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Ultramontane Piety and Catholic Sociability
The Prescription and Practice of Identity in Acadian Patriotic Songs
Jeanette Gallant

The adoption and spread of ultramontane spirituality in nineteenth-century Canada contributed to the development of specific public cultures in Catholic communities across the country. The extent to which music, as a vehicle of this religious ideology, helped to shape the identity of French Canadian minority populations offers a rich locus of study yet to be explored. This paper examines the patriotic songs of the Acadians, a francophone minority exiled from Atlantic Canada during Canadian colonization. It explores not only how religion, nationalism, and economic development were interconnected in nineteenth-century French Canada, but how religious and nationalist ideologies were intermixed and communicated through song in resettled Acadian communities after Canadian confederation in 1867. By offering an explanation of how Acadian patriotic songs operated as a form of devotional practice, this study elucidates how the interaction between religious thought and musical sociability helped construct social sameness as this religiously prescribed sense of national identity was embraced in Acadian Catholic schools and print culture during the first half of the twentieth century.

The Political and Musical Origins of Ultramontanism in Canada

Ultramontanism was a religious and cultural form of nationalism that was introduced to Catholics in nineteenth-century French-speaking Lower Canada. The term ultramontane—derived from the medieval Latin ultramontanus, meaning “beyond the mountains”—traditionally has been used in reference to northern European attachment to the authority of the pope (located in the south beyond the Alps), rather than to a regional or national form of monarchical or religious rule. In postrevolutionary France, ultramontane clerics promoted the notion of papal power from afar not only to oppose state authority, but to create an “all-embracing Catholic unity” regardless of where the faithful were located. The ultramontanism that later emerged in Canada, while centralized in Quebec, was conceived as an église-nation—a church-centered

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1 The Acadian deportations took place from 1755 to 1763 and led to the separation of many Acadian families. After the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, France relinquished its North American colonies and vacated Acadian lands were taken over by planters from New England. See R. S. Longley, “The Coming of the New England Planters to the Annapolis Valley,” in They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1988), 16–17, 28. Acadian resettlement was allowed as long as Acadians lived in small dispersed groups, most of which were established on Canada’s east coast in the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Acadian communities, however, can be found in other places around the world, including west-coast Newfoundland, Quebec (including the Magdalen Islands), other small pockets across Canada, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and the United States (especially in Maine and Louisiana).

identity that extended to other French Canadian communities, both Québécois and Acadian, who from the 1830s had begun to emigrate to find work in different parts of Canada and the United States during Canadian industrialization. As Canada confederation to become a country, ultramontane thought became a powerful tool in helping clerics not only maintain religious freedom, but create a distinct sense of national identity for Francophones in Canada’s classical college system in the first half of the twentieth century.

John Hutchinson describes cultural nationalists as “moral innovators” who seek “to transform the belief-systems of communities, and provide models of socio-political development that guide their modernizing strategies.” This theory helps demonstrate that the Catholic Church—after losing power to the French government under France’s Civil Constitution of the Clergy Law (1790) during the Revolution—found a new purpose as a missionary institution within France’s Third Republic colonial empire. In Canada, the reformed church would use the notion of papal infallibility to resist being overpowered by the English authorities, while drawing on Catholic liberalism to take control of Catholic education and nationalist newspapers, and shape the ethnic identity of different Catholic communities across Canada “based upon denominational loyalty.”

Music—specifically, patriotic song—played an important role in teaching ultramontane principles in the Acadian context. Philip V. Bohlman’s discussion of music’s role in the formation of European nation-states has contributed to our understanding of Canadian colonial relations. His theories not only explain French and English power relations in processes of nation-formation, but also account for how Canada’s francophone minorities—in the face of rapid economic development and new socio-political realities—strengthened ethnic boundaries through musical expressions of ethnic difference, based on a sense of religious dissimilarity. In the case of the Acadians, they not only had been deported during colonization, but lost precious farmland to New England planters during the deportations. Disenfranchised upon resettlement, the Acadians were relocated to coastal areas and faced economic disparity as rural fishermen.

Bohlman’s observation that “the narratives of nationalism in unofficial anthems often intersect” due to “an aesthetic and ideological relatedness” suggests two ways in which Acadian patriotic songs served to construct identity. First, song texts created a sense of “rural” identity

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4 Please see below for an explanation of the college system in Canada.


6 Clarke’s study demonstrates the way in which different ethnic communities were formed using an ultramontane form of Catholic sociability. See Brian Clarke, Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850–1895 (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 12. Clarke’s findings can be extended to Acadia, where French and Irish Catholics lived side by side, but where the clergy also encouraged competition between these two groups that heightened ethnic tensions and eventual social divisions. See Sheila Andrew, “Gender and Nationalism: Acadians, Québécois, and Irish in New Brunswick Nineteenth-Century Colleges and Convents, 1854–1888,” CCHA, Historical Studies 68 (2002): 7–10.

7 See note 1 above.

that discouraged Acadians from leaving French Canada to find work in larger city centers. As
notions of Catholic unity took an overtly nationalistic turn in Canada, Acadian patriotic song
began to act as a call of return to the Acadian homeland. Second, patriotic songs prescribed an
idealized religious identity in which the emotionality of the Acadian eighteenth-century
deportations from Canada was tempered, and national symbols were upheld as the promise of a
brighter socio-economic future. Although linked to the French Canadian temperance movement
in relation to rational control over physical pleasures like alcohol, the term temperance in this
study refers more generally to the cardinal virtue of temperance, a foundational idea in a new
form of ultramontane piety in the nineteenth-century Catholic Church. Temperance—
interchangeable with the word zeal (or zèle) in Acadian patriotic song texts—encouraged an
ordered (or good) life and bolstered the other cardinal virtues of fortitude (courage), prudence
(proper behavior), and justice (receiving one’s due). Introduced together with the notion of
forgiveness, temperance was meant to help Acadians restrain their fears and change the course of
their lives.

Not only the texts but the compositional style of Acadian patriotic songs were intended to
create religious solidarity through the transmission of ultramontane thought. As J. Martin
Daughtry has argued, musical nationalism can either be understood in the Herderian sense as a
nineteenth-century Romantic phenomenon, or it can be described in relation to two anthemic
compositional models that originated in England and France. Daughtry reveals that the
compositional style of national anthems typically does not reflect the nineteenth-century practice

9 “Acadia” can be defined neither as a country nor as a “place.” Yet, Acadians believe it to be their homeland
because they returned to their land of exile after a period of only seven years. Acadia is therefore unique in terms of
traditional anthropological views of nationalism. Informed by Beverley Diamond’s and Robert Witmer’s suggestion
that culture is not a naturally bounded unit, my doctoral work focuses on the cultural and historical dimensions of
nation-formation in the Acadian context. It reveals how music, as a form of expressive culture, has been used to
construct three different understandings of national identity from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day
in relation to Canada’s changing political climate. See Beverley Diamond and Robert Witmer, eds., Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1994), 5, 12. Also see Jeanette Gallant,
“The Governed Voice: Understanding Folksong as a Public Expression of Acadian Culture” (Ph.D. diss., University

10 This essay reveals that French Canada’s temperance movement was distinct from that of English Canada. The
main difference was that it was not led by prominent businessmen and entrepreneurs but by the clergy (Father
Chiniquy particularly, but Bishop Bourget in implementation). As such, women figured less prominently in the
movement. Noel also reveals that while originally portrayed “as a path to salvation,” the French Canadian
temperance movement eventually would target tendencies for self-pity or “drying up the vale of tears below.” See
Jan Noel, “Dry Patriotism: The Chiniquy Crusade,” in Drink in Canada: Historical Essays, ed. Cheryl Krasnick

11 Heimann provides an explanation of the new form of ultramontane piety that emerged in the Catholic Church
during the nineteenth century. See Mary Heimann, Catholic Devotion in Victorian England (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1995), 33–38. Gibson also discusses the notion of “new piety” and how it was manifested and took
hold as “a credulous acceptance of the miraculous.” See Ralph Gibson, A Social History of French Catholicism,

12 J. Martin Daughtry, “Russia’s New Anthem and the Negotiation of National Identity,” Ethnomusicology 47/1
(2003): 44–45. Daughtry’s article is theoretically based on Malcolm Boyd’s classification of nineteenth-century
national anthems into two categories: “anthem-as-hymn” and “anthem-as-march.” See Malcolm Boyd, “National
of embedding folk elements or orientalizations in the music to depict ethnic or national identity (species). Instead, he refers to Malcolm Boyd’s classification in which national anthems adhere to an established musical genre (genus) such as England’s hymnlike “God Save the King/Queen” or France’s marchlike “La Marseillaise.”

Doughtry’s distinction is important to my analysis of Acadian patriotic song because this genre, which Bohlman would describe as an “unofficial anthem,” uncovers the intersection between religious ideology and musical style where the virtue of temperance and an idealized rural identity were being musically prescribed. Because sonic representations of ethnicity were secondary to the songs’ religious message, generic French stylistic forms—such as the French anthemic model or the Italian barcarolle commonly found in French opera—were equally capable of imparting ultramontane principles. Daughtry further shows how the “ritual dimension” of national anthems serves to shape and maintain social identity. Drawing on Benedict Anderson’s notion of collective performance as a physical realization of the imagined community, this paper illustrates the potential for Acadian patriotic songs to shape identity because they were meant to be performed frequently in settings outside the church to enhance the Acadians’ social and devotional life.

The Spread of Ultramontanism and the Establishment of Acadian Classical Colleges

Ultramontanism was first introduced to the Roman Catholic tradition in Europe during the Council of Constance (1414–18), and resurfaced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in reaction to Enlightenment rationalism. By the eighteenth century, counterrevolutionary apologetics emerged that sought to replace individual rationalism with the social restructuring of France through religious authority. The revitalization of ultramontanism was influenced by the writings of Hugues-Félicité Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854), a priest and political theorist who led a new movement of Catholic liberalism that sought to redefine liberalism as the “liberation of people from any suppression by other people.” In this political context, ultramontanism provided a way to separate from the state and unite the Roman Church under the papacy, because a centralized church would have been seen as an effective weapon against revolution. Joseph de Maistre’s 1819 publication Du pape (On the pope) led the way for even greater public reception of ultramontanism. Maistre suggested that monarchical governance be

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14 Ibid., 46.
17 Aubert et al., The Church Between Revolution and Restoration, 275.
retained but defer to papal authority to combat individualism in politics; he also pointed to Rome to provide unity to a divided Christian population. As monarchical rule and Gallicanism (state authority) were supplanted in France, older religious institutions were revived, many of which sought to expand their missionary activities to the colonies. In Canada, the democratic ideals of Catholic liberalism were seen as advantageous in political situations where Catholics held minority status. Bishop Jean-Jacques Lartigue, believing that people’s rights could be misinterpreted in social contracts, thus used the notion of papal infallibility to fight for the separation of church and state, declaring that the pope alone was divinely equipped to judge the morality of human affairs. After Lartigue’s sudden death in 1840, his successor Ignace Bourget— influenced by the ultramontane priests whom he had met during his travels to France and Rome in 1841— led the Catholic revival in Canada in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Bishop Bourget first implemented ultramontane spirituality by bringing over various religious orders from France. He also urged Rome to name Quebec as “an ecclesiastical province” that would oversee the creation of new dioceses across Canada. The Catholic Church soon saw a new period of prestige and power as ultramontanism spread through religious institutions, churches, schools, national conventions, nationalist newspapers, and other print culture in Canada. Bishop Bourget’s other mission was to foster Catholic devotional life through a number of group activities aimed at imparting “a warm, social, and religious commitment to the Roman tradition.” Like other ultramontane clerics, Bishop Bourget focused on developing a “new mood of devotional inclusiveness” that would establish an active Catholic laity and create a new type of Catholic sociability. Confraternities, sodalities, and temperance societies (promoting abstinence from alcohol) were inaugurated, while daily Communion, pilgrimages, retreats, and religious relics (such as crucifixes, medals, statues, scapulars, and rosaries) were introduced to help maintain religious fervor. As Catholic communities became more socially active, the public demonstration of piety was expected and the “theatricality” of religion was explored.

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19 Aubert et al., *The Church Between Revolution and Restoration*, 109, 251.
21 Many francophone academics in Atlantic Canada refer to ultramontanism as “clerico-nationalism.”
26 Heimann, “Catholic Revivalism in Worship and Devotion,” 82.
The religious and political life of French Canada soon conflated as the Catholic Church became intricately involved in defending and protecting the cultural rights of French Canadians after Canadian confederation. Two political factions existed in Lower Canada at this time. Less popular with the Catholic clergy was Louis-Joseph Papineau’s Parti Patriote (Patriot Party), which had spoken out against the Catholic Church in nationalist newspapers prior to confederation. The favorite was the party of Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, a proponent of the British parliamentary system who believed that forming a responsible government with English-speaking Upper Canada would protect French Canadians from assimilation. Ultramontane priests opted to create political alliances with Lafontaine’s party, agreeing to cooperate in economic matters as long as the federal government respected the religious and cultural rights of French Canadians. Three years after confederation, however, the Common School Act was instituted to eliminate religion from the school curriculum. The Catholic Church responded by asserting its right as a divine institution, using the notion of papal authority to gain administrative control over Catholic education.

Hutchinson explains that cultural nationalists often are “driven into state politics to defend the cultural autonomy of the nation.” To ensure that Acadians maintained their religion and language, the Catholic clerics worked to increase the number of already established classical colleges and convent schools in Atlantic Canada during the second half of the nineteenth century. Classical colleges, run mainly by ultramontane priests from Quebec, prepared Acadian men for seminary life using a classical curriculum of literary and ancient Latin texts. Classical studies also were offered for women at convent schools, operated by three different female religious orders. Drawing on an established model in Quebec, the arts were used as a tool of social mobilization by clerics, meaning that various “national” forms of music such as national music...
The Collège Saint-Joseph (later named the Université Saint-Joseph) was the first Acadian classical college to open. It was founded in New Brunswick in 1864 by Father Camille Lefebvre of Quebec. From 1864 to the 1960s, members of the Holy Cross Fathers fostered Acadian musical traditions at the Collège Saint-Joseph, the most significant being Father André-Thaddée Bourque. After being ordained at the Collège Saint-Joseph in 1884, Father Bourque was tasked with developing the music curriculum at the college, where he taught for nine years. Thereafter, he left for missionary activities in India but resumed his post at the Collège Saint-Joseph upon his return. It was during his second posting, from 1909 to 1914, that he began writing a number of his own compositions, many of which were patriotic songs.

The Dissemination and Practice of Acadian Patriotic Songs

The patriotic songs of Father Bourque, along with those written by other Catholic priests or prominent laypeople, became the most popular vocal genre in Acadian society from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1960s. The first Acadian patriotic song collection, *Chants populaires des Acadiens*, was published in 1916 by the Acadians’ governing body, La Société l’Assomption, and was promoted intermittently in the Acadian nationalist newspaper *L’Évangéline*, as illustrated in the 1919 advertisement reproduced in Figure 1.39 In later years, this same group of songs would be reprinted in two different publications. The first was put out in 1927 by L’Évangéline, Limitée under the same title, *Chants populaires des Acadiens*. The second publication appeared in 1947 with a new title, *Chants acadiens*, and was disseminated within the school system by L’Association Acadienne d’Éducation. Figure 2 shows the front covers of all three publications.

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Fig. 1: Advertisement for *Chants populaires des Acadiens*

Fig. 2: Front covers of three different patriotic song collections
The frequency with which these songs were sung during the first half of the twentieth century became apparent in my discussions with interlocutor Florine Després while doing fieldwork in the Canadian province of New Brunswick in 2004. Florine, ninety-three at the time of our interview, was formerly a nun known by the name of Sister Marie-Lucienne (Fig. 3). She conducted La Chorale Notre Dame d’Acadie at the Collège Notre Dame d’Acadie in Moncton, New Brunswick, a convent school tied to the Université Saint-Joseph (later the University of Moncton). In 1965, she began to work in elementary music education, eventually becoming a professor in the Department of Music at the University of Moncton in 1973. Florine explained that Acadian patriotic songs, being a secular song form, were not part of congregational singing. Patriotic songs did, however, form much of the repertoire sung outside the church:

**Fig. 3:** Sister Marie-Lucienne (Florine Després) conducting *La Chorale Notre Dame d’Acadie*

Florine: We were singing for the church and sometimes we would have a little, you know, meeting or something and we’d sing a song. We’d sing a lot of like *Les chants acadiens* or “Évangéline” and all that... I never remember singing other things than “Évangéline” and “Le pêcher acadien”... that’s what I remember.

When Florine was shown a copy of the 1916 *Chants populaires des Acadiens* collection during our interview, it emerged that several other interlocutors had referred to this publication as a folksong collection rather than as patriotic songs. Florine explained this phenomenon as such:

Florine: *Ca, ça...* those are not folksongs... they’re Acadian songs, but they’re not folksongs. They were composed by... A.-T. Bourque. He was an Acadian, *pis ensuite* [then afterwards] A. Robichaud... I knew him very well. When I was at [the church of] St. Anthony... he [Father Robichaud] was the pastor there... He was a musician.

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41 Florine Després, interview by Jeanette Gallant, April 7, 2004, 1: 197–207. The interviews excerpted in this article are based on field research done in fulfillment of the author’s doctoral dissertation. The interviews, conducted in Moncton, NB, cannot be publicly accessed.
42 Ibid., 2: 68–70.
Jeanette: So these are patriotic songs . . .

Florine: *Ah, oui, oui, oui, patriotique* songs, oui . . . 43

Revealing more about the contexts in which these songs were performed, Florine said that, from the age of seven, she remembered patriotic songs being sung at home around the piano as a form of entertainment, and in concerts at her school.44 Because patriotic songs were sung so frequently, she believed that the Acadian public began to think of them as folksongs:

Florine: Every time we had a concert, that’s what we were singing [patriotic songs]. . . .

Jeanette: But did people think that those were folksongs?

Florine: They thought they were folksongs. . . . They became folksongs. . . . J’suis sûr que tu pourrais trouver n’importe quelle vieille femme pis vieux monsieur y sait toute [I’m sure you would find any old woman and old gentleman knows all them there] . . . and they don’t know any folksongs. . . . Every time we had a concert, that’s what we used to sing when I was small.45

Acadian patriotic songs played a significant role in Acadian musical life in the first half of the twentieth century, until the Catholic Church began to lose power in an increasingly secularized French Canada.46 During peak popularity, this repertoire often appeared in print culture and was used to mark special occasions during national conventions, national feast days, religious celebrations (such as St. Cecilia’s Day), and school events. One such event was a regularly occurring school function called a “Patriotic Day.” On page 3 of a concert program for a Patriotic Day held at the Université Saint-Joseph in 1940 (Fig. 4) are printed the choruses of two popular patriotic songs—“La Marseillaise acadienne” and “Évangéline”—followed by a *cri de ralliement* (rallying cry).47 These patriotic songs are grouped together for two purposes: to arouse a sense of religious vigor and instill a sense of national pride. While the chorus of “La Marseillaise acadienne” is written to glorify the Acadians’ Canadian homeland, the chorus of “Évangéline” memorializes the character Evangeline (from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem of the same name), a fictional Acadian hero who suffered great loss during the deportations but returned to Acadia after many years of exile.48

43 Ibid., 2: 49–51. Because Acadians pronounce the French word *puis* as *pis*, it has been transcribed as such throughout this article.
44 Ibid., 2: 61–66.
Bohlman states that “the use of music to shape an image of the nation is conscious.” This suggests that music’s representational quality can be used not only to portray a national picture, but to apply it in such a way “that those living in the nation recognize themselves in basic but crucial ways.” The pairing of “La Marseillaise acadienne” and “Évangéline” demonstrates how music participated in an emerging form of Catholic sociability in the first half of the twentieth century, as clerics tried to help Acadians find a balance between remembering the past and redefining the future. Acadian patriotic songs—generally arranged for three to five voices—were written to strengthen social ties by giving voice to shared memories of their historic past, and to enact ultramontane principles in a public display of piety.

Ultramontane Ideologies in Acadian Patriotic Song Texts and Music

Ultramontane nationalism took hold at a time when Canada was becoming a nation-state. Initially, a “landscape-based” form of piety was implanted in Canada because ultramontanes

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50 Ibid., 83.
around the world believed that urbanization would eliminate not only a connection with the
land, but also “the meaning and importance of the rituals and piety located there.”
Hutchinson explains that the role of cultural nationalists is to “inspire a spontaneous love of
community” while “educating them to their common heritage of splendour and suffering.”
Ultramontane nationalists, responding to the global phenomenon of the Catholic
Enlightenment, worked locally to foster unity among Acadian communities dispersed
throughout Atlantic Canada by constructing simple histories and cultural narratives that
emphasized the similarities of group members. Depictions of an insular community who
idealized the past emerged, and this “rural” ideal became the hallmark of what has become
known as the “colonization movement” in French Canada.

Acadian migration started at the beginning of the twentieth century to cities such as
Moncton, Yarmouth, and Amherst in New Brunswick, as well as further afield to urban New
England, where men found work in factories and women in textile mills. The Catholic clergy
encouraged Acadians to remain in Atlantic Canada and model their lives on those of their
ancestors. This campaign included the printing and popularization of patriotic songs in schools,
as well as the publication of a nationalist newspaper called L’Évangéline to strengthen the
Acadians’ sense of regional identity. Music became a tool to valorize a rural identity that
reasoned against the perceived dangers of Protestant materialism and warned Catholics about
“the dangers of industrial-urban life.”

Underscored in these processes was the church’s desire to frame the socio-economic order
of French Canada in relation to “Catholic social teachings.” Catholic clerics drew on the
ideological cornerstones of religion, language, and homeland in nationalist newspapers to
equate industries such as agriculture and fishing with “the survival of the race.” The lines
between French Canada’s religious and economic interests soon were blurred, leaving the

52 Janice Holmes, “The Reform of Piety in Ireland, 1798–1920,” in The Dynamics of Religious Reform in Northern
53 Hutchinson, The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism, 16.
54 See Cook’s definition of the colonization movement as the “rural settlement of surplus population.” Cook,
“The Evolution of Nationalism in Quebec,” 73. Also see the following in-depth article about migrant French
Canadian workers: Jacques Ferland, “Canadiens, Acadiens, and Canada: Knowledge and Ethnicity in Labour
55 Many Acadian families moved to New England to work in textile mills around the turn of the twentieth century
but kept close ties to their French Canadian roots. See Claire Quintal, Steeples and Smokestacks: A Collection of Essays
Historique Acadienne 9/4 (1978): 72. L’Évangéline was published from 1887 to 1982, making it Acadia’s longest-running
newspaper. See Maurice Basque and Amélie Giroux, “Minority Francophone Communities,” in History of the Book in
Canada, 2: 55. From 1937 to 1944, this newspaper was called La voix d’Évangéline. See Gérard Beaulieu, “Media in
58 Bélanger, “The Roman Catholic Church and Quebec.” Also see Nadia F. Eid, Le clergé et le pouvoir politique
59 See William F. Ryan, The Clergy and Economic Growth in Quebec, 1896–1914 (Quebec: Laval University
l’Assomption et son discours,” Les cahiers de la Société Historique Acadienne 12/1 (1981): 43–44; Sylvain and
Voisine, Histoire du catholicisme québécoise, 418.
region’s sense of national and religious identities to become intertwined. Because the church was convinced that religious unity would ensure the “advancement of the nation,” the curé campagne (country priest) was charged with safeguarding the Acadians’ spiritual life as well as their economic survival.

Ultramontane missionaries also used patriotic songs at Acadian classical colleges and convent schools to teach a new form of “piety,” a notion that promoted the use of forgiveness and personal zeal (zèle) to change one’s socio-economic circumstances. Song texts—designed to empower the Acadians to overcome their sense of inferiority as an exiled, French-speaking colonial minority—introduced principles of self-responsibility and self-reliance as foundations on which Acadians could build a better life. Although songs were laden with characterizations of the Acadians as “poor exiles,” the lyrics were written to counteract the emotionality of the deportations, where the cardinal virtue of temperance—described by Brian Clarke as that of “industrious, self-discipline, and self-improvement”—was embedded in song texts to help Acadians let go of the past and forgive those who wronged them. The word fierté (pride) became emblematic of this religiously shaped sense of social identity, especially after a national flag, national anthem, and patron saint, Marie, were introduced to the Acadians as nationalist symbols in 1881. Often referred to in song texts, these nationalist symbols were meant to signify a sense of hope for those Acadians who were willing to stay and work in Atlantic Canada as a tight-knit community.

The compositional style typically found in Acadian patriotic songs was the “anthem-as-march” model, imitating France’s national anthem, “La Marseillaise.” Represented musically by marchlike tempos, dotted rhythms, and cheerful, arpeggiated melodies, the martial style was designed not only to encourage communal singing, but to instill the virtue of temperance within this disenfranchised minority population. A small number of Acadian patriotic songs also drew on the Italian barcarolle, a standard European musical genre often used to depict nautical scenes in French opera. Since most Acadians made their living as fishermen after the deportations, the barcarolle worked well to communicate an idealized rural identity within Acadian maritime communities. Compositional style thus had a ritual dimension that enabled ultramontane ideas to be enacted communally outside of the church, allowing these songs to

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61 See Robichaud, “Les Conventions Nationales (1890–1913),” 52. Ryan also reveals that many parish priests, particularly those associated with certain ethnic groups, were named “heroes” in written “popular histories of his race.” See Ryan, The Clergy and Economic Growth in Quebec, 22.
64 Since Europeans were fascinated with Italian life and had romantic images of Venetian gondoliers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the barcarolle became a celebrated musical genre in opera. French composer André Campra (1660–1744) capitalized on this by introducing the gondolier to France in his 1710 opera-ballet Les fêtes vénitiennes. See James Anor Margetts, “Echoes of Venice: The Origins of the Barcarolle for Solo Piano” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2008), 3–5.
fuel the Acadians’ collective imagination and shape a sense of identity in this historical moment.

An Idealized Rural Identity

Every Acadian patriotic song in the *Chants populaires des Acadiens* collection contains textual references to an idealized rural identity, and this article will not attempt to analyze each song text in its entirety. Instead, the following examination highlights elements in various song sections that typify the place-based ideology of ultramontane thought. These include themes of staying and return, as well as the valorization of rural industries. Ultramontane nationalists, in the context of French Canada’s colonization movement, feared that Francophones would be culturally and linguistically assimilated due to shrinking populations—especially the Acadians who were living in close proximity to English-speaking Protestants. Acadian patriotic songs thus called upon Acadians to either stay in or return to their homeland, insisting that they would benefit socially and economically by remaining a cohesive community and working rurally like their forefathers. One example is the chorus of “Le réveil de l’exilé” (The exile’s awakening), in which the Acadians—depicted as wandering, lonely exiles—imagine themselves returning to the beauty of their Acadian homeland guided by a “Star,” a reference to the yellow star found on the Acadian national flag (Table 1).

### Table 1: “Le réveil de l’exilé” text (translation by author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choeur:</th>
<th>Chorus:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O chère Acadie,</td>
<td>O dear Acadia,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bien souvent de ton sol je vois</td>
<td>Often from your soil I see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et la belle prairie</td>
<td>Both the beautiful meadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et les coteaux et les grands bois.</td>
<td>And the hillsides and the large wood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L’étoile bénie</strong></td>
<td><strong>The blessed star</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Me guidera vers la patrie.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Will guide me toward the homeland.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bien souvent de ton sol je vois</td>
<td>Often from your soil I see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J’irai voir encore mon bien, mon trésor.</td>
<td>I will again see my beautiful, my treasure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J’irai voir ma chère Acadie.</td>
<td>I will see my beloved Acadia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The piece is written in 12/8 time and the composer, Father A. Robichaud, relies on a quarter-plus-eighth-note rhythmic grouping \(\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8}\) to create a marchlike forward motion.

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65 For clarity, material especially pertinent to this analysis will be boldfaced in the tables for easy identification.
66 The gold star at the top left of the Acadian flag represents the Virgin Mary (the Acadians’ patron saint), and is known as the Stella Maris (Star of the Sea).
67 The French text in all the Tables (including punctuation) has been copied as it was found in the *Chants populaires des Acadiens* collection.
representative of the Acadians’ journey home.\textsuperscript{68} The melodic line is characterized by a series of upward-moving intervals, some of which are chromatic passing notes, as seen in Example 1 on the words “Bien souvent de ton sol” (Often from your soil). This ascending intervallic movement permits the performers to be filled with a sense of hope as they imagine that their destination will someday be reached.

\textbf{Ex. 1: Opening melodic line of “Le réveil de l’exilé”}

[Diagram of the opening melodic line]

Another instance appears in the second verse of “L’espérance” (Hope). Here, the Acadian homeland is cast synonymously with the word \textit{espérance}, as the author of the words, Dominique Leger, invites the Acadians who feel “rejected” by the outside world to “return again” to the motherland and “stay, stay in the land of your fathers” (Table 2).

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{“L’Espérance” text (translation by author)}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
Triste passé! L’Acadie te pardonne; & Sad past! Acadia forgives you; \\
Exemple de sa grande charité! & Example of her great charity! \\
Mais son enfant qui souvent l’abandonne, & But her child, who often abandons it, \\
Brise son cœur se voyant rejeté, & Breaks his heart seeing himself rejected. \\
Ah! \textit{revenez auprès} de votre mère & Ah! \textit{return again} to your mother, \\
Ne cherchez plus au dehors le bonheur; & Look no longer for happiness elsewhere; \\
\textbf{Restez, restez au pays de vos pères,} & \textbf{Stay, stay in the land of your fathers,} \\
Pour l’Acadien surtout c’est le meilleur. & Especially for the Acadian this is best. \\
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

The song’s melodic structure is a musical enactment of the idea of return. For instance, the tonic is consistently used to signify the Acadian homeland, strategically placed to allow the idea of staying or return to be musically portrayed. The three-syllable word \textit{Acadie} appears at the end of bar 1, and the melody returns to the tonic note (A) on the last two syllables in bars 1–2. In bars 13–14 and 17–18, the tonic also is voiced on both syllables of the French word for country, \textit{pays} (pronounced “pe-i”). A similar example can be found in bar 9 on the words “Ah! \textit{revenez}” (Ah! return). This phrase contains an oscillation, propelled by a dotted rhythm, which goes from the tonic to the leading tone and back to the tonic to depict a sense of movement toward home. Finally, in bars 11–12, on the words “\textit{ne cherchez plus au dehors le bonheur}” (Look no longer for happiness elsewhere), the tonic is repeated several times to serve as a musical reminder to the

\textsuperscript{68} Unless otherwise noted, the texts and music of the songs discussed in this article were written by the same person.

Acadians that their happiness relies on them remaining within the bounds of their ancestral homeland rather than going elsewhere in search of financial reward (Ex. 2).

**Ex. 2: Verse 2 of “L’Espérance”**

A third example is Father A.-T. Bourque’s song “La Marseillaise acadienne” (The Acadian Marseillaise), which shapes a sense of place-based identity in two ways. In verse 3, the words point to certain shared rewards if Acadians stay and work together to create a better future inside Acadia. In the chorus, the words reflect on the past, welcoming Acadians to praise and glorify the homeland of their forefathers, “L’Acadie” (Table 3).

**Table 3: “La Marseillaise acadienne” text (translation by author)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acadian Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vers l’avenir avec courage</td>
<td>Toward the future with courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prenons sans crainte notre essor</td>
<td>Let us acknowledge our progress without fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a nous la gloire pour partage</td>
<td>To us comes glory for sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si nous joignons tous nos efforts</td>
<td>If we combine all our efforts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chœur:**

**Honneur à l’Acadie,**

**Vive notre Patrie!**

**Chantons la terre des aïeux,**

**C’est la plus belle sous les cieux.**

**Chorus:**

**Honor to Acadia,**

**Long live our homeland!**

**Let us sing the land of the ancestors,**

**It is the most beautiful under the sky.**
Loosely based on France’s national song, the music of “La Marseillaise acadienne” echoes “La Marseillaise” in its strong, marchlike duple meter and rising perfect fourth intervallic movement from the fifth to first scale degrees at the opening of each verse (see the bracketed notes in Ex. 3). Most interesting, however, is how “La Marseillaise acadienne,” from bar 18 to the end, evokes a sense of national “stability” in the melodic structure of the chorus as the melodic line spells out a steadfast-sounding harmonic progression of major chords (I = F A C; IV = B♭ D F; V = C E G). At the same time, arpeggiated vocal lines (as in bars 18–25) intermix with rising melodies in stepwise motion (as in bars 26–29), allowing singers collectively to experience the rural homeland of their ancestors as a place of promise.

Ex. 3: Verse 3 and chorus of “La Marseillaise acadienne”

“Le pêcheur acadien” (The Acadian fisherman) best represents how ultramontane nationalists tried to raise the status of rural industries in Acadian society. Father Bourque’s ode utilizes the Italian barcarolle style and glorifies the sea for providing a livelihood to many Acadian families. Verse 1 pays homage to fishermen and is a hymn praising the beauty of the sea. Verse 2—because of the large number of fishermen-related deaths in Atlantic Canada—testifies to the power of faith in helping fishermen and their families overcome their fear of drowning or losing a loved one at sea. The final verse acts as a prayer, asking the Virgin Mary to protect Acadian fishermen. Verse 2 and the chorus, shown in Table 4, depict a happy, confident sailor who is unafraid to face the dangers of the open ocean.
Table 4: “Le pêcheur acadien” text (translation by author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acadian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bercé dans ma nacelle, Faible jouet des flots Jamais crainte mortelle Ne trouble mon repos. Ne trouble, ne trouble, ne trouble mon repos. Au ciel que je regarde Veille le Créateur Du danger il me garde Ce Dieu mon protecteur.</td>
<td>Cradled in my skiff, Weak plaything of the waves, Never does mortal fear Trouble my rest. Does not trouble, does not trouble, Does not trouble my rest. I look to the sky Over which the Creator watches; From danger he keeps me, This God my protector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choeur: O sublime and beautiful sea, In your vastness To you I sing this hymn To praise your beauty. Roll and sing, o vast ocean, Rock, rock me in thy bosom. Let us sing about the life and pleasure Of the proud fisherman, Of the merry sailor. Flowing smoothly on the bitter wave, The sailor floats along gaily, Without fearing the rage And fury of the elements. Sing, sing that, merry sailors, Flow fearlessly braving the waves. Sing, sing that, merry sailors, Flow fearlessly braving the waves. Sing, sing that, merry sailors |

Verse 2 lays out the thematic opposition of faith versus fear that typifies this song: “Bercé dans ma nacelle, / Faible jouet des flots, / Jamais crainte mortelle / Ne trouble mon repos” (Cradled in my skiff, / Weak plaything of the waves, / Never does mortal fear, / Trouble my rest). The melodic line creates a sense of peace by employing a moderate 6/8 meter that imitates the gentle rocking of a boat on the water, as seen in Example 4. The vocal line in bars 2 and 6 of the chorus, however, introduces a sense of tension by emphasizing the flattened seventh on the words *amère* (bitter) and *colère* (rage). The tension in the melody is offset by the chorus’ piano accompaniment, which continues to imitate the ebb and flow of waves using a 6/8 rhythmic pattern and contrary motion (see bars 1 and 5 in Ex. 5). The compositional device of creating tension and resolution is a re-creation of how the power of faith can provide solace in times of
grave danger. This musical design enables singers to envision themselves as fishermen who, in the face of possible death, find comfort in their religious convictions.

**Ex. 4:** Verse 2 of “Le pêcheur acadien”

```
2.

Ber-ce dans ma-nace-lé, Fai-bles-jou-et des flots. Jamais crai-n-te mor-
tel-le Ne trou-ble mon re-pos_ Ne trou-ble, ne trou-ble, ne trou-ble mon re-
pos_ Au ciel que je re-garde Viel-le le Cre-a-teur. Du

dan-ger il me gar-de Ce Dieu mon pro-
tec-teur.
```

**Ex. 5:** Chorus of “Le pêcheur acadien”

```
Ex: Flattened 7th

Fi-lant sur l'onde a-mé-re, Le ma-te-lot vo-gue gai-
ment,
```

```
Ex: Contrary Motion

Sans crai-n-dre la co-lè-re, Et la fur-eur des él-
é-ments.
```

Notions of Ultramontane Piety

Two other ideas associated with ultramontane piety emerged to become prescriptive behaviors in Acadian patriotic song: forgiveness and temperance. Combating an ingrained sense of inferiority in Acadian society, Catholic missionaries believed that Acadians not only had to forgive those who had exiled them in order to transform their socio-economic circumstances; they also had to change their attitude and apply personal zeal (zèle) to take charge of their lives. Nationalist symbols, especially the Acadians’ patron saint, Marie, and national anthem, “Ave maris stella” (Hail, star of the sea), appear throughout Acadian patriotic song as either emblems of hope or promises of redemption.

“Plainte et pardon” (Complaint and pardon) illustrates the notion of reconciliation in this vocal genre. In verse 1, Father Bourque paints a picture of the bitterness Acadians felt toward English authorities after their families were separated and deported from 1755 to 1763 for refusing to swear allegiance to the British crown. The chorus, however, emphatically states that God has directed the Acadians to forgive those who oppressed them. The excerpt in Table 5 shows that while Acadians were not expected to forget the past entirely, they were encouraged to follow the example of their forefathers and behave with honor.

Table 5: “Plainte et pardon” text (translation by author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acadian</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Je l’avais dit dans ma sombre misère:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Point de pardon pour l’injuste agresseur,</strong></td>
<td><strong>No forgiveness for the unjust aggressor,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui de l’enfer suscitant la colère,</td>
<td>Qui de l’enfer suscitant la colère,</td>
<td>Who arouses hell’s anger,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nous abreuva de peine et de douleur.</td>
<td>Nous abreuva de peine et de douleur.</td>
<td>Watered by our trouble and pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruel destin, pourquoi nous faire un crime,</td>
<td>Cruel destin, pourquoi nous faire un crime,</td>
<td>Cruel fate, why make for us a crime,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D’être français, enfants de l’Acadie,</td>
<td>D’être français, enfants de l’Acadie,</td>
<td>Of being French, children of Acadia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pourquoi punir l’innocente victime</td>
<td>Pourquoi punir l’innocente victime</td>
<td>Why punish the innocent victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dont le seul tort fut d’aimer sa Patrie,</td>
<td>Dont le seul tort fut d’aimer sa Patrie,</td>
<td>Whose only fault has been to love his Homeland,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chœur:</td>
<td>Chœur:</td>
<td>Whose only fault has been to love his Homeland?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mais pardonnons, c’est Dieu qui nous l’ordonne.</td>
<td>Mais pardonnons, c’est Dieu qui nous l’ordonne.</td>
<td>But let us forgive, it is God who orders us to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oui, pardonnons, mais que le souvenir</td>
<td>Oui, pardonnons, mais que le souvenir</td>
<td>Yes, let us forgive, but let the memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Des jours amers jamais nous abandonne,</td>
<td>1 Des jours amers jamais nous abandonne,</td>
<td>Of those bitter days never leave us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sur le passé guidons notre avenir.</td>
<td>Sur le passé guidons notre avenir.</td>
<td>By the past let us steer our future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nous les enfants des preux venus de France,</td>
<td>Nous les enfants des preux venus de France,</td>
<td>We the children of the courageous from France,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comme eux soyons sans reproche et sans peur,</td>
<td>Comme eux soyons sans reproche et sans peur,</td>
<td>Like them, let us be without reproach and without fear,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N’oublions pas leurs actes de vaillances,</td>
<td>N’oublions pas leurs actes de vaillances,</td>
<td>Let us not forget their acts of bravery,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suivons comme eux le chemin</td>
<td>Suivons comme eux le chemin</td>
<td>Let us follow, like them, the path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de l’honneur.</td>
<td>de l’honneur.</td>
<td>of honor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69 For a brief history of how the Acadians were treated by British authorities’ upon resettlement in Atlantic Canada after the 1763 Treaty of Paris, see Basque, Barrieau, and Côté, L’Acadie de l’Atlantique, 23.
The musical setting of verse 1 (Ex. 6) starts as a slow march in cut time; the appoggiatura figures in bars 1–2 and 9–10 propel the movement forward from the first to the second beat of each bar. The dirge-like feeling, together with the key of G minor, illustrates the Acadians’ refusal to forgive those responsible for their expulsion. By bar 17, the piece modulates to the tonic major, B♭, which changes the mood and anticipates the message that the chorus delivers in bar 37. Here, the chorus is introduced by a strong, stepwise-descending B♭-major scale on the words “Mais pardonnons, c’est Dieu qui nous l’ordonne” (But let us forgive, it is God who orders us to do so). Two later sections (Ex. 7) briefly reference the past to reflect the idea of forgiving but not forgetting: bars 42 and 43 (“mais que le souvenir”—but let the memory) and bar 49 (“Sur le passé”—By the past). Both examples are depicted musically by a return to the minor key, which would permit those performing it to “remember.” The remainder of the chorus encourages temperance by using a melody made up of uplifting and forward-moving scale-like phrases in the major key.

**Ex. 6**: Verse 1 of “Plainte et pardon”
The first verse of “En avant!” written by Abbot Stanislas Doucet, is a good example of how the virtue of temperance was introduced to shape the Acadian identity in Acadian patriotic song (Table 6). The phrase at the end of verse 1 is repeated both textually and musically as the chorus: “En avant marchons! Traçons nos sillons; dans le champ du progrès nous cueillerons les fruits de notre zèle” (March onward! Let us plow our furrows; in the field of progress we will gather the fruits of our zeal). The word zèle connotes self-reliance (and is analogous to the virtue of temperance), because the ability to help themselves was seen as the key to the Acadians’ prosperity.
Table 6: “En avant!” text (translation by author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sous le drapeau de l’Acadie,</td>
<td>Under the flag of Acadia,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au souvenir de nos aïeux,</td>
<td>In the memory of our forefathers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nous chanterons notre Patrie</td>
<td>We will sing about our country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux doux accords de cœurs joyeux!</td>
<td>To the gentle strains of joyous hearts!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pour n’être pas indigne d’elle,</td>
<td>So as not to be unworthy of her,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pour qu’elle soit prospère et belle,</td>
<td>So that she may be prosperous and beautiful,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>En avant marchons! Traçons nos sillons;</strong></td>
<td><strong>March onward! Let us plow our furrows;</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dans le champ du progrès nous cueillerons</strong></td>
<td><strong>In the field of progress we will gather</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Les fruits de notre zèle.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The fruits of our zeal.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sentiment of the text is represented rhythmically through marchlike tempos, driven by the bounce of dotted rhythms, as in bars 13–15 (Ex. 8). A buoyant melody emerges comprised almost entirely of arpeggiated lines designed to encourage group singing, especially in the song’s refrain. “En avant!” is the quintessential example of expressions of ultramontane thought using the “march-as- anthem” style, an attempt to temper the emotionality of the deportations and change the Acadians’ negative attitudes.

Ex. 8: Verse 1 of “En avant!”
Verses 1 and 2 of “Le réveil de l’exilé” (discussed earlier) illustrate how nationalist symbols worked as a form of emotional temperance in Acadian patriotic song (Table 7). Verse 1 paints a picture of an impoverished Acadian exile sitting on a rock and ruminating about everything he has lost during the deportations. Verse 2 describes the same man’s redemption after the Virgin Mary appeared to him and told him that she would soon appear on the Acadian national flag and be heard in the hopeful sound of the Acadian national anthem “Ave maris stella.”

Table 7: “Le réveil de l’exilé” text (translation by author)

1
Un pauvre déporté de la vielle Acadie,
Un soir d’automne assis sur un rocher désert,
Tout tremblant par le givre, et pleurant sa Patrie,
Repassait en esprit ce qu’il avait souffert;
Songeant à ses foyers, ses parents et ses proches,
Regrettant sa maison, ses guérets, et son pré,
Le temple du village et le doux son des cloches,
Il s’étend sur la pierre et s’endort épuisé.

2
La nuit était tombée un repos bienfaisant
Vint lui faire oublier un moment sa détresse.
Bientôt il s’éveilla sous le souffle puissant de la brise des mers.
O suprême allégresse L’Étoile de la Vierge,
au moment de l’aurore,
Apparut à ses yeux puis lui parlant tout bas
“Tu me verras un jour ornant le tricolor;
Entonne avec espoir l’Ave Maris Stella.”

1
A poor deportee from old Acadia,
One autumn evening was sitting on a deserted rock,
Trembling with cold, and crying for his Homeland,
Replaying in his mind all he had suffered;
Thinking of his home, his parents, and relatives,
Missing his house, his fallow land, and his pasture,
The village temple and the sweet sound of bells,
He lies down on the stone and falls asleep exhausted.

2
Night fell, a beneficent rest
Came to make him forget his distress for a moment.
Soon he awoke under the powerful breath of the sea breeze.
O supreme joy, the Star of the Virgin,
at the moment of dawn,
Appeared before his eyes and spoke to him softly
“You’ll see me one day adorning the Tricolor [French flag];
Strike up with hope the ‘Ave Maris Stella.’”

The mood of the melody contributes to how this piece works to shape identity (Ex. 9). For instance, the composer, Father Robichaud, conveys a sense of loss in the opening phrases (bars 1–3 and 6–7) by using repeated notes in a rhythm reminiscent of a funeral march. Redemption is depicted musically as the A-minor melody gradually modulates to G major, a shift formalized as the G-major chord is spelled out in the first half of bar 18 on the words “L’Étoile de la Vierge” (The Star of the Virgin).
My final example of the virtue of temperance in Acadian patriotic song is Father Bourque’s song “La fleur du souvenir” (The flower of memory), in which the Acadian homeland is depicted as a “withered rose” (Table 7). While the decaying rose acts as a metaphor for the Acadian exile in verse 1, the lingering “fragrance” of the rose is used to symbolize how difficult memories from the past can propel the Acadians forward to forge a better tomorrow in the verse that follows. This trope can be identified in the text at the end of the verse: “Prenez ce souvenir, / La plus belle fleur de la terre, / Qu’elle embaume votre avenir” (Take this memory, / The most beautiful flower of the earth, / That it may give fragrance to your future).
Table 7: “La fleur du souvenir” text (translation by author)

1
**Ce n’est qu’une rose flétrie,**
Mais toujours bien chère à mon cœur,
Une humble fleur de l’Acadie,
Que je conserve avec bonheur.
C’est au pays d’Évangéline
Quelle s’épanouit autrefois,
Sur le penchant d’une colline
Que protégeait un beau grand bois.

Choeur:
Petite fleur, rose éphémère,
Tu vis le jour au pays de Grand Pré,
Ici, sur la rive étrangère,
Tu me parles d’un doux passé,
Tu me parles d’un doux passé.

2
Un jour, il m’en souvient encore,
J’allais partir pour d’autres cieux,
Hélas c’était la sombre aurore,
De l’exil de jours malheureux.
Mais alors une voix bien chère
Me dit: **Prenez ce souvenir,**
**La plus belle fleur de la terre,**
**Qu’elle embaume votre avenir.**

1
**It is only a withered rose,**
But still very dear to my heart,
A humble flower of Acadia,
That I happily keep.
It’s in the land of Evangeline.
That it once flourished,
On the slope of a hill
That protected a beautiful large wood.

Chorus:
Small flower, ephemeral rose,
You were born in the country Of Grand Pré,
Here, on the foreign shore,
You speak to me of a sweet past,
You speak to me of a sweet past.

2
One day, I remember it still,
I was just leaving for other skies,
Alas, it was the dark dawn
Of exile, of miserable days.
But then a voice so dear
Told me: **Take this memory,**
**The most beautiful flower of the earth,**
**That it may give fragrance to your future.**

The virtue of temperance is represented differently in the verses than in the chorus. The verses have a forward momentum where the tune and accompaniment are characterized by a military-style rhythmic pattern ([|:|:|:|:|:|]) that is meant to drive the Acadians into action (Ex. 10).
Ex. 10: The opening of verses 1–3 of “La fleur du souvenir”; from page 9 of the collection *Chants populaires des Acadiens*

In the chorus, temperance is depicted through a contrast between the ideas of movement and remembrance. Movement is expressed musically by short notes, while remembrance is portrayed by long note durations. For instance, a sense of forward motion is represented by a recurring figure of three pick-up eighth notes, as indicated in the second half of bars 1 and 2. These pick-up notes then lead to a held half note on the downbeat of the next bar, as seen here:

The use of the half note is symbolic: it is meant to depict the idea of “memory,” which is associated with the metaphor of a lasting “fragrance” (Ex. 11).
The rich social history embedded in *Chants populaires des Acadiens* cannot be denied. Yet, regional song collections in Canada often are overlooked and seen as musically insignificant. Exemplifying how a religiously based sense of Acadian national identity came into being, this examination reveals how Acadian patriotic song was conceived in relation to the global spread of ultramontane ideologies, long after the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe. The analysis provides an exploration of music’s ability to prescribe and practice new understandings of social identity, and may serve as a template for further investigation of song traditions in other Catholic communities in the New World.

Catholic liberalism in France sought to gain religious freedom and create Catholic unity across Europe in a time of absolute power. In nineteenth-century Canada, Catholic missionaries drew on the idea of papal authority to seek political and economic equality for francophone minorities. Nationalistic in tone, missionary efforts in Canada led to the creation of a new type of Catholic sociability, which eventually was enacted in a new compositional genre, Acadian patriotic song. The prescriptive nature of the songs not only points to particular social issues in Acadian society, but also suggests how the specificity of the past was used to shape religious identity and implement social reform. A look at the social practice of Acadian patriotic songs shows music’s ability to participate in constructing identity, particularly as new social attitudes were being musically constructed and performed.  

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70 See Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism.*  