

gouvernemental et qui jouit un moment d'une relative exclusivité, se font les porte-parole de la bourgeoisie et récupèrent en quelque sorte les valeurs ascétiques de l'enseignement catholique au profit de celle-ci. Les auteurs laïcs se distinguent aussi par la rareté des références à la chasteté : c'est une chasse gardée des manuels congréganistes. Mais le contrôle croissant des communautés religieuses sur le marché du livre scolaire, observable au fil des ans, entraîne la prééminence de la morale catholique dans les manuels. Toutefois, les congréganistes ne sont habituellement pas sourds aux progrès scientifiques et techniques. Enfin, au cours du siècle, transparait un souci croissant de mieux répondre aux attentes du public enfantin : utilisation de gravures, d'une typographie diversifiée, mais, surtout, adoption d'un ton convenant mieux à leur jeune âge.

L'ouvrage de Serge Gagnon est intéressant, bien écrit, accessible. Les reproductions de pages de manuels, placées à la fin de l'ouvrage, permettent de mieux saisir son propos. Un propos qui rappelle une vérité incontournable : l'apprentissage de la lecture et de l'écriture doit porter sur des textes significatifs —sinon les enfants s'en détourneraient—qui sont porteurs des valeurs ambiantes. C'était vrai au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle, cela l'est toujours.

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**Shirley Tillotson. *The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-War Ontario*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.**

For someone who has worked in Recreation and now teaches Political Science, Shirley Tillotson's *The Public at Play* was a fascinating and many-layered read. The author notes in her introduction that what began as a book about the establishment

of public recreation provision in post-war Ontario, came to include many other sub-plots. The central story involves predictable struggles between different visions of recreation: at one level between a focus on sports for boys and more inclusive conceptions of leisure activity, at another between pragmatists for whom municipal recreation simply meant activity provision, and those for whom “recreation” was a social movement, the ultimate purpose of which was community development.

Woven into these highly specific struggles, though, are skirmishes in larger battles. These include campaigns—on several fronts—to expand the possibilities open to girls and women, as well as battles to establish new professions in fields like recreation, to define what kinds of “expertise” (and post-secondary credentials) they would need, and the kinds of people that would staff them. Indeed, this book should be of interest to many who might not expect to be interested in recreation, precisely because recreation serves here to illustrate why the professionalization of many kinds of “helping work” over the post-war decades has had such mixed results.

At first glance, it might seem unlikely that large political questions like women’s equality, citizens’ rights, and creeping “rule by experts” could be at issue in arguments over rink time and the certification of craft instructors. However, Tillotson makes a strong case that the limits of 1950s liberalism are revealed in studying the ways that the campaign to establish recreation as a citizens’ right both succeeded and failed. Simply put, her argument is that the project of municipal recreation contributed to normalizing newer—and broader—conceptions of “social rights.” However, recreation became institutionalized in ways that reflected the class and gender relations of the 1950s, and it reproduced service club and Chamber of Commerce visions of community needs. In particular, in these child-centred decades, new kinds of “experts” found middle-class community leaders and parents responsive to the notion that young people needed to be taught leisure skills; and they were able to build support for organized and adult-supervised recreation, as opposed to unstructured play. Moreover, Tillotson also notes that while there were women who were “critical of the way that

sports and recreation were conflated” in much of this discourse, many of them, too, wanted new facilities and programs for their children.

This, then, was the social and political context in which, in communities across Ontario, “Parks & Recreation” was institutionalized within municipal government, typically with responsibilities for arenas, pools, and recreational programming. It was also the context, Tillotson observes, in which a new kind of “man’s job” was invented (chap. 3). Not simply an activity teacher or a facility manager, and definitely not a social worker (all established, but more limited, role models), the new recreation director was above all to be an effective advocate for the cause of public recreation, able to meet on equal terms with the kinds of community leaders who raised funds for new facilities, and sponsored minor hockey programs or swim clubs. In the 1950s, prevailing stereotypes of leadership, the maleness of the existing municipal bureaucracies, the practices of service club sociability, and even the hours of a job that involved many evening meetings, all combined to favour men.

Subsequent chapters address the effects of liberal versions of “community” and citizen participation. Recreation in the postwar decades, Tillotson suggests, sought to present itself as a vehicle of community integration, providing contexts in which citizens of different class, ethnic, and educational backgrounds came together to pursue common goals. Here we can recognize strains of the rhetoric of community development, and indeed in some of this discourse the community centre was envisioned as a kind of suburban settlement house, without the latter’s associations of poverty and neediness. However, although some recreation professionals had roots in the settlement house movement, where the target population for programs was “at-risk” youth, offering recreation to the whole community in places like Brantford or Leaside would gradually come to favour responding to popular demand, as opposed to outreach work.

It’s important to recognize that taking “demand” seriously would soon push recreation departments into doing more than organizing sports for boys. By the 1960s, “progressive” departments were organizing more and more activities for girls,

and by the late 1970s many departments were also responding to increasing adult interest in physical activity classes. This tendency would reach a heyday of sorts in the 1990s when the need to increase revenues would result in some big-city departments abandoning outreach work altogether, focusing scarce resources on the kinds of facilities—fitness centres, and racquet sports—that attract middle-class, adult, paying customers. Some recreation directors of this period would even claim (and with some justice) that they had a mandate to show that municipal recreation could be operated like a business. This inevitably meant catering to demand, as measured by the willingness of organized groups and middle-class individuals to pay for particular kinds of facilities and programming.

This transition from social movement to municipal service to market provision was never without its critics, and Tillotson notes a succession of voices who have deplored tendencies to “focus on ‘organized’ programs, and ‘active’ rather than ‘passive’ recreations” (p. 147), as well as the later tendency to consider admission tickets as the best measure of public interests. She argues, however, that when recreation professionals accepted consumer choice (“the consumer who ‘votes with his dollar’”) as an appropriate guide for recreation programming, they were giving their own imprimatur, and in the name of liberal values, to the legitimacy of the competitive marketplace. “Even though the recreation movement had its roots in a democratic vision of collective agency and universal entitlements to leisure, its leaders ended up accepting a market-mimicking liberal individualism” (p. 160). For Tillotson, its liberalism ultimately helped to confirm some of the enduring social inequities, of both gender and class, which the early recreation movement had set out to challenge.

At one level, then, *The Public at Play* can be read as the death of the dreams of the early urban recreationists, who saw in recreation a vehicle for challenging some of the social inequities of their time. It is, in my view, essential reading for recreation students, and anyone involved professionally in recreation. At another level, though, Tillotson’s story offers important lessons about the failures of other kinds of social service provision in

liberal societies: thoughts about how professional agendas and “needs assessments” can work to undermine the goals of citizen participation, about how commitment “to what Habermas calls ‘the fiction of the *one* public’” (p. 164) can lead predictably to ignoring the needs of socially disadvantaged groups, and about the dangers inherent in the adoption of market models of provision. All of these raise questions that are timely today, in the context of current social policy debates in Canada: around health care and education, around welfare, and around the “needs” of cities. Tillotson’s careful blend of readable social history and trenchant political analysis can offer food for thought for anyone professionally concerned with the future of the public services.

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**Nancy Christie. *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. Pp. 459.**

Nancy Christie explores the rise of the welfare state in Canada between the start of twentieth century and the end of the Second World War. The book offers a cultural analysis, focusing on the discourse and ideological debates surrounding welfare legislation. Christie argues that welfare legislation was a response to concerns about family stability, and, most importantly, represented efforts by the government to enforce, encourage, and maintain the breadwinner ideal. While key social events (notably economic cycles and war) highlighted slightly different concerns and motivated different types of welfare legislation, policies enacted always aimed at regulating families. Throughout the book, Christie documents social debate about the family, gender, work and economic stability, and the