# Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

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)

## Anne M. de Fort-Menares

Volume 20, numéro 3, february 1992

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019275ar DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1019275ar

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

de Fort-Menares, A. M. (1992). Compte rendu de [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)]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 20(3), 133–134. https://doi.org/10.7202/1019275ar

All Rights Reserved © Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 1992

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/



#### Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

https://www.erudit.org/fr/

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 socioeconomic 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.

but also to reflect on the purposes of the discipline after contemplating Toker's own comments on how he would revise his approach.

Notre-Dame was the largest building of its time, the first important Gothic Revival building in Canada, and a landmark in Canadian building history. From 1823-29, the project to rebuild the parish church of Montreal brought together the Sulpician order which worshipped there, the Catholic merchant class who ruled the building committee, and New Yorkbased Irish Protestant architect James O'Donnell, who spent five years in Montreal overseeing the construction of his design before his death in 1830.

In nine exceptionally clear chapters, Toker documents the international intellectual currents that influenced the design and extensive later alterations of the building with precision and insight, concluding with an intriguing analysis of Notre-Dame as a French-Canadian church. Reminding us that the French did not share the moralistic and literary sentiment that the English attached to the Gothic Revival. Toker determines that the building had virtually no influence in English Quebec, despite its English and American antecedents, but that it served as a model for the design of hundreds of French churches, including three direct copies, of which Sainte-Annede-la-Pérade (1855-69, Casimir Coursol) is the grandest and best known. Ultimately, O'Donnell reinvigorated the moribund "traditional" style of ecclesiastic architecture by investing the future symbol of Quebec nationalism with an alternative image to the colonial past. That image was made resoundingly appropriate through decades of acculturation by subsequent artists, particularly Victor Bourgeau.

Notre-Dame became the symbolic parish church for French Canada through the accumulation of artistic contributions, historical events, and social recognition. These factors also create meaningful urban environments, and that is the underlying theme of Grassroots, Greystones & Glass Towers, an informative and topical work that offers critical perspectives on contemporary issues in urban development, urban spaces, architecture, heritage, and housing. Following an introduction to policy issues, planning, and general development problems plaguing the city, the contributions focus on the liabilities and occasional flashes of hope represented by Montreal projects, ranging in scale from the Expo islands and Lachine canal to public art. individual buildings, and facade preservation. Criticism of the present frequently generates a tough blueprint for the future. Explicit programmes are laid out by Isabel Corral for master planning, Peter Jacobs for the mountain landscape, David Brown for the underground network, and Ian MacBurnie for downtown housina.

Fortunately, a common critical stance is detectable in the values promoted: the achievement of meaning and diversity through the intelligent integration and rehabilitation of the historic, encouraging mixed uses and active street life; the potential for community-based planning; respect for context; sensitivity to the patrimony; and a call for propriety, the last a powerful approach developed by Ricardo L. Castro in "Significant Buildings of the 1980s." The sense of Montreal as a profoundly important locus of historical patterns and conditions is evoked with particular poignancy in Susan Bronson's lucid "The Three Rs: Restoration, Renovation and Recycling."

In the elucidation of principles and concepts, and exposition by example, nearly every chapter is an articulate introduction to its own subject and a detailed expansion of the section topic. In the excellent last essay, "Housing that belongs on Montreal Streets," Adrian Sheppard analyzes and illustrates why good projects succeed, and so succinctly summarizes the language and principles of planning and design that this piece could more appropriately open the book than close it.

Beside the superficiality that brevity forces on many of the chapters, the book is marred by the absence of maps and usable plans. Too few of the projects mentioned are illustrated, although most of the images are of sufficient size and well located in relation to the text. Editing has been rigorous, but missed the misspelling of Christopher Lasch's name. Where Grassroots, Greystones & Glass *Towers* is a handbook for education and action. The Church of Notre-Dame in Montreal has retained the large format and elegant design by Robert R. Reid of the first edition. Large, clear plates are gathered at the back with four appendices, including a history of art in the church, easily consultable endnotes, and bibliographies. In an extensively crossreferenced book, only plate 56 is incorrectly dated.

Like its subject, Toker's *Notre-Dame* is a lustrous landmark in scholarship undimmed by developments in theory and methodology. Demchinsky's *Grassroots, Greystones & Glass Towers* is particularly valuable for the vision it presents of a city integrated with its history.

Anne M. de Fort-Menares Toronto, Ontario

Himmelfarb, Gertrude. *Poverty and Compassion: The Social Ethic of the Late Victorians.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. Pp. xii, 466. \$30.00 (U.S.).

The most interesting questions are often the most difficult to answer. When Gertrude Himmelfarb asked how the English thought about poverty throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it took nearly a decade and two large vol-