

“The Devil Made Me Do It.” Popular Spirituality in a Rural Québec Parish, 1736–1901

FRANK ABBOTT

Volume 27, Number 1, 2016

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1040523ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1040523ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (print)

1712-6274 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Abbott, F. (2016). “The Devil Made Me Do It.” Popular Spirituality in a Rural Québec Parish, 1736–1901. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 27(1), 1–30.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1040523ar>

Article abstract

This paper examines popular tales involving the Devil in the rural Québec parish of St-Joseph-de-Beauce, 70 kilometers southeast of Québec City. A microhistorical examination of the interaction between popular beliefs and clerical discourse in the parish over an extended period of time offers valuable insights into the functional details of the relationship between parishioners and curés that might otherwise be missed, misinterpreted, or even invisible at the diocesan level. Popular stories about Satan in Beauce County reveal how Catholicism intersected with popular belief systems in rural Québec. On the one hand, people’s fear of the Devil reinforced the clerical message that their spiritual needs took precedence over the inclinations of their bodies. But people also produced their own versions of the clergy’s construction of the Devil, and added content which often differed from the clerical version of Satan. Understanding the popular views of the Devil sheds more light on the ways that orthodox Catholic belief became blended with popular customs and tales, as well as how ordinary Catholics responded to the Church’s messages from the pulpit and in the confessional (or why they did not).

“The Devil Made Me Do It.” Popular Spirituality in a Rural Québec Parish, 1736–1901

FRANK ABBOTT

Abstract

This paper examines popular tales involving the Devil in the rural Québec parish of St-Joseph-de-Beauce, 70 kilometers southeast of Québec City. A microhistorical examination of the interaction between popular beliefs and clerical discourse in the parish over an extended period of time offers valuable insights into the functional details of the relationship between parishioners and curés that might otherwise be missed, misinterpreted, or even invisible at the diocesan level. Popular stories about Satan in Beauce County reveal how Catholicism intersected with popular belief systems in rural Québec. On the one hand, people’s fear of the Devil reinforced the clerical message that their spiritual needs took precedence over the inclinations of their bodies. But people also produced their own versions of the clergy’s construction of the Devil, and added content which often differed from the clerical version of Satan. Understanding the popular views of the Devil sheds more light on the ways that orthodox Catholic belief became blended with popular customs and tales, as well as how ordinary Catholics responded to the Church’s messages from the pulpit and in the confessional (or why they did not).

Résumé

Cet article porte sur les récits populaires autour du diable dans la paroisse rurale de Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, à 70 km au sud de la ville de Québec. Cette étude, une microhistoire de l’interaction des croyances populaires et du discours clérical dans la paroisse sur la longue période, permet de pénétrer dans leurs détails les rapports entre paroissiens et curés qui autrement demeureraient ignorés, mal compris ou même impénétrables au niveau diocésain. En outre, les récits populaires sur Satan dans le comté de Beauce dévoilent comment le catholicisme interagissait avec le système de croyances populaires au Québec. D’une part, la peur des gens du diable renforça le message clérical sur la nécessité de satisfaire les besoins spirituels sur ceux

de l'appétence corporelle. Mais les paroissiens produisirent également leurs propres versions de la construction cléricale du diable, tout en s'écartant parfois sensiblement de ce modèle. Appréhender les conceptions populaires du diable jette un nouvel éclairage sur la manière dont les récits et les contes populaires ont interpénétré la doctrine catholique, et comment les fidèles ont répondu à l'enseignement de l'Église catholique dispensé du haut de la chaire ou du confessionnal (ou pourquoi ils ont failli à le faire).

One fine autumnal Sunday evening, sometime between 1899 and 1904, when the Reverend Adalbert Blanchet was *curé* of the rural Québec parish of Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, parishioner Treflé Boulet found out that a *veillée*, an evening party of eating, drinking, and dancing was to take place at the home of “David X” and decided to play a trick on the revellers. Arriving at the house, he found a quantity of soot beneath a cauldron. Removing all his clothes, he covered himself with the soot, tousled his hair, grabbed an iron bar, and made his dramatic entrance. A collective gasp indicated that everyone thought they had seen the Devil, including the terrified owner of the house who immediately ended the party.¹ But instead of scolding Boulet for taking the existence of God’s nemesis so lightly, the *curé* heartily approved. “Parle pas un mot, il dit. C’est le meilleur coup que t’as jamais fait dans ta vie; ils n’ont pas eu le temps de voir rien.”² Evidently Curé Blanchet felt the end justified the means since revelry and dancing came to an end in Saint-Joseph, on that Sunday at least.

Apart from being a lighthearted anecdote, accounts such as this tell us several things about the intersection of Catholicism with popular belief systems in rural Québec by the turn of the twentieth century. On the one hand, people’s fear of the Devil reinforced the clerical message that their spiritual needs took precedence over the inclinations of their bodies. But people also produced their own versions of the clergy’s construction of the Devil and added content, which often differed from the clerical version of Satan. Understanding the popular views of the Devil sheds more light on the ways that orthodox Catholic belief became blended with popular customs and tales, making difficult to draw clear distinctions between the two. Beauce

County's reputation for irreproachable Catholic devotion and its close proximity to the seat of the oldest Catholic bishopric in Canada, make it ideally suited to examine the internal dynamics between a Catholic French-speaking community and the Church. This paper looks closely at one rural parish there, Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, during the 165 years from its establishment in the waning decades of the French Regime to the dawn of the twentieth century. Approximately 70 kilometers south of Québec City, the parish straddles the Chaudière River that meanders through eastern Québec before joining the St. Lawrence River just upstream from Québec. It was founded in 1736 when Sieur Joseph Fleury de la Gorgendière, a government official from whose first name the parish derived its patron saint, was granted the Chaudière Valley's first seigneurie.³ By 1762, Saint-Joseph's population reached a total of 436 people in 78 households.⁴ In the period 1765–1901, it grew from 499 to nearly 2,878 souls. Saint-Joseph has a long tradition of population continuity; local lore asserts that over two-thirds of family names recorded on the census of 1762 immediately after the British conquest still exist there. In addition, its population was culturally homogeneous, almost exclusively Catholic and of French origin, unlike nearby parishes such as Sainte-Marie just to the north, or Saint-François just to the south. The few non-Catholic or non-French-Canadian families that did come to the parish over the years never stayed long. Although its folkloric traditions and tales persisted well into the twentieth century, political and economic developments in the mid-nineteenth century changed the trajectory of Saint-Joseph's transformation significantly. The parliament of the Province of Canada made the village of Saint-Joseph the centre of judicial administration for Beauce County in 1857. Furthermore, Saint-Joseph became more integrated into the province's developing market economy after 1876 owing to the arrival of the Quebec Central Railway. These external impulses as well as the good soil and hard work of the parish's farmers made it a well-off agricultural parish.

Although the folklore of Saint-Joseph and neighbouring parishes is rich in anecdotes about the Devil, it may reasonably

be asked how tales from a single parish can offer a meaningful understanding about the place of Catholicism in Québec culture. However, just as the study of a single tree allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the whole forest, a microhistorical examination of the interaction between popular beliefs and clerical discourse in a single parish over an extended period of time offers valuable insights into the functional details of the relationship between parishioners and *curés* that might otherwise be missed, misinterpreted or even invisible at the diocesan level. As Paul Ricoeur points out, when the scale of investigation moves from the macrohistorical to the microhistorical, “what becomes visible are not the same interconnections but rather connections that remained unperceived at the macrohistorical scale. [...] In changing the scale one does not see the same things as larger or smaller. [...] One sees different things.”⁵ Indeed, Québec sociologist Fernand Dumont long ago argued that the lived experience (“le vécu”) of religion is not always exactly the same as its Church-sanctioned expression because doctrine does not fully encompass popular interpretation and behaviour; in some cases it might even contradict them.⁶ As John C. Walsh and Steven High suggest, culture (and by extension popular culture) is an “imagined arrangement of the world.” To make sense of the imagined world that produced these stories, historians of culture must attempt to decode and “read” its linguistic and non-linguistic signs.⁷ Tales of the Devil allow us to see the interplay between clerical discourse and the way ordinary people applied it to their lives. William Westfall’s characterization of culture as “the set of ideas, beliefs, and attitudes through which an individual, society, or group interprets existence” provides a useful way to decipher the interaction between the worlds of religion and popular culture in Saint-Joseph. The ways the *habitants* understood and ordered their world, as expressed in their popular culture, constituted a “pattern of interpretation for organizing the unstructured data of life.”⁸ In “a complex language of words and symbols” reflecting their collective experience of literally toiling on the land to produce their daily bread, they acted out these interpretations on a daily basis through their work and personal interactions.⁹ Even

though the term *habitant* had become a nostalgic designation by the late nineteenth century, semantically it has “une unité significative commune: un rapport dominant à la terre.”¹⁰ *Habitant* reflects more accurately than the neutral census designation of *cultivateur* the combination of peasant individualism and sense of independence that characterized rural life in Saint-Joseph. An important reason to understand how the faithful received and interpreted clerical discourse as evidenced in their popular tales is that otherwise historians of religion can become unwitting prisoners of ecclesiastical thinking. As Ollivier Hubert asks, how can we accept that the population’s receptiveness to Catholic rites and metaphysical assumptions was perfectly reasonable, and yet at the same time unconsciously agree that their popular culture, so heavily structured by the same magic-intellectual framework of the Church, was “superstitious”?¹¹ Consequently, without an awareness of the subtle influence of the Church’s intellectual and spiritual categories, historians can run the risk of missing the ethical and spiritual content of popular beliefs and treat the majority of Catholics like children.¹² Thus we can be distanced from understanding how ordinary Catholics responded to the Church’s messages from the pulpit or in the confessional booth (and why they did or did not).

While the *habitants* shared the same religion and language with other social groups, their work and leisure activities were the basis of the distinctive beliefs and practices that differentiated them. Their collective experiences influenced what René Hardy terms “les perceptions populaires bien ancrées dans les mentalités.”¹³ Since “perception” has as many meanings in French as it does in English, in speaking of the *habitants* in the Beauce the term is meant in the active sense of “perception du bien et du mal: le sens moral,” or a “prise de connaissance” and an “opération de l’intelligence.”¹⁴ This is quite different from the passive sense of merely absorbing information or experiences as fragments of a derivative belief system handed down by other social groups. Although the *habitant* did not exist in isolation from the values of the larger society, Thérèse Beaudoin argues that the historical experience and practical necessities of settling the land

caused him to develop his “propre conception spatio-temporelle l’amenant à établir son rythme de vie en relation avec ses activités particulières.”¹⁵ As Cornelius Jaenen found, most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century visitors remarked on how struck they were by the “independence, assertiveness and ingenuity of the Canadian *habitant*.”¹⁶ Obedience to the clergy, or even to the civil authorities, had not been a notable feature of French-Canadian behaviour in the French colonial period; intendants and bishops alike had regularly complained about their insubordinate spirit.¹⁷ Such characteristics persisted into the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ The surgeon and author Pierre-Jean de Sales Laterrière (1789–1834) observed in 1830 that his fellow *Canadiens* were noted for their “bold spirit of independence,” combined with their sense of personal dignity. These characteristics made them “courteous in their manners, polite in their address, they offend not by rude and rough familiarity, or indifference to the comfort of others; neither do they forget their own dignity, even though they be poor; they cringe not, they fawn not.”¹⁹ De Sales Laterrière argued that circumstances had produced people who lived “not in fear of any man’s power or influence” because, “upon themselves only — on their own industry do they depend for subsistence.”²⁰ These characteristics were, by all accounts, a well-known feature of the people of the Beauce.²¹ J.-Alphonse Richard made a similar argument on the ways that the people of Saint-Sébastien-de-Beauce maintained their collective identity: “Ceux qui vivent, travaillent, se logent, s’habillent de la même façon, qui suivent les mêmes prescriptions hygiéniques et qui, dans leurs loisirs, partagent les mêmes récréations, finissent par s’animer d’un esprit social commun.”²²

Religion and Folklore

We should add the solidarity that comes from people being in church together to the list of factors that reinforced identity. One important expression of Saint-Joseph’s prosperity was that in a quarter century the parishioners spent approximately \$70,000 to rebuild a magnificent church (1865–8), a convent (1887–8),

and a palatial presbytery (1890–2) to house the *curé* and his vicar. These buildings are the visible indications of the importance that the people of Saint-Joseph attached to their religion. After all, the rites and rituals of the Church provided the faithful with a theologically-sanctioned frame of reference about the metaphysical world and relieved some of the uncertainties of the *habitants'* precarious existence. Aware of their own powerlessness in the face of such calamities as the periodic arrival of grasshoppers that devoured crops, they would turn to the power of religion and religious processions to counter such natural threats.²³ Throughout the year, the religious world of the Church and the *habitant* agricultural cycle converged in the framework of the Catholic liturgical calendar. The Church's most important feasts occurred in the winter and early spring, coinciding with slow periods of the agricultural year. The start of the liturgical year, Advent, the four-week period leading up to Christmas and the celebration of Christ's birth, occurred in November when most agricultural work had ceased. In February or March, came the ten-day period of feasting and celebration of *carnaval* that ended at midnight on the eve of Ash Wednesday, the start of a forty-day period of abstinence leading up to Easter.²⁴ The moveable feast of Easter was set close to the spring equinox, just before the start of work for the next agricultural season.

In addition to remarking on the *habitants'* outward displays of piety, outsiders such as the early nineteenth-century English traveller Byron Nicholson observed that the average French Canadian was always ready to share his last glass of wine, his last piece of meat or bread with someone even less fortunate than himself.²⁵ The Church and rural communities harnessed that generous impulse by holding *quêtes*, collections of money or goods in kind, to aid the poor of the community, evidence that people took this duty seriously enough to institutionalize it and invest it with religious and popular sanctions. There were usually two such *quêtes*; one especially, the *quête de l'Enfant Jésus*, a charitable collection of food and money held in the name of the child Jesus during the week following Christmas, is the best known. This collection, also called a "quête des biens de la terre," was not

a legal obligation for parishioners, as was the tithe, but all would have been expected to contribute the goods to be auctioned off in front of the parish church.²⁶

Interwoven as it was in the life of the parish, however, institutional Catholicism did not hold uncontested sway over the spiritual terrain of Saint-Joseph. The *habitants* of the Beauce possessed a popular folklore based on the assumption that the material and the spiritual worlds were interdependent and that there was regular interaction between them. Consequently, on the spiritual side, the borders between the worlds of the Church and the people were porous and overlapping. The popularly constructed metaphysical world simultaneously presented an alternative to and a reinforcement of the Church's own teachings. People accepted the clerical supernatural as a given part of daily life, constantly resorting to Catholic or para-catholic ritual to act upon the world. At the same time, popular beliefs demonstrated "une certaine cohérence du monde qui échappe aux taxonomies cléricales et savantes."²⁷

A number of ethnographic studies have given us insights into the popular culture of Beauce County. In the early 1950s the ethnologist/folklorist Madeleine Doyon-Ferland began investigating its rich, centuries-old combination of Christian and pre-Christian elements.²⁸ In the 1970s, the ethnographers Jean-Claude Dupont and Paul Jacob interviewed informants in the Beauce, including people born in Saint-Joseph late in the nineteenth century.²⁹ Monique-Lachance Fortin's investigation of the linguistic and ethnographic contents of the dialect of the Beauce uncovered a number of popular religious beliefs embedded in people's everyday language.³⁰ Although historians of religion in Canada have not yet made Québec's well-documented system of popular beliefs an object of serious study, historian Nive Voisine argues that greater collaboration between historians and folklorists will allow us more fully to understand the influence of this "religion vécue" on people and their relationship with the Church.³¹ A whole series of phenomena rooted in the people had distinct religious content but largely escaped clerical regulation, even though the clergy was to a great extent a concerned party.³²

For example, the Archives de folklore et ethnologie at Laval University contain dozens of stories from various parts of Québec, and a good number from the Beauce, whose central figure is the heroic *curé*, the powerful protector of those whose folly or carelessness had nearly brought them under the power of the Devil.

Demonizing the Devil

As one of the most renowned figures of Christian mythology, Satan, it might be thought, really needs no introduction. However, the image of Satan, so familiar to the popular imagination today, actually arrived somewhat late on the scene in Western culture, a construct of the late Middle Ages. In Christian teaching Satan was originally the leader of the Heavenly angels who revolted against God and were all cast out of Heaven.³³ For a millennium after the advent of Christianity, there was relatively little popular interest in the Devil. A narrow circle of theologians held arcane debates over the nature of angels, the extent that Lucifer and his demon followers retained their incorporeal angelic properties, and even to which order of angels they belonged.³⁴ Not only did the Church not feel threatened by the Devil, on the popular level his various representations or those of his minions suggest that people treated them with a certain familiarity that mitigated some of their terrifying attributes. Names such as Old Horny, Black Bogey, Lusty Dick, and Old Nick brought these devils closer to men, limiting the fear they inspired. For an ordinary Christian in those early centuries, the invisible world was full of a vast number of more or less powerful beings whose respective places in the universe were not yet precisely defined in terms of Good and Evil. Saints could avenge themselves on the living while demons could often be summoned to help people. In addition, before the twelfth century there was relatively little apparent ecclesiastical concern over popular practices of magic and sorcery, suggesting that the Church did not feel threatened by the superstitious convictions of the people and still less by a satanic counter-religion, denounced with such passion a few centuries later.³⁵

It was not until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries that the process of demonization (so to speak) of Satan began in Europe. Subsequently, the dark force of Satan loomed menacingly in Christian mythology as a counter to the divine light of Heaven, which was the image brought to New France by the early colonists. From the twelfth century on came yet another development in the construction of the Devil. Previously the clergy pictured the Devil and his minions as incorporeal entities who were incapable of acting upon living beings, which thus excluded sexual relations between them. But with the development of the idea of *incubi* which were evil spirits that took seductive male form, and *succubae* which were the female equivalent, came the logical next step which was that these demons could seduce and engage in sexual intercourse with people.

But Even Satan Had His Good Side

As dark a presence as Satan was usually reputed to be in clerical discourse, popular tales granted that even he had his good side. The powerful and fateful Satanism of the late Middle Ages submerged, but did not eliminate earlier popular beliefs that the Devil could be outwitted or dominated by men, beliefs that persisted in European culture and survived the persecution of “witches” and “sorcerers.”³⁶ Both conceptions of Satan came to New France with the colonists: this may explain why the Devil occupied a more ambivalent presence in the folkloric imagination of people of the Beauce than he did in the minds of the clergy. Many popular tales in the Beauce about Satan characterized him as an almost benevolent figure who reinforced the Church’s own promotion of honesty, morality, the respect people owed to the clergy, as well as the Church’s prohibitions against dancing. There are even several locations in Saint-Joseph that he is said to have visited, leaving his imprint on a large rock. That came about because, as Treflé Boulet told ethnographers in 1965, there was a house in the parish where young people often went to dance until one day they saw a man over eight feet tall come down to sit on the rock, hands on his knees. Suddenly

he disappeared, leaving the impression of his seated form in the stone.³⁷ More surprisingly, and at some variance with the clerical image of him, are the popular tales of how the Devil came to the support of such worthy causes as honesty in business affairs, proper Christian conduct, and respect for holy days. He also appeared to people in many forms in order to reinforce proper moral behaviour. A tradition in one family in Saint-Frédéric, a neighbouring parish to Saint-Joseph, is that he acted as a notary to facilitate the honest transfer of the family farm. Another Saint-Frédéric tale concerns a rock where the Devil sat on it for so long arbitrating a dispute over the ownership of a field that he left his imprint.³⁸ In an account from Saint-Joseph, he appeared as a small boy who turned a pile of earth into a rat in order to frighten a farmer who had been ploughing his fields on Easter Sunday. He is credited as taking on the forms of a wolf, a dog, and a firebird, usually as the precursor of retribution to people who deserved it by straying from the Church's code of conduct.³⁹

A most unexpected place for him to have appeared was to aid church construction. Three versions of an account from people in three neighbouring parishes relate that when the church of Saint-Joseph was being built, though the accounts do not specify if it was the church built in 1790 or its replacement in 1865-66, the *curé* called upon the Devil to lend his horse to haul the stone that was needed. One tale came from Saint-Benjamin, Dorchester County, another originated in Saints-Anges in the northwest corner of Saint-Joseph, and a third from Saint-Frédéric, immediately to the southwest. The Saint-Frédéric account described the animal as a large black beast that, the *curé* warned, must never be unbridled or watered.⁴⁰ When that inevitably happened, the horse disappeared, never to be seen again. In the slightly different version from Saint-Benjamin, the *curé* laid his ceremonial stole on the horse's neck while the stone was being hauled. When the work was completed, the *curé* removed the stole and the horse disappeared.⁴¹ Accounts from Beauce County's parishes in close proximity to Saint-Joseph describe how the Devil's horse helped construct the parish churches of Sainte-Marie, Saint-Frédéric, and Saint-Martin.⁴² Two tales about the famous shrine to the

Virgin Mary at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, not far from Trois-Rivières, indicate that other parishes in Québec are also said to have taken advantage of his horse's availability. Why Satan was in high demand as a contractor for religious buildings is unclear because these tales provide absolutely no explanation why the Devil would even want to help construct churches.⁴³

Popular tales about the Devil reinforced another aspect of clerical condemnation, the increased prevalence of swearing and blasphemy, a trend that clerics identified with mounting alarm from the middle of the nineteenth century. Fortunately for the clergy, here again Satan came to the rescue in numerous stories of retribution, where the Devil carried unrepentant blasphemers off to hell.⁴⁴ One typical tale from East Broughton, not far from Saint-Joseph, and collected in August 1965, is said to have occurred in 1905. Ernest Couture, who was around twenty years old at the time, was working with a logging crew in Maine composed of twenty-five men. Some were Catholics, some were Protestants, and others were "des 'rough'."⁴⁵ One of the roughs was rude to a visiting priest. When the clergyman showed him the crucifix, all he got for his efforts were curses. Then a large black dog appeared and the camp filled with smoke. When it had cleared, both dog and blasphemer had vanished, convincing Couture that he had really seen the Devil. The cause of the clergy's concern about swearing was the change from using the names of saints or divine personages in order to convey strong emotion, to employing the names of ritual objects associated with the Eucharist.⁴⁶ Most popular but notorious were the chalice used to consecrate wine at mass (*calice*), the host that is the body of Christ (*hostie*), and the tabernacle, the small locked cupboard on the altar where hosts are stored.⁴⁷ When an emphatic *maudit* is added to any of these terms to provide still more force, simple swearing can verge on blasphemy, deliberate insult to the divinity, as in the expression, "Maudit calice, je suis tanné de travailler de même!"⁴⁸ While some parishioners could name all the important sacred objects associated with the Eucharist thanks to their catechism lessons, far too often males used them blasphemously rather than reverentially. In 1890, the Reverend F.-X.

Gosselin noted the rise in blasphemy in his report from Saint-Joseph.⁴⁹ A year later his report linked young men with drinking and swearing.⁵⁰

In addition to the Devil, there is a well-documented popular belief in his minions, such as sorcerers and *loups-garous* (werewolves). The *loup-garou* had the head and body of a wolf and kept its predatory properties, but had enhanced bestial appetites of concupiscence, hunger, and rage which erased its rationality and spirituality.⁵¹ Individuals could be turned into werewolves for various reasons, mostly related to lax performance of their religious duties. A story from the nineteenth century handed down in the Rodrigue family of Saint-Joseph tells of a man who had not attended mass and had neglected to confess his sins for seven years, and was turned into a *loup-garou*. Eventually he convinced someone to stab the small white spot on his wolf's forehead, signifying where he had been baptized, knowing that it needed to bleed profusely in order for him to return to his human form.⁵² A tale from the parish of Saints-Anges, part of Saint-Joseph until 1875, tells of a father who attended *veillées* so often that he was turned into a *loup-garou*. When he was delivered from this condition, he sinned no more.⁵³ The clear moral lesson in each case is that Satan will punish people failing to observe their religious obligations. But no one is lost forever. By repenting and confessing one's sins to the priest and observing their Catholic obligations, a person could be saved.

The Devil and Sensuality

More serious from a clerical point of view, but totally consistent with Satan's evil attributes, was his pernicious ability to beguile people with the sensual pleasures of traditional sociability, particularly the dance. As the folklorist Barbara Leblanc argues, the Christian distinction between the morally inferior body and the transcendent soul meant that the Church's fundamental concern was always to save the latter. According to Church teaching, the body reacts to sensual stimulations, while the soul controls the spiritual powers of intelligence and will. Endowed with divine

reason and purpose, people must arrive at judgements of good and evil to save their immortal soul. They must master and even deny their morally dangerous physical nature, and not surrender to their passions, because the Devil — the incarnation of evil — inspires these passions.⁵⁴ The answer to the fifth question in the catechism of 1888 told late-nineteenth-century Catholic children in the Québec archdiocese that the soul is superior to the body. If a choice must be made between the welfare of the soul or that of the body, the choice must always be made in favour of the soul.⁵⁵

The Church normally conveyed its message to the faithful through the sermons of the *curés* and in catechism classes. Additionally, early in 1851, and in order to clarify the issues children would face in the years between baptism and marriage, Québec Archbishop Pierre-Flavien Turgeon approved the publication of his former Vicar General, Abbé Alexis Mailloux's *Le Manuel des parents chrétiens*, a detailed work of 328 pages with 34 chapters. It was a complete set of guidelines for Catholic parents to help their children navigate the morally dangerous currents of nineteenth-century life.⁵⁶ The issue of dancing was a subset of the clerical concern about people's morality, particularly young people's sensuality. Mailloux urged parents to keep their children away from evening "assemblées de danses" because darkness lent itself more easily to vice than did daylight. In the dim light, the sounds of "musique enivrante et lubrique font vibrer jusqu'à la corde les plus intimes des passions dépravées d'un jeune cœur déjà blessé et languissant d'amour."⁵⁷ Parents needed to be aware that their offspring were being exposed to such perils as "les mouvements licencieux de la danse," "des sons efféminés d'une musique voluptueuse," "des attouchements de mains," and "l'excitation du sang."⁵⁸ While Mailloux did make the occasional reference to the dangers facing young women at dances, his primary aim seems to have been to protect the young men from feminine wiles because even the most venerable saints had required superhuman strength to resist such temptations. Constant parental vigilance was even more necessary because children lacked the saints' formidable spiritual defenses.⁵⁹

Eight months after Mailloux's *Manuel* was published, Archbishop Turgeon weighed in with a pastoral letter on 18 November 1851 specifically condemning balls and dances as solely profiting Satan.⁶⁰ It was precisely because of the potential for undue familiarity and worse in the circumstances accompanying them, that dances were a source of scandal and moral danger. Not surprisingly, the prelate declared that as far as possible, "toute espèce de danse entre personnes de différent sexe" needed to be prevented, although he probably did not mean this interdiction to apply to married couples. Emphasizing the moral dangers of dancing, Monseigneur Turgeon declared that those who were obstinate enough not to stop, or who encouraged others to engage in dancing, were unworthy to receive the sacraments. Some forms of dance, of course, were morally more dubious than others. Some were even positively immodest. This latter group included such modern dances as the waltz, the polka, the gallop, and the cancan.⁶¹

Unfortunately from the perspective of successive *curés*, the message about the dangers of dancing and the sociability associated with it was not always getting through to people, or they disregarded it. Reverend David Martineau noted in his 1854 report from Saint-Joseph that, "Les danses et les veillées sont encore trop fréquentes."⁶² (Underlined in the original.) A week before Christmas 1868, Reverend Louis-Antoine Martel noted in his *Cahier de prônes* that parents make sure their sons and daughters avoided evening parties, dances, games, drinking, celebrating in homes or drinking establishments near the church within six or seven hours before the Christmas Eve midnight mass.⁶³ His sermon notes for Christmas Day repeated the advice that parents keep a closer eye on their young.⁶⁴ Typical of his flock's behaviour, according to his report for 1869, were their frequent dancing parties and their long courtships, too much familiarity between young males and females, and "paroles déshonnêtes."⁶⁵ Reverend François-Xavier Gosselin reported similar problems in 1891 and again in 1893. In 1898, Reverend François-Narcisse Fortier drafted a similar list.⁶⁶ The beleaguered clergymen in Saint-Joseph were far from alone in their distress. The archbishop himself lamented in 1895, as he had in 1879, "Les longues fréquenta-

tions [...] sont une des plaies de notre pays.”⁶⁷ Even though the Church heartily approved of marriage, the clergy were far from contented with the meandering path many couples took to get there.

Le Beau Danseur

Veillées, evening social gatherings after working bees and the like or to celebrate marriages, would have provided especially welcome opportunities for single males and females to mingle, often without supervision, and to dance. A sympathetic description of a *veillée* written near the start of the twentieth century indicates, when the obliging fiddler struck up a tune, “alors, galants et amoureux se cherchent et se trouvent. On danse pour le plaisir de danser.”⁶⁸ Probably most disturbing for the clergy was that many people would have found in dancing something akin to the numinousness that religious mystics have been said to experience, “une sorte d’ivresse qui va de la langueur au délire, d’une sorte d’abandon mystique à une sorte de fureur.”⁶⁹ No wonder clergymen shuddered. An important personage at the *veillées* was the fiddler, *le violonneux*, “le moteur de l’activité artistique qu’est la danse populaire.”⁷⁰ Some fiddlers would have been known well beyond their villages for their sense of rhythm, their clear and lively playing, and their ability to get even the most reluctant people onto the dance floor.⁷¹ People’s desire to socialize, combined with the vitality of the music, the dancing, and the festive atmosphere of the *veillée* provided the perfect opportunities for Satan, as the clergy feared.

Popular tales featured him both as an intimidating violin player (a subject that will not be discussed here) and as a dashing figure at dances, particularly wedding celebrations. Although the legend of the Devil as a “beau danseur” did not originate in the Beauce, as it is found elsewhere in Canada, France, and Europe, it was particularly well known in this corner of Québec. The popularity of the story was due to Philippe Aubert de Gaspé fils, who recorded a version of it in his 1837 novel, *L’influence d’un livre*.⁷² Subsequent literary and popular variations of

the story of the Devil and Rose Latulippe owed much of their popularity to clergymen who often employed it from the pulpit with dramatic effect at parish retreats.⁷³ In the tale, a dashing and elegant (though slightly sinister) dark stranger appeared at the *veillée* held to celebrate Rose's marriage and danced with her all evening. Certain traits, however, could easily have alerted a keen observer to his satanic identity and must have been impossible to ignore even for the most obtuse reveller. In winter, the snow always melted around the hooves of the dark horse he rode. The Devil's eyes also flashed a sinister, flame-like glow when the name of Jesus was mentioned, or when he encountered people of undeniable goodness, such as *curés* or pious grandmothers who were usually found saying the rosary while everyone else was dancing.⁷⁴ Another clue was that the Devil always wore elegant gloves in order to hide his talons which cut into people's flesh. In some versions, Rose ignored these signs and warnings, kept on dancing with the Devil until he carried her off to Hell. In other versions she repented and was saved at the last minute by the timely intervention of the parish priest. A few sprinkles of holy water also helped avert disaster. In another story from Saint-Joseph, a young eighteen-year-old woman had died and was laid out in the family parlour before burial. Even though dancing was forbidden in the village, relatives and friends of the deceased retired to the kitchen where they danced through the evening. Around midnight, a darkly handsome young man dressed in black, but who never removed his gloves, appeared and asked permission to pay his respects to the deceased young woman. Permission granted, he went in and closed the door. The rest of the company then decided it was time to say the rosary for the deceased, but when they went into the parlour both the corpse and the young man had disappeared, never to be seen again.⁷⁵

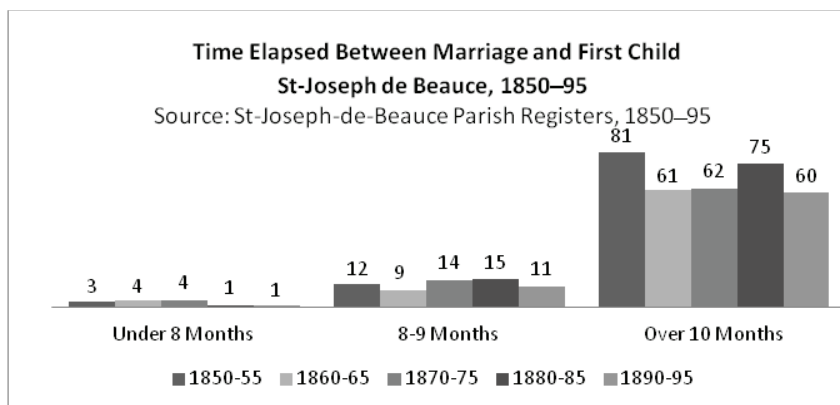
Sensuality and Sexuality

Dancing in itself was serious enough in the eyes of the clergy, but behind their hand wringing about dancing, drinking, and

extended courtships lurked a more urgent preoccupation for the men of the cloth who had always deemed these activities to be dangerous outward expressions of youthful sexuality. While all cultures share a concern with the regulation of sexuality, it is extremely difficult to distinguish clearly between religious and social controls in regulating sexual mores in most pre-modern societies.⁷⁶ Jean Du Berger argues that the legend of *Le Diable beau danseur* was a necessary instrument of social control whose function was essentially ethical. It was a means to prevent individual behaviour which deviated from the norms of the “groupe d’appartenance” (the family, the parish) from destabilizing the community.⁷⁷ However, as Du Berger himself found in many tales that were meant to frighten people, it was not just a few strong-willed young women who danced at evening parties. Large numbers of people enjoyed dancing too, including parents who supposedly forbade their young to do so. The ubiquity of dancing suggests that the dichotomy that is supposed to have existed between the community and deviant individuals, or between Civilization and Nature, is overdrawn.⁷⁸ Certainly the annual reports of the clergy of Saint-Joseph clearly indicate that they felt they were speaking against, not in the name of, the prevailing sentiments of the community when they condemned dancing.

Whatever fears the *curés* of Saint-Joseph had about the sociability of their young parishioners, the unintended consequences of such youthful high spirits did not bear out one of their worst fears: pregnancies outside of, or before, marriage. Saint-Joseph’s parish registers for the period 1850–95 indicate that births considered “illegitimate,” either because the priest recorded it as such or the father was not identified, was at the most two or three for the whole period, although drawing conclusions about sexuality from data on low rates of illegitimacy alone is an unreliable way to measure morality.⁷⁹ Less rudimentary is calculating the time elapsed between a marriage and the birth of a couple’s first child. In Saint-Joseph, marriages resulting from unintended pregnancies were extremely rare as is indicated in the table below, based on the dates recorded

in the parish registers for marriages and births for the first six years of each decade during the period 1850-95 (1850-5, 1860-5, etc.). Such a sample should catch any anomalies or changes in behavioural patterns, while indicating any inconsistencies in people's behaviour.⁸⁰



In the thirty years examined there were 833 marriages and 4,362 births. Matching the date of marriage of the parents with that of the birth of their first child in 413 cases revealed that 90 percent of first conceptions after marriage occurred *at least* ten months after the ceremony, in some cases up to two years afterwards. A much smaller number of births occurred within eight or nine months after marriage, times that could have been due to early births due to the pregnancy occurring just before or just after the marriage. The number of births occurring less than eight months after marriage were extremely low in the last half of the nineteenth century, a mere thirteen in thirty years. These are likely indicators of premarital conceptions, though at least some would have been premature births.⁸¹ The current state of our understanding about the degree of sexual knowledge and behaviour of young people in nineteenth-century rural Québec makes it difficult to determine whether to accept clergymen's generalizations as evidence of actual sexual activity that involved all kinds of behaviour short of intercourse, or merely as reflections of their (more or less) lurid fantasies about young men and women socializing.

The old European tradition that represented Satan, despite his dark powers, as less omnipotent than in conventional Church teaching persisted. Many tales indicated that there were several ways that people could employ to trick him. In a tale from Sainte-Marie, a man agreed to sell his soul to the Devil if the latter would fill his hat with money. The individual went to the top of his barn, made a hole in the roof upon which he put his hat with the top removed. All day long the Devil carried money to drop into the hat which never became full. Discouraged and exhausted, the Devil said he would bring no more money. The barn was half full when the Devil finally gave up.⁸²

Conclusion

Some may smile indulgently at these tales, or treat with amused condescension the naive beliefs of the credulous rural people who accepted them. But the popular culture that had produced these beliefs had served them and their ancestors well, had provided them with the means to make sense of their world and affirmed their sense of independence. Even though E.P. Thompson has argued that “the villager is wise within his own village but accepts the inevitable organization of the outer world in terms of the ruler’s hegemony,” he also admits that beneath the overarching hegemony of the ruling class “there are innumerable contexts in which men and women, confronting the necessities of their existence, derive their own values and create their own mode of life.”⁸³ If we apply Thompson’s sensible observations about the capacity of ordinary men and women to exercise agency over their lives to the context of nineteenth-century rural Québec, these tales allow us to identify secular customs and community standards of right and wrong that demonstrate how they functioned in Saint-Joseph. If popular culture conflicted in several fundamental respects with the behavioural expectations of the Church, people had always accepted that religion and its ministers occupied an important place in the community. In that regard, it needs to be said that cultural/religious questions cannot simply be reduced to what religion did *to* people; we also need to be aware of what

people thought that it did *for* them. As David Nash points out, it is important to recognize that religion was not "an imposed set of values which modern urban populations in particular outgrew or cast aside as evidence of growing sophistication."⁸⁴

The apparent surface contradictions in Québec between Church doctrine and popular beliefs regarding the Devil masked important similarities. In many ways, popular religion in the Beauce actually helped to reinforce Catholicism's religious and ethical teachings. Even though many popular beliefs made the clergy uneasy, they also articulated values such as the necessity for honesty, respect for others, mutual aid, the importance of family and friends, and marital fidelity that the Church itself promoted. In Québec it is essential to keep in mind that, in the common culture of the period, priests and people shared a largely identical list of what constituted disorders and sins.⁸⁵ Far from simply being examples of externally imposed clerical control, such stories also reinforced the community's own standards of acceptable behaviour. While dancing was the concern of the clergy, it was not just because the bride was dancing that she was carried off in the many versions of the legend of Rose Latulippe. If so, the whole assembly should have found itself dancing in Hell with her. That she should have been dancing with her new husband instead of a gallant interloper is one of the more obvious moral lessons to be drawn from that tale. The insistence on marital fidelity, especially on regulating female sexuality, would not have been solely a concern of the clergy (or even of the husband for that matter). Most people then, in this small rural community, probably would have felt that female (and clerical) conduct had to be irreproachable, as they did not apply the same rules to males among the laity, the usual double standard of the time.⁸⁶

The many cautionary tales linking dancing with the Devil at evening parties reinforced the message of the *curés* of Saint-Joseph that their parishioners indulged in the practice of holding these sociable assemblies far too often, and that Satan was always present, if not necessarily visible. On the most obvious level, the clergy would have found comfort in the belief that, if the desire for eternal life in paradise did not motivate people to be good,

then at least the threat of eternal damnation would keep them on the correct moral path. This leads one to wonder if the Devil had not existed, would it have been necessary for the clergy to invent him (it)? Secondly, the frontier between the contrasting, yet complementary spiritual worlds of Catholicism and popular belief was so porous that it is sometimes difficult to determine where one belief system ended and the other began. As in the case of seventeenth-century France, “selon les temps et les lieux, religion populaire et religion officielle peuvent s’opposer, collaborer ou être complémentaires.”⁸⁷ Both rested on assumptions that there were powerful metaphysical forces that had to be placated, and that the supernatural realm had the capacity to influence the physical world. Indeed, how could the Church really disparage stories that used popular cultural tropes to reinforce its own teachings? Such an approach would have implicitly undermined the credibility of its own objectively unverifiable stories about angels and miracles that relied on faith that existed beside people’s confidence in the healing powers of certain saints, the therapeutic uses of Easter holy water, the efficacy of pieces of palm distributed on Palm Sunday, and tales about the visits of the Devil to transport misbehaving people to Hell. In that sense, this popular culture was simultaneously an alternative set of values and representations of the world, and a parallel expression of the dominant ones. As Ollivier Hubert points out, striking parallels existed between popular belief and the Church’s own doctrines, and some popular practices ought to be considered the counterpart to “l’univers tissé de sacralité et de ritualité que l’Église propose.”⁸⁸ *Habitant* popular beliefs may have differed in detail from some of the Church’s teachings, but they also reflected nearly identical moral and social values, such as respect for religion and its ministers, condemnation of swearing and blasphemy, fear of the dark forces of Satan, and mutual respect and aid. In many ways, the informal but equally powerful popular discourse reinforced the Church’s teachings on subjects such as sexual morality and the rules of ethical conduct.

The presence of a number of moral themes in popular religion that reinforced the Church’s prescriptions does not mean

that people's beliefs automatically dictated their worldly conduct. Despite the support that popular beliefs gave to some of the Church's behavioural admonitions, people's passion for earthly gratification often overcame their fears of satanic possession and divine retribution whether the message was couched in the formal theological language of the Church or in the familiar homey *journal* of popular legend. As Michel Foucault has argued, moral values are often transmitted in a diffuse manner so that, "far from constituting a systematic ensemble, they form a complex interplay of elements that counterbalance and correct one another."⁸⁹ On certain points, the various prescriptive agencies such as the family, the church, or the educational institutions may even cancel each other's messages out, or provide convenient loopholes for people to wiggle through. Since clerical injunction was an element largely of external imposition, it was not always as effective as popular morality tales that Leblanc calls a parallel popular discourse with a similar message to the clerical one.⁹⁰ But there was an important difference. Unlike the monolithic and consistent institutional discourse of the Church that condemned dancing, the popular folk idiom as expressed in many songs was inconsistent. There were internal contradictions characteristic of the oral tradition and its thematic contents. If some folk songs took a negative attitude towards evening revelry or dancing, others did the exact opposite.⁹¹

For many people, if there was competition between traditional sociability and clerical expectations, there was no contradiction between enjoying their immediate pleasures in this world and anticipating salvation in the next. Even if the Devil had been the instigator of dancing, swearing, drinking, and all manner of temptations to which people surrendered, one of the attractive features of Catholicism, especially for inveterate sinners, was the belief that confessing one's sins to the *curé*, even during one's last moments on earth, would put matters right with the heavenly authorities. In that regard, then, the parishioners of Saint-Joseph had much in common with their fellow French Canadians, delicately but pragmatically balancing the requirements of the soul with the inclinations of the body.

FRANK ABBOTT taught in the Department of History at Kwantien Polytechnic University from 1988 until his retirement in 2015. His book, *The Body or Soul? Religion and Culture in a Quebec Parish, 1736-1901*, was published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 2016.

FRANK ABBOTT a enseigné au Département d'histoire de la Kwantien Polytechnic University de 1988 jusqu'à sa retraite en 2015. Son livre, *The Body or Soul? Religion and Culture in a Quebec Parish, 1736-1901*, fut publié en 2016 par McGill-Queen's University Press.

Endnotes

- 1 Jean-Claude Dupont, *Le légendaire de la Beauce* (Ottawa: Leméac, 1978), 109. Material in this article has been augmented with more research and is used with the publisher's permission from my book *The Body or the Soul? Religion and Culture in a Quebec Parish, 1736-1901* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016).
- 2 Dupont, *Le légendaire de la Beauce*, 110. Note: all French quotations from Dupont as well as the Archives d'ethnologie et folklore à l'Université Laval (hereafter AFEUL) have been left exactly as they were transcribed from the original tape-recorded interviews.
- 3 Serge Courville et al., *Histoire de Beauce-Etchemin-Amiante* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2003), 124. See also Marie-Anne Nadeau, "Histoire de la paroisse de Saint-Joseph de la Nouvelle-Beauce d'après les notes de M. L'Abbé Jean-Thomas Nadeau," unpublished manuscript in the archives of the Société du patrimoine des Beaucerons, Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, 59.
- 4 *1762 Census of the Government of Quebec* (Pawtucket, RI: Quintin Publications, 1997), 59-62. See also Gérard Poulin et al., *Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce 1737-1987* (Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce: Poulin Limitée, 1987), 50-1 for a copy of the Census of 1762; and Courville et al., *Histoire de Beauce-Etchemin-Amiante*, 123, for the number of households. On the refugees fleeing to the Saint-Joseph from the invading British in 1759-60, see Nadeau, "Histoire de la Paroisse de Saint-Joseph," 77; *1762 Census*, 62.
- 5 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blaney and David Pellauer (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 210-2.

- 6 Fernand Dumont, "À propos du concept de 'religion populaire,'" in *Les religions populaires: Colloque international 1970*, eds. Benoît Lacroix and Pierre Boglioni (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1972), 25–7. See also Nive Voisine, "Histoire religieuse et folklore: quelques réflexions" in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Luc Lacourcière*, ed. Jean-Claude Dupont (Ottawa: Leméac, 1978), 431–5; and Pierre Savard, "L'historien et la religion populaire au Canada français" in *Les religions populaires*, eds. Lacroix and Boglioni, 102.
- 7 John C. Walsh and Steven High, "Rethinking the Concept of Community," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 32: 64 (November 1999), 269.
- 8 William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 13. Similarly, Jean Séguy argues that culture is made up of "l'ensemble des réponses institutionnalisées qu'un groupe se crée pour faire face aux grandes questions de l'existence." Jean Séguy, "Du culturel au culturel," *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 29, no. 5 (septembre-octobre 1974): 1283.
- 9 Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 14–5.
- 10 Christian Morissoneau, "Genre de vie et religion populaire," in Benoît Lacroix and Jean Simard, *Religion populaire religion des clercs?* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1984), 220.
- 11 Ollivier Hubert, "La religion populaire est-elle une légende du XIXe siècle?" *Histoire sociale/Social History* 36, no. 71 (May 2003): 96–8.
- 12 Ollivier Hubert, *Sur la terre comme au ciel: la gestion des rites par l'Église catholique du Québec (fin XVIIe–mi-XIXe siècle)* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000), 51.
- 13 René Hardy, "Regards sur la construction de la culture catholique québécoise au XIXe siècle," *Canadian Historical Review* 88, no. 1 (March 2007): 8.
- 14 In the sense that Sartre also used it, "Dans la perception, un savoir se forme lentement." *Petit Robert Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris, 1989), 1398.
- 15 Thérèse Beaudoin, *L'été dans la culture québécoise (XVIIe–XIXe siècles)* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1987), 19. See also Jean Provencher, *Les Quatre Saisons dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal, 1996). On winter and the French settler's cultural adaptation to the North American climate, see Sophie-Laurence Lamontagne, *L'hiver dans la culture québécoise (XVIIe–XIXe siècles)* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1983).
- 16 Cornelius Jaenen, *The Role of the Church in New France* (Toronto and Montréal: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976), ix.
- 17 Jaenen, *The Role of the Church in New France*, 122–4, 140–4.

- 18 Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Religion and French-Canadian Mores in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Historical Review* 52, no. 1 (March 1971): 51–94.
- 19 Pierre-Jean de Sales Laterrière, *A Political and Historical Account of Lower Canada*, cited in Joseph Bouchette, *The British Dominions in North America or a Topographical and Statistical Description of the Provinces of Lower and Upper Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia., etc.* vol. 1 (London, 1831), 412.
- 20 De Sales Laterrière, *A Political and Historical Account of Lower Canada*, cited in Bouchette, *The British Dominions in North America*, 413.
- 21 Madeleine Ferron and Robert Cliche, *Les Beaucerons ces insoumis, suivi de Quand le peuple fait la loi: La loi populaire à Saint-Joseph de Beauce* (Montréal: Hurtubise, 1972).
- 22 J.-Alphonse Richard, *Historique de la paroisse de Saint-Sébastien de Beauce (1869–1944)* (Joliette: n.p., 1944), 126.
- 23 Beaudoin, *L'été dans la culture québécoise (XVIIe–XIXe siècles)*, 34.
- 24 François Lebrun, "Le calendrier agro-liturgique dans la société traditionnelle de la France de l'Ouest (XVIIe–XIXe siècles)" in *Sociétés villageoises et rapports villes-campagnes au Québec et dans la France de l'Ouest XVIIe–XXe siècles*, eds. François Lebrun and Normand Séguin (Trois-Rivières: Centre de recherches en études québécoises, 1985), 347–51.
- 25 E.Z. Massicotte, *Mœurs coutumes et industries canadiennes-françaises* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1913), 70–1.
- 26 Jeanne Pomerleau, *Corvées et quêtes: un parcours au Canada français* (Montréal: Hurtubise, 2002), 339–43.
- 27 Hubert, "La religion populaire est-elle une légende du XIXe siècle?" 97; see also Voisine, "Histoire religieuse et folklore," 435.
- 28 Madeleine Doyon-Ferland, "Folk Dances in Beauce County," *Journal of American Folklore* 63 (April–June 1950): 171–5; "Rites de la mort en Beauce," *Journal of American Folklore* vol. 67, no. 264 (April–June 1954): 137–47; "Carnavals et déguisements traditionnels en Beauce," and "Rites et voisinage chez trois populations rurales canadiennes (Beauce, Dorchester et Charlevoix)" in *Coutumes populaires du Canada français* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1972).
- 29 Jean-Claude Dupont, *Coutumes et superstitions* (Sainte-Foy: Éditions J.-C Dupont, 1993); *Le légendaire de la Beauce*; *Folklore français d'Amérique: Mélanges en l'honneur de Luc Lacourcière* (Montréal: Leméac, 1978); *Le sucre du pays* (Ottawa: Leméac, 1975); *Le monde fantastique de la Beauce québécoise* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1972); Jean-Claude Dupont and Jacques Mathieu, *Héritage de la francophonie canadienne. Traditions orales* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1986); and Paul Jacob, *Les revenants de la Beauce* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal, 1977).

- 30 Monique Lachance-Fortin, "Le vocabulaire des croyances populaires de la Beauce: Étude linguistique et ethnographique" (M.A. Thesis, Université Laval, 1980).
- 31 Voisine, "Histoire religieuse et folklore," 435.
- 32 Guy Laperrière, "Religion populaire, religion des clercs? Du Québec à la France, 1972–1982" in *Religion populaire, religion de clercs?* eds. Benoît Lacroix and Jean Simard (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1984), 27.
- 33 "Devil," *Catholic Online Catholic Encyclopedia*, <viewed 11 April 2016>.
- 34 Robert Muchembled, *Une histoire du diable XII^e–XX^e siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 20. See also "Devil," *Catholic Online Catholic Encyclopedia*, <viewed 11 April 2016>.
- 35 Muchembled, *Une histoire du diable*, 23–33.
- 36 Muchembled, *Une histoire du diable*, 28.
- 37 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 341, Treflé Boulet (age 81), July 1965. See also Dupont, *Le légendaire de la Beauce*, 94–6.
- 38 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 258, Joseph-André Doyon (age 63), June 1965.
- 39 Jean-Claude Dupont, *Le légendaire de la Beauce*, 122–5.
- 40 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 307, Mme. Cléophas Vachon (age 74), July 1965. See also AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 247, June 1965, Alphonse Bisson (79), June 1965. These accounts can also be found in *Le légendaire de la Beauce*, 103–4.
- 41 AFEUL, Michel Boucher Collection, Reel 2, Recording 98, Albert Morin (age 70).
- 42 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 238, (Beauceville); Recordings 241 and 252 (Saints-Anges); Recording 315 (Saint-Elzéar); and Recording 328 (Saint-Séverin). See also Dupont, *Le monde fantastique de la Beauce québécoise*, 122–7.
- 43 AFEUL, Ghislain Lapointe Collection, Recording 362; and AFEUL, Normand Laffeur and Lucien Ouellet Collection, Recording 107.
- 44 Jean-Pierre Pichette, "Les jurons au Canada français: étude de l'histoire, de la langue et de la littérature orale, suivie du recueil des jurons" (M.A. Thesis, Université Laval, 1973), 169–87.
- 45 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Ernest Couture to Jean-Claude Dupont, August 1965 (Recording 461), "Chien noir entre dans un camp." This tale can also be found in Dupont, *Le légendaire de la Beauce*, 125. There are far too many similar stories from elsewhere in Québec in the Archives de folklore to include here, but typical ones include: Sylvie Bélanger Collection, "Le sacreur dans un camp de bûcherons ou la manifestation du diable"; Gilles Bernier Collection, "Le

- bûcheron enlevé par le diable” (Recording 57); Michel Boucher Collection, “Blasphémateur puni” (Recording 110, Reel 2), “Le bûcheron sacreur” (Recording 40, Reel 2), “Apparition du diable (en chien) à un blasphémateur” (Manuscript 9).
- 46 André Bougaïeff, “Un Trait du français populaire et familier au Québec: le système des ‘sacres,’” *The French Review* 53, no. 6 (May 1980): 839–47.
- 47 Jean-Pierre Pichette et al., Atelier 8, “Les Jurons” in *Le statut culturel du français au Québec: Actes du Congrès langue et société, tome II*, eds. Michel Amyot and Gilles Bibeau (Québec: Conseil supérieur de la langue française, 1984). http://www.cslf.gouv.qc.ca/bibliotheque-virtuelle/publication/html/?tx_iggcplus_pi4%5bfile%5d=publications/pubf112/f112.html, < viewed 18 March 2017 >. See also René Hardy, “Ce que sacrer veut dire: à l’origine du juron religieux au Québec,” *Mentalités, histoire des cultures et des sociétés*, no. 2, *Injures et blasphèmes* (Paris: Imago, 1989), 102–5; and Peter N. Moogk, “‘Thieving Buggers’ and ‘Stupid Sluts’: Insults and Popular Culture in New France,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 36, no. 4 (October 1979): 539.
- 48 Bougaïeff, “Un Trait du français populaire,” 841.
- 49 Archives de l’Archidiocèse de Québec (hereafter AAQ) 64 CD 8, “Rapports des Paroisses de l’Archidiocèse de Québec,” 1890, vol. 2 (I-Z), 551.
- 50 AAQ 64 CD 8.Gosselin, “Rapports des Paroisses, 1891,” 231. In 1892, a colleague in Saint-Martin observed that nothing had changed despite all his efforts and sermons. He concluded disconsolately, “c’est décourageant parfois.” AAQ 64 CD 9, “Rapports des Paroisses,” 1892, vol. 2 (I-Z), 501.
- 51 Muchembled, *Une histoire du diable*, 44–9.
- 52 AFEUL, Majella Dionne and Claude Bellavance Collection, Recording 138, “Portrait de loups-garous,” transcript of an interview with Omer Rodrigue, age 75, Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, 21 February 1965.
- 53 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 256, “Le père tourné en loup-garou,” David Labbé (age 78) of Saints-Anges, Beauce to Jean-Claude Dupont, June 1965.
- 54 Barbara Leblanc, “Les interdictions sur la danse au Canada français,” *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*, vols. 9–14 (1985): 15.
- 55 *Le Catéchisme des Provinces ecclésiastiques de Québec, Montréal, Ottawa: Approuvé le 20 avril 1888 par les Archevêques et Evêques de ces provinces* (Québec: A. Côté et Cie., 1888) 11.
- 56 Abbé Alexis Mailloux, *Le Manuel des parents chrétiens*, (Québec 1851, reprinted Montréal: VLB, 1977), Preface.
- 57 Mailloux, *Manuel des parents chrétiens*, 176.

- 58 Mailloux, *Manuel des parents chrétiens*, 177–9.
- 59 Mailloux, *Manuel des parents chrétiens*, 184–5.
- 60 P.-F. Turgeon, "Lettre pastorale au clergé et aux fidèles de la Cité de Québec, au sujet des danses", 18 novembre 1851, in *Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des Évêques de Québec*, vol. IV, eds. H. Têtu and C. O. Gagnon (Québec: A. Côté et Cie, 1888), 34–38. His successors included the pastoral letter in official archdiocesan pronouncements until well into the twentieth century.
- 61 In 1937, Archbishop Cardinal Rodrigue Villeneuve added the fox trot and the tango to the list of dangerous dances. Rodrigue Cardinal Villeneuve, O.M.I., *Discipline diocésaine*, Third Edition (Québec: Action Catholique, 1937), 198.
- 62 AAQ 61 CD, Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce 2, "Rapport fait par le curé de St-Joseph de la Beauce à Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Québec pour l'année 1854."
- 63 Société du patrimoine des Beaucerons, Fonds de la Fabrique de Saint-Joseph (hereafter SPB FFSJ) 3.22: 56, Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, "Cahier de prônes et annonces, 30 Novembre 1868-1872," 4.
- 64 SPB, FFSJ 3.22: 45–46, Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, "Cahier de prônes et annonces, 30 Novembre 1868-1872," 4.
- 65 AAQ 61 CD Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce 2 (II: 68), L.A. Martel, "Rapport sur la Paroisse de Saint-Joseph pour 1869 à Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Québec."
- 66 AAQ 64 CD 15, "Rapports des Paroisses de l'Archidiocèse de Québec," 1898, vol. 2 (I-Z), 175.
- 67 *Discipline du Diocèse de Québec*, Second Edition (Québec: Léger Brousseau, 1895), 123. See also *Discipline du Diocèse de Québec* (Québec: P.-G. Delisle, 1879), 104.
- 68 Pamphile Lemay, "Les jour gras" in E.-Z. Massicotte, *Moeurs coutumes et industries canadiennes-françaises* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1913), 34–5.
- 69 Simonne Voyer and Gynette Tremblay, *La danse traditionnelle québécoise et sa musique d'accompagnement* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001), 7.
- 70 Voyer and Tremblay, *La danse traditionnelle québécoise*, 114.
- 71 Voyer and Tremblay, *La danse traditionnelle québécoise*, 116, 119.
- 72 Dupont, *Le légendaire de la Beauce*, 102; Jean Du Berger, *Le Diable à la danse* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006), 35.
- 73 Dupont, *Le légendaire de la Beauce*, 102.
- 74 AFEUL, Gilles Martineau Collection, Reel 1, Recording 22. Mme Alfred Martineau (age 65), 18 July 1966. For an exhaustive analysis of this tale, see Du Berger, *Le Diable à la danse*.
- 75 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 335, Mme. Robert Cliche, née Madeleine Ferron (age 42), July 1965.

- 76 Serge Gagnon, *Plaisir d'amour et crainte de Dieu. Sexualité et confession au Bas-Canada* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1990), 5.
- 77 Du Berger, *Le Diable à la danse*, 17, 26, 191–2, 196–7, 204.
- 78 Du Berger, *Le Diable à la danse*, 197–9.
- 79 Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740–1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 267, notes 24 and 25.
- 80 Réal Bates, “Les conceptions prénuptiales dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent avant 1725,” *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 40, no. 2 (1986): 255.
- 81 J.I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848–1881* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 214; see also René Hardy, “Les conceptions prénuptiales à Trois-Rivières comme indice de fidélité religieuse, 1850–1945,” *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 54, no. 4 (2001): 537.
- 82 AFEUL, Jean-Claude Dupont Collection, Recording 417. Thomas Grenier (age 76), n.d.
- 83 José E. Limón, “Western Marxism and Folklore – A Critical Introduction,” *Journal of American Folklore* 96, no. 379 (January-March 1983): 42.
- 84 David Nash, “Reconnecting Religion with Social and Cultural History: Secularization's Failure as a Master Narrative,” *Cultural and Social History* 1, no. 3 (2004): 308. See also Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert, eds., *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).
- 85 Louis Rousseau and Frédéric Castel, “Les conduites qui désolent” in *Atlas historique des pratiques religieuses. Le Sud-Ouest du Québec au XIXe siècle*, eds. Louis Rousseau and Frank W. Remiggi (Ottawa: Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1998), 189.
- 86 Du Berger, *Le Diable à la danse*, 26, 191, 196.
- 87 François Lebrun, “Histoire religieuse et histoire culturelle (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles). Bilan et perspective de la recherche en France,” Actes des colloques de 1979 et 1980, *Étude comparative de la société rurale dans la France de l'Ouest et au Québec (XVIIe–XXe siècles)* (Montréal: Université de Montréal et École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1981), 252–3.
- 88 Hubert, “La religion populaire est-elle une légende?,” 96–7.
- 89 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. II (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 25.
- 90 Leblanc, “Les Interdictions sur la danse,” 13.
- 91 Leblanc, “Les Interdictions sur la danse,” 14–5.