

***The Story of Lynx.* By Claude Lévi-Strauss. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. 276)**

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Volume 17, numéro 2, 1995

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1087496ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1087496ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Association Canadienne d'Ethnologie et de Folklore

ISSN

1481-5974 (imprimé)

1708-0401 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Granzberg, G. (1995). Compte rendu de [*The Story of Lynx.* By Claude Lévi-Strauss. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. 276)]. *Ethnologies*, 17(2), 164–167. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1087496ar>

The Story of Lynx. By Claude Lévi-Strauss. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. 276)

Claude Lévi-Strauss' *The Story of Lynx* seeks meaning for one of the most ubiquitous and fundamental mythic motifs: that of twins. His fundamental hypothesis is that twins, in their "meta-" mythic context, represent humankind's attempt to grapple with the centrally important philosophical conundrum of "being" vs. "becoming." Lévi-Strauss (1978:54-56, 99-101; 1981:694) has traced myth to this foundation before, but in *The Story of Lynx* the demonstration is, perhaps, clearest.

"Being", Lévi-Strauss proclaims, is oneness. It refers to origins in unity, to lack of divisions and boundaries, and to absence of sex, greed, singularity, and materiality. It is, in short, the condition of being one with the universe. Lévi-Strauss believes that this condition is often (perhaps always) counterposed to the condition of "becoming". "Becoming" is the condition by which the world appears to us in its "normal" surface state of space-time contrasts and dualities.

In twins, he believes, there is symbolism which suggests the possibility of overcoming the surface limitations of "becoming." There is the promise of a possible return to oneness, to the "mother" of all. For twins are a special case where two separate objects are in a condition of being united, of losing their singularity, of rejoining and of attaining oneness.

But Lévi-Strauss feels that there is a fundamental difference between European and Amerindian treatments of this possibility. He feels that Amerindian culture stresses resolution of the paradox through demonstrating that twinning is an illusion, that oneness is beyond human comprehension and unreachable. He shows that twin stories across North and South America gradually transform into equivalents which contain ever-widening rifts between the original twinned objects (e.g., coyote and lynx). In Europe, on the contrary, he claims that the stories show that twinning is indeed possible and that differing objects can be made identical.

While this book provides a wealth of ideas that will provoke very constructive lines of reasoning among its readers, it is burdened by weaknesses that are a continuing part of Lévi-Strauss' work. One weakness is the robotic and formulaic structuralism. A second is the unrelenting positivism. And a third is the pervasive sense of speculation generated by the character of his argument, an argument that relies upon ponderously meandering analogies which appear to have very little surface validity. Nonetheless, *The Story of Lynx* combines with previous works by Lévi-Strauss to provide a significant and lasting repository of provocative and intuitively insightful ideas about mythology and about the ethnology of the Americas.

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Ordinary Life, Festival Days: Aesthetics in the Midwestern County Fair. By Leslie Prosterman. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995. Pp. xi + 220)

I have mixed feelings about this book. On the one hand, I'm pleased that the inadequate theoretical and descriptive attention paid to festivals within the United States is being remedied. On the other hand, I'm disappointed because *Ordinary Life, Festival Days* doesn't do as much as I think it could to advance research and analysis in this relatively neglected field of folkloristics.

Yet this is a very solid piece of scholarship, a respectable and respectful look at county fairs in the midwestern United States. Its focus upon aesthetics, given the manifest and primary concern of county fairs and their boards with the judging of local products, seems reasonable and valuable. I applaud Prosterman's decision to conduct an ethnography based upon people "who declare themselves interested or involved in the fair" (p. 7)—board members, judges, exhibitors, and so on. This is an ethnography of enthusiasts, and they are the participants most concerned with aesthetic issues.

Despite this strong and well-delineated focus, however, Prosterman lost me in her introduction when she commented: "As far as I could establish in an anecdotal way, issues of gender did not seem to be dominant in understanding the functioning of the fair. There was consciousness that gender roles were changing, but those role changes or role differences did not seem fundamentally to influence people's attitudes toward the fair or the symbolic dimensions of the fair" (pp. 7-8). I wanted to know in whose understanding issues of gender were not dominant, and who were the "people" whose attitudes were uninfluenced by gender? In midwestern U.S. fairs, as in the ones I know about in Ontario and Manitoba, there is a pretty strict division of labour and competition between women and men. A brief section of *Ordinary Life* (pp. 100-101) looks at "gender distinctions," in

which Prosterman comments that: "No stated rules stop either gender from entering categories unspecified by sex...Still, custom, not law, precludes one sex or another from entering any of these nongender-specified sections. Women enter men's categories with less problem...In the departments and divisions in which women commonly have held sway, men...require enticement with special subdivisions like the one on the plants and flowers section in one fair: 'The Masculine Touch. Arranged and exhibited by a Man'...There are no special Ladies' or Women's categories in any of the fairs (pp. 100-101)." Such an arrangement seems a pretty significant aspect of "the functioning of the fair" and of how folks "participated in the culture of the fair." Its primarily understood-but-unstated format makes it all the more so. Perhaps in suggesting that gender does not influence "attitudes" and "symbolic dimensions," Prosterman means that the aesthetic dimensions of fair judgement that she discusses, such as balance and uniformity, are equally salient in women's and men's domains. But her meaning is unclear.

I even began to wonder just how Prosterman conceived the idea of a gendered fair, particularly when she commented: "What more obviously did seem to affect participation were race and religion; with a few exceptions, the local and transient participants were all white Anglo-Saxon Protestants or Catholics" (p. 8). Perhaps she thinks that a gendered analysis of midwestern U.S. county fairs would only be possible if one sex or another were excluded from participation by custom or practice, as are people of colour and non-Christians. Yet Prosterman also fails analytically to engage the whiteness and Christianity of the fairs. For example, she does not make the links of these aspects of practice with her analysis of family and community (e.g. p. 66).

Of course, there is nothing wrong with Prosterman deciding not to look at gender, race, or religion in her analysis. But she should not justify this choice by arguing that they are unimportant when her own work shows they are, as she does with gender, nor say they are important and then ignore them, as she does with race and religion.

Prosterman sees midwestern U.S. county fairs as "a statement of what life could be—a kind of cultural icon" (p. 12). She notes, but does not explore beyond insider's views, their "oppositions," or contradictions. Her descriptions of fairs and of their history and administration, premium book categories, judging, and aesthetic criteria with their working relationship to everyday life, are exhaustively detailed. Yet her comments seem almost exclusively based upon emic categories and ideas, and never approach "thick" description. Prosterman never seems to distance herself sufficiently from the events she looks at to make generalisations other than those fair insiders themselves would make.

As such, there is very little that I as a folklorist could take from this book into my own analysis of festivals, or of the culture and society of the midwestern

United States. More attention to work on culturally and socially related events—for example, Beverly Stoeltje's on rodeo—might have helped Prosterman in this regard. I do think, however, that *Ordinary Life* would be extremely useful to folks becoming more deeply involved in midwestern fairs—new judges or new board members, for example—because Prosterman has done such an excellent job of outlining fair workings and aesthetics from insider perspectives. Given the frequent (and in my opinion generally justified) criticism of folkloristic writing becoming irrelevant to our subjects of study, this is an important contribution.

Nevertheless, Prosterman's book epitomises a particular way of writing about traditional culture which I personally find somewhat problematic—what I'd like to call “the ethnography of niceness.” Though at points her sweet veneer cracks slightly and we get a glimpse or two of the non-ideal (exhibitors who cheat, bad judges, and so on), the one central signifier of discord she discusses at some length in the book—the midway—is in the final, most analytical and theoretical chapter, mentioned only in passing.

Linked to this ethos, Prosterman's oblique remarks about the National Endowment for the Arts and the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s trouble me. She refers to “one notion of value” to which she alleges “politicians and administrators tend to allot money, performance and exhibit space, art education, and political attention” (p. 186). Her implication is that folk arts and aesthetics, as seen in county fairs, have been slighted by the NEA. Yet they have for some time been included under its purview. What right-wing politicians and administrators are trying to suppress at the NEA is not folk art, but the arts of marginalised groups and individuals who challenge the very structures of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and uniformity epitomised in the county fair as Prosterman describes it. Folk arts projects are trotted out by folklorists and NEA officials alike as examples of the benign arts NEA funds, and are contrasted with the nastiness of the more intellectually and politically challenging work of artists like Tim Miller. (Perhaps Prosterman would agree with this view, and her obliqueness is a result of fear of repercussions for her publisher, another organisation directly funded by the U.S. government, and, thus, clearly not immune to political and material censorship.)

Despite my obvious misgivings, however, *Ordinary Life*, *Festival Days* is an important contribution filling a lacuna in folkloristic studies. Its contents, both explicit and implicit, raise questions that I hope will be debated in the field for some time.

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"The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing" and Other Songs Cowboys Sing. Guy Logsdon (ed.). (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. Pp. xxii + 388)

"The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing" and Other Songs Cowboys Sing first appeared in hardback in 1989; it has recently been reissued in paper. This anthology of cowboy songs and poems was a welcome addition to the growing list of cowboy titles when it first appeared, and it remains welcome. As the title indicates, the book attempts to establish a balance in our understanding of the repertoire of this glamorous profession, filling in the dashes and restoring the asterisked verses and, in some cases, presenting items that, if they were collected at all in earlier times, remained in the collector's file cabinet, probably in a red folder. For years, a "family values" portrait of the cowboy dominated our culture while Roy Rogers and Gene Autry were hailed as the kings of our expressive ranges.

Unfortunately, the difficulty of striking this balance is also indicated by the title. Concluding his preface, Logsdon writes, "My purpose in compiling this collection has been to make available a true range of songs that have been—and remain—a significant part of cowboy culture and experience" (p. xx). He seems generally to have succeeded in this, especially since he has wisely referred to "a true range of songs." The choice of title song seems to promise a more generally bawdy collection than he in fact presents. Why "The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing" should have eponymous glory among all the songs Logsdon has collected—both common and rare—isn't clear, although the words certainly do ring out the warning that readers will need to be willing to read X-rated material. Other than that, it doesn't seem that the song is particularly representative; Logsdon's informant's comment on it suggests his own lack of commitment: "That one was just plumb nasty."

Logsdon notes that not all cowboys appreciated bawdry (p. xiv), and that although cowboy poets of both genders continue to create bawdy verse and song (p. xvi), most of this material came from outside the cowboy tradition (p. xv). The point is to develop a balanced view of cowboy poetry, in which the sentimental, epic, and other modes are clearly as important as bawdry (or—as surely applies to some of this material—obscurity). That the same performers may offer both sentiment and bawdry suggests that either the iconoclasm of one, or the emotion of the other—or both—should not be taken at face value.

In fact, while there is obscenity, misogyny, and misanthropy aplenty here, not all of the bawdry Logsdon presents is truly shocking, except for those who maintain a distaste for openness about bodily functions or Anglo-Saxon terminology. In "The Oaks of Jimderia," "Cousin Harry," and the more familiar

“The Boogaboo” (a North American version of “The Foggy, Foggy Dew”), for example, individuals meet for sexual activity that is tender and even personally committed.

Interestingly enough, except for Austin and Alta Fife’s work and Hal Cannon’s *Cowboy Poetry: A Gathering*, Logsdon’s anthology is virtually the first anthology of cowboy verbal culture since John A. Lomax’s *Cowboy Songs* produced by a folklorist, rather than by a retired cowboy or cowboy singer (Cannon 1985; Fife and Fife 1969; Lomax 1957). This does not mean that Logsdon is entirely at arm’s length from his subject matter, however. In several ways, it seems to me, he represents cowboy artists as much as he studies them. For example, Logsdon seems to me to be unduly concerned to demonstrate that cowboy poetry is unique, claiming, for example, “...it is probable that no other occupation either produced such an abundance of poets or inspired as many poems” (p. 289). Yet a number of his annotations refer to *Shitty Songs of Sigma Nu*, and he acknowledges that “My Lula Gal” has been shared with fraternity boys (p. 154) and soldiers (p. 156). The debt of cowboy song to the canons of the sea and the logging industry is well known. Logsdon himself quotes Will C. Barnes, one of the first recorded cowboy singers, from a *Saturday Evening Post* article of 1925: “Some of the very best so-called cowboy poetry in existence has been written by college men who knew little or nothing of the real life and work of the ranges” (p. 306). My own collection of Alberta verse suggests that the poetry of housewives and parents may be at least as extensive as that of the cowboys. While the uniqueness of this activity seems to be an important aspect of the mythology surrounding it—and this is a claim one frequently hears made by Canadian cowboy poets—it should not be taken at face value. If nothing else, the achievement of cowboy poets (or any other kind) need not be unique to be valuable.

Similarly, Logsdon supports the claim for a kind of cowboy authenticity that is at best uncertain: “...while the imaginary cowboy became more unreal, generations of *working* cowboys—or real cowboys—have nourished and kept alive their way of life, their work ethic, and their occupational techniques and customs from which the myth emerged” (p. 282). Perhaps, but the “real cowboys” have always been influenced by “imaginary cowboys,” in an expression/enactment cycle that goes back as far as the dime novels.

Indeed, one might speak of a contemporary *cowboyism* which defiantly rejects a stereotype even Hollywood no longer offers (the satin-shirted Gene Autry image), but welcomes another sort of mythic stereotype, a contemporary romanticism of the workaday, the quotidian, the salty, and the vulgar, which is in part reflected in Logsdon’s provocative title. Each generation of cowboyists needs to prove its right to defend the *truly quotidian*, which it alone seems to have discovered. Thus Logsdon writes that Ina Sires, who lectured on cowboy culture and produced a songbook during the 20s, “...was genuinely a collector of cowboy songs, but she also romanticised of the cowboy [*sic*]” (p. 306). Part of a quotation

from her work he offers as a demonstration of her romanticism suggests an attitude not so far from that Logsdon expresses towards his own collection: "Not all these ballads are beautiful; but all are sincere and reflect as accurately as a mirror, the life of the cowboy." I doubt that Logsdon would claim that all of his songs "reflect the life of the cowboy," but like Sires, he claims to opt for the "truth" side of Keats' truth/beauty equation, and his disparagement of her romanticism is more useful as a statement of his current status than as a description of her role in her contemporary world.

Much of Logsdon's useful concluding essay, "A Singing Cowboy Roundup," is devoted to the questioning of various performers' authenticity or romanticism. In addition to being a songbook and partial ethnography of the cowboy, *Whorehouse Bells* is an account of the changing conceptualization of cowboy verbal culture. There is more to this than the newly found ability to include bawdry. Logsdon frequently acknowledges that his own understanding of the field has grown during his thirty years of work. He notes, for example, that for years he failed to collect "the tradition of poetry recitation" (p. 42), considering it a trivial genre, as was common. By the same token, he confesses that he'd ignored a "...rodeo version of 'The Strawberry Roan.' I was interested only in what I thought to be the 'old' cowboy songs. It was only years later, after I began to conceptualize the true development of cowboy singing, that I returned for Bill Long's version" (p. 97).

It should be noted that the majority of songs Logsdon presents were collected from a single performer, Riley Neal. Indeed, he indicates that the book was at one time conceived of as a study of this major informant. However, Logsdon's work with other sources, both scholarly and in the field, has been extensive. I see no reason to fault him for overgeneralizing from one performer's repertoire.

Logsdon's anthology is valuable for the collection of songs it presents, for his thorough review of the literature and recording history of the field of cowboy song and poetry (including a rather good introduction to the publication history of bawdy song), and because of the author's own open discussion of his development as a student of the field that invites a similar response from his readers. If it's a book that some readers will disagree with frequently, if they find themselves wishing that Logsdon would question some of his own assumptions a bit more, then we should acknowledge that our disagreement is possible because of the author's thoroughness and openness.

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The Tancook Schooner: An Island and its Boats. Wayne O'Leary.
(Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press,
1994. Pp.xiv + 272)

To date, the historiography of Atlantic Canada's maritime past has focused almost exclusively on the large sailing ship and its place in the "Golden Age of Sail." The economic and social history of these seemingly more alluring and romantic vessels has been the subject of many academic and popular publications. In stark contrast, the ubiquitous traditional small wooden craft, usually defined as less than 50 feet in length, has been largely ignored, despite the constant and integral role it played in the evolution of maritime economies and local ways of life. Be they dories, punts, dinghies, sloops or small schooners, their history has not been adequately recorded. Thankfully this neglect will not be the epithet of the Tancook Schooner. Author Wayne O'Leary has compiled an in-depth perspective of the relationship between the 40- 50- foot schooner and the people of Tancook Island situated in Mahone Bay, southwest of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

As a self-described labour of love, O'Leary spent numerous summer vacations in the 1950s and 60s fishing and sailing the waters of Mahone Bay with uncles and cousins absorbing the family lore of Tancook Island, its people and boats. Realizing this oral tradition would soon disappear in the wake of modernization, he began systematically interviewing family members and those familiar with the island's technological heritage and traditional fishing, farming, and coasting economy. In time, oral history was supplemented by collecting information from half models, sail plans, and photographs, and by more formal research in libraries, museums, and archives.

One of the major strengths of the book is O'Leary's success in presenting the Tancook Schooner as a cultural artifact which assumes greater significance when properly described in the context of this time, place, and use. O'Leary weaves a backdrop of the island's early history and the lifestyle of its inhabitants. Against this, the Tancook is portrayed as the linchpin of the island's economy from its genesis the first decade of the 20th century to its gradual demise

beginning in the early 1940s. Meticulously, O'Leary chronicles the early development of the schooner, the evolution of its hull shape and rigging and the methods and materials used in its construction. He further describes the use of the schooner in the local fishery, in rum running during Prohibition, and in the coasting trade of agricultural produce from Tancook Island to Halifax. This approach gives the Tancook Schooner a contextual depth unparalleled by any small craft in Atlantic Canada with the possible exception of the Banks dory. For this O'Leary deserves much credit.

With the exception of a half model or sail plan, the principal source of information usually associated with any traditional boat type is oral history. Although O'Leary has strived to balance this information with other sources, it is evident, however, he relies heavily upon the memories of Thomas Mason and Murray A. Mason. Anyone citing information in the book should be cognizant that oral history inevitably suffers from the vagaries of human memory, particularly when specific details are involved. One assumes the related interviews with the Stevens, Levis, and Langilles were used to substantiate their recollections.

More specific criticisms relate to editorial weaknesses and omissions. In the case of the former, the reduced size of the lines plans make them difficult to read. Similarly, the list of vessels in the appendix should have been alphabetized for easier use.

While it is also tempting to suggest O'Leary should have compared the Tancook Schooner to other contemporary craft, it is abundantly clear this was not possible due to a lack of comparable information. Anyone attempting to redress this lamentable situation, however, should take O'Leary's approach and view the boat as a cultural artifact, documenting it in a similar scholarly and comprehensive fashion. O'Leary has set a standard that others would do well to emulate.

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The Christmas Imperative: Leisure, Family and Women's Work. By Leslie Bella. (Halifax: Fernwood, 1992. Pp. 252)

Conventional definitions of Christmas as a holiday, framed in terms of leisure and celebration, ignore the massive amount of female labour which underpins the season. Notwithstanding the importance of Christmas in terms of symbolizing, reaffirming and reinforcing bonds between family members and

friends, such happiness requires work. When seen critically, Christmas is really a female work project. Although it is a project which appears to be voluntary, Christmas is better understood as a complex of external and internal organized forces which push women to “do” Christmas—forces which Leslie Bella calls the “Christmas imperative.”

In *The Christmas Imperative: Leisure, Family and Women's Work*, Bella (a Professor of Social Work at Memorial University) sets out to show how and why women cooperate with the Christmas imperative. Motivated by questions of history and politics, and drawing on her own contradictory experiences of “unsuccessful” Christmases, Bella promises to “explain the origins, describe the impact and promote the transformation” (p. 12) of this Christmas imperative.

Although the book began as a critique of the androcentrism of leisure theory, prompted by Bella's thesis that “family leisure” was really “women's work,” it goes much further. The book is organized around two interrelated themes: an analysis of social reproduction (the importance of women's caring work); a feminist critique of “familism” (a rejection of the anti-social nuclear family). Unlike much of the literature on social reproduction which tends to economism, in Bella's presentation the Christmas imperative has an intensely *subjective* as well as economic dimension.

As Bella explains, the Christmas imperative drives women to reproduce—for their male kin and children—their own magical memories of girlhood Christmases, built on the work of mothers, grandmothers and other female relatives. But because childhood wonder cannot be recaptured, each Christmas is destined to be at least a small disappointment even though women are prohibited from acknowledging this. “As women,” she writes, “we are haunted by the residue of familism and convinced that the reproduction of Christmas, with all that that implies, is our responsibility. It can be no one else's, and that is why we experience the Christmas imperative with such an exquisite combination of joy and pain” (p. 232). The internal pressure women place on themselves and other women is compounded by, and helps to legitimize, the “Christmas pushers”: commercial interests (retailers, especially large department stores), advertisers, women's magazines, the media and other institutions (in which religion, curiously, figures little) which profit from Christmas.

Christmas, when performed successfully, has a number of effects beyond the obviously commercial: it confirms family identity and domestic felicity, it allows Christian families to resonate with the purity of the “Holy Family,” and it reassures participants of their place in a lineage of care and tradition. These personalistic effects are presented as the “core” of the Christmas imperative, although Bella is equally clear that commercial and economic interests organize the season as the “central celebration of contemporary capitalism” (p. 51).

The strength of the book, however, is not so much its theoretical contribution as its rich description of the contemporary and historical “production” of Christmas. In this respect, Bella’s use of sources is innovative—blending fiction, historiography, diaries, archival ephemera and oral histories to present a compelling picture of how women struggle to make a “successful” Christmas for themselves and their families. Women’s testimonies of their Christmas experiences show the holiday from its most shining to its most agonizing. Bella allows women’s first-person narratives to carry her argument. I was filled with empathetic exhaustion as I read women’s descriptions of their struggles to (re)create family traditions and rituals to demonstrate their love and care. Simultaneously, painful stories of dislocation, immigration, alcoholism and distress show that the Christmas imperative is no mere socialization to be lightly tossed away. The misery of a “failed” Christmas is all too real—it is a season, after all, in which suicide rates reportedly rise.

The heart of *The Christmas Imperative* is several chapters of social history about Christmas. Bella explores the “invention” of Christmas in the 19th and early 20th century, via a joyous romp through Victorian fiction meshed with political and cultural analysis. These chapters are filled with rich gems: pagan Saturnalian roots, the rise of a Christmas-card empire, the popularization of carols and “traditional” songs, the curious history of Santa Claus parades, the crucial role of retailers (including Canada’s own Eaton’s), women’s periodicals and more. I was fascinated to learn that Christmas was not originally feminized in the holiday spectacle conceived by Washington Irving, Charles Dickens and their contemporaries—all of which centred on male characters. Feminization, according to Bella, began in the late 1800s (and the popular girls’ book *Little Women* occupies an explanatory place of honour), but it was not until the 20th century that women and Christmas were cemented together in an apparently natural bond.

Bella takes pains to distinguish *Christmas* from the *Christmas imperative*—and it is testimony to the power of the imperative that this distinction cannot always be maintained successfully. While her suggestions on how to transform the holiday to eliminate the Christmas imperative are the least successful element of the book, being prescriptive and sketchy, Bella is motivated by an important ethical concern. Bella writes that children (and I would add, adult women) “deserve golden memories to carry into their futures, but not ones that embody familist prescriptions” (p. 49). Paradoxically, by transforming the holiday to challenge its sexism, commercialism and familism, she argues, we can honour family traditions more authentically and be more true to the spirit of Christmas.

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Wisdom of the Mythtellers. By Sean Kane. (Peterborough, ONT.: Broadview Press, 1994. Pp. 281)

The purpose of this study is to trace the creation and telling of myths from pre-agricultural times to the more modern age of agriculturally-based civilizations. Kane's contention is that the world views of pre-agricultural "mythtellers" were fundamentally different from ours, that these tellers represented human society in tune with nature, rather than in conflict with nature, and that their myths reflected this pre-agricultural harmony. Kane may well be right in his contention, but his book tells us more about the author's world view than about the nature of those long-ago tellers of myths.

This study is a child of the kind of comparative mythology engaged in by the great Victorian mythologists, but because it lacks the Germanic, obsessive, scholarly detail of these earlier works, it comes across as a representative of the golly-gee-whiz school of comparative mythology. Kane's view is a romantic one in which the origins of mythology lie in a golden age of harmonious existence between humankind and nature. Perhaps any speculation on ancient pre-agricultural societies, beyond the archaeological, leads to romanticism; it certainly leads to strange and wondrous connections in this book. For starters, Kane equates modern Australian Aboriginal society with ancient palaeolithic culture, and modern Haida society with mesolithic peoples. Survivalism is risen from the dead.

Because the ancient mythtellers are now dust, Kane substitutes more modern tellers who, in his opinion, share some link with the golden age. Beyond relatively recent Haida and Aboriginal tellers, Kane includes Victorian retellings of ancient Celtic myths, as interpreted by his Aunt Alice (Alice Kane, a professional storyteller, whose repertoire was explored by Edith Fowke in *Songs and Sayings of an Ulster Childhood* [Kane 1983]). Can we trust his links? In fact, the book is a series of almost stream-of-consciousness links: for example, from Lapps walking around fir trees to the prayer wheels of Nepal to *Childe Roland* to Celtic millstones to Haida housepoles—all in one paragraph—linked in their aspect of circularity. My head spins.

The ancients knew things we will never know, and their incarnations (Aboriginals, Native Americans, Homer, Aunt Alice) know them too. I sense the noble savage roaming somewhere in Kane's brain, but I also sense a general awe-struck attitude towards the terrible mysteries which unite us all in a great chain of being. "Stories already exist in nature, waiting to be overheard by humans who will listen to them" (p. 33). "If you listen to the loon's call, you will know what I mean: the loon's call is full of the cries of the gods" (p. 68). "In many cultures the storyteller enters the village on stilts" (p. 199). I'm sorry, I shouldn't do this.

But Kane's unabashed subjectivity has rubbed off on me, and I can only respond in kind.

Kane's scholarship is of a "type," but I don't think that type will be most folklorists' cup of tea (or flagon of mead, perhaps). The value to folklorists of Kane's study lies in its nature, rather than in its thesis. It represents a form of folk revivalism different from, but related to, the variety found at folk festivals or the folkloristic performances of popular culture. There is a New Age feel to this book, and it may well serve as a folkloristic text for the study of new directions in revivalism.

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The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia. By Ian McKay. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1994. Pp. 371)

More than any other book I know of, Ian McKay's *The Quest of the Folk* engendered lively exchange even before its publication. McKay, a historian, is one of Canada's most stimulating scholars and his preliminary papers and articles on the nature and importance of antimodernism to Nova Scotia have excited academics across disciplines. Because the construction of "folk" and the work of folklore collector Helen Creighton are central to McKay's thesis, debate has been particularly spirited among folklorists.

Combining a Neo Marxist perspective with Foucaultian post-structuralism and Gramscian theory, McKay traces the social construction of "the Folk" and "Innocence" as part of a rise of antimodernism in twentieth century Nova Scotia. He argues, "Innocence emerged in the period from 1920 to 1950 as a kind of mythomoteur, a set of fused and elaborated myths that provided Nova Scotians with an overall framework of meaning, a new way of imagining their community, a new core of hegemonic liberal common sense" (p. 30). Divorced from twentieth-century modernity, innocence promoted the primitive, the rustic, the unspoiled and the unchanging (p. 30). McKay contends that the embrace of

Innocence brought with it five particularly dramatic changes in perception and practice: the province was portrayed as being essentially Scottish, provincial history focused on a vanished golden age, rockbound coasts and the omnipresent sea became central symbolic landscapes, the archetypal Nova Scotian came to emphasize masculinity and prowess, and, finally, Nova Scotia came to be seen as a "Folk society" (pp. 31–32).

McKay builds his thesis for the creation and success of this variant of antimodernism largely through the presentation of detailed case studies of Helen Creighton, the province's best known folklorist, and Mary Black, a civil servant who promoted handcrafts. He supplements their examples with illustrations from the works of other cultural producers, including regional writers who helped to shape an antimodernist view of the province and its people. He ends his exploration with an examination of contemporary examples of "the folk" as commodified through tourism and commercialism.

It is important to state at the beginning that this is a significant work that every folklorist in Canada should read. That said, it would be a different analysis if written by a folklorist and thus will meet with mixed reaction within the folklore community. I personally find some parts of McKay's discussion more convincing than others. For example, I particularly enjoyed his analysis of contemporary commodification of the folk for commercial and tourism ends. On the other hand, I am less persuaded by some of his statements about Helen Creighton. I assess her place in Canadian folkloristics differently than McKay who imbues her with a significant degree of influence in academic and government circles. And, I suspect other folklorists will find as I did that at times McKay's knowledge of folkloristics and of folklore (and fieldwork) dynamics limited.

Admittedly some of my disagreements with aspects of McKay's interpretation reflect the different filters through which we see the world. As a folklorist whose orientation is feminist, my approach varies from that of McKay, the Neo-Marxist historian. Still, I have some questions about selection. Because we can never consider every example, we must select. Therefore it is not surprising that as McKay critiques the politics and practices of cultural selection he makes his own choices. For example, he relies heavily on the two case studies of Creighton and Black at the expense of other collectors from this time period. Admittedly Creighton was the region's most popular collector, but the work of others from Arthur Huff Fauset and MacEdward Leach to scores of local ethnographers, offer contrasting approaches. And I was struck by the book's real absence of references to those in McKay's own discipline of history. From time to time I wondered about how some of McKay's observations about selection applied to them. I'd like to hear more about their role. What were historians studying during this period? How does the construction of history they were weaving mesh with antimodernism? Finally, the discussion would benefit from more references to what was happening in other places. How does the Nova Scotian example compare to the Appalachian one, for example?

From my own place on the margins of folklore, I see the discipline at a crucial point in its history. Because of this, *The Quest of the Folk* is particularly welcome. Folklorists may not agree with all that McKay says about our field or about a figure like Helen Creighton but he does force us to reflect on our discipline's role in ideologies like antimodernism and to see theory where we once denied its presence. *The Quest of the Folk* comes at an important juncture as we contemplate the changing place of folklore both in Canadian society and in academic life and as we address the uses being made of folklore not only by the people who create and exchange it but by those—including folklorists—who appropriate and commodify it.

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Music, Culture, and Experience: Selected Papers of John Blacking.

By John Blacking, edited by Reginald Byron. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. xii + 269)

At the time of his death in 1990 at the age of 61, John Blacking was one of the world's pre-eminent ethnomusicologists. Blacking was an exceptionally accomplished and deeply committed scholar/musician/social idealist who indefatigably proselytised on behalf of a universalistic vision of the properties and significance of music in the construction, maintenance and expression of human beingness. From his post as head of the Department of Social Anthropology at the Queen's University of Belfast from 1970 to 1987, he became the principal mentor of a fair number of the scholars currently active in ethnomusicological work. Blacking was a key figure not only in the institutionalisation of ethnomusicology as an academic discipline in Europe but also in the democratisation of access to ethnomusicological training worldwide. He created, as well, a substantial body of highly original and often provocative scholarship.

This volume, as epitomised in the publisher's statement on its back cover, "brings together in one convenient source eight of Blacking's most important theoretical papers along with an extensive introduction by the editor. Drawing heavily on his fieldwork among the Venda people of South Africa, these essays reveal his most important theoretical themes such as the innateness of musical ability, the properties of music as a symbolic or quasi-linguistic system, the complex relationship between music and social institutions, and the relation between scientific musical analysis and cultural understanding."

Although Blacking's published output spans the years 1953-89 (and posthumously to 1992), the eight essays anthologised in this collection all appeared between 1969 and 1985, and four of them are from the three-year period 1969-71. It was this fruitful three-year period which saw the publication of twelve papers which show Blacking moving away from the primarily particularist/descriptivist stance of his earlier work and becoming more overtly concerned with engaging broader issues and ideas. The thinking of this period was soon to be further synthesised and refined in his most famous publication, *How Musical Is Man?*, one of the first ethnomusicology "textbooks" to be supplied with illustrative sound recordings (Blacking 1973; 1974). The four remaining essays date from 1977-85. Their titles alone give a good indication of the diversity of Blacking's concerns: "The Study of Musical Change," "Reflections on the Effectiveness of Symbols," "The Music of Politics," "Music, Culture, and Experience." It should be noted that these are not Blacking's original titles; editor Reginald Byron has retitled all but one of the eight essays, giving them a less pedantic and/or geoculturally focused tone than the originals. Byron has also "deleted and altered some material" (p. 21) here and there, in the interests of making the papers more timely.

It would be unfair to Blacking, and to the field of ethnomusicology at large, to attempt to outline and discuss the range of thought embodied in the eight papers in the anthology within the confines of a short review. Thankfully, Byron's lengthy (twenty-eight page) introductory essay, "The Ethnomusicology of John Blacking," does an excellent job of this. It is a thoughtful summation of Blacking's life and work, and includes expert expositions and contextualisations of each of the eight essays in the collection. Byron also supplies a "List of Works by John Blacking" (the works number more than 100: books and booklets, edited books, sound recordings, television programs, and papers). Blacking was indeed, in the words of the late Alan Merriam, "a fearsomely energetic man" (p. vii). Additionally, Byron has taken the trouble to marshal the reference lists for the eight anthologised articles into a collective reference list, where one can see at a glance the enormously wide range of publications Blacking knew intimately enough to be able to engage meaningfully in his own work. The collective reference list also includes items cited by Byron in his introductory essay, most notably a number of "tribute" pieces which appeared following Blacking's death. These pieces are essential reading for anyone wishing to gauge Blacking's contributions and impact (see especially Bailey 1990; Donnan 1991; Howard 1991; Kippen 1990).

In some ways, John Blacking is to the 1970s-80s period in the history of cross-cultural studies in world music and dance what musicologist/cultural historian Curt Sachs (1881-1959) was to this multidisciplinary enterprise in the earlier decades of the century. Blacking, like Sachs, was a fecund scholar with uncommonly broad interests and vision who sometimes "tended to idealise"

(Bailey 1990:xiii) in the service of making a powerful case for a passionately held theory or point of view. And Blacking, like Sachs, was “a giant among musicologists, as much for his astounding mastery of several subjects as for his ability to present a comprehensive view of a vast panorama” (Sadie 1988:651). Although in the current intellectual climate in ethnomusicology and related fields, notions of “difference” and “contingency” seem to be more in vogue than such perennial Blacking themes as “commonality” and “necessity,” this does not diminish Blacking’s enormous achievement, nor discount the many ways his work can continue to be useful. It is our profound loss that we cannot know where Blacking would stand today. As Bruno Nettl remarks in his elegiac forward to the collection, “[Blacking’s] last year or two of life produced much that promised to change or expand the directions of his approaches, and to affect powerfully the field of music research generally” (p. vii).

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Sardinian Chronicles. By Bernard Lortat-Jacob, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. x + 118, compact disc)

With this slender and somewhat cryptically titled volume, ethnomusicologist Bernard Lortat-Jacob, director of research at Paris' Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and a seasoned scholar of circum-Mediterranean traditional music, shows how powerful and effective some tenets of "the new ethnography" can be when applied to subject matter engaged by ethnomusicologists. *Sardinian Chronicles* is an audacious (in the positive sense) book. Let me emphasise that I think it is also an important one; any of my following remarks which might be construed as negative criticism are intended solely as non-judgemental observations on Lortat-Jacob's departures from the conventions of traditional academic presentation. I am not myself put off by the departures, but I can well imagine that some others might be.

The ostensible subject matter Lortat-Jacob engages is the village music of Sardinia, with special reference to players of the accordion (an instrument which the author himself plays) who have some experience as freelance professional musicians. I say "ostensible subject matter" because this book is not at all what one might expect from an accordion-playing ethnomusicologist publishing on the results of a field study of an accordion-rich culture. Lortat-Jacob eschews the conventions of mainstream ethnomusicological writing (e.g., problem-oriented and/or data-driven exposition, empirical musical analysis, transcriptions, process models) and also the conventions of mainstream academic scholarship at large (e.g., engagement with other literature and carefully positioned statements of scope, aims, methods, concepts, hypotheses, conclusions/implications). The "ostensible subject matter", as I have stated it, is my construction for this review: Lortat-Jacob never once says that his book is about what I say it is (or "about" anything in particular, for that matter). All that the prospective reader has to go on in this regard is a very brief (1-page) forward by Michel Leiris and the publisher's promotional statement on the book's back cover, both of which position the work in somewhat elliptical terms while simultaneously promising an important and innovative study ("a dramatic turning point in musical ethnography"—Veit Erlmann, Free University of Berlin). The constraints of the Library of Congress cataloguing scheme allow only the following prosaic hints about the book's contents: "1. Sardinia (Italy)—Social life and customs. 2. Accordionists—Italy—Sardinia—Social life and customs" (p. iv). The book's lack of conventional scholarly apparatus and orientation material (preface, acknowledgements, introductory "overview" chapter, "summing up" chapter, reference list) could easily frustrate any prospective reader who is accustomed to being able to quickly and

easily scan an academic monograph to take its measure before deciding whether or not to proceed further.

So, what *does* Lortat-Jacob offer in the absence of so many of the standard underpinnings of academic publishing, in a book released in a premier university press series (Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology)? Essentially, he offers “vignettes focused on individuals...which bring to life an art still very much alive: the music of villages with an oral tradition, sung or played in the company of others” (publisher’s statement). Each of the twelve vignettes is an autonomous piece, yet they are all interrelated and, when taken all together, form, in the words of the forwardist, Michel Leiris, “a gallery of living portraits...that make the lay reader sense that there do indeed exist human beings called ‘Sardinians’” (p. x). In Lortat-Jacob’s account, the “human beings called ‘Sardinians’” do many, many other things besides producing, consuming and reflecting upon music—including those individuals whom he singles out as musicians and who form the locus of his study. While it may be a truism that readers and writers of musical ethnographies realise that such works typically present a tightly framed picture, Lortat-Jacob’s account shows absolutely no signs of editing out what some ethnographers might categorise as irrelevant or peripherally relevant information *vis-à-vis* the task of delineating a musical culture. The traditional ethnomusicological rallying cry, “music in its cultural context,” is taken by Lortat-Jacob entirely literally: the cultural context of music is potentially *everything* that happens in the culture that the musical ethnographer is able to witness or become aware of. By adopting the stance of the all-observant memoirist or diarist, Lortat-Jacob draws us into the routines and exigencies of the everyday lives of music makers and their associates (he astutely includes himself prominently as a member of both groups in his writeups, a strategy which makes his accounts almost irresistibly compelling). The end result is one of the most richly nuanced, insightful and poetically evocative accounts of a musical culture—not to mention the enterprise known as ethnographic fieldwork—yet to appear in print. The sheer power and beauty of the book as a piece of literature hit me soon after I began to prepare this review: after reading the first few pages I set my pencil and notepad aside and settled in for the pleasures of a “good read” (and was in fact compelled to finish the book at a single sitting—a practically unique occurrence in my relationship with ethnographic/ethnomusicological monographs, for whatever that may be worth as a recommendation). The author who most often came to mind as I was reading *Sardinian Chronicles* was the V. S. Naipaul of *The Middle Passage* (1969) and *An Area of Darkness* (1968)—(probably owing in no small part to the translating skills of Teresa Lavender Fagan). The belles-lettres/storytelling approach is, to be sure, not all that new in musical ethnography (see, for example, Tedlock 1992, where novelistic dialogue is juxtaposed with more standard modes of ethnographic presentation), but in my estimation Lortat-Jacob has set a new benchmark for this approach.

Notwithstanding Lortat-Jacob's iconoclastic approach (I could see calling it an example of "postmodern ethnomusicology"), the baby has not been thrown out with the bathwater. An index has been provided (pp. 117-118), as well as a list of "Other Works by Bernard Lortat-Jacob" (pp. 109-110), thus making the book not only usable but very useful as a reference tool. The sub-entries under "music" in the index, for example, will alert the musicologically savvy reader to the fact that some standard (ethno)musicological topics and questions have indeed been engaged. For such readers, tracking said entries will reveal the author to be a sophisticated musical intelligence in the conventional western academic mold, but also perceptive beyond the mold. The book ships with an expertly produced compact disc, the notes for which include English translations for song lyrics and indications as to which chapter each selection pertains to. The book also reproduces a number of black-and-white photographs taken during the course of the author's fieldwork, although, in keeping with the contra-conventional posture of the book, they are neither listed in the table of contents nor keyed to textual commentary. They are seemingly offered as just another element adding to the immediacy and memorability of the overall package, like snapshots pasted into a diary. While neither the photos nor the recorded examples represent the twelve essays even remotely evenly, they, like the essays, are each twelve in number. I somehow have the feeling that this numerical parallelism is not accidental (but perhaps I am being unduly influenced here by the many other clevernesses of Lortat-Jacob's presentation).

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A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of Larena Clark By Edith Fowke, with Jay Rahn. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1994. Pp. viii + 308)

When Edith Fowke and Jay Rahn had to decide which ninety-three songs to put in this collection they had quite a task, for LaRena Clark (1904-1991) knew some 500 songs. Lucky for us they persevered, for in their book we now have the first comprehensive study of the repertoire of an Anglo-Canadian woman folk singer.

A Family Heritage is largely a collection of songs, lovingly and carefully annotated. Before the songs come eighteen pages of introductory and biographical information. The songs are followed by Rahn's six-page essay on LaRena's musical style, a two-page summary of the book, and four appendices. The songs themselves are arranged in fourteen categories: classic ballads, songs of true love, songs of false love, returned lover ballads, the [Robert] Burns connection, bawdy ballads, North American romantic ballads, comic songs, Irish songs, English songs, American songs, local Canadian songs, lumbering songs, and LaRena's compositions. The authors included those songs from LaRena's repertoire that they believed to be "unique or rare...particularly complete or well worded, or showed interesting textual or musical variations" (p. 4). Each song text comes complete with melody line and guitar chords as well as brief notes on the song text and song performances.

The appendices provide welcome information. The first offers an extensive list of books and records where variants of LaRena's songs can be found. It also describes the tunes LaRena sang and compares them to variants recorded elsewhere. "LaRena's Family Songs," the second appendix, offers a list of all the songs LaRena sang, complete with notes that tell in which records, field tapes, or books her performance of the song can be found. When applicable, the Child or Laws reference number is also included. From this list, we easily get a sense of just how broad LaRena's repertoire was. A third appendix lists all the songs on the twelve records that feature or include LaRena's work. The fourth and final appendix lists the singer's original compositions and the records on which they can be heard.

There is much to learn about traditional song and singing in this study. First of all, Fowke does her readers an important service by reminding us, in her opening sentence, that folksinging is "one art in which women have always excelled" (p. 1). She places LaRena among women such as Anna Gordon Brown (1747-1810), Francis James Child's main informant, and Bell Robertson who provided Scottish collector Gavin Greig with nearly 400 folksongs.

Fowke offers examples of how LaRena's songs celebrate Canada as homeland. She points out how the "bonny ivy tree" becomes "the bonny maple tree" (p. 143) in LaRena's "Razinberry Lane" ("Rosemary Lane" or "Home, Dearie, Home"). She also includes luminous stories about place as she discusses, for example, how LaRena came to write about tumbleweed in her 1967 composition "O Canada, Land of Our Homeland." LaRena, Fowke relates, had heard artist A. Y. Jackson tell how, as a boy, he would send notes in tumbleweed that blew across the prairies and that, sometimes, he would receive an answer back.

Fowke also keeps a sharp eye out for the startling phrase, the song with lines unknown in any other variant. So, in LaRena's "Go and Bring Me Back the Boy I Love," we are able to learn about an unusual third stanza:

Oh, my love is like a lozenger:
He is small but oh how sweet!
And if I had a crown of gold,
I would plant it at his feet. (p. 97)

Finally, Fowke provides us with information about how traditions flourish in a family setting, for LaRena's relatives learned songs in many places and brought them home. LaRena's great-grandfather, Edward John Watson, travelled all over Canada and the United States looking for songs. He passed those songs onto his son, Edward, who sang them to his daughter, Mary Frances, LaRena's mother. From her paternal grandfather, John Edward LeBarre, and her father, Ben LeBarr, who both worked their winters away in the timberwoods, LaRena learned songs of logging. From her maternal grandmother, Annie O'Neill Watson, LaRena learned many Irish ballads. Her paternal grandmother, Martha Anne Moore LeBarre, brought songs from her Quakersville, Pennsylvania home (or, should that be Quakertown, PA?). In notes to song sections and individual songs, Fowke indicates which songs LaRena learned from whom, giving valuable details about transmission and preference along gender lines in a family. Her study would have benefited from gathering all this material together in one place in the book and discussing song tradition in family settings: what happens to songs and singing when it moves from occupational settings of the lumberwoods to the family? How does individual preference in joint performance settings influence what songs are passed on—or forgotten—in a family, as Burdine and McCarthy have explored (Burdine and McCarthy 1990)? What accounts for the gendered preferences that are briefly sketched out?

Other contextual information Fowke carefully includes is equally intriguing. "I grew up in a singing family," LaRena relates in her interviews with Fowke. "Everyone in the family sang songs and my first recollections are of a big old wood stove in the kitchen all covered with white pine that my father and grandfather had built in an enormous kitchen, and people used to come to visit and

sit around the big stove, and there was a horsehair sofa, and they would sing songs. I didn't sing, I was too small, but I listened and every song they ever sang I knew by heart" (p. 17). LaRena also says that she learned all the songs during a "period of transition" (p. 15) after her father's boat-landing and their home burnt down, when the family—grandparents, parents, children—moved about, following Ben LeBarr's work. And years later as she performed on public stages, LaRena told Fowke, "[W]hen I would sing the songs [that my mother had sung] I would sing like my mother and I'd be thinking of my mother...And each ancestor when I reverted to either song that any one of them had sung I'd sing it the way they had sung it. To me it wasn't a song, it was an ancestor" (pp. 16, 17). I find myself wanting to know much more about these contexts for traditional learning in LaRena's life—and the others that are briefly mentioned. What did the songs come to mean to a family "in transition," moving about from place to place after being so swiftly wrenched from their home? And, though I certainly agree with Fowke's decision to honor LaRena's request not to speak of her previous marriages or her children, I do wish we could have known if singing played any part in the raising of LaRena's own family. What did LaRena's public singing later in life—with the support of her husband Gordon—mean to her? One of the particular challenges in family folklore, as Larry Danielson and others note, is finding ways to include the more troublesome, painful aspects of family life so that our explorations escape the half-truths of nostalgia (Danielson 1994).

With its details on traditional singing and its meticulous annotations, Edith Fowke and Jay Rahn's work represents a valuable addition to folksong and family study. *A Family Heritage* allows us to see a singer whose repertoire is based not only on reverence for Canadian history, but also on the realization of the role that the family group plays in the maintenance of traditional culture.

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Il était cent fois La Corriveau. Par Nicole Guilbault. (Québec, Nuit Blanche éditeur, 1995)

Replacée dans le contexte de la société d'aujourd'hui, il n'est pas sûr que l'histoire de Marie-Joséphite Corriveau frapperait l'imagination autant qu'à l'époque de la Conquête. Étant donné la quantité de crimes, souvent horribles, que les médias se font un devoir de porter à notre connaissance, il n'est même pas certain que les concepteurs de nouvelles y trouveraient un intérêt particulier et prendraient la peine d'en parler plus d'une fois. Le meurtre de Louis Dodier, à vrai dire, fait pâle figure à côté de ceux de l'Étrangleur de Chicago, du Sanguinaire du Yorkshire ou, plus près de nous, de Paul Bernardo, de sorte que nous pouvons nous étonner de l'extraordinaire postérité qu'il s'est méritée.

Au moment de la Guerre de sept ans, il est plausible que la sensibilité de la population par rapport aux actes de violence devait se trouver un peu émoussée, d'autant plus que la présence de militaires anglais rappelait sans cesse aux Canadiens-français l'ampleur des pertes subies et l'inévitabilité de la domination. Alors pourquoi les habitants de Saint-Vallier, et bientôt de toute la vallée du Saint-Laurent, furent-ils troublés par la découverte d'un seul corps — sévèrement mutilé faut-il dire¹ — au point de sentir le besoin d'en parler continûment? Bien des explications furent avancées au cours des deux derniers siècles, au point qu'il a fallu un effort soutenu de la part des historiens et ethnologues pour séparer les faits objectifs des inférences commises à leur sujet : où les uns cherchaient à ranimer le spectre de la chasse aux sorcières dans une conjoncture s'y prêtant manifestement fort bien, les autres, plus sages, s'essayaient à reconstituer ce que le cas comportait d'inusité. Jusqu'à ce jour, aucune d'entre elles ne s'est avérée véritablement concluante, ce qui a eu pour effet de vivifier considérablement la légende et d'ouvrir la voie à de nouvelles spéculations.

Avec la parution de *Il était cent fois la Corriveau*, chacun de nous se voit convié à y aller de sa propre interprétation, mais en profitant au préalable d'un corpus de textes suffisant à son interprétation en tant que phénomène mythique. Car c'est bien de cela qu'il s'agit : quand nous avons affaire à un événement qui, activant les croyances d'une communauté, génère un commentaire aussi durable que protéiforme sans trop de souci pour la vérité historique, comment ne pas y voir un prétexte pour exprimer autre chose. Comment ne pas y reconnaître un sens qui, transcendant les actes criminels d'une pauvre femme et les circonstances de son

1. Voici comment le médecin militaire George Fraser décrit les blessures de Louis Dodier (cité par Luc Lacourcière, p. 155) : « Upon examining the Body (...), I found two wounds in his Face, one near his upper lip which penetrated through the flesh and upper jaw, the other a little before the Eye, which was about four inches deep, two other wounds on the left side of his Head which fractured his skull, his lower jaw was fractured without a Wound, the Wounds in his Face and Head were about three inches from each other. I am of opinion that those wounds were the cause of the man's death. »

exécution, répond à une interrogation beaucoup plus fondamentale. Tout comme les Grecs avaient besoin du Panthéon des Dieux pour pallier l'inexplicable, n'aurions-nous pas trouvé le meilleur moyen de sublimer la destinée troublante de Marie-Joséphite Corriveau, de même que celle du peuple qui l'a jugée?

La compilation de textes que nous offre Nicole Guilbault a cette qualité indéniable de nous permettre de suivre à la trace la création du mythe. Dans *Contes et sortilèges des quatre coins du Québec*, faisant oeuvre d'ethnologue, elle nous avait déjà présenté un recueil de récits brefs dans lequel transparaisait ce que nous pourrions appeler le caractère «auto-référentiel» de la littérature, c'est-à-dire sa capacité de s'écarter de la contingence pour faire apparaître une signification encore plus vraie que le réel. Elle nous revient cette fois en concentrant son attention sur un seul objet, La Corriveau, ce qui a pour effet de mettre en évidence les mécanismes de dérivation de la représentation.

Des 122 récits recueillis par ses étudiants du Cégep François-Xavier-Garneau entre 1975 et 1990, 15 versions ont été retenues en raison de leur variabilité par rapport aux faits historiques tels que connus aujourd'hui. La meurtrière s'y présente tour à tour comme belle ou laide, cruelle ou justifiée, pendue ou placée vivante dans les «chaînes», d'une à sept fois homicide et recourant, il va sans dire, aux moyens d'exécution les plus variés. Le plus inusité et le plus cocasse est sans doute celui que rapporte madame Gemma Leblanc, 73 ans, de Québec, dans les termes que voici :

(...) ça devait être quelque chose qu'il ne fallait pas dire, quelque chose de pas très catholique, je ne sais pas quoi! Elle lui avait amputé quelque chose. C'est épouvantable, non? Je ne sais pas quoi! Je n'ai rien dit! On peut toujours soupçonner... Le pauvre monsieur en est mort au bout de son sang. (p. 51)

Outre ces histoires colportées par des «gens ordinaires», *Il était cent fois la Corriveau* collige trois séries de textes nous aidant à comprendre comment il est possible d'en arriver à des écarts aussi marqués. C'est ainsi que nous est offerte la possibilité de confronter «les versions orales» à des «adaptations littéraires» de onze auteurs différents, depuis Philippe Aubert de Gaspé avec *Une sorcière et une damnée* (1864) jusqu'à Guy Cloutier et *la Morte vivante* (1993), en passant entre autres par Louis Fréchette (*Une relique*, 1885), Victor-Lévy Beaulieu (*Coupable et innocente*, 1976) et Anne Hébert (*La victime est sauvée*, 1990). Nicole Guilbault a eu aussi l'excellente idée de leur accoler quatre «récits satellites» d'un grand intérêt, soit parce qu'ils ressemblent ou empruntent librement à la légende de La Corriveau, ou soit, comme dans le cas du *Gibet d'un contrebandier* de Victor Hugo, qu'ils mettent en lumière l'atrocité de son châtement :

Le fantôme était goudronné. Il luisait ça et là. L'enfant distinguait la face. Elle était enduite de bitume, et ce masque qui semblait visqueux et gluant se modelait dans les reflets de la nuit. L'enfant voyait la bouche qui était un trou, le nez qui était un trou,

et les yeux qui étaient des trous. Le corps était enveloppé et comme ficelé dans une grosse toile imbibée de naphte. La toile s'était moisie et rompue. Un genou passait à travers. Une crevasse laissait voir les côtes. Quelques parties étaient cadavre, d'autres squelette. Le visage était couleur de terre; des limaces, qui avaient erré dessus, y avaient laissé de vagues rubans d'argent. (p. 135)

Quatre «études», enfin, viennent compléter l'ouvrage pour mettre en lumière le contexte historique et judiciaire qui a permis l'avènement du mythe. N'eût été du Régime militaire aboli en 1764, des croyances particulières des Canadiens-français de l'époque et d'une conjoncture socio-politique spécialement favorable, il est probable en effet que le «fait divers» n'aurait jamais accédé au statut que nous lui connaissons, comme le démontrent éloquemment Luc Lacourcière, Yves Tessier, Monique Hamel et Louis Philippe Bonneau.

Mais que résulte-t-il au juste de cette compilation autour du thème de La Corriveau? À notre avis, la conviction que, dans des circonstances propices, par une sorte de propension, l'extraordinaire pouvoir de suggestion de la littérature ne se contente pas de tenir lieu d'un fait qui lui est ontologiquement antérieur, en d'autres mots d'être le signe de quelque chose, mais devient cette réalité toute entière. Au risque de simplifier à outrance, qu'il nous soit permis de rappeler, au sens large du moins où nous entendons ce mot depuis les travaux de Roland Barthes et de Claude Lévi-Strauss, que le mythe se présente avant tout comme un phénomène d'«inflation verbale» qui, en réaction à une réalité étrange ou inextricable, — et puisque l'homme s'avère incapable de supporter l'inconnu, crée de toute pièce une explication provisoirement satisfaisante. Or, comme Monique Hamel le fait remarquer à propos, ce qui est incompréhensible dans l'histoire qui nous intéresse, ce n'est pas tant le crime qui fut commis dans un contexte où existent de nombreuses circonstances atténuantes, mais la sentence qui dans toute l'histoire du droit anglais en Amérique du Nord fait figure d'exception :

Ce qui choque encore plus, c'est qu'[elle] n'ait été assortie d'aucune condamnation à cette pendaison dans les chaînes lorsqu'on était convaincu de la culpabilité du père Corriveau : cette sévérité ne fut imposée que lorsque la fille fut reconnue coupable. Et alors que la fille Corriveau devait se voir appliquer le châtiment de la flétrissure pour avoir été déclarée coupable de complicité lors du premier procès, le père, reconnu coupable de ce crime à son tour, est non seulement exempté de cette peine, mais est encore exonéré de toute responsabilité et officiellement protégé par le gouverneur contre tout jugement que pourrait porter contre lui la population. (p. 186)

Le spectacle insupportable du corps en décomposition offert à la population de Pointe-Lévi dut frapper les imaginations avec beaucoup de force, puisque s'amorça immédiatement une interprétation qui ne tarderait pas à devenir «auto-référentielle». La Corriveau devint d'abord une sorcière, ce qui constitue une explication mythique pour le moins confortante, jusqu'à ce qu'un dénommé J.-Eugène Corriveau, fonctionnaire de la Ville de Québec, fit en sorte de la

réhabiliter en rapatriant les actes du procès de 1763 de la Public Library de Londres. Elle muta alors en une figure ambivalente, capable «d'adapter les croyances qu'[elle] véhicule à l'idéologie dominante et d'aller jusqu'à présenter comme BON, à un moment donné de l'histoire, ce qui était considéré comme MAUVAIS à une époque précédente; ou l'inverse.» (Nicole Guilbault, p. 11) Aussi avons-nous tendance à la considérer désormais comme une pauvre victime, certains, comme Yves Tessier (avec un peu d'opportunisme sans doute), allant même jusqu'à lui attribuer une signification emblématique :

Le fait que cette légende soit ravivée, au cours de la décennie 1960-1970, une période marquée par le nationalisme, n'est pas l'effet du hasard. Il est d'autre part difficile d'expliquer les comportements particuliers par le général. L'autorité militaire ne s'est pas exercée de la même façon dans les différents gouvernements... Le contexte de ce procès est celui de Québec, mais la légende est celle de tout le Québec. (p. 176)

Quoi qu'il en soit, *Il était cent fois la Corriveau* établit qu'en l'absence d'une explication acceptable à un phénomène ambigu, tous les moyens d'élucidation ou de compensation sont les bienvenus. Pour s'adonner à cette spéculation galopante, d'ailleurs, d'aucuns n'hésiteront pas à fermer les yeux sur des preuves normalement accablantes. C'est ainsi que la pendaison dans les «chaînes» ne laisse pas de nous interpeller, en dépit de la volte-face de Marie-Joseph qui, après un premier procès dans une langue que ne comprenaient pas les jugés, passe effectivement aux aveux :

[La] veuve Dodier, déclare qu'elle a assassiné son mari Louis Hélène Dodier pendant la nuit alors qu'il dormait dans son lit: qu'elle l'a fait avec une petite hache; qu'elle n'a été incitée ni aidée par aucune autre personne à le faire; que personne n'était au courant. Elle est consciente de mériter la mort. Elle demande seulement à la Cour de lui accorder un peu de temps pour se confesser et faire sa paix avec le ciel. Elle ajoute que c'est vraiment dû en grande partie aux mauvais traitements de son mari si elle est coupable de ce crime. (Actes de la court martiale d'avril 1763 autorisée par son Excellence le Général Murray, cité par Luc Lacourcière, p. 162)

Il faut croire que personne ne fut convaincu par cette déposition — sans parler de l'absence de contre-interrogatoire de Me Saillant, avocat de l'accusée —, puisque le ressort de la littérature orale et écrite ne tarda pas à se détendre de la manière que nous connaissons. En fait, l'objectivité ne se révèle ici d'aucune utilité, et même si, avec Monique Hamel, il nous est permis de croire que «La Corriveau avait effectivement assassiné son mari» (p. 186), le processus de représentation mythique venait de trouver tout ce qu'il faut pour se mettre en branle.

Assurément, le meurtre de Louis Dodier se révéla un crime condamnable, mais un crime qui sans le procès et la sentence qui s'ensuivirent n'aurait pas eu

de suites littéraires. Aussi y-t-il au moins cela de positif dans cette histoire scabreuse qui, aboutissant aux textes savoureux qui nous sont offerts ici, n'a certes pas fini de nous fasciner. Une compilation fort adroite, résultat de plusieurs années d'investigation, qui relance et renouvelle notre compréhension de la légende. À cause de *La Corriveau*, nous nous avisons de ce que la littérature n'a pas toujours besoin de tempérance et de fidélité pour atteindre son but. Convenons que cela est loin d'être un défaut! et puisque personne ne pourra plus jamais lui faire de mal, il se trouve ici une excellente opportunité de reconsidérer et d'apprécier l'une de nos grandes figures mythiques.

CLAUDE ALBERT

Bluegrass, Blackmarket. By Hans Luxemburg (director). 28 minutes, VHS, colour. Purchase price \$150. Appalshop Film & Video (306 Madison St., Whitesburg, Kentucky 41858, USA)

Blackmarket marijuana is custom for many Appalachian farmers, and as this video depicts, such marijuana production is culturally continuous with the earlier tradition of bootlegging alcohol. The Kentucky countryside's rolling hills and deep, almost hidden, "hollows" provide one of the world's most perfect landscapes for marijuana cultivation. The growers have improved upon techniques learned in part from federal agricultural programs introduced during the 1940s. A short black-and-white segment of historic government footage extols the people for growing hemp, much needed for rope and line in the WWII war effort. While this footage points out that every grower must apply for a federal license, there is no mention of the drug's consciousness-altering properties or of its potential cash value. Towards the end of the video there is a closeup of the hands of one grower holding a mature bushy plant; he says, "One pound of good dope will sell for \$1,000 to \$3,000 dollars, and that's just around here."

Significant sections interweave interviews of upstanding citizens lamenting how unfortunate it is that the poor have to grow marijuana, with footage of militia tracking down "patches of dope" from helicopters. Other portions intercut statements by local sheriffs, who are in the uncomfortable position of upholding the law while their sympathies are with the people, with the advice of an anonymous farmer who narrates the many techniques a successful grower must employ in order to elude the law and harvest a bountiful crop.

While it is often difficult for the viewer to determine the ideological position of the director, he seems to favour the explicit messages of the local elite, who recognize poverty in their counties, but deplore the behaviour of illegal marijuana growers.

On the other side are the county sheriffs; six are arrested by undercover FBI agents posing as mafiosi. One of them, Sheriff Johnny Mann, the alleged ringleader, lived on the wild side before being sponsored by his county's elite to run for sheriff. He is shown in segment after segment trying to make sense of what has happened to his once idyllic county. Mann's sympathies are clearly with the hill growers. He comments that he never went looking for people's "pot patches," but whenever he found one, he was required by law to destroy it.

This video succeeds in demonstrating how nearly impossible it is to impose laws on impoverished peoples when local customs have defined the benefits of struggling against the combined might of the military and political state. It could be successfully used in classes to dramatize the extra-legal and illicit dimensions of tradition.

LOUIS CHIARAMONTE

Memorial University of Newfoundland

ABSTRACTS / RÉSUMÉS

Wartime Housing and Architectural Change, 1942-1992

*Annmarie ADAMS
Pieter SIJPKES*

◆ This paper comprises the intermediate results of a study of architectural changes made to wartime houses over a fifty-year period in Ville St-Laurent, Quebec, Canada. Our study shows several basic patterns in the ways people changed their spaces over time. In-depth interviews with longtime occupants and a comprehensive photographic survey of the area show that it was their wartime work experience which encouraged most householders to undertake renovations themselves; that the employment of professionals for extremely difficult jobs followed a kind of “copy-cat” phenomenon which can be mapped throughout the neighbourhood; and that many women supervised the alterations made to their houses.

◆ Cet article se base sur les résultats d'une étude des modifications architecturales apportées depuis une cinquantaine d'années aux maisons de la ville de Saint-Laurent, au Québec, par leurs propriétaires. Les auteurs y décèlent plusieurs types fondamentaux d'aménagement spatial et structural. S'appuyant sur de nombreuses entrevues avec des habitants de longue date, ainsi que sur une ample documentation photographique, les auteurs nous montrent comment des travailleurs et travailleuses dans l'industrie aéronautique pendant la guerre ont su profiter de leur expérience à l'usine lorsqu'ils se sont mis à modifier et à rénover leurs maisons. Même si des entrepreneurs professionnels y ont ajouté leur contribution, les résidents sont fiers encore aujourd'hui de leur travail comme bâtisseurs et bâtisseuses.

House Movings and Alterations: Stability and Change in the Codroy Valley

Richard MACKINNON

◆ By exploring house moving and alteration in the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland, this article focuses on how vernacular buildings change over time. It outlines the broad patterns of movings, additions and subtractions and provides some of the reasons for these activities.

◆ La façon dont les habitants de la Codroy Valley, à Terre-Neuve, modifiaient et déplaçaient leurs maisons fournit à l'auteur matière à réflexion sur le paysage bâti au fil des ans. En modifiant et déménageant leurs maisons pour des raisons bien définies, ces Terre-Neuviens nous ont légué un héritage significatif en architecture vernaculaire.

The Ukrainian Peasant Home: Space Domestication

Natalia SHOSTOK

◆ The paper deals with the traditional Ukrainian home of Central Ukraine at the beginning of the twentieth century. The domestication of the home is considered to consist of two different stages: physical detachment of the site from the outer world and its further differentiation. The formation of the inner space—cooking area, sleeping area, holy corner, household work area, and guest area—depended on the belief that the inner space of the peasant home was inhabited by humans as well as supernatural entities: pagan spirits, homeguards and deceased ancestors, and Christian saints.

◆ Cet article traite de l'habitation ukrainienne traditionnelle (en Ukraine centrale) au début du XX^e siècle. La «domestication du foyer» comporte les étapes suivantes: détacher l'emplacement du monde extérieur, différencier encore l'espace intérieur. Ce dernier se divisait en plusieurs aires— pour cuisiner, pour dormir, pour exprimer la foi (icônes, etc.), pour faire les tâches ménagères, pour accueillir les invités. La différenciation intérieure suivait la croyance selon laquelle des êtres surnaturels habitaient la maison aussi: des fantômes païens, des gardiens du foyer (comme des anges gardiens), des ancêtres défunts, ainsi que des saints chrétiens.

L'habitation chez les francophones au Canada

Jean-Claude DUPONT

◆ La structure de l'habitation des francophones au Canada fut différente selon les époques, et les formes adoptées par les constructions varient à partir de modes, de conditions sociales et d'influences ethniques. On peut déceler la présence de trois types d'habitation sur une période de plus de deux siècles. D'abord une maison d'établissement, puis en second lieu, une maison de transition, et finalement une maison plus imposante qui traduit la situation économique des occupants. La durée d'une telle mutation de la maison québécoise ou acadienne s'étend généralement sur une période de trois générations familiales, tandis que sur des terres d'accueil comme dans l'Ouest canadien, par exemple, moins de deux générations suffisent pour que s'effectuent ces mêmes changements.

◆ Francophone dwellings in Canada have, naturally, changed over time, with construction methods varying according to fashions, social conditions and ethnic influences. Three basic house types can be discerned over a roughly two-hundred-year period: First, the “settlement” house; then, the “transitional” house; and, finally, the more imposing “status” house (translating the residents’ economic situation). Such an evolutionary pattern is generally found in the space of three family generations in Quebec and Acadia, while in the Canadian West—more influenced by later immigration—about two generations’ time is sufficient for such changes to be seen.

Home and Hearth: An Archaeological Perspective on Acadian Domestic Architecture

David J. CHRISTIANSON

Andrée B. CRÉPEAU

◆ During the last two decades a number of archaeologists have examined the remains of pre-1755 Acadian settlements. The authors review the findings of these excavations and surveys and discuss how the archaeological record reflects the surviving historical descriptions of Acadian houses. Patterns of house size, shape, structural elements and location are discussed.

◆ Les Acadiens des provinces maritimes du Canada ont développé une identité ethnique différente des autres habitants de la Nouvelle-France, une identité qui est reflétée dans leurs institutions sociales et politiques ainsi que dans leurs habitations. Cet article étudie l’architecture domestique acadienne du XVIII^e siècle dans le bassin de la rivière Annapolis. Les découvertes archéologiques dans cette région servent à répondre aux questions suivantes: Quelle était la spécificité acadienne de cette architecture domestique—ses méthodes de construction, ses matériaux, le style et les caractéristiques spatiales de ses maisons? Quel lien existe-t-il entre ces dernières et les maisons acadiennes en Louisiane, qui furent bâties après le «grand dérangement»?

Gender Segregation and Sacred Architecture: A Study of George Street Methodist Church, Peterborough, Ontario

Dale Gilbert JARVIS

◆ This paper starts with a brief architectural history of George Street United Church, Peterborough, Ontario, which includes an account of a failed attempt at gender segregation which took place in 1889. The paper then looks at Methodist gender construction, masculine and feminine ideals, and its paradoxical notions

of “womanhood.” It explores, with examples from contemporary churches, how gender concepts were incorporated into sacred architecture. The article concludes with one explanation for the disintegration of Wesley’s mid-18th-century idea of forced gender segregation by the end of the 19th century.

◆ Cet article trace l’historique architectural de l’Église unie Georges Street, à Peterborough, en Ontario, y compris son histoire de ségrégation sexuelle (que l’on a essayé d’instaurer en 1889) et la façon dont les méthodistes concevaient les distinctions sexuelles. L’auteur explore l’architecture sacrée de l’époque comme moyen d’incorporer certains idéaux, dont celui de John Wesley, du masculin et du féminin. Il conclut son essai par une explication de l’abandon à la fin du XIX^e siècle de la ségrégation sexuelle chez les méthodistes.

Vernacular Architecture and Urban Design: A Strategy for Place-Making in St. John’s, Newfoundland

Robert MELLIN

◆ For some years now, urban planners have begun to rely more on quantitative and qualitative data garnered from vernacular architecture as they seek to develop new strategies for meeting the changing housing needs of city-dwellers. In this article, the author examines older residential areas in St. John’s, Newfoundland, with a view to finding useful ideas for consolidating and improving the existing housing stock in terms of the strengths of traditional neighbourhoods. History, landscape, social values and economic factors all come into view in Mellin’s proposed approach to enlightened residential redevelopment.

◆ Depuis quelques années, plusieurs urbanistes se servent d’analyses quantitatives et qualitatives du patrimoine architectural lorsqu’ils se mettent à élaborer de nouvelles stratégies en politique du logement. En s’appuyant sur des renseignements détaillés tirés de l’architecture vernaculaire des vieux quartiers résidentiels de Saint-Jean, Terre-Neuve, l’auteur propose une méthodologie qui tient compte à la fois de l’héritage bâti et des besoins actuels en milieu urbain. Il fait appel à certaines valeurs sociales ainsi qu’à plusieurs pratiques traditionnelles comme points de départ pour une meilleure planification: histoire, paysage, priorités humaines, et contraintes économiques y ont la place qui leur revient.

Framing a House, Photography and the Performance of Heritage

Brian RUSTED

◆ Using data from qualitative research on vernacular housing, this paper discusses the role of photography in the heritage restoration of an outport community in Newfoundland. An assessment of the instrumental role usually played by photography in ethnographic and material culture research is made in light of the vernacular uses of photography. The socially coded and symbolic character of this built environment signals distinct taste and class cultures which are performed in narrative and material media. Photography contributes to the local performance of the past and the sign value of the built environment: it legitimates the invention of heritage and at the same time offers a means for local residents to contest dominant codings of their houses. In developing this case study, the role of photography will be considered from a variety of perspectives: as a research tool for the ethnography of communication; as a resource that offers access to categories of local knowledge; as a communicational practice that provides a corpus of texts for oppositional readings; and as a problematic representational form which raises questions about the medium in relation to research.

◆ Cet article fait l'analyse de la photographie en tant que ressource documentaire dans le cadre d'un projet de restauration patrimoniale à Terre-Neuve. L'usage vernaculaire de la photographie nous aide à mieux comprendre le rôle significatif que joue la photographie au sein de l'ethnographie et dans les recherches sur la culture matérielle. Nous pouvons décoder la symbolique de l'environnement architectural d'un village, par exemple, en regardant de près la façon dont certaines distinctions sociales et culturelles se transmettent narrativement. La photographie fait ainsi partie de la «théâtralisation» du passé, de l'environnement bâti: elle légitime l'«invention du patrimoine» tout en permettant aux habitants de contester l'idéologie dominante et son interprétation de leurs propres maisons.

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Volume XXV, numéro 3, 1995

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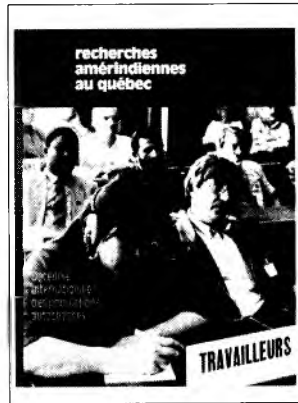
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Prix du vol. XXV, numéro 3 : 12 \$ [16,37 \$ avec taxes et frais de port]

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18-1, 1996	Contemporary Cultural Discourses Discours culturels contemporains	Gary Butler
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Upcoming issues are devoted to specific themes. All articles which are not related to the theme will be published in a « special articles » section. Contributors interested in participating in a thematic issue must submit their manuscript to the guest editor at least six months prior to publication.

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«No Longer There»

Detail / Détail (1980)

Water colour on paper

Barry Gabriel

Grace Bay, Cape Breton Island

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1942-1992

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Revue publiée par
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE D'ETHNOLOGIE
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