

EVANGELINE: AN INQUIRY INTO CULTURAL CONCIOUSNESS AND STORYTELLING

Acadie (Excerpt)

Karissa Wedman

from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

voices
stand
loud the deep-voiced ocean
speaks
the hearts
leaped
the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers
forever
hope endures
beauty strength
tradition still sung
Acadie, home
Acadia
lay in the fruitful valley
dikes
shut out the turbulent tides
and welcomed the sea to wander
the tranquil evenings of summer
them
bless
homeward
alike were they free
bolder grew
merrily laughed
gladdened the earth
the reign of rest
stillness
seaside
their favorite
full grand
peals of laughter
echoed back
heavily
faces
laughed
caught and reflected
sunshine
the
united the fragments
beating heart
empty without thee
not forgotten
besieged by the ocean
bent but not broken
french english
beloved most of all
triumph remember imagine
speak
thoughts
in fantastic shapes
laughed
laughed
with gladness
Acadia

Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie (Excerpt)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow - 1807-1882

Prelude

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines
and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green,
indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and
prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on
their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced
neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the
wail of the forest.

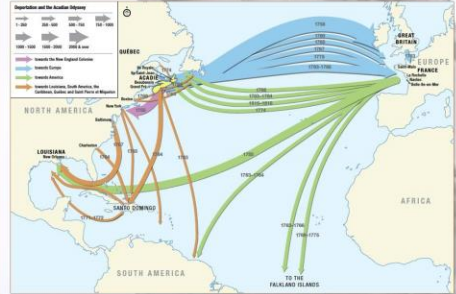
This is the forest primeval; but where are the
hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the
woodland the voice of the huntsman
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of
Acadian farmers,
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water
the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an
image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers
forever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty
blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle
them far o'er the ocean
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful
village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and
endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of
woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition still sung by the
pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the
happy.

Karissa Wedman: wedmank@wwu.edu

Dr. Christina Keppie

Western Washington University: Canadian American Studies



Leixner, A. et al. "Acadian Diaspora", map. The Multiliteracies Project. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Description: This project seeks to illuminate the importance of storytelling to a culture's collective memory and consciousness through an inquiry of the Evangeline Myth. The story of Evangeline has shaped much of Acadian and Cajun identity. However, this story was written by a non-Acadian, and therefore is born of an outside-looking-in perspective. This project illustrates why an outsider perspective may have negative consequences on a culture by using specific examples from the Acadian diaspora to prove that the Evangeline Myth is not an accurate portrayal of Acadian-ness. Instead, it dilutes and whitewashes both the Deportation of 1755 and the Acadian identity in the minds of outsiders and insiders alike. A discussion of writing as resistance introduces a type of poetry in which former works are erased to create a new narrative known as erasure or blackout poetry. This erasure is done on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Evangeline* itself, thus creating a new narrative out of the old. I acknowledged that I am, like Longfellow, a white Anglophone who does not belong to the Acadian community. I further acknowledged that Acadie is not a monolith, so this analysis of the Evangeline Myth may not resonate in every corner of the diaspora.

“What did us the most harm was
the story of Evangeline”

-Zachary Richard, *Cajun Heart* (2016)

This work is inspired by Cam Awkward-Rich's (2020) poem *Everywhere We Look There We Are* and Sally Wen Mao's (2019) poem *Occidentalism*.