

The author's attention to the provincial economy, the Depression and the two world wars, and how these factors affected the university administration, is to be applauded. It is not an easy task to profile individual women working towards changes in education within the larger socio-economic and political setting. All in all, Stewart's work is interesting, challenging, and illuminates many areas of Canadian social and educational history.

**Heather J. MacMillan**  
National Archives of Canada

**Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts Before the Massey Commission.** MARIA TIPPETT. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 252 p. ISBN 0-8020-2743-1 (bound), 0-8020-6784-0 (pbk.).

In a 1986 *Canadian Historical Review* article, Maria Tippet urged historians to take a greater interest in Canadian cultural history, an area of study traditionally dominated by literary critics, fine arts scholars, and practitioners in the arts. She argued that the historian's methods, skills and perspective were necessary to give the field coherence and to fit it into the broader context of Canadian history. *Making Culture* is Tippet's answer to her own challenge.

Tippet has written a scholarly historical survey of the arts in English Canada in the first half of the twentieth century. The scope of research required for such a large topic was all the larger due to the extensive sources available. Since supporters of culture tend to be well educated and articulate propagandists for their interests, Tippet was able to draw upon a wide array of published materials. By focusing on institutions and the arts, she also tapped into the records of the organizations, which were major sponsors of cultural activity across the country. Finally, many leading artists and patrons gained recognition in their lifetimes, ensuring that numerous collections of their private papers have survived. Tippet has mined these materials assiduously, and the result is a work based on an impressive depth and variety of sources.

In such a broad topic, deeply researched, there is always the risk of floundering in an overwhelming mass of detail. Tippet imposes order on her material by arranging her chapters thematically rather than chronologically. Themes such as the development of professionalism, the growth of arts education, the impact of foreign influences, and the role of patronage, private and public, organize the book. There is an inevitable trade-off in adopting such a design; a certain analytical clarity is gained, but the natural flow and thematic interplay of narrative is lost. On the whole, the structure of *Making Culture* makes it less compelling to read than it might have been, a book better suited to informing the specialist than entertaining the general reader.

It is, nonetheless, a provocative work. One interesting motif that emerges is the obsession among supporters of the arts with justifying their pursuits as something more than just the dallying of dilettantes. They defended their interests and solicited government support with a variety of standard arguments. Culture was promoted as a means of self-improvement, a higher form of education, an effective type of diplomacy, the basis of successful commercial design, the binding fabric of nationhood and the repository of the essential values of western liberal democracy. English Canadians rarely felt comfortable with the "art-for-art's sake" rationale for their hobbies.

One of Tippet's central purposes is to cure cultural nationalists of their tendency to treat the Massey Commission as creationist myth. *Making Culture* demonstrates conclusively that English Canada enjoyed a lively arts scene throughout the first half of the century. This is not startling news for anyone who has more than a passing acquaintance with the subject, but what Tippet really seems to be getting at is that modern cultural nationalists have mistreated this earlier period because they have misread its significance. They have celebrated select subjects like the Group of Seven that seem appropriately national and professional, while ignoring a broader realm of cultural activity that was more voluntary, British and participatory in nature. The implication is that they are embarrassed by an earlier arts scene that appears amateurish and colonial compared to the state-subsidized, professional, and self-consciously "Canadian" culture that emerged in the postwar period. Tippet corrects their ahistorical assumption that a national culture emerged full-blown in the heady climate of postwar nationalism, by demonstrating that it came, instead, as a result of trends towards institutionalization, national organization, and government support that had been evident for decades before. The final chapter of the book explores how these developments matured as the Second World War experience promoted both nationalist sentiment and an association of the arts with the civilization Canadians were fighting to defend.

Indeed, the struggle to develop a national institutional infrastructure for the arts emerges as the dominant theme of Tippet's book. There were some fine ironies inherent in the process. It becomes clear that English Canadians' early identification with British traditions in the arts offered certain advantages in the perennial Canadian struggle to be un-American. British culture had such a long and honourable history that its superiority to "American" commercial culture and other vulgar phenomena of modern North American life was unquestioned. The "Canadian" culture which displaced it was an unknown and unproven commodity. It had to be professional so it could achieve high standards and prove its worth, it had to be organized on a vast scale in order to serve as a national culture, and it had to be funded by the government so it would not be overwhelmed by the competition of continental commercial culture. To an extent, these developments were also the result of technological progress in communications and the media. Nevertheless, Canadians erected a national system of culture that in many ways resembled the American culture it was designed to resist.

Has Tippet met her own challenge and proven the value of having historians write cultural history? *Making Culture* certainly provides the synthesis and context that Tippet thought was lacking in existing works in the field. It weaves together the various arts activities of English Canadians into a coherent pattern that complements and enhances our general understanding of Canadian history. At the same time it equips Canadians who are concerned about contemporary cultural issues with a deeper, more sophisticated knowledge of the background of their cause. If the historical and arts communities can learn from each other, this could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

**Paul Litt**  
Toronto

**Early Stages: Theatre in Ontario, 1800 - 1914.** (Ontario Historical Society Series). ANN SADDLEMYER, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 412 p. ISBN 0-8020-2738-5 (cloth) ISBN 0-8020-6779-4 (paper).