

## *Les jardins des Amériques : éden, home et maison. Le Canada et les Amériques.*

Yves Laberge

Volume 72, 2010

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/mcr72br04>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

National Museums of Canada

ISSN

1718-1259 (print)

1927-9264 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Laberge, Y. (2010). Review of [*Les jardins des Amériques : éden, home et maison. Le Canada et les Amériques.*]. *Material Culture Review*, 72, 72–73.

such evidence shows a circumstantial correlation between the two, it fails to demonstrate any kind of reliable, causal relationship. The relationship between the Gaelic language and music has been discussed extensively by scholars like John Shaw (1993), Glenn Graham (2006) and Heather Sparling (2003).

Shears' argument that Gaelic culture in Cape Breton and rural Nova Scotia has been retained perfectly intact due to the culture's physical isolation and lack of external influences, a point reiterated every few pages, is also of concern. While it may be true that certain outside influences were limited prior to the 1880s, it is insufficient to assume that a culture can only experience change through the influence of outside sources. To frame a culture as static and incapable of internal change positions the group as timeless, and neglects the possibility of agency or personal creativity. This is an issue that has been discussed at length in anthropological texts. Scholars like Franz Boas (2008/1911) have criticized such assumptions, challenging notions of timelessness and primitivism that have their roots in

colonial Eurocentrism. Furthermore, Shears readily acknowledges the lack of reliable sources from the 19th century that indicate specifics of bagpipe performance practice, negating any possibility of supporting or disproving his claim of a period of cultural stasis and limiting such discussion to speculation.

Overall, I found *Dance to the Piper* to be a well-researched and informative book documenting the social history surrounding the bagpipes and their introduction into Nova Scotian culture. While it seems to be aimed primarily at a popular audience, it is also useful to scholars due to its grounding in archival materials and its ability to attend to conflated representations of the Highland bagpipes in popular culture over the years. Shortcomings in regard to cultural analysis notwithstanding, I recommend it as an excellent source for photographs, audio recordings and genealogical information, all of which are augmented by ethnographic research. It is clear that Shears is passionate about the subject matter and has a deep understanding of the Highland bagpipes and their history.

## References

Boas, Franz. 2008/1911. *The Mind of Primitive Man*. New York: Macritchie Press.

Graham, Glenn. 2006. *The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition*. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press.

Shaw, John. 1992. Language, Music and Local Aesthetics: Views from Gaeldom and Beyond. *Scottish Language* 11: 37-64.

Sparling, Heather. 2003. Music is Language and Language is Music: Language Attitudes and Musical Choices in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. *Ethnologies* 25 (2): 145-71.

## YVES LABERGE

Compte rendu de

Patrick Imbert (dir.). 2007. *Les jardins des Amériques : éden, home et maison. Le Canada et les Amériques*. Ottawa : Université d'Ottawa.

246 pp.

Cet ouvrage interdisciplinaire, publié en français par la Chaire de recherche « Canada : enjeux sociaux et culturels dans une société du savoir », regroupe sept textes inédits. Ces recherches ne portent évidemment pas sur le jardinage, mais bien sur les représentations symboliques des lieux et des jardins comme révélateurs d'appartenance, de mémoire et d'identité collective.

En guise d'ouverture, le professeur Patrick Imbert montre comment l'étude et la compréhension du paysage canadien à travers diverses média-

tions (comme les écrits, littéraires ou autres) et par le truchement de la création artistique (surtout par les œuvres picturales) peuvent participer, au-delà de leur évidente dimension esthétique, à une véritable construction sociale de l'identité collective, voire de l'État nation (44). Parmi les exemples cités, pensons à *La Flore laurentienne* (1935) du frère Marie-Victorin ou encore aux toiles du Groupe des Sept. L'intérêt de ce livre résulte d'une étude attentive de la dimension esthétique qui dépasse une simple affirmation identitaire et qui n'est pas exclusive

au Canada ; en plus de l'exemple des peintres du Groupe des Sept, Patrick Imbert mentionne pour les États-Unis le cas de George Alsop, qui idéalisait les paysages du Maryland pour y projeter la vision « d'un nouveau paradis terrestre » (24). Cet « attachement émotionnel au territoire » se manifeste et se transpose de diverses manières, comme l'indique le titre de l'ouvrage ; lieu transcendé ou idéalisé, lieu d'appartenance, point de départ (25). Toutefois, des variantes peuvent exister dans cette classification, passant du nomadisme à la sédentarisation ; par exemple, « le concept de home comme maison en mouvement appartenant surtout à la culture anglo-saxonne » s'oppose à l'idée du jardin qui implique au contraire l'idée d'un enracinement (55). Plus loin, d'autres exemples touchent l'Amérique latine. Dans un monde où les distances sont abolies par les nouvelles technologies, Internet, les migrations, on peut se demander comment nos repères identitaires d'hier connaissent de nouvelles limites et des mutations.

Tout ce livre invite à la réflexion et à l'analyse du lieu et de ses significations, voire de ses extrapolations dans la création littéraire et audiovisuelle. Les auteurs touchent autant aux études littéraires qu'aux approches culturelles centrées sur la symbolique des espaces (195). À première vue, ces lieux sembleraient peut-être banals sur le plan urbanistique, mais ils sont pourtant riches sur le plan culturel et historique : par exemple l'aéroport, ou encore le quartier de la Petite Italie à Montréal (88). De plus, ces analyses provoquent aussi des ricochets qui renvoient tour à tour à plusieurs conceptions théoriques (sémiologie, postmodernité) et ouvertures transdisciplinaires, par exemple à propos de la transculturation (189). On en apprécie la richesse quant aux auteurs consultés dans différents corpus et les correspondances qui y sont créées sur le plan théorique. Les étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat apprécieront particulièrement cet ouvrage concis et imaginaire.

## LAURA SANCHINI

Review of

Doucet, Daniel. 2010. *Elizabeth LeFort: Canada's Artist in Wool/L'artiste canadienne de la laine*. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press.

Pp. 192, ISBN: 978-1-897009-36-9, \$24.95.

Upon entering the Acadian village of Chéticamp in Cape Breton, visitors are greeted by a sign proclaiming the village to be the "Rug-Hooking Capital of the World." This local pride can also be seen in the town's landscape, which is dotted with folk art galleries that display the work of local artists. The museum at *Les Trois Pignons* Cultural Centre, for example, houses an impressive collection of locally made hooked rugs and other folk art objects. For the interested learner, the museum also regularly offers rug-hooking classes to both locals and tourists.

Renowned as it is for its hooked rugs, it is little wonder that the accomplished Acadian rug-hooker, Elizabeth LeFort, gained the recognition, respect and fame that she did for her work. Daniel Doucet's *Elizabeth LeFort: Canada's Artist in Wool / L'artiste canadienne de la laine* is an ethnographic biography of the celebrated Acadian Cape Breton rug hooker. This is a valuable book for two reasons: it is the first book to examine LeFort's life and art; and the book's hefty appendix is a pictorial

compilation of a collection of her works, many of which are not on display in any public venue.

LeFort began honing her craft at age thirteen when she quit school to begin hooking mats to help supplement her family's income. Doucet explains that her early hooked mats were fairly ordinary until she received a postcard from her brother in England. This postcard, which depicted a thatched roof cottage, sheep and ducks in various shades of brown, inspired Elizabeth to reproduce this landscape on a hooked mat. This was revolutionary in Chéticamp rug hooking, as Doucet notes, "moving from the mats normally done in several bright colours to incorporating twenty-eight shades of the same colour into a design was a quantum leap for her. Did she get help? No, she did not" (16). Doucet paints LeFort as a strong-willed, determined artist who knew and respected the value of her work. In fact, when her first tapestry was completed, she decided it was worth more than the typical ten dollars and demanded twenty-five dollars from the