

policy makers, academic analysts, and students of urban migration.
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Moore, Paul S.

Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun.

Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.

250 pp.

ISBN: 9780791474181.

It is difficult to disentangle the development of the twentieth-century city from that of film. Perceptions of the city were powerfully shaped by and mediated through film, and throughout its history, film has been profoundly influenced by the shifting nature of urban spaces and urban experiences. Moreover, changes in the moviegoing experience have reflected and shaped changes in cityscapes (e.g. the shift from stand-alone, neighbourhood or downtown cinemas to suburban multiplexes). In *Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun*, Paul S. Moore examines this relationship with a detailed discussion of the development of cinemas and the moviegoing experience in early-Twentieth Century Toronto.

Moore demonstrates how local practices of moviegoing in Toronto played a key role in the development of moviegoing as a mass practice. "Film," he argues, "had first to be integrated into the culture of particular cities to become a national or global practice" (2). Moore examines the role of municipal and provincial regulation (from fire-safety regulations to the creation of formalized censorship), showmanship (the promotional and other practices of the theatre owners), and promotion and journalism (both in terms of advertising in newspapers and the related development of journalistic interest in film and moviegoing) in transforming moviegoing into a mass practice in the Toronto of the period. Moore's extensive archival research and attention to detail effectively illustrate his claims, in the process revealing fascinating local particularities to early moviegoing in Toronto, such as the surprising role of fire-safety regulations (and the legitimate fear of fire in public spaces), for example, in formalizing and legitimating moviegoing. If at times lacking in memorable anecdotes and a bit bogged down in minutiae, *Now Playing* provides a thorough discussion of a fascinating topic, and will be invaluable to all readers interested in early moviegoing or Toronto during this period.

It is probably of less value, however, to urban studies scholars. Despite Moore's frequent references to the essential role of urban cultures in the transformation of moviegoing into a mass practice, particularly in the introduction, that is not really the focus of the book. Rarely does Moore focus on how the city as such, or

practices and experiences particular to cities, shaped the practice of moviegoing, nor does the book have much to say about the role of moviegoing in the development of the modern city. Moreover, although he does cite some of the obvious contemporary (more or less) scholars on the modern city (e.g. Simmel, and Wirth and others in the Chicago School), Moore does not really engage with the wide range of potentially relevant authors in urban studies, particularly those who have critiqued or further developed the work of those scholars he does cite. This is not really a criticism, however, simply a recognition that *Now Playing* is primarily situated in and of relevance to film studies rather than urban studies.

On a more critical note, *Now Playing* is much better at providing detail than it is at broader analysis; or—perhaps more accurately—it suffers from a tendency to make broader claims that do not reflect the book's actual focus. For example, the book's suggestive final sentence is “[w]atching movies, we became a city, and then a nation, together” (224). Disregarding the misleading ‘we’ (neither Moore nor his readers were part of the moviegoing audience being constructed during the time covered by his study), the problem is that although *Now Playing* does discuss citizenship in its final chapter, it does not focus on how moviegoing produced a coherent sense of civic or national identity. It is as if this final sentence, and others like it throughout the book, refer to another book, one that could have been written but was not. Similarly, the subtitle's reference to the “regulation of fun” suggests a discussion in which the book does not really engage. Of more minor concern, *Now Playing* is repetitive in places, with similar or nearly identical sentences being repeated on a number of occasions, and marred by a tendency toward irrelevant and distracting localism in places (e.g. not infrequent references to the present status of stores or buildings referred to in passing).

Despite these concerns, I would recommend *Now Playing* to anyone interested in early moviegoing or in life in Toronto in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

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Schrank, Sarah.

Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles.

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

224 pp.

ISBN: 9780812241174.

In *Art and The City*, historian Sarah Shrank explores the importance of public art and the city's artistic subcultures in influencing civic culture. By illuminating in-