

Mélanges en l'honneur de Luc Lacourcière: folklore français d'Amérique, Edited by Jean-Claude Dupont (CELAT) (Montréal: Leméac, 1978. Pp. 485, Présentation, Index.)

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**Mélanges en l'honneur de Luc Lacourcière:
folklore français d'Amérique**

*Edited by Jean-Claude Dupont (CELAT)
(Montréal: Leméac, 1978. Pp. 485,
Presentation, Index.)*

Collective scholarly works are often disappointing to the reader as they bring together various articles in a loosely knit format that has something to interest everyone but that doesn't make any statement as a whole. One has only to take a close look at *Les Mélanges*, however, to see that this is not the case here. The lack of a central theme, which lessens the value of many collective works, is not felt here, for although the thirty-two "études" included in the book cover an extremely wide range of topics, together they form more than just a potpourri of diversified articles. Rather, we have here a book which truly reflects the present state of folklore studies in French Canada.

It is no coincidence that this brilliant collection happens to be published as part of a book dedicated to Professor Luc Lacourcière. Such a distinguished group of contributors could only be brought together by an endeavour such as this festschrift in which folklorists in Canada and abroad express their thankfulness and appreciation felt towards Professor Lacourcière.

Les Mélanges is a work in which scholars not only from the ranks of the Canadian folklorists, but also from such fields as literature, anthropology and geography, present high-quality articles which illustrate the advances folklore studies have made thanks to Professor Lacourcière's guidance and which indicate the future developments to be expected in the field of French-Canadian folklore studies.

Had the editor and editorial board responsible for the production of *Les Mélanges* chosen to publish a book of reminiscences, of glances into the history of folklore studies in French Canada, in which Professor Lacourcière's role has been enormous, the result would have been pleas-

ing, but would not have been as valuable as the work in its present form. In the present state of Canadian folklore scholarship, a work that expresses the contemporary motivation of folklorists does more to honour the one who is largely responsible for the progress made in the study of French-Canadian folklore, than would have a review of past accomplishments.

As it is, *Les Mélanges* is not only an interesting and useful book for folklorists, but is also valuable for the general reader who wishes to become familiar with contemporary folklore studies without having to amass a great deal of literature. This idea is supported by the fact that shortly after its publication, the work found itself among the list of best-sellers in Québec. For the beginning folklore student or enthusiast, *Les Mélanges* can serve as an excellent French language introduction to the many different fields of folklore study.

Mélanges en l'honneur de Luc Lacourcière was, of course, written for Professor Lacourcière, and the many tributes which form the first part of the book, aside from being a joy to read, give the reader an idea of the influence this great scholar has had on a whole generation of folklorists. It is fitting that the book should begin with a tribute from Father Anselme Chiasson, the veteran Acadian folklorist, because Professor Lacourcière was the first to recognize the richness of Acadian folklore, and was the first to begin extensive collecting of folk traditions among the Acadians of the Maritime provinces. The tribute by the well known Acadian author Antonine Maillet also stands out as being especially meaningful, as it explains the role Professor Lacourcière played in the emergence of contemporary Acadian literature. Finally, the most important tribute to Professor Lacourcière is perhaps the one written by Mgr. Félix-Antoine Savard, who was, with Luc Lacourcière, co-founder of *Les Archives de folklore*.

In my appraisal of *Les Mélanges*, I have chosen to dwell mostly on the content of the articles rather than the tributes because the former will be, for the majority

of readers, read and studied in greatest detail. Some of the thirty-two articles present the results of recent studies while others provide comments on ongoing studies, but most articles reflect the prime interests of their authors. It seems evident that many contributors made a great effort to express the essence of their thought in a short article. This is another reason why *Les Mélanges* is not an ordinary anthology.

Among the articles worth mentioning is the one by Robert Bouthillier about the song "La bergère en pleurs dans un lieu solitaire." The article illustrates the structural approach Professor Bouthillier takes to the study of traditional songs. The article by Professor Elli Kõngäs Maranda explores the basic patterns present in different types of folk arts, both oral and material. The very lucid way in which the author approaches this question makes the article a very thought-provoking one. Another article worth noting is that of Professor Nancy Schmitz, in which the influence of Gaelic narratives on French-Canadian folktales is analyzed. This article is one of the few published on the subject of cross-cultural influences in French-Canadian folklore.

Apart from the contributions by folklore scholars, the articles written by scholars from such disciplines as geography, history, linguistics, archaeology and anthropology have a great importance in the work, as they broaden the range of topics included and given an insight into the role folklore studies have played in the development of other disciplines.

It is only unfortunate that a few articles are disappointing to the reader because of their lack of substance. Catherine Jolicoeur, for example, in her article entitled "Une recherche légendaire," only gleans very rapidly through a subject matter that deserves a much more detailed "exposé." Her article provides the reader with hardly any information at all about the extensive study of Acadian legends the author has undertaken. Another disappointing article is that of Georges Gauthier-Larouche, which provides a thorough but seemingly

pointless description of a 17th-century Québec house.

A final aspect of *Les Mélanges* worth mentioning is the important contribution from scholars outside of French Canada. The articles by Gerald Thomas, by Herbert and Violetta Halpert, by Elizabeth Brandon, by Roger Piñon and by Marie-Louise Ténèze illustrate the impact Professor Lacourcière's work has had on folklore scholarship in such areas as Newfoundland, the United States and France.

In my opinion, *Mélanges en l'honneur de Luc Lacourcière* is the most significant French-language folklore publication of 1978. One can safely say that its publication marks an important event in the history of Canadian folklore studies.

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Contes de bûcherons

Par Jean-Claude Dupont
(Montréal: Les Éditions Quinze, 1976.
215 pp. Présentation, notes, glossaire,
photos, illustrations. \$9.95)

Menteries drôles et merveilleuses

Contes traditionnels du Saguenay recueillis
et présentés par Conrad Laforce
(Montréal: Les Éditions Quinze, 1978.
Pp. 287, préface, présentation, notes,
glossaire, illustrations. \$10.00)

Contes populaires de la Mauricie

Narrés par Béatrice Morin-Guimond,
recueillis par Carolle Richard et Yves
Boisvert, présentés par Clément Legaré
(Montréal: Fides, 1978. Pp. 299, préface,
photo, carte, illustrations. \$11.00)

Within the last two years, three French-Canadian folktale collections have appeared in which the emphasis is on a reper-