, Acadians and descendants of Loyalists reveal the same preoccupations in the expression of their collective identities. Our analysis of the main themes indicated that both groups valued the preservation of collective memory; both had an interest in progress and the future as well as the promotion of common values. A more detailed lexical analysis, however, showed that these main preoccupations were approached and treated very differently.

The dominant theme in the CNA was the nation itself, which had to be reiterated and defined in the absence of a distinct territory. The characteristics most often associated with Acadians were pairs of opposites referring to the past, the present, or the future (*malheur-bonheur, difficultés-gloire,*

faible-ambition), which may reflect the gap felt between the reality of their situation and projected ideals. In the "References to the Past," words with strong affective connotations were used: *larmes, abandon, douleur, oubliés, persécutés.* These words emphasized the fact that Acadians were victims of injustices, and were used to evoke an emotional, unifying response. As for the theme of "Progress and the Future," it was strongly linked to the nation as an abstract notion rather than a physical and material entity. In these first three CNA, the speakers perceived progress not as commercial and industrial endeavours, but rather as the survival of the Acadian nation through the perpetuation of collective memory and the preservation of traditions.

The lexicon used by the Loyalist speakers, in contrast, shows that they were mainly interested in the commemorative act itself, and, by extension, in the 1783 landing of the Loyalists in Saint John. This interest is characterized by the use of an abundance of people and place names, historical events, and dates. National and international relations were also important to them, but their idea of nation referred to the British Empire of which they were a part. In the ritualization of their collective discourse, the Loyalist speakers positioned their ancestors as active participants by using words such as *choice, active, brave,* and *determination*, whereas the Acadians speakers positioned their ancestors as having suffered passively[7]: *soumis, infortune, persécutés, abandon, isolement, misère*. The morphosyntactic analysis of the CNA revealed an inclusive discourse in the present despite many references to the past. According to Pérez-Agote, collective identity needs to ritualize the story of its creation (quoted in Dressler et al. 28). This need becomes stronger in cases where social cohesion is fragile and this group origin is "made sacred to ward off any risk of rupture." This sacred past happens in a mythical time, and so Acadians in the 1880s continued to relive founding events in a generic, and therefore atemporal, present. The morphosyntactic analysis of the Loyalist texts has shown that the third-person plural referring to Loyalist ancestors was used almost twice as frequently as the first-person plural (*we*). Past tense verbs are also twice as frequent as present tense verbs, indicating a discourse focused on Loyalists of the past. A distance is evident as much from the neutral tone as by a collective identity situated in the past and unable to find a common, inclusive *we* in the present.

How does this study of collective identity in these two populations during the 1880s inform our views on how New Brunswickers perceive themselves today? In a recent telephone survey of 204 respondents in New Brunswick, 36% of Acadian respondents (a special sample of Francophones living in Dieppe, Petit-Rocher, and Caraquet) declared their territorial affiliation as Acadie (a nonexistent geographical territory). Similarly, although 44% of the same respondents self-identified as French, 29% claimed they were Acadian or French-Acadian. These numbers are all the more striking when compared another study in which only one (0.5%) Anglophone respondent claimed to be of Loyalist origin, despite the fact that a significant portion of the present population of New Brunswick has Loyalist ancestry. The authors of that study concluded that Anglophones in New Brunswick do not have access to "historical narratives that inform their identity" (Conrad et al. 11) in the same way Acadians do, and that the latter have a more intimate relationship with their past. The impossibility of a consensual *we* in the Loyalist speeches and sermons may well have been an indicator of the loss of a kind of popular collective identity, whereas the use of the collective *nous* in the Acadian texts reveals a desire to strengthen the collective identity.

Chantal Richard (UNB) was the principal investigator of a pilot project called "Vocabularies of Cultural Identity" (2007–2010). She is currently leading "Vocabularies of Identity II," which extends the study of collective identity from 1880 to 1940.

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Endnotes

[1] The authors would like to thank Dr. Greg Marquis who was consulted periodically throughout this research. We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

[2] Irish Catholics, who outnumbered Loyalist descendants in Saint John by mid-century, did not engage in "overt historical commemoration" until the 80th anniversary of the Irish potato famine in 1927, when they placed a Celtic cross on Partridge Island, a former quarantine station (Marquis 29). For this reason, we did not include this group in our study of public collective discourse in the 1880s.

[3] This sentiment is expressed in the motto of the first French-language Acadian newspaper founded in 1867, *Le Moniteur Acadien*, which was "Notre langue, notre religion et nos coutumes" ("Our language, our religion and our customs").

[4] See, for example, Rastier. Also, many thematic and content analysis–based papers are published in the online journal *Lexicométrica* (*http://lexicometrica.univ-paris3.fr/*), which also publishes the proceedings of the JADT (Journées d'Analyse de Données Textuelles).

[5] Hyperbase does allow the length of the contexts to be adjusted to a specific number of words; however, this team felt that considering the entire paragraph was most appropriate since, ideally, each paragraph contains a complete idea.

[6] In this sub-study, each form was analyzed in isolation to determine the referent in each case. Each of these three forms received a different percentage value but they were all within the 80–90% range.

[7] There are narratives of resistance in Acadian literature competing with this discourse of submission; however, the ideology promoted at the CNA is one of passive suffering, largely due to the strong Catholic presence in the early Acadian Renaissance. Examples of resistance can be found in the early works of Pascal Poirier and Antoine Léger, for example.