

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

ALAN GORDON, *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montreal's Public Memories, 1891-1930*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 2001, x + 288 p., Index, \$49.95 hardcover.

Making Public Pasts illuminates the reader to the ideological struggles challenging the citizens of Montreal, Quebec between 1891 and 1930. During this period, Montreal was both a bilingual and increasingly multicultural city. The two key groups, the British-Canadian and the French-Canadian, struggled to celebrate their distinct memories in the public spaces of the city. From these struggles emerges an ideological competition between the two key groups in the shaping of history and memory. While individual memory was important, Gordon shows how the festivals, monuments, plaques, and so on (public memories) in Montreal served to guide both individual and collective perceptions of the past. Gordon presents a broad analysis of public memory as discourse; affirming that "the contested nature of public memory suggests that a multiplicity of meanings, audiences, and memories intersect through the public past" (173).

Gordon provides a brief historical sketch of the city's past in order to situate the reader in the various disagreements found in Montreal from 1891 to 1930. He explores the role and views of the key players of Montreal's public history; while setting the stage for the ensuing discussion on the creation of public memories and contested terrain. Gordon approaches questions of Montreal's contested terrain by examining various public memories. He effectively analyzes how memory was used in Saint-Jean Baptiste Day celebrations as well as the role of memory in maintaining a national identity.

While the contents of the book are comprehensible, the layout would have benefitted by strategically placing the illustrations and maps, presented at the onset, throughout the book. As well, several quotes have been left untranslated making these parts of the text, for some readers, difficult to fully apprehend. *Making Public Pasts* is an excellent resource for students, educators, and persons interested in the history of Montreal. It also provides the reader with an innovative approach to evaluating the role of historic monuments, festivals, etc., in the political, social, and cultural life of Montreal citizens during a period of great change.

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