

**Owen, Carrigan D. *Crime and Punishment in Canada - A History*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991. Pp. 554. Tables, appendices. \$24.95 (paper)**

C. R. Scott

Volume 20, numéro 3, february 1992

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019274ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019274ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Scott, C. R. (1992). Compte rendu de [Owen, Carrigan D. *Crime and Punishment in Canada - A History*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991. Pp. 554. Tables, appendices. \$24.95 (paper)]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 20(3), 132-133. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019274ar>

Susanna Strickland Moodie (1803-1885) began contributing short stories to the growing number of popular and religious periodicals in England after the death of her father left the Strickland family in reduced economic circumstances in the late 1820s. In *Voyages: Short Narratives of Susanna Moodie*, editor John Thurston has brought together fourteen of Moodie's numerous short sketches published between 1828 and 1871. Although the majority of stories collected here were written after the Moodie family moved from their backwoods farm to Belleville in 1839, all but one are set in England.

Drawing inspiration from her own life, these sketches reveal Moodie's preoccupation both with the social decline experienced by gentlewomen upon the death of a male breadwinner and with the heroine's decision to marry and, in at least five of the stories, to emigrate in order to regain a measure of economic security. Significantly, however, these narratives all end before or just as Moodie's heroines embark upon the adventure of emigration. Thurston's description of these stories as "tentative acts of discovery" is thus apt, for in them Moodie attempts, but ultimately fails, to reconcile her own family's chronic economic instability and inferior social station in Upper Canada with her heroine's unspoken expectation that marriage and emigration will restore her own fortune and rank. In *Voyages*, Moodie's personal disillusionment is palpable.

The response of women short story writers to a challenge of another kind is the subject of *New Women: Short Stories by Canadian Women 1900-1920*. As the title of the volume suggests, editors Sandra Campbell and Lorraine McMullen link women's literary production in this period with the emergence of that archetype of 'modern' urban life, the New Woman, whose development mirrored and, in part, symbolized Canada's transforma-

tion from a rural and agrarian society to one increasingly dominated by the exigencies of urban and industrial life. Campbell and McMullen argue that a new kind of woman writer and a new kind of female subjectivity emerged in the English-Canadian periodical press between 1900 and 1920. Accordingly, the twenty stories included in this collection were selected either for their contributions to the short story genre or for their commentary on women's changing social roles.

As Campbell and McMullen note in their introduction, whether well known or obscure, the authors of these stories were fully engaged in "the momentous transitions underway in women's status and society." The stories feature women in new roles, attempting to resolve the apparent disjunction between the promise of economic and sexual freedom on the one hand and their continued expectations of romance and marriage on the other. The female Maritime out-migrant in Boston, the middle-class temperance worker, the working-class munitionette, and the immigrant domestic from the British Isles are just a few of the familiar—although still obscure—historical figures given life in this group of stories.

These two collections underscore the importance of fiction writing as a source for the history of English Canadian cultural and social life. Not only do these stories illuminate the artistic and social vantage points of female short fiction writers, but they also suggest that attention to women's changing literary sensibilities can add a subtle richness and depth to our explorations of all women's experience of the past.

Beverly Boutilier  
Department of History  
Carleton University

Owen, Carrigan D. *Crime and Punishment in Canada – A History*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991. Pp. 554. Tables, appendices. \$24.95 (paper).

This book will be of particular interest to those readers concerned with urban affairs, as Carrigan makes it clear that the great bulk of criminal action in Canada, aside from that attributed to native peoples, has taken place and is still taking place in an urban setting. While there are obvious exceptions to the rule, the dark side of human nature manifests itself or is detected when people are grouped together in close proximity. The factual material in this book, often presented in time series for easy comparison, will aid serious students of social history, criminology and the administration of law in reaching conclusions in as objective a manner as possible.

Professor Carrigan is one of the first historians to analyze the subjects in a comprehensive way in Canada. He captures our interest by his citation of some of the first cases of crime in Canada from the early days of French settlement. He mentions theft, murder and the plotting of revolution that were punished by both Roberval and Champlain. His work is divided into two parts: a review of the kinds and frequency of criminal activity, with detailed discussions of white collar crime, organized and juvenile crime and the offenses committed by women; followed by a segment on the treatment of those convicted of the crimes discussed, again with specialized accounts of the treatment of juveniles and women.

Carrigan raises many pointed questions on the causes of criminal activity and the utility of the various options for punishment, including incarceration. These will doubtless continue to occupy discussion agendas for many years to come. He points out convincingly how the crime

rates have risen in the past thirty years after remaining relatively stable over the previous centuries and links the increase to the "me" generation syndrome illustrated by increases in white collar crime, juvenile and organized crime and increased crime related to substance abuse, particularly drugs. While Canada has had a deserved reputation for a low level of criminal activity, crime has always been with us and is on the increase. The public's perception of crime has always had a larger impact on corrective measures than the actual crime statistics. The material in this book could allay a number of potential misconceptions.

It is interesting to note, even in this balanced account, how the perception of criminals changes as they move from an "at large" status to an incarcerated state. There is an obvious concern on the part of the public to restrain criminal activity, whether its roots lie in the shirking of social responsibility, a lack of moral or ethical values or psychotic and antisocial behaviour. Modern society appears to recognize that both social environments that nurture crime, and environments which exploit individuals are causes of crime needing correction. Carrigan points out that individuals continue to carry out criminal acts regardless of the efforts devoted to eliminating basic socio-economic causes. Punishment and deterrence remain as the prime focus for the criminal justice system.

Once the individual criminal is imprisoned, however, emphasis seems to shift from punishment and deterrence to protecting that individual from potential abuses in the system. Public motivation changes from one that demands prevention of the crime to one that focuses on the humanitarian protection of the individual's rights and seems to forget the reasons the imprisonment was levied.

Whatever our ideological slant in this contentious area, Carrigan's work reminds us that criminal activity will always be with us and that there are large areas of disagreement on how to prevent the occurrence of crime or correct the behaviour of offenders. The reasons for crime remain varied, as does the motivation of criminals.

An issue not dealt with in the book is the cost of the criminal justice system and how it has grown over the years. Expenditures are high and continually rising. In the federal system alone, a cursory examination of the estimates of the Correctional Service indicate an annual expenditure of approximately \$50,000.00 per offender, and higher amounts for those in maximum security. It would have been useful if Professor Carrigan had included tables on the relative costs of the system over time, including both the costs of law enforcement and corrections. These figures may not be readily available, but, among other things, they would be useful in comparing the arguments of experts on the validity of the programs they promote.

A large portion of public funds is expended on law enforcement and the social welfare of prisoners and, as Carrigan points out in several areas, there is little agreement on the efficacy of programs to prevent recidivism. Could our expenditure be reduced with the same effect? Are we paying too much to support the relatively small percentage who do not respond to programs? These are valid questions in today's economy and it is unfortunate little information is available on them in an otherwise comprehensive book.

C. R. Scott  
History Department  
Carleton University

Toker, Franklin. *The Church of Notre-Dame in Montreal*, 2nd ed. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. Pp. xxvi, 124. 58 black & white plates, bibliography, index. \$19.95 (paper).

Demchinsky, ed. *Grassroots, Greystones & Glass Towers: Montreal Urban Issues and Architecture*. Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1989. Pp. 220. 72 black & white illustrations, index. \$15.95 (paper).

An inescapable conclusion drawn from reading these two books is that while the study of Canadian architecture has expanded, the appreciation of architecture has not. Canadian cities, Montreal in particular, continue to be ravaged. More tentatively, Montreal seems to foster a critical culture rare in Canada.

Montreal emerges as exquisitely complex terrain for the eye and the intellect. The accessibility and integrity of that terrain are threatened by political tensions between the cultures of French and English Canada, and by the prevailing culture of development that threatens distinct environments worldwide. Development is the focus of *Grassroots, Greystones & Glass Towers*, a compilation of eighteen essays written by sixteen Montreal designers, journalists, and urban activists. Conceived as an overview of the urban environment, the collection amounts to a prescriptive manifesto for change in the development process as it is known in Montreal. The real subject however is the character of Montreal, formed by the confluence and conflict of language, religion, and culture, and how to retain it.

Cultural interaction is also a theme of the scholarly monograph *The Church of Notre-Dame in Montreal*, first published to great acclaim in 1970. Its republication, with a new preface and updated bibliography, gives cause not only to revel again in the intricacies of a superb study,