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The Evangeline Oak: of Lost Loves and Found Objects

John Adlam

Abstract

Down by the bayou in St Martinville, Louisiana, lies an oak tree which is supposed to mark the meeting place of Emmeline Labiche and Louis Arceneaux: the "Evangeline"™ and "Gabriel"™ whose legendary love, sundering and reunion is chronicled in Henry Longfellow's™ epic poem "Evangeline"™. In this paper, in response to the conceptualisation of the mediatisation of romantic love expounded by Storey and McDonald (2013), I use an associative structure to explore a range of 'found' cultural, literary, historical, group analytic and psychosocial associations to this legend and to give an account of my own personal response to it. I locate the idealised story of Evangeline and Gabriel and their unconsummated pairing at the heart of the Romantic movement and its links to both contemporary and late-modern colonial discourses and I place this in the context of a wider commentary on the alienation of emotional states of being in consumerist societies.

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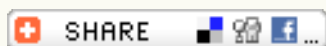
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