

# ***Frozen Festivals: Ceremony and the Carnaval in the Montreal Winter Carnivals, 1883-1889***

Don Morrow

University of Western Ontario, London

This paper arises from its author's research interest in Montreal sport during the late nineteenth century. Relatively recent research by Frank Abbott on the 1894 Quebec City winter carnival and by Sylvie Dufresne on the winter carnivals in Montreal has prompted me to examine the form (to a certain, minor extent) and, more significantly the function of the Montreal winter carnivals during the 1880s. Furthermore, the author has undertaken an analysis of contemporary literature of sport that takes as its focus, Bruegel's famous painting of "The Quarrel Between Carnival and Lent." The latter work has resulted in considerable research on the cultural and ritualistic significance of the age-old "Carnaval" festivals. The image built and perpetuated and marketed in the "bourgeois hegemony" of culture that the Montreal carnivals became, was carefully structured by Montreal's Anglophone elite. In turn, this contrived package of hibernal, showcased splendour had its real roots in other cultures (Russia and The Netherlands, for example) and was re-invigorated well into the twentieth century in Montreal, in Quebec City and in some northern US cities.

The central focus of the paper examines the cultural and ritualistic (or lack thereof) significance of the Montreal winter carnivals in terms of images, marketing and business aspects, elite propaganda, cultural conflicts and media presentation of the carnivals. With respect to cultural conflicts and media presentations, both the English media (*Gazette, Daily Star, Toronto Globe, Winnipeg Free Press, and The New York Times*) and the French press (*Le Devoir, Le Soleil, and La Presse*, where and when available) plus private scrapbook collections of newspaper articles are analysed. The study relies heavily on the cultural analysis frameworks utilized by Arnott and Dufresne, among others. This study elucidates a variety of factors responsible for the marketing and control of early Canadian sport in a cultural context.