

Repentance could weep unseen: Remembering Maison Sainte-Madeleine, 1850-1975

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ABSTRACT

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While Irish Magdalen laundries have garnered considerable media attention, the existence of these institutions in Quebec remains relatively unknown. This project examines Maison Sainte-Madeleine, a refuge in Quebec City opened by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec in 1850 with the purpose of reforming so-called “fallen women.” These early inmates, who were often alcoholics, sex workers and unmarried mothers, were only allowed to leave the asylum once the Sisters judged that they were ready to reintegrate into society. In the nineteenth century, inmates sewed and washed clothing as a means of atoning for their sins without payment for their work. In this early period, Maison Sainte-Madeleine relied on charity and revenue from the laundry for its maintenance. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec enforced a strict schedule of prayer and work through surveillance and spatial separation. This project outlines the evolution of the built environment, as well as the living conditions and sources of income of the institution from its foundation to its closure.

By the mid-twentieth century, Maison Sainte-Madeleine underwent significant reforms, including the introduction of social workers and the compensation of inmates. The establishment’s modernization during the Quiet Revolution, coupled with the close relationship that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd entertained with the public, led to a divergence in the way these institutions are remembered in Quebec and Ireland. This study will argue that Maison Sainte-Madeleine did not receive the same amount of scrutiny as Irish Magdalen laundries because of its institutional trajectory, and because it was overshadowed in public memory by the Duplessis Orphans scandal.

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INTRODUCTION

On January 11th, 1850, on a cold, windswept night, Marie Fitzback and Mary Keough founded Maison Sainte-Madeleine on Richelieu street in Quebec city.¹ This institution's purpose was to "save young girls whose beauty and innocence were a peril to their virtue and honor," while also offering "a haven to the wretched women of Saint-Anne Street Jail."² Magdalen asylums³ such as Maison Sainte-Madeleine were institutions aimed at rescuing so-called "fallen women," who became known as penitents after being admitted.⁴ These women were only allowed to leave the asylum once the Sisters judged that they were ready to reintegrate into society, and had no fixed sentences.⁵ Inmates, whom Marie Fitzbach referred to as her "children," sewed and washed clothing to atone for their sins without payment for their work.⁶ In Maison Sainte-Madeleine during the mid-nineteenth century, most inmates were immigrants, spoke languages other than French and had different religious affiliations.⁷ Some women were admitted through the Quebec courts, but the vast majority entered through voluntary admissions. Some likely entered because they had nowhere else to go, while others were sent there by family members or the parish priest. The religious order's publications linked work in the laundry with spiritual repentance. The affective and manual labor that inmates performed inside the institution was justified by a discursive production of fallen women as inferior and in need of moral rescue. The order enforced bodily discipline with strict surveillance and spatial separation. To reach a broader understanding of Maison Sainte-Madeleine's relationship to social norms of behavior, this thesis outlines its evolution from its foundation in the mid-nineteenth century to its closure in 1975.

¹ Sister Saint-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, (Québec: Generalate of the Good Shepherd, 1950): 27.

² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

³ Magdalen asylums are also known as Magdalen homes or Magdalen laundries. Both "Magdalen" and "Magdalene" spellings are used.

⁴ The term "penitent" is regarded as derogatory by survivors of Irish Magdalen laundries. This study will refer to these women as "inmates" to reflect the carceral nature of the institution in which they were confined.

⁵ Sr Saint-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 47.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-45.

⁷ Jacqueline Gagnon, "Maison Sainte-Madeleine," (Quebec : Université Laval, 1^{er} Mai 1949) : 28. MA thesis.

Literature review

In Ireland, Magdalen asylums have generated considerable scholarship and controversy.⁸ Scholar and activist James M. Smith linked government implication in these institutions with wider social and political discussion of sex work and illegitimacy. He argued that in post-independence Ireland, “political discourses legitimized state practices of institutionalizing many of its most vulnerable citizens in mother and baby homes, Magdalen asylums, and industrial and reformatory schools.”⁹ Similarly, Frances Finnegan wrote a scathing indictment of the treatment of inmates in Magdalen asylums, citing the sexual double standard to which they were subjected. She asserted that “[c]onfinement, forced labor and senseless atonement, obsessively urged was but part of their penance,” since many institutionalized women were also separated from their children.¹⁰ Finnegan’s study argued that while social attitudes were important in the creation and maintenance of these institutions, by the end of the twentieth century, a disparity grew between the treatment of women within Magdalen asylums and wider social discourse on sexuality. She drew critical attention to the continued detainment of women in Magdalen asylums into the 1990s, when sexuality was no longer widely regarded as sinful enough to justify

⁸ Irish Magdalen laundries have been the subject of several monographs: Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish*; James M. Smith; James M. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment*; Rebecca Lea McCarthy, *Origins of the Magdalene Laundries: an analytical history*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010); Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish society, 1800-1940*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Articles on the Irish Magdalen laundries include: Erin Costello Wecker, “Reclaiming Magdalenism or Washing Away Sin: Magdalen Laundries and the Rhetorics of Feminine Silence,” *Women's Studies* 44, no. 2 (2015): 264-279; Sheila Killian, ““For lack of accountability”: The logic of the price in Ireland’s Magdalen Laundries,” *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, Vol. 43, (2015): 17-32. ISSN 0361-3682; Brian Titley, “Magdalen Asylums and Moral Regulation in Ireland,” in *Schools as Dangerous Places: A Historical Perspective*, ed. Anthony Potts and Tom O’Donoghue, (Youngstown: Cambria Press, 2007): 119–43; Audrey Rousseau, “Representations of Forced Labor in the Irish Magdalen Laundries: Contemporary Visual Art as Site of Memory,” in *Excavating Memory: Sites of Remembering and Forgetting*, ed. by Starzmann, Maria Theresia and Roby, John R., (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016): 293-315; Emilie Pine, “Coming Clean? Remembering the Magdalen Laundries,” in *Memory Ireland*, ed. Oona Frawley, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 2011): 151-71; Maeve O’Rourke, “Ireland's Magdalene Laundries and the State's Duty to Protect,” *Hibernian Law Journal*, vol. 10, (2011): 200-238; Clara Fischer, “Gender, Nation, and the Politics of Shame: Magdalen Laundries and the Institutionalization of Feminine Transgression in Modern Ireland,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 4 (Summer 2016): 821-843; Elizabeth Cullingford, ““Our Nuns Are Not a Nation”: Politicizing the Convent in Irish Literature and Film,” *Éire-Ireland* 41, no. 1 (2006): 9-39.

⁹ James M. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007): 5.

¹⁰ Frances Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 242.

institutionalization.¹¹ To document the living conditions within these institutions, academics, journalists and activist groups such as Justice for Magdalenes have conducted several oral history interviews of formerly confined women. These sources revealed the extent of abuse prevalent in these establishments.¹² Activist and academic investigation into Magdalen asylums led to a recognition of these establishments in regulating gender and sexuality.

While Irish Magdalen asylums have received considerable critical attention, similar institutions in Quebec have not been the object of the same scholarly scrutiny.¹³ Quebec's vast institutional network of maternity hospitals, crèches and orphanages in the nineteenth century has also been the subject of extensive study.¹⁴ Marta Danylewycz's study of the Sisters of Mercy and the Congregation of Notre-Dame examined conventual life in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Quebec. Her monograph, completed posthumously, accounts for the growth of religious orders in this period, and the complex social and spiritual factors that pushed women to join the sisterhood.¹⁵ Danylewycz argues that religious and professional fulfillment were strong motivators, including the acquisition of skills in nursing in the case of the Sisters of Mercy.¹⁶ Maison Sainte-Madeleine can be situated within the broader history of confinement in Quebec. Jean-Marie Fecteau has produced an extensive body of scholarship on poverty, criminalization,

¹¹ Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish*, 242.

¹² Extensive psychological abuse and, less frequently, sexual and physical violence are all cited in descriptions by survivors of Irish Magdalen laundries.

Martha Cooney, Christina Mulcahy, Phyllis Valentine and Brigid Young, *Sex in a Cold Climate*. Directed by Steve Humphries. New York, NY: Cinema Guild, 2003; Justice for Magdalenes, "Submission to the United Nations Committee Against Torture," Crocknahattina, May 2011; Katherine O'Donnell, Sinéad Pembroke and Claire McGettrick, "Oral History of Martha," in *Magdalene Institutions: Recording an Oral and Archival History. Government of Ireland Collaborative Research Project*, (Dublin: Irish Research Council, 2013): 17

¹³With notable exceptions: Marie-Aimée Cliche, "Survivre à l'inceste dans les maisons du Bon-Pasteur de Québec, 1930-1973" *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*, vol. 14, n° 2, 2001, 122-143; Josette Poulin, *Une utopie religieuse : le Bon-Pasteur de Québec, de 1850 à 1921*, Quebec: Université Laval, 2004. Doctoral thesis.

¹⁴ See also: Guy Laperrière, *Les congrégations religieuses: De la France au Québec*, vol.1, *Premières bourrasques, 1880-1900*, (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université de Laval, 1996); Janice Harvey, *The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society: a case study in Protestant child charity in Montreal, 1822-1900*, (Montreal: McGill University, 2001). Doctoral dissertation; Rhona Richman Kenneally, *The Montreal Maternity, 1843-1926: Evolution of a hospital*, (Montreal: McGill University, 1986). MA thesis; Peter Gossage, "Les enfants abandonnés à Montréal au 19e siècle: la Crèche d'Youville des Soeurs Grises, 1820-1871," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 40 no.4 (printemps 1987): 537-559; Huguette Lapointe-Roy, *Charité Bien Ordonné: Le Premier Réseau de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté à Montréal au 19e Siècle* (Montréal; Boréal Express, 1987).

¹⁵Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the veil: an alternative to marriage, motherhood, and spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987): 24-50, 87-88.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 86, 108.

incarceration and institutionalization in Quebec. With Janice Harvey, he wrote a historiography of social regulation, in which they argued that institutions were constituted by shared acting. They conceived of agents as a “temporary though repeated coming together of a particular agency at a specific time by a given person.”¹⁷ As an institution, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was formed through the shared acting of Sisters, who followed a strict schedule. Resistance to the discipline of the institution was intermittent and disorganized, since inmates were prevented from organizing through surveillance and a rule of silence within the asylum. An account of the structures of power in the institution involves the recognition of a wide range of stakeholders, including Sisters, chaplains, inmates, the Quebecois government and the wider population of the city, but also the built environment. This thesis will chart the evolution of Maison Sainte-Madeleine and its different stakeholders to account for the disparity between public memory of Irish and Quebecois Magdalen asylums. Specifically, it will give an account of the evolving architecture of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s set of institutions in Quebec City. From its foundation to the mid-twentieth century, Maison Sainte-Madeleine grew from a three-storey house to a five-floor building with a large, connected laundry. The evolution of this institution’s architecture was accompanied by changes in institutional discipline over the centuries.

Sources

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec produced extensive documentation of their institutions, which provide rich material for the study of Magdalen asylums. Because of the extent of available primary sources, Maison Sainte-Madeleine is a compelling case study of the relationship between moral reformers and inmates. This project draws primarily from the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s publications and *Annales* as source material, selected because they reveal the ideological underpinnings of Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s mandate of spiritual reform.¹⁸ The *Annales* are a daily record of life within the institution, updated regularly if not daily by a Sister. This institutional record provides insight into the day-to-day operation of

¹⁷ Jean-Marie Fecteau and Janice Harvey, “From Agents to Institutions: An Historical Dialectic of Interactionism and Power Relations,” in *La régulation sociale entre l'acteur et l'institution: Pour une problématique historique de l'interaction / Agency and Institutions in Social Regulation: Toward an historical understanding of their interaction*, (Quebec: Les Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2005): 22.

Maison Sainte-Madeleine from the perspective of the religious order. Historians Tamara Myers and Joan Sangster describe the difficulty of working with official sources when writing about girls' resistance in reformatories between 1930 and 1960. They argue that "[t]hough girls' actions and words are often relayed directly to us through these records, they are recounted by psychologists, penal workers, administrators and nuns whose preconceived expert knowledge about the nature of young women shaped their reconstructions of delinquent girls' rebellions within a language of irrationality, incredulity and pathology."¹⁹ The *Annales* likewise recount the actions of inmates and Magdalens, but give little insight as to their motivations. Because entries are written contemporaneously, they are generally more reliable than commemorative publications, which impose a retroactive narrative of life within Maison Sainte-Madeleine. However, the *Annales* are limited in their scope, since they tend to remark on exceptional occurrences rather than on the routine within the asylum. This project will use entries in the *Annales* to describe specific events in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, such as burials and escape attempts, and detail the reactions of the religious order.

Commemorative volumes such as Céline Jalbert's *Présence d'avenir au coeur du monde* and the *Album centenaire* present an idealized view of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's work. One such volume, the *Album centenaire*, is probably written in order to be read by members of the religious order, since what is likely to be the only existing copy of the document is currently in their convent archives.²⁰ Others, including Jalbert's *Présence d'avenir au coeur du monde* and Sister Saint-Bernard Upham's *Years of Shepherding*, are intended for a general audience. The readership of publications such as *Un Cinquantenaire au Bon-Pasteur* is more ambiguous, since it was professionally printed by the religious order but addressed and dedicated to the Sisters. In all these sources, the authors have a clear stake in downplaying or omitting controversy entirely. Moreover, these volumes are meant to show the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec in a positive or even heroic light. The material shown in these publications varies according to the intended readership. For example, *Album centenaire* features photographs of inmates in Buanderie Saint-Joseph, whereas *Présence d'avenir au coeur du*

¹⁹ Tamara Myers and Joan Sangster, "Retorts, Runaways and Riots: Patterns of Resistance in Canadian Reform Schools for Girls, 1930-60," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 3 (2001): 669.

²⁰ I was unable to locate any other copy of the document, but considering the fact this book was bound by hand and photographs were glued inside, it is unlikely that there are multiple copies of the *Album centenaire*.

monde does not. Since these sources are meant to promote the religious order's spiritual mission, they should be read with skepticism and critical distance. Though they are inherently biased, these publications are useful in establishing the religious order's evolving interpretation of their own work throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Other material, such as the constitution of the religious order and a prayerbook published in 1937, shed light on the routine expected of Sisters and institutionalized women within Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Because they are prescriptive rather than descriptive sources, it is difficult to establish the extent to which the rules outlined in these documents were applied. However, the schedules and rituals detailed in the constitution and prayerbook reveal the expectations of the religious order with regards to institutionalized women. Commemorative volumes and daily records of the institution, though helpful in situating the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's attitudes towards inmates and Magdalens, do not consistently record institutionalized women's background, age and dates of entry and departure. Historian Marie-Aimée Cliche's demographic analysis of unwed mothers in Hôpital de la Miséricorde and incest survivors in Maison Sainte-Madeleine uses case files as primary source material.²¹ Though these documents would provide further insight as to the background of institutionalized women, a statistical analysis of the inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine is beyond the scope of this project due to the sensitive nature of these files and the breadth of the period under study.²² Therefore, this project will draw on Cliche's scholarship when possible to describe the asylum's population.

The disparity between official sources and inmates' lived experience is particularly apparent in the Irish Magdalen laundries²³ case: oral history accounts of women's confinement contradicts the evidence brought forth in governmental documents such as the McAleese report.²⁴ Therefore, religious sources such as commemorative volumes and daily records convey

²¹ Marie-Aimée Cliche, "Morale chrétienne et "double standard sexuel," Les filles-mères à l'hôpital de la Miséricorde à Québec 1874-1972." *Histoire sociale-Social History*, Vol. XXIV, no. 47 (1991): 85-125; Cliche, "Survivre à l'inceste dans les maisons du Bon-Pasteur de Québec, 1930-1973" *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*, vol. 14, n° 2, (2001), 122-143.

²² Cliche, "Survivre à l'inceste," 124. Many of the documents cited in Cliche's study include extensive reference to incest, for example. In this article, she notes that early institutional files were generally sparse, containing identification records and letters from priests and family members. After the introduction of social workers in 1948, case files included IQ tests and interview reports.

²³ The terminology "Magdalen laundries" will be used to designate Irish Magdalen asylums, reflecting the name by which they are widely known in Ireland.

²⁴ For a comprehensive analysis of the shortcomings of the McAleese report, see: Máiréad Enright, "Critiquing the McAleese Report," *Human Rights in Ireland*, February 8, 2013.

much more information on sisters' perceptions of inmates than on the lived experience of institutionalized women. While this archival material offers an inherently limited perspective, it nonetheless gives insight into resistance to institutional discipline through accounts of escape attempts and descriptions of inmates. Despite the inherent bias of these sources, this thesis will attempt to reconstitute life in the asylum through a critical reading of religious documents. This project also draws on photographs, a map and an insurance siteplan to describe the architecture of Maison Sainte-Madeleine and adjacent buildings, as well as the living conditions of inmates and Magdalens. These documents, which were generally produced by outsiders, offer key information on life within the establishment. The expansion of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's institutions throughout the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries is particularly apparent in this source material. Moreover, numerous photographs display the uniforms of inmates as well as their working conditions in Maison Sainte-Madeleine and the attached laundry. This thesis will draw upon both visual material such as maps and photographs and religious documents such as commemorative volumes to describe Maison Sainte-Madeleine's spiritual, social and architectural evolution from 1850 to 1975.

Theoretical framing

Maison Sainte-Madeleine's foundation at the mid-nineteenth century marked a new approach in punishment and moral rescue. Philosopher Michel Foucault's scholarship, especially *Discipline and Punish*, frequently provides a lens of analysis with which to interpret Ireland's Magdalen asylum system.²⁵ Miriam Haughton notes the panoptic architecture of the Sean McDermott Magdalen laundry in Dublin. She links Foucault's argument that "the mode of regulating the body [...] shifted from physical punitive methods to observation of the body in a panoptic infrastructure associated with prison architecture" with the development of Irish Magdalen asylums in the twentieth century.²⁶ Haughton argues that the architecture of this establishment was "political technology" which exerted power over the body of inmates.²⁷

²⁵ Smith, *Architecture of Containment*, 204; Kellie Greene, "The Women of Dolours: Sunday's Well & Lifting the Shroud of Silence." *Global Media Journal: Australian Edition* 4, no. 2 (December 2010): 1-39. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed January 29, 2017).

²⁶ Miriam Haughton, "From Laundries to Labour Camps: Staging Ireland's 'Rule of Silence' in Anu Productions' Laundry," in Miriam Haughton and Mária Kurdi (eds.), *Radical Contemporary Theatre Practices by Women in Ireland*, (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2015): 65.

²⁷ Ibid.

Performance theorist S.E. Wilmer links the discourse of respectability and sexual abstinence which emerged in the nineteenth-century Ireland to the Magdalen asylum system.²⁸ He defines the Church's role in sustaining a "biopolitical policy of social control over the lives and sexual activities of their congregations."²⁹ Wilmer relates this biopolitical function to Foucault's argument that systems of social control were upheld through the normalization of moral codes rather than through legislative means.³⁰ Foucault enjoins readers to "regard punishment as a complex social function" by assessing the positive and negative effects of punitive mechanisms, and calls for an analysis of these methods as a "political tactic."³¹ Thus the very architecture of Magdalen asylums was part of a punitive mechanism of social control. This carceral mechanism was also sustained through the normalization of a discourse on sexual deviance. For Foucault, the emergence of prisons and penitentiaries as the dominant form of punishment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries marks a departure from earlier, more public mechanisms of penalty.³² Foucault understands the rehabilitative function of carceral institutions as an investment of power relations onto inmates' bodies. In Magdalen asylums, this process was explicit in the use of humiliating uniforms, but also in the labor required from inmates. Maison Sainte-Madeleine, thus, should be understood as part of a change in carceral and extra-penal practices which replaced earlier forms of public punishment. Its emergence was comprised within a wider discourse on sexual immorality that extended beyond legislative means of social control.

Maison Sainte-Madeleine was embedded within a larger network of institutions of moral reform. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec operated a women's prison and an industrial school alongside Maison Sainte-Madeleine. These institutions were interconnected, both through their administrative personnel and their similar mandates of spiritual repentance. Historian Ian Mackay urged writers to "imagine a way of doing history that locates the 'problem of Canada' within the history of power relations: to map, across North America, both the grids of power (penitentiaries and criminal codes, schools and legislatures) through which a given

²⁸ S.E. Wilmer, "Biopolitics in the Laundry: Ireland's Unwed Mothers," in S.E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė (eds), *Resisting Biopolitics: Philosophical, Political, and Performative Strategies*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015): 255.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 256.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

³¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1995): 23.

³² *Ibid.*, 231.

hegemonic ‘social’ was constructed and centred, and the forces of resistance capable, at certain times, of effecting far-reaching changes of the project itself.”³³ Catholic networks of social control, which included Magdalen asylums, were described by James M. Smith and Jean-Marie Fecteau as grids of power. Smith coined the phrase “architecture of containment” to describe the large network of institutions of moral reform in Ireland, including mother and baby homes, industrial schools, crèches and Magdalen asylums.³⁴ Jean-Marie Fecteau has used the term “carceral archipelago,” coined by Michel Foucault, to designate social regulation in nineteenth century Montreal.³⁵ The institutions of moral reform opened by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd extended beyond Quebec City. The logic of colonial and capitalist expansion underwrote much of the religious order’s publications, including daily records and commemorative publications. Maison Sainte-Madeleine was linked to convents in the province of Quebec in and the United States, but also to missions overseas in current-day Lesotho and South Africa. While a study of these international institutions is beyond the scope of this thesis, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec were implicated not only in education and moral reform in Canada, but abroad. Therefore, while Maison Sainte-Madeleine was embedded in a network of institutions of moral reform within Canada, their ideological investment had ramifications on an international scale.

The Magdalen asylum system regulated the behavior of women who did not conform to the ideal of the heterosexual, nuclear family in the nineteenth century. Early inmates, who were former convicts, sex workers, unwed mothers, or alcoholics, were generally women who transgressed the Catholic ideal of the mother who works within the home. Theorist John D’Emilio argues that “the ideology of capitalist society has enshrined the family as a source of love, affection and emotional security, the place where our need for stable, human relationships is satisfied.”³⁶ Women who were confined within the asylum defied gendered norms of behavior which tied femininity to the home. The strict rule of silence enforced in Maison Sainte-Madeleine prevented women from organizing around their common experiences. Their names

³³ Ian MacKay, “The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History,” *The Canadian Historical Review* no. 4 (2000): 622.

³⁴ Smith, *Architecture of Containment*, xiii.

³⁵ Jean-Marie Fecteau et al., “Répression au quotidien et régulation punitive en longue durée le cas de la prison de Montréal, 1836-1913,” *Déviance et Société* 2006/3 (Vol. 30), 353.

³⁶ John D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity,” in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. by Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell and Sharan Thompson, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983): 100-113.

were changed once they entered, and they were given shapeless uniforms. The architecture of Maison Sainte-Madeleine ensured that inmates would not be seen by outsiders. It was constituted as a space by social relationships between the Sisters, inmates and the built environment, including the equipment within the laundry. Angela Davis has written extensively on the history of American penitentiaries. Her work will be used as a critical framework to understand institutional confinement in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Arguing that the prison occupied a concurrent space of visibility and invisibility in the lives of Americans, she wrote that “[t]o think about this simultaneous presence and absence is to begin to acknowledge the part played by ideology in shaping the way we interact with our social surroundings.”³⁷ Maison Sainte-Madeleine, situated in the heart of Quebec City, was both visible, in so much as it occupied a central space in the urban environment, and invisible, since it kept women who failed to conform to gendered norms of behavior out of public space. Davis argued that according to the dominant American view in nineteenth century, “women convicts were irrevocably fallen women, with no possibility of salvation.”³⁸ Moral reformers who, like the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, believed that former female convicts could be saved, “did not really contest these ideological assumptions about women’s place.”³⁹ Throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd believed that some fallen could achieve spiritual redemption, but did not question whether the sins or crimes that inmates committed deserved incarceration.

The relationship between sisters and inmates was religious, but also economically driven. Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s expansion throughout the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries was made possible through the revenue derived from laundry and textile work. Until 1944, inmates’ work in the laundry was unpaid, which meant that Sisters handled the income from laundry contracts exclusively.⁴⁰ Through the Good Shepherd of Quebec’ programme of spiritual reform, women were “produced” as penitent subjects through work such as cutting cloth, sewing and weaving. Michel Foucault writes that “[p]enal labor [...] is intrinsically useful, not as an activity of production, but by virtue of the effect it has on the human mechanism,” arguing that

³⁷ Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, (New Delhi: Navayana Press, 2003): 15.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁹ Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 70.

⁴⁰ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Buanderie Saint-Joseph,” in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

work in nineteenth-century carceral institutions instilled discipline by “bend[ing] bodies to regular movements.”⁴¹ He argues that this labor was imposed through hierarchy and surveillance rather than violence. Foucault concludes that “[i]f, in the final analysis, the work of the prison has an economic effect, it is by producing individuals mechanized according to the general norms of an industrial society.”⁴² In the twentieth century, the laundry, the convent and Maison Sainte-Madeleine were linked by enclosed corridors, which meant that inmates were rarely seen by outsiders. In the asylum, the separation of different groups of inmates and Magdalens was justified by a fear of moral contagion. Citing uneven industrial development, geographer Doreen Massey calls for a conception of “economic space [...] as constituted by the geographical organization of the relations of production.”⁴³ In Massey’s view, space is produced by the relationship between different actors and the built environment. Clothing which was sewn, mended and washed by inmates travelled through the city of Quebec, while many of the women who worked in the laundry never left the premises of the institution. Power relations were constituted through the spatial organization within the asylum. For example, an enclosed passageway built in the early-twentieth century linked Maison Sainte-Madeleine to an adjacent laundry. While serving a moral function, this structure also served to keep inmates away from public view. This enclosed passageway and other features of Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s built environment demonstrated Massey’s argument that “spatial form is an important element in the constitution of power itself,” since part of the power wielded by the Sisters over inmates was related to the disparity in their access to the outside world.⁴⁴

Understanding the strict regimen of prayer imposed on inmates as affective labor can provide an analytical frame for our interpretation of resistance within the asylum. Women who fell outside of the prescribed bodily discipline were reprimanded and discursively produced as inferior to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri describe affective labor in *Multitude* as “always directly construct[ing] a relationship.” Specifically, Hardt and Negri identify a tendency in immaterial labor to “blur the distinction

⁴¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 242.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴³ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994): 22.

⁴⁴ Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, 22.

between work time and nonwork time, extending the working day indefinitely to fill all of life.”⁴⁵ While this theory was elaborated in response to the rise of precarious immaterial labor in the 1980s and mid-90s, their concept of affective labor can be applied to the work in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. This relationship of subservience between Sisters and inmates was constituted through Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s mandate of moral reform. In Magdalen asylums, inmates were expected not only to work menial jobs for several hours during the day, but also to perform spiritual repentance at all times. In the order’s constitution, the Mistress of penitents was not only charged with giving the women in her charge religious instruction, but to make sure that they understood and memorized prayers and rituals. Moreover, inmates from “bad houses” were not allowed to receive communion until six months after their stay, or longer if they were judged not to demonstrate sufficient sincerity.⁴⁶ Marxist feminist Silvia Federici criticizes Hardt and Negri’s discussion of immaterial labor in *Multitude* for its gender neutrality. In an article entitled “Precarious Labor: A Feminist Critique,” she explains that they did not account for “[t]he feminist analysis of the function of the sexual division of labor, the function of gender hierarchies, the analysis of the way capitalism has used the wage to mobilize women’s work in the reproduction of the labor force.”⁴⁷ Affective labor’s role in Magdalene asylums can be understood through Federici’s line of criticism. She understands reproductive labor as any labor that serves the reproduction of labor-power, including domestic work, childcare and cooking.⁴⁸ These skills were taught in Maison Sainte-Madeleine alongside a hierarchical structure, where sisters were instructed not to allow inmates to criticize their superiors or their colleagues.⁴⁹ In

⁴⁵ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2004): 65.

⁴⁶ “qui arrivent des mauvaises maisons,” in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Constitutions et règles*, 260-261.

⁴⁷ Silvia Federici, “Precarious Labor: A Feminist Critique,” Speech, New York, October 28th, 2006. *In the Middle of a Whirlwind*. <https://inthemiddleofthewhirlwind.wordpress.com/precariou-labor-a-feminist-viewpoint/>

⁴⁸ Friedrich Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1909): 8-9; Selma James, *Sex, Race and Class*, (Brooklyn, NY: Pétroleuse Press, n.d.): 4; Anna Agathangelou, *The Global Political Economy of Sex: Desire, Violence and Insecurity in Mediterranean Nation States*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004): 12-14; Mignon Duffy, “Doing the Dirty Work: Gender, Race, and Reproductive Labor in Historical Perspective,” *Gender and Society*, Vol. 21 No. 3, (June 2007): 313-336. The concept of reproductive labor has a long history within Marxist and materialist feminisms. Friedrich Engels outlined the concept of reproductive labor in the preface of *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This concept was expanded upon by anti-racist feminist Selma James in her pamphlet *Sex, Race and Class*, first published in 1973. More recently, reproductive labor has been used by scholars such as Anna Agathangelou and Mignon Duffy to describe sex work and domestic labor performed by women of color in a contemporary context.

⁴⁹ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Constitutions et règles*, 272-273.

Federici's view, reproductive labor is a precondition to exploitation and accumulation of capital, since it ensures the maintenance of laborers' ability to work. The reproduction of the nuclear family was at the center of industrial development. In this type of family, male workers relied on the labor of domestic workers and their spouses within the home for their continued ability to work. Therefore, systems that punished individuals who transgressed norms of gendered behavior facilitated the flow of capital. Maison Sainte-Madeleine's institutional mandate was to favorize the reintegration of "fallen women" to the workplace or the home. As noted above, inmates who were confined in Magdalen asylums were regarded as socially and sexually deviant, especially with regards to the family. The affective and manual labor they performed as a form of atonement was intentionally reminiscent of the domestic work that married women performed within the home in industrializing Quebec. The institution maintained itself through productive labor such as weaving, sewing and washing clothing. While some of the skills taught in Maison Sainte-Madeleine could be useful in an industrial workplace such as a commercial laundry or manufacture, inmates also performed reproductive labor. For example, some institutionalized women were involved in childcare through the religious order's maternity hospital. Inmates were also recruited to this position from the hospital after giving birth.⁵⁰ In the early twentieth century, "[p]remarital sex and the birth for a fatherless, hence nameless, child threatened to overturn the patriarchal family, a cornerstone of Quebec society."⁵¹ Women who transgressed norms of heterosexual conduct such as sex workers and unwed mothers were often confined in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Failures to perform productive and reproductive labor within Maison Sainte-Madeleine constituted a form of resistance to the discipline of the institution. Some inmates attempted to escape, while others demanded to be released, and many simply failed to adhere to the rule of silence and strict schedule enforced in Maison Sainte-Madeleine.⁵² Whether within the home, in the workplace, or in a Magdalen asylum, women in nineteenth-century Quebec were compelled to perform reproductive labor, a process fundamentally linked to industrial capitalism.

⁵⁰ Mireille Bergeron, "Historique sommaire de l'Hôpital de la Miséricorde et de la Crèche Saint-Vincent-de-Paul des Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur de Québec," (Québec : Service des archives des Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur de Québec, 2012) : 18. Web.

⁵¹ Andrée Lévesque, *Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939*, (Montréal: Les éditions du remue-ménage, 1994), 101.

⁵² Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 201. For example, *Years of Shepherding* describes inmates' "rebuffs, pouting, angry tirades and resistance," as well as escape attempts.

Outline

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Maison Sainte-Madeleine reproduced and regulated hegemonic gender roles through a programme of moral reform. The emergence of this system was deeply tied to the Catholic church and the role of the heterosexual family in Quebecois society. Maison Sainte-Madeleine was a space constituted through relationships of power between Sisters, Magdalens, and inmates. This institutional hierarchy is evidenced in the order's publications and institutional records, which detailed life within the asylum. Since its institutional trajectory diverged importantly from Irish Magdalen laundries, this study will give a chronological account of Maison Sainte-Madeleine's development over 150 years. The first three chapters will be devoted to the growth of the institution and its changes in mandate. The first will span from the foundation of the asylum in 1850 to its fiftieth anniversary; the second will outline a transitional period from 1900 to 1940, and the third will follow the institution's modernization and eventual closure from 1940 to 1975. These three chapters will examine the expansion of the institution by focusing on the built environment and living conditions within the asylum. The successive moves of Maison Sainte-Madeleine signalled evolutions in its hierarchy. This growth was made possible through state intervention: the institution received public funding in the early twentieth century, and was eventually taken over by the Quebecois government in 1975. The final chapter will draw out the similarities and divergences between Irish and Quebecois Magdalen asylums to account for the lack of public recognition that Maison Sainte-Madeleine has received.

The first chapter will outline the history of Maison Sainte-Madeleine from its foundation to the turn of the twentieth century, arguing that it was an austere institution where inmates lived in highly restricted parameters. This institution and other Magdalen asylums were opened as a response to concerns over immigration and sex work. Additionally, the foundation of the asylum was closely related to the wider phenomenon of incarceration in Quebec City, since it purportedly offered women an opportunity to reintegrate into the workforce or the home after imprisonment. The chapter will provide a historical background on the economic, social, and legal conditions of Lower Canada, Canada East and Quebec to contextualize the foundation and evolution of the institution. It will argue that the constitution of Maison Sainte-Madeleine as an economic space was related to processes of industrialization in Quebec City. This institution was

not exceptional in this regard, since other Magdalen asylums and establishments of moral reform opened in Montreal in this period. This thesis will provide present a historical summary of these institutions to contextualize the foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine and its evolution through the nineteenth century. Much like other Magdalen institutions, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's asylum maintained itself financially through charity and the labor of inmates. Daily life within the institution was highly regimented. Some inmates professed vows to stay in the institution for life by joining the Magdalen class. The foundation of this category within the asylum highlighted contradictory elements within the Maison Sainte-Madeleine's programme of spiritual reform. This mandate of moral uplift was apparent in the order's 1886 rules and constitution, which provided instructions on life within the asylum. These rules applied to Sisters, Magdalens and inmates, and emphasized spatial separation and bodily discipline. This chapter will close with a comparison between Maison Sainte-Madeleine and the establishments of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers, a religious order unaffiliated with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, to compare conditions between institutions of moral reform. This juxtaposition will also highlight the inherent difficulties of accounting for religious institutions by relying on sources written by the clergy.

The second chapter will argue that, between 1900 and 1940, Maison Sainte-Madeleine underwent a transitional phase in which the institution expanded significantly, while retaining the strict discipline established in the nineteenth century. The first portion of the chapter will outline the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's institutional practices, while the second will emphasize the evolution of the built environment. The asylum began admitting a growing number of juvenile delinquents sent by the Quebec courts, and unwed mothers from the order's maternity hospital. The Sisters opened a commercial laundry adjacent to Maison Sainte-Madeleine, Buanderie Saint-Joseph, in which inmates worked. This chapter will demonstrate that a strict schedule was still in place within the asylum by drawing on a prayerbook published in 1937. In the early twentieth century, Sisters, Magdalens and inmates had vastly different experiences of the built environment, both inside and outside the asylum. Following Magdalens' move to Maison de Bethanie, inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine congregated in rooms assigned by age and mental ability. Outside the asylum, the hierarchy between Sisters and inmates was also visible in Belmont cemetery. This chapter will provide an account of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's burial practices, and the institutional emphasis on spiritual

salvation through death. Institutionalized women who died in the asylum were buried under communal gravestones. In this period, Magdalens and inmates rarely left the institution, while Sisters retained comparatively more contact with the outside world. Lastly, this chapter will use an escape attempt in the asylum as a case study to examine the breadth of surveillance within the asylum. Despite its growth and evolution, Maison Sainte-Madeleine remained a strict institution in the early-twentieth century.

The third chapter will argue that Maison Sainte-Madeleine's institutional trajectory in the mid-twentieth century was subsumed under the broader narrative of secularization of the Quiet Revolution. From 1940 to its closure, Maison Sainte-Madeleine underwent considerably reforms. These changes towards professionalization, medicalization, and secularization were linked with increasing government intervention. Maison Sainte-Madeleine decisively broke from its mandate of reforming "fallen women" to focus instead on the moral uplift of delinquent girls. The institution offered culinary and domestic training, predominantly in textile production, through the foundation of a school of arts and trade. Social workers and therapists entered the establishment for the first time. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec also began favoring a psychotherapeutic approach in their treatment of juvenile delinquents. However, these reforms should not be overstated: protégées continued to wash, press and fold clothing in Buanderie Saint-Joseph until the 1970s. While work within the laundry was compensated after 1944, wages were much lower than average for women in the labor-force. The training given to protégées shared several similarities with the manual labor performed in the earlier days of the institution, including its emphasis on domesticity and reintegration within the home. The increasing government intervention culminated in the closure of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, by then known as Maison Marie-Fitzbach, which was absorbed in the state-run readaptation center L'Escale. The institution's closure coincided with a marked decrease in the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's membership, as well as a wider tendency towards secularization in Quebecois society. Therefore, the reform and eventual closure of Maison Sainte-Madeleine were part of broader social changes ushered in by the Quiet Revolution.

The final chapter will define some major factors which led to the difference in which Irish and Quebecois Magdalen asylums are remembered by the public. Drawing on Elizabeth Cullingford's scholarship, which argued that representations of Irish Magdalen asylums evoked

Gothic narratives of religious intransigence, the chapter will maintain that the institutional reforms of the 1940s to the 1970s led to a more sympathetic view of Maison Sainte-Madeleine. The fact that Quebecois inmates were compensated for their labor, whereas Irish inmates were not, played a significant role in the public memory of these institutions. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec also entertained a closer relationship to the general public than their Irish counterparts. Through commemorative publications and the foundation of a museum, the religious order retained control over the history and representation of their institutions. The public outcry generated by the Duplessis Orphans controversy brought illegitimacy and unwed motherhood to the forefront of discussion. This chapter will the similarities between this scandal in Quebec and the Magdalen controversy in Ireland, and argue that the public response to the Duplessis Orphans overshadowed popular memory of Maison Sainte-Madeleine. This chapter will explore the importance of studying Magdalen institutions from a transnational perspective by showing major differences between the Irish and Quebecois contexts.

CHAPTER 1: The foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, 1850-1900

Maison Sainte-Madeleine was founded in 1850 in response to industrialization, immigration and sex work in Quebec City. First, this chapter will contextualize the foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine by providing a historical background on Magdalen asylums. Drawing on the work of Constance Backhouse and Jean-Marie Fecteau, this chapter will outline legal attitudes towards sex work in Canada and working conditions for women in Quebec City in the mid-nineteenth century. Religious vocations were rising, and the region was undergoing a period of industrialization in the late nineteenth century. This economic and legal context, combined with a rise in religious fervor, led to the establishment of several Magdalen asylums in Montreal. Because of their emphasis on rehabilitating former prisoners, these institutions were connected to the wider system of incarceration in Lower Canada, East Canada and the province of Quebec. Secondly, this chapter will relate the foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine to social regulation, specifically with regards to immigrant and sex work. The asylum was a hierarchical environment, in which Sisters oversaw the daily lives of inmates and Magdalens. This order of importance was reinforced by spatial separation and uniforms worn within the asylum, but also through strict supervision. From the very beginning, the institution relied on the labor of inmates to sustain itself, which was justified by an ethic of spiritual repentance. Moreover, the revenue generated by manual labor and charity prompted the expansion of the built environment of Maison Sainte-Madeleine in the nineteenth century. This growth was accompanied by the creation of the Magdalen class, a group of inmates who vowed to stay in the institution for life. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec formalized its system of moral reform through its 1886 constitution, which emphasized bodily discipline as a means of spiritual salvation. Drawing on this document, this chapter will demonstrate the extent of surveillance within the institution. Lastly, the institutions of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers will offer a point of comparison with Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Much like the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, this Montreal-based religious order of French origin opened a women's prison and several extra-penal institutions, including a Magdalen asylum. Both establishments embraced a mandate of spiritual salvation through manual labor, which was enforced through strict supervision. Several monographs written by clergy members give a historical account of the

Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers. This chapter will expose the limitations of these religious sources in accounting for conditions within these institutions.

Magdalen asylums did not originate in Canada. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec put forward a history of Maison Sainte-Madeleine which placed the first Magdalen asylums in the twelfth century, adding that they proliferated rapidly in the seventeenth century.⁵³ These houses were initially religious communities composed of “penitent women who desired to reform their lives,” though “[a]s time went on [...] others of blameless reputation were also admitted, until many communities were composed entirely of the latter.”⁵⁴ While there was no consensus on the date of foundation of the first Magdalen asylum, these institutions existed in Germany in the early thirteenth century.⁵⁵ The Order of St. Magdalen, founded in 1618, was separated in three categories, the Magdalens, the Sisters of Saint Martha and the Sisters of Saint Lazarus, who occupied separate buildings. The Sisters of Saint Lazarus were described as “public sinners confined against their will.”⁵⁶ Thus the practice of detaining fallen women in Magdalen institutions predated the arrival of these establishments in Canada. Magdalen asylums such as Maison Sainte-Madeleine were part of the larger network of carceral and extra-penal institutions in the nineteenth century. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault described the “the completion of the carceral system” in 1840, with the foundation of Mettray, a penal colony for young delinquents in central France.⁵⁷ This institution was significant because it “situates the ‘end’ of the process in the lower reaches of criminal law.”⁵⁸ Mettray admitted juvenile delinquents sentenced by the courts, but also acquitted minors and boarders.⁵⁹ Foucault argued that extra-penal institutions such as Mettray were part of a “carceral archipelago.”⁶⁰ While not prisons, these establishments were interconnected, linking “public assistance with the orphanage, the reformatory [sic], the penitentiary, the disciplinary battalion, the prison; the school with the charitable society, the workshop, the almshouse, the penitentiary convent.”⁶¹ The Sisters of the

⁵³ Henri Raymond Casgrain, *L'asile du Bon-Pasteur de Québec, d'après les annales de cet institut*, (Québec : L.J. Demers et Frères, 1896) : 12.

⁵⁴ Florence Rudge McGahan, “Magdalens,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol IX, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912): 524.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 524.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 524.

⁵⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 293.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 299.

Good Shepherd of Quebec operated a prison, a reformatory, an orphanage and a Magdalen asylum. Sherrill Cohen has related women's asylums, including Magdalen institutions, to the mechanisms of discipline described by Foucault. She argued that the carceral archipelago was "preceded by the vast network of women's institutions that grew up in early modern Europe."⁶² Earlier Magdalen institutions such as the ones opened by the Order of St-Magdalen were a direct precedent to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's institutional network. In Canada, the first charitable work aimed at reforming fallen women was founded by Marguerite d'Youville and Sisters of Charity in the mid-eighteenth century.⁶³ Magdalen asylums proliferated across Europe in this period, with over 300 opened in England by 1900.⁶⁴ The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers, a religious order of French origin unrelated to the Quebecois Sisters founded convents in Limerick, Breslau, Bangalore, Nayakakanda, El-Biar, Misserghin, Philadelphia, Vienna and other cities between 1833 and 1860.⁶⁵ In Montreal, the Charitable Institution for Female Penitents, the Protestant Magdalen Asylum and the Hôpital de la Miséricorde, whose respective histories will be drawn later in this chapter, flourished in the mid-nineteenth century. Maison Sainte-Madeleine, therefore, emerged as part of a larger system of extra-penal institutions aimed at reforming fallen women.

The foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine coincided with a rise in religious fervor and criminal prosecution in Canada East. Jean-Marie Fecteau argued that in the mid-nineteenth century, the Catholic Church controlled the majority of systems of social regulation in the province due to a favorable religious and political climate.⁶⁶ Nineteenth century social welfare

⁶² Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums until 1500: From refuges for ex-prostitutes to shelters for battered women*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 147.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁴ McCarthy, *Origins of the Magdalene laundries*, 184.

⁶⁵ Charles de Riancey, *De la situation religieuse en Algérie*, (Paris: Librairie centrale, 1846): 15; Gaëtan Bernoville, *Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier*, (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds Ltd, 1958): 193; "History" and "Contemplatives," Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers of the Province of Sri Lanka/Pakistan, accessed July 28th, 2017, <http://www.gssslpk.lk/index.php> The order counted 463 Houses in 1958 and 2600 Magdalens. These convents were not necessarily attached to Magdalen asylums, since the order also opened industrial schools. However, there are several examples of Good Shepherd refuges opened internationally: in 1926, the Sisters opened a refuge in Wattala, in Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). A specific section for unwed mothers was opened in 1938, and the order received Magdalens in their Bangalore convent in 1958. An 1846 publication describing religious groups in Algeria noted a Good Shepherd refuge in El-Biar. The order, which specialized in the rescue of fallen women, expanded its presence in all five continents by 1958.

⁶⁶ Jean Marie Fecteau, "L'univers religieux, l'éthique libérale et l'économie de l'enfermement. Le cas du Québec au xixe siècle," in *Religion et enfermements : XVIIe-XXe siècles*, (Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005), par. 3.

initiatives were separated between Catholic and Protestant communities.⁶⁷ In 1871, nine out of ten inhabitants of Quebec were Catholics, which meant that Maison Sainte-Madeleine served a wider population than its Protestant counterparts.⁶⁸ Criminal prosecution dramatically increased in Quebec City and Montreal between 1830 and 1860. Donald Fyson attributed this increase to the criminal justice system's focus towards social regulation. By the end of this period, "vagrancy, drunkenness, disorderly conduct and disrupting the peace" were the most common offences.⁶⁹ Jean-Marie Fecteau noted that the incarceration rates of men and women were comparable between 1836 and the mid-1860s, after which the number of female prisoners dramatically declined to represent around one fifth of male inmates in the early 1910s.⁷⁰ This period marked the opening of several Magdalen homes, industrial schools and reformatories that absorbed part of the criminalized population.

Legal approaches to sex work

The foundation of several Magdalen asylums in the nineteenth century was connected to governmental efforts to control and contain sexuality. Historian Constance Backhouse describes three legal approaches to sex work in this period: regulation, prohibition and rehabilitation. She argues that "[d]iscrimination on the basis of class, race and ethnic origin figured prominently in each, as immigrant and minority groups such as the Irish, black and native Indian communities suffered disproportionately."⁷¹ Prior to 1865, Canadian legislation targeted women for their status as sex workers, a treatment which was "significantly harsher" than English law, which required indecent or disorderly behavior.⁷² In 1865, the Canadian Parliament passed the Contagious Diseases Act based on the English legislation passed a year earlier. This statute allowed for the detainment of sex workers in lock hospitals to alleviate what was perceived as a

⁶⁷ Robert J. Grace, "A Demographic and Social Profile of Quebec City's Irish Populations, 1842—1861," *Journal Of American Ethnic History* 23, no. 1 (2003): 77. *Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost* (accessed July 23, 2016).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶⁹ Donald Fyson, "The Judicial Prosecution of Crime in the Longue Durée: Quebec, 1712-1965," in Jean-Marie Fecteau and Janice Harvey (eds), *Agency and Institutions in Social Regulation: Toward an Historical Understanding of their Interaction*, 91.

⁷⁰ Jean-Marie Fecteau et al., "Répression au quotidien et régulation punitive en longue durée le cas de la prison de Montréal, 1836-1913," *Déviante et Société* 2006/3 (Vol. 30), 344.

⁷¹ Constance Backhouse, "Nineteenth-Century Canadian Prostitution Law: Reflection of a Discriminatory Society," *Histoire Sociale - Social History*, Vol. XVIII, no. 36, (1986): 388.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 389.

public health problem. The legislation, however, remained unenforced, as no lock hospitals were certified by the expiry of the statute in 1870.⁷³ This period ushered in an attempt at prohibiting sex work entirely, in part due to moral anxieties surrounding so-called “white slavery,” the coercion of white women into sexual slavery.⁷⁴ The federal court of Canada passed “An Act respecting Vagrants” and “An Act respecting offenses Against the Person” to address this crisis in 1869.⁷⁵ The first legislation allowed officers to interrogate “common prostitutes, or night walkers wandering in the fields, public streets or highways, lanes or places of public meeting or gathering of people”, and fine or jail them should they not give “a satisfactory account of themselves.”⁷⁶ The maximum period of incarceration was two months, and the maximum fine was \$50.⁷⁷ This statute regulated the way in which citizens, particularly women, negotiated public space, since they could be questioned and potentially apprehended for being outside at night. “An Act to respecting offenses Against the Person” addressed the fear of white slavery more directly, by making it “criminal to procure the defilement of women under the age of 21 by false pretenses, representations, or other fraudulent means.”⁷⁸ Backhouse noted a subsequent expansion of social regulation of sex work, particularly in the end of the nineteenth century. This legislative framework, rather than aimed at containing sex work, sought to eradicate it entirely.⁷⁹ In nineteenth-century Canada, the category of “fallen woman” encompassed not only women who transgressed a variety of social norms, but also ones who were perceived as likely to transgress. Unwed mothers, former convicts, sex workers and alcoholics were all mentioned as inmates in religious publications describing Magdalen asylums. The successive laws described by Backhouse disproportionately targeted poor and racialized women, and regulated the way in which public space was negotiated. The legislative framework that addressed sex work thus informed who was likely to be institutionalized.

Social stigma against women who transgressed norms of sexual behavior was pervasive in Quebec City. While Maison Sainte-Madeleine positioned fallen women as subjects in need of moral reform, religious institutions were not the only spaces in which sex work and unwed

⁷³ Backhouse, “Nineteenth-Century Canadian Prostitution Law,” 389-92.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 394.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 395.

motherhood were regulated. Charivaris were public rituals in which citizens would expressed their disapproval through noisemaking and mock serenading. René Hardy has noted that a third of charivaris documented in judiciary archives in the province of Quebec were related to sexual transgression.⁸⁰ Brothels were targeted and destroyed by mobs in the city of Quebec.⁸¹ In the early days of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, inmates and Sisters were repudiated by the public, frequently insulted and called names including such insults as “women of bad life” and “depraved girls.”⁸² Marta Danyelewycz described a similar hostility towards the Sisters of Miséricorde, who encountered verbal and physical abuse in the mid-nineteenth century when accompanying unwed mothers.⁸³ This treatment suggests that violence against sex work and unwed motherhood was pervasive and extended beyond the women who engaged in it. Moreover, charivaris, public name-calling and the destruction of brothels meant that women who transgressed sexual norms of behavior were humiliated and shut out of public space.

The emergence of institutions such as Maison Sainte-Madeleine should be read in the broader economic context of Quebec City. Concurrent with the foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, changes in trade regulation led to an increase in manufacture. The repeal of the Corn Laws and Navigation Acts in the late 1840s and early 50s signalled a decline in the timber industry, as these policies had favored exclusivity in trade between the colonial city and the British empire.⁸⁴ Shipbuilding also experienced a rapid downfall, which partly led to economic depression and population stagnation in the 1870s.⁸⁵ This period marked the “beginnings of mechanization and mass production,” particularly in the shoemaking industry.⁸⁶ Legislation was put in place to regulate these burgeoning industries. In 1885, the Factory Act was introduced in Quebec, which limited working time for young girls and women to ten hours a day and sixty hours a week.⁸⁷ The legislation, which was the first labor law in the province, limited the

⁸⁰ René Hardy, *Charivari et justice populaire au Québec*, 161.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁸² Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 36.

⁸³ Danyelewycz, *Taking the Veil*, 86.

⁸⁴ Vallières, *Quebec City*, (Quebec: University of Laval Press, 2011): 96.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁸⁷ National Assembly of Quebec, *The Quebec factories act of 1885: and regulations prescribed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on the 19th of June, 1888*, (Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions, 1986): 12. Microfiche CIHM.

workday: women could not work before 6am or after 9pm.⁸⁸ Children under the age of twelve and girls under the age of fourteen were prohibited from working in factories. This legislation purportedly covered laundries and was reportedly enforced through regular inspections.⁸⁹ The Act was largely ineffectual, partly because “[c]ompanies employing fewer than forty women and children were not covered by its provisions.”⁹⁰ Moreover, inspectors were only appointed in 1888, and female inspectors eight years later. The lack of enforcement of the Act coupled with low remuneration spelled out difficult circumstances for workers, especially women and children.⁹¹ The predominantly female garment industry received “some of the lowest wages: \$173 a year in 1890, or half the average industrial wage in Montreal.”⁹² Workers in this industry suffered exploitative conditions, especially in sweatshops, which emerged in Quebec around 1870.⁹³ At the same time, women were gaining employment in greater numbers: by 1891, they comprised 30% of the Quebecois workforce.⁹⁴ Female hires in factories in particular attracted the ire of clergy and union leaders.⁹⁵ The Magdalen asylum system, which was aimed at reintegrating women to the home or the workplace, thus prepared women for difficult and even exploitative conditions in manufacturing and domestic work.

Backhouse’s account of legislation towards sex work as well as Quebec’s industrialisation should be read in conjunction with the emergence of forms of punishment aimed at instilling domesticity in inmates. Angela Davis wrote that separate penal facilities for women in the nineteenth-century United States purported to “reintegrate criminalized women into the domestic life of wife and mother.”⁹⁶ The reformers who advocated for this programme “did not, however, acknowledge the class and race underpinnings of this regime,” since “[t]raining that was, on the surface, designed to produce good wives and mothers in effect steered poor women (and especially black women) into “free world” jobs in domestic service.”⁹⁷ Following their incarceration, many former inmates became “maids, cooks and washerwomen for more affluent

⁸⁸The Education Committees of Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) and Centrale de l’enseignement du Québec (CEQ), *The History of the Labor Movement in Québec*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987): 32.

⁸⁹ National Assembly of Quebec, *Factories Act 1885*, 14, 22.

⁹⁰ CSN and CEQ, *The History of the Labor Movement*, 33.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹⁴ Denyse Baillargeon, *A Brief History*, 78

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁹⁶ Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 70.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

women.”⁹⁸ Scholar Dionne Brand argues that Black women employed in domestic work in the Americas performed both productive work and the reproduction of labor-power in society, adding that “although it is necessary labor, it is seen as degraded labor.”⁹⁹ Black women working in these positions would receive lower wages than working white women, and work on flexible time while also taking care of their own families. This role within the mode of production was ideologically tied to racist stereotypes in which Black women were positioned as inferior. Between 1841 and 1881, 97% of working Black women in East Canada were employed in domestic work.¹⁰⁰ Davis wrote that rather than challenge the hegemonic model of “fallen woman,” penal reformers emphasized the possibility of moral uplift through preparation for marriage. Since being a stay-at-home mother required a husband with the financial means to provide for a family, this system was mainly targeted at white, middle-class women. Therefore, race and class were determining factors not only in who was criminalized, but also who was perceived as capable of reform.

Other Magdalen asylums and institutions for fallen women in Lower Canada

Maison Sainte-Madeleine was not the first nor the only Magdalen asylum in the Lower Canada, Canada East and the Province of Quebec. This section will give a brief history of institutions that admitted Magdalens and penitents in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, including the Catholic and Protestant Montreal Magdalen asylums and Asile Sainte-Pélagie, later known as the Hôpital de la Miséricorde.¹⁰¹

The Montreal Magdalen asylum was an early example of such institutions, and predated the period of industrialization in Quebec City outlined above.¹⁰² Founded by Agathe-Henriette Huguet dite Latour in 1829, the establishment was also known as the Charitable Institution for

⁹⁸ Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 70.

⁹⁹ Dionne Brand, “Black Women and Work: The Impact of Racially Constructed Gender Roles on the Sexual Division of Labor,” in Enashki Dua and Angela Roberston (ed.), *Scratching the Surface: Canadian Anti-racist Feminist Thought*, (Toronto: Women’s Press, 199): 91.

¹⁰⁰ Daniel Guay, *Des empruntes noires sur la neige blanche : Les Noirs au Québec*, (Québec : Université Laval, 1988), 159.

¹⁰¹ In order to account for the evolution of other Magdalen institutions in the region, this section goes beyond the timeline outlined for Maison Sainte-Madeleine in this section (1850-1900) to include the 1930s.

¹⁰² Peter Gossage and J.I. Little, *An Illustrated History of Quebec*, 132. Historians J.I. Little and Peter Gossage have noted the 1840s as a key decade in the industrialization of Montreal.

Female Penitents. According to historian Mary Anne Poutanen, “[t]he primary objective of the refuge was to change the sexual behavior of prostitutes through repentance, discipline, and work.”¹⁰³ The institution benefitted from the support of Emilie Gamelin, who was involved in the establishment of several charitable institutions in the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁴ She founded the Sisters of Providence and was “one of very few Canadian Catholics to have been beatified and proposed to sainthood.”¹⁰⁵ The asylum also received grants as outlined by the Provincial Statutes of Lower Canada, though it mainly relied on the labor of inmates to fund itself.¹⁰⁶ Poutanen described it as an unpleasant institution, citing a woman who chose to remain in prison rather than transfer to the establishment.¹⁰⁷ The Montreal Magdalen Asylum was most famous for having housed Maria Monk, who wrote a discredited and anti-Catholic account of her stay in Hôtel-Dieu. In this account, she alleged that nuns killed newborn children.¹⁰⁸ In fact, she had been staying at the asylum on Geneviève Street two years prior to her sensationalistic publication.¹⁰⁹ By 1836, the institution had closed, having housed three hundred inmates.¹¹⁰ Alongside the foundress’ remarriage, Poutanen noted “the obvious disinterest in its continued operation on the part of the elite religious and secular population” as a primary motivator in the institution’s closure.¹¹¹ The maintenance of Magdalen asylums was thus tied to wider social forces, such as the implication of the clergy and citizenry.

Magdalen asylums were not uniquely Catholic institutions. The Montreal Protestant Magdalen Asylum opened in 1844, and admitted a wide variety of inmates.¹¹² It was founded in the same year as the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers’ Magdalen asylum on Brock Street,

¹⁰³ Mary Anne Poutanen, *Beyond Brutal Passions: Prostitution in Early-Nineteenth Century Montreal*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015): 154.

¹⁰⁴ *An Act to authorize the advancement of a certain sum of money in aid of an Institution for Female Penitents*, Provincial Statutes of Lower Canada Vol. 14, C.A.P. XLIII, (1832): 578.

¹⁰⁵ Bettina Bradbury, *Wife to Widow: Lives, Laws and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Montreal*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011): 289.

¹⁰⁶ Marguerite Jean, “TAVERNIER, ÉMILIE,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003. Accessed May 9, 2017. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tavernier_emilie_8E.html

¹⁰⁷ Poutanen, *Beyond Brutal Passions*, 155.

¹⁰⁸ Clio Collective, *Quebec Women: A History*, (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1987): 169.

¹⁰⁹ Agathe-Henriette Hugué-Latour, *Affidavit of Maria Monk, Madame D.C. McDonnell [sic], matron of the Montreal Magdalen Asylum, Ste. Genevieve Street*. Montreal: n.p., 1.

¹¹⁰ Poutanen, *Beyond Brutal Passions*, 157.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹¹² Janice Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies’ Benevolent Society: A Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822-1900,” (Montreal: McGill University, 2001): 111. PhD Dissertation.

which will be described later in this chapter.¹¹³ The Montreal Protestant Magdalen Asylum was renamed the Female Home in 1868. Janice Harvey noted that “[a]lthough some of the women admitted were prostitutes, most were young pregnant domestic servants, alcoholics, former prisoners and, from the 1890s, women placed by the Recorder in lieu of a prison sentence.”¹¹⁴ The asylum also relied on laundry work and prayer as a method of spiritual reform. In 1886, it was taken over by the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and became known as the Sheltering Home.¹¹⁵ The register for the years 1887 to 1897 listed 3101 entries, most of whom were Protestants. Much like Maison Sainte-Madeleine, this institution housed immigrants and women of color.¹¹⁶ The institution began admitting “female convalescents, the feeble-minded and ‘incompetent, idle girls’” in the late-nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ The Protestant Magdalen Asylum demonstrated that concerns over sex work, criminality and immigration were not unique to Catholicism.

Establishments which were not strictly Magdalen asylums also attempted to reform so-called fallen women through the creation of a separate class of inmates. Journalist Micheline Lachance, in her study of Montreal’s Asile Sainte-Pélagie run by the Sisters of Mercy, noted that women were admitted as penitents Magdalens in the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹⁸ Founded in 1845, this institution offered unwed mothers a place to give birth in secret.¹¹⁹ Inmates worked in the laundry or sewing prior to giving birth, and obeyed a rule of silence at night.¹²⁰ By the 1930s, the institution was known as Hôpital de la Miséricorde, and patients were given a new name upon entering, some of which were humiliating.¹²¹ Single mothers underwent a process of infantilization in the hospital, where they would be given marks according to their behavior.¹²² Patients who could not afford their hospitalization could work before or after birth to refund the

¹¹³ Édouard Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur et ses oeuvres à Montréal*, 13, 14.

¹¹⁴ Janice Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum,” 111.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹¹⁶ *W.T.C.U. Sheltering Home Register*, Montreal: W.T.C.U. Sheltering Home, 1887-1897. McCord Museum. The document specified that many women who entered the institution were “coloured.”

¹¹⁷ Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum,” 112.

¹¹⁸ Micheline Lachance, “Rosalie Jetté et les filles-mères: entre tutelle religieuse et pouvoir médical (1845-1866),” (Montreal: Université du Québec à Montréal, 2007): 134. MA thesis.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹²¹ Andrée Lévesque, “Deviants Anonymous: Single Mothers at the Hôpital de la Miséricorde,” in Arnup, Katherine, Andrée Lévesque and Ruth Roach Pierson, eds. *Delivering Motherhood* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 110.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 113.

cost.¹²³ This work was justified on economic and spiritual grounds.¹²⁴ Assessing this practice's spiritual dimension, historian Andrée Lévesque wrote that "[i]t is difficult to argue that this kind of work was solely for moral reform when women in private rooms were exempt from all work before their delivery."¹²⁵ Some inmates were referred to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers.¹²⁶ Contrarily to similar institutions Ireland, unwed mothers were encouraged to keep their child after giving birth in Hôpital de Miséricorde during the 1930s.¹²⁷ The history of Hôpital de la Miséricorde, while not a Magdalen asylum, highlighted the Catholic tendency of seeing unwed mothers as fallen women in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

The similarities between Maison Sainte-Madeleine and other Magdalen asylums, including its foundation in the mid-nineteenth century and its emphasis on bodily discipline and salvation through work, meant that it was not an exceptional institution. While the Catholic and Protestant Magdalen asylums, the Good Shepherd of Angers institutions and the Hôpital de la Miséricorde housed a wide variety of inmates, all these establishments regulated women's sexual and moral behavior. Former criminals, alcoholics, sex workers and unwed mothers were all subjects of rescue work. Moreover, all these institutions depended in some way on inmates' manual labor to sustain themselves. Maison Sainte-Madeleine was thus not unique in its mission of moral reform in the nineteenth century.

Foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine

Concurrent with the emergence of other Magdalen asylums in the region, the foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine was tied to social regulation and sex work. The history of the foundress of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec illustrated the ideological underpinnings of the fledgling institution. Marie-Josephte Fitzbach, was born in 1806 in the village of Saint-Vallier de Bellechasse, the seventh of eight children.¹²⁸ She received no formal education in her youth and could not read or write, though distinguished herself early on by her piety.¹²⁹ Following financial difficulties in her family, she moved to Quebec City at the age of

¹²³ Lévesque, "Deviants Anonymous," 111.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹²⁸ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 21.

¹²⁹ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 22.

thirteen, staying with her sister.¹³⁰ She was hired as a domestic servant in a house next to a brothel, an experience that subsequent biographers have noted as formative.¹³¹ An official publication by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec attributed the following gruesome story to her:

One night, an unfortunate woman being pursued, came to stand by our open window, begging to let her in; it was not possible. A secret passage was shown to her. She took it and returned to the house, and instead of keeping quiet, she went to look out of a window. Those who were pursuing her did not so soon notice her that they tore off her head, which was left on the ground while her torso was in the house. When the news spread in the morning, we saw the coagulated blood, I felt horror such that I still feel it now.¹³²

The commemorative monograph reporting this gruesome murder, presumably of a sex worker, unfortunately does not offer a citation nor does it specify a year, making it difficult to measure its factuality. However, the tale would suggest the depth of stigma, coercion and violence that sex workers faced in early nineteenth-century Quebec City and Lower Canada. According to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, Fitzback was therefore inspired to open Maison Sainte-Madeleine as a response to the perceived problem of “fallen womanhood” in Quebec City. Rather than address the stigma against sex work directly, the institution attempted to reform and rehabilitate inmates.

From its very inception, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was connected to carceral institutions in Quebec City. Sir George Manly Muir, a lawyer who paid frequent visits to the Notre-Dame-de-Québec prison, was central to the establishment of Maison Sainte-Madeleine.¹³³ Muir became interested in founding a refuge after a conversation he allegedly had while exhorting female prisoners to lead a more righteous life.¹³⁴ A woman explained that any attempt to integrate the workforce after a stay in prison was ill-fated, because: “Once lost, we are without resources, no

¹³⁰ Ibid., 22.

¹³¹ Ibid., 23.

¹³² “Une nuit, une malheureuse femme, étant poursuivie, vint se placer à notre fenêtre entrouverte, suppliant qu'on la laissât entrer; ce n'était pas possible. Un passage dérobé lui fut indiqué. Elle le prit et, revenue au logis, au lieu de se tenir coite, s'avança pour regarder par un carreau. Ceux qui la poursuivaient ne l'eurent pas plus tôt aperçue que, se jetant sur elle, ils lui arrachèrent la tête qui fut laissée sur le sol tandis que le tronc était dans la maison. Quand la nouvelle fut répandue le lendemain matin, que l'on vit le sang coagulé, j'épouvrais une horreur telle que je la ressens encore.” Ibid., 23.

¹³³ Ibid., 28-29.

¹³⁴ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 29

one wants to receive us. Once we leave, there is nothing for us outside places of perdition and debauchery.”¹³⁵ This passage suggested that the stigma of incarceration prevented women from being hired after their sentences. Muir, who was known for the phrase “The salvation of a soul is worth more than the conquest of an empire,”¹³⁶ was motivated to open a refuge, the cost of which would be initially shouldered by the Société Saint-Vincent-de-Paul and abbot Charles-François Baillargeon.¹³⁷ The support of the society was hardly surprising: Muir was involved with the group and helped open a chapter in Toronto in 1850.¹³⁸ He approached the archbishop of Quebec, Mgr Pierre-Flavien Turgeon, to find a suitable person to take charge of the institution, upon which Marie-Josephte Fitzback was recommended.¹³⁹ With the help of Mary Keogh, an Irish immigrant and orphan, Fitzback opened Maison Sainte-Madeleine on January 11th 1850.¹⁴⁰ The first night, the two foundresses arrived during a snowstorm and their first meal was a half loaf of bread.¹⁴¹ In the first year of operation, twenty women were admitted to the asylum, and six helpers joined the institution.¹⁴² A recent publication by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec describes early inmates as “lost women,” “issued from the roughest backgrounds,” as well as “quick-tempered, violent and rude.”¹⁴³ According to the religious order, the admitted women, the majority of whom were immigrants over the age of twenty-one, were generally sex workers, criminals, alcoholics and addicts.¹⁴⁴ While many of the early inmates were former criminals, some of the first admissions were young women who arrived to Canada from Ireland to escape famine. Referring to a historical notice by the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Society, demographer Robert J. Grace characterized the women held within the asylum as being

¹³⁵ “Une fois perdues, nous sommes sans ressource, personne ne veut plus nous recevoir. Au sortir d’ici, il n’y a pour nous que les lieux de perdition et la débauche.”

Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 29.

¹³⁶ Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur 47

¹³⁷ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 29

¹³⁸ E.J. Devine, “The Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul,” in *The Canadian Messenger*, Vol. 9, no. 10 (1899): 435-6.

¹³⁹ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 30.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 48.

¹⁴¹ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir* 33

¹⁴² Andrée Désilets, “FITSBACH,” n.p.

¹⁴³ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 35.

¹⁴⁴ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Les protégées,” in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec: Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

of primarily French and Irish origin.¹⁴⁵ Between 1842 and 1861, the Irish Catholic population of Quebec City increased by 130 percent, with women in particular swelling the ranks.¹⁴⁶ In 1861, there were 1,238 Irish Catholic women between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three in the city, an increase of more than 50% since 1852.¹⁴⁷ An 1860 notice on the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Society described the foundation of Maison Sainte-Madeleine as a response to the arrival of immigrants from Europe, who were often destitute and resorted to sex work.¹⁴⁸ Thus, the growth in population following the Great Irish Famine partly explained the preponderance of Irish Catholic women in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Though not all women who entered the institution were criminalized, the justification for the foundation of the establishment showed the extent to which it was embedded within the wider carceral system in Quebec City. Maison Sainte-Madeleine thus emerged as an extra-penal institution, which absorbed former convicts alongside destitute immigrants.

Incorporation and establishment of the religious order

Despite the difficult beginnings of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, the institution was incorporated and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec were canonically established within the first decade of its foundation. The rue Richelieu asylum was fast abandoned in favor of a vaster space on rue de la Chevrotière, at the corner of Saint-Amable in the Saint-Louis district (fig. 1).¹⁴⁹ According an official history of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, the neighborhood had an unsavory reputation.¹⁵⁰ A largely working-class district, it was a popular meeting place for English regiments.¹⁵¹ A historian of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec described the streets neighboring the institution as being particularly dangerous at night, since they were frequented by drunk sailors and soldiers.¹⁵² Measuring 72' by 55', the building on de la

¹⁴⁵ Robert J. Grace, "A Demographic and Social Profile of Quebec City's Irish Populations, 1842—1861," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 23, no. 1 (2003): 73. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 23, 2016).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁴⁸ N.a., *Notice historique sur la Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, (Quebec: Imprimeur de l'Archevêché, 1860) : 103.

¹⁴⁹ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 39.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵¹ Casgrain, *L'asile du Bon-Pasteur de Québec*, 118.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 118.

Chevrotière cost 20 000\$ to erect, and was located next to a “house of ill fame.”¹⁵³ The move occurred on May 1st 1855, and the institution was henceforth known as the Maison Bon-Pasteur by the general public.¹⁵⁴ The building was officially incorporated under the name “Asile du Bon-Pasteur de Québec” on May 30th.¹⁵⁵ The act of incorporation stipulated that all rents, profits and revenue that Maison Sainte-Madeleine would acquire should be spent on the living costs of inmates and members of the corporation, on the construction and repair of buildings and on any associated expenses.¹⁵⁶ The institution was also permitted to set its own rules, as long as they did not contravene legislation in Lower Canada or the stipulations of the act. The Act specified that the institution would deliver annual reports to both chambers of the legislature that would detail the number of members and the number of inmates as well as the general state of affairs within.¹⁵⁷ The religious order was canonically established as the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on February 2nd 1856.¹⁵⁸ Despite the new name of the community, the order was generally known as the Sisters of the Good Shepherd due to their involvement with the asylum.¹⁵⁹ Mary Keogh, who played a key role in the foundation of the institution, was not admitted to the religious order because of “a weakness of spirit,” and left the premises shortly after.¹⁶⁰ Marie-Josephte Fitzbach was named the Superior of the institution five days later, and was known as Mother Mary of the Sacred Heart thereafter.¹⁶¹ Therefore, in spite of early difficulties, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec established themselves more firmly by 1856 through the officialization of both the religious order and their first institution.

¹⁵³ “maison mal famée” in Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 40; N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 83.

¹⁵⁴ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 49.

¹⁵⁵ N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 83.

¹⁵⁶ *Acte pour incorporer Maison Sainte-Madeleine*, 1-2

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2

¹⁵⁸ Andrée Désilets, “FISBACH (Fitzbach, Fisbacht), MARIE,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol XI. North York: University of Toronto/ Université Laval, n.p.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ “faiblesse d’esprit” in N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 85; Dumais, P. “Avis Officiels,” *Journal de l’instruction publique* Vol. 3, no 3 (Mars 1859), Montreal : Département de l’instruction publique, 1859, 46. While little is known about her life following her departure, her name turns up in the *Journal d’instruction publique* in 1859, where she is listed as having received a diploma allowing her to teach elementary school.

¹⁶¹ N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 92.



Figure 1. Map of Quebec, 1855. The red dot (added by the author) indicates corner La Chevrotière and Sainte-Amable in Saint-Louis district. From: S. McLaughlin, “McLaughlin’s Plan of the City of Quebec. 1855,” in *McLaughlin’s Quebec Directory*, (Quebec: Bureau & Marcotte, 1855), n.p.

Uniforms and the built environment

The uniforms worn by inmates and Sisters and the built environment of the asylum enforced hierarchy within the institution. Maison Sainte-Madeleine expanded to accommodate a growing number of inmates throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Sisters and inmates wore different uniforms, which were conceived to inspire penitence. In Maison Sainte-Madeleine, black dresses and white bonnets were the uniforms for the congregation, while inmates wore blue calico outfits.¹⁶² Photographs of the 1850 uniform show a white high-collared cape reaching down to the waist adorned with a V-shaped ribbon. Underneath this garment, the

¹⁶² Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 39.

women wore a long, dark dress with ample sleeves with the skirt reaching down to the ankles.¹⁶³ The sisters' costume was based on the Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu.¹⁶⁴ While separating categories of inmates was key to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd's project of spiritual reform, this mission was not reflected at first in the built environment of Maison Sainte Madeleine. Inmates and sisters occupied close quarters in a three-storey stone house on 67 Richelieu Street in Quebec City.¹⁶⁵ The building featured sewing rooms and a chapel on the first floor, and sisters slept in a common dormitory.¹⁶⁶ The first winter was particularly difficult in the asylum, as many inmates and Mary Keogh slept in the attic of the building on straw cots.¹⁶⁷ The fact that inmates slept in such conditions reflected their position within the asylum's hierarchy. Inmates were overseen by a Sister, whose position was titled "Mistress of penitents."¹⁶⁸ Fear of moral contagion was eventually reflected in the built environment of Maison Sainte-Madeleine. A sister recounting Muir's visit to the Quebec City prison described it as an environment that "render[ed] the younger and less experienced inmates more depraved by association with inveterate sinners."¹⁶⁹ Before the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec were recognized as a religious order in 1856, men would arrive at Maison Sainte-Madeleine to attempt to see inmates.¹⁷⁰ This meant that after this early period, the location of Maison Sainte-Madeleine as well as inmates' confinement meant that few Quebec citizens would have understood the inner workings of the institution. Inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine were not allowed to leave the premises.¹⁷¹ The 1886 constitution of the religious order advised that visitors who, exceptionally, were allowed to visit parts of the asylum where inmates worked and lived, should do so only with the permission of the Mother Superior and under the constant supervision of two Sisters, or

¹⁶³ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "Costumes d'autrefois Costumes actuels 1850-1950," in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

¹⁶⁴ N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré Cœur*, 84

¹⁶⁵ Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 28-38.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

¹⁶⁷ Casgrain, *L'Asile du Bon-Pasteur*, 106

¹⁶⁸ N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré Cœur*, 93, 173. Marie-Zoé Blais, known as Sister Mary of Saint-Joseph, was the first Mistress of the penitents. Formerly a novice at the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu, she went on to direct the Good Shepherd Convent at Rivière-du-Loup in 1860.

¹⁶⁹ Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 7.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁷¹ N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 62.

one Sister and a person designated by the Superior.¹⁷² This document also recommended new arrivals would be kept in isolation from other inmates upon entering the institution.¹⁷³ Sisters in charge of new arrivals instructed these women on life within the community, and inmates were only integrated to the group after the sisters conducted an assessment of their character.¹⁷⁴ Inmates were not alone in their seclusion from the outside world: Sisters and novices were not be allowed to leave the premises of the convent or talk to strangers without permission.¹⁷⁵ The constitution warned that no outsiders should be informed of the inner workings of the asylum and convent without explicit consent from the Mother Superior.¹⁷⁶ Therefore, all women's movements within the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's institutions were highly regulated, though Sisters benefitted from privileges that inmates did not. The built environment of the asylum served to seclude institutionalized women from the outside world. The description given in 1900, then, that Maison Sainte-Madeleine was a "shelter where repentance could weep unseen at the feet of Christ," was entirely appropriate.¹⁷⁷

Sources of income

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec relied on charity and manual labor as primary sources of income, which helped fund the expansion of Maison Sainte-Madeleine. From the foundation of the institution, the order put measures in place so that inmates would work in garment production. Two of the first collaborators, Esther Ouimet and Marie-Zoé Blais, were trained as seamstresses before joining, and the former was explicitly recruited because of her talents in that field.¹⁷⁸ Blais taught embroidery, tailoring and sewing to inmates, including the creation of religious garments.¹⁷⁹ By 1875, a total of 1051 women had been admitted to the asylum, or an average of forty-one a year.¹⁸⁰ The rapid growth of the institution precipitated

¹⁷² Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Constitutions et règles de la Congrégation des soeurs servantes du Coeur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur de Québec, 1886), 54.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 257.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 257.

¹⁷⁵ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Directoire*, 239.

Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Constitutions et règles*, 60.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 62.

¹⁷⁷ N.a., *Cinquantenaire de la fondation de l'Asile du Bon-Pasteur de Québec and Centenaire du Bon-Pasteur de Québec (1850-1950)*, (Quebec : Asile du Bon-Pasteur, 1900) : 116.

¹⁷⁸ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 37.

¹⁷⁹ Casgrain, *L'Asile du Bon-Pasteur*, 90, 116.

¹⁸⁰ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 49.

another move that year, towards a building directly attached to the Mother House which housed ninety inmates (visible in fig. 3).¹⁸¹ The asylum sometimes received government funding: in 1867, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was listed as having received a \$640 government grant, double what the Montreal Magdalen Asylum received that year.¹⁸² An 1876 publication by Sir James MacPherson Le Moine outlined conditions within the fledgling institution. At this time, there were approximately seventy-five nuns and twenty novices in the Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec. Le Moine indicates that there were “one hundred Magdalens and thirty young girls in their reformatory,” who received a capitation grant of 5.50\$ a month.¹⁸³ The total expense of the Convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec was established at over \$17,000 a year, an amount raised through charity and “the sale of ornamental work made by the nuns and their pupils and *penitentes*.”¹⁸⁴ Even considering inflation, the 1876 budget of the convent seemed to far exceed the governmental grant given to Maison Sainte-Madeleine nine years earlier, suggesting that manual labor and charity were the primary source of income for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec. Describing Scottish Magdalen asylums, Linda Mahood wrote that “[b]ehind the directors’ idealized image of the morally reformed female proletariat lay the material realities of reproducing the institution: paying the bills and possibly making a profit.”¹⁸⁵ The productive work inmates performed within the attached laundry was explicitly linked to their spiritual repentance. An article urging for donations to the asylum published in 1852 explained that inmates’ “daily labour, the work of their hands is sanctified by prayer.”¹⁸⁶ This ideological justification of work as a method of spiritual salvation concealed the economic reality of the institution’s survival. Without the work of inmates, Maison Sainte-Madeleine could not maintain itself financially.

¹⁸¹ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 50.

¹⁸² N.a., “Hospitals and Charities,” *The Globe* (Toronto) April 28th, 1865: 2.

¹⁸³ Le Moine, *Quebec Past and Present: A History of Québec 1608-1876 in Two Parts*, (Quebec: Auguste Côté & Co, 1876): 375.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 375.

¹⁸⁵ Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes : Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century*, (London : Routledge, 1990): 87.

¹⁸⁶ N.a., “The Asylum of the Good Shepherd,” (Quebec: n.p., 1852): 1.



Figure 2. The first Magdalens in Maison de Bethanie. From: “Premières recluses de la Maison Béthanie, s.d.,” in Musée du Bon-Pasteur, “Les vies cachées de la Maison Béthanie,” *Musée virtuel du Bon-Pasteur : Histoire de chez nous*. Web.

Foundation of the Magdalen class

The foundation of the Magdalen class demonstrated two contradictory models of spiritual salvation in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. While most inmates’ stay in the asylum was temporary, some swore vows to remain in the institution until their death. In 1857, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec inaugurated the Magdalen class.¹⁸⁷ According to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, these inmates “obtained the privilege of pronouncing on their death-bed vows of poverty, chastity and obedience,” and were given new names, all of which included the first name “Madeleine.”¹⁸⁸ Three women became Consecrated Magdalens: Madeleine-St-Patrice,

¹⁸⁷ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 49.

¹⁸⁸ Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 199; Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 147.

Madeleine-de-la-Providence, and Ste-Madeleine.¹⁸⁹ Magdalens remained in Maison Sainte-Madeleine to devote their lives to quiet contemplation and prayer, and were separated in two groups until 1929.¹⁹⁰ Consecrated Magdalens swore to remain in the institution for life, while vowed Magdalens renewed their vows yearly.¹⁹¹ These two groups of women both lived in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, but occupied separated quarters.¹⁹² The costumes worn by Magdalens resembled more closely the ones worn by the Sisters. Consecrates would wear an austere costume of black cloth with a coif, veil, rosary and wide collar. The dress, which changed very little between 1857 and 1950, reached down to the ankles and featured dark sleeves (fig. 2 and 8).¹⁹³ Alongside the costumes worn by Magdalens, the vows pronounced by this class of inmates resembled those sworn by Sisters upon entering the order. This class of inmates, thus, resembled religious Sisters in many respects. By 1904, the institution counted seventy-five Magdalens.¹⁹⁴ The Magdalen class embodied what criminologist Véronique Strimelle described as the two irreconcilable elements of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers's rehabilitation program. Their institutions simultaneously sought to reintegrate inmates to the labor force, while presenting religious women secluded from the outside world as the only valid form of femininity.¹⁹⁵ While only a minority of institutionalized women vowed to remain in Maison Sainte-Madeleine for life, the existence of the Magdalen class demonstrated a similar contradiction in the institution's programme of moral reform.

¹⁸⁹ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "Les consacrées," in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950): n.p.

¹⁹⁰ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 49.

¹⁹¹ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 15.

¹⁹² Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "Les consacrées," n.p.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 49.

¹⁹⁵ Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish*, 106; Véronique Strimelle, "La gestion de la déviance des filles à Montréal au XIXe siècle. Les institutions du Bon-Pasteur d'Angers (1869-1912)," *Revue d'histoire de l'enfance "irrégulière,"* no. 5 (2003): 77. The Magdalen class was also a feature of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers' institutions in Ireland.



LE BON-PASTEUR DE QUÉBEC
tel qu'édifié par la Fondatrice — rue Lachevrotière —
(1855) LE MONASTÈRE — (1866) L'ÉGLISE — (1870) LE REFUGE SAINTE-MADELEINE

Figure 3. Maison Sainte-Madeleine attached to the chapel and Mother House. From: N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur (1806-1885): Fondatrice du Bon-Pasteur de Québec et ses colalboratrices [sic]*, (Quebec : Asile du Bon-Pasteur, 1935): 113.

Institutional discipline and surveillance

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's 1886 constitution demonstrated the breadth of surveillance within the institution. Contact between Sisters, Magdalens and inmates was highly regulated in nineteenth-century Maison Sainte-Madeleine. The constitution outlined the role of "Mistress of the penitents," a position which involved the oversight of inmates' daily life in the institution. Sisters who occupied this role in the asylum sometimes encountered resistance from the women they supervised. An early history of Maison Sainte-Madeleine described this position as particularly trying, citing "girls who, more starved for liberty than

penitence, did not comply to the points of the rule.”¹⁹⁶ The Constitution recommended that the Mistress of the penitents treat her charges gently, though she may firmly punish rebellious behavior when necessary.¹⁹⁷ Discipline was enforced through strict supervision. The Mistress of penitents was instructed to never leave inmates without surveillance: in the case of a necessary absence, her assistants would assume the oversight of the charges. To ensure the supervision of inmates, two sisters would sleep in the dormitory every night.¹⁹⁸ The Mistress of penitents was instructed to “strip herself of her own ideas” so that she may be impartial in her application of the rules.¹⁹⁹ The rules of the institution discouraged hierarchy between inmates of the same class, while also emphasizing the Sisters’ elevated status. For example, the constitution stipulated that Magdalens could only speak to inmates with the permission of a superior, and could not do so without supervision.²⁰⁰ To avoid jealousy and infighting, the Constitution also recommended that Sisters avoid giving any preference or special treatments to inmates.²⁰¹ If a conflict between two inmates arose, the Mistress of the penitents would force them to reconcile and to ask for forgiveness.²⁰² While religious entertainment was allowed, games that would subvert the hierarchy between nuns and inmates were forbidden. Inmates were not permitted to alter or adjust their clothing, and were forbidden from dancing and playing cards.²⁰³ Within the asylum, inmates were strictly forbidden from holding “particular friendships.” Specifically, they would not be allowed to entertaining regular conversations with the same women, and were prohibited from any physical contact with each other, including holding hands. Sisters were warned to be vigilant not to let two inmates be alone together, especially if they were whispering.²⁰⁴ Friendships between inmates were thus discouraged in the asylum through constant and rigid surveillance. Discipline in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, then, was apparently largely enforced through supervision.

¹⁹⁶ “où les filles, plus affamées de liberté que de penitence, se pliaient mal aux points du règlement,” in N.a., *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 172.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁹⁹ “se dépouiller de ses propres idées,” in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Constitutions et règles*, 253.

²⁰⁰ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec. *Constitutions et règles*, 255.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 253.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, *Constitutions et règles*, 253.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 250- 251.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 270-271.

The rules of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec emphasized hard work, modesty, silence and cleanliness. The Constitution cited the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), wherein wise virgins brought oil for their lamps to enter the chambers of Christ, and foolish virgins were excluded because of their negligence. The article explained the symbolism of the fuel, which was meant to evoke charity, humility and hard work.²⁰⁵ In this passage, virginity alone is not seen as a virtue: Sisters have to constantly work to achieve an eternal union with Christ after their death.²⁰⁶ For example, the order's constitution listed detailed instructions for eating, encouraging mortification.²⁰⁷ Novices were apprentice nuns, who ascended to sisterhood after two years.²⁰⁸ The rules of modesty put forward by the Congregation listed faults often committed by novices, including raising their voice, laughing loudly, looking behind themselves to see if someone was walking behind them, putting their hands on their waist, curving their shoulders or dragging their feet, giving signs of approval or disapproval during a common reading, crossing their arms or legs, humming, and touching their head, ears or nostrils too often. The solution to these behaviors given by the order's constitution was to pay particular attention to cleanliness and order.²⁰⁹ The Sisters of the Good Shepherd regarded cleanliness as an "exercise in virtue," and fundamentally linked to modesty.²¹⁰ A strict rule of silence was put in place for sisters and inmates within the institution, and even when allowed to speak, the constitution recommended that nuns keep their voices low and not maintain conversation unnecessarily. The rule of silence also extended to action, as sisters would have to be careful not to cause excessive noise when closing windows or walking.²¹¹ In the Constitution, Sisters were held as an example for Magdalens and inmates. Article VI Part IV of the Constitution warned sisters of lightness of conduct and affectation in their clothing and in their way of walking, eating, drinking, and speaking, especially in front of children and inmates. It recommended an attitude of joy and simplicity. Articles VII and VIII outlined exceptions to this rule on special occasions such as birthdays and New Year's Eve, where sisters could perform the kiss of peace.

²⁰⁵ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Constitutions et règles*, 155-156.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁰⁷ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Directoire*, 114-117.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 239.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

²¹⁰ "dans une religieuse, un exercice de vertu," in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Directoire*, 85.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

²¹² The Mother Superior, the Vicar Sister and her Council, the Director of the Provincial House and the Mistress of the penitents would also give this religious greeting to inmates on their birthdays and New Year's Day.²¹³ The rules put forward by the 1886 constitution demonstrated the highly regulated nature of life within the institution for Sisters and inmates alike.

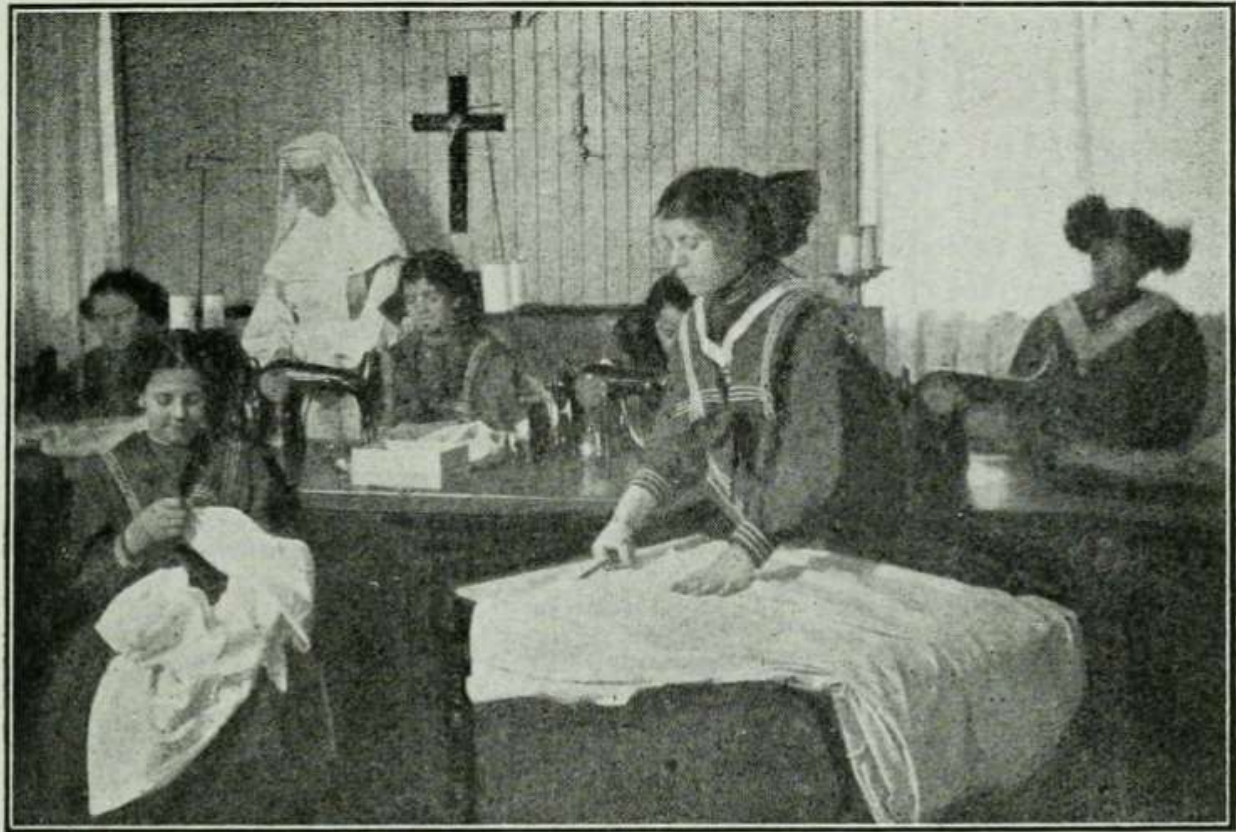


Figure 4. Juvenile delinquents sewing and cutting clothing in an unspecified Good Shepherd of Angers institution. From “Au travail— coupe et couture, *Jeunes délinquantes*,” in Édouard Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur et ses œuvres à Montréal*, (Montréal : Imprimerie de l’Institut des sourds-muets, 1916): 37.

Comparison with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers’ institutions can be compared with Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec. Beyond their shared name, these two orders were both implicated in the construction of carceral and extra-penal institutions. Each opened a prison, a reformatory and a Magdalen asylum. The similarity was acknowledged by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

²¹² Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Constitutions et règles*, 152-153.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

of Angers: in 1929, the Montreal-based convent wrote to Maison Sainte-Madeleine, noting the similarity and spiritual proximity of the two orders.²¹⁴ Religious publications written about the two orders demonstrated the limitations of accounts written by the clergy. Édouard Gouin, a priest at the Saint-Sulpice Seminary and Sister Marie de St-Edmond both wrote histories of the Good Shepherd of Angers' institutions.

The order founded a Magdalen asylum on Brock Street (named Monastère de Saint-Joseph-du-Bon-Pasteur in Montréal) in 1844.²¹⁵ In its first year, the institution housed eighteen inmates, who embroidered and washed clothing.²¹⁶ The primary source of revenue for the order was derived from the laundry.²¹⁷ Nine years later, the Sisters moved to Sherbrooke street and housed sixty inmates.²¹⁸ The institution provided shelter for immigrant women, many of whom were ill or homeless upon arriving to Canada. Much like Maison Sainte-Madeleine, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers' Magdalen asylum admitted a significant proportion of women who had arrived in Quebec City from Ireland.²¹⁹ In 1870, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers took over an asylum intended for previously incarcerated women initially opened by the Sisters of Mercy. The order also ran a reform school which embraced similar principles of spatial separation, work in the laundry, and silence.²²⁰ Within these institutions, inmates sewed, cut and washed clothing, and cooked and gardened (fig. 4).²²¹ Much like the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, the Montreal-based order emphasized spatial separation and bodily discipline. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers believed in the “principle of reformation through environment”, which emphasized “[f]resh air, hygiene” and “beautiful surroundings”.²²² Accordingly, inmates and Magdalens stayed in separate wings of the Sherbrooke Street Monastery.²²³ Much like the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, the Montreal-based

²¹⁴ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 98.

²¹⁵ Édouard Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur et ses œuvres à Montréal*, (Montreal : Imprimerie de l'Institut des sourds-muets, 1916) : 13, 14.

²¹⁶ Sr Marie de St-Edmond, *Sous les Feux des Saint Cœurs*, 52.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

²¹⁸ Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 18.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, In 1847, Saint-Sulpice Seminary provided pensions for Irish inmates, who were hospitalized in great numbers following a typhus outbreak. This practice persisted until 1875.

²²⁰ Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945*, (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 2006) : 53.

²²¹ Gouin, *Le Bon-Pasteur*, 46.

²²² Véronique Strimelle, “Du tribunal à l'institution,” 208; Bernoville, *St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier*, 91-92.

²²³ Bernoville, *St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier*, 91-92.

Sisters opened a wide range of carceral and reformatory institutions which relied on manual labor to sustain themselves.

Through the Good Shepherd of Angers' programme of spiritual reform, women were "produced" as penitent subjects through work such as cutting cloth, sewing and weaving. Michel Foucault wrote that "[p]enal labor [...] is intrinsically useful, not as an activity of production, but by virtue of the effect it has on the human mechanism," arguing that work in nineteenth-century prisons instilled discipline by "bend[ing] bodies to regular movements."²²⁴ He argued that this labor was imposed through hierarchy and surveillance rather than violence. Foucault concluded that "[i]f, in the final analysis, the work of the prison has an economic effect, it is by producing individuals mechanized according to the general norms of an industrial society."²²⁵ Gouin's monograph outlined the methods of reform envisioned by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers. He argued that the sisters tried to instill in inmates the subordination of flesh to reason and faith through persuasion and constraint.²²⁶ This justification of manual labor was reminiscent of the one outlined by Foucault, since it was tied to spiritual salvation rather than to the economic dimension of work. Foucault's analysis of carceral institutions highlighted the relationship of punitive labor to processes of nineteenth-century industrialisation. Much like Maison Sainte-Madeleine, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers enforced strict bodily discipline in the institutions, which was intended to facilitate fallen women's reintegration to society.

The similarities between the two orders were also noticeable in their institutional discipline and growth. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers opened a women's prison and a reformatory. These institutions were interconnected, since former convicts would be institutionalized in the Magdalen asylum. The Sisters of Good Shepherd of Angers also opened a women's prison, named Saint-Daria's asylum, on Fullum street. Prior to the establishment of this carceral facility in 1876, male and female prisoners in Montreal were kept in mixed-gender facilities.²²⁷ The women's prison was funded by the Quebec government and received regular inspections.²²⁸ Prisoners were given the option to stay with the Sisters as penitents after their

²²⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 242.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 49.

²²⁷ Fecteau, "Répression au quotidien," 347.

²²⁸ Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 27; Sr Marie de St-Edmond, *Sous les Feux des Saint Cœurs*, 58-61.

sentences.²²⁹ Inspections conducted near the turn of the century show that women were incarcerated alongside their young children in St-Daria's asylum.²³⁰ In 1892, the prison expanded to include a laundry, in which convicts worked.²³¹ The religious order opened Maison Sainte-Hélène in 1900, a reformatory which admitted "young people exposed to lose their honor" who were admitted either through the courts or by their families.²³² This institution, which taught "protégées" domestic tasks through regular discipline, sought to protect girls from spiritual peril. Maison Sainte-Hélène was closely related to Saint-Daria's asylum. Just as the number of prisoners in Saint-Daria's dwindled, Maison Sainte-Hélène admitted a growing number of young women. While at first inmates and prisoners shared common space in Maison Sainte-Hélène, by 1912 they occupied separate quarters.²³³ Between 1911 and 1916, the number of penitent inmates in the Good Shepherd of Angers's institutions jumped from seventy-four to 188, while the number of prisoners diminished from 148 to 105. The number of convicts in Saint-Daria's dwindled to an all-time low of thirty-two by 1936.²³⁴ A year later, one hundred and fifty inmates lived in Maison Sainte-Hélène, and more than two hundred Sherbrooke street Monastery.²³⁵ The simultaneous increase in protégées and fall in prisoners demonstrated the extra-penal character of Maison Sainte-Hélène, and its close relationship with the women's prison. Maison Sainte-Hélène closed in 1960, at the same time as Saint-Daria's asylum.²³⁶ While the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec only opened a women's prison in 1932, Maison Sainte-Madeleine flourished in the late nineteenth century in a period where the male-to-female prisoner ratio was falling.²³⁷ Both Maison Sainte-Hélène and Maison Sainte-Madeleine fulfilled extra-penal functions, and absorbed part of the criminalized population after their convictions.

Gouin's *Le Bon Pasteur et ses œuvres à Montréal* and Sister Marie de St-Edmond's *Sous les Feux des Saints Coeurs* demonstrated the disparity between the clergy and the general

²²⁹ Sr Marie de St-Edmond, *Sous les Feux des Saint Coeurs*, 72.

²³⁰ Fecteau, "Répression au quotidien," 347.

²³¹ Sr Marie de St-Edmond, *Sous les Feux des Saint Coeurs*, 91. This laundry was named Buanderie Saint-Joseph, a name identical to the one opened by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec.

²³² "de jeunes personnes exposées à perdre leur honneur," in Sr Marie de St-Edmond, *Sous les Feux des Saint Coeurs*, 218.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 117.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

²³⁵ Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 30.

²³⁶ Strimelle, "Du tribunal à l'institution," 208.

²³⁷ Jean-Marie Fecteau et al., "Répression au quotidien et régulation punitive en longue durée le cas de la prison de Montréal, 1836-191," *Déviance et Société*, vol. 20 (2006/3): 344.

public's perceptions of the Good Shepherd of Angers' institutions. Gouin wrote that the Good Shepherd Sisters gained an unsavory reputation in the city. Rumors circulated that Sisters were tantamount to torturers, while inmates were helpless victims or renegades. Gouin described the rules instituted by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers as strict, but maternal in outlook.²³⁸ He dedicated two pages to a justification of the religious order's finances, arguing that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers did not make a significant profit from their operation outside of government grants and charitable donations.²³⁹ He cited a high cost of maintenance, including sick and elderly nuns, unruly inmates and children in industrial schools.²⁴⁰ This passage was likely written in response to complaints that had been lodged in the early 1910s alleging that the Sisters "were failing to prepare the girls for life in the city and for taking advantage of the girls' free labor."²⁴¹ Gouin's defense of the institution's finances was at best unreliable, since he did not provide numbers to support his claim. While *Le Bon Pasteur et ses œuvres à Montréal* defended the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers against claims that they made a substantial profit from the labor of inmates, it did not address the unpaid character of the work performed by inmates. Moreover, excerpts of *Le Bon Pasteur et ses œuvres à Montréal* seemed to support the public's perception that the Good Shepherd of Angers' institutions did not sufficiently train young women for life outside the institution. *Le Bon Pasteur et ses œuvres à Montréal* described the outside world as a "gear," or as an "immense anonymous syndicate" that seized young women and exposed them to vice.²⁴² These industrial metaphors were opposed to the Good Shepherd institutions, which served to protect young women from spiritual danger. The monograph emphasized the dangers of the city outside the asylum's walls, while romanticizing conditions within the institution. The author further argued that the best way to achieve spiritual salvation was to remain in the institution for life. Like the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's publications, the literary works associated with the Montreal-based order emphasized death and the afterlife. Written by a Sister, *Sous les Feux des Saints Coeurs* included descriptions of inmates, many of whom died in the asylum. The majority of these stories depicted unruly sinners who ultimately converted on their deathbed, including the story of one

²³⁸ Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 51.

²³⁹ "engrenage," "immense syndicat anonyme," in Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 46-49.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 46-49.

²⁴¹ Myers, *Caught*, 55.

²⁴² Gouin, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 40.

woman who threatened a sister with a knife.²⁴³ The book ended with a description of the final days of Thomasina Sarao, sentenced to the death penalty for murdering her husband. According to the religious order, she experienced a strong renewal of faith prior to her botched execution in the Bordeaux jail.²⁴⁴ The prominence of these stories revealed the order's fascination with death and the afterlife: the ultimate reward for penitence as envisioned by the order was entry into heaven. Much like *Le Bon-Pasteur et ses oeuvres à Montréal, Sous les Feux des Saints Coeurs* described the work of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers in glowing terms. However, Sister Marie de Saint-Edmond's monograph also revealed that working conditions were sometimes dangerous: the author recounted a prisoner catching her arm in a strap while working in the laundry in the early twentieth century, and suffering a significant injury which left her permanently mutilated.²⁴⁵ *Le Bon-Pasteur et ses oeuvres à Montréal* demonstrated Gouin's interest in protecting the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers' reputation, and the potential bias of the clergy in writing religious histories. Similarly, *Sous les Feux des Saints Coeurs* romanticized life in the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers' institutions, while simultaneously hinting at difficult working conditions within. Both these sources depicted the religious order's work in sympathetic terms, while also revealing information on their institutions that undermined the positive portrayal that the authors sought to give.

Conclusion

Maison Sainte-Madeleine, through its mandate of rescuing fallen women, was opened in response to social and religious concerns over criminality, sex work and immigration, at a time where Quebec City was undergoing a period of industrialisation. This institution was not unique in this regard, since several Magdalen asylums were founded in the mid-nineteenth century in Montreal. These establishments were opened amidst growing anxieties around immigration and sex work, and were closely related to carceral and extra-penal institutions such as prisons and reformatories. Like other Magdalen asylums, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was sustained by income from charity and manual labor. This source of funding resulted in the expansion of their institutions. Doreen Massey conceptualizes space as the “contemporaneous existence of a

²⁴³ Sr Marie de St-Edmond, *Sous les Feux des Saint Cœurs*, 191-2.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 231-2.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

plurality of trajectories.”²⁴⁶ As an economic, religious and social space, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was constituted by the interrelation of Sisters, Magdalens and inmates. The built environment of the asylum grew as a result of the labor of institutionalized women, who worked under strict surveillance. The trajectories of the women who inhabited Maison Sainte-Madeleine varied, since a minority of inmates remained in the institution until their death. Within the asylum, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec held a double model of spiritual salvation: inmates could reform either by leaving the institution for marriage or employment, or remaining for life by joining the Magdalen class. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s 1886 constitution outlined this hierarchy within the asylum, which was reinforced through surveillance. This document highlighted the regimented nature of life within Maison Sainte-Madeleine for Sisters and inmates. An atmosphere of penitence was likewise constructed through the uniforms worn by institutionalized women and the architecture of the establishment. Massey’s scholarship emphasizes the inherent heterogeneity of space: in her view, an institution is shaped by the relationships of power between different actors. Thus, Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s development and growth in the late-nineteenth-century was embedded within the social, political and economic context of the city of Quebec, and shaped by the relationships of power between the women who lived within its walls.

CHAPTER 2: Maison Sainte-Madeleine in the early twentieth century: Expansion and transition, 1900-1940

²⁴⁶ Massey, *For Space*, 12.

The early-twentieth century was a transitional phase in Maison Sainte-Madeleine's history, which was marked by the rapid expansion of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's institutions. While this growth signalled changes such as a collaboration with the Juvenile Delinquency Court and the opening of a commercial laundry, this period also held many continuities with the nineteenth century, including the strict schedule and living conditions within the asylum. This chapter will draw on a prayerbook published in 1937 to describe life in Maison Sainte-Madeleine in the early-twentieth century. The relationships between inmates, Magdalens and Sisters outlined in this document were mediated through the spatial arrangement of Maison Sainte-Madeleine. The built environment reflected new hierarchies within the asylum, as inmates were separated in new rooms according to age and intellectual ability. This chapter will argue that the institution's insistence of salvation in the afterlife was not reflected by its burial practices, since Magdalens and inmates were buried in communal graves. In addition, the Sisters benefitted from access to the outside world in a way that inmates and Magdalens did not. This chapter will conclude with the case of a young woman who attempted to escape the institution to demonstrate the coercive nature of confinement in the asylum. Thus, in the early-twentieth century, the expansion and development of Maison Sainte-Madeleine did not result in a meaningful change in institutional discipline.

Shifting mandate: Towards the admission of juvenile delinquents

According to Céline Jalbert's commemorative publication *Présence d'avenir au coeur du monde*, Maison Sainte-Madeleine's purpose shifted over the years from reforming sex workers and alcoholics to admitting as "many young girls under legal age were brought by their mother and father."²⁴⁷ Others were sent there by the Juvenile Court and a local residence for young delinquents.²⁴⁸ Jacqueline Gagnon described the institution's mandate in the early-to-mid-twentieth century as the protection of teenage girls.²⁴⁹ This purported shift in admissions was likely facilitated by an arrangement in 1895 between the religious order and legal authorities to offer women who had committed a first criminal offence the choice between a stay in prison or

²⁴⁷ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 50.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁴⁹ Jacqueline Gagnon, "La Maison Sainte-Madeleine de Québec," 24-25.

Maison Sainte-Madeleine.²⁵⁰ In 1892, the Canadian Criminal Code instituted “juvenile aged fourteen and over” as a distinct category of offenders, who were granted separate trials.²⁵¹ Juvenile courts in the beginning of the twentieth century were a distinctly North American system, which emphasized child protection as a guiding principle.²⁵² Common offences for young women in Montreal's Juvenile Court, the only specialized court of this nature in the province, included indecent behaviour and running away from home. Historian David Niget has argued that escape attempts were often met with parental fears that young women would engage in sex work.²⁵³ The younger age of admission in Maison Sainte-Madeleine can be linked to a general tendency in Magdalen institutions to confine younger women. In a longue durée study of women's asylums, Sherill Cohen has identified the crucial role of these institutions in defining and regulating juvenile delinquency. She noted that “[m]any of the ex-prostitutes' asylums in existence over the centuries underwent a common pattern of shifting emphasis.”²⁵⁴ Religious orders experienced difficulty in “reform[ing] experienced prostitutes steeped in immorality” and chose to “concentrate instead on young wayward girls.”²⁵⁵ Unmarried mothers as well as women who were prone to “notorious misconduct, vagrancy, running away for prolonged periods, free companionship, difficulties in adaptation” and “family disintegration” began to be admitted to Maison Sainte-Madeleine.²⁵⁶ Historian Marie-Aimée Cliche, who noted that eight unwed mothers arrived from hospice Saint-Joseph between 1852 and 1876, while 508 arrived from Hospice de la Miséricorde between 1917 and 1972.²⁵⁷ The description of the institution's mandate, however, should be read with skepticism. Historian Tamara Myers has also written about delinquency in the Montreal context, writing that “[l]ate-nineteenth-century social critics

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 51.

²⁵¹ Tamara Myers, *Caught*, 29.

²⁵² David Niget, “Parents et mineurs face à l'institution judiciaire pour mineurs: les cas d'Angers et de Montréal, 1912-1940,” in Jean-Marie Fecteau and Janice Harvey, eds. *La régulation sociale entre l'acteur et l'institution : Pour une problématique historique de l'interaction/ Agency and Institutions in Social Regulation: Toward an historical understanding of their interaction*. Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2005. Accessed July 31, 2016. ProQuest ebrary. 401.

²⁵³ Ibid., 412.

²⁵⁴ Sherill Cohen, *The evolution of women's asylums since 1500 : from refuges for ex-prostitutes to shelters for battered women*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 148.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 148.

²⁵⁶ “inconduite notoire, vagabondage, fugue prolongée, libre compagnonnage, difficulté d'adaptation, désintégration familiale,” in Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 50.

²⁵⁷ Cliche, “Morale chrétienne,” 98; These statistics, however, only denoted the admissions of unmarried mothers through maternity hospitals.

did not differentiate between women and girls who occupied the streets (especially after dark) and prostitutes, causing vagrancy to become one of the largest crime categories for female offenders at this time.”²⁵⁸ Myers’ observation suggested that the shift in admissions noted by the religious order may not have been as drastic as its publications indicated. In the nineteenth-century, the reasons for admission to Maison Sainte-Madeleine encompassed a wide range of behaviors due to the vague category of “fallen woman.” Legislation described by Constance Backhouse such as the 1869 “An Act respecting Vagrants” indicated that girls caught in the city after dark could be convicted of vagrancy, a behavior which was associated to juvenile delinquency in the twentieth century. Moreover, the parental fears described by Niget suggested that the fear of sex work was still a factor in admissions, even though it was tied to escape attempts. The shift in admissions, thus, may have in fact been a change in the public perception of what constituted a criminal act, bolstered by the emergence of juvenile delinquents as a category of offender. Therefore, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s publications indicated a change in admissions based on collaboration with the Juvenile Delinquency Court and Hôpital de la Miséricorde, rather than a substantive difference in the reasons for young women’s confinement.

Living conditions in Maison Sainte-Madeleine

The prayers and strict schedule in Maison Sainte-Madeleine reinforced the ideological underpinnings of penitence, while leaving women confined in the institution with little time to themselves. A prayerbook published in 1937 gave considerable insight into the proposed programme, though it is difficult to determine the extent to which it was followed. The small volume contained a signature on the first page dated 1941, suggesting that it was still in use then. The prayerbook’s schedule was listed as follows: after the morning bell, the Mistress of the penitents called “Benedicus Domino!”, to which the women were expected to respond “Deo Gratias.”²⁵⁹ Afterwards, inmates proceeded to wash and prepare in silence, and at 5:25 they knelt for the morning offering.²⁶⁰ They then headed towards the chapel for the angelus and a morning

²⁵⁸ Myers, *Caught*, 47.

²⁵⁹ N.a., *Règlement et prières d’usage à l’Asile Sainte-Madeleine*, 3.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

prayer.²⁶¹ Following the service, inmates recited a short prayer as they left the chapel to go to the refectory.²⁶² Upon arrival, each took their assigned seats and exchange blessings and prayer before the meal.²⁶³ Consecrated Magdalens departed after eating to go back to the chapel and recited the Crown of the Saint Virgin, a series of prayers to Mary.²⁶⁴ After another ring of the bell, inmates departed towards their respective assignments. Every hour, they recited the following offering, which was composed by Father Saché:²⁶⁵

Another hour has passed! Another step closer to death and eternity. For hardened sinners, it is a step closer to hell; for the just and the penitent it is one step closer to heaven! Sisters, let us offer the hour that is starting to the Holy Trinity. Blessed be at every moment Jesus in the Saint Sacrament!²⁶⁶

At 9am, they repeated thirty-three Pater, Ave, and Gloria Patri, as well as seven Pater and Ave for Saint Joseph and six Pater, Ave and Gloria of the Immaculate Conception for souls in the purgatory; an hour later they sang the Ten Commandments.²⁶⁷ At 11:10, Consecrates underwent a “particular examination”, which consists of specific prayers, while inmates recited a second rosary.²⁶⁸ On Fridays, inmates entered confession, and Consecrates dedicated themselves to meditation.²⁶⁹ Lunch began at 11:25, preceded and followed by prayers, after which were recited the Angelus, the Litanies for the Virgin and an offering before recreation.²⁷⁰ The break

²⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

²⁶² Ibid., 88.

²⁶³ Ibid., 89.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 90.

²⁶⁵ Gossage and Little, *Illustrated History of Quebec*, 15; Casgrain, *L'asile du Bon Pasteur*, 92-98, 102-105.

Louis-Césaire Saché became the first chaplain and director of the Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Born in France, Saché entered the Jesuit order in 1840 after having been ordained to priesthood in the diocese of Tours. The Jesuit Order had recently been invited to Canada by Monseigneur Ignace Bourget when Saché arrived in Montreal in 1845. The order had previously established itself in the province in the early seventeenth century, but died out with their last member in 1800 following conquest. Father Saché, who moved to Quebec city in 1850, gave mass twice a week at Maison Sainte-Madeleine on Thursdays and Sundays, and received confessions from inmates.

²⁶⁶ “Encore une heure d'écoulée! Encore un pas de plus vers la mort et l'éternité. Pour les pécheurs endurcis, c'est un pas de plus vers l'enfer; pour les justes et les pénitents, c'est un pas de plus vers le ciel! Mes sœurs, offrons l'heure qui commence à la Très Sainte Trinité. Béni soit à tout moment Jésus au Saint Sacrement!” in N.a., *Règlement et prières d'usage à l'Asile Sainte-Madeleine*, 96.

²⁶⁷ N.a., *Règlement et prières d'usage à l'Asile Sainte-Madeleine*, 97.

²⁶⁸ N.a., *Règlement et prières d'usage à l'Asile Sainte-Madeleine*, 98-100.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 101.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 102.

ended at 1pm, after which the inmates resumed work. They snacked at 3pm, and proceeded to an offering of silence with seven Pater, Ave and Gloria at 4:30pm.²⁷¹ At 5:10pm, all rose towards the chapel for a third rosary, as well as ten Ave and seven Pater.²⁷² At this juncture, the anniversaries of the deaths of both Sisters and inmates would be honored through prayer.²⁷³ Dinner followed a similar structure as lunch, with the addition of benedictions and grace.²⁷⁴ At 7:15, Consecrates and inmates would gather for evening prayer, and before they went to bed at 8:00, they recited an offering, an act of contrition, a salutation to Mary and six Pater.²⁷⁵ This schedule, with daily variations, was followed from Monday to Saturday.²⁷⁶ On Sundays, inmates attended catechism lessons, a sermon and a period of study in the parlor.²⁷⁷ After lunch, they would pray to the Stations of the Cross.²⁷⁸ Maison Sainte-Madeleine held a monthly recollection, which started at 7:30 with a thousand prayers to Mary, followed by a rosary and a sermon. After a meditation and two more rosaries, inmates would attend an educational session on the rules and customs of the institution, after which they prayed for a favorable death.²⁷⁹ The evening concluded with a consecration to the Virgin Mary, and either a lesson in manners or catechism.²⁸⁰ The schedule outlined by the prayerbook demonstrated the extent of the affective labor expected from inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine: the rules suggested that institutionalized women should perform spiritual repentance from the moment they woke up to the moment they went to sleep. However, not all inmates would have followed this prayerbook: certain institutionalized women joined the Association des filles auxiliaires de Sainte-Madeleine, founded in 1905. This group of women, selected from inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, took care of infants born in Hôpital de la Miséricorde. Upon joining, they were known as Marguerites du Sacré-Coeur, though informally the Sisters called them “bonnes.”²⁸¹ The membership increased significantly in the 1930s, during which 474 women were admitted to the

²⁷¹ Ibid., 103.

²⁷² Ibid., 104.

²⁷³ Ibid., 104-105.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 121.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 138, 203.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 232-233.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 231.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 231.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 234.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 234.

²⁸¹ The position lasted a year, and by 1965 a total of 1170 had joined since the foundation of the association. Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 54.

association.²⁸² Silvia Federici argues that the fact “[t]hat reproductive work is a labor-intensive process is most evident in the care of children and the elderly that, even in its most physical components, involves providing a sense of security, consoling, anticipating fears and desires.”²⁸³ Much like other inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, the Marguerites performed affective labor. Maison Sainte-Madeleine, through its strict schedule and emphasis on domesticity, disciplined the bodies of inmates to prepare them for life outside the institution.

Sources of income

Despite the younger age of admission, all inmates continued to engage in manual labor.²⁸⁴ The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s laundry was a primary sector of commercial activity for the religious order. In 1900, the Sisters opened Buanderie Saint-Joseph where “200 residents [...] with compensation wash, iron, darn, sort clothes and expedite them.”²⁸⁵ Situated on Rue Berthelot, the purpose-built laundry featured a cord-operated elevator to shuttle clothing upwards, and its services became so popular that clients had to be turned away.²⁸⁶ That year, the service was indexed in the *Quebec and Levis Directory*, a subscription-based yearly publication listing Quebec cities’ businesses, though the order failed to renew their subscription in subsequent years.²⁸⁷ Before Buanderie Saint-Joseph, the religious community operated a laundry that was first located in the basement of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, and was frequently expanded until it was moved to Maison Sainte-Famille, also in the basement. Wood-burning stoves were used to heat the laundry in cauldrons, and inmates used buckets and handwringers to wash the clothing which was then suspended outside or in the attic, depending on the season. The laundry accepted two commercial contracts as early as 1882.²⁸⁸ Income from the laundry was reinvested in repairs and equipment. The building underwent a major renovation

²⁸² Cliche, “Morale chrétienne,” 99.

²⁸³ Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, (Brooklyn: PM Press, 2012): 107.

²⁸⁴ Jacqueline Gagnon, “La Maison Sainte-Madeleine de Québec,” 24-25.

²⁸⁵ “200 résidentes de la Maison Sainte-Madeleine qui, moyennant une rémunération, lavent, repassent, reprisent, classent le linge et l’expédient,” in Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 50.

²⁸⁶ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Restauration de la Buanderie Saint-Joseph,” in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

²⁸⁷ Boulanger and Marcotte, *The Quebec and Levy Directory*, 11th edition, (Quebec: L.-J. Demers et Frères, 1899), 669.

²⁸⁸ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Restauration de la Buanderie Saint-Joseph,” in *Album centenaire*.

in 1922, which saw the construction of an annex and the purchase of modern laundry equipment.²⁸⁹ The order purchased a wringer for 600\$ in 1927, and a press for collars and shirts for 3200\$ in 1931.²⁹⁰ Even though the Sisters of the Good Shepherd made significant investments in the building over the course of the twentieth century, working in the laundry entailed significant risks to health and safety. In 1928, Buanderie Saint-Joseph nearly burnt down due to an electric iron left running without supervision.²⁹¹ The laundry had already witnessed a major fire in 1908, which started in the boiler room.²⁹² As the economic center of the institution, Buanderie Saint-Joseph acquired spiritual resonance for the Sisters. The order invested significant sums in the building to ensure its modernization, though laundry work remained dangerous for inmates. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd hosted a yearly religious celebration of nine days, which began in 1904.²⁹³ This ritual was devoted to Saint Joseph, and was adopted following an explosion in the laundry, which luckily caused no injuries or death.²⁹⁴ Inmates and sisters typically sang devotional songs and prayers in Buanderie Saint-Joseph. The regular performance of religious rituals highlighted the spiritual significance of work and the centrality of the laundry to the order's imaginary.

Buanderie Saint-Joseph was not the only source of income for Maison Sainte-Madeleine in the twentieth century. The establishment received public funding as part of an expansion of welfare in Quebec. The institution was included within the Public Charities Act of 1921, which entitled charitable establishments to subsidies from the provincial and municipal governments.²⁹⁵ B.L. Vigod has described the emergence of this legislation as a response to a deepening budgetary crisis in religious public service institutions, which were in higher demand while receiving little increase in their income. The bill, which Vigod argued was the “statutory basis of welfare organization in Quebec for forty years,” was opposed by prominent members of the

²⁸⁹ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Restauration de la Buanderie Saint-Joseph,” in *Album centenaire*.

²⁹⁰ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 71, 125.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 250; Sister Denise Rodrigue, “La neuvaine à Saint Joseph chez les Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur de Québec,” In *Le patrimoine immatériel religieux du Québec*. Web. <http://www.ipir.ulaval.ca/fiche.php?id=954>

²⁹⁴ Sister Denise Rodrigue, “La neuvaine à Saint Joseph.”

²⁹⁵ Etienne Berthold, “Maison Sainte-Madeleine,” *Encyclobec*, 2015, n.p.

Catholic clergy.²⁹⁶ For example, Members of *L'Action Catholique* opposed government intervention, warning readers of a potential secularization of religious charities.²⁹⁷ The Act created a Provincial Bureau of Public Charities, and provided funding for institutions such as Maison Sainte-Madeleine. The legislation entailed governmental oversight of religious charities: article 10 of the Act entitled inspectors to evaluate the merits of the institutions that received subsidies.²⁹⁸ Therefore, Maison Sainte-Madeleine benefitted from state funding while also being the subject of governmental oversight.

Death and salvation

Though the programme of moral reform instituted in Maison Sainte-Madeleine was ostensibly aimed at rehabilitating women, the order emphasized death as the ultimate redemption. Fecteau posited that Catholic institutions in the nineteenth century fulfilled ends that were separate or even contradictory with their purported mandates. In particular, he cited religious orders' "ethic of eternal salvation that often [made] them privilege, in fact, a good death to an ambiguous recovery."²⁹⁹ The prayers recited in Maison Sainte-Madeleine and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's publications both emphasized salvation in the afterlife. The 1886 constitution included extensive instructions on accepting and preparing for death: for example, Sisters could recite a prayer for a good death, which involved imploring Jesus to have pity on them.³⁰⁰ Narratives of inmates' fall and redemption recounted in religious publications often culminated in death. In a 1924 speech to inmates, Monseigneur Esdras Laberge congratulated Magdalens who had sworn life-long vows, telling them that "they could not do better."³⁰¹ Inmates who died in the asylum in this period were given Requiem mass.³⁰² The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec exhumed their graveyard, which was disaffected in

²⁹⁶ B.L. Vigod, "Ideology and Institutions in Quebec. The Public Charities Controversy 1921-1926," *Histoire Sociale-Social History*, Vol 11, no 21, (1978): 167.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

²⁹⁹ "l'éthique du salut éternel qui fait souvent privilégier, dans les faits, une bonne mort à une guérison ambiguë," Jean Marie Fecteau, "L'univers religieux," par. 20.

³⁰⁰ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Directoire*, 498-502.

³⁰¹ "À celles qui se sont engagées pour la vie, il leur a dit qu'elles ne pouvaient mieux faire," in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 24.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 30.

1915, to Belmont cemetery. Marie-Josephte Fitzback's grave was the first to be relocated in 1931.³⁰³ By 1925, 192 institutionalized women had died in the asylum, reaching 265 by 1950.³⁰⁴ Two tombstones were erected for Magdalens in Belmont cemetery: one for those who died between 1868 and 1915, and one for those who died from 1915 onwards. While the graves were intended for Magdalens, the daily records of the institution described inmates also being buried in the Belmont cemetery when their parents did not retrieve their bodies.³⁰⁵ Thus while the Sisters elevated Magdalens over inmates in life, in death no such distinction was made. Though the Sisters of the Good Shepherd's constitution did not specify where inmates prior to 1915 were buried, the dates on the graves suggested that they were buried in the order's graveyard. The *Annales* noted the case of an inmate being buried in Belmont cemetery after this date.³⁰⁶ These communal graves did not include the names of the interred. The 1915 gravestone was smashed and split in two.³⁰⁷ Women who had been Marguerites du Sacré-Coeur between 1918 and 1995 were buried in a separate, more ornate grave, which included the names of the deceased.³⁰⁸ Communal graves meant that, to a visitor of the cemetery unfamiliar with the history of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, inmates would be understood not individually, but as a group of women. The religious order's emphasis on redemption in the afterlife was at odds with the burial of inmates and Magdalens under tombstones that did not list their names.

Hierarchy and the built environment

As the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers' institutions expanded, new categories of inmates were established. Maison Sainte-Madeleine was granted a separate administration from

³⁰³ *Mère Marie du Sacré-Cœur*, 142.

³⁰⁴ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "Étude psychologique et sociale des protégées," in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

³⁰⁵ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 103, 127.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁰⁷ "Monument des Madeleines du Bon-Pasteur de Québec décédées après 1915," Cimetière Notre-Dame-de-Belmont, accessed July 17th, 2017. <http://www.cimetierebelmont.ca/patrimoine-historique/>

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

the Mother House in 1924, after a unanimous vote from the General Council.³⁰⁹ This decision facilitated the growth of the institution, which was overcrowded.³¹⁰ In 1929, Consecrated Magdalens moved to Maison Béthanie, a building which was previously the Hôpital de la Miséricorde, a hospital for unwed mothers. Magdalens became known for their mending and darning services.³¹¹ Jacqueline Gagnon, a sister writing a thesis in Social Work about Maison Sainte-Madeleine in 1949, noted that this relocation resulted in the creation of six categories for inmates, who were organized according to their age as well as their physical and mental aptitudes.³¹² These groups were separated in different rooms: for example, girls younger than sixteen gathered in Salle St-Michel, and Salle du Christ-Roi hosted women over the age of thirty.³¹³ Consecrates were granted a separate “semi-cloistered hall separate from the other rooms.”³¹⁴ This new separation signified a change within the hierarchy of the institution, since inmates were now separated by age and intellectual ability, and Magdalens occupied an entirely different building. In the early twentieth century, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s institutions alternatively fulfilled both carceral and reformatory functions. The link between these two types of establishment was nearly reflected in the built environment, when in 1921, the Archbishopric of Quebec suggested that the local women’s prison be relocated in an expansion of Maison Sainte-Madeleine.³¹⁵ The idea was rejected by the Sisters, citing lack of space. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec moved the prisoners they oversaw to a purpose-built prison on chemin Gomin in 1931. Angela Davis writes that in the nineteenth-century United States, prison reformers advocated for “a female custodial staff” as a way of “minimiz[ing] the sexual temptations, which they believed were often at the root of female criminality.”³¹⁶ Similar arguments were invoked to justify the construction of Refuge Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci, which was funded by the Quebec government. The debate in the Legislative Assembly, which involved

³⁰⁹ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 4-9. The *Annales* of the Congregation noted that on March 25th, 1924, twelve inmates joined the Children of Mary, fourteen vowed to be Slaves of Mary, and three were received as Angel’s Children. The entry did not elaborate on the significance of these categories; however, this event was marked by considerable ceremony.

³¹⁰ Sr Saint-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 194

³¹¹ “La reprise et le tissage invisible,” in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, “Les vies cachées de la Maison Béthanie,” Musée virtuel du Bon-Pasteur : Histoire de chez nous. Web. No 57

³¹² Jacqueline Gagnon, “La Maison Sainte-Madeleine de Québec,” 24-25.

³¹³ “Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Les Classes,” in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

³¹⁴ Sr Saint-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 182.

³¹⁵ Etienne Berthold, “Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci,” *Encyclobec*, 2015, n.p.

³¹⁶ Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 70.

the premier of Quebec Louis-Alexandre Taschereau and the then-minister of Trois-Rivières Maurice Duplessis, cited the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers' prison on Fullum Street as a justification for the religious takeover of the prison.³¹⁷ At the time of the debate, the Quebec prison, a mixed-gender facility, held twenty-five women. Taschereau cited the moral problem of incarcerating men and women alongside each other.³¹⁸ The prison, named Refuge Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci, was designed by Raoul Chenêvert to resemble a fourteenth-century castle, and held roughly twenty sisters and a hundred women, including juvenile delinquents and preventative cases who were held in separate sections.³¹⁹ Women who demonstrated good behavior could access a recreation room, while “those that did not submit or did not submit well to their fate” were held separately.³²⁰ Leather-padded cells were given to “furious” prisoners.³²¹ Inside the prison, inmates were taught arts and crafts and sometimes worked in the laundry.³²² Some women were referred to Maison Sainte-Madeleine to pursue a certification of “domestic competence.”³²³ In 1932, the prison admitted 206 prisoners, and until its closure, an average of two hundred women entered the prison a year.³²⁴ However, the prison rarely held more than twenty-five women at a time.³²⁵ The smaller living capacity of Refuge Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci meant that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec generally oversaw a larger proportion of inmates than prisoners throughout the twentieth century. Thus, the relocation of Magdalens to a separate institution and the opening of a women's prison meant that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd oversaw Magdalens, inmates and prisoners in separate facilities.

Relationships of power in Maison Sainte-Madeleine were mediated through access to public space. Though they were not allowed to leave the asylum on regular days, Magdalens occasionally left the premises on field trips with the Sisters. In August 1925, they left in seven cars for a picnic in Notre-Dame-des-Laurentides, where they visited a chapel and a farm, picked

³¹⁷ National Assembly of Quebec, *Transcription of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, 17th Legislature, 2nd Session, Friday 8 March 1929. Web.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ “Inauguration prochaine de la prison des femmes,” *L’Action catholique*, October 24th 1931.

³²⁰ “d’autres qui se soumettraient pas ou mal a leur sort [sic]; d’autres sont tapissées de cuir pour les furieuses,” in “Inauguration prochaine de la prison des femmes,” *L’Action catholique*, October 24th 1931.

³²¹ “d’autres sont tapissées de cuir pour les furieuses,” in *ibid.*

³²² Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 52; Etienne Berthold, “Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci,” *Encyclobec*, 2015, n.p.

³²³ Étienne Berthold, “Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci,” *Encyclobec*, 2015, n.p.

³²⁴ “Compétence domestique,” in Étienne Berthold, “Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci,” *Encyclobec*, 2015, n.p.

³²⁵ Ibid.

medicinal herbs and berries in the woods and watched ducks swim in a pond (a similar picnic held around 1948 can be seen in fig. 5).³²⁶ In September of the same year, inmates also took a field trip, where they ate bacon sandwiches, candy and apples.³²⁷ An entry for the 1932 picnic described a menu, which the Sisters noted as unaffected by the financial crisis, composed of sandwiches, tomatoes, apples, bananas, cookies and sweets.³²⁸ The *Annales* recounted these occasions as joyful, and yearly picnics were held for Magdalens though no similar outing was noted for inmates.³²⁹ In these outings, women were supervised by the religious order, and followed a strict schedule. These picnics were exceptional occasions during the course of which Magdalens enjoyed the outside world, albeit in a limited capacity. Inmates also had little contact with the outside. Maison Sainte-Madeleine was connected to Buanderie Saint-Joseph, which had no street access, by an enclosed passageway (fig. 6).³³⁰ This structure, which appeared in maps of the institution as early as 1898, was reminiscent of the tunnels built between Magdalen asylums and convents internationally.³³¹ By 1928, the religious order built a tunnel between the noviciate and the convent.³³² In France, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers commissioned a 55-meter tunnel between their Mother House and Saint-Nicholas abbey, an institution that they opened in 1854 to reform “female prisoners under 18 and those who were just being released.”³³³ The religious order justified this construction as “a creative way to connect the Mother House and the Abbey while avoiding leaving the enclosure, and so getting around cumbersome restrictions.”³³⁴ In Ireland, the Limerick Magdalen laundry was connected to a convent, an industrial school and a chapel through tunnels.³³⁵ While serving a religious function, these passageways effectively ensured that inmates could not see, and could not be seen by, the outside world. These events can be contrasted to the access that the religious order had

³²⁶ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 32.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 34; “Madeleines prenant part au pique-nique annuel sur le terrain de l'Hospice Saint-Charles à Cap-Rouge,” in Musée du Bon-Pasteur, “Les vies cachées de la Maison Béthanie,” *Musée virtuel du Bon-Pasteur : Histoire de chez nous*. Web.

³³⁰ Sr Saint-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 181.

³³¹ Charles Edward Goad, *Insurance plan of the City of Quebec*, vol. 1 (Montreal; Toronto; London: Chas. E. Goad, 1898), 28.

³³² Underwriters' Survey Bureau, *Insurance plan of the city of Quebec*, (Montreal; Toronto: Underwriters' Survey Bureau Limited, 1923), 28.

³³³ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers, “The Tunnel Experience,” (Angers: Maison-Mère de Notre Dame de Charité du Bon Pasteur, n.d.), n.p. Pamphlet.

³³⁴ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers, “The Tunnel Experience,” n.p.

³³⁵ Evelyn Glynn, “Left Holding the Baby,” (Limerick: Limerick School of Art and Design, 2009), 61. Thesis.

with public discourse both locally and internationally. During the early twentieth century, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd maintained significantly more contact with the outside world than inmates and Magdalens through letters and visitors. The *Annales* of the Congregation demonstrated the order's awareness of international events, especially relating to the wider Catholic world. For example, an entry in the *Annales* on May 31st, 1931 described the rise of fascism in Italy. The author expressed sympathy and solidarity to the victims of Catholic repression, citing bombings in Venice.³³⁶ The Sisters celebrated the anniversary of Canadian Confederation in June 1927.³³⁷ While not acting as direct participants, the religious order entertained opinions about international and local politics. The 1937 prayer book also listed prayers for special occasions, including one for the "diocesan works of Action Sociale Catholique" which called for the expansion of the organization's influence.³³⁸ In 1939, a representative of Action Catholique lectured the religious order on the dangers of communism. Specifically, he described materialism and atheism as threats to Catholicism in Canada.³³⁹ These passages highlighted how Sisters situated themselves within an international political context. The correspondence that the Sisters held on the fiftieth anniversary of their establishment underscored the order's local, provincial and transnational reach. This event attracted guests from parishes in Quebec and the North-Eastern United States, including thirty Sisters from Biddeford and Van-Buren, Maine and six sisters from Lawrence, Massachusetts.³⁴⁰ High-ranking government officials were also present at the anniversary, which is heavily detailed in *Un Cinquantenaire au Bon-Pasteur*.³⁴¹ The Sisters received letters from the Prime Ministers of Quebec and Canada, Félix-Gabriel Marchand and Wilfrid Laurier.³⁴² Archbishops of Quebec and Boston, as well as the bishops of Portland, Saint-Germain-de-Rimouski and Chicoutimi also wrote responses to their invitations to the anniversary.³⁴³ These letters provided evidence of the influence of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec outside of the convent walls. These instances showed continuities with the disparity of access to the outside world already in place in

³³⁶ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 130.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

³³⁸ "Les œuvres diocésaines d'Action Sociale Catholique," in *Règlement et prières d'usage à l'Asile Sainte-Madeleine*, 135.

³³⁹ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 242.

³⁴⁰ N.a., *Cinquantenaire au Bon-Pasteur*, 217-8.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 20-80.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 54, 56.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20-25.

the nineteenth century. The picnics that Magdalens attended and the letters that Sisters received both illustrate the “plurality of trajectories” conceptualized by Doreen Massey.³⁴⁴ The fact that Magdalens could only leave while supervised, while Sisters’ correspondence travelled the world, was representative of the relationships of power that constituted Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Therefore, Magdalens retained far less access to the outside world than Sisters did in the early twentieth century.



Figure 5. Magdalens having a picnic in Cap-Rouge in 1948. From: “Madeleines prenant part au pique-nique annuel sur le terrain de l’Hospice Saint-Charles à Cap-Rouge,” in Musée du Bon-Pasteur, “Les vies cachées de la Maison Béthanie,” Musée virtuel du Bon-Pasteur : Histoire de chez nous. Web.

Escape attempts were one of the most visible forms of resistance to Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s institutional discipline. On June 8th, 1930, at 10:15pm, a young woman who had recently been admitted threw herself from a fifth-floor window, clutching an image of Our Lady of Purity that she had taken from above her bed. According to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, she prayed to the Virgin Mary, hoping for her survival. This passage is ambiguous, since the author of the entry in the *Annales* did not mention how she knew what the young

³⁴⁴ Doreen Massey, *For Space*, 12.

woman was doing before her fall. Thus, this incident could be regarded as an escape or a suicide attempt. The young woman was taken to Hôtel-Dieu by a sister, and survived the fall with a broken bone. The nun reportedly scolded the girl, arguing that she should have left through the door. The young woman answered that “she could not find an occasion” to do so.³⁴⁵ The *Annales* praised the level of surveillance in the asylum, noting that inmates were kept under constant supervision. However, this incident suggests that supervision at night was less extensive. The young woman’s sister, who was also an inmate, was immediately sent back to live with her parents. A week later, the escapee was readmitted to Maison Sainte-Madeleine.³⁴⁶ In 1933, the Sisters added a door grid in front of the convent entrance, which was locked at night. They cited security concerns due to the influx of immigrants to the city.³⁴⁷ While this grid may have made afforded more protection for the religious order, it almost certainly made escape attempts more difficult. The young woman’s fall from the fifth-floor window as reported in the *Annales* revealed the extent of surveillance and the involuntary nature of confinement in the asylum. The built environment of the asylum and the security within ensured that inmates had little mobility, and almost no contact with the world outside of the institution.

Conclusion

In the early-twentieth century, Maison Sainte-Madeleine began admitting younger women, which was precipitated by collaboration with the Juvenile Delinquency Court and the Hôpital de la Miséricorde. Much like the “fallen women” who inhabited its walls in the nineteenth century, inmates entered the institution for a variety of reasons at the turn of the century. Causes for admissions, including unwed motherhood and vagrancy, were tied to norms of sexual behavior. Within the asylum, inmates were held under constant supervision and followed a highly regulated schedule, which emphasized prayer and manual labor. Buanderie Saint-Joseph, opened in 1900, expanded and acquired new equipment throughout the period, though working conditions were at times unsafe for institutionalized women. Labor in the laundry played a key economic role in sustaining Maison Sainte-Madeleine, since it was one of

³⁴⁵ “C’est que je n’ai pu en trouver l’occasion,” in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 114.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

the main sources of funding for the institution alongside government grants. The rules outlined in a prayerbook published in 1937 suggested that inmates performed extensive affective labor alongside work in the laundry. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have defined this type of work as “labor that produces or manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion.”³⁴⁸ Inmates performed spiritual repentance through regular rosaries, confessions, catechism lessons, and prayers. These rituals required an attitude of respect, solemnity and sometimes silence. For Hardt and Negri, affective labor involves “body and mind,” as opposed to emotional labor which is a “mental phenomena.”³⁴⁹ Significantly, the labor of spiritual repentance was explicitly linked to manual labor in the laundry: the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec held yearly religious celebrations in Buanderie Saint-Joseph. The religious order also encouraged inmates to stay in the institution until their death. Their publications emphasized redemption in the afterlife. This discursive emphasis was contradictory to the burial practices of the religious order, since women who remained in the institution as Magdalens were not given separate tombstones from other inmates. Thus, the graves in Belmont cemetery offered insight into the disparity between the order’s mandate of moral reform and its material practices. Beyond Buanderie Sainte-Joseph, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec also opened a prison in Quebec City and a separate building for Magdalens, named Maison de Bethanie. This expansion allowed for a new spatial separation within the asylum, as inmates were categorized according to their age and perceived intellectual ability. The built environment of the religious order’s institutions expanded in the early-twentieth century, but retained continuities with the earlier period, especially in terms of access to the outside world. This chapter outlined Magdalens’ yearly outings in Notre-Dame-des-Laurentides as a case study for spatial relationships. These events were exceptional, as they underscored how infrequently institutionalized women caught a glimpse of the world outside the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s establishments. Moreover, inmates entered Buanderie Saint-Joseph through an enclosed passageway. In contrast, the religious order maintained a correspondence with high-ranking members of the clergy and government throughout this period. These instances showed continuities with the disparity of access to the outside world already in place in the nineteenth century. The picnics that Magdalens attended and the letters that Sisters received both illustrate

³⁴⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 108.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

the “plurality of trajectories” conceptualized by Doreen Massey.³⁵⁰ The fact that Magdalens could only leave while supervised, while Sisters’ correspondence travelled the world, was representative of the relationships of power that constituted Maison Sainte-Madeleine. The uneven access to the outside world was perhaps most dramatically seen in escape attempts. The case of a young woman who threw herself outside of Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s window in 1930 highlighted the extent to which inmates were supervised in the early twentieth century. Therefore, just as the asylum expanded and began admitting younger inmates, it continued to enforce strict discipline through surveillance. The period from 1900 to 1940 thus constituted a transitional phase in the evolution of the institution, which prefaced its modernization in the later half of the twentieth century, while retaining key aspects from the early days of the asylum.

CHAPTER 3: Modernization and closure of Maison Sainte-Madeleine 1940-1975

From its foundation to the early-twentieth century, Maison Sainte-Madeleine received increasing government subsidies, which supplemented income generated from inmates’ labor. This growing state intervention had a decisive impact in the latter half of the twentieth century, when the institution underwent significant reform. Maison Sainte-Madeleine, which admitted generally younger women from the region of Quebec, opened a school of arts and trade which

³⁵⁰ Doreen Massey, *For Space*, 12.

offered inmates, then known as protégées, domestic training in textile production and culinary preparation. While this initiative provided girls with an education, Buanderie Saint-Joseph remained an important sector of economic activity in the establishment. Through the introduction of social work and a psychotherapeutic approach to the treatment of young girls, Maison Sainte-Madeleine's operations became progressively medicalized and professionalized. These changes were concurrent with Quebec's Quiet Revolution, a period of secularization that saw religious social services taken over by the state. This period eventually culminated in the governmental acquisition of the institution in 1975.

While the mandate of the institution changed significantly in this period, Maison Sainte-Madeleine's architecture still functioned to seclude young women from the outside world. Significantly, Sister Saint-Bernard Upham wrote in 1950 that "[o]n account of the nature of the work carried on in the institution, doors are not freely opened to visitors."³⁵¹ By that point, the religious order had vastly expanded their operations. Six branch houses were built adjacent to the Sisters' Generalate.³⁵² Maison Sainte-Madeleine was situated on the northernmost end of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's complex.³⁵³

³⁵¹ Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 181.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 220.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 220.

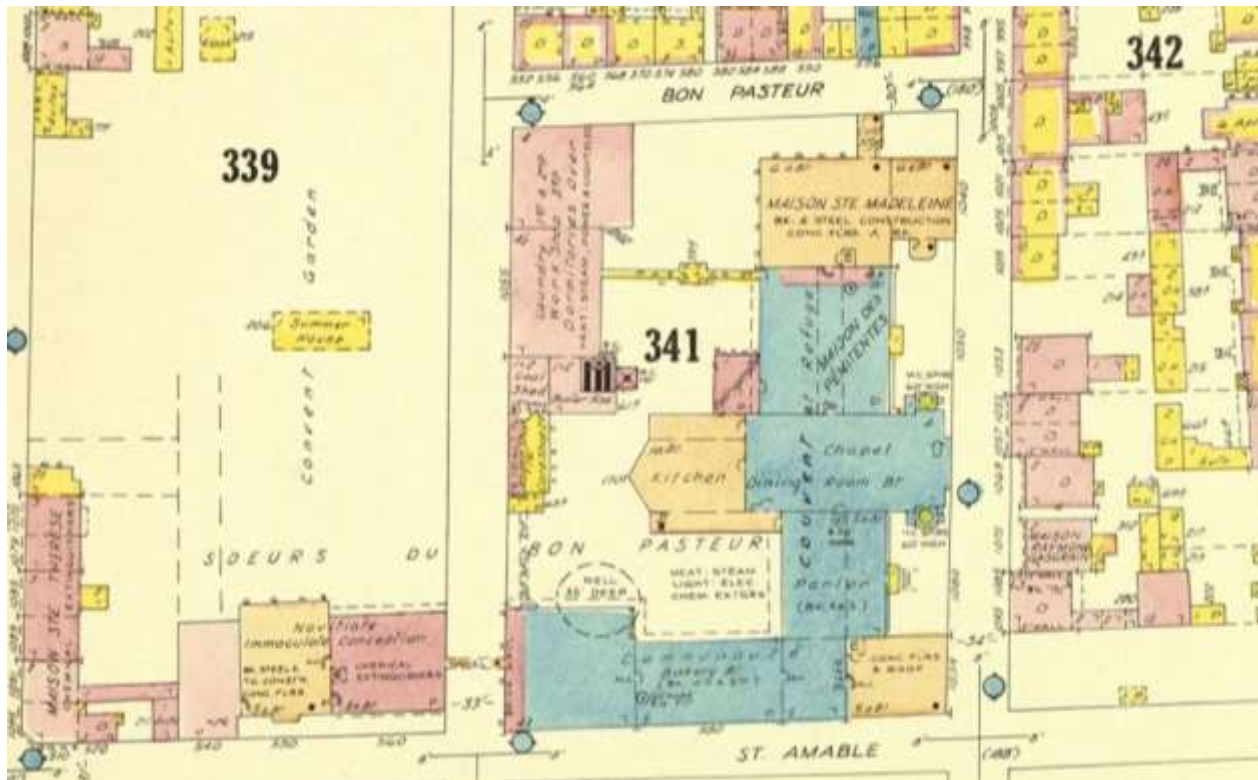


Figure 6. Siteplan of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s buildings in 1957. The passage between Maison Sainte-Madeleine and Buanderie Saint-Joseph is clearly visible. From: Underwriters’ Survey Bureau, *Insurance plan of the city of Quebec*, (Toronto; Montreal: Underwriters' Survey Bureau Limited, 1957), 28. BAnQ.

Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s purported mandate underwent significant adaptations in the later half of the century, as evidenced by differences in terminology and admission practices. Successive adjustments in the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s lexicon highlighted the institution’s evolution: for example, in 1943, the religious order stopped using the word “penitent” in favor of “protégées,” and in 1953, Magdalens were rechristened the Association of Oblates of Mary.³⁵⁴ These changes suggested an increasing harmonization between former Magdalens and the religious order, since the Oblates of Mary became known as Sisters in 1955.³⁵⁵ By 1962, Maison Sainte-Madeleine changed names and official purpose: now known as “Maison Marie-Fitzbach,” its new mandate was to rehabilitate young women aged thirteen to

³⁵⁴ Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 35.

³⁵⁵ Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 49; Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish*, 106. A similar adjustment occurred in Irish Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers’ asylums, when Magdalens, now known as Sisters Magdalens, relocated to Belfast in 1969.

eighteen.³⁵⁶ By the time of its publication, the asylum had seen 7619 admissions.³⁵⁷ According to the album, which marked the religious order's hundredth anniversary, protégées in the twentieth century tended to be younger women who were born within the province, while inmates in the early nineteenth century were mainly immigrant women above the age of twenty-one. The *Album centenaire*, the religious order's hundredth anniversary commemorative publication, cited that the "majority of subjects admitted are undisciplined, unstable or perverted teenagers, especially from the region of Quebec."³⁵⁸ Underage girls rarely entered the institution of their own volition, as most were sent there by their mother or father.³⁵⁹ While the required age of entry was fourteen and older, younger girls were sometimes admitted in special cases and when found to have serious family problems and character deficiencies.³⁶⁰ Underage girls were kept in the institution until they were legal adults.³⁶¹ In a 1948 report by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was listed as housing six girls between the age of twelve and thirteen in the institution, as well as 116 young women aged fourteen to twenty and 102 of age 20 and over.³⁶² This last number includes thirty Consecrated Magdalens, leaving sixty-five women aged twenty or more "free in a house of rehabilitation."³⁶³ Among this latter category, thirty-one has been interned for a long time, some even for a period of longer than thirty years.³⁶⁴ The *Annales* noted at least one case of a woman who had spent forty-one years institutionalized before her death in the asylum.³⁶⁵ Thus, while the religious order emphasized the younger age of protégées, the census numbers nevertheless indicated that a substantial amount of women over the age of twenty-one were institutionalized in the mid-twentieth century. In 1957, the recommended duration of stay for young women was of at least two years.³⁶⁶ The *Album centenaire* noted that some women were unable to adjust to society after their stay in the institution, with no home, no

³⁵⁶ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 96.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁵⁸ "la plupart des sujettes admises sont des adolescentes indisciplinées, instables ou perverses, provenant surtout de la région de Québec," in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "Les protégées," in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

³⁵⁹ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "Les protégées," n.p.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ "libres dans une maison de réhabilitation [sic]" in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "Les protégées," n.p.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 1 (1924-1942)*, 240.

³⁶⁶ Etienne Berthold, "Maison Sainte-Madeleine," *Encyclopedic*, 2015, n.p.

family as well as poor physical and mental health.³⁶⁷ Other women were admitted through the intervention of a priest or social agency, including some preventative cases.³⁶⁸ Under a section detailing the causes of admission, the *Album Centenaire* cited “family maladjustment”, explaining that teenagers of “illegitimate birth” who had trouble integrating to orphanage life would be admitted, as well as young women who were rejected by their parents.³⁶⁹ Specifically, some girls entered the institution because their parent remarried, or because they were in “disaccord with their step mother or step father.”³⁷⁰ Even though Maison Sainte-Madeleine was not recognized as a re-education facility, girls continued to be referred there by the Juvenile Delinquency Court.³⁷¹ The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec opened a house for juvenile delinquents named Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde in 1944. The first inmates were briefly housed in Maison Sainte-Madeleine prior to their entry into the institution. Its establishment was justified by the overcrowding of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers’ rehabilitation center.³⁷² By the mid-twentieth century, Maison Sainte-Madeleine had broken with its nineteenth-century mandate of reforming sex workers and former convicts by institutionalizing younger women, who were sent to the establishment primarily because of family difficulties.

³⁶⁷ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Les protégées,” n.p.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ “Mésadaptation familiale,” “de naissance dite illégitime,” in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Les protégées,” n.p.

³⁷⁰ “en désaccord avec les beau-père ou belle-mère,” in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Les protégées,” n.p.

³⁷¹ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Les protégées,” n.p.

³⁷² Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, 63.



Figure 7. Art exhibition in Maison Sainte-Madeleine in 1949. From: Neuville Bazin, *Exposition d'art domestique à la Maison Sainte-Madeleine les 17 et 18 juin 1949*. Quebec: Neuville Bazin, 1949. BAnQ.

Domestic training

Collaboration with the Quebecois government resulted in an emphasis on education and domestic training in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. In 1947, the religious order established a school of arts and trade in the institution, and thirty-seven out of forty students achieved great distinction in the first year.³⁷³ The program was put together by a Sister, and then approved by the Ministry of Youth Assistance.³⁷⁴ Entry into the school required the completion of a test of

³⁷³ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 51.

³⁷⁴ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "École d'arts et métiers," n.p.

aptitude, a mental test and a test of personality.³⁷⁵ Students' and professors' pensions as well as the required equipment were provided by the ministry, which ensured that young women were "exclusively devoted to school."³⁷⁶ Thus, young women enrolled in the school were exempted from labor aimed solely at covering their cost of living, and instead worked within the school. The program consisted of 1600 hours of study, evenly split general culture and technical training. The subjects in the former consisted of "maternal language, household accounting, politeness and propriety, hygiene and homecare, childcare, home economics" and "familial and social morality," while the latter was comprised of lessons in "cutting and sewing, general and specialized cooking, weaving, decorative crafts, knitting" and "mending."³⁷⁷ This highly gendered training had precedent in the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's other institutions. By the 1950s, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec had founded several establishments that taught household labor to young women. In 1917, they opened Patronage Saint-Geneviève, a school specializing in domestic training in the Saint-Louis neighborhood. They also opened two familial institutes in 1939 and 1945, aimed at "prepar[ing] a female elite to look after the spiritual, moral and intellectual needs of the family."³⁷⁸ Maison Sainte-Madeleine's school of arts and trade was thus a continuation of educational practices led by the religious order in the province of Quebec. Moreover, the school of arts and trade bore certain similarities to practices in place in other institutions of moral reform for young girls in the region. In the 1940s, the Girls' Cottage Industrial School in Montreal offered a basic education that consisted of "Academic school to Grade X including stenography; Practical training in home economics, mothercraft, gardening and poultry raising; Religious education, recreation, music, dancing and art; Regular preventive and corrective health programme."³⁷⁹ Therefore, the programme taught to protégées was not unusual, but part of a wider reform of religious social services. In 1949, Maison Sainte-Madeleine provided primary level classes for twenty-five girls

³⁷⁵ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "École d'arts et métiers," n.p.

³⁷⁶ "exclusivement dévouées à l'école," in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "École d'arts et métiers," n.p.

³⁷⁷ "langue maternelle, comptabilité domestique, politesse et bienséance, hygiène et soins domestiques, puériculture, économie domestique, morale familiale et sociale" and "coupe et couture, cuisine générale et spécialisée, tissage, arts décoratifs, tricot, reprise," in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, "École d'arts et métiers," n.p.

³⁷⁸ "prépare une élite féminine à voir aux besoins spirituels, moraux et intellectuels de la famille," in Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 67.

³⁷⁹ Tamara Myers, "Regulation, Agency, and the Transformation of Care for 'Predelinquent Girls'" in *Agency and Institutions in Social Regulation: Toward an Historical Understanding of their Interaction*, 348.

aged thirteen to fifteen.³⁸⁰ This emphasis on education marked a significant shift from the earlier days of the institution, where inmates would be given little if any instruction beyond religious lessons. Moreover, the intervention of the government meant that protégées in the twentieth century, while still performing manual labor, did so within an official training program.

Young women obtained domestic and culinary training in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. The nature of the domestic work accomplished by young women in the school of arts and trade was illustrated in several photographs of a 1949 exhibition of domestic art at Maison Sainte-Madeleine (fig. 7). Young women learned to knit and sew a wide variety of textiles. Several floral handkerchiefs and striped ties were displayed on a table at the center of a large room. On all sides, mannequins and hangers are outfitted with belted dresses, coats and berets. Held on June 17th and 18th, the exhibition also featured purses and blouses of various designs. A popular Montreal fashion magazine, *La Revue Moderne*, announced in its March 1949 issue that rounded waists, nautical stripes, checkered cloth and piqué collars were making a resurgence.³⁸¹ Certain features of the 1949 fashion, such as the shape of the collars and the patterns, were discernible in the display, which suggests that women institutionalized in Maison Sainte-Madeleine had contact with outside trends. Three other rooms in the exhibition showcased sweaters, curtains and folded fabric, as well as children's clothing. This last room included white crocheted shawls, bonnets, slippers and small dresses for infants.³⁸² This training indicated that women could seek positions in domestic or textile work after graduation. Maison Sainte-Madeleine also provided culinary training, which emphasized meal preparation as a domestic science. Another room in the exhibition displayed an array of cupcakes, canned vegetables, donuts and sweets. The inclusion of baked goods is perhaps unsurprising, considering the publication of a cookbook by a member of the religious community, Sister Marie de Sainte-Thérèse de Jésus. Titled *La Cuisinière économe et avisée: menus et recettes pratiques conformes aux nécessités des temps*, the collection detailed recipes derived from personal teaching and domestic economy laboratories in

³⁸⁰ Cliche, "Survivre à l'inceste," 131.

³⁸¹ "Rond-point de la mode 1950," *La Revue Moderne*, March 1949, Montréal, 17; Denyse Baillargeon, *A Brief History of Women in Québec*, 91. *La Revue Moderne* was founded by Anne-Marie Gleason in 1919 and bought in 1960, when it became known as *Châtelaine*.

³⁸² Neuville Bazin, *Exposition d'art domestique à la Maison Sainte-Madeleine les 17 et 18 juin 1949*. Quebec: Neuville Bazin, 1949.

the United States and Canada.³⁸³ As suggested by the title, the author was particularly concerned with frugal cooking, warning readers that while meat was a necessary part of a person's daily diet, its cost could be prohibitive.³⁸⁴ The writing also reflected a scientific outlook on cooking by including instructions on sterilization as well as comprehensive cooking charts.³⁸⁵ The baked goods on display in the exhibition could easily have come from the cookbook's extensive baking section. Thus, training in Maison Sainte-Madeleine reinforced domesticity through textile production and meal preparation. One piece of evidence suggests that the programme of moral reform and reintegration to the home favored by the religious order was sometimes successful. The *Annales* of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec described the case of a woman who found a spouse after receiving training in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. In June 1951, Gabrielle Desrosiers, a former Consecrate who left the vocation married Laurent Gauthier of Chicoutimi, a soldier. Desrosiers trained in weaving at the arts and craft school, and worked for a year in the Convent of the Sacred Heart of Mary to pay for her wedding. Maison Sainte-Madeleine covered the rest of the cost. The meetings between the prospective spouses occurred under the supervision of the Sisters, in the parlor of the institution.³⁸⁶ The religious order's account of this engagement revealed the surveillance to which protégées were subjected, since Desrosiers was not left alone with her fiancé until she left the institution. This example demonstrated a fulfillment of the training in place in Maison Sainte-Madeleine in the 1950s, and the extent to which domesticity was emphasized. The school of arts and trade, while formalizing education for protégées, thus represented a continuity with the textile work that was performed in the institution in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, since it prepared young women for domestic life.

³⁸³ Sœur Marie de Sainte-Thérèse de Jésus, *La Cuisinière économe et avisée : menus et recettes pratiques conformes aux nécessités des temps* (Sainte-Foy : Institut St-Jean-Bosco, 1947): iii.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 472-482.

³⁸⁶ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 2 (1943-1963)*, 123.



Figure 8. Buanderie Saint-Joseph in the mid-twentieth century. “Repasserie de la Buanderie Saint-Joseph,” s.d. from “Buanderie,” in *Sœur Sainte-Henriette, Centenaire au Bon-Pasteur*, n.p. Reproduced in “L’œuvre auprès des jeunes délinquantes à la Maison Marie-Fitzbach,” In *Le patrimoine immatériel religieux du Québec*. Web. © Chaire de recherche du Canada en patrimoine ethnologique, Université Laval.

Work in the laundry

Though textile production and home cooking skills were taught in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, most institutionalized women worked in the laundry. In 1950, Buanderie Saint-Joseph had 800 clients, and employed “15 nuns, 3 employees and more than 100 [...] girls.”³⁸⁷

The religious order lists a triple purpose for the laundry: “first, they serve as framework for their

³⁸⁷ “15 religieuses, 3 employés et plus de cent de nos filles,” in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “La Buanderie Saint-Joseph,” n.p.; Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 182. In describing the laundry in 1950, Sister Saint-Bernard Upham estimated that fifty girls worked in the laundry.

initiation to manual labor, they provide an effective means of reform, namely: the application to a work in line with the skills and taste of each; and finally the work allows the interns to consciously defray the costs of their maintenance, and even make some savings”³⁸⁸ Protégées generally worked four to five days a week.³⁸⁹ Work in laundry was limited to six hours and a half for women who were over the age of twenty-one and not pursuing school, as well as minors who had “no intellectual ability.”³⁹⁰ Wages within the laundry were settled by a 1944 collective convention, and ranged between \$0.20 and \$0.35 an hour, depending on skill. Clothing costs, educational and living costs and medical fees were subtracted from this salary.³⁹¹ In 1944, the average female wage-earner worked 43.6 hours a week during the month of highest employment, and earned nearly \$0.48 an hour.³⁹² These statistics should be read with caution, however: though no statistics were available for wage by ethnicity or race for 1948, the fact that a wage gap between white and visible minority Canadians endures in a contemporary setting strongly suggests that women of color, especially Black and Indigenous women, were paid substantially less than white women in this period.³⁹³ Thus, while protégées worked fewer hours on average than women in the labor-force, they also received substantially lower wages. Protégées were only allowed to access their earnings when they could claim an immediate cause to do so, or would be given the entire sum upon departure.³⁹⁴ The *Album Centenaire* contained several photographs of the laundry credited to Photo Roussel (fig. 8). These photographs demonstrated increasingly modernized equipment. A note accompanying a picture of the laundry room lists among other things “6 large tanks, 4 small tanks [...] 4 wringers” and “2 dryers” as

³⁸⁸ “tout d’abord, ils servent de cadre pour leur initiation aux travaux manuels, ils fournissent un moyen efficace de réforme, à savoir: l’application à un travail conforme aux aptitudes et au goût de chacune; enfin le travail permet aux internes de défrayer consciemment les frais de leur entretien, et même de faire quelques économies” «La Buanderie Saint-Joseph” , in Sœur Sainte-Henriette, *Centenaire au Bon-Pasteur*, n.p.

³⁸⁹ Sr St-Bernard Upham, *Years of Shepherding*, 182.

³⁹⁰ “celles qui n’ont aucune aptitude intellectuelle,” in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “La buanderie Saint-Joseph,” in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec: Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

³⁹¹ “Buanderie Saint-Joseph,” in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, *Album centenaire*, n.p.

³⁹² Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book*, (Ottawa: King’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1947), 556, 557.

³⁹³ Krishna Penkadur and Ravi Penkadur, “The colour of money: earning differentials among ethnic groups in Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Economics*, Vol. 31, no. 3, (1998): 518.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

equipment.³⁹⁵ Young women can be seen laboring alongside Sisters in a dimly lit room. Protégées working in the mending room sometimes repaired a thousand socks in a week, and learned to crochet and weave carpets.³⁹⁶ A folding room was also featured in the *Album*, in which six young women were pictured working alongside a nun. It is worth noting that the room's windows were barred. Other photographs featured including a large-scale press and spinners, which indicated that the pictures were taken after the 1949 renovation. That year, a refurbishment of Buanderie Saint-Joseph revealed that the wooden beams were rotten to the point of endangering protégées and sisters, to such an extent that construction workers were surprised that the ceiling had not caved in.³⁹⁷ By 1957, Buanderie Saint-Joseph was four stories high: the laundry occupied the first two floors, workshops were located on the third, and inmates slept on the uppermost floor. A boiler room was attached to the side of the building (fig.). Buanderie Saint-Joseph remained open until at least 1971.³⁹⁸ It underwent a last renovation which occurred in 1960, where a new floor and a steel frame were added to the building. The interior was given an overhaul, making way for a “more adequate repartition of rooms.”³⁹⁹ Though protégées were compensated for their labor in the laundry in the mid-twentieth century, they continued to face exploitation through low wages and potentially dangerous working conditions.

Psychotherapeutic approach in Maison Sainte-Madeleine

The change in institutional mandate towards a rehabilitative rather than punitive approach was facilitated by a closer collaboration with governmental agencies. In 1948, sisters who had earned degrees in social work entered Maison Sainte-Madeleine.⁴⁰⁰ The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec signed a convention with the Sauvegarde de l'enfance on the subject of

³⁹⁵ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Buanderie,” in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

³⁹⁶ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Buanderie,” n.p.

³⁹⁷ Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Rénovation de la buanderie Saint-Joseph,” in *Album centenaire de la Congrégation des Sœurs Servantes du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, (Quebec : Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur, 1950) : n.p.

³⁹⁸ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 3 (1964-1976)*, 119.

³⁹⁹ “une répartition plus adéquate des locaux,” in Sr Marie-Ste-Véronique du Sauveur and Sr Ste-Hélène-de-la-croix, “Rénovation de la buanderie Saint-Joseph,” n.p.

⁴⁰⁰ Cliche, “Survivre à l'inceste,” 124; Etienne Berthold, “Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci,” *Encyclobec*, 2015, n.p. It would take another decade before a social worker was introduced to the women's prison, Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci.

family allocations for orphans. From that point on, every girl who entered the institution was seen by a social worker, and followed by a government agency. Sauvegarde de l'enfance also provided financially for the institutionalized young women's stay.⁴⁰¹ According to a Sister who was an educator in the institution, Georgette Côté, Maison Marie-Fitzbach adopted a psychoeducational therapeutic approach in the 1960s. Girls were placed in the institution by a social worker or a CLSC, and their behavior was monitored weekly. The Sisters attempted to instill personal responsibility and autonomy by giving the girls an allowance and cigarettes in exchange for good behavior. Sister Côté also noted that several women attempted to escape, only to be brought back by police officers. She explained that young women were taught to channel their aggression and their sexuality into constructive hobbies. Girls also attended group therapy, and some followed high school classes.⁴⁰² The introduction of social work and government support was consistent with practices in other Catholic institutions: a Sister of the Good Shepherd of Angers visited Maison Sainte-Madeleine in 1951 to study the social services in place there.⁴⁰³

The psychotherapeutic approach adopted in Maison Sainte-Madeleine was particularly apparent in the treatment of incest survivors. Historian Marie-Aimée Cliche found 170 cases of victims between 1930 and 1973, the vast majority of whom were admitted after 1950.⁴⁰⁴ Reports written by religious social workers showed that more than a third of the affected families presented multiple cases of incest, whether because there were more than one victim or more than one perpetrator within the household.⁴⁰⁵ Forty-eight survivors of incest had already been pregnant by the time they entered the institution, with more than half the pregnancies being unmistakably attributable to a family member.⁴⁰⁶ Anxiety and aggression were the two most frequent behavioral problems exhibited by these young women, but some girls also suffered from self-harm, suicidal ideation and guilt.⁴⁰⁷ Some of the reasons for admission in incest cases

⁴⁰¹ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 2 (1943-1963)*, 138.

⁴⁰² Sister Georgette Côté, "L'œuvre auprès des jeunes délinquantes à la Maison Marie-Fitzbach," In *Le patrimoine immatériel religieux du Québec*. Web. <http://www.ipir.ulaval.ca/fiche.php?id=993>

⁴⁰³ Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach, Tome 2 (1943-1963)*, 138.

⁴⁰⁴ Cliche, "Survivre à l'inceste," 125.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 129.

included “moral danger” and “sexual immorality.”⁴⁰⁸ Counselling services as well as therapy overseen by a psychologist or psychiatrist were available to the girls in Maison Sainte-Madeleine.⁴⁰⁹ A cornerstone of the therapeutic approach given by the religious order was maternal substitution, where Sisters attempted to build an affective bond with the young women.⁴¹⁰ Moreover, the biological mothers of the survivors were instructed to forgive their daughters of any misbehavior and to keep in steady contact with them.⁴¹¹ Cliche has noted that disclosure was a particularly difficult step in the recovery process for the young women, many of whom experienced difficulties in trusting people, especially men, following their experience of trauma.⁴¹² Many girls repeatedly skipped confession, and felt guilty for the imprisonment of their abuser or the disintegration of their family life.⁴¹³ While being a victim of incest was not considered sinful in the eyes of the clergy, subsequent sexual behavior such as intercourse with other men or masturbation was seen as immoral.⁴¹⁴ Forgiveness was a significant step in recovery as encouraged by the clergy, and survivors were encouraged to pardon their abuser. The sisters supported a distinction between the sin and the sinner.⁴¹⁵ Survivors were also encouraged to set their own boundaries by learning to say “no”: Cliche cited the case of a young woman who made great progress in her recovery after declining to visit her family during the Christmas holiday.⁴¹⁶ While some young women healed from their traumatic experience enough to lead a relatively happy life after leaving the institution, many suffered long-term psychological difficulties.⁴¹⁷ Concluding her study of the treatment of incest in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, Cliche wrote that many therapeutic approaches used by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, such as self-affirmation and verbalisation, still had contemporary relevance.⁴¹⁸ However, she also noted that while the religious nature of the treatment was appropriate at a time when most of the population was Catholic, it was no longer applicable in post-Quiet Revolution Quebec.⁴¹⁹

⁴⁰⁸ Cliche, “Survivre à l’inceste,” 141.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 132.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

Therefore, while Maison Sainte-Madeleine introduced social work and therapy, it maintained a Catholic approach to incest, which framed the crime in religious terms.

Institutional reform and closure

The Quiet Revolution of the 1960s saw sweeping changes in the management of the healthcare and education sectors, which impacted Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Jean Lesage's government proposed the acquisition of the buildings that had until now housed the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, which provoked the congregation's 1965 move to its current location near Université Laval.⁴²⁰ Historian Michael Gauvreau has argued that "[b]etween 1960 and 1965, official Catholic opinion shifted markedly away from the notion that Quebec's identity as a Catholic society was a function of the Church's direct control of educational institutions."⁴²¹ The state takeover of religious institutions during the Quiet Revolution had a considerable impact on the closure of Maison Sainte-Madeleine and the way in which it is remembered. Services that were previously in the hands of religious communities such as the Sisters of the Good Shepherd were now overseen by the state. Maison Marie-Fitzbach was combined with Maison Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde in 1975 to form a new state-run readaption center named L'Escale.⁴²² In 1963, the Boucher committee report recommended the professional training in social services, especially for healthcare workers, psychologists and social workers.⁴²³ A note in the *Annales* described this change a legitimate and positive, which suggests that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec were not entirely opposed to government intervention in their administration.⁴²⁴ The government took possession of the former Mother House and adjacent buildings on September 24th, 1976.⁴²⁵ These moves coincided with a tendency towards

⁴²⁰ Cliche, "Survivre à l'inceste," 132.

⁴²¹ Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005): 175.

⁴²² Sister Georgette Côté, "L'œuvre auprès des jeunes délinquantes à la Maison Marie-Fitzbach," In *Le patrimoine immatériel religieux du Québec*.

⁴²³ Gossage and Little, *History of Quebec*, 237.

⁴²⁴ "C'est bien le temps de le dire. Les siècles se suivent mais ne se ressemblent pas. Aujourd'hui l'État et le public exigent de savoir et même de constater de leurs propres yeux les qualifications que les possèdent les Professeurs de leurs enfants. C'est légitime, en justice envers la soeur elle-même, envers les élèves et envers les parents. Les professeurs doivent être à la hauteur de leur tâche," in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, *Annales de la Maison Marie-Fitzbach*, Tome 3 (1964-1976), 129.

⁴²⁵ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 88.

secularization within the religious order, with at least 220 sisters giving up the veil in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴²⁶ In 1978, the Oblates of Mary moved to the former monastery of the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood in Levis. This change in scenery was “the culmination of a long process aimed at offering Oblates vaster rooms and a privileged access to nature.”⁴²⁷ The membership of the religious order also declined: as of 1997, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec numbered around 900 members.⁴²⁸ Therefore, the closure of Maison Sainte-Madeleine can be read as part of a broader narrative of secularization in the 1960s and 70s.

Conclusion

Maison Sainte-Madeleine experienced widespread reforms between 1940 and its closure in 1975. Inmates became known as “protégées,” and Magdalens were rechristened Sisters. Through collaboration with the Quebecois government, the establishment opened a school of arts and trade that offered domestic training to institutionalized girls. Following this highly gendered programme, protégées learned domestic skills including sewing, weaving and cooking. State intervention also resulted in the introduction of social workers in the establishment. During this period, Maison Sainte-Madeleine adopted a psychotherapeutic approach in its treatment of delinquent girls, which emphasized personal responsibility and maternal substitution. This institutional trajectory, however, did not spell the end of repressive conditions for protégées. Though Maison Sainte-Madeleine modernized considerably throughout the twentieth century, this institution still subjected young women to exploitative work in the laundry, which remained open until the 1970s. Even after the Sisters adopted a psychotherapeutic approach towards juvenile delinquency, girls attempted to escape the premises. The governmental takeover of Maison Marie-Fitzbach was the culmination of decades of state intervention. Its institutional trajectory was contemporaneous with the wider secularization and nationalization of social services in the Quiet Revolution.

⁴²⁶ Jalbert, *Présence d'avenir*, 92.

⁴²⁷ “l'aboutissement d'un long processus visant à offrir aux Oblates des locaux plus vastes et un accès privilégié à la nature,” in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, “Les vies cachées de la Maison Béthanie,” *Musée virtuel du Bon-Pasteur : Histoire de chez nous*. Web.

⁴²⁸ Andre Picard, “Quebec nuns defrauded, court finds: Moral victory for Sisters of the ...,” *The Globe and Mail* Nov 7, 1997: A4. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.



Figure 9. Oblates of Mary in the garden between 1978 and 1983. From: “Groupe d'Oblates dans le grand jardin de l'ancien monastère du Précieux-Sang de Lévis- Entre 1978 et 1983,” in Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, “Les vies cachées de la Maison Béthanie,” Musée virtuel du Bon-Pasteur : Histoire de chez nous. Web.

CHAPTER 4: Remembering Maison Sainte-Madeleine and the Irish Magdalen laundries

Several factors contributed to the disparity between the prominence of the Irish Magdalen laundries scandal and the lack of attention that Quebecois Magdalen asylums have received. First, the Duplessis orphans scandal overshadowed the public memory of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, despite the fact that this controversy directly implicated the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec. Secondly, the modernization of Maison Sainte-Madeleine contrasts with the lack of adaptation of Irish Magdalen laundries throughout the twentieth century. This chapter will draw on Elizabeth Cullingford's scholarship, which identifies a tendency to frame Irish Magdalen laundries in Gothic narratives, to argue that these institutions attracted scandal partly because of their institutional intransigence. Conversely, Maison Sainte-Madeleine's evolution was subsumed in narratives of modernization associated with the Quiet Revolution. Thirdly, this chapter will likewise identify narratives of slave labor associated with Irish asylums, which will be contrasted with the compensation that inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine received for their work. Lastly, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec managed to sustain a closer relationship with the public than the orders who ran Irish Magdalen asylums. Specifically, the religious order opened a museum which sought to impart the history of the congregation to visitors. These factors emphasize the necessity of considering Magdalen asylums in a transnational context.

Maison Sainte-Madeleine and the Duplessis Orphans scandal

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd were implicated in the Duplessis orphans scandal, which bore striking similarities to the Irish Magdalen laundry controversy. The Duplessis orphans were approximately three thousand children who were raised in crèches in the 1940s and 50s such as the one run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, and were transferred to single-sex orphanages around the age of five.⁴²⁹ These children were admitted to psychiatric institutions such as Mont-Providence school, a move orchestrated by the Duplessis government to avail itself of federal funding that was available for such institutions.⁴³⁰ These transfers occurred despite the lack of evidence supporting that these children were mentally ill, and the

⁴²⁹ Canadian Press, "Les orphelins de Duplessis dénoncent l'inertie de l'Église et exigent des excuses publiques." *Le Devoir*, Montréal, April 3rd 2010.

Adje Van de Sande and Boudreau, François, "Les orphelins de Duplessis," *Nouvelles pratiques sociales* 13, no. 2 (2000): 126.

⁴³⁰ Gossage and Little, *An Illustrated History of Quebec*, 226.

stigma of institutionalization followed them throughout their adult lives. False mental health diagnostics were only removed from their medical files in 2012, when the Assembly General of Quebec passed Article 176.⁴³¹ The Duplessis orphans generally received little to no education, and faced traumatic circumstances including psychological, physical and sexual abuse.⁴³² The scandal first came to light after the publication of Jean Charles Pagé's 1961 *Les Fous crient au secours*. This book prompted a commission into psychiatric hospitals, widely known as the Bédard Report, which brought the scandal to public attention.⁴³³ Alongside Maison Sainte-Madeleine, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec had also run Crèche Saint-Vincent de Paul, an institution in which children born outside of wedlock were raised. Some of these children had been born in the Hôpital de la Miséricorde in Quebec.⁴³⁴ Mothers who gave up their newborns for adoption in the hospital signed a form in which they agreed not to attempt to reclaim their children.⁴³⁵ Rose Dufour's 2002 investigation of the Duplessis orphans include several testimonials of children born in the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's maternity hospital or raised in their crèche.⁴³⁶ One survivor recalled asking a Sister from Crèche de la Réparation, an institution in Pointe-aux-Trembles, about his origins. She informed him that his mother was in Maison Béthanie, not far from where he was raised.⁴³⁷ This passage suggests that, in at least one case, the parent of a Duplessis orphan became a Magdalen. Though this controversy clearly involved the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, Magdalen asylums such as Maison Sainte-Madeleine were largely elided from the narrative of this scandal. The Duplessis Orphans scandal received renewed attention in 1992, when the Comité des orphelins et orphelines institutionnalisés de Duplessis (COOID) launched a class action lawsuit against the Quebec government and the Church. Two settlements of 25 and 26 million dollars were granted to the Duplessis Orphans by the Quebec government in 2001 and 2006 respectively.⁴³⁸ The government issued an official apology, but the religious orders have yet to do the same. The

⁴³¹ Jeanne Corriveau, "Les orphelins de Duplessis libérés d'un fardeau," *Le Devoir*, Montréal, October 17th 2012.

⁴³² Gossage and Little, *An Illustrated History of Quebec*, 227.

⁴³³ Adje Van de Sande and François Boudreau, "Les orphelins de Duplessis," *Nouvelles pratiques sociales* 13, no. 2 (2000): 127.

⁴³⁴ Rose Dufour, *Naître rien : Des orphelins de Duplessis, de la crèche à l'asile*, (Sainte-Foy : Éditions Multimondes, 2002) : 19.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 37, 169-171, 176, 273.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴³⁸ CBC News, "Duplessis Orphans get \$26M from Quebec," *CBC News*, Dec. 26th, 2006.

COOID organized a demonstration in front of Notre-Dame Basilica in April 2010 asking for an official apology from the Church, but none came.⁴³⁹

Comparatively, Maison Sainte-Madeleine and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec have received praise from government officials. The 150th anniversary of the religious order in 1999 was a momentous occasion, which saw the Sisters receive official congratulations from Canadian and Quebecois leaders including Jean Chrétien and Lucien Bouchard.⁴⁴⁰ A letter from the mayor of Sainte-Foy, Andrée P. Boucher, mentioned that she had attended a school run by the religious order.⁴⁴¹ This correspondence highlighted the contribution that the sisters made to Quebecois society, citing their participation in “the creation of numerous care homes for women in difficulty and residences for disturbed teenagers.”⁴⁴² These letters, written after the Duplessis orphans scandal was brought to light, suggested that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec retained a relatively uncontroversial reputation despite the order’s implication.

The Irish Magdalen asylums scandal, however, bore striking similarities to the Duplessis Orphans controversy. These Irish institutions rose to public prominence when a mass grave of 133 women was exhumed outside of High Park laundry in 1993, one year after the initiation of the COOID lawsuit in Quebec. The bodies interred were those of auxiliaries in the institution, the equivalent to Maison Sainte-Madeleine’s Magdalens. Upon disinterring the grave, twenty-two additional bodies were found. The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, who ran the institution, were unable to produce the names and death certificates of these women.⁴⁴³ A survivor organization, Justice for Magdalenes (JFM), submitted an extensive report to the United Nations Committee Against Torture, which detailed forced labour as well as psychological and physical abuse in the institutions.⁴⁴⁴ An inter-departmental committee chaired by Martin McAleese was established to investigate state involvement in the Magdalen asylums. The ensuing publication in 2013, known as the McAleese report, has been widely criticized for its lack of partiality towards religious

⁴³⁹ Canadian Press, “Les orphelins de Duplessis dénoncent l’inertie de l’Église et exigent des excuses publiques.” *Le Devoir* (Montréal), April 3rd 2010.

⁴⁴⁰ Céline Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir au cœur du monde*, (Quebec : La Congrégation des Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur de Québec, 1999) : x, xi

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, xiv.

⁴⁴² “la création de nombreuses maisons d’accueil pour les femmes en difficulté et de résidences pour adolescentes perturbées,” in Jalbert, *Présence d’avenir*, x, xi.

⁴⁴³ Anne Enright, “Antigone in Galway,” *London Review of Books* 37 no. 24 (2015): 13.

⁴⁴⁴ Justice for Magdalenes, “Submission to the United Nations Committee Against Torture,” Crocknahattina, May 2011.

orders.⁴⁴⁵ UNCAT charged that the report did not result from a “fully independent investigation into allegations of arbitrary detention, forced labour or ill-treatment.”⁴⁴⁶ Taoiseach Enda Kenny issued an official apology to survivors of the Magdalene asylums on February 19th, 2013, which included a compensation scheme.⁴⁴⁷ Much like the Duplessis Orphans scandal, the Magdalen controversy centered on Catholic institutional abuse and the stigma against pregnancy outside of wedlock. The similarities between these two histories were recognized by survivors in Ireland and Quebec. On June 3rd, 2017, in Concordia University in Montreal, Duplessis Orphans and survivors of the Mother and Baby Homes in Ireland corresponded via video conference to share their experiences.⁴⁴⁸ The event was organized at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling by Alyssa Ryvers, a composer who noticed the similarities between the two controversies.⁴⁴⁹ This meeting suggests an ongoing recognition of the link between the Irish and Quebecois legacies of Catholic institutional abuse. While the Duplessis orphans scandal garnered national press coverage, the plight of unmarried mothers in Quebec has not received the same level of public scrutiny or activism. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec were implicated in this scandal through Hôpital de la Miséricorde, Crèche Saint-Vincent de Paul and Maison Béthanie, since the testimonial of one Duplessis orphan suggested that his mother was a Magdalen. Moreover, inmates from Maison Sainte-Madeleine worked in Hôpital de la Miséricorde as bonnes. A recognition of the wider implications of the Duplessis Orphans scandal would involve an acknowledgement of the role of Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec’s institutions, specifically since the scandal surrounding the Irish Magdalen laundries so closely resembled the Quebecois experience.

Modernization and compensation

⁴⁴⁵ Justice for Magdalenes, “JFM Research Publishes Critique of McAleese Report,” Crocknahattina, February 2015.

⁴⁴⁶ Felice D. Gaer, “Report to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,” Geneva. May 22 2013. 4.

⁴⁴⁷ Henry McDonald, “Magdalene laundries: Ireland to apologize to survivors,” *Guardian* (Manchester), February 19 2013.

⁴⁴⁸ Jaela Bernstien, “Children of sin: Quebec and Irish orphans share stories of abuse under care of Catholic Church,” *CBC News*, June 3rd, 2017.

⁴⁴⁹ “Irish and Quebec orphans hold video conference that reveals similar stories of Catholic institution abuse,” *Irish Central* (New York City), June 5th, 2017.

The institutional modernization of Maison Sainte-Madeleine between the 1940s and 1970s resulted in a disparity in the way that Irish and Quebecois Magdalen laundries were remembered by the public. The fact that Quebecois inmates received a salary, however small, was significant considering the attention given to the lack of remuneration their Irish counterparts received. Referring to Irish Magdalen laundries in “Antigone in Galway,” Anne Enright dubbed this issue “the slavery question,” a terminology also used by other authors to describe coerced and unpaid labor in the laundries.⁴⁵⁰ The McAleese report noted that the Irish public was often under the impression that Magdalen laundries were highly profitable for the religious orders who ran them.⁴⁵¹ Though conditions in Maison Sainte-Madeleine were exploitative, since inmates were paid little more than half the average wage given to working women in 1944, Irish Magdalen laundry inmates attracted more attention specifically because of the unpaid nature of their work. The “slavery question” in the Irish case was part of a tendency to decry these institutions for their lack of evolution: the lack of compensation of inmates was a holdover from nineteenth-century practices. Literary scholar Elizabeth Cullingford examines the representations of religious orders in popular films and novels in Ireland. While condemning abuse and corruption in Magdalen laundries, she argues for a feminist interpretation of convents, positing that “many traditional female religious communities—although their independence was always compromised by their allegiance to a patriarchal church, and their extinction under the onslaught of Western modernity currently seems assured—offered in their time a greater degree of autonomy for women than was available in “the world.”⁴⁵² Despite the decline in female vocations and the patriarchal hierarchical structure in which these communities existed, Cullingford describes convents as offering possibilities for social advancement and independence for women. She notes that in such environments, sisters were an authoritative minority among a majority of inmates. Regardless of their motivation to do so, religious communities who operated Magdalen asylums in Quebec and Ireland maintained their institution partly through the unpaid labor of women during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. The Sisters’ social advancement and autonomy was contingent upon the work of the women they sought to reform. Convents reproduced social relations of power in which a minority of women achieved

⁴⁵⁰ Anne Enright, “Antigone in Galway,” *London Review of Books* 37 no. 24 (2015): 14; Anna Carey, “Depressing but not surprising,” *New Statesman*, United Kingdom. July 17th 2015; Mary Raftery, “State apology is only way to express wrong done to Magdalens,” *The Irish Times* (Dublin), June 20th, 2011.

⁴⁵¹ *McAleese Report*, 994.

⁴⁵² Cullingford, “Our Nuns are Not a Nation,” 34

autonomy and authority. For Cullingford, the issue of nuns' agency is particularly important in weighing responsibility for the Irish Magdalen asylum scandal. She argues that the "more independent power we attribute to the new apostolic sisterhoods, the more blame they must shoulder for scapegoating sexually deviant women and establishing Our Lady's chaste maternity as the dominant feminine idea."⁴⁵³ She decries simplistic representations of religious women as motivated by profit or power, and stresses that "[t]he difference between a vocation and a punishment, however, lies not in the strictness of the discipline but in the will to perform it"⁴⁵⁴. Cullingford's article describes the Gothic tropes prevalent in films about Irish Magdalen asylums, which emphasize the backward or even medieval nature of these institutions. In particular, she criticizes Peter Mullan's film *The Magdalene Sisters* for "reviv[ing] the old colonial and essentialist discourses of Irish primitivism and Maria Monk-style anti-Popery."⁴⁵⁵ Based on the documentary *Sex in a Cold Climate*, this film took liberties with survivor testimony to emphasize the sexual sadism of Sisters.⁴⁵⁶ Moreover, Mullan emphasized profit and power as the motivation for Sisters to join the convent. In contrast, Cullingford calls for a nuanced view of religious orders' conventual life, which accounts for institutional abuse while avoiding anti-Catholic tropes. She charges that Mullan's film associates "Irish religious practices with the unreasonable, uncivilized, and unprogressive narrative of medieval barbarism."⁴⁵⁷ The tropes identified by Cullingford indicate that Magdalen laundries were condemned in part because of their lack of evolution, since popular representations of these institutions draw continuities between Medieval and modern practices. In particular, these narratives emphasize the lack of compensation of inmates and the profitability of these institutions. Contrarily to the representations of Irish Magdalen asylums, Maison Sainte-Madeleine modernized throughout the twentieth century. This institution's history, while sharing similarities with the Irish case, nonetheless diverged from the Gothic narratives because of its adaptation from the 1940s to the Quiet Revolution. The secularization of Maison Sainte-Madeleine meant that Sisters no longer had a primary role in its operation post-1975. The establishment thus lost the uniquely Catholic character that was assigned to its Irish counterparts.

⁴⁵³ Cullingford, "Our Nuns are Not a Nation," 13.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21, 33.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

State intervention in Irish and Quebecois Magdalen asylums

Both the Irish and Quebecois governments were involved in funding Magdalen asylums in the twentieth century. As mentioned above, the modernization of Maison Sainte-Madeleine took place with considerable intervention from the Quebecois government. Though Irish Magdalen laundries' income was derived primarily from inmates' labor well into the twentieth century, these institutions also received governmental support. The McAleese report found extensive evidence of state intervention in the operation of these institutions, including 2124 referrals from the courts since the establishment of the Irish Free State.⁴⁵⁸ In Ireland, government officers and social workers conducted follow-ups with women who were sent to Magdalen asylums on probation.⁴⁵⁹ In 1969, the Department of Health acknowledged that the Magdalen asylum in Donnybrook's main source of income was the laundry, although it nevertheless gave a weekly grant for "sub-normal" or disabled women in the institution.⁴⁶⁰ In 1974, the Southern Health Board reported that the Good Shepherd asylum in Cork was also sustained by work within the laundries, but was having difficulty in maintaining its output.⁴⁶¹ The Department of Health gave similar grants to the Sean McDermott Magdalen laundry in 1969, and to the Good Shepherd Magdalen laundry in Limerick and the High Park Magdalen laundry in Dublin in 1970.⁴⁶² Inspections under the Factories Acts were also carried out in the Irish asylums.⁴⁶³ Yet, the state intervention in Maison Sainte-Madeleine was more extensive than in Irish Magdalen laundries, as evidenced by the government takeover of the institution and the compensation of inmates. Equally, the social context that led to the termination of these establishments in Ireland and Quebec differed. The transition from Maison Marie-Fitzbach in 1975 to L'Escale happened two decades earlier than the closure of the last Irish Magdalen laundry.⁴⁶⁴ Maison Sainte-Madeleine's secularization happened amid the Quiet Revolution, as part of a broader tendency towards state control of religious institutions. Therefore, whereas Irish Magdalen laundries were

⁴⁵⁸Ireland, Department of Justice and Equality, *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee to Establish the Facts of State Involvement with the Magdalen Laundries*, Chair: Martin McAleese. Government of Ireland, (2013): xiii.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, xxii.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 615.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 631-2.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 618-628.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, xxi.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

depicted in films and novels as Gothic institutions, Maison Sainte-Madeleine's mid-twentieth century history was characterized by modernization and state intervention.

Relationship with the public

The extent to which women who were confined in Magdalen laundries have spoken to the media is another major factor in the way that these institutions were remembered. In Ireland, numerous oral history interviews have been conducted with survivors, while the nuns who ran these institutions remain relatively silent.⁴⁶⁵ The opposite was true of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec. Because abuse was reported in Irish, Canadian,⁴⁶⁶ American⁴⁶⁷ and Australian⁴⁶⁸ Good Shepherd institutions, its existence in Quebec cannot be ruled out. However, there are apparently few if any interviews with women who were institutionalized in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, while as noted above, several individuals including mayor Andrée Boucher spoke positively of the establishment. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec sought to convey the history of their congregation by opening a museum in 1992. Housed in the former Maison Béthanie, it shut its doors in 2014.⁴⁶⁹ In an interview about the closure, museologist Nathalie Perron explained that many children who had grown up in the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's crèche visited the museum to understand their origins. She assigned therapeutic value to this experience, and outlined the extent of the order's operation on an international scale. She described Maison Sainte-Madeleine as a transitional home for prisoners.⁴⁷⁰ The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's museum gave the religious order an opportunity to engage with the public in a way that their Irish counterparts did not.

Conclusion

⁴⁶⁵ Claire McGettrick, Katherine O'Donnell and Sinead Pembroke, *Magdalene Oral History Archive*, Dublin: Digital Repository of Ireland, 2010-2013.

⁴⁶⁶ Georgina Williams, *Delcina's Tears*, Denver: Outskirts Press, 2007.

⁴⁶⁷ Women who were confined in American Magdalene laundries formed a survivor group on the social media platform Facebook titled "Survivors of Good Shepherd/Magdalone laundries in America."

⁴⁶⁸ Canadian Press, "Researcher probes Canadian links to abuse at Magdalene laundries," *Macleans*, July 12, 2016.

⁴⁶⁹ Josianne Desloges, "Le musée thérapeutique des sœurs du Bon-Pasteur de Québec," *Le Soleil*, Quebec, August 15th, 2014.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The similarities between the Duplessis orphans scandal in Quebec and the Magdalen laundries controversy in Ireland demonstrated the necessity of studying Catholic establishments from an international perspective. Throughout the twentieth century, both Irish and Quebecois governments along with the Catholic Church were involved in the operation of institutions of moral reform aimed at unmarried mothers and their children, including mother and baby homes and maternity hospitals. Magdalen asylums in both localities held women who committed a variety of perceived transgressions, including sexuality outside marriage, but also alcoholism and sex work. In both Ireland and Quebec, the discursive production of the category of “fallen woman” justified unpaid labor within the laundry. Despite the fact that a significant number of women were confined in Maison Sainte-Madeleine, the existence of Magdalen asylums remains little known by the Quebecois public to this day. The lack of attention that these institutions have drawn is salient considering the public scandal that they have attracted in Ireland.

CONCLUSION

Maison Sainte-Madeleine was never an exceptional institution. Its establishment arose concurrently with the foundation of several Magdalen asylums in the nineteenth century. Its institutional growth, therefore, should not be read in isolation of the social, legal and political context that produced it. In the nineteenth century, several factors influenced Maison Sainte-Madeleine, namely industrialization, religious fervor, the social stigma against sex work and the legislation that targeted it.

Maison Sainte-Madeleine's development should be read in the context of the history of confinement and incarceration in Quebec. In the early-to-mid-twentieth century, The Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec oversaw a women's prison, a reformatory, a maternity hospital and a house for Magdalens. These institutions were interconnected: some inmates in Maison Sainte-Madeleine were admitted from the prison or the maternity hospital, who in turn occasionally swore lifetime vows to remain in Maison Béthanie. The emergence of Maison Sainte-Madeleine and Magdalen asylums in the nineteenth century was part of the development comprehensive network of punitive establishments, which Foucault termed the "carceral archipelago." These institutions of moral reform expanded as part of a wider abandonment of public forms of punishment in favor of incarceration and confinement. During this time, women were pathologized and criminalized for a broad range of transgressions, usually tied to sexuality or domesticity.

As an economic space, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was constituted through an ideological justification of moral reform through affective and manual labor. In the nineteenth century, inmates were expected to atone for their sins while sewing, washing and weaving clothing. Surveillance remained a consistent feature of Maison Sainte-Madeleine throughout its history. Through policies that discourage communication between institutionalized women, constant supervision facilitated an exploitative system in which inmates worked unpaid or for very low wages. The strict supervision in place within the asylum shaped the built environment, which facilitated the imposition of new hierarchies throughout the twentieth century. Inmates had very little access to the outside world, and were expected to adhere to a strict schedule which emphasized affective and manual labor. Escape attempts highlighted the coercive nature of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, since institutionalized women could not leave of their own accord.

According to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec, the institution's mandate changed over the years from the moral reform of sex workers, alcoholics, addicts, and former convicts to the treatment of juvenile delinquents. This purported shift should be interpreted with caution for three main reasons: first, this adjustment in the admissions process was identified primarily by the religious order; secondly, the nineteenth-century category of "fallen woman" encompassed a wide range of behaviors including vagrancy and unwed motherhood; and lastly, juvenile delinquency was a historically constituted category of offender which emerged in the late-nineteenth century. Narratives of institutional evolution should likewise be treated with some skepticism, since Maison Sainte-Madeleine retained features such as manual labor and constant surveillance until its closure. Nevertheless, certain reforms such as the introduction of social workers and compensation for inmates signalled a divergence from the practices of the nineteenth century. The institution's changing outlook was perhaps most noticeable in its treatment of survivors of incest as described by Marie-Aimée Cliche. While conditions in the mid-twentieth century undeniably softened, Maison Sainte-Madeleine maintained a strict institutional discipline well into the 1960s and 70s. Significantly, the institution by then known as Maison Marie-Fitzback, was absorbed into a state-run rehabilitation centre. Its eventual takeover by the Quebecois government anchored its history within a movement towards governmental control of social services.

Contrarily to Irish Magdalen laundries, Maison Sainte-Madeleine has not been the object of outrage or scandal. In part, the modernization and secularization of the institution meant that its history was subsumed under the larger narrative of Quebec's Quiet Revolution. This aspect should not be overemphasized, since as noted above, the institution retained several aspects of its nineteenth-century programme of moral reform until the 1970s. The fact that protégées were paid in Maison Sainte-Madeleine in the mid-twentieth century, while their Irish counterparts were not, also impacted the way in which these institutions are remembered. However, institutionalized women and girls in the Quebecois institution received wages well below the average for female workers in the province. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's publications and museum also offered sharp contrast to the lack of communication the Irish Sisters had with the public. The disparity in conditions within Irish and Quebecois Magdalen asylums highlighted the importance of studying these institutions' transnational expansion. These establishments were

influenced by broader social and political changes, as exemplified by the secularization of Maison Sainte-Madeleine during the Quiet Revolution.

The histories of Irish and Quebecois Magdalen asylums were bound in both nations' Catholic institutional systems. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec's establishments, including Maison Sainte-Madeleine, were involved in the Duplessis Orphans scandal. Both children born outside of marriage and their mothers were institutionalized in the mid-twentieth century. Unwed mothers sometimes entered Maison Sainte-Madeleine from Hôpital de la Miséricorde, the religious order's maternity hospital. Studies of the controversy found at least one case where the mother of a Duplessis orphan was institutionalized in Maison Béthanie. The link between Irish and Quebecois "architectures of containment" was explicitly recognized by formerly institutionalized people in both localities. Duplessis Orphans met with survivors of Irish industrial schools to discuss their common experiences. The relationship between these histories opens up the possibility for the recognition of a shared institutional past, especially in consideration of the extensive parallels between Maison Sainte-Madeleine and Ireland's Magdalen laundries.

Two major areas of research warrant further consideration. First, this study relied largely on religious records to draw a history of Maison Sainte-Madeleine. This history of Maison Sainte-Madeleine remains incomplete without the testimonial of women who were confined within the institution. In Ireland, the emergence of oral history interviews was essential in launching a governmental investigation of the Magdalen laundries. These sources highlighted the limitations of relying on accounts of these institutions written by members of the clergy. Though religious publications maintained a largely positive view of Maison Sainte-Madeleine, photographs and plans of the asylum showed a secluded and potentially dangerous working environment for inmates. Moreover, the constitutions and rules of the Sisters demonstrated the severity of the institution's discipline. However, without interviews with former protégées, researchers have little access to the thoughts and feelings of women who were institutionalized in Maison Sainte-Madeleine. Second, this research has focused primarily on Maison Sainte-Madeleine and Quebec City, while the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec expanded internationally. While this study focused on this institution's trajectory in Quebec City, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd founded convents on an international scale, opening institutions in

Rwanda, Lesotho, South Africa, Haiti, Brazil and the United States.⁴⁷¹ They were not alone in this endeavor, since religious orders connected with Magdalen asylums such as the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Angers also extended their operations across five continents.⁴⁷² Of course, not all of these convents would have been associated with refuges for “fallen women” or unwed mothers. However, this international expansion opened the possibility of several transnational studies, or even a global history of Magdalen asylums. Comparative histories would shed light on the wider social, religious and political contexts that lead to the foundation and continued operation of these institutions in different localities.

Since its population was almost exclusively female, Maison Sainte-Madeleine was an illustrative chapter in women’s history in Quebec. This study highlighted the variety of roles that women could hold in society, with Sisters on one end of the spectrum and inmates on the other. Moreover, the religious order’s programme of moral reform reinforced gendered norms of behavior, with particular emphasis on domesticity. The hierarchical order of Magdalen asylums indicated that women could hold considerable power over other women, even though the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Quebec were themselves embedded within the patriarchal structure of the Catholic Church.

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