Elle nous permet donc d’examiner comment les événements de l’époque, militaires et civils, ont changé tant la façon de soigner que les soignantes elles-mêmes. L’auteur ne perd cependant jamais de vue l’humanité de son sujet, ce qu’elle démontre, entre autres, par le traitement attentif qu’elle fait de l’expérience traumatisante de deux infirmières qui ont été faites prisonnières de guerre, en dépit de la convention de Genève.

L’ouvrage met en relief la réalité plus complexe du Corps infirmier à cette époque, alors que celui-ci se déclinait en trois temps – celui de l’armée, de la marine et des forces de l’air – et où la contribution d’autres professionnelles de la santé (diététiciennes, physiothérapeutes), entre autres facteurs, compliquaient la gestion du Corps armé médical. L’utilisation des axes du genre et du développement de la technologie médicale pour situer l’expérience des infirmières militaires dans le contexte plus large de la vie militaire et de la vie civile, de l’histoire sociale et de l’histoire scientifique, permet à l’auteur d’étayer son propos et de positionner les infirmières ayant servi au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale à la fois à titre de membres à part entière des Forces (officers) sans perdre leur féminité (ladies) – mais par-dessus tout, à titre de professionnelles consommatrices, détentrices de connaissances et maîtrisant les technologies qui ont fait d’elles des membres indispensables de l’effort de guerre canadien.

En conclusion, malgré leurs différences, et certainement en vertu de leurs similitudes, les ouvrages de Mélanie Morin-Pelletier et Cynthia Toman sont d’une grande complémentarité et reflètent à la fois l’expérience des infirmières militaires canadiennes lors des deux plus grands conflits du XXe siècle et l’intérêt et la passion des auteurs pour leur sujet.

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Bibliothèque et Archives Canada


Whether in Montreal or Halifax, the sentiment in the early part of the twentieth century was relatively the same: moral decay had begun to seep into Canadian society as a result of modernity and its concomitant evils that lurked within the country’s cities. Two potent symbols of this decay were the apparent rise in juvenile delinquency and the appearance of the young, modern girl. “Les jeunes filles modernes” are the focus of Tamara Myers’s *Caught: Montreal’s Modern Girls and the Law*, which makes an important contribution to Quebec and Canadian criminal justice and social history. Myers explores the juvenile justice system’s relationship with these modern girls, along with the threat that their actions, as well as the deviant image that Montreal society had constructed of them, posed to the stability and the future of the French-Canadian nation. Myers deftly interweaves the lives of girls who explored Montreal’s “sites of perdition” (p. 17) and their experiences before the city’s juvenile court. In the process, Myers...
draws several significant conclusions about how juvenile justice functioned in Montreal.

In theory, Canada’s system of juvenile justice was meant to be progressive and, unlike adult courts, non-confrontational. As Myers reveals, however, girls and their parents often battled one another in court. Similarly, although reformatories and training schools were hailed as a welcome departure from prisons as way to turn problem girls into “true homemakers” (p. 212), many of the girls whom Myers studies felt that, on the basis of the treatment that they received and the confinement that they endured, they were being punished for their actions. Moreover, in many cases, evidence of these girls’ misdeeds often took the form of gossip, while social workers, who as Myers indicates were not trained in the law, played a central role in determining their fates. In this sense, Caught provides another reminder that historically the best interests of children and adolescents have often been overshadowed by the impulse to ensure that social and moral order in Canadian society was maintained.

The juvenile justice system in Montreal, as elsewhere in the country, was gendered. Girls, more so than boys, were arrested for moral offences. According to Myers, girls usually appeared before the Montreal Juvenile Court for failing to obey a curfew, staying out all night, talking back to parents, or dating an “inappropriate” boy. As well, judges and probation officers practised maternal justice towards girls. Rather than deal with delinquents as “criminals,” the juvenile justice system dispensed maternal guidance to wayward youth. As was the case in other cities and provinces, maternal justice in Montreal amounted to increased state surveillance of girls’ lives. A key part of Myers’s discussion of maternal justice centres around Montreal’s female probation officers, the “mothers of all children” (p. 91), who advised juvenile court judges as to the best treatment for delinquent youth. In outlining the work of Montreal’s probation officers, Myers uncovers how, through an array of forms, some of which are reproduced in the book, probation officers reduced girls’ lives to bureaucratic entities. Myers also includes a discussion of the work performed by Jewish probation officers or case-workers and their interaction with Montreal’s burgeoning Jewish community. This is a key contribution to the literature on the professionalization of the juvenile justice system in Canada.

A familiar feature of the discourse surrounding adolescent girls and juvenile justice in Montreal was the role of experts in identifying and offering solutions to the “modern girl problem.” Among these self-described experts were priests, social reformers, and psychiatrists. In examining how various experts understood Montreal’s girl problem, Myers detects a subtle transition in their thinking in that many of these girls were no longer considered to be victims of male seducers, but “problem girls” (p. 61) whose sexual lives had to be placed under scrutiny and tightly regulated. As Myers points out, the city itself was not the sole culprit when it came to explaining why these girls had gone astray. Psychiatrists and social workers in particular often blamed mothers for their daughters’ deviant behaviours. Thus the Montreal Juvenile Court, and the state generally, felt justified in monitoring these girls’ lives, along with their home environments.
Myers provides a fascinating portrait of adolescent girls’ work and leisure lives in Montreal. Most assumed multiple identities: Catholics, Canadians, workers, and consumers. In living these identities, notably by taking part in the “frivolous life” of the city (p. 136), these girls were actively rejecting the dominant gender roles of moral citizens and future wives and mothers. Thus, as Myers rightly asserts, it was not necessarily the sheer number of these girls, but the nature of their lives and the offences that they were accused of committing, that caused so much concern for juvenile justice authorities. Within this broader pantheon of concern were those cases of “precocious sexuality,” including girls who had unwed pregnancies, many of whom appeared before the Montreal Juvenile Court during the first half of the twentieth century.

As was common in cases of sexual improprieties before a court of law, the sexual lives and histories of these young girls were on full display. In addition, many were scolded by the court for not preserving their chastity. In what is perhaps the most engaging chapter in Caught (“Did You Bleed?”), Myers examines the sexualization of female delinquency. Notably, she highlights the pivotal role that doctors played in proving girls’ immorality. By branding girls as “deflowered” (p. 188), doctors were effectively able to discredit these girls’ testimonies that they were “good” or that they had been coerced into having sex with strange men. Furthermore, the issue of incest served to undermine the notion that the juvenile court would protect girls from the ravages of a dangerous home life. In the cases that Myers discusses in which girls alleged that they had been the victims of incest, rarely did the men involved face criminal charges. Instead, the juvenile court judges denounced the girls themselves for their immoral character. As Myers concludes, incest “functioned to reinforce male supremacy, docile femininity, and the primacy of family life” (p. 199). Myers’s thoughtful and detailed discussion of the secret crime of incest adds a significant element to the history of gender relations and sexual abuse in Canada.

To address the many worries that Montreal society had about modern girls, the juvenile court meted out “correction,” which usually meant that girls were placed on probation or confined in a reformatory or training school. In these training schools, it was hoped, a delinquent girl would be rehabilitated and become a good woman. Girls took part in programmes intended to build character by focusing upon domestic, vocational, academic, and recreational training. Yet, as Myers notes, while these girls were surrounded by all of the accoutrements of a stable, middle-class lifestyle in training schools, rarely were they able to enjoy such a way of life when they were released. Caught also delves into the punishment that girls received and their responses to it, especially breaking the training schools’ code of silence by swearing or singing, and ultimately by escaping.

Caught is certainly a welcomed addition to the study of women, gender, and juvenile justice in Canada. Of added significance is that Myers’s work sheds new light upon the lives of modern girls and the operation of the juvenile justice system in Montreal. It may be argued that Caught has not necessarily broken new ground in our understanding of juvenile delinquency in Canada. Key works by Joan Sangster, Jeffrey Keshen, Indiana Matters, Sharon Myers,
and Carolyn Strange have done much to uncover the contours of delinquency and the lives of “little criminals” in Canada. Nevertheless, Myers has drawn our attention to the parallels between Montreal and the rest of the country regarding the history of juvenile delinquency, as well as the unique aspects of this history in a city that struggled with its Roman Catholic heritage and the rising tide of secularism that the 1908 Juvenile Delinquents Act and juvenile courts represented.

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Le personnage du voyageur, ce travailleur canadien-français du commerce de la fourrure aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, occupe une place privilégiée dans le panthéon historique canadien, voire même américain. Or, comme le souligne l’auteur de *Making the Voyageur World*, les vrais voyageurs demeurent mal connus. Leurs contemporains lettrés, et plusieurs générations d’auteurs folklorisants après eux, les ont réduits à l’animalité – on fait d’eux de « joyeux chevaux de trait » (*merry workhorses*, 2) – et les ont élevés au statut de héros romantiques hypermasculins. Soucieuse de voir ce qui se cache derrière la caricature, Carolyn Podruchny les a placés au centre de son analyse et en a produit une stimulante histoire socio-culturelle.

L’ouvrage se penche sur la période qui s’étend de la cession du Canada en 1763 à la fusion des grandes compagnies de la baie d’Hudson et du Nord-Ouest en 1821. Cela dit, les bornes chronologiques demeurent plutôt floues. L’analyse tantôt se resserre sur les deux premières décennies du XIXe siècle, âge d’or du commerce montréalais de la fourrure, et tantôt se dilate pour recouvrir une période beaucoup plus longue, allant des années 1680 jusqu’aux années 1870, pendant laquelle le voyageur a existé en tant que catégorie socio-professionnelle. Le monde, pour ne pas dire la mentalité, des voyageurs change assez peu dans la longue durée, suggère ce livre.

Si elle n’est pas sans poser problème, la perspective qui tend vers la longue durée a l’avantage de permettre à l’auteur de faire flèche de tout bois – ou canot de toute écorce – dans un domaine d’étude où les sources sont fragmentaires et peu nombreuses. Les voyageurs eux-mêmes étaient dans l’ensemble non-lettrés, mais Podruchny parvient à retrouver quelques éclats de voix dans les archives judiciaires, les chansons et quelques rares lettres. Elle s’attarde avec perspicacité aux défis méthodologiques inhérents au recours aux sources, beaucoup plus nombreuses celles-là, produites par les bourgeois et commis des compagnies de commerce ainsi que par les voyageurs (avec un petit « v »), hommes pour qui le voyageur canadien-français était un « Autre ». Confrontée par le mutisme des sources, Podruchny fait appel aux volubiles théoriciens : E. P. Thompson sur l’histoire vue d’en bas, Antonio Gramsci sur l’hégémonie,