The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You:

The 1912 Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition in its North American and Transnational Contexts

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Abstract

The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You: The 1912 Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition in its North American and Transnational Contexts

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This thesis explores the 1912 Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition as part of a transnational public-education project that provided tools for the promotion of public health, child welfare, and the prevention of child and infant mortality in North America. During the Progressive Era, the population of cities increased and urban living conditions became a major concern for reformers, who were especially worried about a vulnerable group within this population: children. Child welfare exhibitions became an important component of the child-saving movement in the early 1910s, developed in response to the dangers and risks of the cities, as well as the alarming childhood and infant mortality rates. They were grassroots initiatives organized by communities seeking to share new education methods and to explain their philanthropic work around children's well-being. The Montreal exhibition was based on an American model and largely influenced by the New York and Chicago exhibitions held the year before. Inviting readers on a virtual tour of the 1912 exhibition, the dissertation examines the different thematic sections of the Montreal event, which dealt in turn with the following child-related issues: health, housing and the city environment; education and religious training; recreation; philanthropy; juvenile court; and industrial conditions. The omnipresence of children in urban setting and the particular salience of the mother's responsibility are emphasized throughout the chapters. In Montreal, reformers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds put their differences aside in this endeavor, designing and presenting a successful exhibition visited by over three hundred

thousand people. The transnational lens shows that reformers worked together across countries and shared elite ideologies, beliefs, values, and attitudes, but also concepts of public health, moral and social regulation, nationalism, scientific motherhood, and materials for child welfare exhibitions. This study asserts that this heterogenous group had conflicting views regarding the origins of child welfare problems, blaming mothers or poverty, and proposed contrasting solutions in the exhibition materials. Overall, the thesis argues that the visual and experiential elements of the exhibition were central to the choice of this medium for the transnational public-education project on child welfare.

Keywords: Child Welfare Exhibition; child welfare; exhibitions; Montreal; New York, Chicago, transnational history; progressive; childhood; public health; infant mortality; child rearing; motherhood, women, children

Acknowledgements

The idea for this dissertation came from a paper I wrote in a Quebec history course taught by my supervisor, Peter Gossage. I was in the early stages of the PhD program and had come upon the discovery of the Montreal Child Welfare Exhibit Souvenir Handbook. After digging deeper, I learned that this local event was connected to a transnational series of events; this became the topic of this thesis. In fact, what started as a small project on Montreal and its 1912 child welfare exhibition became a much larger endeavor. It implied connecting two countries in a transnational study involving international movements, ideas, knowledge, and progressive actors coming together to promote public health and child welfare in new urban settings. The wide variety of subjects covered by the exhibition has kept me interested and enthusiastic throughout the years of work, interspersed with the birth of my children.

First and foremost, I wish to thank my supervisor Peter Gossage for his patience, encouragement, kindness, constructive criticism, and meticulous help with the writing in English. His support and our conversations throughout this process have helped me to develop my *pensée historienne* and to gain confidence in my ability to complete this thesis. Merci beaucoup Peter. Thank you also to Barbara Lorenkowski and Theresa Ventura for their suggestions pertaining to research, framing and thesis organization. They both have been great mentors encouraging me to find my voice as a historian and have shown me the importance and relevance of doing women's history. I wish to thank Louise Bienvenue who, after my presentation on the Montreal exhibition at the 2013 *Congrès de l'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française* suggested that this would make a great thesis subject.

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List of Acronyms Used

City Improvement League (CIL)

Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition (MCWE)

Montreal Local Council of Women (MLCW)

Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste (SSJB)

Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste (FNSJB)

Introduction

On the evening of October 8th, 1912, the Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition (MCWE) opened at the Drill Hall on Craig Street. In its coverage of the event, *The Montreal Daily Herald* keenly underlined some of the specificities of the Montreal exhibition within a broader context:

> Dr. J. George Adami, of McGill University, who was in the chair, sketched the rise of the Child Welfare Movement from its inception in New York two years ago. He showed how the movement had spread like wild-fire in the Eastern States – how Atlantic City, Louisville and Buffalo had followed suit in rapid succession. Then, in view of the diversity of races and creeds in Montreal, the speaker thought it was much in the credit of Mrs. Learmont, Dr. Anna Strong, and coworkers that the organization of the Exhibition was such a complete success. "Every single language, creed, and religion is represented at this Exhibition. Differences of opinion which, in the past, have been bitter animosities, have disappeared in the common endeavor to do something of value and benefit to the children of this great city," said Dr Adami in conclusion.[1]

Part of a larger transnational movement, the Montreal exhibition was one of the most popular of its time. A week after its opening, a writer from *Le Devoir* reported on the success the exhibition was already having: "La foule était tellement dense hier soir à l'Exposition pour le Bien-Être de l'Enfant que, par deux fois, les barrières d'entrée furent rompues."[2]

This dissertation will explore the MCWE as part of an early twentieth-century public-education project providing tools for the promotion of public health, child welfare, and the prevention of child and infant mortality in North America. During the Progressive Era, as the population of cities increased and urban living conditions became a major concern for reformers, American and Canadian societies were deeply transformed by the processes of industrialization, immigration, and urbanization. Reformers were especially worried about a vulnerable group within this population: children. The dangers and risks of the cities, as well as alarming childhood and infant mortality rates, prompted reformers to act on behalf of the children who, it

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[1] "Welfare Exhibit Inaugural Draws Large Gathering," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 9, 1912, 9.
[2] "Un musée social pour Montréal," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 17, 1912, 6.

has been suggested, seem to have become more precious as fertility rates and average family size declined.[3]

While a variety of local and international reform movements emerged, driven by activists who sought to change the modern, industrial world, the child-saving movement developed, contributing to improve children's welfare primarily through prevention. Women were important advocates, participants, and leaders in this field, given their widely acknowledged expertise when it came to children. At the same time, as mothers, they were the target of proposed reforms and subject to advice and recommendations from others. The Progressive period also witnessed the rise of fairs and exhibitions as increasingly popular marketing and communication spaces. World fairs were used to promote imperialism, progress, modernity, scientific discoveries, and technological developments to the masses.[4] Part education and part spectacle, exhibitions were large events that attracted big crowds looking for entertainment and novelty.

In this context, child-welfare exhibitions became an important strategy for the child-saving movement. The exhibitions were grassroots enterprises organized by communities wanting to share new education methods or to explain their philanthropic work centered around children's well-being. The United States Children's Bureau developed expertise in the domain and became a reference for reformers across the globe.[5] As a result, local organizations reached

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[3] Danielle Gauvreau, Diane Gervais, and Peter Gossage find that fertility had been declining in Quebec since the 1870s. Danielle Gauvreau, Diane Gervais, and Peter Gossage, *La fécondité des Québécoises, 1870-1970: d'une exception à l'autre* (Montréal: Boréal, 2007), Chapter 3. David I. Macleod explains that children and adolescent made up a smaller share of the U.S. population during the Progressive era than they had two generations earlier. Birth rates fell from 55 births per 1000 in 1800 to 25 in 1920. The fertility rate also went from 7 in 1800 to 3.2 by 1920. David I. Macleod, *The Age of the Child: Children in America, 1890-1920* (New York: Twayne, 1998), 3-4. Viviana Zelizer mentions that the falling birthrates and the smaller family size can be linked to a higher emotional value for each child. Viviana A. R. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 11.

[4] Robert W. Rydell and Nancy Gwinn, eds., *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World* (Amsterdam: VU University Pres, 1994), 1.

[5] Lillian D. Wald, Henry Street Settlement founder, and Florence Kelly, social reformer and activist, came up with what would become the Children's Bureau, as an initiative for the government to protect a right to childhood. This American federal Bureau was created in 1912. Through field investigation by trained professionals, the

out to them asking for help in planning their exhibitions, which they gladly provided. In 1915, the Children's Bureau's exhibit specialist, Dr Anna Louise Strong, stated that "the exhibit has proved a useful method of popular education."[6] In addition, Julia Lathrop, chief of the Bureau, also asserted that "the exhibit has proved, in recent years, an important means for the widespread publication of facts."[7] These exhibitions, therefore, are best understood as public-education projects deploying educational methods and approaches, as well as communication and publicity strategies, in advancing the cause of child welfare. The exhibition model emerges under close scrutiny as a cultural object representing elite ideologies, beliefs, values, and attitudes, but also concepts of public health and child welfare in North America in the 1910s.[8]

A transnational lens allows us to follow the movement of ideas across countries, particularly in a time when different nation-states emerged, and this perspective is very fitting for the study of child-welfare exhibitions. Thus, the work of the Children's Bureau and many American reformers spread far beyond the United States borders and influenced reformers across the world. In Canada, this effect was especially visible in Montreal, as reformers and feminists organized a child-welfare exhibition in 1912, based on the American model. The Montreal exhibit formed part of a historical movement. Every child-welfare exhibition that took place

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Children's Bureau foregrounded the link between poverty and infant mortality, emphasizing the importance of mothers' education and sanitation. See Kriste Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood: The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

[6] Dr Anna Louise Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits: Types and Preparation* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), 8.

[7] Strong, 5.

[8] The 1910s specialists use the terms "exhibit" and "exhibition" interchangeably. The different name used for very similar exhibits in 1911 and 1912 illustrate this fact, as the first was called the New York Child Welfare Exhibit, and the second the Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition. In this dissertation, the term exhibit will refer to a display part of a section of an exhibition. A child-welfare exhibition will be defined as consisting of many sections and being "a well-rounded presentation of the whole question of the welfare of the community's children, including health, education, recreation, and many-problems that arise in dealing with the defective, dependent, and delinquent child." Strong, 9.

around that time came into being because of the united efforts of active progressive citizens, concerned with the risks faced by urban children in their community.

Studying the elaboration of child-welfare exhibitions during the 1910s with a transnational approach, this dissertation will focus on the 1912 MCWE in connection with examples from New York City (1911), Chicago (1911), and, to a lesser extent, Rochester, N.Y. (1913). I will explore the role of the exhibition as a public-education project, focusing closely on the use of this particular medium to spread scientific knowledge. Using elements of social and cultural history, I will examine the exhibition as a vehicle that conveyed ideologies of social and moral regulation, public health, child welfare, scientific education for women, and nationalism. As I will show, these exhibitions presented conflicting visions over child-welfare issues, with an internal tension at work between reformers who argued for either individual responsibility or social causes. I will also highlight the tension resulting from the fact that, although celebrated for its modernity, Montreal had some of the highest infant mortality rates and some of the worst living conditions in the Canada.

Child-Welfare Exhibitions in the Context of the Progressive Era

This study is rooted in the Progressive Era –roughly the years between 1890 and 1920– a period defined by active reform and optimism in American and Canadian history. It was characterized by new politics and social measures created to cope with urban growth, industrial development, increased immigration, and rural depopulation. The reforms were proposed by politicians, philanthropists, and activists concerned with social order.

In the United States, the Progressive Era brought political and social changes. The federal government was strengthened, the Presidency gained power over the political and economic course of the country, citizenship gained a national affiliation, and laissez-faire politics gave way

to ideas of a democratic society that should work for all of its members. Many Americans came to see government intervention in the economy as sometimes necessary to protect them, as they became aware that they had a social responsibility towards others. Progressive reforms put brakes on rapacious capitalism and the exploitation of national resources, led citizens to take an activist stance towards government, and allowed progressive groups to enter the political sphere through lobbying. At the same time, internationalism forced the United States out of isolation, with the women's peace movement, the Pan-African movement, and the international workers' movement. Unfortunately, many issues were left unsolved, racism being the biggest failure of the progressives.[9]

The Progressive Era also saw the emergence of consumer society, linked to both fears and hopes. There were new opportunities for vice undermining public morality and putting young women in danger at work and leisure activities, but there was also the opportunity to show that all workers had to have rights and needed protection. Consumer society and the labour movement brought the idea of a living wage, which meant that everyone should have the right to earn enough to purchase consumer items, and also sought to add leisure to the growing list of individual rights. At the same time, the whole family began to be seen as a consumer. In dance halls, working-class men and women gathered, and families spent their wages on clothing, household goods, and appliances.[10]

Moreover, the Progressive Era is characterized by the emergence of social science in the United States. Historian John Recchiuti presents the transition between the churches being at the heart of the social reform, to the social scientists taking over the task. Although social scientists

[9] Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 283-85.

[10] Flanagan, *America Reformed*, 182, 184, 194-197.

were still an elite, a transfer took place from the economic elites of society deciding what was best for the needy, to the intellectual elites. This meant that charity went from being something the rich and noble had to do, to a scientific work that should be carried out by specialists.[11] While in Canada, religious organizations were still very much at the forefront of the progressive reforms, specialized health care professional emerged as important progressive actors, especially as they spread scientific knowledge, as did Canadian women activists in voluntary associations.[12]

In Canada, the progressive effort started with the Temperance Movement in the second half of the nineteenth century, supported by the Catholic and Protestant churches that were concerned with alcohol consumption and morality. Voluntary associations were created to rally forces against "the tramping life," and conservative moral reformers targeted women and children in their fight for social purity, as reformers blamed the poor for their difficulties. By then the Methodists and Presbyterians had joined the progressive forces through the social gospel approach, working to counter the effects of industrialization while still aiming for spiritual salvation and social purity.[13] Progressive impulses also included urban reforms and the union movement. Public health became a priority for reformers at the turn of the twentieth century, with health professionals using scientific evidence to convince municipal officials and school boards to make significant changes.[14] In 1897, reformer Herbert Brown Ames published a sociological

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[11] John L. Recchiuti, *Civic Engagement: Social Science and Progressive-Era Reform in New York City* (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), Chapter 1.

[12] Claudine Pierre-Deschênes, "Santé publique et organisation de la profession médicale au Québec, 1870-1918," in *Santé et Société au Québec, XIXe-XXe siècle*, eds. Peter Keating and Othmar Keel, (Montréal: Boréal, 1995); Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971); Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Denyse Baillargeon, *A Brief History of Women in Quebec,* Studies in Childhood and Family in Canada (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014), 86-99.

[13] Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008), Chapter 3; Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto, Ont.: Between the Lines, 2003), Chapter 3.

[14] Pierre-Deschênes, "Santé publique," 115-132.

study of the social conditions of working class in Montreal. With *The City Below the Hill*, he aimed to convince fellow members of the propertied class to take action and responsibility to improve the working class living conditions, especially in terms of housing which he described as being unfit and unsanitary.[15]

The women's movement also took off during the Progressive Era, as women challenged the doctrine of separate spheres, which stipulated that men were to be in the public sphere, with infinite opportunities open to them, while women were to stay in the private sphere, taking care of children, the home, and morality. Women started to venture into the public sphere through their work with voluntary organizations, thus preserving virtue and reputation.[16] Overall, the progressive work in Canada was chanelled through voluntary organizations as the federal, provincial, and municipal governments were not yet truly invested in their population's welfare.[17]

Historiography

The research reported here is largely anchored in the historical literature on the Progressive Era in the Canadian and American contexts. It can be situated at the intersection of three historiographical fields in particular: first the history of exhibitions; second the history of child-welfare reforms and third, the history of reformers and progressives. A brief overview of the relevant works in these three fields is therefore in order.

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[15] Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929,* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), Chapters 1 and 6; Hebert Brown Ames, *The City Below The Hill,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

[16] Micheline Dumont and Collectif Clio, *L'histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles* (Montréal: Le Jour, 1992), 342-50; Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996), Chapters 6 and 7.

[17] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, Chapter 7.

Exhibitions

The vast literature on the history of exhibitions encompasses many studies going from the general visual representations and design elements of exhibitions to the specific influence and effects of an exhibition. Within this literature, two studies address the Montreal 1912 child-welfare exhibition specifically. Janice Harvey discusses the event briefly in a chapter on Anglo-Protestant women and health care in Montreal during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[18] Interested mainly in the role played by Protestant women in the development of Montreal's public-health system, she briefly examines the central role of the Montreal Local Council of Women (MLCW) in the organization of the exhibition, while outlining the event's main goals and its thematic organization.

In *Nourrir la machine humaine,* Caroline Durand also addresses the MCWE, looking at nutrition concepts in the context of a health education campaign. She finds that the exhibition served as a common ground for health specialists, reformers, and domestic science educators to share their ideas on poverty, food, and health. She describes these ideas as being rational, nationalist, and conservative.[19] Interested in the emergence of the professions of dietician and nutritionist in Quebec in the early twentieth century, Durand also considers the nutritional notions conveyed at a different health-related exhibition, the 1908 Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition (MTE), concluding that the two events promoted new scientific knowledge in this professional field, using amongst other methods model kitchens and cooking demonstrations.[20] Accordingly,

[18] Janice Harvey, "Des femmes anglo-protestantes s'attaquent aux questions sanitaires. Les multiples facettes des soins de santé à Montréal au XIXe et au XXe siècles," in *L'incontournable caste des femmes: histoire des services de soins de santé au Québec et au Canada*, ed. Marie-Claude Thifault (Ottawa : Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2012), 35-57

[19] Caroline Durand, *Nourrir la machine humaine: nutrition et alimentation au Québec 1860-1945*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016), 88.

[20] Durand, *Nourrir la machine humaine,* 101-2.

the dissertation will argue that exhibitions were promotional sites for healthcare, housekeeping, and reform professionals

A few studies focus on individual child-welfare exhibitions. In the first study to specifically analyze motherhood in the child-welfare exhibition context, Ranjana Sana explores the 1920 Calcutta Child Welfare Exhibition as part of a transnational exhibit initiative which emulated a 1917 London model.[21] She finds that mothers were singled out as being ignorant and in need of instruction on child-rearing. Focusing on public lectures at the exhibition, she highlights the significance of the concepts of nationalism and community building. For his part James Marten has written about the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit in *"No Beer for Babies,"* describing the magnitude of the exhibit, the largest of its time, and focusing on how it was vividly received and perceived by visitors and the local media.[22] With its many details and illustrations, Marten's article shows the importance of the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit as part of the progressive reforms of this city, and it highlights the significant role of progressive women in organizing the event.

Another article explores the New York Child Welfare Exhibit and the positive impact of Lewis Hines's photographs presented there, as the famous photographer and social critic was, in fact, the exhibit's official photographer.[23] Robert Sink emphasizes the importance of photos in the exhibition, looking specifically at the New York Public Library booth. Similarly, Marten points to the significant contribution of images to the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit,

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[21] Ranjana Saha, "Motherhood on Display: The Child Welfare Exhibition in Colonial Calcutta, 1920," *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 58, no. 2 (2021): 249–77.

[22] James Marten, "'No Beer for Babies': The Child Welfare Exhibit," *Chicago History* 33, 3 (2005): 36-51.

[23] Robert Sink, "Children in the Library: Lewis Hine's Photographs for the Child Welfare Exhibit of 1911," *Biblion* 1, 2 (1993): 12-24.

demonstrating that photographs, illustrations, and charts were essential components of child-welfare exhibits, contributing greatly to their success and popularity.

Focusing on the 1908 Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition, Valerie Minnett analyzes how the design conveyed scientific knowledge. In her Master of Architecture thesis and a related article, she highlights the connections made between the home and the disease and how the exhibition organizers put "domesticity on display."[24] As with Caroline Durand's book, Minnett's study allows for a comparison and an evaluation of the achievements of the Tuberculosis and child-welfare exhibits that took place in Montreal. For example, whereas Minnett speaks of success for the Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition visited by 60 000 people,[25] my sources reveal that the MCWE was visited by over 350 000 people,[26] demonstrating that the latter was exceptionally popular in Montreal. As both exhibitions were built around the main public-health concerns in the city, tuberculosis and child mortality, the reformers' discourses and the choice of the exhibition medium for each event can also be compared. Jennifer Lisa Koslow explores the different forms of visual displays used to promote public-health education in the first three decades of the twentieth century, including traveling exhibits and child-welfare exhibitions.[27] Focusing in particular on production techniques and the reformers' strategies and discourse, her work shows that the study of the exhibition as a medium of communication for scientific knowledge and as an object of cultural history is extremely relevant for this period.

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[24] Valerie Minnett, "Disease and Domesticity on Display: The Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition, 1908," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History / Bulletin canadien d'histoire de la médecine* 23, no. 2 (2006): 381-400.

[25] Valerie Minnett, "Inside and Outside: Pathology, Architecture and the Domestic Environsment at the Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition, 1908" (Master's Thesis, McGill University, 2004), 32.

[26] "Trois cent mille visiteurs à l'exposition de l'enfance," *La Patrie*, 21 octobre 1912, 9.

[27] Jennifer Lisa Koslow, *Exhibiting Health: Public Health Displays in the Progressive Era* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2020).

In a broader context, many historians have examined exhibitions and fairs through the lens of cultural history.[28] Curtis M. Hinsley and David R. Wilcox, for instance, study the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 and its impact,[29] while Alfred Alles examines the role, structure, and design of exhibitions at large.[30] For his part, Robert W. Rydell explores the relationships between American imperialist ideologies and World's Fairs during the Gilded Age/ Progressive era.[31] Each of these studies shows the importance of exhibitions in modern societies at the turn of the twentieth century.

In a Canadian context, Keith Walden's study of the Toronto Industrial Exhibition examines this annual event as a tool of cultural representation during the late Victorian period.[32] Centered on modernity and innovation, *Becoming Modern* explores the role of the Toronto Industrial Exhibition in shaping urban culture between 1879 and 1903. Addressing the subject of women and exhibitions, Walden finds that they had a merely symbolic role and were more of an inspiration than actors in the organization. Nonetheless, the exhibition allowed middle-class women to participate in the public sphere, even though it was understood they were confined to

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[28] See John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* (London: Studio Vista, 1977); Jean-François Barbier-Bouvet et al., *Histoires d'expo: Un thème, un lieu, un parcours* (Paris : Centre de création industrielle, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1983); Lynne Cooke, and Peter Wollen, *Visual Display Culture Beyond Appearances* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995); Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002); Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, *Thinking About Exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 1996); Anna Jackson, *Expo : International Expositions 1851-2010* (New York, NY: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2008); Robert W., Rydell John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America : World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000); Rydell and Gwinn, *Fair Representations;* Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, and Anne Rasmussen, *Les fastes du progrès: le guide des expositions universelles, 1851-1992* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992); Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, "Progrès et fierté: les expositions universelles," *Bulletin D'histoire Politique* 16, 2 (2008): 15-24; Jeffrey Trask, *Things American :Art Museums and Civic Culture in the Progressive Era. The Arts and Intellectual Life in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[29] Curtis M. Hinsley and David R. Wilcox, eds., *Coming of Age in Chicago: The 1893 World's Fair and the Coalescence of American Anthropology* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska press, 2016).

[30] Alfred Alles, *Exhibitions: Universal Marketing Tools* (New York: Wiley, 1973).

[31] Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[32] Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

the domestic realm. Elsbeth A. Heaman also explores the place of Canadian women in exhibitions during the Victorian era in her larger study of the evolution of agricultural and international exhibitions at the end of the nineteenth century, finding that exhibitions opened doors for broader public roles for women and their demands although they presented a white, male-dominated culture.[33]

Studying exhibitions serves to comprehend the culture, politics, and economies of the communities that organized, participated, and visited them. While historians have specifically shown that women were important actors in child-welfare exhibits, further exploration into the role women played in organizing and managing exhibitions is warranted. Accordingly, this dissertation will dig deeper into the specific child-welfare exhibitions and place them within their global context, while highlighting the importance of their visual and sensorial characteristics.

Child-Welfare Reforms

The history of child-welfare reforms encompasses work on children and childhood as well as studies on child rearing and the emergence of juvenile justice. In *Pricing the Priceless Child*, Viviana Zelizer explores the economic and sentimental transition from the economically valuable and useful child to the financially useless yet emotionally priceless child in middle-class and working-class families in the United States between the 1870s and 1930s. Zelizer argues that this sentimental view of children spread across classes during the Progressive era, as reformers created measures to protect working-class children, such as laws regulating child labour and imposing compulsory education. She posits that a significant change occurred in the late nineteenth century in America, as "part of a cultural process of 'sacralization' of children's

[33] Elsbeth A. Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society During the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

lives."[34] Surveying the history of childhood in America at the turn of the twentieth century, David I. Macleod outlines some broad trends and patterns while differentiating the experiences of children based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, region, and social class.[35] In, *The Age of the Child,* he shows that reformers were somewhat successful in improving public health and education, but not so much in improving or changing practices around childhood. Like other researchers working on the Progressive Era, including Zelizer, he finds that by this period children seemed to become more precious as their numbers relative to the adult population declined (compared to the two previous generations).[36]

Neil Sutherland comes to similar conclusions in his study of English Canadian childhood reforms at the turn of the twentieth century, as he looks at the development of beliefs and practices around children's health and education based on contemporary knowledge developments.[37] Sutherland finds that modernity, industrialization, and the rising standard of living were important factors changing family life in Canada, resulting in a more nurtured childhood at the end of the nineteenth century. He notes that an optimistic sentiment towards children developed and spread throughout the nation. Sutherland also discusses the influence of foreign countries work in child welfare on Canadian reformers during that period and reflects on the undeniable stimulating force of American welfare societies' work.

With studies on mothers, child rearing, and child welfare, many feminist historians have shown how women were the targets of child-welfare reform initiatives. In Quebec, Denyse

[34] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child,* 11.
[35] Macleod, *Age of the Child.*
[36] Zelizer states that decline in birth and mortality rates of children in the twentieth century would explain their increased emotional value. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child,* 10.
[37] Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canada: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus*. Second Edition (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000).

Baillargeon is a key contributor to this body of scholarship.[38] *Un Québec en mal d'enfants* analyzes the processes and discourses surrounding the medicalizing of motherhood between 1910 and 1970, with a special interest for gender and social class.[39] Baillargeon focuses on Quebec's French-Canadian mothers and their children, and on the scientific knowledge promoted among them by the medical specialists. In the Ontario context, Cynthia Comacchio has looked at the medical discourses and campaigns used to counter infant mortality and guide child rearing between 1900 and 1940.[40] Katherine Arnup has also written on child-rearing advice to mothers in Canada in the early twentieth century.[41] Gender and class are central to the arguments of these books, showing that "ignorant mothers" were held accountable for their children's low standards of health and welfare, even though poverty was often to blame. Looking at the social construction of motherhood, historians find that mothers were not passive in the face of advice given by health professionals. Although their role as mother was criticized by experts, it was also elevated in status during this period. Baillargeon and Comacchio have also addressed the important connection between the nationalist ideology and children in the early 1900s, as they were described as "the future of the nation."

For the United States, Rima Apple makes similar claims in her books *Perfect Motherhood* and *Mothers and Medicine.*[42] In the first, she explores the ideas and discourses around scientific

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[38] See Denyse Baillargeon, "Gouttes de lait et soif de pouvoir. Les dessous de la lutte contre la mortalité infantile à Montréal, 1910-1953," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History / Bulletin canadien d'histoire de la médecine*, 15 (1998): 27-57; Denyse Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family, and Home in Montreal during the Great Depression*, Studies in Childhood and Family in Canada, (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999).

[39] Denyse Baillargeon, *Un Québec en mal d'enfants. La médicalisation de la maternité 1910-1970* (Montréal: Éditions du Remue-Ménage, 2004).

[40] Cynthia R. Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

[41] Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

[42] Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood : Science and Childrearing in America* (New Brunswick, N.J : Rutgers University Press, 2006); Rima D. Apple, *Mothers and Medicine: A Social History of Infant Feeding, 1890-1950* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

motherhood, as doctors and middle-class women told working-class women how to raise their children. The second book analyzes the change in infant feeding based on interactions between mothers and medical, business, and scientific experts. Apple shows that changes in child rearing and feeding occurred mainly because of the new scientific knowledge, changing vision of motherhood, and the food industry lobby.

Shurlee Swain and Margot Hillel explore the child rescue movement in the late Victorian period in their study of discourses around childhood, race, and nation in the context of the British empire.[43] In the context of the child-saving movement, driven by theology and Evangelicalism, children were seen as in need of rescue from the fearful living conditions they faced within the urban setting, as well as from the threat of so-called "racial degeneration." As a group, children were perceived as the future of the "race," which meant their fate was connected to the fate of the nation itself. In exploring the child rescue movement in England, Australia, and Canada, Swain and Hillel argue that discourses on child welfare spread across nations and demonstrate that there could be more than one national context at stake in the argument around saving the "race" and the nation.

In recent years, scholars have debated concepts of agency in the history of children and youth. Mona Gleason has addressed the challenges facing historians and defines "the agency ideal as the imperative to focus upon youthful autonomy and resistance as the main interpretive goal in histories of children and youth."[44] She argues for "more imaginative readings of conventional sources,"[45] suggesting that historians should engage with interpretive strategies

[43] Shurlee Swain and Margot Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire: Child Rescue Discourse, England, Canada and Australia, 1850–1915* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010).
[44] Mona Gleason, "Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education," *History of Education* 45, 4 (July 2016): 447.
[45] Gleason, "Avoiding the agency trap," 458.

such as empathic inference so that children may be included in history as actors. Accordingly, a few studies highlight the agency of children in the early twentieth century, portraying children as active players in historical change while investigating the subject of youth empowerment, resistance, and activism. Valerie Minnett and Mary Anne Poutanen have shown that children could play an active part in the public-health fight in Montreal by participating in a fly swatting contest.[46] Exploring the 1913 strike in Montreal's Aberdeen school, Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen demonstrate that children actively participated in the strike following an incident in which they perceived injustice.[47] David Nasaw, for his part, focuses on working-class children in urban centers of America at the turn of the twentieth century. He demonstrates that children did have some type of agency during the first two decades of the twentieth century, with the example of newsboys striking in the summer of 1899, showing that they were not simply victims of the new dangers of the industrial city, as the reformers had portrayed them.[48]

Scholars have also looked at child welfare through the lens of juvenile justice. In the Canadian context, Jean Trépanier explores the development of the juvenile courts and the implementation of the 1908 Juvenile Delinquent Act.[49] He posits that this new system, based on reform rather than punishment, aimed to protect young offenders in the best interest of the child and the community, encouraging children to stay in their family environment instead of placing them in institutions. More critical of the judicial system, Renée Joyal argues that, under the

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[46] Valerie Minnett, and Mary Anne Poutanen, "Swatting Flies for Health: Children and Tuberculosis in Early Twentieth-Century Montreal," *Urban History Review* 36, 1 (fall 2007): 32-44.

[47] Roderick MacLeod, and Mary Anne Poutanen, "Little Fists for Social Justice: Anti-Semitism, Community, and Montreal's Aberdeen School Strike, 1913," *Labour/Le Travail*, 70 (Fall 2012), 61–99.

[48] David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and at Play* (Garden City, N.Y: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1985), 99-100.

[49] Jean Trépanier, "Protéger pour prévenir la délinquance : l'émergence de la Loi sur les jeunes délinquants de 1908 et sa mise en application à Montréal," in *Entre surveillance et compassion. L'évolution de la protection de l'enfance au Québec,* des origines à nos jours, ed. Renée Joyal, (Sainte Foy: Presses de l'université du Québec, 2000), 49-95.

pretext of protection, the new federal law increased surveillance and institutionalization of delinquent children in Quebec.[50] For his part, in his comparative study between France and Canada, David Niget highlights the important contribution of progressive actors to the development of Montreal's youth justice system.[51] In her analysis of the development of the first juvenile justice courts in the United States, Naama Maor shows that this new system emerged from the child-saving movement and served to promote social reformers' values and ideas on the physical, mental, and moral aspects of child rearing, while helping to preserve social order and to discipline children, especially those from immigrant families.[52]

With a focus on Montreal, Tamara Myers analyzes the regulation of girls in Quebec in the context of the emergence of the juvenile court, under a court that practiced maternal justice to monitor young offenders.[53] Her gendered approach to youth delinquency shows that girls were viewed as more at risk for moral offences than boys, with modern girls being sent to reform or training school to police their sexuality and preserve social and moral order. In another study Myers finds that, unlike girls, boys' bodies and sexuality were generally not criminalized in the early years of the Montreal juvenile court, as young male offenders were presented as prepubescent, neglected, and vulnerable rather than sex delinquents.[54] Lastly, Sylvie Ménard studies the institutionalization of delinquent boys in reform and industrial schools in Quebec as a strategy of social control, finding that the existing institutions did not adapt well to the new youth

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[50] Renée Joyal, “L'Acte concernant les écoles d'industries (1869): une mesure de prophylaxie sociale dans un Québec en voie d'urbanisation,” in *Entre surveillance et compassion. L'évolution de la protection de l'enfance au Québec, des origines à nos jours*, ed. Renée Joyal, (Sainte Foy: Presses de l'université du Québec, 2000), 35-48.

[51] David Niget, *La naissance du tribunal pour enfants: une comparaison France-Québec, (1912-1945)*, Collection Histoire, (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

[52] Naama Maor, “Delinquent Parents: Punitive Welfare and the Creation of Juvenile Justice, 1899-1927,” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2020).

[53] Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945*, Studies in Gender and History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

[54] Tamara Myers, “Embodying Delinquency: Boys' Bodies, Sexuality, and Juvenile Justice History in Early-Twentieth- Century Quebec,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 4 (October 2005): 383–414.

justice system after 1912.[55] These studies ground the emergence of juvenile justice in the turn of the twentieth century child-welfare movement, emphasizing the paternalist and maternalist approach of reformers towards young offenders. As we shall see, these ideas also featured prominently in the child-welfare exhibitions held in cities across North America at virtually the same time as the new juvenile courts were established.

Reformers and Progressives

This dissertation presents child-welfare exhibitions as the work of reformers and progressive social activists. Scholars have offered a range of useful definitions for this heterogeneous group. In her book *America Reformed*, Maureen A. Flanagan argues that there were many different progressives and just as many visions of American progressivism at the turn of the twentieth century. She presents them as engaged citizens and activists in the fields of social justice, politics, economics, and foreign policy.[56] Alan Dawley gives a similar definition in *Changing the World*: "To be progressive in what was later called the Progressive Era meant to support a politics of social justice and civic engagement over a politics of patronage and power."[57] Progressives sought to put public good before personal gain, using Jeffersonian ideals. They fought big businesses (not opposing private property), with aims to restrain capitalism.[58] Moreover, Georgina Feldberg, in her book on tuberculosis and class, shows that social reform was a middle-class project in which this group promoted a standard behaviour as well as social and moral

[55] Sylvie Ménard, "L'Institut Saint-Antoine et la question de l'institutionnalisation des mineurs au Québec (1869-1950)," *Globe: Revue Internationale d'Études Québécoises* 8, no. 2 (July 2005): 74; Sylvie Ménard, *Des enfants sous surveillance: la rééducation des jeunes délinquants au Québec, 1840-1950*, (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 2003). On institutionalization of delinquent children, also see Louise Bienvenue, "Sortir de la délinquance par l'expérience institutionnelle," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique Française* 65, no. 2/3 (September 2011): 307–30. On girls' reform institutions see 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"* 5 (2003): 61-83.

[56] Flanagan, *America Reformed,* Chapter 2.

[57] Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003), 15.

[58] Dawley, *Changing the World*, 72.

authority. She adds that reformers aimed to transform behaviour through education in the interest of the middle class.[59]

In Quebec, progressives were often called reformers (*réformistes*) and hygienists (*hygiénistes*), as Claudine Pierre-Deschênes and François Guérard have observed. They promoted a range of reforms to be initiated by the middle class in order to counter social and sanitary problems caused by industrialization and urbanization. These hygienists were often doctors who demanded the establishment of a public-health system with the aim, among other things, of reducing mortality from contagious diseases by improving the urban environment.[60] Other progressives included women who intervened in the public sphere through philanthropic associations.[61] In this context, then, progressives, must be understood as active and engaged citizens, both men and women, concerned with social and sanitary problems derived from industrial capitalism, especially those related to child welfare and public health.

As members of the cultural, scientific, and economic elites, reformers played an important part in the reform process and the progressive movement across America. Analyzing the development of the medical profession in relation to the public-health movement in Montreal at the turn of the twentieth century, Claudine Pierre-Deschênes finds that doctors were able to advance their profession by contributing to the public-health reforms as *hygiénistes*, improving public health, popular education, and infant mortality.[62] Doctors, especially French-speaking ones, used their expertise and the public-health cause to legitimate their position of power in

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[59] Georgina Feldberg, *Disease and Class: Tuberculosis and the Shaping of Modem North American Society* (New Brunswick, NJ. : Rutgers University Press, 1995), 82.

[60] Claudine Pierre-Deschênes, "La tuberculose au début du XXe siècle: problème social et réponse réformiste" (Master's Thesis, UQAM, 1980), 8-13; François Guérard, *Histoire de la santé au Québec* (Montréal : Boréal, 1996), 32-33.

[61] Yolande Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes: Catholiques, protestantes et juives dans les organisations caritatives au Québec* (Montréal : PUM, 2010), 181-95.

[62] Pierre-Deschênes, "Santé publique," 115-132.

Quebec society, enabling them to contribute to the establishment of norms and participate in government decisions, while maintaining the liberal, capitalist order.

Women's contribution to social reform have been studied by feminist historians aiming to reframe women's perspectives and experiences in Canadian and American history, with emphasis on their agency and their importance in building communities and nations. In *Femmes philanthropes,* Yolande Cohen explores the volunteer work of Montreal women through an analysis of the targeted actions of three denominational charitable groups in the first half of the twentieth century: the Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste (FNSJB), the Young Women's Christian Association, and the National Council of Jewish Women.[63] She demonstrates that beyond the social regulation, moralization, and domination of the bourgeoisie, an ethics of care was in play that sought to change social and family relationships and to foster a more inclusive and empathic moral and political vision of the other. Cohen shows that women were able to take their place by appropriating the typically feminine areas of family and motherhood. They succeeded in moving these concerns from the private domain into the public sphere, paving the way for generations of committed women in Canada and Quebec.

Similarly, scholarship on women and the reform movement in Canada includes many studies on specific women's organizations. Karine Hébert looks at the FNSJB as a maternalist group, as it used maternity to open doors for women between the private and public sphere.[64] Likewise, Elizabeth Kirkland studies Montreal's elite women's activism through a maternalist lens, while Janice Harvey explores the work of two female-directed charities influenced by restrictive gender ideologies, the Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent

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[63] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes*, 181-95.
[64] Karine Hébert, "Une organisation maternaliste au Québec: la Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et la bataille pour le vote des femmes," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 52,3 9 (Hiver 1999): 315–344.

Society.[65] Yolande Cohen studies the development of the Montreal Diet Dispensary, another organization where Montreal women could develop and practice gendered expertise.[66] Sharon Cook looks at women's advocacy work through the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Canada.[67] From a more explicitly political perspective, Joan Sangster surveys Canadian women's fight for suffrage and Denyse Baillargeon focuses on the same struggle in Quebec.[68]

In the American context, Sarah Deutsch's *Women and the City* looks at women's role in mapping the city, examining how they navigated, individually or through alliances, between the public and private spheres to create safe spaces for themselves.[69] The city is again the theater of women's reform work in Daphne Spain's *How Women Saved the City.* Spain looks at volunteer women's work in creating safe "redemptive" spaces for newcomers through four volunteer associations in the cities of New York, Boston, and Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century.[70] For the same period, Maureen Flanagan presents the work of activist women in Chicago, painting a portrait of united women, even though class, race, and ethnicity divided them, who fought for a livable city for all, while men promoted profit and economic progress. [71]

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[65] Mary Elizabeth Kirkland, "Mothering Citizens: Elite Women in Montreal, 1890-1914," (PhD diss., McGill University, 2011); Janice Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society: A Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822-1900," (PhD diss., McGill University, 2001).

[66] Yolande Cohen, "De la nutrition des pauvres malades: L'histoire du Montreal Diet Dispensary de 1910 à 1940," *Social History / Histoire Sociale* 41, no. 81 (May 2008): 133–63.

[67] Sharon Cook, "Women Creating Canada: The Long Reach of Temperance into the Twenty-First Century," *Canadian Issues* (Fall, 2016): 28-32.

[68] Joan Sangster, *One Hundred Years of Struggle: The History of Women and the Vote in Canada*, Women's Suffrage and the Struggle for Democracy, V.1 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018); Denyse Baillargeon, *To Be Equals in Our Own Country : Women and the Vote in Quebec*, Women's Suffrage and the Struggle for Democracy, V. 3, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019).

[69] Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[70] Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

[71] Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City 1871-1933* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Women have also contributed to reform with their direct contribution to public health as nurses or even as patients.[72] In her introduction to *L'incontournable caste des femmes*, Marie-Claude Thifault reminds us that as women, nurses were at the bottom of a hierarchical structure dominated by men.[73] She adds that women were determined to better their position and professional status. Moreover, Denyse Baillargeon and Jessica M. Robbins each analyze the imbalanced relationships between doctors, nurses, and patients. Baillargeon finds that visiting nurses were subordinate to doctors, while having more freedom and autonomy than their colleagues working in hospitals.[74] Robbins notes that tuberculous nurses generally came from the middle class and had unfavourable prejudices towards their working-class patients.[75] Two noteworthy articles focus on the role of public-health nurses. Yolande Cohen and Michèle Gélinas look at the public-health nursing service of the city of Montreal, as it experienced a quick secularization and the professionalization of nursing.[76] Louise Bienvenue finds that the Victorian Order of Nurses contributed to the professionalization of nursing and the Canadian hygienist movement.[77]

Biographies of individual reformers also have a place in this literature review. Exploring individually the lives of accomplished North American social reformers such as Jane Addams, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Lillian Wald, Anna Louise Strong, Marie Gérin-Lajoie, and Rose Henderson allows for a better understanding of their feminism, motivations, affiliations, and the

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[72] Andrée Lévesque, "Mères ou malades: les Québécoise de l'entre-deux-guerres vues par les médecins," *Revue d'histoire de L'Amérique française* 38, 1 (Juin 1984): 23-37.

[73] Marie-Claude Thifault, dir., *L'incontournable caste des femmes: Histoire des services de santé au Québec et au Canada* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2012), 11.

[74] Denyse Baillargeon, "Les rapports médecins-infirmieres et l'implication de La Metropolitaine dans la lutte contre la mortalité infantile, 1909-53," *The Canadian Historical Review* 77, 1 (1996): 33-61

[75] Jessica M. Robbins, "Class Struggles in the Tubercular World: Nurses, Patients, and Physicians, 1903-1915," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 71, 3 (Fall 1997): 412-434.

[76] Yolande Cohen and Michèle Gélinas, "Les infimières hygiénistes de la ville de Montréal: du service privé au service civique," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 22, 44 (November 1989): 219-246

[77] Louise Bienvenue, "Le Victorian Order of Nurses dans la croisade hygiéniste montréalaise (1897-1925)," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 6, no 2, (hiver 1998): 64-71.

transnational operations of progressive networks in the early twentieth century.[78] Part of the privileged classes, these progressives were among the first generation of women educated in prominent colleges and universities who participated in major reforms at the local, national, and international levels. Similarly, Margaret Gillett studies the first generation of female graduates from McGill University, emphasizing their pioneering and ground-breaking roles for women's education in Montreal, while Suzanne Morton shines a light on the career and activism of an important Canadian social worker also trained at McGill, Jane B. Wisdom.[79]

Finally, the experiential and visual aspects of exhibitions were central to the choice of this medium and the work of reformers. Many scholars have explored reformer's use of social photography as a tool to expose the plight of the working class. Kathy Quick looks at the work of American documentary photographer Lewis Hines in the context of the rise of the statistical method in the social sciences and his studies at Columbia University.[80] Quick shows that as a social reformer, Hines aimed for his work to show the harsh reality of working-class children and to serve as visual data, close to statistics, to educate people on the failure of the state to care for them. For his part, Robert Macieski finds that, through his social photography, Hine gave visibility to New England child labour while creating iconic images.[81] Likewise, Alan

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[78] Louise W. Knight, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010); Anya Jarbour, *Sophonisba Breckinridge: Championing Women's Activism in Modern America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019); Marjorie N. Feld, *Lillian Wald: A Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Tracy B. Strong and Helene Keyssar, *Right in Her Soul: The Life of Anna Louise Strong* (New York, NY: Random House, 1983); Anne-Marie Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie, Conquérante De La Liberté* (Montréal: Éditions du Remue-ménage, 2005); Peter J. Campbell, *Rose Henderson: A Woman for the People* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

[79] Margaret Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill* (Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981); Suzanne Morton, *Wisdom, Justice, and Charity: Canadian Social Welfare Through the Life of Jane B. Wisdom, 1884-1975* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

[80] Kathy Quick, "The Average Child: Lewis Hine, Statistics, and 'Social Photography,'" *Visual Studies* 33, no. 3 (September 2018): 231–50.

[81] Robert Macieski, *Picturing Class: Lewis W. Hine Photographs Child Labor in New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015).

Trachtenberg shows that Hine used photography paired with short texts to practice social work and to teach by exposing social evils.[82]

In the Canadian context, James Opp explores how social documentary photography was used by social gospel reformers in Winnipeg in the early twentieth century.[83] Looking at Methodist publications, he finds that photographic representations of children in urban environments shifted the visual representation of Protestant reform from heroic missionaries to photographic documentation, evidence that moral boundaries were threatening the children and the nation. As I will argue below, photographic images were central to the exhibition medium and the social documentary style served to inspire empathy as well as to alarm visitors.

Conceptual Framework

Building on this literature review, three theoretical approaches and concepts inform the present study and its central research questions.

Feminism and Maternalism

This research is grounded in feminism, as it explores issues that were central to women and contemporary to the development of modern feminism in North America. The concept of feminism applied here is inspired by Nancy F. Cott's *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* and can be described as opposition to sex hierarchy, the belief that women's condition is socially constructed, and an understanding that women perceive themselves as a social group and identify

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[82] Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), Chapter 4.

[83] James Opp, "Re-imaging the Moral Order of Urban Space: Religion Photography in Winnipeg, 1900-1914." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 13, no 1 (2002): 73-93.

with this group.[84] The dissertation will suggest that feminists were a heterogeneous group with different beliefs and opinions, but whose unity must nonetheless be recognized. Indeed, women from different associations worked together on exhibitions despite their differences, especially ethnic, political, and religious.

In the context of this study, one aspect that arises from feminist work will be specifically explored. The maternalist approach uses the argument of sexual difference to advance their cause. As we have seen in the literature review, many historian have studied this subject in the context of women's organizations in Quebec and Canada. Among them, Yolande Cohen, Karine Hébert, Elizabeth Kirkland, Janice Harvey, and Sharon Cook show how women were able to legitimize their public action given their work in typically feminine areas.[85] Furthermore, in her book focusing on the gendered roots of welfare in the United States, Linda Gordon defines maternalists as women activists of the Progressive Era who framed the family and domestic responsibilities as women's work. They therefore saw themselves as motherly figures for the poor, and as uniquely qualified for reforms touching children, women, and families because of their experience as women and mothers.[86] Similarly, Gwendolyn Mink adds that Progressive maternalists "acted as the social mothers of poor women" and "in directing their claims towards the state, these maternalists were agents of Progressive Era reform."[87] They focused on maternal prescriptions, promoting American motherhood and perpetuating gender inequality in the welfare state, with their social policies embracing women's difference. Maternalists promoted mothers' political significance in terms of their domestic role of raising future citizens. Hence, they set out to

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[84] Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 4-5.

[85] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes*; Hébert, "Une organisation maternaliste au Québec"; Kirkland, "Mothering Citizens"; Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan Asylum"; Cook, "Women Creating Canada."

[86] Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 53-55.

[87] Gwendolyn Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917-1942* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 7.

reform mothers and through them their children and used their own domestic values and ideas about childcare in their reforms to promote a normative motherhood, while trying to alleviate poverty and improve child welfare.[88]

Like the maternalists described by feminist historians, women working on child-welfare exhibitions principally justified their public work by relating it to the home. They described the city and women's work environment as a home that they needed to protect and improve. These women also considered issues regarding children as their own. Moreover, they added that their innate nurturing and feminine characteristics made them the best qualified for this type of reform work. Hence, women claimed a right to act on these spaces. They were also given responsibilities and leadership positions based on their perceived expertise on children in Progressive Era societies.

Transnational History

Throughout the Progressive Era, a social conscience developed and progressives became aware of the world around them, often through their involvement with international movements. Alan Dawley studies the rise of a new internationalism during the Progressive Era, arguing that international affairs played an important part in progressive ideas and reforms in America. He demonstrates that a "world consciousness" came about, with more cooperation among nations, including representatives of both capital and labour, and with communications circulating worldwide thanks to new technologies. To Dawley, the new internationalism that motivated progressives, paired with the new circulation of capital, ideas, and communications, calls for a study that goes beyond national frontiers[89]

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[88] Mink, *Wages of Motherhood*, 8-13.
[89] Dawley, *Changing the World*, 14-16.

Daniel T. Rodgers, in the same vein, presents social politics in America as a proposal that came through a transatlantic network, with imported ideas transformed by progressives from the middle class to control and constrain markets to benefit social welfare policies. He explains that what made the transatlantic progressive connection possible was the rapid and convergent economic development of the nations composing it, and "a new understanding of common histories and vulnerabilities."[90] Rodgers shows that "municipalization was the first important Atlantic-wide progressive project," as cities were the site of social-political action and mobilizations for public welfare, with issues of germs, sewage, gas, and streetcars being in the progressives' sights across the North Atlantic. "Municipalizers" borrowed and learned from each other's experiences across nations. Nonetheless Rodgers explains that in the transatlantic connection there was a sense of old versus new world, which mutually reinforced the nation's differences.[91]

The concept of transnational history has also been explored by anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Szanton Blanc who argue that there needs to be a shift in research methodology in the social sciences to understand the effects of the new increased communications, migrations, transportation, networks, and identities transcending and crossing national borders.[92] In *Within or Without the Nation*, Karen Dubinsky and her colleagues explain that for historians, the transnational approach impels them to "look beyond the nation for levels of analysis."[93] Using a transnational approach, historian Karen Flynn states that "transnationalism

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[90] Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard U. Press, 1998), 24-31, and 33.

[91] Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 159.

[92] Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Szanton Blanc, eds., *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992).

[93] Karen Dubinsky, Adele Perry, and Henry Yu, *Within and Without the Nation: Canadian History as Transnational History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 9.

is often used to explain how globalization and its attendant reconfigurations of international social, political, and economic relations have resulted in the deterritorialization of borders and, by extension, nation states."[94] Thomas Bender concurs and explicitly rejects the exceptionalist historiography of the United States, proposing to look at similarities rather than differences between the U.S. nation and the rest of the world, especially the Atlantic world. For him, American history cannot be fully understood outside of the global context, as he finds that space is as important as time when studying history. Bender argues that a transnational approach allows historians to step away from a perspective of differentiation for the purpose of nation building and to focus instead on understanding processes that led to the development of the nation at the global level.[95]

Similarly, Akira Iriye explains that the nation was for a long time the unit of analysis in history. The social and cultural turn in history that started in the 1960s began to challenge this nation-centered methodology, with a history "from the bottom up" emphacizing social groups over national politics. Crossing national boundaries would happen in comparative history, where scholars would compare different nations, often on the basis of foreign relations. This field developed into international history during the 1970s but remained nation-centric until the late 1980s. At about the same time, imperialism emerged as a subject of interest to historians, evolving from works of diplomatic and political history to economic, social, and cultural historical works. The transnational approach to history developed during the late 1980s and early 1990s, again with the nation as its unit of study in the early stages. It was by the turn of the

[94] Karen Flynn, "'She cannot be confined to her own region': Nursing and Nurses in the Caribbean, Canada, and the United Kingdom," in *Within and Without the Nation: Canadian History as Transnational History,* ed. by Karen Dubinsky, Adele Perry, and Henry Yu (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 228.

[95] Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

twenty-first century that transnational history moved away from the traditional framework, with non-state actors now at the forefront. A phenomenon could now be studied as transcending national boundaries. In his book on the evolution of global and transnational history, Iriye explains that "the transnational approach to the study of history, in other words, does not deny the existence of nations and the roles they play in contributing to defining the world at a given moment in time."[96]

This approach is especially relevant to study transnational advocacy organizations.[97] It has also been used by historians to study questions of population control through the activities of non-state actors such as the Catholic Church or non-governmental associations.[98] In Canada as well as in the United States, the worker's movement, the social gospel, and the women's movement were among the progressive efforts that transcended national boundaries and connected progressives across the globe.[99] Claudine Pierre-Deschênes points to the importance of transnational exchanges and influences during this period when it comes to networks between Canadian and American hygienist physicists.[100] A transnational approach, therefore, seems essential to any serious study of early twentieth-century child-welfare exhibitions in the United States and in Canada.

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[96] Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), *2*-13, 15.

[97] See Ian R. Tyrrell, *Woman's World/woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

[98] Iriye, *Global and Transnational History*, 57.

[99] Flanagan, *America Reformed*, Chapter 2; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water,* Chapter 3; Dubinsky, Perry, and Yu, *Within and Without the Nation*.

[100] Pierre-Deschênes, "Santé publique," 129-131.

Critical Fabulation

As the archives contain limited sources giving a voice to working-class mothers visiting the child-welfare exhibitions, this dissertation will use critical fabulation to tell the story one of these women.[101] As we have no example of what it was like for the typical visitor of the MCWE and can only imagine the internal struggles she experienced, I will tell the story of Blanche, a fictional French-Canadian working-class mother I pictured residing in Montreal's Saint-Enfant-Jésus parish in 1912. I chose to create Blanche to represent the "poor mother" at the heart of the child-welfare exhibition, the typical working-class woman progressive maternalists aimed to help and reform. With this narration, I aim to fill the gap found in the archive by imagining how a mother might have felt at the child-welfare exhibition, writing "at the intersection of the fictive and the historical."[102] The concept of critical fabulation is close to empathic inference, which Mona Gleason describes as an interpretive strategy that "suggests that historians deeply engage their ability to imagine and interpret the world as if from the point of view of the least powerful."[103] Thus, each chapter will start with a paragraph recounting Blanche's experience and internal dialogue as she travels through the exhibition. In the absence of testimonials from working-class women who walked through the exhibition doors, we can only imagine that women would have been overwhelmed with feelings seeing the exhibits and packed walls. Blanche, as a fictional character, gives a voice to such a visitor and allows us to imagine the upheaval she experienced.

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[101] This method is described by Saidiya Hartman in the context of women in Atlantic slavery "as straining against the limits of the archive to write a cultural history of the captive, and, at the same time, enacting the impossibility of representing the lives of the captives precisely through the process of narration." Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, 2 (June 2008): 11.

[102] As Hartman explains, critical fabulation "is a history of an unrecoverable past; it is a narrative of what might have been or could have been; it is a history written with and against the archive." Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 12.

[103] Gleason, "Avoiding the agency trap," 458.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

My analysis will be guided by three central questions that can be articulated as follows:

1) What can be said of the exhibition as a visual medium for the promotion child welfare? The dissertation will look at child-welfare exhibits as a public-education project that deployed pedagogical methods and approaches. I will explore the design and the content of these exhibitions targeting urban children's welfare, connecting the experts' model with local communities' grassroots exhibits. Exhibitions were a method of choice for communicating and publicizing strategies pertaining to child welfare, allowing organizers to present scientific knowledge, cultural development, and progressive innovations at the turn of the twentieth century. Throughout the dissertation, I will analyze the different visual and interactive techniques they used, often to shock visitors or appeal to their compassion, thus connecting the exhibition medium and its experiential quality to the history of emotions. I will discuss the importance of visuality in connection to literacy in urban settings with new immigrant populations. I will also review the presence of children's demonstrations at the exhibition and its impact on visitors.

2) Looking at the Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition of 1912 from a transnational perspective, was it more closely aligned with the American model, or more specific to its local context? The dissertation will analyze the differences between the Montreal exhibition and three American ones, all held within a brief three-year period (1911-1913), with special attention to the ways in which discourses on nationalism and imperialism were adapted to fit the local context. In what ways, especially, did the unique dynamics of language and the Catholic Church's influence in Quebec impact the Montreal event and lend it greater specificity? Although they were based on a standard model, the individual exhibits were tailored to the specific communities in which they were staged.

The dissertation will also highlight the convergences between the different exhibitions that took place in the early 1910s. I will explain how the transnational exchange of progressive ideas and scientific knowledge connected the two nations. The dissertation will demonstrate that the cause of children united and brought people to work together, despite their religious and linguistic differences and divergences of opinion. This was especially true for women, who were important actors as leaders and objects of the proposed reforms and measures. Accordingly, the research will explore the extent to which women reformers played an important part in creating the discourses to which they subjected working-class women. They developed expertise in child public-health education, making private issues public, and bringing this scientific education to communities. The child-welfare exhibitions will be portrayed as a predominently feminine, successful endeavor. The dissertation will emphasize the transnational connections women made through progressive networks.

3) How was the tension between individual and societal responsibility for the welfare of North American children reflected in the content of these exhibitions – especially the one in Montreal? The dissertation will analyze the exhibition as a space that featured competing thinking. Progressive era reformers did not all share the same ideas and beliefs, meaning that political tensions and contradictory discourses might emerge from different sections of the exhibition, depending on who prepared them. Throughout their tour, visitors were faced with representations of child-welfare threats which were said to be the responsibility of the parents, especially the mother. However, other displays suggested that infant mortality and poverty were societal problems, responsibility for which ultimately fell to the state. I will explore the opposing visions present at the exhibition, including evangelism and social science, liberalism and socialism, and the different outlooks on charity. In doing so, I will discuss moral and social regulation at the exhibition as major ideological trends surrounding issues of poverty and child

welfare. The concept of social class will be central to the discourse analysis, which reveals a dichotomy between two classes. The urban working class will be studied in relation to a broadly defined elite that includes the propertied classes, the middle and upper classes, as well as the professional experts in their field of expertise.

Sources and Methodology

The dissertation is be based on the qualitative analysis of a large number of archival documents. The largest body of sources comes from the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland (NARA II), which holds the records of the United States Children's Bureau. The General records contain many boxes (10+), files (50+), and documents pertaining to child-welfare exhibitions, with an especially large quantity of iconographic material (photos and charts) and correspondence. These documents pertain to general standards for exhibit preparation and to several local exhibits. They contain, among other things, a detailed guide dated 1915 on child-welfare exhibits' preparation and type, as well as many documents and photos from the Rochester Child Welfare Exhibit. These sources make it possible to focus the analysis both on the development of a standard model and on several local examples.

I chose to study certain local exhibitions on the basis of the documents available in the archives and of their historical significance. The New York and Chicago exhibits were the first two to be staged in 1911, from January 18 to February 12 and from May 11 to 25 respectively, and their study allows us to understand the origin of the broader public-education project. The Chicago exhibit also merits attention because it was built on the basis of the New York exhibit, using its original material, and because it was the most successful of its time. In addition, the archives contain two large photo albums documenting the exhibition in detail. The Rochester exhibit is one of the many exhibitions that took place in the United States over the decade of the

1910s.[104] It is uniquely well documented in terms of the remarkable quality of iconographic material available in the archives. This can be explained by the fact that the city of Rochester is the birthplace of the Eastman Kodak company, specialized in photography. The Montreal exhibition was the first child-welfare exhibition encountered during preliminary research. I initially chose it because it was a popular event that united Montreal's different communities. Furthermore, as the first and the largest exhibit to take place in Canada, the study of this event allows for a transnational study of exhibitions across the United States and Canada. As a Montrealer living and studying here and trained as a social historian of Quebec and Canada, it would have been impossible for me to contemplate a study of child-welfare exhibitions that did not devote significant attention to the one that piqued my interest in the first place, staged in this city from October 8 to 22, 1912.

In addition to the sources found at NARA II, the American corpus of sources also includes documents from the John Shaw Billings papers in the New York Public Library Archives and Manuscript collections. These archives consist of textual and visual documents from the Committee on Libraries and Museums of the 1911 New York Child Welfare Exhibit. They include the exhibit guide and correspondence with interesting information on the preparation required to get ready for such an exhibition, and the struggles associated with it. The University of Chicago Library holds The Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection which contains guides and instructional pamphlets, photo albums, and artifacts associated with the exhibit. The University of Rochester holds the pamphlet guide to the Rochester Child Welfare Exhibit in its Miner Library Rare Books & Archives collection.

[104] In 1915, the child-welfare exhibit guide mentions 15 Exhibits taking place in big American cities and 2 outside of the U.S., including Montreal. Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 7.

The Souvenir Guide of the 1912 Montreal Exhibit first inspired this project. It is located in the Collection nationale of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) in Montreal. Looking for other records on this subject led to the Vieux-Montreal archives center of the BAnQ which holds some relevant records connecting prominent Montreal women as well as some important men to the exhibitions. They can be found in the Fonds Montreal Council of Women, the Fonds Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste, and the Fonds Collection Institut Notre-Dame du Bon-Conseil de Montréal. The Fonds Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal contains documents a limited amount of general correspondence on the subject of the exhibition and on child welfare more generally, as well as fragments of correspondence with the City Improvement League, a group involved in organizing the exhibition. The study of this local event comes with limitations: there is no physical evidence left from the Montreal exhibition except the handbook, and there are still few written documents related to the event to be found. Newspaper coverage, however, was voluminous.[105] The BAnQ holds several newspaper collections; *Le Devoir*, *La Patrie*, *La Presse*, *The Gazette*, *The Montreal Daily Herald*, and *The Montreal Daily Star* all of which covered the MCWE exhaustively. The analysis of the media coverage of this event allows for a study of perceptions and discourses surrounding the exhibits, but also gives a sense of the popular success of the event.

The Archives de la Ville de Montréal also contains a few documents connected to child welfare and public health in the early 1910s in the Fonds Service de santé, the Fonds Commission d'hygiène et de statistiques, and the Fonds Comité de santé - Bureau de santé. The Bibliothèque des livres rares et Collections spéciales de l'Université de Montréal holds

[105] An initial presentation of my research, based largely on newspaper accounts, generated a positive response at a conference for Quebec historians. Marie-Hélène Vanier, "'Les enfants sains font les nations saines': l'exposition pour le bien-être des enfants de Montréal, 1912" (paper, 66th Congrès de l'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française, Rimouski, Qc, October 11, 2013).

documents on public-health education and another copy of the Souvenir Guide. Bibliothèque et Archives Canada has a very limited number of documents pertaining to the Montreal Exhibit. Finally, a few journals in the field of health are held at the McGill Libraries and some contain articles on the 1912 exhibition. Written by nurses or doctors, these articles contain precious information on the creation of the first two American exhibits.

Organization

The structure of this dissertation mirrors that of the MCWE. I have chosen to take the reader on a virtual tour of the exhibition, following the same sequence of themes and issues that visitors encountered as they moved through the spaces of the Montreal Drill Hall in October 1912. As I aimed to create a flow that would transport the reader across the booths and displays, I decided to start each chapter with a critical fabulation recounting Blanche's imagined experience at the exhibition. The brief narrations from the perspective of a French-Canadian working-class mother will set the stage for the analysis to follow in each chapter.

The first chapter will provide an overview of the concept of the child-welfare exhibition and serves to contextualize the various elements that gave rise to these exhibits during the Progressive Era. An exploration of the design, content, and materials that made the exhibit an effective medium for public education in the area of child welfare will follow. The chapter closes with an analysis of the Montreal exhibit, looking at the origins of the local exhibition and the progressive reformers who united to share knowledge and create a successful event.

Chapter 2 will focus on how health was presented at the exhibition. I will discuss at length the displays on infant mortality and the discourses on mothers surrounding this important issue. While exploring the different clinics at the exhibition, I will address the role of medical experts

on-site during the two-week event. The final part of the chapter will question power relations, social, and moral regulation in relation to public health at the exhibition.

The third chapter will discuss housing and the industrialized city as threats to child welfare. I will start by analyzing the contrasting presentation of “good” and “bad” housing, as private space was put on display and criticized openly, putting the responsibility on the families. The chapter will also focus on the basic needs of children inside their homes, with exhibits on clothing, food, and furniture. Finishing with an analysis of the urban environment, the chapter will examine environmental factors and poverty in relation to child welfare, challenging city planners.

Chapter 4 will be devoted to the education and philanthropy sections of the child-welfare exhibition. The specificity of Montreal will be highlighted, as schools and educational movements will be studied. I will address the importance of performing children in the exhibition setting. The chapter will also examine children’s recreational activities, as well as their religious and moral training. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of philanthropic initiatives in Montreal, looking at Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish institutions.

The final chapter will show how reformers presented poverty as a social problem and the root cause of most child-welfare issues. More specifically, the chapter will discuss the exhibits on the law and the child, exploring juvenile justice and delinquency, and the industrial conditions, addressing the standard of living and work conditions. Lastly, I will look at the significance of nationalism in child-welfare exhibitions and at differences and similarities in that respect between those staged in the United States and Canada.

Overall, then, this study of child-welfare exhibitions as a project of public education during the Progressive Era seeks to explore the international movement of progressive ideas and the development of social solidarities across nations. This coordinated, multi-sited project played

a significant part in the powerful progressive crusade to reform public health and child welfare. With its detailed attention to the MCWE, this dissertation will also explore how women and men of differing opinions and affiliations worked together for the common cause of children but also to legitimize their expertise, promoting ideas and values corresponding to their elite groups. This heterogenous group of reformers had conflicting views regarding the origins of child-welfare problems and proposed dichotomic solutions in a largely popular experiential education project.

Chapter 1: Child-Welfare Exhibitions: Overview of a Public Transnational Education Project

Ce matin je me suis levée tôt en prévision d'une grosse journée. Après avoir préparé le déjeuner, rangé la maison et regardé les petits partir pour l'école, je vais prendre le tramway près de la Main pour me rendre jusqu'au manège militaire. Avec la voisine madame Lebrun, on va aller voir l'exposition dont ils parlent dans les journaux depuis quelques jours. On est curieuse et on s'est dit qu'on était aussi bien d'y aller pendant que les enfants étaient à l'école pour profiter de notre sortie. Ça va nous changer les idées et surement nous divertir. Ça a l'air qu'il y a beaucoup de monde en fin de journée alors on va essayer d'arriver tôt. Il parait qu'on peut laisser nos bébés avec des gardes-malade pendant qu'on se promène. C'est ben d'adon. Je me demande comment ça va être, je ne suis jamais allée à une grande exposition comme ça. Qu'est-ce qu'ils peuvent bien m'apprendre que je ne sais pas déjà alors que j'ai quatre enfants pis ma mère en a eu sept avant moi! C'est sûr qu'il y a trop de bébés qui meurent par chez nous, surtout l'été, mais on fait ce qu'on peut avec le peu qu'on a pour prendre soin de notre famille. La vie n'est pas toujours facile dans le Mile End. En-tout-cas, j'ai hâte de visiter ça. Je me demande si je vais comprendre tout ce que je vais voir. Ma sœur Anne m'a dit que c'était bien impressionnant et qu'il ne fallait pas manquer ça. J'espère que ça va valoir le déplacement.

This chapter will study the design of the MCWE as a grassroots endeavor in the context of the child-welfare exhibition era. This thick description will immerse the reader in the 1912 exhibition sensorially, setting the stage for an analysis of the exhibit medium as an educational tool embraced by the North American child-saving movement during a relatively brief moment in the second decade of the twentieth century. I will examine the first child-welfare exhibitions, and the experts that planned them, in connection to the development of public health during the Progressive era. Furthermore, this chapter will explore both the common elements shared by a selection of North American exhibitions held between 1911 and 1913 and the specificities of the Montreal event. Organizers made a point of tailoring the exhibition to the unique characteristics of the host community, while also connecting it to the transnational project and cross-border exchange of scientific knowledge. Elite women were at the forefront of philanthropy and reforms concerning child welfare. I will therefore conclude this discussion with an examination of the roles played by women in the organization of child-welfare exhibitions. This chapter will emphasize the importance of progressive discourses and techniques in the elaboration of child-

welfare exhibitions. It will also highlight the modernity of Quebec society, situating it as unique but nonetheless engaged in contemporary currents of thought.

The Era of the Child-Welfare Exhibitions: Key Contextual Elements

Sensing the Exhibit

Upon entering the 1912 MCWE, visitors were absorbed in the frenzied atmosphere of the dozen different exhibit sections housed in the large two-story stone-built Drill Hall at the corner of Craig and Hôtel-de-Ville Streets, a site now crossed by the Ville-Marie Expressway (figure 1.1). Upon walking into the expansive Romanesque Revival style building, measuring 123 feet wide by 136 feet long, all of their senses were solicited and engaged.[1] They were engrossed immediately in the noise and excitement of people walking everywhere around them, especially children who came out in droves to visit the exhibition. Every day, school-aged children performed dances or gymnastics routines in the center of the hall, contributing to the lively, joyous clamor across the building. When their music and singing filled the room, the ambient cacophony was briefly calmed.

Figure 1.1 Drill Hall, Craig Street, Montreal, QC, about 1895. Source: VIEW-2445 © McCord Museum. Photographer: Wm. Notman & Son

[1] Jackie Adell, "The Structural Designs of the Early Drill Sheds in Canada," *Bulletin / Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada*, 16, 2 (June 1991): 45, 49.

The exhibition was staged for a period of two weeks between 8 and 22 October, 1912. Dense crowds visited the exhibits every day and every evening. As they navigated through the exhibition, visitors were in close proximity to one another while walking or standing in line to observe specific exhibits and demonstrations. They encountered health specialists as well as young women speaking various languages, deployed across the displays to provide further explanation. Visitors were invited to touch and feel different objects and materials throughout the exhibition, such as fabric samples or model furniture and toys. Their sense of smell was stimulated by the odor of cooking demonstrations mixed with the different bodily smells emanating from the large crowd in the poorly ventilated space. Luckily for Montrealers, the weather averaged at 9.5° Celsius in October 1912, making their experience in the hall more comfortable than it was for Chicagoans, where a similar exhibition had taken place in May 1911 during "the worst heat wave of the year."[2]

A sea of well-dressed women caught the visitors' eyes. Many visitors appear to have worn their finest clothes, including light-colored long sleeve shirts or dark jackets, full dark skirts cut above the ankle, and attractively embellished hats. Likewise, visitors saw men nicely dressed in suits among the crowds, gathered around different exhibits and steering around children, dressed in their best clothes, trying to get to the slide displayed in the playground section. Figure 1.2 shows a funnel of such well-dressed visitors trying to enter the Philanthropy section of the Chicago exhibition. Visitors also observed the many replica classrooms, where children

[2] Government of Canada, "Daily Data Report for October 1912," *Canada*, last modified July 9, 2021, https://climate.weather.gc.ca/climate_data/daily_data_e.html?hlyRange=%7C&dlyRange=1871-07-01%7C1993-03-31&mlyRange=1871-01-01%7C1993-12-01&StationID=5420&Prov=QC&urlExtension=_e.html&searchType=stnProv&optLimit=specDate&StartYear=1911&EndYear=1913&selRowPerPage=25&Line=29&Month=10&Day=8&lstProvince=QC&timeframe=2&Year=191; Marten, "No Beer for Babies," 40.

presented their skills in living exhibits set up on little stages, featuring little girls making hats and older boys working on wood. In every section of the North American exhibitions, walls were plastered with photographs and information. Visitors' eyes were overwhelmed with dramatic representations of sick children and dilapidated houses, as well as alarming headlines and statistics, leaving them with a vivid impression of the dangers of the city for its children.

Figure 1.2 Crowds walking around at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Untitled, photograph, 1911, Box 3, Child Welfare Exhibit photograph album, Vol. II, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Collection, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, (hereafter cited as Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II). Photographer unknown.

The Rise of the Exhibit Medium

While the Progressive Era fostered many reform movements in North America, as discussed in the introduction, it also witnessed major scientific advances. Germ theory, derived from the work of Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch, had shown that diseases originated from infectious microorganisms.[3] As this theory gained acceptance in the 1890s, the bacterial revolution changed

[3] Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 28.

the way the medical community and government officials viewed disease. It also changed their approach to disease and their actions towards it. This innovative medical knowledge, especially increasing knowledge and understanding of disease-causing microbes, contributed to the New Public Health phenomenon. With no remedy for many infections, prevention became the main public-health strategy. Specialists tried to convince people to adopt "specific individual hygienic behaviours" to prevent the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis.[4]

At the turn of the 20th century, as the working-class population increasingly crowded into cities with dangerous sanitary conditions, reformers and public-health specialists developed many tools to educate the population. As Jennifer Lisa Koslow explains in her book on public-health exhibitions in the Progressive Era, their strategies were often marketed toward women. Reformers displayed "gendered expectations" as well as a class bias and prejudice against working-class people. They published pamphlets and delivered lectures, but came to favour visual and interactive educational materials. This emerging preference was based on their reductive views of working-class people's capacity to understand and process "complex textual information," a prejudice directed in particular towards immigrants in the United States.[5] Although it is impossible to tell exactly how well Quebec working-class people comprehended written material, a large majority of the people could read and write in 1911. According to the Canadian census, this was the case for 86.56 percent of the Quebec population aged five years and over, compared with 90.33 percent for Montreal. This proportion decreased when accounting only for foreign-born men and women five years and over living in Montreal, reaching respectively 82.75 and 80.80 percent who could read and write. These literacy rates were the lowest in the working-class district of Ste-Anne and highest in Ste-Antoine, which included

[4] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health*, 2-3.
[5] Koslow, 4.

wealthy neighbourhoods like the Square Mile.[6] These numbers tell us that reformers surely underestimated the working-class comprehension skills and that their bias contributed to their choice of the exhibition medium.

Likewise, movies, images, and exhibitions were emerging as preferred tools for public-health reformers. Koslow notes that "the reliance on visuals for popular health education converged with the commercialization of popular amusement."[7] The exhibition era also coincides with a popular time for elaborate pageants.[8] In parallel with world and local fairs of the time, exhibitions were used as marketing and communication tools to disseminate scientific knowledge and promote the values and ideologies of their organizers to the general population, mixing education and entertainment.[9] Although visitors were attracted to the child-welfare exhibition for its information and its important subject matter, they were also drawn to the event because of its publicity, its popularity, and the opportunity to be entertained.

As North American reformers examined overall public health during this period, they found children to be the most vulnerable group in cities. Mortality rates among society's youngest members were shocking, with reformers claiming one in four babies did not reach the age of one in Chicago and Montreal.[10] Simultaneously, family life was evolving, with children

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[6] These rates were even higher when looking at the population aged 21 and over. For example, 93.90 percent of Canadian-born males in Montreal could read and write. Statistics Canada, *Fifth Census of Canada 1911, Religions, Origins, Birthplace, Citizenship, Literacy and Infirmities, by Provinces, Districts and Sub-Districts, Volume II,* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1913), 466, 491, 496, 501.

[7] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health*, 5.

[8] See H. V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

[9] Robert W. Rydell and Nancy Gwinn, *Fair Representations,* 1.

[10] Organizers of the Chicago and Montreal exhibitions put forward these numbers. Untitled, photograph, 1911, Box 2, Child Welfare Exhibit photograph album, Vol. I, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Collection, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, (hereafter cited as Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I); *Child Welfare Exhibition Souvenir Handbook* (Montreal: La Patrie, 1912), 6. Available numbers show infant mortality rates of 149.5 per thousand live births in Chicago in 1910 and 209 for Montreal between 1911 and 1915. Health Statistics, "Illinois Infant Mortality 1907-2010," Illinois Department of Public Health, last modified July 31, 2014, http://www.idph.state.il.us/health/infant/cumrate.htm; Denyse Baillargeon, *Un*

becoming more emotionally valuable in an increasingly nurturing childhood setting.[11] Many reformers adhered to the child-saving movement, aiming to improve children's welfare through preventive methods.[12] Child-welfare exhibitions emerged in the United States in this context and the first one was staged in New York City in January 1911. Exhibitions provided a local response to the global and national childhood issues produced by industrialization. They followed closely the popular Tuberculosis exhibitions of the early 1900s, two of which took place in 1908 in Washington and in Montreal, showcasing the advances in visual and graphic techniques while educating the public.[13] Child-welfare exhibitions gained momentum during the 1910s, starting with major exhibitions staged by American reformers in large cities and ending with several smaller ones across the globe. Under the reformers' direction, child-welfare exhibitions developed as part of a larger movement for popular public-health education, "borrowing techniques of modern advertising, with combined images and snappy text, to grab the public's attention."[14] Local child-welfare exhibitions were in essence grassroots enterprises organized by communities out of a desire to promote public-health reform and knowledge of children's health, hygiene, and well-being. However, they also promoted the interest of their own group and class, often emphasising the cleavages between the working and middle classes through their exhibits.[15]

Québec en mal d'enfants. La médicalisation de la maternité 1910-1970 (Montréal: Éditions du Remue-Ménage, 2004), 38.

[11] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 10-11; Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canada: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus*. Second Edition (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000).

[12] On the child-saving movement see Anthony Platt, "The Rise of the Child-Saving Movement: A Study in Social Policy and Correctional Reform," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 381 (January 1969): 21–38.

[13] Valerie Minnett, "Disease and Domesticity on Display: The Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition, 1908," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History / Bulletin canadien d'histoire de la médecine* 23, no. 2 (2006): 382.

[14] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health*, 6.

[15] Koslow, 76, 98; Claudine Pierre-Deschênes "Santé publique," 115-6.

Setting the Stage: The First Exhibits

Curry D. Breckinridge, a visiting tuberculosis nurse in Chicago, used a metaphor to describe the development of child-welfare exhibitions saying "a thought is like the circles made by a pebble on the surface of the water; it drops silently, the circles rise and spread, the first merging into the second, the second into the third-and finally they are lost to sight on the bosom of the lake."[16] As she wrote in *The American Journal of Nursing* in 1911*,* the first child-welfare exhibition had its origins in the idea of a Sunday school teacher for a humble exhibit of her students' work. Reformers adopted the idea, thinking it would be beneficial to have an exhibit of children's work and living conditions in the city. After three years of work and research, the New York Child Welfare Exhibit opened in January 1911.

The idea of a child-welfare exhibition was soon adopted by a Chicagoan. Due to the help of generous matrons and volunteers, the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit opened in May 1911. The main matron was Harriet Hammond McCormick, a philanthropist and activist involved in child-saving in the city.[17] Assembled hastily, this exhibition consisted of practically the entire New York exhibit, plus some added material pertaining specifically to Chicago. In both events, child welfare was addressed in relation to different headings with committees working on each subject: homes, schools, libraries and museums, work and wages, recreation, streets, health, laws, settlement, associations, churches, and public and private philanthropy.[18] Subsequently, between 1911 and 1915, child-welfare exhibitions on this model were staged in Kansas City, Northampton

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[16] Currie D. Breckinridge, "'The Child in the Midst': The New York-Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit," *The American Journal of Nursing* 11, 10 (1911): 814. It is interesting to note that nurse Curry D. Breckinridge (her name was misspelled in the journal) was the sister of Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, a social reformer, University of Chicago professor, and member of two committees of the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. See Jarbour, *Sophonisba Breckinridge.*

[17] Mrs. McCormick, the wife of Cyrus H. McCormick Jr., was particularly involved in philanthropy and advocacy for children since the sudden death of her daughter Elizabeth. Breckinridge, "Child in the Midst," 814.

[18] *Pamphlets on Child Welfare Exhibit in Chicago—1911* (Chicago: Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911), 1.

(Mass.), St. Louis, Buffalo, Montreal, Louisville, Providence, Knoxville, Rochester, New Britain, Peoria, Toledo, Seattle, Indianapolis, Dublin (Ireland), and other smaller towns.[19] Each of these events came into being because of the united efforts of active progressive citizens, concerned with the issue of the urban children in their community. As the New York exhibit handbook stated: "The Child Welfare Exhibit is thus a veritable educational institution, with curriculum, text-books, charts and models, a corps of teachers, and a body of students."[20]

Dr. Anna Louise Strong emerged as the leading expert on child-welfare exhibitions, and wrote a handbook on exhibition types and preparation in 1915. In it, she explained that child-welfare exhibitions were created "not only to help individual parents, but to secure needed legislation or community action for the welfare of children."[21] Interestingly, this statement juxtaposes two competing visions articulated by reformers as to the social and political dynamics of child welfare: the individual responsibility of parents and the societal problem. The tension between these two notions and other competing philosophies was reflected in the form and content of the various child-welfare exhibitions. Strong oversaw the preparation and administration of every exhibit staged in the first half of the 1910s, and women's associations across the globe would write to her and her successors to ask for advice.[22] Montreal was no exception, and its child-welfare exhibition was the first and biggest of its kind to take place

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[19] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 7.

[20] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 15.

[21] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits*, 9.

[22] For example, a file contains correspondence regarding child-welfare exhibition preparation and material for the period of 1916-1920. Letters are from different places including Ontario, Alberta, Québec, Illinois, Texas, Alabama, Iowa, Massachusetts, France, Minnesota, New York, Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and India. Correspondence, RG 102, Box 71, File 8-1-2-2-9, Records of the Children's Bureau, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as Children's Bureau, NACP). Also see *Miscellaneous Publications (handbooks), Child Welfare Exhibits--1911-1912*.

outside the United States, initiated by progressive Montrealers who were inspired by the successful American exhibitions.[23]

The First Exhibition Expert

Strong was a social activist, writer, and organizer. Raised in a family that valued the Social Gospel and progressive politics, she earned a bachelors' degree from Oberlin College, and a PhD in philosophy from the University of Chicago.[24] Before she became a well-known socialist activist and a journalist, Strong made her mark by specializing in child-welfare exhibitions. Following time spent at Hull House in Chicago and Greenwich House in New York, settlements where she was associated with important Progressives such as Julia Lathrop, Lilian Wald and Florence Kelly, she worked on child hygiene for the most important social-work organization in New York in the early twentieth century, the Russel Sage Foundation. Although she had not studied social work at the New York School of Philanthropy like many of her contemporaries, her experience in settlement houses and her network of progressive friends provided access to professional opportunities in social work. Six months after starting at the Foundation, she was hired by the National Child Labor Committee, where she took child-welfare exhibitions around the country, coordinating with local organizers.

In fall 1911, Anna Louise Strong was officially put in charge of the Child Welfare Exhibit Program by the Committee. The following year, she was offered a position to run the exhibit program for the new U.S. Children's Bureau, alongside her Hull House friend Julia Lathrop,

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[23] American Home Economics Association, "News from the Field," *Journal of Home Economics*, 6, 5 (1914): 517. The only other international exhibit that took place in the early 1910s was held Dublin, Ireland, from July 15 to August 31st 1914; "L'hygiène infantile," *Le Devoir*, Lundi 24 avril, 1911, 5.

[24] The Social Gospel movement emerged in the 1880s. This Protestant movement "emphasized the brotherhood of man" while pursuing "social reform along the lines of justice and equality through personal regeneration." Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), 103-4. On the crusade for social morality and how it opened doors for women see Flanagan, *America Reformed*, 34-35.

where she worked actively until 1916, organizing exhibitions and providing expert advice internationally.[25] Strong was put in charge of the 1912 Montreal exhibition, as the executive staff director, where she worked alongside the executive committee and members of many of the city's associations.[26] Before the end of the two-week event, she left Montreal for Kentucky where she took on a similar role in the organization of the Louisville exhibition.[27] Strong's work and her presence at the Montreal exhibition testifies to the important transnational connections between progressives concerned with child welfare and to the prominent role of women in child-welfare exhibitions. As maternalists, progressive women who organized exhibitions were perceived as legitimate experts who were well placed to propose reforms for mothers and their families.[28]

Standard Exhibitions Tailored to Each Community

Design and Content Specificity

Some important fundamental elements made the exhibition medium especially interesting for child-welfare prevention and promotion across nations. First, exhibitions used "emotion to provoke action," especially through alarmist displays and photographs.[29] The Montreal exhibit guide explained that:

> a Child Welfare Exhibition is not a mere passing show to tickle the curiosity of the searcher for novelties. It is a sermon, by pictures, demonstrations and dramatized facts, on the Great Truths of Child Life, pregnant with meaning for us all and calculated to call for serious introspection and fruitful resolutions.[30]

This means that the experiential aspect of the exhibit was essential in its design. The communication technologies used in exhibitions were specifically chosen to create emotions and

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[25] Strong and Keyssar, *Right in Her Soul,* 47-63.
[26] *Souvenir Handbook*, 38-39, 3.
[27] "Les visiteurs sont de plus en plus nombreux à l'Exposition du Bien-Etre," *La Presse*, Oct. 16, 1912, 8.
[28] Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled,* 53-55.
[29] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health*, 6.
[30] *Souvenir Handbook*, 45.

shape visitors' feelings.[31] This was especially effective in child-welfare exhibitions' homes sections, which presented photographs of working-class housing paired with dramatic slogans.[32] Furthermore, Koslow explains that reformers thought that displays involving sensory elements, such as exhibits, would appeal to people's feelings and encourage them "to engage in transformative action."[33] For example, in an article on the Chicago exhibit, James Marten points out that visitors were shocked by the flashing red light in a booth representing the preventable death of a child happening somewhere in the world.[34] Realizing the meaning of light going on and off made an intangible fact tangible for many, leading reformers to hope this would inspire improved behaviours in the visitors.

Moreover, Strong's preparation guide mentioned a display present at many community exhibits. An inscription placed near the exits compelled visitors to ponder, "Who is to blame for the conditions here shown?" Strong explained that "the string which the spectator is directed to pull 'to find out' discloses a mirror in which he views himself."[35] This display demonstrates reformers' emphasis on individual responsibility, particularly in disease prevention and transmission. Realism and simplicity were also important features contributing to the exhibitions' success.[36] In this regard, the presence of children, in living exhibits and other performances, further contributed to the emotional appeal of the exhibition. Exhibitors chose to have children participate in the exhibits to attract the sympathy of visitors. Seeing the children, visitors would think they were worth saving. They could easily imagine these children's future in jeopardy,

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[31] Susan J. Matt and Luke Fernandez, "Technology and feeling" in *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide*, ed. Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Peter N Stearns (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group: 2021), 212, 218-9.

[32] We will explore this in chapter 4.

[33] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health*, 12.

[34] Marten, "No Beer for Babies," 47.

[35] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 35.

[36] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health,*7-8.

connecting them to the different display materials surrounding them. The examples presented above show how organizers operated to translate the abstract emotional appeal of children into the tangible space of the exhibition.

Nevertheless, "in case seeing did not result in believing,"[37] as Koslow puts it, organizers planned for docents to help the public understand the material. The New York exhibit guide confirmed that "the Exhibit is to be explained by a force of more than one thousand well-informed volunteer 'Explainers,' serving in twenty-four hundred shifts of four hours each, and covering each section of the exhibit every hour of the twenty-four days during which it is open."[38] Likewise, the Chicago exhibition had nearly fifteen hundred explainers who volunteered to guide visitors in sixteen different languages.[39] In Montreal, the exhibition committees also planned for a large number of explainers to guide people through the exhibits and highly recommended visitors should take advantage of the "assistance of the expert explainers."[40] Like their American counterparts, the Montreal explainers spoke multiple languages, to ensure that all visitors could understand the exhibits. *The Montreal Daily Herald* reported that explainers described the exhibits and answered questions in Yiddish on a successful "Hebrew Day," held to encourage the city's Jewish population to participate, on Sunday October 13, 1912.[41] By having people on the floor to explain the exhibits, reformers made sure to control the message and transmit their middle-class ideologies and values.

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[37] Koslow, 30.

[38] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 15.

[39] Explainers in Chicago spoke English, German, Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Swedish, Danish, French, Spanish, Yiddish, Japanese, Chinese, Croatian, Ruthenian, and Russian. *The Child in the City: A Handbook of the Child Welfare Exhibit at the Coliseum, May 11 to May 25, 1911* (Chicago: The Blakely Printing Co, 1911), 18.

[40] *Souvenir Handbook*, 45.

[41] "Hebrew Day was Big Success for the Exhibition" and "Explainers Used Yiddish Language," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 14, 1912, 9.

There were similar features in each child-welfare exhibition, reflecting the project's transnational nature. Each exhibition maintained a consistent floor plan, designed to provide a coherent experience for visitors. Organizers suggested a linear tour of large sections arranged by subject, starting on the west side of the hall and going clockwise, with entertainment space and a playground in the central court and conferences in separate rooms. The flow was important, as was the width of the aisle, allowing for an optimal visit, while adapted to local conditions.[42] A handbook outlining the floor plan and suggested order of the exhibits was available to assist visitors and provide information to those unable to attend. The floor plans were very similar, as figures 1.3 to 1.6 below show, and their density signified how child welfare was embedded in many different aspects of society.

The plan for the first child-welfare exhibition in New York (figure 1.3) presents a lighter layout than the others, as growing expertise and shared material made the subsequent exhibitions more complex. The Chicago exhibit plan (figure 1.4) resembles a maze, with its sixteen sub-headings comprised of many wall panels each, creating a non-linear path. As photographs show, the first section, presenting the work of associations and clubs, featured busy wall panels full of photos, texts, and even handcrafted items. It also included a platform where children's clubs took turns presenting their activities.[43] The dense and busy section was surely entertaining. But one can only imagine how difficult it must have been to travel through these tightly-packed and narrow paths of the Chicago installation, starting with such a lively display, all this in the middle of a heat wave. We may wonder if the proximity was intentional, designed perhaps to mirror the crowded working-class neighbourhoods of the city.

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[42] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 27-28.

[43] See photographs of the association and clubs' section of the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.

DIAGRAM OF EXHIBITS

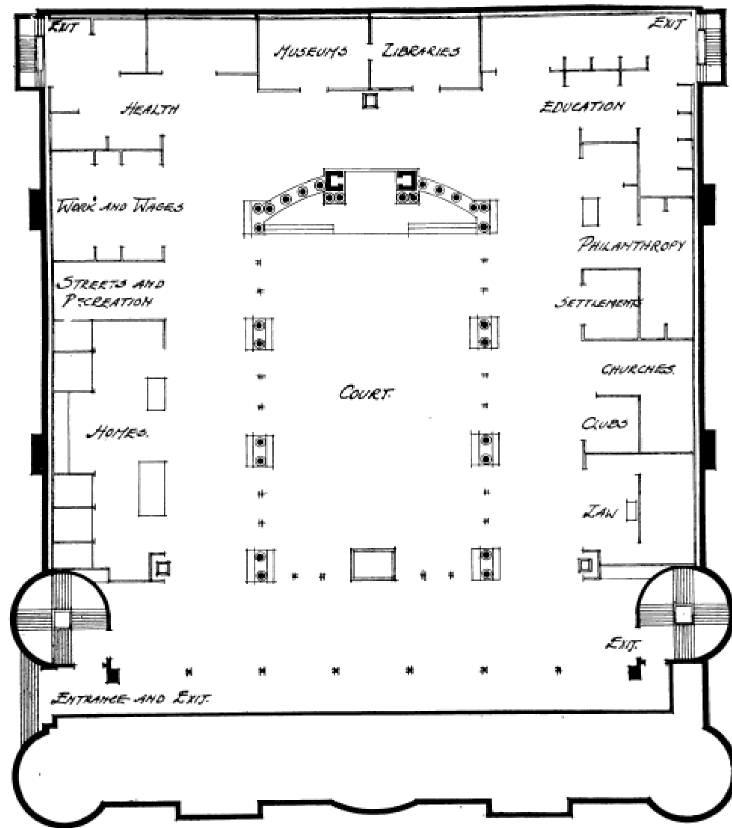

Figure 1.3 Plan of the 1911 New York Child Welfare Exhibit held at the 71st Regiment Armory. Source: *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 16.

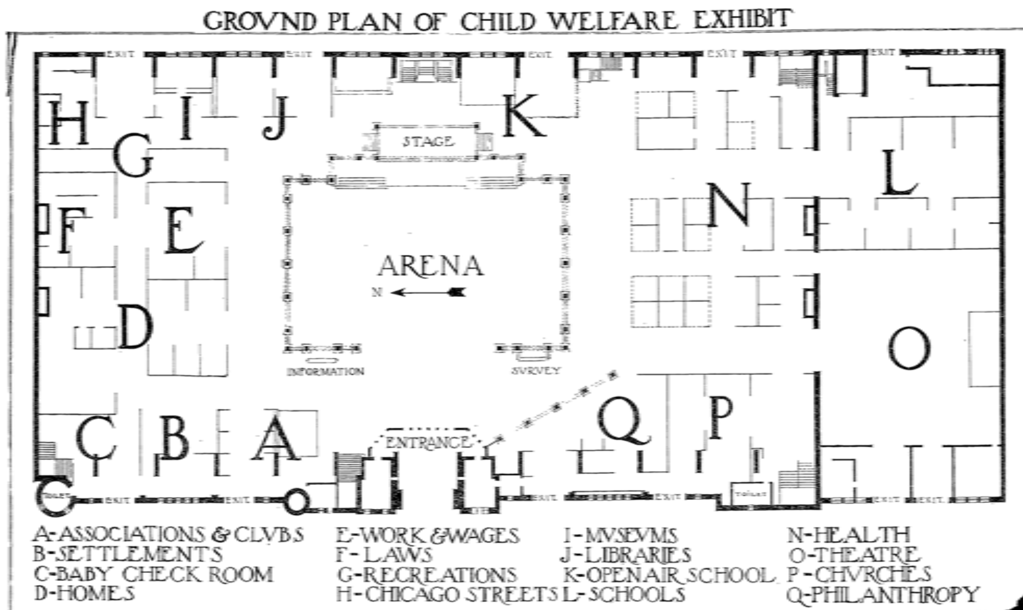

Figure 1.4 Plan of the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit held at the Coliseum. Source: *Child in the City,* 1.

Although just as full, the Montreal plan (figure 1.5) presents a more streamlined layout, with sections in four-sided booths juxtaposed next to each other in an overall rectangular drill hall. The exhibition itinerary outlined the tension over who bears responsibility for child welfare, be it the individual or society. Individual and especially maternal responsibility was emphasized in the initial exhibits on Health and Housing, whereas in the final sections, entitled Law and Work &Wages, the emphasis was on urban poverty as a societal problem for which collective solutions were needed. Whether intentional or not, this itinerary would have had an impact on the visitor, perhaps resulting in a less guilt-ridden experience. The health section, divided into different sub-sections, noticeably occupied almost one-fourth of the entire exhibit space, practically double the surface it occupied in the New York exhibition. This demonstrates the importance of this subject for organizers, which was also specifically put at the beginning of the exhibition. The Philanthropy section is much larger than in other North American plans, showing the specificity and the complexity of Montreal's welfare organization centered around charitable work from predominantly Catholic, but also Protestant, and Jewish institutions. There was a sizeable space dedicated for a miniature playground in the middle of the room whereas a small play space was imbedded in the recreations' section in Chicago.[44] It is an improvement that emerged at the 1912 exhibition and was reproduced in the model plan proposed in Strong's 1915 exhibit guide (figure 1.6). This indoors playground was very popular in Montreal, with Agnes Chesley, Women's editor for *The Daily Montreal Star,* stating that hundreds of children would gather to play in this small space.[45]

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[44] *Souvenir Handbook*, 46; *Child in the City,* 1; *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 16.

[45] Agnes Chesley, "The Children at Play," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 14 1912, 8. Chesley was the women's editor for the newspaper.

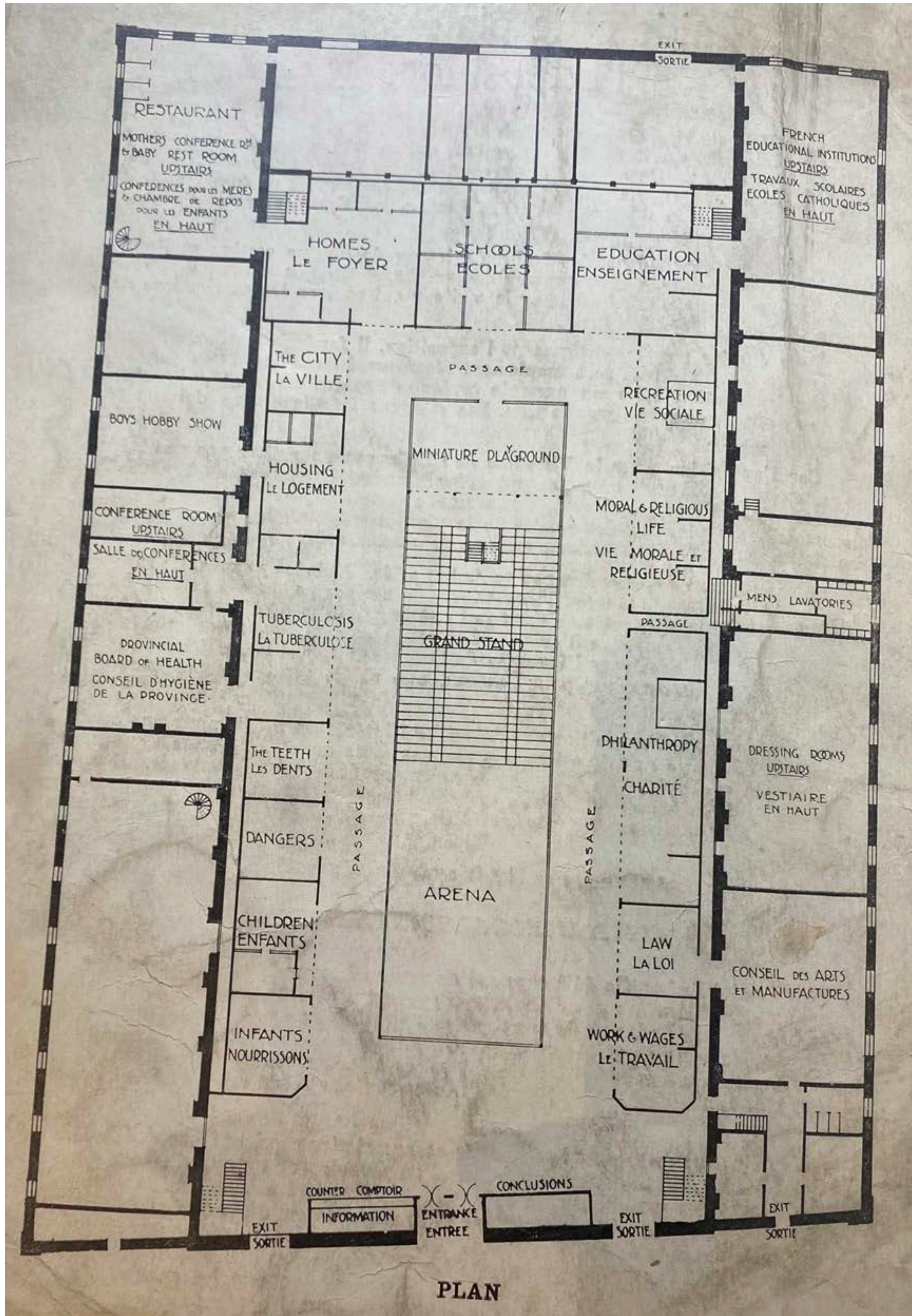
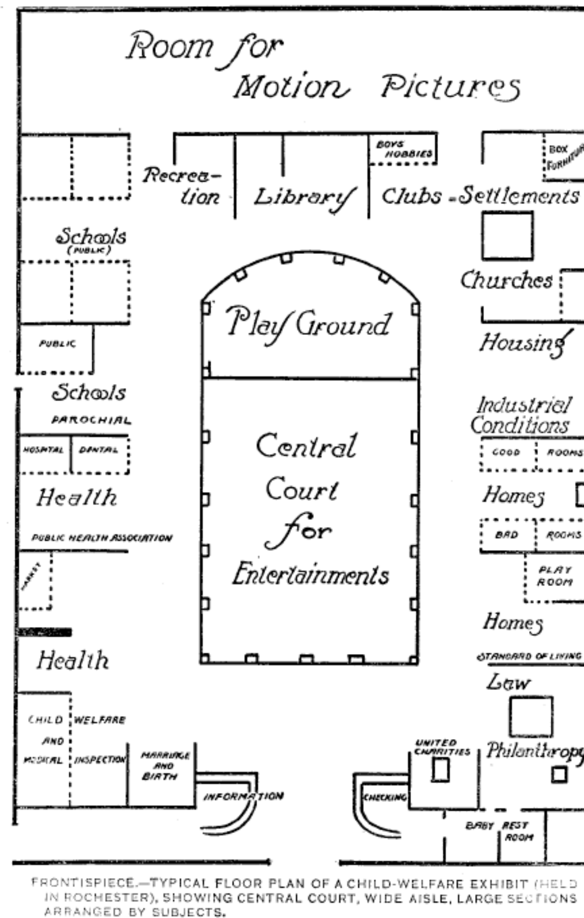


Figure 1.5 Plan of the 1912 Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition. Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants tenue au Manège Militaire rue Craig, Montréal, Octobre 1912, Guide-Souvenir,* 46.



FRONTISPIECE.—TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN OF A CHILD-WELFARE EXHIBIT (HELD IN ROCHESTER), SHOWING CENTRAL COURT, WIDE AISLE, LARGE SECTIONS ARRANGED BY SUBJECTS.

Figure 1.6 Typical plan for a child-welfare exhibition. Source: Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 2.

Next to the miniature playground, daily afternoon and evening performances showcased the talents of children from different schools in the large central court and grand stand. Another area showed the children in action, as the boys hobby show was located in a room behind the housing section. The section presenting the work of French educational institutions also hosted children's demonstrations, upstairs at the back of the hall, close to the school section. The other side of the second floor, close to the home section, had a restaurant, the baby rest room, and conference rooms. Overall, the plan for the Montreal exhibit aligned with its American equivalents, showing the knowledge being shared across nations but differed noticeably in its bilingualism. These local differences emphasize that, in general, child-welfare exhibitions

standardized best practices and followed the same logic across nations. We see that exhibition floor plans were refined and enhanced as reformers perfected their skills in this medium, finding better ways to convey their message.

Handbooks and Symbols

Only a few physical items remain from the original exhibitions: the handbooks and photographs. These educational materials contributed in tangible ways to the success of the events. Each handbook had the exhibition's emblem on top and the exhibit plan at the beginning or the end. The emblems or seals were images symbolizing child welfare. The New York and Chicago exhibits had similar emblems, depicting a swaddled young child with its arms open (figure 1.7). Although no reference is made to the choice or the origins of these emblems, we have concluded that they are reproductions of Andrea della Robbia's white glazed terra-cotta reliefs of swaddled babies on blue backgrounds found on the façade of the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence, Italy (figure 1.8.). This institution is not only one of the first works of Renaissance architecture, it

Figure 1.7 Emblems of the 1911 New York Child Welfare Exhibit and 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Sources: *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 7; *Child in the City,* 1.

Figure 1.8. Andrea della Robbia's bambino found on the façade of the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence, Italy, created in 1487. Source: Rachel Boyd, "Andrea della Robbia's bambini at the Ospedale degli Innocenti, Florence," Smarthistory, last modified March 29, 2021, https://smarthistory.org/andrea-della-robbia-bambini-ospedale-degli-innocenti/. Photographer: Rachel Boyd.

is among the oldest running foundling hospitals in Europe, caring for infants and children for over five centuries. It came to represent humanism, as its sponsors "demonstrated their understanding and compassion for the foundling infants."[46]

Often referred to as the bambini or bambino, these rondels were the institutions' insignia. Analysing their symbolism, Emma Derr explains that "this iconography can be associated with the Christian tradition of holy figures, such as Christ, the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist being represented as swaddled infants. The tight swaddles communicate safety and security, which the hospital provides its foundlings."[47] These images offered a fitting symbol for the child-welfare

[46] Lawrence Kahn, "The 'Ospedale degli Innocenti' and the 'bambino' of the American Academy of Pediatrics," *American Academy of Pediatrics* 110 (2002): 177.

[47] This foundling hospital opened in 1441 and the ten rondels with creative differences were mounted on the Loggia in 1487. For example, even numbered babies were looking right and odd numbered looking left. Facial expressions and swaddling were also different for each infant. The New York and Chicago exhibitions were the only two exhibitions to use these rondels as emblems that we could find. See Emma Derr, "Andrea della

cause. The carefully-wrapped child appeared innocent and precious; its open arms suggesting welcoming the future and what the world has to offer. Reformers wished to send the message that every child should be born free with the same opportunities and that the city and community should look after their needs.[48] Thus, these simple representations of a baby are straightforward and appealed to public sentiment; an innocent child has the world in front of them but needs to be protected (swaddled) from the city's dangerous conditions. The bambino symbol would be used by many maternal and child health organizations "as a 'sign of hope' and 'an appeal to the 'nature' of the child' and to its rights to a childhood," after World War I. With organizations such as the Save the Children International Union, the National Children's Relief Organization, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Brazilian Pediatric Society using the insignia, public-health researchers find that the common choice of the bambino was influenced by an international cooperation movement towards children's health and its humanistic connection.[49] The New York and Chicago exhibitions can be considered as precursors in this movement.

In contrast, the seal chosen for the Montreal exhibition represented "Jeanne Mance caring for an Indian child," reproducing a sculpture "on the base of the Maisonneuve Monument in Place d'Armes Square," unveiled in 1895. Here the child is again presented as vulnerable and needing protection, as he is almost naked and immobilized by the nurse who is softly and calmly bandaging his arm (figure 1.9). The visible distress on the child's face stands out from the peaceful expressions of the children on the American emblems. This expression could be the result of pain from an injury, but could also represent the child needing to be saved from its

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Robbia," *Florence As It Was*, last modified November, 2019, http://florenceasitwas.wlu.edu/people/andrea-della-robbia.html; *Miscellaneous Publications.*

[48] *Child in the City*, 6.

[49] Pierre Buekens and Perrine Humblet, "A 15th Century 'Bambino' is the Symbol of Global Maternal and Child Health," *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 15 (2011): 1-3, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-010-0675-7. The authors interestingly note that the bambino and its swaddling evolved over time, to show signs of starvation during a famine or as swaddling practice were no longer recommended.

dangerous environment. The decision to include a woman in the emblem is a meaningful difference from other seals. The organizing committee explained that they chose this image to represent the important role of women in philanthropic work in Montreal, past and present, including their prominent role in organizing the child-welfare exhibition.[50]

Moreover, the choice of this image from the history of New France evokes white womanhood, settler colonialism, and Montreal's specificity in a North American setting. In his study of public memory in Montreal, Alan Gordon finds that women were rarely represented on public monuments given that liberal, separate-spheres ideology kept them in the home. Gordon shows that "French Canadians looked back to heroic figures and those who exemplified religious duty," such as Jeanne Mance, whereas Anglophones had only one woman appearing on monuments, Queen Victoria. Jeanne Mance was a "'real life' example" to be admired and emulated, while the Queen was a model of patriotism that could not be mirrored.[51] Although they had contrasting perceptions of history and of commemoration, as representatives of both linguistic communities, Montreal reformers united under the choice of Jeanne Mance for the exhibition emblem. The higher infant mortality rates among Catholics might have been at play in this choice. In his opening address, exhibition co-president Thomas Gauthier spoke of the important role played by women in the city, from Jeanne Mance to the current moment. He compared the exhibition to a tree, with women being its roots.[52] Connecting the emblem to the city's past and emphasizing women, showcasing New-France pioneer and Montreal's first nurse

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[50] *Souvenir Handbook*, 1.

[51] Only four women had been commemorated in Montreal by 1930. The other two were Marguerite Bourgeoys and Joan of Arc. Alan Gordon, *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montréal's Public Memories, 1891-1930*, Studies on the History of Quebec - Études d'histoire du Québec (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), xiii, 134-5.

[52] "Child Welfare Exhibition Open," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 9, 1912, 5.

Jeanne Mance, all highlighted women's significant role in the Montreal exhibition, the French fact, and the specific setting of Montreal.[53]

Figure 1.9 Emblem of the 1912 Montreal Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants*, 1.

Other symbols found in the handbooks were important for the exhibitions. The New York city exhibition featured a massive sculpture by Louis Potter at its entrance. Reproduced in the handbook, it featured two men and a woman bearing heavy loads, representing life's burdens, with a young child beneath them (figure 1.10). All of the figures' backs were bent, including the as-yet unburdened child. The handbook explains that the child was symbolically weighted down

[53] Following American exhibitions chose to have a child or a mother with her child as their emblem. See *Miscellaneous Publications.*

by heredity, social conditions, his environment, and more. Hence, reformers explained that "the purpose of the Child Welfare Exhibit is to point the way to lift the burdens from childish shoulder to straighten these bent little backs to prevent bent little backs for the future."[54] The Chicago handbook also referred to this symbol, as Jane Addams explained in the foreword, "I see the shining faces from little children from whose back heavy burdens have been lifted,"[55] referring to the goal of the exhibitions. This representation is similar to that of the emblems, as the child is positioned as an innocent victim needing protection.

Figure 1.10 Earth Bound. Sculpture at the entrance of the 1911 New York Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 8.

An image published in the frontispiece of the Chicago exhibition handbook was also symbolic. It depicted an old man holding a scythe and handing the world to a child. The child is

[54] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 9.
[55] *Child in the City,* 5.

reaching for the globe with open arms. An hourglass stands between him and the man. Under the image reproduced in figure 1.11, a text says “Strengthen the little hands that must carry on the world.”[56] The “grim reaper,” a symbol of death, alludes to child mortality, while the hourglass suggests the rapid passing of time. This cartoon represents the urgency to help children and improve child welfare so that there can be a future for the planet. These subjects were at the core of reformers’ preoccupations and motivated them in their work on child-welfare exhibitions. The use of emotional images would be found throughout.

Figure 1.11 Image of a child being handed the world by an old man. Source: *Child in the City,* 1.

A comparison of the different exhibition handbooks shows a difference in their form and content. The New York and Chicago booklets were twice as voluminous as the one produced for Montreal, outlining in greater detail the information provided in the different exhibits. While not exhaustive, the New York publication was quite thorough, summarizing each section of the exhibit while adding some relevant details and a bibliography. As the first one published, the

[56] *Child in the City*, 1.

New York handbook had no photographs of the exhibition and very few images, whereas the later publications were filled with photographs from previous exhibitions and images to be found on wall panels at the event.[57] Halfway between the New York and Montreal booklets in terms of form and design, the Chicago handbook was comprehensive and provided essential information on each section. Building on the experience of the New York exhibition, the Chicago exhibit guide was more concise, but distinguished itself by its significant number of photographs.[58]

The Montreal exhibition handbook was short and to the point. Organizers stated that it was designed to assist visitors, as well as people who could not attend the exhibition. Nonetheless, they asserted that there was too much information to fit in a small publication. They decided to limit the handbook size and instead suggested several visits to grasp the material presented in each section of the exhibit, for "the Exhibition offers a liberal and scientific education in the Social Conditions of a great city, which intelligent citizens should not let pass unheeded." The choice of a shorter pamphlet can be explained by financial and logistical considerations. Given the need to publish French and English versions of the handbook, organizers tried to be efficient by focusing on the main points of each section and including striking pictures and charts. In addition, nine out of the forty-six pages were paid advertisements from sponsors promoting products for children and parents, supporting the cost efficiency argument. In the end, the organizing committee printed twenty thousand copies in English and thirty thousand in French.[59]

Child-welfare exhibitions were expensive endeavors. A result of the work of over three hundred people, including many volunteers, the New York exhibit cost between $70,000 and

[57] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit.*
[58] *Child in the City,* 6-75 passim.
[59] *Souvenir Handbook,* 45. Some of these ads will be discussed in further chapters.

$100,000, while the Chicago exhibit cost an additional $50,000.[60] In comparison, the Montreal exhibit was made possible for only $30,000, including contributions of $5,000 from each level of government: municipal, provincial, and federal. Organizers also received a free venue and labour from the many volunteers.[61] Exhibitions could save money by reusing materials produced by previous exhibitions, but they still valued grassroots efforts that produced city-specific features. The scientific knowledge presented in graphics, wall panels, lanterns, models, publications, and movies were often loaned by exhibition committees and later the Children's Bureau.[62] By contrast, local organizers created all of the exhibit material pertaining to local institutions and issues, such as housing, schools, charities, or work and wages. Nonetheless, as a transnational education project, the exhibitions had more in common than they had differences. Their common aim was to protect children from urban threats and thus, to guard their nation's future.

As early as 1912, Pauline F. Witherspoon, assistant director at the MCWE, suggested the establishment of a central office for child-welfare exhibitions where materials and information could be kept.[63] Although the Children's Bureau was not able to organize right away, it would eventually centralize exhibit material in its office and engage its exhibit expert, Anna Louise Strong. The Children's Bureau would become a reference in terms of child-welfare exhibitions, with requests coming from across the globe in the second half of the 1910s, even from as far as Russia, Japan, and India.[64] Strong firmly believed in the importance of the exhibition having been

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[60] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 12; *Child in the City,* 5.

[61] "Exposition Permanente de Puériculture," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 17, 1912, 4; "Welfare Show Is Over but Screens Will Be Preserved," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 23, 1912, 5.

[62] Inventory of Exhibit Material, January 1919, RG 102, Box 70, File 8-1-2-2-0, Children's Bureau, NACP.

[63] Letter from Pauline F. Witherspoon to Jane Addams, August 21, 1912, RG 102, Box 71, File 8-1-3, Children's Bureau, NACP.

[64] Letters seeking advice from the exhibit expert, 1919-1920, RG 102, Box 72, File 8-1-3-1, Children's Bureau, NACP; Correspondence regarding exhibit material, 1916-1919, RG 102, Box 71, File 8-1-2-2-9, Children's Bureau, NACP. We do not know where all international child-welfare exhibitions were held, but we know the American Red Cross (ARC) organized child-welfare exhibitions in France between 1918 and 1923, such as in Lyon and in St. Etienne in 1918. See Julia F. Irwin, "Sauvons les Bébés: Child Health and U.S. Humanitarian Aid in the First World War Era," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 86, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 50. We know there was communication

asked for and managed by the community, as opposed to an exhibit sent to a city in order to yield a popular success. In a 1915 letter to Julia C. Lathorp, she explains that the grassroots exhibit "produces an effect which is really worth while, and which is much appreciated by the community. It was work of this sort of which that I have hoped for several years that the Bureau could be made the center, both for the sake of the Bureau and of the country at large." She further explained that she thought it was best to send an expert to advise and assist in organizing "first rank" child-welfare exhibitions.[65] In her eyes, the combined work of the exhibit expert with a local committee would make the most successful exhibition, as her presence in New York, Chicago, and Montreal had taught her.[66]

Photographs

Photographs were a crucial element of child-welfare exhibitions. They served to expose the reality experienced by children, a tool used by social reformers for "bringing the 'real' conditions of the city to the public mind, creating visual reference points."[67] Photographs could have a powerful effect on visitors. In her study of the 1908 Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition, Valerie Minnett argues that "photos sent the message that the prevalence of tuberculosis was higher amongst the people who lived under these conditions," meaning the working class. Overall, the exhibition had been designed to compel visitors to internalize the discourse around causes and

between the ARC and the Children's Bureau, see Slides and incidental apparatus, RG 102, Box 70, File 8-1-2-2-2, Children's Bureau, NACP. We also know there was a child-welfare exhibition in Calcutta, India, in 1920, which followed the same model, presenting the elites' nationalist values and ideologies. Saha, "Motherhood on Display," 249–77.

[65] Letter from Anna Louise Strong to Julia C. Lathrop, September 10, 1915, RG 102, Box 69, File 8-1-0-2, Children's Bureau, NACP.

[66] Anna Louise Strong, "Comments on holding a Child Welfare Exhibit in connection with Infant Mortality Study of the Children's Bureau," RG 102, Box 72, File 8-1-3-2, Children's Bureau, NACP; *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 14; *Child in the City*, 82; *Souvenir Handbook*, 39.

[67] Opp, "Religion Photography in Winnipeg," 74.

prevention of the disease. Thus, Minnett asserts that photography was an important element in the reformers' fight against tuberculosis.[68] Likewise, photos played a vital role in child-welfare exhibitions. They were part of the technique to evoke visitors' emotions and served to disseminate reformers' ideas, values, and beliefs. They were present in every section and discussed in detail by organizers.[69]

Although experts in the U.S. Children's Bureau thought so-called "flat" exhibits were much less attractive and effective for visitors than living exhibits, they nonetheless understood printed material to be necessary. Strong explained that "wording and grouping of photographs should be carefully planned, so that the most important matters stand out most clearly and the rest of the material is properly related." She added, "Probably no part of exhibit technique is as difficult as this, but the time spent is well worth while if the exhibit is to give a true impression." In her guide for exhibits, she discussed photo grouping, lettering, and colouring of screens in order to provide information to visitors efficiently. Addressing photographs, Strong had specific advice, recommending the use of one large detailed photograph in a flat finish over various smaller ones.[70] Thus, many photos were annotated with information about their size and framing, such as in figure 1.12, showing their importance and the thinking behind the photos featured in the exhibition. They were specifically used as "emotional representations to elicit emotional responses."[71] The standardization of photography as exhibit material indicates the professionalization of child-welfare exhibitions and the value placed on newly developed

[68] Minnett, "Inside and Outside," 75.
[69] Revision notes, 1915, RG 102, Box 96, File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP.
[70] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 33-34.
[71] Katie Barclay and Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, "Intersectional identities" in *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide*, ed. Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Peter N Stearns (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group: 2021), 190.

knowledge. Using photographs, knowledge could be easily disseminated across the globe for reformers to organize their own exhibitions.

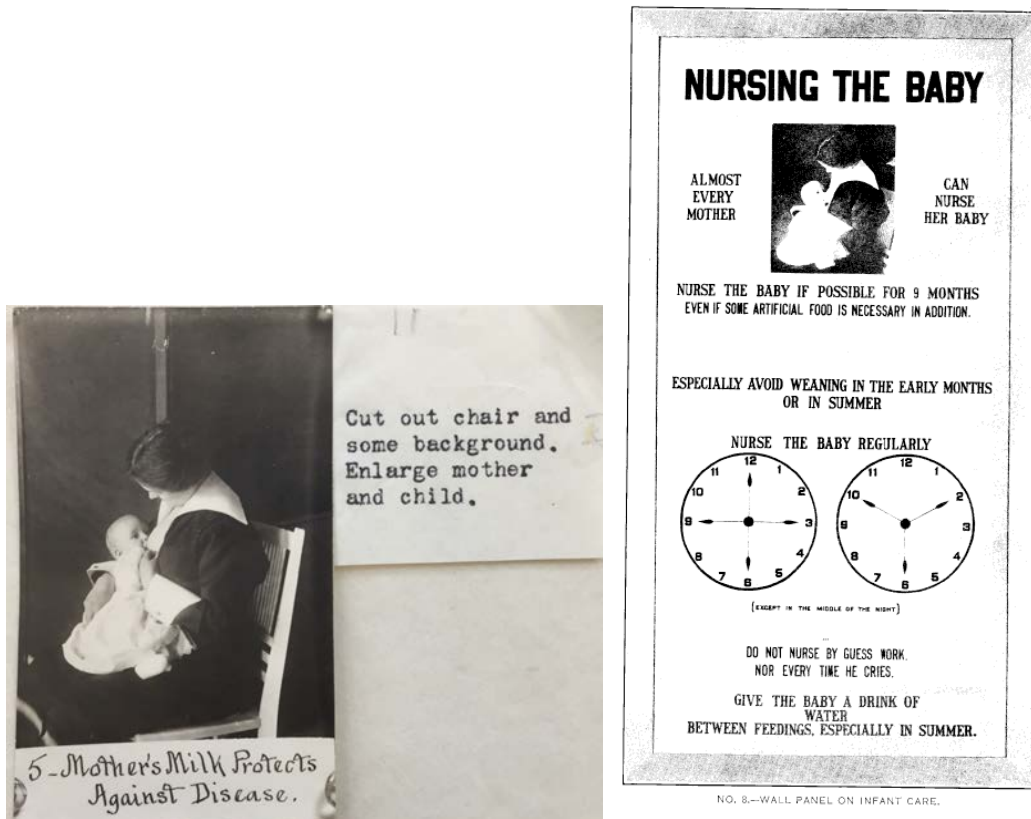

Figure 1.12 Photograph to be used in child-welfare exhibitions and baby-week campaigns and screen created with the photograph edited according to comments. Sources: RG 102, Box 96, File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP. Photographer: Cardinell-Vincent Co. Official Photographers. Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 66.

The type of photography was also fundamental to the success of the child-welfare exhibitions. In his study of religion and the photography of urban spaces in Winnipeg in the early 1900s, James Opp outlines the efficacy of social documentary photography in social gospel mission work. Portraying poor living conditions, this method was an effective and modern way to promote the work done by the Methodist Church, and to gain financial support for it. The posed pictures proved the need for relief and displayed the work already underway. They acted as a "light" of the social gospel to observe the darkness. The photographs documented—and often sensationalized—urban life, showcasing the environment as well as threats to children's health

and morality. They relayed the message that “without a healthy Christian home, based on Anglo-Saxon-Protestant values, the moral lives of children were at risk.” Moreover, Opp finds that “in making children the subject of photographic representations of urban slums, the 'problem' of the city became a problem for the future of the nation.”[72] These conclusions, drawn from a different set of images, are certainly supported by the photography produced and used in child-welfare exhibitions.

Analyzing Lewis Hine’s photographs for the New York Child Welfare Exhibit, Robert Sink finds that social progressives used photography as a visual technique, showing the evils of urban childhood and providing visitors with an understanding of the issues they raised. However, as Sink notes, not all photographs were alarmist, or posed. Photography also promoted the positive services provided to children, including Hine’s photos of children in the New York Public Library. They captured the interactions between librarians and children, while the exhibit committee ensured the pictures were spontaneous and not staged (figure 1.13). The libraries’ booth was one of just a few presenting positive images of children, aligning with the reformers’ conception of children as the future of society who could become good citizens with the help of institutions like libraries.[73] Considered the father of the social documentary technique, Hine’s work was popular during the Progressive era and his style was reproduced among social reformers’ projects such as the child-welfare exhibitions.[74]

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[72] Opp, “Religion Photography in Winnipeg,” 79-82, 85, 86.

[73] Robert Sink, “Children in the Library: Lewis Hine's Photographs for the Child Welfare Exhibit of 1911,” *Biblion* 1, 2 (1993): 14-16, 21, 23.

[74] Kate Sampsell-Willmann, “Student-Centered Reading of Lewis Hine’s Photographs,” *History Teacher* 47, 3 (2014): 388.

Figure 1.13 "At the shelves after story telling" at the 125th Street branch. Source: New York Public Library Archives, The New York Public Library. "Foreign Parentage," New York Public Library Digital Collections, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/I,ems/510d47d9-82a3-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99. Photographer: Lewis Hine.

Lewis Hine is best known for his social documentary photography of thousands of children at work produced for the National Child Labor Committee between 1906 and 1918. His background in education and sociology, as well as the context of the birth of social science informed his approach to photography. He used a straight style approach, taking direct, frontal, detailed, and focused photos of his subjects. The images were "seemingly unmanipulated" and of repetitive nature, gathering data on social problems, as he aimed to "enter into visual conversations with his subjects."[75] Hine used the background to situate the subjects and give context, but also to promote his social reformist ideas. Studying photography of immigrant children at Ellis Island, Klara Stephanie Szlezák explains that "Hine makes use of a sentimental rhetoric in his visual codes in order not to present them as people who need to be transformed or

[75] Quick, "The Average Child," 231–32; Sampsell-Willmann, "Hine's Photographs," 390.

even denied admission, but as people who need to be given a chance in life." Moreover Szlezák argues that "Hine's understanding of the photographic medium as a multifaceted art form that offers innumerous ways to create and diversify meaning through dynamic and individualized scenes correlates with his claim that photographs should be used to voice social criticism and to exert a reformatory impetus."[76] Hine expressed his political views in his photos, namely his positive, unthreatening views of immigration. For him, honesty in photography was an important means to convey messages and to serve his causes.[77]

Accordingly, organizers used various strategies of social documentary photography in their handbooks and exhibitions. The Montreal exhibit guide was comprised mainly of photos of children and graphs presented at the exhibition. The images focused on priorities for improving child welfare in the city, often depicting children in dreadful situations. Many wall panels presenting shocking statistics were also reproduced in the pamphlet. Nonetheless, it also celebrated the work done by philanthropic institutions, with pictures of children at camp, in classrooms, or in institutions.[78] It is in these contexts that photographs offered the most hopeful representations of children.

The first two American exhibitions, New York and Chicago, promoted the philanthropic and civic work done in those cities, emphasizing the good work being done by photographing children in healthy contexts recommended by child-welfare reformers, such as the libraries and children's clubs. In figure 1.14, children are pictured in a drawing class. While some children are seriously working on their sketch, such as the two girls in the front, others seem to be laughing and having fun, such as a little boy in the middle of the frame. This image brings out the pleasant,

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[76] Klara Stephanie Szlezák, "'Capturing' Immigrant Children: The Issue of Americanization in Photographs by Augustus F. Sherman and Lewis W. Hine," *Amerikastudien* 57, no. 1 (March 2012): 27.

[77] Sampsell-Willmann, "Hine's Photographs," 395, 397.

[78] These images will be discussed further in the chapters addressing their specific topics.

friendly atmosphere that could be enjoyed by children during structured activities. Most photographs in the Chicago booklet, which could also be found on the screens at the exhibition, featured children either in educational situations or during structured leisure activities. In these photos, children were active and seemed to be more spontaneous than in posed contexts, similarly to Hine's photographs in the libraries.[79]

Figure 1.14 Photos of children taking a drawing class in Chicago. Source: *Child in the City,* 15. Photographer unknown.

However, the handbooks and exhibits also presented alarming photographs. These portrayed children in vulnerable situations, particularly working for low wages, playing on substandard playgrounds, or in any unhealthy circumstances. The photo in figure 1.15, representing a group of children gambling in the streets of Chicago, was meant to alarm the public. The caption, "Real play takes room," explained that children turn to gambling because

[79] *Child in the City*, 8-16.

baseball is forbidden.[80] This photo presented city streets as dangerous playgrounds, the experience of which threatened children’s morality. A screen on the dangers of street play presented at the New York exhibition expressed the same concern, implying that their escapades in the streets would inevitably lead to arrests (figure 1.16). Screens displayed in the exhibits were designed to catch the visitors’ eyes and tended to sensationalize children’s environments. Captions were essential interpretive tools for exhibition organizers, leading visitors to the conclusions they should draw from photographs. They dictated the meaning of the photographs, leaving little space for a different interpretation, based perhaps on class, gender, or ethnicity.

Figure 1.15 Boys gambling on the streets of Chicago because baseball is forbidden. Source: *Child in the City,* 37. Photographer unknown.

[80] *Child in the City*, 37.

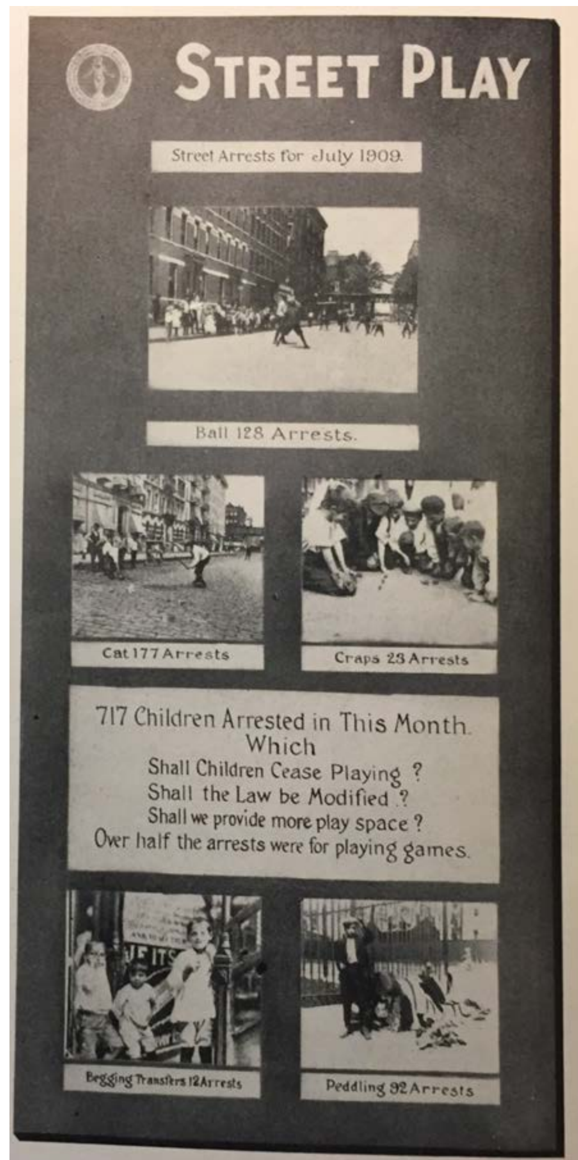

Figure 1.16 "Typical Screen" shown at the 1911 New York Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 10.

Dual Audiences

The exhibition medium engaged visitors because of its tangible features, provoking emotions but allowing for experiential learning as well. Child-welfare exhibitions targeted two audiences. First, they aimed to reach working-class people, hoping to change individuals' household behaviours, especially in order to reduce infectious diseases. In the United States, organizers targeted immigrants and foreign-language speakers, whereas in Montreal they focused on

inhabitants of working-class neighbourhoods, a large proportion of whom were French-speaking. Within this first group, we will see that mothers were specifically targeted by exhibitions on infant mortality. Secondly, reformers sought to influence their fellow white, middle-class men and women, to support governmental action on public health, housing, education, recreational infrastructure, and a range of similar issues.[81] They used different types of exhibit material and methods to appeal to the different type of visitors: demonstrations, samples, models, graphics, photographs, wall panels, etc. More tangible materials were aimed at the working class, while alarmist representations were meant to bring awareness to the middle class. However, sensibilities were hurt by judgmental portrayals of the working-class' lifestyle.[82] This caused social strains, intensified by the exhibitions' promotion of middle-class ideologies held by their progressive organizers. In Montreal, the influence of the French-speaking Catholic population created a unique event, but also generated additional tensions.

The Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition: Progressives United

The Genesis of a Local Exhibition

Using the American template and with the goals of being educational, scientific, and strategic in mind, the organizers of the 1912 MCWE planned to leave an indelible impression. Organizers chose the month of October to hold the exhibit, as they thought it was one of the most beautiful seasons of the year and the best timing since the city dwellers would have returned from vacation.[83] In an article published in *The Public Health Journal* in July 1912, Dr. John George Adami highlighted many significant points about the important value of health exhibitions,

[81] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health,* 6-7, 9.

[82] I will discuss this further in Chapter 4. "Woman Faints Seeing Squalid Home Show at Welfare Exhibit," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Wednesday Oct. 9, 1912, 2; Koslow, *Exhibiting Health,* 76.

[83] "L'hygiène infantile," *Le Devoir*, April 24, 1911, 5.

especially their role in changing public opinion. Dr. Adami was a professor of pathology at McGill University, a public-health advocate, and the president of the City Improvement League (CIL). The League was created in 1909 by progressive reformers, mostly university professors and businessmen, with the goals to bring together all citizens interested in municipal problems, improving public hygiene and municipal governance.[84] Adami was also the co-president of the exhibition and an avid spokesman for the event. He explained that for progress to be made and for governments to take action, a sound public opinion needed to be established. This could be achieved by "making popular knowledge of improved conditions, and of the means whereby defects and abuses may be corrected."[85] Dr. Adami's arguments in support of the upcoming MCWE aligned with the reflections other North American reformers were making at the time, as presented by Koslow in her analysis of health exhibitions.[86]

Based on recent experience, Dr. Adami argued that holding a Health Exhibition was the best way to popularize knowledge. Other methods, such as publishing articles in quarterly magazines, establishing associations of experts, or giving lectures on hygiene, primarily reached the more privileged classes. He presented the 1908 Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition, the 1911 Health Exhibition of Dresden, and the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit as successful examples that attracted large crowds and reached a considerable segment of the public. With such events, reformers were especially keen to influence the minds of schoolchildren. They hoped that youngsters would find the new facts appealing and discuss them at home, leading to new methods and behaviours that improved home conditions. Reformers were certain that providing an

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[84] See City Improvement League, *For a better Montreal: Report of the First Convention of the City Improvement League* (Montréal, 1910); Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 95-6; Gabriel Rioux, "Émergence d'une réflexion moderne en planification urbaine: apports de la Ligue du Progrès Civique pour la métropole montréalaise," (Master's thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2005).

[85] J. G. Adami, "Child Welfare Exhibitions and their Value," *The Public Health Journal* 3, no. 7 (1912): 371-72.

[86] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health,* 17.

immersive experience and engaging the active participation of children would impact them deeply.[87]

Montreal Progressives in Action

Child-welfare exhibitions were a team endeavor. Dr. Adami spearheaded Montreal's local effort with the help of American specialist Anna Louise Strong. A skilled writer and public speaker, he had undeniable powers of persuasion, which he used to inspire people to rally for common causes such as child welfare. Moreover, his work with the CIL and his experience in Tuberculosis prevention led him to experience settings where Protestant, Catholic, English, and French had to work together in the interest of Montreal's entire population.[88] He co-chaired the exhibition with Thomas Gauthier, president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste (SSJB). In their opening night speeches, the co-presidents paid tribute to those who had made the event possible. Mr. Gauthier praised women who worked for the city throughout the years since its founding, while Dr. Adami thanked Mrs. Learmont, the philanthropist who he claimed made the exhibition happen in Montreal and whom he credited for also initiating the tuberculosis exhibition a few years prior.[89] Married to a successful businessman, Charlotte Smithers Learmont was a maternal feminist and a social activist engaged in many philanthropic activities. Among others, she worked with the CIL, the MLCW, and the Victorian Order of Nurses.[90] Along with William Henry Atherton, literature professor, historian, and philanthropist who served as secretary of the CIL and executive

[87] Adami, "Child Welfare Exhibitions," 372.

[88] Marie Adami, *J. George Adami: A Memoir* (London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1930) 43-6.

[89] "L'exposition du bien-etre de l'enfance," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 9, 1912, 2; "Child Welfare Exhibition Open," *The Montreal Gazette,* Oct. 9, 1912, 5.

[90] Elizabeth Kirkland, "Smithers, Charlotte (Learmont)," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* last modified in 2018, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/smithers_charlotte_16E.html

secretary of the exhibition, Mrs. Learmont visited the 1911 New York Child Welfare Exhibit and pleaded for the CIL to hold such an exhibition in Montreal.[91]

Thus, Montreal's prominent progressive reformers and philanthropists took part in organizing the city's child-welfare exhibition. Most of the committee members had either worked with the CIL since its creation in 1909, were members of eminent local organizations, or were important representatives in fields connected to the exhibition. The executive was led by the two co-presidents, Dr. Adami and Mr. Gauthier. The two vice-presidents were Dr. Milton Hersey, chairman of finance and a provincial city water analyst specialized in testing water chemically and bacteriogically,[92] and Dr. W. G. Kennedy, vice president of the St. Patrick's Society. The executive committee was comprised of Mrs. J. B. Learmont and fifteen other renowned members.[93] Madame F. L. Béique was president of the FNSJB.[94] Dr. Grace Ritchie England was a social activist, the first woman to receive a medical degree in the province, and president of the MLCW.[95] Carrie Matilda Derick was a social activist, past president of the MLCW, and professor of Comparative Botany at McGill University.[96] Madame Marie Gérin-Lajoie, was the secretary of the FNSJB and an avid fighter for women's education.[97] Elizabeth Helm managed the Montreal University Settlement.[98] Jeanne Anctil was a member of the FNSJB, teacher of

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[91] "L'exposition du bien-etre de l'enfance," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 9, 1912, 2. W. H. Atherton's philanthropic activities focused on city sanitation, public health and public hygiene. See Yan Senneville et Gabriel de Ravinel, *La vie oubliée d'un homme engagé! Le Fonds William Henry Atherton, 1867-1950 (P0060)* (Montreal: Université de Montréal, 2009), 3.

[92] City Improvement League*, Report First Convention*, 39 passim.

[93] *Souvenir Handbook*, 39.

[94] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes,* 116.

[95] Margaret Gillett, "Ritchie Octavia Grace," The Canadian Encyclopedia, last modified December16, 2013, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/octavia-grace-ritchie; Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes*, 52.

[96] Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily*, 227, 306; Cohen, 182.

[97] Anne-Marie Sicotte, "Lacoste, Marie (baptisée Marie-Thaïs-Élodie-Coralie) (Gérin-Lajoie)," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, last modified in 2011, http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/lacoste_marie_17F.html; Cohen, 58-9.

[98] *Souvenir Handbook*, 37.

household science, and principal of the Écoles Ménagères Provinciales.[99] Mary Ellen (Bellelle) Guerin was a social activist who would become the first president of the Catholic Women's Club.[100] Lyon Cohen was president of the Baron de Hirsh Institute.[101] Ucal-Henri Dandurand was a prominent real estate broker.[102] Dr. Séraphin Boucher, M.D., helped to start the Goutte de lait milk dispensaries in Montreal and would become director of the City's health department in 1913.[103] J. V. Desaulniers was the principal of Belmont School.[104] Ald. Victor Morin, notary, was a member of the SSJB and city council.[105] Rufus Smith was the secretary of the Charity Organization Society.[106] Olivar Asselin was a journalist and prominent nationalist member of the SSJB.[107] Finally, Prof. J. A. Dale was a social activist, member of the CIL, and professor of education at McGill University.[108]

It is significant to note that half of the group was made up of women and just more than half of the executive committee members were French Catholics. Dr. Adami said it was especially difficult for Montreal to organize such an exhibition due to its diverse population, particularly its linguistic and religious differences. In his 1912 *Public Health Journal* article, Dr. Adami emphasized the important impact of co-operation among the numerous local French, English, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish associations that usually worked individually. He

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[99] Louise Fradet, "Anctil, Jeanne (baptisée Marie-Jeanne-Antoinette)," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* last modified in 2005, http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/anctil_jeanne_15F.html.

[100] She also served as Lady Mayoress to her widowed brother. "History," The Catholic Women's League of Canada, last modified in 2023, https://www.cwl.ca/our-history/.

[101] *Souvenir Handbook*, 39.

[102] *Lovell's Montreal Directory, for 1911-1912* (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, Limited, 1911), 993.

[103] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité,* 138-9.

[104] *Lovell's Directory*, 1026.

[105] *Lovell's Directory*, 1564; "SHM16 Fonds Victor Morin", Archives de la ville de Montréal, last modified January 25, 2013, http://archivesdemontreal.com/greffe/guide-archives/pdf-catalogues/SHM16.pdf.

[106] *Souvenir Handbook*, 38.

[107] Hélène Pelletier-Baillargeon, "Olivar Asselin (baptized Joseph-François-Olivar)," Dictionary of Canadian Biography*,* last modified in 2005, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/asselin_olivar_16F.html

[108] I could not find Dale's first and middle names. Christie and Gauvreau, *Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada*, 147; City Improvement League*, Report First Convention*, 2.

asserted that they could wield greater influence together. He believed their cooperation could have a positive impact on visitors to the exhibit, thus appealing to all segments of the community, from children, mothers, and even the mayor of the city.[109] Montreal newspapers reported that these groups worked well together to make the exhibit an inclusive space, with lectures in as many as nine languages, and days dedicated to subgroups such as the Jewish population.[110] *The Montreal Gazette* stated that:

> The work had, however, proved itself high above all religious differences. The clergy of all religious denominations, notably the Archbishop of Montreal, the women of both and all races with particular reference to the Federation Nationale and the Montreal branch of the National Council of Women, the co-operation of individual helpers and such societies as the St. Jean Baptiste Association and the Charity Organization Society, had made the success of the institution possible by their help.[111]

Moreover, *The Montreal Daily Herald* reported that Dr. Adami said that "every single language, creed, and religion is represented at this Exhibition. Differences in opinion which in the past have been bitter animosities have disappeared in the common endeavor to do something of value and benefit to the children of this great city."[112] The interesting turns of phrase and expressions to speak of the inclusiveness of the exhibition shows that this collaboration was special and out of the ordinary. We find that an important achievement of child-welfare exhibitions was to bring together the different child-welfare workers in their respective cities. This is in agreement with research showing that, although Montreal reformers were divided along ethnic and religious lines, especially since the Catholic Church disapproved of secular and non-denominational groups and associations, the different reformers were able to collaborate on special occasions.[113]

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[109] Adami, "Child Welfare Exhibitions," 371-74.

[110] "Une constatation bien loin d'être consolante," *La Patrie*, Oct. 10., 1912, 2.

[111] "Child Welfare Exhibition Open," *The Montreal Gazette,* Oct. 9, 1912, 5.

[112] "Notable Speakers Make Appalling Figures Basis of Addresses at Opening," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 9, 1912, 9.

[113] Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération* (Montréal: Boréal, 2000), 212.

Progressive Women, Local Divisions and Transnational Exchanges

Although Dr. Adami's leadership is apparent in the sources, it did not go uncontested, as progressive reformers were not a homogeneous group. Historians have described them in different terms, calling them progressives, activists, hygienists, or feminists, promoting a social reform movement initiated by the middle-class to counter social and hygienic problems affecting child welfare and public health caused by industrialization and urbanization.[114] Some of the exchanges between parties involved in organizing the event reveal evidence of tension and disagreement. Within the Montreal organization, there were efforts at cooperation, but also a sense of gendered division impacting the dynamics among the local stakeholders. The main organizers were the (all-male) CIL and SSJB, working alongside the two major women's groups in the city: the MLCW and the FNSJB. Doctors and other male experts played a large role in child-welfare exhibitions. One might assume they had the upper hand due to their public prominence and the leadership positions they occupied, and especially given the rise of scientific motherhood.[115] Claudine Pierre-Deschênes finds that doctors gained influence, prestige, and influence through their actions towards hygienic reforms.[116] However, Denyse Baillargeon has argued that doctors needed women allies to reach working-class mothers. Reform-minded women were also important advocates, participants, and recognized leaders in this field, given their perceived legitimate expertise in caring for children.[117]

In fact, women were the main organizers and initiators of child-welfare exhibitions. As public-health nurse Curry D. Breckinridge said in 1911, with reference to the New York and

[114] See Flanagan, *America Reformed,* Chapter 2; Pierre-Deschênes, "La tuberculose au début du XXe siècle," 8-13; François Guérard, *Histoire de la santé,* 32-33; Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes*, 181-95.

[115] Rima D. Apple, "Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Social History of Medicine*, 8, no. 2 (août 1995): 161-178.

[116] Pierre-Deschênes, "Organisation de la profession médicale", 132.

[117] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité,* 20.

Chicago exhibitions, "when 'A woman wills' things are apt to move along most rapid."[118] The New York, Chicago, and Montreal exhibitions were all the initiatives of women. In the cases of Chicago and Montreal, the events were spearheaded by wealthy elite women, Mrs. McCormick and Mrs. Learmont. They were guided by a maternalist ideology reflected in this quote from the Chicago handbook by Jane Addams: "the city that cares most for its children will be the greatest city."[119] Moreover, Koslow explains that "the organizers of these events were usually women, which paralleled the broader movement by women to develop civic infrastructure to protect the health and welfare of women and children."[120] Accordingly, Montreal women on the organizing committees were essentially maternalist reformers active in their community through philanthropic associations.[121]

As a group, Montreal's progressive women differed from their American counterparts in that they were divided along linguistic and religious lines. A few years before the exhibit, these divisions split the city's feminist national association, the MLCW. The FNSJB emerged in 1907 due to pressure from the Catholic Church, but also to enable French-Canadian Catholic women to continue their action from a nationalist perspective like the men's SSJB. Despite the split, these elite, feminist community leaders, both Catholic and Protestant, continued to work together for the cause of women.[122] Despite their ideological differences, overall it is not surprising that they united to prepare and stage the child-welfare exhibition. Through the exhibit guide, we see them collaborating in the different organizing committees. In fact, progressive women of from various fields were omnipresent in the making of the exhibition.[123] Some were the philanthropist wives of

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[118] Breckinridge, "Child in the Midst," 814.
[119] *Child in the City*, 65
[120] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health,* 26.
[121] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes,* 181-95.
[122] Cohen, 51-57.
[123] *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants tenue au Manège Militaire rue Craig, Montréal, Octobre 1912, Guide-Souvenir,* 39.

prominent Montrealers. Others were among the first female graduates at McGill University. Most were feminists or suffragettes; social activists who cared deeply about women's education and women's causes in general. In addition to the women already mentioned, members of the exhibiting committees included Idola St. Jean, feminist activist and French teacher at McGill University, prominent social worker Helen Reid, Ethel Cartwright, Director of Women's Physical Education at McGill, and Royal Victoria College warden Ethel Hurlbatt.[124]

Even though collaboration among these women might have been difficult at times, they were allies in their fight for child and family welfare, and correspondence between the CIL and the MLCW implies that gender conflicts were more important.[125] The MLCW worked well alongside other women's group, but was disappointed to say the least by the League's advice to prevent them from supporting any principle that other groups involved in the child-welfare campaign might oppose, such as women's suffrage.[126] However, many women working on the exhibition were known suffragettes, including Protestants like Grace Ritchie England and Carrie Derick, but also Catholics such as Idola St-Jean.[127] This was the beginning of a decline in the relations between these groups that partially explains why the MLCW downplayed its role in what was ultimately a very successful endeavor. Annotated correspondence between the two organizations indicates that the MLCW perceived advice from the CIL as patronizing, and it discouraged further collaboration between the groups after the exhibition ended. In her written response, the MLCW president, Dr. Grace Ritchie England, requested to completely disassociate from the CIL. She protested the CIL's attitude toward the MLCW in connection with the child-

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[124] Gillett, *History of Women at McGill*, 181, 306, 225, 291.

[125] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes,* 54.

[126] Dr. Adami to the Executive of the Child Welfare Exhibition, 1912, P653, S1, SS3, D1, Montreal Local Council of Women, Minutes 1908-1913, inserted in p. 357 of Minute Book, Fonds Montreal Council of Women / Conseil des femmes de Montréal, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Montréal (hereafter cited as Fonds MCW, BAnQ).

[127] Gillett, *History of Women at McGill,* 181.

welfare exhibition, implying that they did not work well with other women's organizations.[128] Given the success of the exhibition and as the media reported, it would seem on the contrary that these women had worked very well together in this venture.[129] Although women were considered experts and leaders in the organization of exhibitions, there were still limits to the power, issues, and spaces considered appropriate for women and their domain of action.[130] Nonetheless, participating in transnational feminism through their philanthropic associations, progressive women contributed to the professionalization of women in domains associated with care and child welfare, allowing women to play an important role in the public sphere.[131]

Before this conflict, it appears that most interactions among the child-welfare exhibition organizers were positive, whether during the preparations or at the time of the event. Montreal child-welfare leaders also communicated with their American counterparts. Connections were made between Canadian and American doctors, as much as between women's organizations across the two nations, and it is clear that Montreal local associations sought advice from American fellow experts.[132] The best example of transnational connection is the presence and significant role of Anna Louise Strong, the U.S. Children's Bureau exhibit specialist, at the MCWE. She even brought two assistants, Pauline Witherspoon and Elizabeth Moore, to help her in the executive office.[133] In the months prior to the exhibition, Strong visited Montreal to

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[128] Letter to Dr. Atherton from Anna Scrimger Lyman, December 5 1912, P653, S1, SS3, D1, Montreal Local Council of Women, Minutes 1908-1913, inserted in p. 357 of Minute Book, Fonds MCW, BAnQ.

[129] "Pour combattre les ravages que fait en notre ville la mortalité infantile," *La Presse*, Oct. 12 1912, 20.

[130] Deutsch, *Women and the City;* Walden, *Becoming Modern,* 171-81.

[131] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes,* 57, 64, 112.

[132] For when members of the executive committee visited the New York exhibition see "Child Welfare Exhibition Is Formaly Open," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 9, 1912, 2. For communication between women experts see Pauline Witherspoon to Jane Addams, August 21 1912, RG 102, Box 7, File 8-1-3, Children's Bureau, NACP. On transnational/international connections between doctors see Pierre-Deschênes, "Organisation de la profession médicale", 130.

[133] Pauline Witherspoon to Jane Addams, August 21 1912, RG 102, Box 7, File 8-1-3, Children's Bureau, NACP; "Notable Speakers Make Appalling Figures Basis of Addresses at Opening," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 9, 1912, 9.

prepare for the event and provided guidance and assistance to the women of the MLCW.[134] Overall, there were constructive conversations and exchanges and no palpable tensions between global and local actors involved in the exhibits. This is representative of the transnational social-activist movements of the Progressive era that connected reformers across the globe for social and hygienic causes, especially women.

Although reformers were driven by benevolence, they had additional incentives behind their actions. Addressing the motivation of school commissioners in her study of tuberculosis and the Montreal Protestant school board, Mary Ann Poutanen finds that "notwithstanding a range of motivations that included empathy, an earnest desire to do good, and real health concerns, they sought reforms that did not disturb the status quo."[135] Furthermore, Georgina Feldberg, in her book on tuberculosis and class, shows that reformers aimed to transform behaviour through education in the interest of the middle class.[136] Likewise, Claudine Pierre-Deschênes finds that doctors in Quebec at the turn of the twentieth century were preoccupied with working-class urban living conditions, connecting insalubrity with population degeneration and a compromised future for the nation. She uncovers that doctors proposed progressive reforms that strengthened the organization and the rise of their profession and that although they claimed to reduce inequality, their discourses and reformist action served to preserve the power of the middle class over the working class.[137] Sebastien Normandin shows that there were links between Eugenics and social reformers, as McGill professors J.G. Adami and Carrie Derrick were main supporter and

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[134] Montreal Local Council of Women, Minutes 1908-1913, container 1997-10-001\1, Box P653, S1, SS3, D1, Fonds MCW, BAnQ. Strong would travel across the globe to help prepare child-welfare exhibitions until 1916. See Letter from Anna Louise Strong to Julia C. Lathrop, September 10, 1915, RG 102, Box 69, File 8-1-0-2, Children's Bureau, NACP.

[135] Mary Anne Poutanen, "Containing and Preventing Contagious Disease: Montreal's Protestant School Board and Tuberculosis, 1900-1947," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 23, no. 2 (December 2006): 422.

[136] Feldberg, *Disease and Class,* 82.

[137] Claudine Pierre-Deschênes, "Organisation de la profession médicale," 115-6.

disseminators for this movement in Montreal in the early twentieth century, arguing against social and hereditary degeneracy while strengthening their new professional expertise status.[138] In her study of philanthropist women in Québec, Yolande Cohen finds that the French-Catholic Church and élites had natalist and nationalist concerns that permated in their public hygiene discourse and action.[139] Accordingly, my analysis shows that the MCWE promoted the work and power of doctors and new women experts, their middle-class values, norms, and ideals of morality, using the exhibit medium as a tool to evoke emotions and motivate actions.

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A few days before the Montreal exhibition closed, the *Montreal Daily Star* reported that "to have organized such an exhibition required herculean labors. It has, we must hope, inaugurated an era of higher civics in Montreal, an era in which it will be recognized that the welfare of the city depends on the welfare of the child."[140] Everyone agreed that the child-welfare exhibition was a huge success, as it attracted over 300,000 visitors, among them mothers, children, and city leaders.[141] Montreal's French Catholic context differed from other international contexts. The bilingual French and English sections, led primarily by local, social activist women, distinguished the enterprise from its American counterparts.[142] Moreover, the use of the American model of exhibit for the Montreal event, with an almost identical framework, reveals

[138] Sebastian Normandin, "Eugenics, Mcgill, and the Catholic Church in Montreal and Quebec: 1890-1942," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 15, 1 (June 1998): 65-71, 81. For more on Eugenics see "Eugenics Archives," Eugenics Archive, Accessed August 22, 2023, https://www.eugenicsarchive.ca/.

[139] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes,* 112.

[140] "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19th 1912, 21.

[141] "Child Welfare Exhibition Was Great Success," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 23 1912, 2.

[142] Montreal Local Council of Women, Minutes 1908-1913, container 1997-10-001\1, Box P653, S1, SS3, D1, Fonds MCW, BAnQ

these exhibits as a space for the transnational exchange of progressive ideas and scientific knowledge, connecting Canada and the U.S. It also established Montreal as a modern city, a site for transnational knowledge exchange, and a pioneer in the child-welfare field for all of Canada. Despite its much-vaunted modernity, however, the city had some of the highest infant mortality rates and worst living conditions in the country. With its different sections, the exhibition sought to overcome this adversity, elevating Montreal and by extension Canada to greatness. Reformers believed that this goal could only be achieved by putting children's welfare first, above any other national or sectional interest.[143]

[143] *Souvenir Handbook,* 3.

Chapter 2: Health at the Exhibition: "The Voice of the Child Cries out Against You!"

Je franchis les tourniquets du manège militaire et demande à une gentille dame du kiosque d'information à ma gauche où se trouve la salle où ils gardent les bébés. Je monte ensuite au deuxième avec ma voisine et traverse l'étage pour laisser ma petite afin de pour pouvoir me concentrer sur la visite. Une fois de retour en bas, je m'approche de la première section de l'exposition avec enthousiasme. Je suis fébrile. Je tente de me frayer un chemin parmi la foule dense qui cherche à passer dans l'entrée plutôt étroite du premier cubicule. Dès que je passe le seuil, je suis happée par les premières images qui captent mon regard: un cortège de petits cercueils, puis le visage d'un bébé tellement maigre. C'est difficile à regarder. Mes yeux se remplissent d'eau, j'ai comme un sentiment de vertige. Je m'accote sur le coin d'une table. Ça me rappelle le petit Joseph du logement d'en dessous, le fils de madame Lebrun, qui n'a pas survécu aux grandes chaleurs de juillet. Je prends la main de ma voisine et elle serre la mienne en retour. On se regarde et tente de retenir nos larmes. On sait trop bien que beaucoup d'enfants ne vivent pas assez longtemps dans notre ville. Les prières à l'église Saint-Enfant-Jésus-du-Mile-End ne suffisent clairement pas à prévenir le pire. Puis je remarque cette lumière qui clignote dans le coin de la salle. Je m'y rendrai bientôt pour découvrir des chiffres effrayants. Je prends quelques bonnes respirations afin de me ressaisir et j'avance dans la section avec la ferme intention de trouver des informations sur quoi faire pour ne pas que ça arrive à un de mes petits. Ils ne deviendront pas un chiffre sur un mur.

As the astronomical infant mortality rates prompted the holding of the MCWE, the tour of the exhibition logically started with the health section. This was no coincidence; of all the topics addressed in the exhibition, health was reformers' top priority. This part of the exhibition was therefore the most significant in terms of size and the importance of its goals. Reformers expected it to be one of the most worthwhile for visitors, as the display materials did not suggest how to treat illnesses but how to prevent or control them by maintaining safe and healthy homes. Their goals were to educate parents in order to lower infant mortality rates and to reduce the "misery and deformity among the children of Montreal" with the help of "photographs, diagrams, and models, supplemented by talks, conferences, and demonstrations."[1] To reach their goals, organizers promoted social norms and played on nationalist ideology. Progressive discourse

[1] *Souvenir Handbook*, 5.

stressed women's responsibility for saving children, therefore the section targeted mothers predominantly.

This chapter will explore how health was addressed at the exhibition. It will start with an analysis of the discourses and displays surrounding infant mortality in connection to motherhood, as the exhibit was suffused with an ambivalence about working-class women and their middle-class progressive interlocutors. The work of medical experts will then be examined from the standpoint of the clinics they held during the two-week event. Lastly, the chapter will highlight how the exposition promoted moral and social norms in association with public health. I will emphasize that children's health was perceived as a scientific issue, as well as one related to the behaviour and morality of mothers.

The Infant Mortality Issue

Infant mortality devastated the city of Montreal, motivating the organizers to make the materials on baby-saving work the health exhibit's first stop. Dreadful numbers were presented at the exhibition along with images and displays to emphasize that changes needed to be made in the home and in the city to put a halt to this deathly wave. Hence, the Montreal exhibition handbook's Health section started with a photograph of a lineup of children's hearses going to one of the cemeteries on Mount Royal during the Montreal summer reproduced in figure 2.1. *The Montreal Daily Herald* described the image as "six funerals of children converging upon Notre Dame des Neiges cemetery within range of one camera."[2] The photograph's subtitle said the picture was meant to tell its "own tale," as social documentary photography was used to present sensationalized images portraying dramatic situations in the reformers' sight.[3] This image

[2] "The Child in the City," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 8, 1912, 4.
[3] See Opp, "Religion Photography in Winnipeg," 79-82, 85, and 86.

emphasized the higher mortality of French-Canadian children, a fact confirmed by statistics and displayed at the exhibition.[4] July was the worst time of the year for infant mortality in Montreal, with the number of dead doubling during this hot summer month. Doctors attributed the high infant mortality of summertime to the heat, which contributed to a lack of sterilized milk available to feed the city's babies properly. As Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton describe, intestinal infections were at their highest point during this season because many babies were weaned and "exposed at a very young age to tainted water, milk and food." It was even more prevalent among French-Canadian babies, for whom infant mortality was 40 percent higher than Irish Catholics and Protestants. In fact, Olson and Thornton find that the main factor in infant mortality was the cultural effect, meaning that French-Canadian families had increased odds of infant death between one and eleven months.[5]

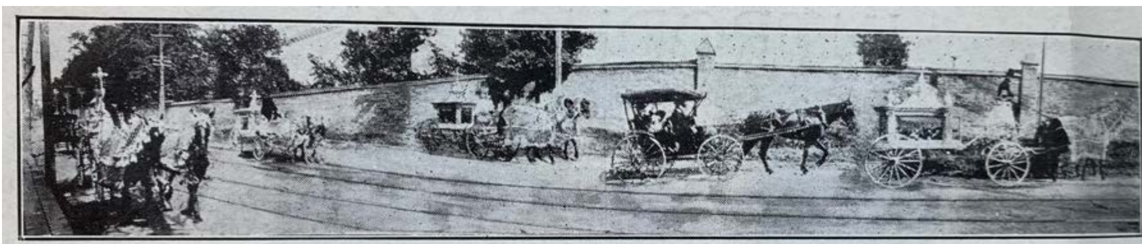

Figure 2.1 Image in the header of the health section of the French and English versions of the MCWE souvenir handbook. Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants*, 4. Photographer unknown.

Montreal's infant mortality rates were staggeringly high. In 1911, 25 to 30 percent of infants did not reach their first birthday. This harsh statistic placed the city third in a table of death rates in the first year of life among babies (figure 2.2).[6] Moreover, the exhibit organizers

[4] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 95; *Souvenir Handbook*, 5.

[5] "Montreal Is High up in Infant Death List," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 16, 1912, 2. Milk was given an important place in the fight for infant mortality and I will explore its treatment further in this chapter. Sherry H Olson, and Patricia A Thornton, *Peopling the North American City: Montreal, 1840-1900*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 98-101, 95; quotation on p.98.

[6] *Souvenir Handbook,* 6, Martin Tétreault, "Les maladies de la misère: aspects de la santé publique à Montréal, 1880-1914," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 36, 4 (mars 1983): 511-3; Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 93.

claimed that 54.92 percent of children born in Montreal died before turning five.[7] Child deaths in Montreal in 1911 totaled 5,355, according to reformers, and hygienists said two-thirds of these fatalities were preventable.[8] Newspapers reprinted these statistics throughout the two weeks of October in which the exhibition was held, aiming to impress the importance of the child mortality problem on the readers' mind, and to encourage them to visit the exhibition.[9] A reporter for *La Presse* insisted that people and governments needed to process the information presented at the exhibition and make changes in care and hygienic conditions to stop the "épouvantable holocauste annuelle d'enfants en bas âge," making Montreal "la plus grande 'tombe blanche' de toutes les grandes villes du monde."[10] The vocabulary used by the media was harsh, but it reflected how shocked reporters were by the high death toll among the city's children. The headlines were alarmist and aimed to shock and provoke readers, much like the exhibition's displays illustrating the number of deaths.[11] Desperate times called for desperate measures. The exhibits on infant mortality in Montreal and their media coverage emphasized the young deaths and made the "ignorant mother" their target. Rather than identifying systemic causes of the staggering infant mortality rates, this social problem was being attributed to individual failure.

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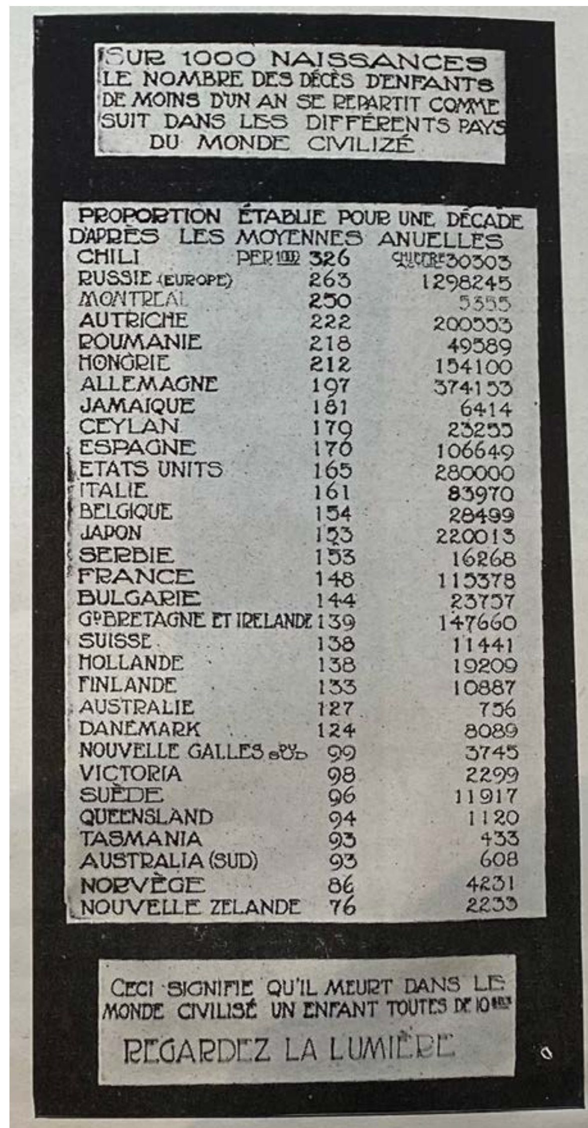
[7] "Child Welfare Exhibit in French and English," *The Survey* 26, 17 (July 22 1911): 595.

[8] "L'hygiène et l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 10, 1912, 4. The numbers presented in the exhibition are in line with birth and death statistics found for the period. The number of 5,355 child deaths amounts to 30 percent of the 17,637 recorded births in Montreal in 1911. Statistics Canada, "Number of Births, Marriages and Deaths by Principal Cities, 1911" in *Canada Year Book 1912* (Ottawa: Statistic Canada, 1912), 38, https://www66.statcan.gc.ca/eng/1912/191200620038_p.%2038.pdf; Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 93.

[9] See for example "Ministers Vistit the Exhibition," *The Montreal Gazette*, Wednesday Oct. 16, 1912, 7; "L'hygiène et l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 10, 1912, 4; "First Great Work of Co-Operation in Child Saving," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Wednesday Oct. 8, 1912, 7.

[10] "L'hygiène et l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 10, 1912, 4. The term "tombe blanche" is connected to the appellation "peste blanche." Tuberculosis was called the "white plague" because it was feared given its uncertain causes and stigmatizing diagnosis. It was also connected to the afflicted patients' pale skin color. See Vanier "Tuberculose, foyers et familles," 43.

[11] "Ministers Visit the Exhibition," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 16, 1912, 7; Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 93. For more on birth registration statistics see Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité,* 42-4.



SUR 1000 NAISSANCES LE NOMBRE DES DÉCÈS D'ENFANTS DE MOINS D'UN AN SE REPARTIT COMME SUIT DANS LES DIFFÉRENTS PAYS DU MONDE CIVILIZÉ

PROPORTION ÉTABLIE POUR UNE DÉCADE D'APRÈS LES MOYENNES ANUELLES

	PER 1000	CHIFFRE
CHILI	326	30303
RUSSIE (EUROPE)	263	1298245
MONTREAL	250	5555
AUTRICHE	222	200553
ROUMANIE	218	49589
HONGRIE	212	154100
ALLEMAGNE	197	374153
JAMAIQUE	181	6414
CEYLAN	179	23255
ESPAGNE	170	106649
ETATS UNITS	165	280000
ITALIE	161	83970
BELGIQUE	154	28499
JAPON	153	220013
SERBIE	153	16268
FRANCE	148	115378
BULGARIE	144	23757
Gd BRETAGNE ET IRELANDE	139	147660
SUISSE	138	11441
HOLLANDE	138	19209
FINLANDE	133	10887
AUSTRALIE	127	756
DANEMARK	124	8089
NOUVELLE GALLES SUD	99	3745
VICTORIA	98	2299
SUÈDE	96	11917
QUEENSLAND	94	1120
TASMANIA	93	433
AUSTRALIA (SUD)	93	608
NORVÈGE	86	4231
NOUVELLE ZELANDE	76	2233

CECI SIGNIFIE QU'IL MEURT DANS LE MONDE CIVILISÉ UN ENFANT TOUTES DE 10

REGARDEZ LA LUMIÈRE

Figure 2.2 Table presenting infant mortality rates in the "civilized world." Montreal took third place. Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants*, 4.

Mortality Displays and Transnational Connections

A table highlighting infant mortality rates across the globe was featured in several places in the MCWE. A screen broadcast the statistics to visitors, and the souvenir handbook reproduced the grim details (figure 2.2.). These features brought an international dimension to local statistics, showing everyone that Montreal placed an unenviable third in the highest number of global infant deaths in a list of "countries of the civilized world." It was the only city in a list that included

twenty-five countries and the five Australian states, revealing that these areas were perceived as "civilized" by the reformers.[12] Denyse Baillargeon explains that in the early twentieth century, reformers and hygienists measured the greatness of the nation and its level of civilisation by infant and maternal mortality rates. She finds that the province of Quebec was in a really bad position, especially compared directly to Ontario, leading doctors to compare Montreal to Calcutta in terms of infant mortality. Putting Montreal in relation with other countries highlighted the severity of infant mortality in the city while at the same time reflecting "civilized" imperialist and nationalist views shared by the transnational child-welfare reformers.[13] The comparison was part of a marketing strategy to provoke action towards child welfare.

Below the table, the exhibitors included a panel claiming that these numbers meant a child died every ten seconds in the so-called "civilized world," repeating the same expression, and asked visitors to watch the light displayed next to the chart, which flashed once every ten seconds to represent these deaths.[14] A flashing-light display was also present at the Chicago exhibition. In both cities, newspapers reported that the flash left an impression on visitors, awakening their conscience and appealing to their emotions.[15] A reporter from *The Montreal Daily Star* commented on the exhibit, criticizing non-breastfeeding mothers in the process:

> Who that has seen that little electric light flare up, only to go out in ten seconds, will fail to comprehend what infantile mortality means? Every ten seconds, a baby dies somewhere in this world. Every ten seconds misery and suffering are caused because the world will not hurry to embrace opportunities which science has given it. If, for instance, mothers would only nurse their babies instead of depending on the milk of cows that are too often tuberculous, many babies' lives would be saved.[16]

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[12] There was no similar table in the New York or Chicago exhibitions positioning the cities in the international context. *Souvenir Handbook,* 6.

[13] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 33-34, 67-8, 71.

[14] The French version is presented in figure 2.2 as it has a better image definition, but the same table was reprinted in the English handbook. See *Souvenir Handbook,* 6.

[15] Marten, "No Beer for Babies," 47; "Mothers Watch Screen Flashes as Infants Die," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 16, 1912, 2.

[16] "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.

Again, the media aimed to appeal to the readers through emotion while also relaying valuable information presented at the exhibition. Nonetheless, as they connected breastfeeding and science, they undermined mothers who fed their babies cow's milk. As we will see later in this chapter, maternal responsibility for infant mortality was a major theme at every child-welfare exhibition.

Another American exhibit panel was reproduced in Montreal. The slogan "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against you" stood out on posters in New York, Chicago, and Montreal presenting each city's infant mortality statistics (figures 2.3). The message of these displays was that these infants' deaths could have been prevented.[17] Underlining certain words and numbers to emphasize their importance, the Montreal panel addressed the visitors directly, asking them "what will you do to help stop this waste of life?"[18] A picture of an emaciated baby filled the top of the poster, adding to the dramatic effect created by the text. *The Montreal Daily Star* made this slogan the headline for the front page of the second section on Saturday October 19th, a page dedicated wholly to the MCWE. The heading was published next to many photos included in the exhibition and a long text recapping the information presented in the Drill Hall.[19] In each case, the slogan "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You" was used to address the public directly, to bring the issue home and heighten awareness of the problems threatening the city's children. By personalizing the problem of infant mortality, reformers hoped visitors would feel concerned and compelled to take action.

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[17] *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants,* 5; *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 37; Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

[18] *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants*, 5.

[19] "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.

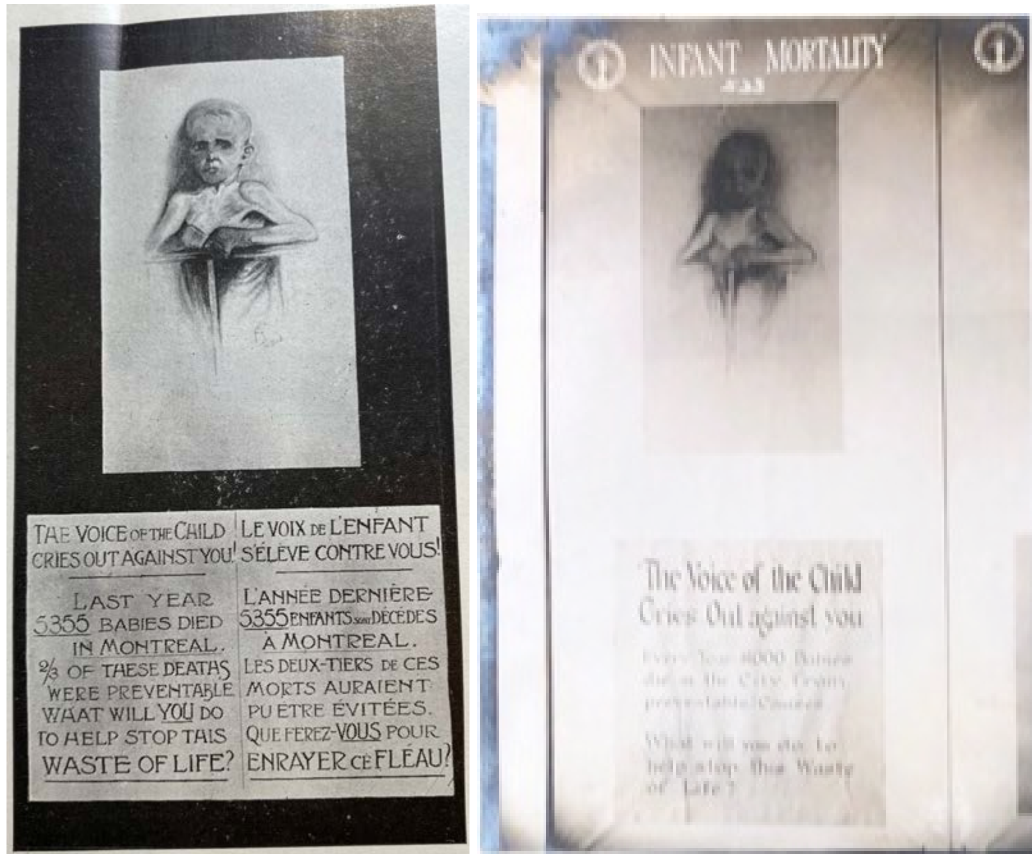

Figure 2.3 The Voice of the Child Cries Against You. Charts presented at the MCWE and the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants,* 5 and Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

The Chicago exhibition included one of the most striking installations on infant mortality. Four dolls revolved around a cylinder in a tall box in front of two large walls of dolls. A sickle fell and made a doll drop every few seconds.[20] Two photos of the exhibit show two different perspectives: one image shows the revolving dolls with death lurking from above embodied by the reaper, whereas another shows a baby doll transformed into an angel with a halo on top of its head (figure 2.4). The text underneath read, “1 baby out of every 4 drops into the grave before reaching age of one year.”[21] Earlier health exhibits had included similar displays. For example,

[20] Marten, “No Beer for Babies,” 47-8.
[21] Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

tuberculosis exhibitions included the "death rate illusion," in which a small doll transformed into a skeleton every thirty seconds.[22] The visual appeal was undeniable. The display occupied an entire booth, making it one of the biggest exhibits on any single topic, and was dominated by its dynamic, eye-catching revolving dolls. *The Montreal Daily Star* published a photograph presenting a similar display of a reaper above a baby doll in a box, referring to the same tragic statistics (figure 2.5). Although there is no reference to a revolving display in the exhibit guide or in newspaper coverage, this image suggests the Montreal exhibition reproduced some of the same visual effects pioneered in the Chicago exhibit.

Figure 2.4 Display of dolls highlighting infant mortality at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.

[22] Tomes, *Gospel of Germs,* 120.

Figure 2.5 Photograph of a display on infant mortality very similar to the one presented in Chicago. Source: *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21. Photographer unknown.

The Chicago exhibition handbook described the wall panels behind the installation in detail:

> Thirty-five hundred children died in Chicago last year from preventable diseases. No more pathetic array of dolls was ever assembled than that with which the Health Department, in one of its rooms, illustrates the army of little citizens who had to fall out of the ranks before life's march was fairly begun. They carry the colors of the enemy that overcame them—scarlet fever, diphtheria, meningitis, stomach troubles, tuberculosis and other deadly ills. They are there as grim reminders that the child-saving work of the community, though well begun, is not one-half, or one-tenth done.[23]

This very graphic representation of infant mortality attracted visitors and forced them to take a closer look to understand what each component of the installation meant. As James Marten suggests in his study of the Chicago event, many displays were "thought-provoking," prompting

[23] *Child in the City*, 46.

observers to state that the different exhibits "told it in a way that gets you."[24] Since working-class families were cruelly aware of the root causes of poverty and confronted by infant mortality in their daily lives, this exhibit probably hit home for many of them. Nor were privileged families immune from infant mortality and the associated grief.[25] Clearly the large array of dolls created a powerful impression, including for medical professionals and government officials. Accordingly, after visiting the Chicago exhibition, Dr. Adami commented on this especially touching exhibit:

> Nothing, for example, appears to have impressed the minds of visitors to the Chicago Exhibition more than a little model which was there represented. Every intelligent man and woman has at least a vague knowledge that the infantile mortality in the congested districts of our great cities is higher than it ought to be. How terribly high it is, seems to have been brought home to every one by this little model showing a procession of infants parading before the eye of the spectator, with above them the over-hanging sickle of Death, the sickle descending and cutting of every third child. Exhibitions of this nature make an ineradicable impression, they are never forgotten.[26]

There is little doubt visitors would remember this large exhibit, as it compelled them to visualize all the little lives lost embodied by colorful dolls. Such a display is consistent with local and world fairs, which often featured performative exhibits that were meant to educate. A baby incubator exhibit travelled across the United States for thirty-five years, starting in 1898, presenting a remarkable technological advance, but mainly entertaining the crowds as nurses displayed the smallest babies in the country. Eric Reiter mentions that premature babies were exhibited in incubators as a scientific curiosity at Montreal's Dominion Park in 1906.[27] Bernadine Courtright Barr explains that the incubator exhibit at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis was "a locus of serious efforts directed toward increasing the survival rates of

[24] Marten, "No Beer for Babies," 47-8.

[25] For example, Henriette Dessaulles, member of the bourgeoisie and one of the first women journalist in Quebec, wrote in her diary in the late 1870s about the grief she experienced after losing her sister. See Fadette, *Henriette Dessaulles: journal*, ed. critique Jean-Louis Major (Montréal : Presses de l'Universite de Montréal, 1989), https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2365354, 342-7.

[26] Adami, "Child Welfare Exhibitions," 372.

[27] Eric H. Reiter, *Wounded Feelings: Litigating Emotions in Quebec, 1870-1950* (Toronto: Published for the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History by University of Toronto Press, 2019), 54.

premature infants" while fitting in the amusement section and "appeared as a side-show curiosity." She finds that the installation touched visitors' emotions, although exhibited babies became a commodity for paying visitors.[28]

The angelic representation of infant mortality staged in the Chicago dolls exhibit was common in Catholic cosmology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The thought of deceased children becoming angels in heaven comforted grieving Catholic parents, and even prayers referenced this idea.[29] This is reminiscent of post-mortem photography's Romantic aesthetic beautifying death, aiming to bring peace and comfort in dealing with a child's death.[30] However, the media challenged the angelic representation of children dying in infancy. *The Montreal Daily Star* published part of a letter sent by a priest to the Provincial Board of Health which said that

> When an infant dies, why should the family foolishly console themselves by saying or hearing others say –"Oh, he is very happy, he makes one more angel in heaven? Is it not better, after having valiantly worked for the glory of religion and country, to become a saint later than an angel now?"[31]

Such a reaction from a man of the Church echoes the frequent use of the angelic image in Catholic culture and shows the extent of support for child-saving work in Montreal. Denyse Baillargeon also finds that the clergy and nationalists condemned mothers' consoling rationalization that each lost baby was saved from a miserable life and could expect an easy path

[28] Bernadine Courtright Barr, "Entertaining and Instructing the Public: John Zahorsky's 1904 Incubator Institute," *Social History of Medicine* 8, 1 (April 1995): 31; quotations on pages 21 and 20. For more on world fairs see Rydell and Gwinn, *Fair Representations*.
[29] Hillary Kaell, "The Holy Childhood Association on Earth and in Heaven: Catholic Globalism in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly*, 72, 4, (December 2020): 841.
[30] Troy Cluff, "Peaceful Ironies: The History and Aesthetics of Postmortem Photography in Quebec and Ontario (19th and 20th Centuries)" (Master's thesis, Concordia University, 2014), 28.
[31] "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.

to heaven.[32] Even when dead children were represented as angels, such as in the Chicago cylindrical display, visitors should be shocked, not comforted.

The exhibits and wall panels analyzed above connected Montreal with the rest of the world, positioning the city as part of a global problem but also as a target for the international child-saving movement, which represented a solution to child mortality.[33] Their display reinforces the fact that Montreal reformers were part of a transnational alliance and made connections with like-minded people across the globe. While infant mortality was presented similarly in child-welfare exhibitions across nations, however, there were also distinctive displays created to raise awareness of local circumstances at the various exhibitions.

Indeed, child-welfare organizers diversified their visual representation strategies to appeal to specific publics. By the 1910s, as Nancy Tomes explains, reformers "realized that both moralistic and fear-based advertising repelled some viewers, and they began to vary the […] approach with appeals to other, more positive virtues." Patriotic images as well as "mother and child representations became increasingly popular."[34] Child-welfare exhibitions therefore capitalized on the fact that their topic was particularly conducive to touching images of mothers with their children. Photographs depicting the maternal bond could appeal to deep emotions. Visitors could identify and sympathize with their subject, as their condition was universal. Hence, exhibitors used different display styles in an attempt to engage visitors, especially mothers, with compelling information. Organizers presented infant mortality in a straightforward and dramatic manner, whereas they illustrated the importance of the maternal bound powerfully and emphatically.

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[32] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité,* 58.
[33] On child-saving movement see Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*.
[34] Tomes, *Gospel of Germs,* 120.

Discourses on Mothers and their Milk

In the eyes of the medical experts, milk was one of the most important subjects connected to the life and death of babies. Because infants primarily died of gastro-enteritis, breast-feeding was perceived as a panacea, alongside clean milk distribution and hygienic education for mothers. Doctors believed that bottle feeding was the main cause of infant mortality, and a 1925 Canadian Welfare Council survey officially linked excess infant mortality and bottle-feeding.[35] Olson and Thornton's analysis suggest that the higher infant mortality in French-Canadian babies "arose from [..] 'weanling diarrhea,'" especially in the context of the hot Montreal summer months.[36] Likewise, Terry Copp asserts that tainted food and water were the root causes of the high infant death rate from gastro-intestinal ailments.[37] In his study of infant feeding in Australia in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, Milton Lewis shows that diarrheal infections were also the main cause of infant mortality in the United Kingdom and Australia. He finds that contemporary British doctors demonstrated that the source of infection lay not only in the milk but in the home.[38] Based on these findings, we can directly connect unsanitary bottle feeding to infant death from intestinal infections at the time of the exhibition.

The Montreal exhibition handbook stated that "improper methods of feeding are the chief causes of death in young children." Inadequate feeding brought babies into contact with bacteria and germs that caused diarrhea and lung inflammation. Therefore, contemporary experts claimed

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[35] Denyse Baillargeon, "Gouttes de lait et soif de pouvoir. Les dessous de la lutte contre la mortalité infantile à Montréal, 1910-1953," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History / Bulletin canadien d'histoire de la médecine*, 15 (1998): 30-31; Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité,* 51, 53. Martin Tétreault explains that although diarrheal diseases were said to be the main causes of death in in children at the turn of the 20th century, diarrhea was only a symptom of inadequate food and hygiene. See "Les maladies de la misère," 518.

[36] Olson and Thornton, *Peopling the North American City,* 101.

[37] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, 96.

[38] Milton Lewis, "The Problem of Infant Feeding: The Australian Experience from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the 1920s," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 35, no. 2 (1980): 174, 177.

that “the most essential feature of baby feeding is that the **mother should nurse her own child**.” They added that mothers’ milk was the most effective form of nourishment and the best adapted food encouraging a baby’s growth. Whereas artificial food could be contaminated with bacteria, mothers’ milk contained substances that protected children from certain germs.[39] Olson and Thornton, moreover, have documented this protective effect and connected infant mortality in the first year of life in Montreal in 1900 to “early weaning in an unsanitary urban environment.” They estimated the proportion of mothers who appear to have breastfed between 1860 and 1900 on the basis of an analysis of birth spacing. French-Canadian mothers, they conclude, were weaning their infants earlier than Irish Catholics and Anglo Protestants by 1900, and 33 percent of their babies were not breastfed. French Canadians also experience more poverty in dense neighbourhoods with higher unsanitary conditions. Olson and Thornton suggest that mothers might have bottle-fed for cultural reasons, because of an illness, because they also thought their milk was defective, or because breastfeeding was interrupted and could not resume.[40] In contrast, as Baillargeon and Lewis both suggest, Jewish mothers’ longer breastfeeding practices led to lower infant mortality in their families, even though they, too, experienced poverty and overcrowding.[41]

Hence mothers — especially working-class, French-Canadian mothers — and their defective “mothercraft” were singled out as the cause of infant mortality and lectured by doctors to nurse their babies. But mothers’ daily lives could present a number of obstacles. With Quebec families averaging six to eight children in 1911, closely-spaced pregnancies were common.[42] We

[39] *Souvenir Handbook*, 6-7.
[40] Olson and Thornton, *Peopling the North American City,* 105 and 103-107.
[41] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 53 and Lewis, “The Problem of Infant Feeding,” 186.
[42] Danielle Gauvreau and Peter Gossage, “Avoir moins d’enfants au tournant du XXe siècle: une réalite même au Québec,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique Française* 54, (2000), 44; Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 57.

can imagine that mothers were exhausted and at times too busy with household work to exclusively breastfeed, given the constraining nature of this task which required time, good nutrition, and rest for the mother. Although only a minority of mothers worked outside the home, their domestic labour was hard and time consuming, including caring for their children and sick relatives, cooking, washing, and cleaning. Some mothers also managed to work in the home to bring in extra money, such as washing or sewing.[43]

If French-Canadian mothers were reluctant to breastfeed or weaned their babies early, it could be related to their French heritage, as Baillargeon has argued. In studies of nineteenth-century France, mothers were also found to breastfeed less than their counterparts in other parts of Europe. Bottle feeding was widespread and infant mortality was especially high in Normandy, the region from which many ships had departed for New-France centuries earlier. Historian Catherine Rollet has advanced the idea of a "*fonds culturel commun*" to explain these similar behaviours. For example, French and French-Canadian mothers supplemented breastfeeding early on with dangerous foods and stopped liquid when diarrhea occurred, leading to dehydration. They also shared false beliefs that led them to stop breastfeeding, for instance, when menstruation returned or because sexual relations spoiled the milk.[44] Nonetheless, statistics for the early 1920s indicate that a high proportion of mothers breastfed their babies, including French Canadians for up to 70 to 82 percent, but not long enough to protect their children from the risks of bottle feeding. Many infants were only nursed a few weeks, and the rate decreased every month to reach 30 percent when the baby turned one year old. Lastly, Baillargeon highlights that close

[43] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, 44-5; Bettina Bradbury, *Working Familie: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*, Canadian Social History Series, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), Chapter 5.

[44] Catherine Rollet-Échalier, *La politique a l'égard de la petite enfance sous la IIIè République,* (Paris: Institut National d'Études Démographiques – Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), 86, 523, 525, 104; Catherine Rollet, "La santé au premier âge sous le regard de l'État," *Cahier québécois de démographie* 23, 2 (Fall 1994), 287; Catherine Rollet and Marie-France Morel, *Le temps de l'enfance: Tradition et modernité des soins aux tout petits. Approche historique et anthropologique*, (Paris: Fondation Mustela, n.d.), 96-8.

pregnancies and breastfeeding were irreconcilable, as French-Catholic families followed the Church's natalist rhetoric and often had large families, especially compared to other Canadians.[45] There were exceptions to this high-fertility rule, however, as overall fertility had been declining in Quebec since the 1870s.[46] The high infant mortality rates and the significant benefits of breastfeeding explain why CWE organizers thought carefully about how their messages concerning mothers and their milk would be conveyed.

The exhibition presented infant feeding in two opposing ways: there were either dramatic illustrations of the dangers of bottle feeding or positive images of mothers feeding their babies. The choice of the term "artificial feeding" by contemporaries to refer to bottle feeding carries a strong value statement, essentially saying that this method went against nature. For example, a wall panel reproduced in figure 2.6 showed two contrasting photographs of the same baby. In both, the baby is lying on a chair covered with fabric, wearing only a diaper. In the first image, the bottle-fed infant is emaciated and weak, whereas he looks completely healthy in the second, taken five months later after having been switched to "mother's milk." The juxtaposition of these images strongly suggested that breastfeeding was better than bottle-feeding. If the photos did not already speak for themselves, the text explained how the infant almost tripled his weight over four months, adding information on the protective and constructive features of breast milk.[47] In order to get the same impact, the Chicago handbook also presented contrasting photographs of babies, indicating that one was bottle-fed and the other nursed (figure 2.7). The adjacent photos are similar in many ways: they were likely taken in the same place with the mothers posing exactly the same way. The mother is sitting on a large dark bench with her baby sitting on her

[45] Baillargeon, "Médicalisation de la maternité," 33-4, 53-8; Olson and Thornton, 105, 107.
[46] Gauvreau, Gervais, and Gossage, *La fécondité des Québécoises*, Chapter 3.
[47] Untitled, photograph, 1911, RG 102, Box 96, File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP (hereafter cited as File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP).

Figure 2.6 Wall panel used from the exhibit of the Children's Bureau. Source: File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP. Photographer unknown.

Figure 2.7 Contrasting images of a breastfed versus bottle-fed baby. Source: *Child in the City*, 50-1.

lap. The child is naked on a pale blanket that covers its crotch. However, the babies are again very different in each image. The first child is crying and is very frail, seemingly not able to sit up. The second baby is quiet and chubby, sitting straight and looking at something directly behind the camera. Without a doubt, the breastfed baby seems healthier and happier in the photos on the wall panel and in the handbook, and they were chosen to reflect that. Moreover, the decision to present babies undressed speaks to a cherubic representation of infants and infant mortality, referring to the fragility of babies' lives, their innocence, and the need to save and preserve them. The emaciated body of the malnourished infant also evoked an emotional resonse of pity.

Another dramatic poster (figure 2.8) exhibited in the infant section explained, in words and especially images, why mothers should choose to nurse their babies rather than giving them cow's milk. In the scenario narrated here, sixty miles separated the farm from the home, and there were thirty-six to forty-two hours between the time the cow was milked and the baby was fed a bottle. The milk trajectory was filled with filthy stops, including the barn, the train, and the bottling plant. Any number of contaminants could be introduced during this long journey, a point illustrated graphically with an image of milk in the mouth of a baby on its deathbed. A mother's milk, on the other hand, was "God's plan," an appeal to the visiting mothers' religious values.[48] The claim that breastfeeding was the natural and godly way of feeding was common in this time period and could certainly induce a feeling of guilt in a mother who was unable to nurse.[49] The same poster was used in the Chicago exhibition and reproduced on postcards, showing again the transnational sharing of ideas and exhibit material.

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[48] *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants*, 2. The language of Protestant evangelicalism was also used by the anti-tuberculosis movement to promote science. See Tomes, *Gospel of the Germs, 124.*

[49] Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood,* 3.

Figure 2.8 Poster discouraging the use of cow's milk for babies and encouraging breastfeeding presented at the exhibition. Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants*, 2.

Exhibitors often chose to pair disturbing and positive imagery, using the standard codes of social documentary photography.[50] A Chicago booth on motherhood (figure 2.9), showcased a framed and easel-mounted photograph of a breastfeeding mother looking tenderly at her child. Two large panels were displayed on the walls on each side, of which one was the poster depicting the road travelled by cow's milk.[51] The decision to exhibit photographs of mothers breastfeeding was a strong statement in support of this way of feeding babies. It implied that this act was natural and important, and indicated that society favored this practice. The breastfeeding mother's

[50] See Opp, "Religion Photography in Winnipeg"; Szlezák, "Capturing' Immigrant Children."
[51] Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.

photograph, an image that evokes the Madonna and child, complemented the milk trajectory poster as a clear representation of what it defined as "God's plan." Many pamphlets, such as one on baby care distributed at the Chicago exhibition, also included photographs of a breastfeeding mother (figure 2.10). The normalization of photos explicitly showing mothers feeding their babies indicates that that breastfeeding was the most natural and the healthiest option for babies in their first year of life. Images of mothers in action, feeding their babies in a home setting, supported this discourse.

Figure 2.9 Motherhood exhibit at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.

Figure 2.10 Photograph of a nursing mother published in a pamphlet distributed at the Chicago exhibition. Source: Committee on Infant Welfare, "How to Keep the Baby Well!," 1911, Box 1, Folder 2, 1-2, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection.

These images presented mothers breastfeeding combined with information on best practices. The photographs showed both newborns and older babies, underlining the importance of nursing children for more than a few months. Although breastfeeding was presented as a natural practice, medical experts nonetheless provided plenty of advice to give breastfeeding mothers.[52] For example, experts recommended that mothers breastfeed in a quiet corner of their home, and cover their noses and mouths if they had a cold while feeding their babies. They provided striking photographs of mothers nursing in these contexts (figures 2.11) which were used for educational panels on colds and pneumonia.[53] The images served as models to mothers, showing the baby latching on and mothers getting on with it effortlessly. Not only did experts tell mothers when and where to nurse their children, they also told mothers they should refrain from feeding if they were upset, claiming that their state of mind would affect their milk. The Chicago

[52] For more on doctors' increasing scientific advice to mothers see Apple, *Perfect Motherhood* and Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*.
[53] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits*, 64.

exhibition guide even specified that "worry, anger, illness or overwork on the mother's part are as harmful as improper food or lack of cleanliness."[54] This statement implied that a mother's health was an important factor for child welfare. A pamphlet distributed at the Chicago exhibition explicitly stated that: "if the mother has been badly frightened or very angry or excited, it is not safe to give the breast at all; it should be drawn and the milk thrown away."[55] Misinformation about breast milk thus aligned with false beliefs of the time that prevented mothers from breastfeeding.[56] In addition, such constraining advice would have made the practice of breastfeeding seem less organic and natural and might even have dissuaded some mothers from pursuing this option.

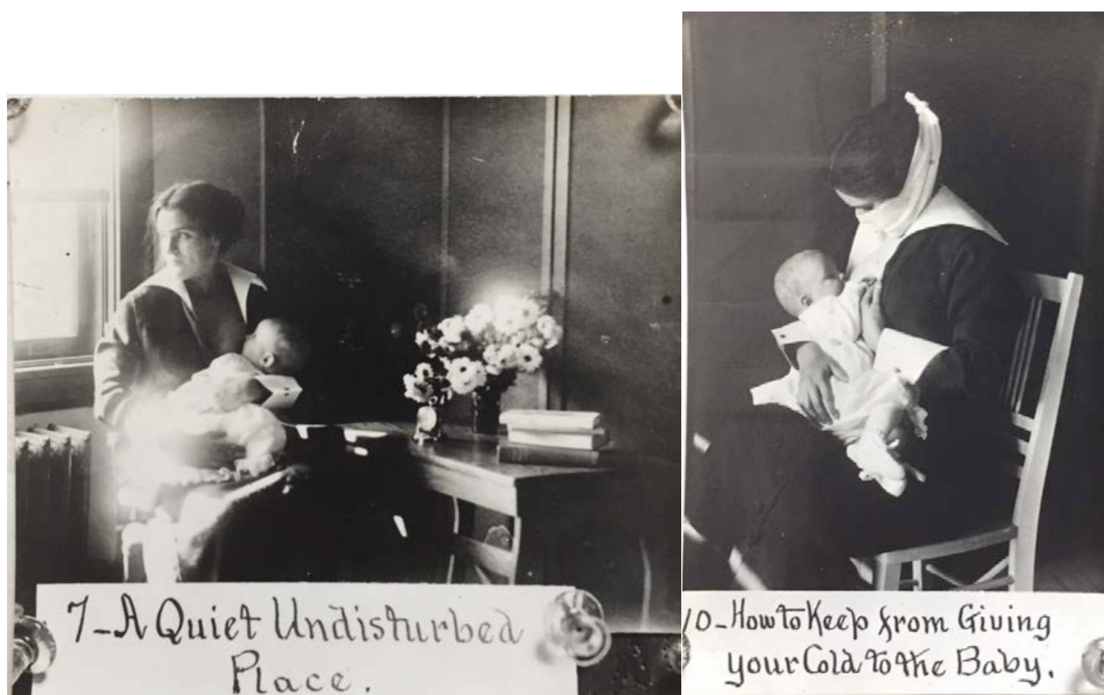

Figure 2.11 Photographs of a mother breastfeeding for an infant care panel. Source: File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP. Photographer unknown.

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[54] *Child in the City*, 50.

[55] F. W. Reilly, M.D., "Hot-Weather Care of Infants and Young Children," 1908, Box 1, Folder 2, 2, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library (hereafter cited as Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection).

[56] For example, some mothers believed their menstruation and sexual relations spoiled their milk. Baillargeon, "Médicalisation de la maternité," 56 and Olson and Thornton, *Peopling the North American* City, 107.

In another pamphlet distributed at the Chicago exhibition, the committee on infant welfare insisted that mothers should stick to a schedule set by the doctor, breastfeeding every four hours during the day while only feeding once during the night. Although stating that breastfeeding was "the best and safest" option, this pamphlet alternated between breastfeeding and bottle-feeding advice.[57] Such contradictory messages must have been confusing for mothers. By the time they visited the exhibition, many had already decided they were unable or unwilling to breastfeed their babies. Jacqueline H. Wolf finds that Chicago doctors gave advice on breastfeeding and bottle feeding alike. Even though they believed breast was best, these doctors met many mothers who had already decided to stop breastfeeding and also had to care for sick babies who had been bottle fed. Moreover, Wolf explains that rigid feeding schedules contributed to lactation failure, by reducing the mothers' milk supply, leading mothers to stop breastfeeding.[58] Hence, to reduce infant mortality, doctors decided to promote safe bottle feeding along with breastfeeding, despite the contradictory nature of this advice.

As doctors recognized that some mothers could not feed their babes with their own milk, they stressed that mothers should only start bottle feeding after getting medical advice. They highlighted the importance of getting the best milk possible and preventing bacterial contamination, advising mothers to boil all milk during the summer.[59] In Montreal, this was an important matter as milk was often of poor quality and would not be pasteurized until 1926.[60] Discussing the problem of milk supplies in Montreal, Terry Copp cites a 1914 investigation

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[57] Committee on Infant Welfare, "How to Keep the Baby Well!," 1911, Box 1, Folder 2, 1-2, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection.

[58] Jacqueline H. Wolf, "'Don't Kill Your Baby': Feeding Infants in Chicago, 1903-1924," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 53 (July 1998): 225, 240.

[59] *Souvenir Handbook,* 7.

[60] Baillargeon, "Fréquenter Les Gouttes De Lait." 30.

revealing that 90 percent of the milk reaching the city was unfit for consumption. Like Baillargeon, Copp connects the lack of breastfeeding in the first year of life leading to babies' death from gastro-enteritis.[61] As milk quality and consumption were important issues for infants, every North American exhibition handbook gave strict advice and milk transformation demonstrations took place at child-welfare exhibitions. They insisted on the importance of keeping milk in ice boxes, which they said could be made at home for fifty cents.[62] There were also lectures for mothers on the dangerous issues surrounding milk. *The Montreal Daily Herald* stated that a talk by Dr. Louis Laberge, medical health officer for the city, was one of "the most interesting" in the "mother's lectures" series.[63] In true exhibit fashion, the critical message was repeated in different ways. Screens on the walls shared the same information as photographs of the preservation techniques that were demonstrated daily in the health exhibit booth.[64] The exhibition medium facilitated communication and the sharing of evidence and material on infant feeding best practices across nations.

The question of infant feeding was a central component in the three booths that made up the Baby Saving section of the health exhibition in Montreal.[65] In a long article dedicated to the exhibition published in the Saturday edition of *La Presse* on October 12, 1912, the reporter stressed the crucial importance of this section, with its focus on promoting infant care and preventing infant mortality. The article discussed the daily talks mothers should attend during the event, presenting them as maternity classes. It emphasized the importance of infant feeding, mentioning fatal mistakes resulting from improper breastfeeding, as well as from bottle feeding

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[61] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, 96-9. See also Denyse Baillargeon, "Gouttes de lait et soif de pouvoir," 30-31.

[62] *Souvenir Handbook*, 7; *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 28; *Child in the City*, 50; "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.

[63] "Hebrew Day Was Big Success for the Exhibition" *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Monday Oct. 14, 1912, 9.

[64] Untitled, photograph, 1911, File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP.

[65] This sub-section of the exhibition was called "Exposition pour le Bien-Être de la Première Enfance" according to *La Presse*.

or a mixture of the two methods.[66] This shows that Montreal mothers fed their babies using different methods prior to the exhibition. It also indicates that mothers were held responsible for learning safe feeding methods, and their failure to do so appropriately would have consequences for which they would be held accountable.

Given that bottle feeding found a place in the Montreal exhibition, the handbook included two advertisements for baby formula within its first pages. This accounted for two out of the nine advertising pages in the publication. The handbook never addressed these commercial products and openly promoted breastfeeding, but the ads directly appealed to mothers.[67] In her book on the social history of infant feeding, Rima D. Apple explains that the first infant formula was invented in the 1860s by a German chemist. Other chemists and merchants developed their own products shortly after. They used cow's milk, wheat flour, sugar, and malt combined with other ingredients to make a digestible and nutritious mix. Nestlé's Food soon stood out from the pack, as its product was "complete" and needed only water to be added, whereas competitors were "milk modifiers" that needed to be dissolved in milk and water.[68] Infant formula was therefore a common product by 1912 and Nestlé's food had been around for nearly thirty years. The advertisement found in the Montreal handbook described infant formula using terms such as homogenized through scientific process, rich, pure, and natural. "Laurentia" Maternized Milk presented itself as the scientific and medical substitute, while Nestlé's Food, claiming to have been the choice of thousands of mothers, offered to send them a free sample along with a large

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[66] "Pour combattre les ravages que fait en notre ville la mortalité infantile," *La Presse*, Oct. 12, 1912, 20.

[67] Milton Lewis finds that Australian doctors recommended this type of formula for healthy babies over six months in the mid 1890s. See Lewis, "The Problem of Infant Feeding," 182.

[68] Rima D. Apple, *Mothers and Medicine,* 8-12.

package and a book on infant care. We can see how such advertising could appeal to mothers, offering an alternative presented as natural, safe, easy, and scientific.[69]

Overall, advice on breastfeeding presented at these child-welfare exhibitions was multifaceted and potentially confusing for mothers, as different sections presented conflicting ideas. We can imagine that mothers may have wanted to nurse their babies once they learned about the health benefits for their child. But they were constrained by their exhausting daily lives as they cared for numerous children, dealt with a new pregnancy every year, and worked to keep the home tidy, while getting enough rest and nutrition to be able to lactate. Nursing mothers' desires would have clashed with their limitations. By turning to mixed feeding, they stood to lighten their load, allow for older siblings to help with bottle feeding, and free up time to go on with other tasks. Not to mention that breastfeeding can be painful and latching can be difficult for an infant, discouraging mothers and further contributing to the decision to bottle feed. Seeing their babies' failure to gain weight, and feeling the pressure from the medical experts could be other factors leading to that option. All the measures and information on milk were designed to decrease infant mortality, by rooting out "mothers' ignorance." Medical and nursing experts chose to address both breastfeeding and bottle feeding because inadequate feeding was the main cause of infant mortality in Montreal. However, by providing advice on two opposing methods, the exhibit would have challenged mothers' confidence in their abilities. As Apple explains, expert guidance directed towards mothers led to the development of scientific motherhood. This concept held women responsible for deciding how to feed their infants but left them dependent on medical advice, ultimately depriving them of their power.[70] Furthermore, this discussion of infant feeding at the child-welfare exhibition is an example of experts applying a double standard to

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[69] *Souvenir Handbook*, 2, 6.
[70] Rima D. Apple, *Mothers and Medicine,* Chapter 6.

mothers. On the one hand, they regarded them as the most competent to feed their children because nature intended it that way; yet, on the other, they saw them as incompetent and ignorant when it came to breastfeeding their babies. However, mothers' autonomy in choosing what they thought best for their babies contributed to the contradictory messages at the exhibit, as it reflected the current breastfeeding realities and the resistance of working-class mothers.

Clinics at the Exhibition: Doctors, Dentists, and Nurses

The health section of these exhibitions went beyond the issue of infant mortality. Different displays surveyed diseases affecting school-aged children in the city and means of prevention that could be undertaken by families. The Montreal exhibition handbook explained that doctors, dentists, and nurses were there to "help [families] with the treatment of 'already contracted' diseases in children and suggest hygienic methods to prevent them." Likewise, the section promoted the work of trained health-care professionals, recommending that parents make a habit of going to the doctor for advice early in their children's lives.[71] Such a discourse contributed to the professionalization of medical experts and to the practice of scientific motherhood.[72] While emphasizing disease prevention and early medical intervention, moreover, these exhibits also had medical experts on-site to examine children. This proactive approach was directly aligned with the discourse promoting consultation with health care professionals. The installations addressed specific preventable or curable health concerns, including the important issues of hearing loss, blindness, tuberculosis, and dental health. Organizers explained that the numerous premature deaths and disabilities resulting from such diseases affected individual families as well as society.

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[71] *Souvenir Handbook*, 5.

[72] See Apple, *Mothers and Medicine* and Pierre-Deschênes, "Santé publique et organisation de la profession médicale au Québec."

They mentioned physical and emotional losses, but also "a tremendous economic loss to the community."[73] However, it is interesting to note that they fail to mention the social causes impacting children's health in this section, such as their living condition in tenement districts, inadequate living wages, and the poor state of sanitation in the city. The reference to the impact of health on economic productivity reinforces the idea that the exhibition handbook was written for the upper classes, as working-class people were seen as human resources valued mainly for their labour power. The emphasis on the preventable aspect also leads to this conclusion, as exhibitors aimed to show that the children could be saved and were worth saving.[74]

The Health of the School Children

School children were an important part of the exhibition. They were the target of many displays while also participating in demonstrations showing their vitality. In the Health section, doctors and nurses highlighted the importance of their clinical work with these children and the consequences that might arise from lack of care. They described how medical inspection in schools had proven to have positive outcomes for children's wellbeing, providing for a happier life and preparing them "for a more useful" future.[75] This was an example of liberal strategies to improve social welfare.[76] Exhibitors exposed the main infections affecting school-aged children, connecting them to dramatic consequences. Throat and nose issues were said to "cause stupidity and deafness and predispose to colds and to tuberculosis." Dental problems could lead to chronic rheumatism, and untreated eye problems could leave children with headaches and nervousness

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[73] *Souvenir Handbook,* 5.

[74] Katie Barclay and Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, "Intersectional identities" in *Sources for the History of Emotions : A Guide*, ed. Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Peter N Stearns (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group: 2021), 191.

[75] *Souvenir Handbook*, 8.

[76] Lewis E. Hill, "On Laissez-Faire Capitalism and 'Liberalism,'" *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 23, no. 4 (1964): 394.

symptoms. Such alarmist leaps in logic aimed to establish the importance of school medical inspections, which "must not be allowed to deteriorate for lack of funds."[77] At the same time, the emphasis on good health care and disease prevention for school children served to convince parents to heed expert medical advice and to consult a doctor or a dentist if anything seemed to be wrong with their child.

The Dispensary

The presence of doctors, nurses, and dentists on site daily allowed parents to have their children examined for free. Their presence also tended to normalize consulting medical professionals, publicizing their work in hopes of minimizing fears. The Montreal exhibition guide stated that "any mother who has a child, about whose health she wishes to enquire, may bring it to the baby and children's clinic afternoons." Furthermore, it mentioned that in these free clinics "all languages are used. French, English, Yiddish, and also Italian, Russian, and German." As the wording implied, the first three languages represented well-established groups in the city, whereas the last three showed consideration for newcomers. Making the clinics multilingual reflected an extensive effort to appeal to all of Montreal's families. Moreover, the handbook stated that "Sundays are devoted to Yiddish mothers," showing that experts took into consideration religious obligations. Clearly organizers planned their clinics around the groups they targeted and made sure they had the means to reach them. They explicitly invited mothers to come to the clinics and attend talks in the conference room upstairs, next to the baby-rest room where they were encouraged to leave their infants with trained nurses in order to focus on the exhibits and lectures. The talks were a complement to the exhibition, covering all topics related to

[77] *Souvenir Handbook*, 8.

child welfare, including food, clothing, and health.[78] Medical experts were involved in every step of the process, from the exhibit inception to talks, demonstrations, and the examination of children.

La Presse reported on the free dispensary, explaining that it was on the left when visitors entered the Drill Hall, and opened at ten o'clock under the supervision of Sainte-Justine hospital. The newspaper also stated that nurses demonstrated child care in rooms adjacent to the dispensary daily between 3:00 and 6:00 in the afternoons and between 8:00 and 10:00 in the evenings.[79] A few days later, it was reported that the dispensary had moved to the right side of the entrance. The floor plan of the exhibition shows a big empty room behind the health section's different booths which, it would seem, was at first filled by the dispensary and demonstration rooms, before the *Conseil des arts et manufactures* conceded their room on the right side of the exhibition' entrance to the dispensary (figure 2.12). The large attendance at the dispensary, which had been sharing space with the popular demonstration rooms, most likely caused the move to the other side. Although there are no numbers on attendance, *Le Devoir* observed that the dispensary staff was really busy but never overwhelmed and consistently asked mothers to bring their sick children to see the doctors.[80]

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[78] *Souvenir Handbook*, 9; "Invitation aux mères de familles," *La Presse*, Oct. 7, 1912, 3.
[79] "On se rend par miliers a l'exposition pour le bien-être de l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 11, 1912, 5.
[80] "Les enfants à l'exposition," *Le Devoir*, Octobre 14, 1912, 6.

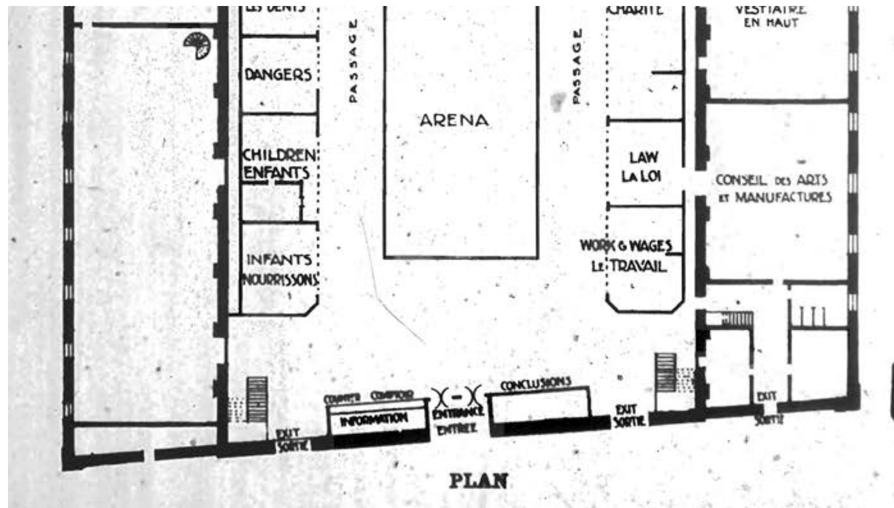

Figure 2.12 Close-up of the plan of the MCWE. The big empty room on the left was used for the dispensary and nursing demonstrations. Source: *Souvenir Handbook,* 6. Photographer unknown.

La Presse published a photo of two (male) doctors examining a young child at the exhibition (figure 2.13). The text under the image stated that a coughing baby must be examined to check if its lungs are endangered.[81] This Montreal image provides insight into what the dispensary looked like: an enclosed space with a chair for the little patient and doctors dressed in professional attire. But photographs of children being examined at the Chicago and Rochester child-welfare exhibitions give more detail. Figure 2.14 shows another male doctor examining an undressed baby lying on a table covered by a white sheet. There is a scale to weigh the baby on that same table, with a nurse at one end and the baby's mother at the other, next to the doctor. The two women are smiling at the camera, while the doctor is focused on the child, softly pulling on its arm, creating movement in the frame. The exam takes place in a booth shielded from the visitors' eyes by a folding screen. Set in an enclosed room with glass windows, the photographs of the Rochester dispensary show a woman doctor examining children with the help of a nurse (figure 2.15). Onlookers are peering through the windows, while the mother is sitting near the

[81] "Pour combattre les ravages que fait en notre ville la mortalite infantile," *La Presse*, Oct. 12, 1912, 20.

Figure 2.13 Two doctors examining a young child at the MCWE. Source: “Pour combattre les ravages que fait en notre ville la mortaliteé infantile,” *La Presse,* Oct. 12, 1912, 20. Photographer: F. Bourassa.

Figure 2.14 Doctor examining a baby assisted by a nurse at the exhibit at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

Figure 2.15 Photographs of a young child and a baby being examined by a doctor at the Rochester Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau NACP. Photographer: Cardinell-Vincent Co.

doctor. She is very neatly dressed, her embellished hat topped with a face net. In the first photo, the undressed child is sitting on a mattress-covered table, wrapped in white linen from the abdomen down. The doctor is sitting in front of him, measuring his chest. The nurse's hand is helping the child to sit up. The other image shows the doctor examining a baby with the same mother seen in the other images. The baby is lying on the same table, having just been unwrapped and with the doctor leaning over it, listening to its heart. In this frame, we see more clearly that the doctor is assisted by a nurse. These images, staged and taken with the awareness of the protagonists, illustrate how doctors would proceed with a full examination of a child with the mother by its side, in an intimate setting, with their tools and the assistance of a nurse. They were surely used to advertise and promote the work of the doctors and the dispensary. Showing the public that medical exams were not invasive or intimidating and that there was no reason to avoid them.

These images are rare evidence of medical practices, especially toward infants, in the 1910s. They also evoke a marked difference between the United States and Montreal in the composition of the medical profession. There were very few women doctors in Montreal, as they could only be trained at Bishop's College's Faculty of Medicine since the late 1880s. Dr. Grace Ritchie England was the first woman to receive a degree in medicine there and in the province of Quebec in 1891. It was not until 1922 that McGill had its first women graduate from its renowned Faculty of Medicine, although they had been asking to be admitted for thirty-five years. Until then, they had to train in Europe or in the US, where women had been receiving medical education and practicing since the mid-nineteenth century.[82] Thus, whereas there were

[82] Gillett, *History of Women at McGill*, 280-91

women doctors examining children at the American exhibitions, women were relegated to the role of nurses and assisting men at the Montreal exhibit.

The Dental Clinic

The dental clinic was another important and popular part of the exhibition. The handbook noted that the Province of Quebec Dental Association prepared the information on the proper care of the teeth at its own expense.[83] In her book on the history of oral health in Canada, Catherine Carstairs finds that as the dental profession developed in Quebec at the turn of the twentieth century, the science of dentistry and the professionalization led to more education and prevention work, such as this clinic. She shows that until that period, "few children had ever seen a dentist." Carstairs explains that a diet high in sugar and the lack of tooth brushing led to "an epidemic of tooth decay" in the early twentieth century, with bread, sugar, and oatmeal being among the main constituent of Montrealers' daily diet. Fear of the dentist, high cost of treatment, and incomplete prevention methods also contributed to the poor dental health of children.[84] Thus, newspaper coverage of this section of the exhibition demonstrated the severity of insufficient dental hygiene in children and the serious consequences that could ensue. Every day, three dentists, working in rotation for two-hour shifts, conducted oral examinations with the help of two or three nurses.[85] Besides helping with material and cleaning the exam room, part of their work was probably to alleviate the fear many children may have felt at the sight of the dentist's chair and instruments, although there are no reports of screams or outbursts at the clinic. *La Presse* reported daily on the

[83] *Souvenir Handbook*, 9, 40.

[84] Catherine Carstairs, *The Smile Gap: Oral Health and Social Inequalities*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 5, 16-8.

[85] "View of the Immense Crowd that Thronged the Child Welfare Exhibition," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 9, 1912, 2; "Child Welfare Exhibition Open," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 9, 1912, 5; "Le bien-être de l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 8, 1912, 2. Although the article mentions nurses, they might have been dental assistants.

dental clinic, claiming that it was very attractive and that people would even go over just to watch.

> Chaque soir, la foule se presse devant la Clinique des dents installée à l'Exposition: le spectacle n'est pas banal. Que constate-t-on dans les examens des nombreux sujets qui passent par la chaise d'opération? C'est que les dents des enfants à Montréal sont déplorablement négligées, et cela non seulement parmi les pauvres, mais encore chez ceux dont les moyens et la position sociale n'ont aucune excuse.[86]

The newspaper published daily statistics of visitors to the clinic as well as dental hygiene data, stating the number of mouths examined and the proportion that were found healthy, highlighting the progressive reformers' marked penchant for statistics. The exhibit revealed that 78 to 98 percent of school children had cavities, prompting dentists to explain that decayed teeth and tooth pain could lead to significant health problems, from digestive issues to tuberculosis and pneumonia.[87] For example, on October 18, 1912, dentists examined 351 mouths, out of which 334 were found diseased, including 1,206 cavities and 250 missing teeth. Overall on that same day, the exhibit's total dental exams added up to 1,840 mouths, finding that only 47 of them were completely healthy, and 10,938 teeth were either missing or decayed.[88] Emphasizing the educational and prevention work done at the exhibition, *Le Devoir* noted that dentists were handing out free toothbrushes to children. The article was directed at parents, encouraging them to care for their children's teeth, but also put pressure on governments to do more so that every child could have access to dental care.[89] Choosing to publish daily numbers, newspapers highlighted the previously unnoticed problem of dental health affecting a large number of children throughout the city. Moreover, seeing the facts and numbers presented in a sensational manner in daily media coverage confirms the importance of this subject and the dramatic effect

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[86] "Ce qu'il faut entendre," *La Presse*, Oct. 11, 1912, 4.

[87] "L'hygiène dentaire," *La Presse*, Oct. 15, 1912, 17. See also "De sévères leçons à l'exposition pour le bien-être de l'enfance," *La Patrie*, Octobre 11, 1912, 3.

[88] "Service des dentistes au bien-être de l'enfance," *La Presse*, Oct. 21, 1912, 5.

[89] "Les enfants à l'exposition," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 14, 1912, 6.

of inadequate dental care on Montreal children. The remarkable numbers of cavities and overall defective mouths justified the plea for further disease prevention in this field, including measures such as dental inspections in schools.[90]

A photograph of the dental clinic was published in *La Patrie* without any information or even a mention of its work (figure 2.16). Even if the photo is not very clear, it shows the exhibit, with the back and side walls plastered with informative posters. The dentist's chair and equipment occupy the center of the booth. There is no one in the image. A flawless and vibrant photograph taken at the 1912 Rochester Child Welfare Exhibit gives a much better overview of an entire dental exhibit in action, which likely resembled its Montreal counterpart (figure 2.17). It was comprised of "photographs, statements, lantern lecture, dental equipment, models of teeth, and a demonstration of dental examination, all in one 8 by 12 space made by the Rochester Dental Society."[91] The booth was enclosed between two high temporary walls covered with panels plastered with information and photos about dental care, enclosed by a fence. There is a rug in the middle of the wooden floor; on one side a dentist examines a young girl's teeth with a dental assistant standing next to him, holding a glass of water. This section resembled a dentist's office, with its professional chair, tools, and sterilizer. On the other side, an explainer is working the lantern projector. Two small girls with bows in their hair are sitting on little chairs in the foreground, waiting for their turn in the dentist's chair. One of them smiles at the photographer. The photograph was clearly staged, given everyone's specific placement in the frame and the stillness of the action, but it still represents the typical activity that went on during the exhibition. It is worth noting that the three girls' parents are absent. Although they might have been left out

[90] School inspection was the preferred preventive method as access to free dental treatment seems to have been scarcely available in Montreal.

[91] Cardinell-Vincent Co., photographs, 1913, File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP.

of the frame and standing next to the booth, such a photograph could suggest that some children wandered the exhibits with or without their parents. Again, photographs of the dental installations served to demystify the work of dentists and invite exhibition visitors to visit the clinic without fear.

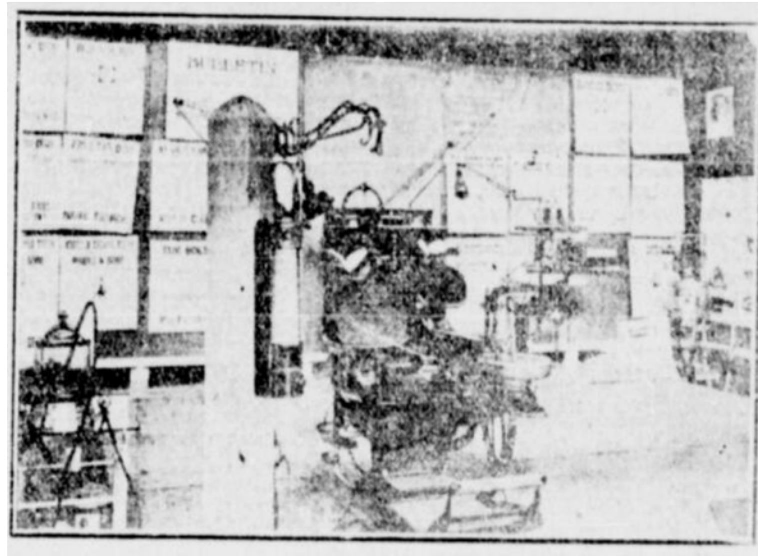

Figure 2.16 Dental clinic at the MCWE. Source: “L’oeuvre des religieuses enseignantes à l’exposition socio-pédologique,” *La Patrie*, Oct. 14, 1912, 3. Photographer form La Patrie.

Figure 2.17 Photograph of the Rochester Dental Society exhibit booth at the Rochester Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: File 8-6-6-4-3, Children’s Bureau, NACP. Photographer: Cardinell-Vincent Co.

Nurses

Nurses assisted doctors and dentists in their clinics, but also demonstrated their work and cared for children in different sections of the exhibition. They were prominent in the baby section. A special scale was installed in this section so that mothers could have their babies weighed. Nurses used that measure to follow their growth. As height and weight were the only two indicators of a baby's development, having infants weighed regularly was strongly encouraged. No other development milestones were mentioned in all the exhibitions surveyed. The exhibition handbook includes a photograph of a baby on the scale, highlighting the importance of this practice and showing easy, simple, and quick this operation was (figure 2.18).[92] In the same section, nurses also demonstrated milk sterilisation.[93] They taught mothers how to scald the utensils, prepare the milk formula, and keep the day's milk fresh on ice. Figure 2.19 shows an exhibit of a milk laboratory in Chicago where nurses would conduct such demonstrations, while figure 2.20 presents a more accessible milk transformation process on a regular stove.[94] The photographs indicate that there were fully equipped booths with material and appliances found in the home.

Figure 2.18 His Majesty the Baby. Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants,* 5. Photographer unknown.

[92] *Souvenir Handbook,* 6.

[93] "Le bien-être de l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 8, 1912, 2.

[94] *Souvenir Handbook,,* 7; *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 28; *Child in the City,* 50; "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.

Figure 2.19 Exhibit of a milk laboratory at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

Figure 2.20 Photographs of the process of milk transformation. Source: File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP. Photographer unknown.

Overseeing the baby-rest room was an important responsibility, entrusted to the Victorian Order of Nurses, close collaborator of the Local Montreal Council of Women and ally in the fight against infant mortality. This private visiting nurse service, active in Montreal since 1898, was a pioneer and specialist in public-health nursing, focused on educating and caring in working-class neighbourhoods. The VON's work went beyond religious ties, providing care to Anglophones

and Francophones in the city.[95] Located upstairs in the northwest corner, next to the mothers' conference room, the baby-rest room hosted babies while mothers visited the exhibition. *The Montreal Daily Star* described it as the most interesting part of the exhibition; a chance to get real insight into the nature of the child, as visitors could observe babies laughing and playing.[96] This anticipates by several decades the fate of the Dionne Quintuplets, who were put on display for public amusement and became a popular tourist attraction in the 1930s.[97] The decision to showcase babies in this way was surely an effort to appeal to the emotions of visitors and to highlight that all the work of these exhibits was intended for the future benefit of these very children.

The Montreal Gazette reported that groups of two to four nurses cared for an average of thirty babies under three years old every day until nine o'clock, the greatest number being 150. They were helped by a committee of women volunteering at the exhibition. One must assume (and hope) that they did not have to care for all the babies at the same time. At the exhibition's closing, the paper claimed the nurses had cared for over 1,000 infants.[98] This popular service was established after the New York and Chicago exhibitions showed the need to relieve mothers so that they could concentrate and absorb all the information during their visit (figure 2.21).[99] Although it seems to have been a successful program, a sensationalist article from *The Montreal Daily Herald* recounted an unfortunate incident in which two mothers came to claim the same baby late at night, as the exhibition was closing. Comparing the confrontation to a miniature Balkan War, the journalist told of a heated argument solved by a "husky cop" and relatives who

[95] Bienvenue, "Le Victorian Order of Nurses," 65-7.
[96] "Baby's Rest' Is Interesting Part of Exhibition," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 15, 1912, 12.
[97] Dominique Brégent-Heald, "Five Little Stars: The Dionne Quintuplets, Motherhood, Film and Tourism during the Great Depression," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 39, 1 (2019): 55.
[98] "Hebrew Day at the Exhibition," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 14, 1912, 7; "Chid Welfare Exhibition Over," Oct. 23, 1912, 2.
[99] *Child in the City*, 18.

helped to identify the children.[100] The incident does not seem to have cast a shadow on the baby room and no other newspaper reported negatively on the service. The reporting likely reveals more about the racy journalism in this newspaper than about the much-needed program. Rather, the baby-rest room encouraged mothers to come to the exhibit, allowing them to focus on the information presented while knowing their babies were in good hands, with professional nurses.

Figure 2.21 Nurses holding two babies while one is kissing the other in what seems to be the baby-rest room at the Chicago Chid Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

The work of nurses was also showcased in many photographs of them performing medical acts or caring for children. In the exhibition guide, nurses are depicted weighing a baby, putting drops in a baby's eyes, attending to a child after surgery, and caring for foundlings.[101]

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[100] "Warfare Imminent When Both Mothers Wanted the Same Checked Baby"," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 11, 1912, 1.

[101] *Souvenir Handbook,,* 6-8, 27.

Newspapers reported on the Victorian Order of Nurses' "heavy share in the exhibition." The nurses seemed ever-present, from the baby-rest room to assisting doctors and dentists with lectures and exams. They also provided a direct link between medical professionals and mothers, offering specific advice and demonstrating ways to care for babies and school-aged children. Newspapers reported on positive interactions between nurses, children, and mothers, although some less welcome, unsolicited advice was probably also offered.[102] Baillargeon finds that mothers generally viewed nurses in a more favorable light than doctors because their gender brought proximity despite their professional authority. She reveals that many mothers attested to their appreciation for the nurses they encountered, although others questioned their legitimacy in giving them advice given their celibate status.[103] Louise Bienvenue explains that the VON was well established in Montreal society at the time, caring for mothers and young children and providing post-natal care at home. As allies in the fight for child and mother welfare, their presence at the 1912 exhibition was only natural.[104] Overall, the representation of nurses at the exhibition shows that they were praised for their important and essential role in child saving, their skills, and their feminine approach, but always subordinated to male doctors.[105] In sum, with the presence of many healthcare professionals and the discourses promoting their work and value, the child-welfare exhibitions contributed to the on-going professionalization of medicine. These professionals presented themselves as experts who knew what was best for children, their families, and the nation.

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[102] "Child Welfare Exhibition Over," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 23, 1912, 2. Baillargeon explains that hygienists found that their advice reached converts more easily. See *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 281.

[103] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 278-9. Her findings are based on interiews with mothers who gave birth between 1926 and 1966.

[104] Bienvenue, "Victorian Order of Nurses," 67.

[105] Baillargeon, "Les rapports médecins-infirmieres," *The Canadian Historical Review* 77, 1 (1996): 59.

Public Health, Power Relations, and Norms at the Exhibit

Child-welfare exhibitions contributed to the development of new expertise on motherhood and to the recognition of medical professions. While promoting scientific knowledge across nations, they also reinforced middle-class values, beliefs, and attitudes. In their advice to parents, the experts promoted normative ideas on class, gender, and race. By the same process, they stipulated moral rules by which to live. Children and mothers were expected to reproduce the middle-class behaviours presented at the exhibition, despite the limitations of their material and financial resources.

A Mother's Responsibility: The Ignorant Mother at the Exhibit

Working-class mothers were held responsible for children dying in the city, as they were responsible for safety in the home. *La Presse* stated the matter plainly in its 12 October 1912 edition: "Il est une vérité qu'il faut faire connaître: l'enfant ne meurt que de l'ignorance ou de l'erreur de la mère. Un enfant sain qui n'est pas exposé dans un milieu antihygiénique, qui n'est pas victime d'erreur grossière doit vivre."[106] Newspapers often depicted mothers as ignorant, poorly educated, and prone to mistakes. During the two weeks of the exhibition, articles in French and English decried the "ignorance" of working-class parents, denouncing improper care as the main cause of death among the city's babies.[107] Most articles connected infant mortality and "improper" feeding with ignorance, claiming that mothers just "did not know" how to care for their children.[108] As newspapers reported on facts presented at the exhibition, observing for instance that "one-fourth of all deaths of babies occur within a week of their birth," they repeated

[106] "Pour combattre les ravages que fait en notre ville la mortalite infantile," *La Presse*, Oct. 12, 1912, 20.

[107] See for example "Mgr. Bruchesi's Help," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 8, 1912, 7, and "De sévères leçons à l'exposition pour le bien-être de l'enfance," *La Patrie*, Oct. 11, 1912, 3.

[108] "Montreal Is High Up in Infant Death List," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 16, 1912, 2.

that "the importance of mothers' nursing their babies cannot be exaggerated."[109] While replicating the teachings of the exhibition, journalists claimed that it was a lack of knowledge rather than poverty that contributed to the spread of contagious diseases in the home and the mortality that ensued.[110] With this explanation, they absolved politicians from tackling the root causes of poverty. Similarily, in his study of infant feeding in Australia at the turn of the twentieth century, Milton Lewis finds that reformers in England and Australia also blamed mothers for infant mortality and specifically the ignorance of working-class mothers. He explains that "by focusing on the individual mother, it diverted attention from the unequal social conditions which made for significant differences in mortality between classes, and it obscured the social fact of unequal access to medical advice."[111]

Hygienist reformers, mainly doctors, contributed to the discourse around the ignorant mother. A group of male Montreal doctors comprised the organizing committee for the Health section, a reflection of their domination over the medical field in Quebec. Their class and gender created a distance between them and the mothers with whom they interacted.[112] As we have seen, there were very few women doctors in Montreal at the time. And even though Dr Grace Ritchie England was on the exhibition's executive committee, she was confined to the "Homes" section.[113] This is a concise illustration of power relations at the exhibition, showing that men had the upper hand in framing its message, just as they dominated the medical profession. Baillargeon explains that mothers definitely felt the power imbalance in their interactions with doctors, as they thought certain doctors were haughty and often failed to explain what was going on.[114]

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[109] "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.
[110] "Furnishing a Home Complete for 100$," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 16, 1912, 3.
[111] Lewis, "The Problem of Infant Feeding," 179-80, 186.
[112] The mothers interviewed gave birth between 1926 and 1966. Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 273.
[113] *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants*, 40; Gillett, *History of Women at McGill*, 280-91.
[114] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 273.

The health section's two chairmen, Dr. Séverin Lachapelle and Dr. Alexander Dougall Blackader, were prominent doctors specializing in childhood diseases and in the fight against infant mortality.[115] They made a statement in the Montreal exhibition handbook that explained their perspective.

> In a general way, the chief cause of mortality among babies, is due to ignorance, and even thoughtlessness on the part of mothers, of the proper methods of caring for their infants. It is hoped that through the statistical statements of facts, and the suggestions for proper care, nourishing, feeding, etc., as told by the screens in this section, the public as a whole, may be stimulated to demand that more adequate provision be taken for the conservation of our most valuable resources namely, -our babies, and that mothers may be given better opportunities for learning the best methods of caring for their offspring.[116]

Clearly these doctors blamed mothers for their babies' deaths, but also realized that women lacked opportunities to learn how to care for their young children. Their assertion reminds us that the exhibition targeted mothers but also the various levels of legislative authority who could act to improve public health. While doctors blamed mothers for infant mortality and disease, they also showed they wanted to help them by providing medical advice. Simultaneously, they pleaded with governments to make educational resources available to working-class mothers.[117] A long article in *The Montreal Daily Star* echoed this paradox of blaming mothers for their ignorance in the context of limited educational resources, alerting readers to the enormous but preventable infant mortality rate in the city.

> They have been deprived of their right to live, not by any eternal decree but by ignorance, prejudice, and indifference. The ignorance of parents, the prejudice in favor of old ways and obsolete ideas, the indifference of a buried age to the rights of posterity: they constitute the unhallowed trinity which work havoc with the citizenship of Montreal.[118]

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[115] Rita Desjardins, "Lachapelle, Séverin," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* vol. 14, last modified in 1998, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lachapelle_severin_14E.html; Érica Boisvert (in collaboration), "Blackader, Alexander Dougall," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* vol. 16, last modified in 2017, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/blackader_alexander_dougall_16E.html

[116] *Souvenir Handbook,* 6.

[117] *Souvenir Handbook,* 5.

[118] "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.

Parents were said to be uneducated in the proper ways to care for babies. They were also criticized for looking after their children using techniques passed down from previous generations. While acknowledging a societal role in infant mortality, the emphasis on ignorance, prejudice, and indifference placed most of the responsibility on mothers. These arguments were used in turn to promote the educational value of the exhibition.

Women Reforming Women

With mothers under scrutiny, gender and class dynamics played a central role in the exhibition. As described in the previous chapter, elite women were very involved in the organization and dissemination of knowledge about child rearing. They were considered experts in domains pertaining to the home and nursing. Maternalist reformers initiated the North American exhibitions, participated in their creation, and were onsite to propagate, demonstrate, and explain the information they contributed to creating. Some of these reformers were social science or medical experts, while others were philanthropists or women's rights advocates. Their professional affiliation and social class led these women to exercise control over other women.[119] Such was the case with public-health nurses who were mainly middle-class women while the public they aimed to reach were working-class mothers.[120] Motivated by their goals to reduce child mortality and improve the life of urban families, middle-class female reformers believed that promoting their ideas on public health, morality, and social norms would benefit other women. Essentially, they told other women what they should do and how they should behave to

[119] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 281.

[120] Cohen and Gélinas, "Les infimières hygiénistes de la ville de Montréal," 238; Robbins, "Class Struggles in the Tubercular World," 416.

raise “proper” children and keep “proper” homes. However, this meant devaluing the way working-class mothers ran their homes and passing judgment on their values.

Female journalists contributed to this campaign. Writing in *La Patrie*, for example, Madeleine Huguenin praised the work of the exhibition and condemned mothers who gave up breastfeeding. She claimed these mothers were selfish and capricious, arguing that it was the mothers’ weak character, their lack of patience, and their unwillingness to learn, that kept them from saving their babies.[121] Middle-class women were also subject to criticism for their performance as mothers and even professional nurses. However, the exhibition guided them toward behaviours based on their class norms and values, described as the best and only sensible options. Women were expected to follow the example of the dominant group’s middle-class women; their behaviour and domestic ideals. As a result, the archetypal ignorant mother became synonymous with the working-class mother.

Maternalist reformers presented mothers in more than one light. Although they criticized them for their ignorance, they brought to light their difficult reality. They used varieties of social photography to cast an empathetic eye on working-class mothers. Through images, these women were presented as needing to be given the opportunity to better their family’s life rather than to simply be reformed.[122] Some photographs revealed the difficulties of motherhood, such as the picture in figure 2.22 of a Chicago mother. She is standing in the street with her toddler in her arms and her other young child leaning against her with her face buried in her mother’s jacket. Looking down at her child, evading the photographer's lens, the mother seems aged by worry and the harshness of life. The image, exhibited at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, evoked poverty, exhaustion, illness, sadness, and pity. It could not leave the visitor indifferent.

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[121] Madeleine Huguenin, “Chronique,” *La Patrie*, Oct. 14, 1912, 4.
[122] Szlezák, “Capturing’ Immigrant Children,” 26-7.

Figure 2.22 Photograph of a mother with her two children used in an exhibit promoting help for families in their home rather than institutional care at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: *Pamphlets on Child Welfare Exhibit in Chicago—1911, (*Chicago: Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911). Photographer unknown.

On the other hand, instead of telling sad stories, progressive reformers such as New York's Lillian Wald chose to present pictures of seemingly lovable poor and sick people to solicit empathy and middle-class donations.[123] Such photographs of mothers and their babies were carefully posed and selected to be attractive and to leave a good impression. Likewise, the U.S. Children's Bureau created many posters to promote maternal feeding in exhibitions under the guidance of Dr. Anna Louise Strong. Notes reveal that mothers in posters were chosen for their

[123] David Huyssen, *Progressive Inequality: Rich and Poor in New York, 1890-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 138-141.

physical appearance. For example, the photograph of a very happy-looking mother and child was excluded from a screen as Strong's colleague noted that "this baby is a beauty, but the mother looks like a virago."[124] They were replaced by another pair that corresponded more closely to the standards of beauty of the time (figure 2.23). This shows that mothers were judged and scrutinized for a variety of reasons and contexts at the exhibition. Nevertheless, they were captured as empathetic subjects for the fundraising needs of the reformers.

Figure 2.23 Photograph of a happy baby in his mother's arms. The photograph on the left was discarded because the mother was considered too masculine next to another photograph selected by the U.S. Children's Bureau. Source: File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP. Photographer unknown.

[124] Annotated photograph, 1911, File 8-6-6-4-3, Children's Bureau, NACP.

Morality and Medicine

While emphasizing public-health education, the exhibition also promoted social and moral hygiene. Indeed, organizers connected the morality and behaviours of parents directly to their children's health. Middle-class reformers' criticism of working-class morality was the dominant theme. However, reformers' efforts to prevent blindness provide a possible counter-example. This subject is remarkable as it was given a significant place in each North American exhibition. For instance, the Chicago exhibition included twenty-four wall panels on the prevention of blindness and vision conservation.[125] Specifically, the Montreal exhibition showcased a photograph of the typical intervention of a nurse putting drops in a newborn's eyes. This medical protocol, still in place in Quebec, used silver nitrate drops to protect babies from conjunctivitis caused by gonorrhea and syphilis.[126] These two infections can cause infant mortality, blindness, and insanity in children, and invalidity in mothers. Although experts claimed that infections were mostly "due to the lax morals of our male population," connecting gonorrhea and syphilis to prostitution, they took a surprisingly non-moralizing approach. In the Montreal handbook, they discussed the importance of prevention and advised the public to overcome the "prudish neglect" over these infections and their outcomes so that their severe consequences could be avoided. Experts claimed that

> The greater part of the "fast living" among our boys and young men, is due to an ignorance on their part of the physiology of sex and of the appalling results which are almost certain to follow their lack of self control. The young women and mothers of the community may also help a very considerable degree in solving this problem if they will adopt a more rational, more intelligent and kindlier attitude, not only towards the men, but

[125] Photographs of wall panel, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I and Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

[126] *Souvenir Handbook,* 7; Dorothy L Moore MD, Noni E MacDonald MD, Canadian Paediatric Society, and Infectious Diseases and Immunization Committee, "Preventing Ophthalmia Neonatorum," *Paediatr Child Health* 20, no. 2 (2015):93-96. Today erythromycin ointment is used instead of silver nitrate, and its use is no longer recommended as mandatory for newborns that are not at risk for chlamydial conjunctivitis.

> also towards those young girls and young women who, as a result of ignorance, poverty and unusual temptation, are led to adopt the life of the prostitute.[127]

This direct and honest rhetoric does not condemn prostitution, advocating instead for prevention through education. This aligns with experts' discourse on working-class ignorance. Yet, although it connects morality and prostitution, this discourse argues for a change in attitude and perspective towards commercialized sex, pushing for greater openness and understanding. This excerpt shows a different side of reformers. The goal in this instance was not to impose a moral standard but to propose measures based on an understanding and sensitivity to the realities of life in Montreal. This perspective does not appear judgmental and seems to be aimed at the elites, urging them to feel compassion for the working-class people depicted. This might be explained by the extent of the problems and consequences surrounding blindness and the commitment of doctors to improve the situation through prevention. Moreover, as children were presented as the future of the nation, reformers at the Chicago exhibition stated that "the conservation of the child's Eyesight is one of the nation's most important duties."[128] Since the scientific advent of bacteriology and the new understanding of disease transmission at the end of the nineteenth century, prevention had become a central part of public education. Around the same time, new science and statistics also allowed for accident prevention in industrial settings. Magda Fahrni explains that risk management associated with industrial modernity created a new masculine technical expertise in Montreal that included the transnational sharing of knowledge.[129] Hygienists followed a similar path, drawing on to modern notions of risk management to guide their preventive actions and organizing to promote the growth of their profession.[130] Overall, the

[127] *Souvenir Handbook,* 8.

[128] Photograph of a wall panel, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I

[129] Magda Fahrni, "Accident Prevention in Early-Twentieth-Century Quebec and the Construction of Masculine Expertise," in *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities Across Time and Place*. eds Peter Gossage and Robert Allen Rutherdale (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2018.), 46-47 and 58.

[130] Tomes, *Gospel of the Germs*, 92; Baillargeon, "Les rapports médecins-infirmieres," 39-40.

way this specific health problem was treated shows the complexity of the reformers' work. Throughout the exhibition, we see instances of understanding of the gap between the recommended best practices and the working-class reality emerging next to moralizing discourses, as experts tried to find a balance and get the working-class to adhere to their teachings.

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Newspapers reported that the infant mortality section of the MCWE attracted the largest audiences, producing daily headlines about this sensitive subject. They spoke of "a large crowd of mothers" in this section at all times.[131] The connection between milk, mothers, and infant mortality was central in the social-reform discourses transmitted through the exhibition and its media coverage. Maximizing the impact of the exhibition medium, they used different methods to get their message across to the public. The two main messages were very much in tension. Reformers presented information blaming mothers for the death of their babies, because of their ignorance or lack of good care. Other posters and displays presented mothers as caring and nurturing. These representations align with historians' findings on the medicalization of maternity and scientific motherhood, as specialists found mothers to be naturally suited for care of their families. At the same time, they thought they were unable to make good decisions for their children without expert assistance.[132] However, the information conveyed throughout the

[131] "Mothers Watch Screen Flashes as Infants Die," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 16, 1912, 2.
[132] See Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies;* Apple, *Perfect Motherhood;* Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*.

exhibition showed that mothers made decisions for themselves and that doctors adapted some of their discourse to reduce infant mortality.

Chapter 3: Housing and the City: Reforming the Spaces of Childhood

Les photos des maisons bien en vue en entrant dans la section sur le foyer nous rappellent des temps plus dur, madame Lebrun et moi. On a toutes les deux grandi dans le bas de la ville sur la terre battue. La vie était difficile mais on s'en est sorti. Je peux dire que je suis fière de ne pas élever mes enfants dans une maison de fond de cour. Mais ça fait mal au cœur de voir les petites faces devant ces maisons affichées sur des grands panneaux. La misère je la connais, j'ai pas envie de la voir partout sur les murs. Ça fait qu'on a préféré traverser cette partie-là ben vite pour aller voir une démonstration de cuisine. Ça sentait bon et il y avait une atmosphère festive près de la table. La demoiselle était bien avenante et tout le monde autour semblait plus joyeux. Je me suis dit que ça pourrait être plaisant d'apprendre une nouvelle recette. Je suis pas fâché de poursuivre la visite dans une section qui semble déjà un peu plus gaie. Il y a de l'action partout où je regarde; des démonstrations, des objets exposés, des femmes qui expliquent toutes sortes de choses. C'est divertissant tout ça mais qu'est-ce qu'on peut ben m'apprendre sur le lavage à moi, une mère de famille qui ne compte plus les heures qu'elle passe à laver? Qu'on vienne pas me dire que je sais pas comment habiller pis nourrir mes petits. Vers la fin de la section, ils ont reproduit des chambres qui faisaient comme si on regardait dans un logement habité par une famille. Ah c'était beau mais je sais ben pas comment on pourrait se payer ça. Ça m'a plutôt rendue triste. Je sais bien que je suis chanceuse d'habiter dans un loyer chauffé, éclairé, avec des toilettes pis toute, mais des fois j'aimerais donc ça avoir des beaux meubles neufs et des beaux rideaux.

A *Montreal Daily Star* reporter asked his readers to reflect on a photograph of working-class housing he had seen at the exhibition: "Suppose a baby is born in that squalid room in Benoit street which is shown in one of the screens. What chance of life has it? Decidedly a very small one, unless it comes of abnormally healthy stock."[1] With its portents of doom for future local residents, this quote reveals the impression the Homes section left on the visitors who surely did not live in the area. As a city of renters, Montreal had a growing "slum problem" in 1912. This problem was central for reformers concerned with child welfare. The displays of the MCWE challenged mothers' outlooks about their roles and responsibilities regarding child welfare. In particular, the Homes of the Children section intensified their conflicted feelings, as it explored

[1] "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21. Benoit street was located west of St. Urbain street, between St. Catherine west and Dorchester west. See Charles E. Goad Co, *Insurance plan of city of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, volume I* (Montreal: Charles E. Goad, Co. Civil Engineers, 1909), 17.

their most intimate environment and their cultural expressions and behaviors. The home was traditionally the mother's exclusive preserve. By casting light onto their private space, the exhibition empowered women, giving them a legitimate place in the public sphere. But this exposure also made them vulnerable to criticism and condemnation in the public eye. Meanwhile, the exhibition organizers also placed the responsibility of child welfare on the city environment, dedicating the following section to its problems and possible improvements to Montreal's overcrowded districts. Unlike the Health section, which placed all the blame for infant mortality and children's health on the individual, this next section began to target the systemic causes of this social problem. Ultimately, the privacy of the home was breached, as domestic life was analyzed in all of its aspects, leaving visitors to question the extent to which parents or municipal administrators were responsible for poor housing conditions in Montreal.

This chapter will explore the section of the exhibition that focused on housing and the city. After surveying Montreal housing, other aspects of domestic life will be highlighted, namely clothing, cooking, and furnishings, which were popular displays at the exhibit. What was the impact of exposing the intimate daily activities of families' home lives and the domestic setting? How do these displays reveal class encounters and zones of social control? Without excluding their benevolence and good intentions, we will see that feminist maternalist imposed their common ideals and biases on working-class mothers. Lastly, considering the exhibition's propositions for improving the city environment will set the stage for exploring reformist discourses addressed to city administrators. Throughout this chapter, examples will emphasize perceptions and relationships between the working class and the more privileged groups, with comparisons between Montreal and other North American metropolises. I will also highlight the transnational connections between reformers and ideas on city improvement.

The Good and the Bad: Housing in Montreal

A Changing City

At the turn of the twentieth century, Montreal experienced a period of great economic and territorial expansion, making it Canada's premier metropolis. Although Montreal was going through what historian Paul-André Linteau describes as its golden age, class differences and power relationships were aggravated. Contributing to these cleavages, the city's population increased dramatically, doubling from 250,000 to over 500,000 in first decade of the century. The composition of the population also changed as internal and international migration increased. Many French Canadians moved to the city from rural Quebec in hopes of finding employment in one of the many industrial factories. By 1911, French Canadians accounted for 63.5 percent of Montreal's population. Meanwhile, immigration brought a new ethnic diversity to the city, with fewer newcomers from the British Isles and more from eastern and southern Europe. Montrealers of British origin accounted for 25.7 percent of the population in 1911, a decrease of 6 percent from 1901. This decline was due largely to lower immigration from this group as well as the bourgeoisie leaving the city for new suburban communities such as Westmount. Significantly, by 1911, seven percent of the city's population was now made up of new immigrants from continental Europe, the largest group being composed of East European Jews. Another notable group of immigrants came from Italy during this wave, making up 1.5 percent of Montreal's population. As Paul-André Linteau explains, this increase in immigration from groups other than French or British origins is the most important demographic phenomenon of this period. By 1911, immigrants represented an unprecedented ten percent of the population, up from five percent in 1901 and two percent earlier in the nineteenth century. These new ethnic groups crossed paths throughout the city, especially in central districts. They brought with them their languages and quickly built their own institutions and community organizations; therefore, pre-

existing societal partitioning between French-Catholic and Anglo-Protestant institutions would not be immediately disrupted by their arrival.[2]

Although there were many differences between them, around two-thirds of Montrealers had the common experience of working for low wages and living in relative or absolute poverty. The unparalleled population growth led to serious housing shortages, rising rents, and poor living conditions.[3] The Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Cost of Living of 1913-1915 stated that in Montreal

> Housing conditions have degenerated and there is a decided lack of workingmen's dwellings with proper conveniences at low rentals. Rents have increased 50 per cent in the last seven years, leading to "doubling up" of families in same apartment or house, overcrowding and ill health. Present rentals for workingmen range from $7 to $18, averaging $10. City assessments have increased considerably since 1900.[4]

At the 1912 exhibition, reformers pointed to similar findings concerning the unhealthy housing available in the metropolis. However, reformers' alarming criticism over working-class housing exaggerated and generalized terrible living conditions that did not characterize all Montreal workers. Historians have emphasized the agency and the resourcefulness of the working class, showing that they formed a heterogeneous group. There is also evidence that overcrowding decreased in working-class housing between 1850 and 1900 and that new constructions were of superior quality and had access to better utilities. Although there were still cases of overcrowding in workers' housing in 1912, sanitary and hygienic problems were more important and alarming

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[2] Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, 141, 159-165. On wealthy Anglophones leaving inner-city districts and new residential districts see Robert D. Lewis "A City Transformed: Manufacturing Districts and Suburban Growth in Montreal, 1850—1929," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1 (January 2001): 26.

[3] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, 70.

[4] John McDougald and Robert Hamilton Coats, *Board of Inquiry into the Cost of Living: Report of the Board* (Ottawa: Printed by J. Taché, 1915), 483. As we will look more closely at the family budget in the section of the exhibition on industrial conditions in Chapter 6, it will be made clear that the standard of living of working-class families barely allowed them to meet their needs and contributed to the cycle of poverty and sickness.

to the reformers who described them as being overwhelmingly unhealthy.[5] This discourse is telling of the class bias that characterized progressive reformers and it was particularly apparent in this section of the exhibition. It aligned with the 1897 findings of reformer H. B. Ames' social investigation of "the city below the hill," painting a miserable picture of the living conditions of the working class in Montreal's southwestern districts.[6] Linking public health, public morals, living conditions, and class, reformers put forward their ideals and promoted their values, many of which were incompatible with the realities of the working class.[7] Nonetheless, choosing to focus on unsanitary conditions, the MCWE created a compelling exhibit on housing.

The Homes Committee of the Montreal exhibition team was made up of nine women and three men, which made it the most feminine section of the exhibition. By contrast, the City Environment Committee had a ratio of one woman to ten men.[8] This can be explained by the maternalist vision that legitimised women's expertise on the subject of the home.[9] Jeanne Anctil, trained in France and in Switzerland, teacher of household science, principal of the Écoles Ménagères Provinciales and Homes Committee member, is a great example of an expert in a new science that developed through transnational networks.[10] The presence on the Homes Committee of Caroline Dessaulles-Béique, president of the FNSJB and co-founder of the Écoles Ménagères Provinciales, and Dr. Grace Ritchie England, president of the MLCW (both were members of the Executive Committee as well) emphasises the importance of this specific exhibit.[11] Additionally,

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[5] See Gilles Lauzon, "Cohabitation et déménagements en milieu ouvrier montréalais. Essai de reinterprétation à partir du cas du Village Saint-Augustin (1871-1881)," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique francaise* 46, no. 1 (September 1992): 115–42; Bradbury, *Working Families,* 156; Olson Thornton. *Peopling the North American City,* 75, Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal,* 214-7; David Hanna and Sherry Olson "Métiers, loyers et bouts de rue: l'armature de la société montréalaise de 1881 à 1901," *Cahiers de géographie du Québec 27*, no. 71 (September 1983): 255–75.

[6] Ames, *City Below the Hill*.

[7] Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 133.

[8] *Souvenir Handbook*, 40.

[9] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes,* 148-9.

[10] Fradet, "Anctil, Jeanne."

[11] Caroline Dessaulles-Beique is also known as Madame F.L. Béique. *Souvenir Handbook*, 40.

this important feminine contingent stressed the dual role of women at the exhibition. As progressive-feminist reformers, they were leaders who played an important part in creating the discourses on domestic life and disseminating the knowledge. At the same time, as mothers, they were the object of recommended reforms. Moreover, progressive middle-class women often subjected working-class women to their ideas and values. Although women were not always uplifting other women in this context, they brought light to their domestic issues and attempted to improve their daily lives and those of their children.

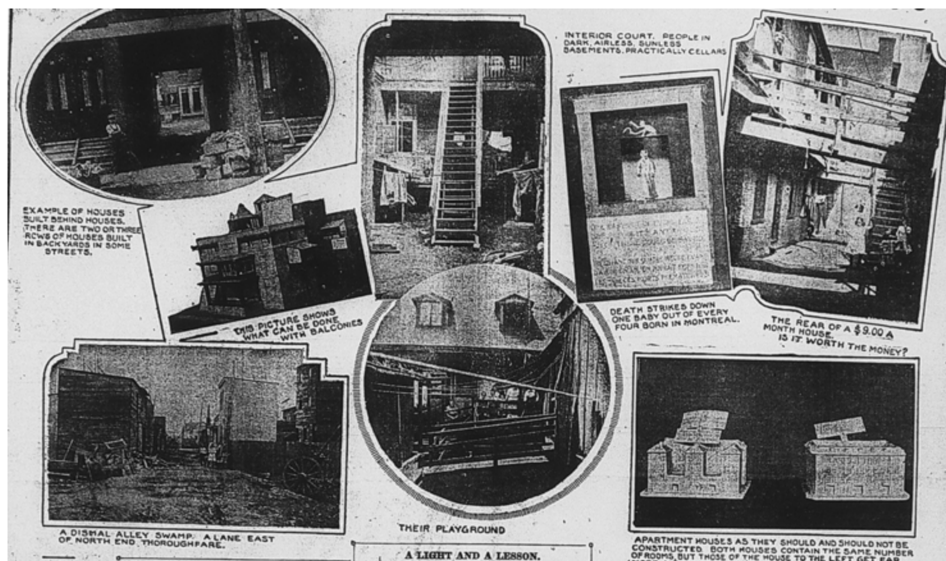
Private Life on Display: Public and Private Reactions

Without a doubt, the Homes of the Children section was one of the most striking exhibits of the MCWE. The installations consisted of wall exhibits, models, as well as living demonstrations. The variety of presentation methods was intended to display all aspects of the child's home life. Photographs of actual working-class homes left little room for imagination, and were especially staged by exhibitors in a forward social documentary style to send a particular message, as in figure 3.1. The images were staged to show that young innocent children were left unattended in dangerous and insalubrious environments. The contrast between the purity of the children and the "squalor" of their living conditions was intentionally foregrounded for the observer. Opp explains that such photographs highlighted the dire need for assistance and the dangers faced by children living in these neighbourhoods, presented as depraved.[12] Likewise, Koslow shows that exhibitors chose alarmist displays to bring awareness to the middle class.[13] As these visual presentations of vulnerable children in slum conditions were designed as a call for urgent urban reforms, they also provoked significant reactions from the public and the media. Montreal newspapers reproduced

[12] Opp, "Religion Photography in Winnipeg," 85-6.
[13] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health,* 76.

shocking images of family dwellings and their surroundings, while others described them vividly in print (figure 3.2). This brought to light the private lives of women and their families, for better and for worse.

Figure 3.1 "Their only playing space." Photograph of children in front of their home in one of Montreal's working-class district. Source: *Souvenir Handbook* (Montreal: La Patrie, 1912), 11. Photographer unknown.



EXAMPLE OF HOUSES BUILT BEHIND HOUSES. THERE ARE TWO OR THREE ROWS OF HOUSES BUILT IN BACKYARDS IN SOME STREETS.

INTERIOR COURT. PEOPLE IN DARK, AIRLESS, SUNLESS BASEMENTS, PRACTICALLY CELLARS

THIS PICTURE SHOWS WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH BALCONIES

DEATH STRIKES DOWN ONE BABY OUT OF EVERY FOUR BORN IN MONTREAL.

THE REAR OF A $9.00 A MONTH HOUSE. IS IT WORTH THE MONEY?

A DISMAL ALLEY SWAMP. A LANE EAST OF NORTH END THOROUGHFARE.

THEIR PLAYGROUND

A LIGHT AND A LESSON.

APARTMENT HOUSES AS THEY SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUCTED. BOTH HOUSES CONTAIN THE SAME NUMBER OF ROOMS, BUT THOSE OF THE HOUSE TO THE LEFT GET FAR

Figure 3.2 "The Voice of the Child Cries Out Against You." The front page of the second section of the Saturday edition of the Montreal Daily Star on October 19th, 1912 was all about the home section of the MCWE. Source: *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21. Photographer unknown.

Inevitably, this part of the exhibition presented images that were particularly sensitive for mothers visiting the exhibit; one might say that they contained emotional triggers. An article

from the *Montreal Daily Herald* published on October 9th, 1912, titled “Woman Faints Seeing Squalid Home Show at Welfare Exhibit” showcased a “dramatic” example of the impact these public representations of private life could have on visitors. The reporter described the photograph at the front of the booth: “It was quite easy to recognize the features of the supposedly pauperized family in the foreground of a rather ancient looking house. Above was the heading 'Haunts of Gangs.'” Such captions paired with photographs, creating a social documentary, were characteristically used by reformers to problematize children’s urban environment as a moral or immoral space (figure 3.3).[14] The article continued by recounting the mother’s fainting and reacting to the display as she came back to her senses saying that

> On reviving she pointed at the photo with sorrowful gesture and explained in broken words that it was her home and that it was “no haunt of a gang.” “Let me say that my home is a happy and comfortable one and I think it is a crying outrage that my family of innocent children should be thus exposed as denizens of a haunt of a gang,” she cried. Her efforts to tear down the photo were frustrated.[15]

Insights such as these, relating to how people felt when viewing images reflective of their own way of life, are all-the-more important as working-class voices are almost completely absent from archives on this subject. Furthermore, this woman’s reaction shows that exhibit organizers displayed strong class bias in framing ordinary working-class homes as squalid incubators of depravity.[16]

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[14] Opp, “Religion Photography in Winnipeg,” 86-92

[15] “Woman Faints Seeing Squalid Home Show at Welfare Exhibit,” *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 9, 1912, 2.

[16] Opp, 85-9.

Figure 3.3 “A human Rookery, Montreal Tenements. Wanted Model Dwellings for the Workers’ Children.” This caption was juxtaposed with the photograph of children in the inner court of their home. The picture causing the mother to faint would have been similar to this. Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 11. Photographer unknown.

The exhibition and the handbook contained several photos of working-class homes that appeared to be in poor condition. Many depicted children standing in the stairs or in the yard entrance. As reported in *The Montreal Daily Herald* article mentioned above, the children in the photographs were likely to be recognized by visitors.[17] The newspaper testimony suggests mothers would have been shocked, ashamed, saddened, or distressed to have their children presented in this manner, and by this intrusion into their family’s private space, now on display in front of thousands of people. Most could not have shown their emotions outwardly, as the scarcity of testimony suggests, but they likely would have reacted strongly to images of their

[17] “Woman Faints,” *The Montreal Daily Herald*, 2.q

children, their surroundings, or upon recognizing familiar locations and even people presented at the exhibition.

Why would the exhibition present these photographs? What were the organizers' intentions? Was it to shame the visitors? Did they want to upset parents to provoke change? Or was this aimed at legislators? It was most likely a combination of these reasons. Historians have shown that mothers were often held accountable for their families' health, including in these first decades of the twentieth century. As we saw in the chapter 2, given their belief that mothers needed scientific and medical advice to raise healthy children, doctors and hygienists connected mothers' ignorance to their responsibility for the household's well-being.[18] Consequently, although working-class mothers understood their homes to be loving and their children well taken care of, the images and headings alarmed public opinion and implied that mothers were at fault for these poor living conditions, reinforcing the preconceived notions promoted by reformists. The display of shocking photos also aimed to convince the governments to take action.

Standards vs Reality

While the exhibit presented working-class women's domestic environment and practices as defective and needing improvement, it also highlighted middle-class ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes. Progressive reformers across America were very much preoccupied with the home of the child, and put the responsibility on parents. Accordingly, the 1911 *Handbook of the New York Child Welfare Exhibit* argued that

> Parents are, to a large degree, able to choose their dwelling places. It is often possible for the same expenditure for the parents to better vastly the living conditions under which the

[18] See Pierre-Deschênes, *La tuberculose au début du XXe siècle*; Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*; Andrée Lévesque, "Mères ou maladies," 26-27; Apple, "Constructing Mothers," 162, 168.

> child develops. The average workingman, however, does not understand exactly what constitutes "good housing." Furthermore, when he does understand, he does not know how or where to find it.[19]

Although quick to emphasize parents' ignorance, reformers acknowledged, to a certain degree, the dissonance between the notions they promoted and the realities faced by working families. Thus, they recommended suburban living while also admitting that some workers had to remain in cities where they lacked housing options. Moreover, the committee on homes of the New York Child Welfare Exhibit found that the most favorable living conditions for a child's welfare included sun light, fresh air, and space to play, while conceding that these were unattainable in crowded Manhattan districts. They also realized that builders prioritized profit over health and aimed to provide solutions with the exhibit.[20] The discrepancy between reformers' perceptions and the reality of working-class parents' choice of homes highlights unachievable standards of living based on class and gender.

For the same reason, mothers' control over their dwellings was also a concern for Montreal reformers. Cellars, inner courts, and rear tenements were presented as some of "the worst features of Montreal housing." The MCWE *Souvenir Handbook* quoted a woman who lived in one cellar home pictured in the exhibit who said that: "every spring when the thaw begins, our rooms are flooded with several inches of water. How can people, who are forced through poverty, to live in places of this sort, be expected to bring up healthy children?"[21] This mother's statement shows that families did not freely choose to live in unhealthy conditions but often had little power over their housing. The presence of this declaration in the handbook represents a change in paradigm from 1908 when public-health reformer Dr. Elzéar Pelletier,

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[19] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 20.
[20] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 21.
[21] *Souvenir Handbook*, 9-10.

Secretary of the Quebec Provincial Board of Health and future member of the MCWE's Homes Committee, expressed outrage at the fact "that there were always tenants willing to occupy" dark rooms, comparing them to medieval dungeons. He believed that people's ignorance of hygiene rules meant they did not know the impure air was bad for their health, which he argued was one reason for the pervasiveness of dark rooms in Montreal.[22] Dr. Pelletier unfairly blamed the victims, as tenants were undoubtedly capable of distinguishing between a dry, light-filled apartment and a wet and mouldy one.

Ex[hib]iting Dark Rooms

The issue of dark rooms was particularly important in 1908, as the Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition also stressed the importance of the home in preventing illnesses. When mentioning dark rooms in the listing of the exhibits of the housing section in exhibition's published catalogue, the reformers stated that: "Many such rooms are found in Montreal, especially in certain parts of the city in which the inhabitants are supposedly sufficiently intelligent to see the danger of such rooms."[23] The wording used here is unusual as the other exhibits are simply identified as part of a list.[24] The patronizing air and the sheer level of condescension of these statements, insinuating that the working-class population lacked intelligence, is representative of certain reformers' perceptions of the working class,. The quote also highlights the discrepancy between the standards they promoted and the realities of peoples' lives.

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[22] Minnett, "Inside and Outside," 67.

[23] *Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition Programme-Catalogue* (Montreal: The Montreal League for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, 1908), 30.

[24] The previous element is "614. Plans of New Henry Phipp Dispensary, Philadelphia." and the following is "616. Plans of flats in Montreal containing "Dark Rooms."" See *Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition Programme-Catalogue* (Montreal: The Montreal League for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, 1908), 30.

The Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition's most popular exhibit presented two contrasting Montreal living rooms: one was dark and featured furniture typical of a poor family, the other was neat and hygienically furnished by philanthropists for ten dollars.[25] The arrangement of the rooms emphasized the importance of light and fresh air. In her study of this 1908 exhibition, Valerie Minnett explains that the arguments were convincing, were viewed by thousands of visitors of the exhibit, and were discussed repeatedly in the city's newspapers. However, lack of action on the part of the municipal and provincial boards of health left many of the city's working-class dwellings in unsanitary condition. Nonetheless, Minnett found that the exhibition was able to "establish a cause-effect relationship between unsanitary housing and tuberculosis disease in the body." Indeed, many Montrealers were introduced to the notion that "their own homes could contribute to ill health" through this exhibition.[26]

Minnett suggests that the organizers, knowing that most visitors were working-class women and children who lived in comparable houses with dark rooms, "made use of the opportunity to further impress the message they hoped to convey," which was "that they could overcome the physical condition of their homes with little money, and a desire to take control of their domestic environments, thereby avoiding the consequences of tuberculosis on their bodies."[27] As housing and domesticity were the domain of women, organizers strengthened the reformist discourse asserting the mother was responsible for conditions in the home with the

[25] This amount corresponded to the weekly income of a construction labourer in 1911. See Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, 32-3.

[26] Minnett, "Inside and Outside," 80, 75-76, 81, 83, 82. More broadly on the relationship between healthy homes and healthy bodies, see Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women, 1870-1900*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

[27] Minnett, 76.

living room exhibit. These arguments were revived and adapted a few years later in the MCWE, which linked them to overall child health and welfare.[28]

Furthermore, the child-welfare exhibition chose to reproduce the "dark room makeover" demonstration in its tuberculosis exhibit, right next to the housing section. There was one significant difference with the 1908 display. The arrangements of the two rooms were altered but not the furniture, suggesting that reformers were becoming aware of the financial realities for working-class families. Nonetheless, the occupants' responsibility for their homes was still a subject of criticism. An article in *The Montreal Daily Star* described the two rooms, "both represent the abode of a person in humble circumstances, and the varied conditions depict the personality of the inhabitant."[29] Accordingly, the general guide for child-welfare exhibits prepared by Dr. Anna Louise Strong called such an exhibit "The homes of Mrs. Do Care and Mrs. Don't Care."[30] This label clearly shows that reformers held women responsible for their homes' conditions. *The Montreal Daily Star* article continued with a doctor's comments on "slum-dwellers," based on his experience visiting patients, arguing that they chose to live this way.[31] This is another example of experts blaming working-class families for unhealthy living environments. It is consistent with Valerie Minnett's findings that "condemning particular living arrangements and methods of performing routine activities sent the message that class distinction played a role in many cases of tuberculosis."[32] Still, the reproduction of the living-rooms exhibit shows that housing concerns persisted in Montreal throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, with dark rooms remaining a chief concern for Montreal's reformers and medical experts

[28] The newspaper coverage of the MCWE shows that event was most likely also mainly visited by working-class mothers and children, but it was also visited by all members of the community. See "Children of all Races Swarm into the Exhibition," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 9, 1912, 4.

[29] "Sharp Contrasts Prevail in Many Welfare Exhibits," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 17, 1912, 12.

[30] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits*, 36.

[31] "Sharp Contrasts Prevail," *The Montreal Daily Star*, 12.

[32] Minnett, "Inside and Outside," 84.

as late as the 1940s.[33] However, exacerbating factors were also consistent, including governments' failure to legislate on housing issues and contemptuous attitudes toward the working class by elites and experts.

Suburbs and Home Gardens

As reformers claimed that children needed space, sunlight, and fresh air, they concluded that suburban living could be the best and only solution to attain these conditions. New York experts were convinced that single-family houses in the suburbs would be optimal for child welfare. However, in their eyes, this would necessitate providing amenities to convince people to move to a new neighbourhood, including a transit system for workers, as well as amusement and social life.[34] They failed to mention that this would also require access to affordable housing in the suburbs. The Montreal exhibit experts criticized the suburbs just outside the city, which were already experiencing overcrowding.[35] Still, they argued land there was less expensive and families could establish themselves there permanently, as opposed to temporary rentals downtown. While extolling the benefits of suburban living, the exhibition also encouraged initiatives to improve and beautify the city environment. The Home Garden department featured an "exhibit of a good and a bad backyard," showing that by planting seeds "in ugly spots of the city," not only would children make the city attractive, they would "have a wholesome occupation, which brings them close to nature."[36] In Montreal, Maisonneuve was a great example of an industrial suburb developed by promotors at the turn of the twentieth century with a

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[33] Mary Anne Poutanen, Sherry Olson, Raphael Fischler, and Kevin Schwartzman, "Tuberculosis in Town: Mobility of Patients in Montreal, 1925-1950," *Social History / Histoire sociale* 42, no. 83 (May 2009): 91.

[34] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 21.

[35] Robert Lewis discusses the cases of Saint-Henri and Sainte-Cunégonde. See "The Industrial Suburb Is Dead, Long Live the Industrial Slum: Suburbs and Slums in Chicago and Montreal, 1850–1950," *Planning Perspectives* 17, 2 (2002): 125, 146.

[36] *Souvenir Handbook*, 10.

beautifying campaign, following new trends in urban design. Paul-André Linteau explains that this 1910 campaign was made possible by a local bourgeoisie motivated to make its mark and demonstrate its capabilities, the euphoric climate of prosperity, and the prevailing liberal ideology shaped by a belief in progress. Such a project sprung from the City-Beautiful movement originating in the United States and the British City-Garden movement, part of a larger urban beautification crusade aiming to improve city life.[37]

In practice, working-class living conditions remained unchanged for the time being and modest attempts to improve the city were insufficient to ensure children's health and welfare. As the exhibition shocked visitors by exposing these traditionally private living conditions with dramatic photographs, the contrasting proposed housing standards continued to be unattainable for working-class families, mainly because of the cost of suburban home-owning and the fragility of working-class income.

Fulfilling Basic Needs: Clothing, Food, and Furnishings

The Home section of the exhibition aimed to be different from other sections, by reducing the emphasis on statistics about faulty child-rearing methods. This was not so obvious in the housing exhibit, where images of unsanitary dwellings were given pride of place. But the aim of promoting child welfare by giving parents positive suggestions to improve their home lives was much more visible in the clothing, food, and furnishing exhibits.[38] New knowledge about fabrics, cooking, and home organization had developed from new research on child rearing and from the

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[37] Paul-André Linteau, *The Promoters' City: Building the Industrial Town of Maisonneuve, 1883-1918*, (Toronto, Ont.: J. Lorimer, 1985), 137.

[38] *Souvenir Handbook*, 9.

professionalization of housekeeping and household management.[39] These exhibit displays were full of advice, conveying numerous, detailed, and precise demonstrations on these topics. However, presenting a "proper" way to do things in the home exposed what reformers saw as "defective" parental behaviors.

"What Was the Matter with Mary's Last Dress"[40]

Experts on textiles prepared an exhibit on children's clothing detailing how to choose clothes and how to care for them. Looking at the Chicago exhibit's photographs, the clothing display seemed to appeal to a wide audience (figure 3.4). For example, they explained the "right way" to wash babies' woolens in contrast to regular clothing, as they said the traditional process caused it to shrink. The instructions were clearly stated in the exhibition handbook: "Shave good soap and melt in over the fire. Add enough luke-warm water to make suds. Wash in two waters by squeezing only. Rinse in luke-warm suds. Squeeze out the water, shake well, hang in the open air."[41] The experts also gave advice on choosing clothing, with an emphasis on what they thought were the "right" colours and the "proper" fabric. Accordingly, they demonstrated methods to test fabrics and presented optimal clothing for children of different ages, designed and selected according to value, comfort, appropriateness, and attractiveness.[42] These prescriptive methods and criteria were based on medical recommendations and reformers' ideals of suitability for children, again pressing their gendered, middle-class norms on working-class mothers. Looking

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[39] Christina Bates, "How to Dress the Children? A Comparison of Prescription and Practice in Late-Nineteenth-Century North America," *Dress* 24, 1 (1997): 44; Jocelyne Mathieu, "L'éducation familiale et la valorisation du quotidien des femmes au XXe siècle," *Les Cahiers des dix* 57 (2003): 121; Durand, *Nourrir la machine humaine*, 88-90.

[40] *Textiles. What Was the Matter with Mary's Last Dress?*, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

[41] *Souvenir Handbook*, 10-11.

[42] *Souvenir Handbook*, 11.

at child-care manuals, fashion journals, and mail-order catalogues, Christina Bates finds that advice on children's clothing in the late nineteenth century did not reflect practice in the home. However, children's fashion adapted to health experts' recommendations to a certain degree, for example by popularizing the use of wool undergarments, which the medical experts had first recommended to maintain an even body temperature. Bates shows that the dress-reform campaign was aimed at middle-class mothers and that fashion journals for women called on them to set an example for working-class mothers. As we have seen for the prescriptive advice in the children's health section, Bates shows that the child experts saw the mother as ignorant and "threatening to their children's health by clinging to traditional ways."[43]

Figure 3.4 Visitors looking at clothing display at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

[43] Bates, "How to Dress Children," 45-51.

A paper presented at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit outlines a meticulous process involved in choosing proper children's clothing, as prescribed by experts. Nelly Crooks of Milwaukee's Downer College presented "The Clothing of Children" to women working in settlements or in large institutions. Based on her shopping experiences, she discussed the importance of material for different clothing items, as well as the difficulties in finding garments of good wool. She demonstrated how to test the percentage of wool in the fabric and recommended layering thinner fabrics when it was impossible to get good wool for a fair price. Crooks discussed specific items of clothing, from stockings to blouses, showing pieces and mentioning the price she paid for them in a poor neighbourhood. She explained clearly what was wrong with certain items and what should be worn instead. This expert aimed to educate women to help them choose clothing for institutionalized children, as well as passing on the knowledge.[44]

Similarly, an article from The *Montreal Gazette* described how a young lady explained to visitors how to test clothing said to be all wool to reveal its true composition.[45] Moreover, wall panels exhibited in Chicago presented similar information, using a specific language style and form. Titled, "What was the matter with Mary's last dress," the panel asked questions directly to visiting mothers about their experience with their child's clothing, provided specific advice on shopping and fabric testing, and displayed small textile samples and experiment results (figure 3.5).[46] These examples highlight the exchange of scientific knowledge among North American progressive women. They also show that finding affordable, quality clothing was not easy in working-class districts in either country. Many items were sold under false pretenses, with a

[44] Nelly Crooks, "The Clothing of Children," in *The Child in the City: A Series of Papers Presented at the Conferences Held During the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit*, ed. Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge (Chicago: Chicago School of Civics and Philosophy, Department of Social Investigation, 1912): 92-99.

[45] "Public Flocking to Exhibition. Demonstrators of Various Departments Are Listened to by Large and Ever-Changing Crowds," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 11, 1912, 2.

[46] *Textiles. What Was the Matter with Mary's Last Dress?,* photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

much lower wool percentage than advertised, which made it important to provide women with concrete information. Clearly, wool was discussed extensively at child-welfare exhibitions and was a highly sought-after fabric. Based on Bates' discussion of the scientific study and recommendations of wool by medical and fashion experts, it seems obvious that the exhibit experts based themselves on the same contemporary findings to promote this natural fibre in children's clothes.

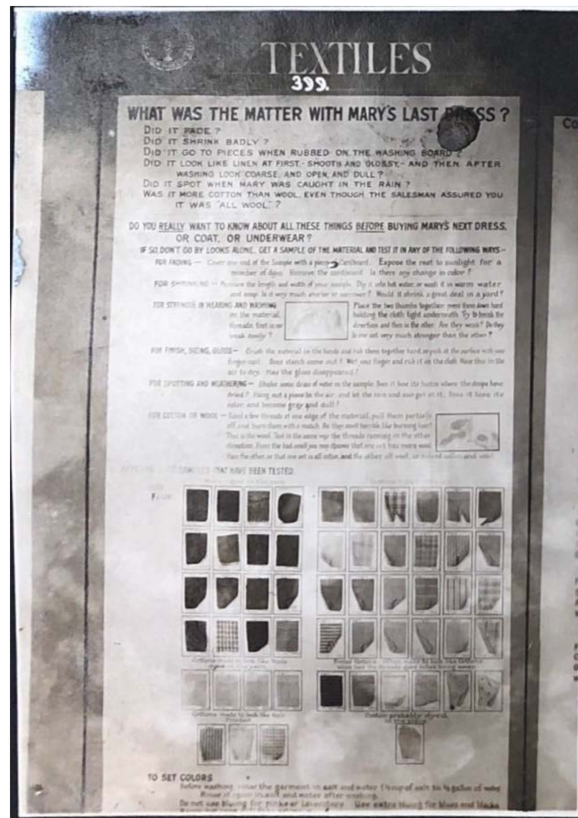


Figure 3.5 "What Was the Matter with Mary's Last Dress?" Wall panel presented at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown. Photographer unknown.

However educational its intentions, the clothing section also contributed to the judgemental representations of domesticity. As new experts in matters of housekeeping, the progressive maternalists promoted reformist ideals of normative motherhood and childhood. Accordingly, Bates explains that reformers

> subscribed to the prevailing ideology which prescribed that mother, whose domain was the home, was the morally superior of the sexes, the keeper of family values and protector of the physical and moral health of family members. Yet pervading all types of child-care literature was a deep distrust of mother - of the traditional ways in which she raised her children and of the old networks through which she got her information.[47]

This was especially visible in the way children's clothing was presented in Chicago. After exploring the Chicago exhibit, visiting nurse Curry D. Breckinridge described the baby tent exhibit saying: "in two of its little cribs were displayed dolls improperly dressed (an Italian bambino swaddled up to its neck and a Polish baby tied up in a pillow) while an American doll-baby, kicking in the undisguised comfort of a little short and a single napkin, in a third dressing in hot weather." Nurse Breckinridge reported two contrasting reactions to this display. A mother who had lost her baby told the exhibit's explainer that if she had only known how to properly dress her child, she could have saved her baby, to which the explainer replied that now that she knew she could spread the word and help to save other babies. In opposition, an elderly visitor expressed her outrage seeing the babies barely dressed, which she found immodest.[48] Such scenes and presentations show how perceptions of race and ethnicity could cause tensions between women at the exhibit. As the comment from the older visitor shows, some women reacted negatively to displays preventing differences in cultures and customs that impacted the dressing of babies.

These same displays often presented immigrant practices as inappropriate and the "American" manner of dress as appropriate. Looking at a photograph of the exhibit (figure 3.6), the untrained eye, viewing these images decades later, cannot tell that the dolls represent Italian or Polish babies. However, as a Chicago visiting nurse, Breckinridge was able to differentiate between the two traditional ways of swaddling babies and it is likely that many contemporary

[47] Bates, "How to Dress Children," 44.
[48] Breckinridge, "The Child in the Midst," 819.

visitors would have made the same distinctions. Therefore, members of the Italian and Polish communities could have felt targeted and "triggered" seeing their cultures labelled as "improper" by the exhibit. One hopes that the exhibit explainers were able to defuse the situation by providing additional information justifying this display and convincing mothers of the dangers of overdressing babies in warm weather.

Figure 3.6 Baby tent exhibit at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. The close-up detail Shows dolls in two different cribs identified as the "Improper Way to Dress Baby" and the "Proper Way to Dress Baby". Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown. Photographer unknown.

Although we have no direct evidence of such a demonstration taking place in the Montreal clothing section, the overall similarity with the American exhibitions can lead us to believe that parallel representations occurred. When they did, the focus of differentiation in Montreal was more on morality between social class than on ethnicity as in the American case. In the Montreal exhibits, middle-class ideals were on display, while the working class was presented as in need of rescue, just as in the housing section. Nonetheless, the increase in immigration from Italy and Eastern Europe could have led to emphasis on these different traditional ways of dressing children, especially by visiting nurses.

Food: Fueling the Body

While food was recognized as a very prominent component in the growth of children, experts focused on the fact that mothers needed training and guidance to balance budget and nutrition. As Cohen explains, these new professional women in nutrition aimed to emancipate themselves and other women through their maternalist actions. While expanding the field of expertise for women, these progressive reformers promoted social and family morality.[49] The food exhibit presented a table comparing nutritional values and price per pound, prepared by the Montreal Dietary Dispensary. Nutrition specialists aimed to show mothers that they could buy cheap but nourishing foods, stating that "about 25c. per day is the least amount on which a child of 10 can be properly fed." They recommended, for example: "pure milk, well cooked cereals, soft cooked eggs, cooked fruit, fruit juice, well cooked vegetables, milk puddings and similar food."[50] Experts also emphasized children's changing needs as they went through different stages of their development. The exhibit provided examples of children's menus appropriate for specific age

[49] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes*, 148-9.
[50] *Souvenir Handbook*, 11.

groups, with detailed costs and nutritional values (figure 3.7). The Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit's Food and Feeding committee described food as fuel for children, referring to specific numbers of calories and proteins required for children given their age.[51] Pamphlets with practical suggestions, advice, explanations, menus, and recipes were available for visitors at the low price of five or ten cents (figures 3.8).

6 SCHOOL OF HOUSEHOLD ARTS

MEALS FOR ONE DAY

For Three Children in a Family with an Eight Hundred Dollar Income

I.

CHILD 2—4 YEARS OLD.

Breakfast: 7.30 A. M.	Oatmeal Mush	0.8 oz. Dry Cereal
	Milk	1½ Cup
	Stale Bread	1 Slice
	Orange Juice	4 Tablespoons
Lunch: 11 A. M.	Milk	1 Cup
	Stale Bread	1 Slice
	Butter	1 Teaspoon
Dinner: 1.00 P. M.	Baked Potato	1
	Boiled Onions (Mashed)	1
	Bread and Butter	1 Slice
	Milk to Drink	1 Cup
	Baked Apple	1
Supper: 5.30 P. M.	Boiled Rice	Cup
	Milk	¾ Cup
	Bread and Butter	1 Slice

NUTRITIVE VALUE AND COST.

Material	Weight oz.		Protein gms.	Fuel Value Calories	Cost
Rolled Oats	0.8		4.2	100	0.0030
Stale Bread	2.0		7.0	200	0.0080
Orange Juice	2.0		...	25	0.0150
Butter	0.5		0.1	100	0.0110
Potato	2.6		1.3	50	0.0020
Onion	1.0		0.5	14	0.0030
Apple	2.0		0.2	26	0.0100
Sugar	0.2		...	23	0.0006
Rice	1.0		2.3	100	0.0050
Milk	3.44	(1 Qt.)	32.20	675	0.0800
			47.80	1313	0.1377

SUBSTITUTES OR ADDITIONS.

For Rolled Oats or Rice: Other cereals, such as rolled wheat, wheaten grits, farina, hominy and corn meal.

For Orange Juice and Baked Apple: Prune pulp or apple sauce.

For Onions: Spinach, strained peas, stewed celery, carrots, or cauliflower tips.

An egg may be added every day, and should be included at least two or three times a week.

These changes will alter the cost somewhat.

THE FEEDING OF YOUNG CHILDREN 7

II.

CHILD 4—8 YEARS OLD.

Breakfast:	Oatmeal Mush	1½ oz. dry cereal
	Top Milk	4 ozs.
	Stewed Prunes	4 or 5
	Toast	1 Slice
	Milk to Drink	6 ozs.
Dinner:	Pea Soup	1 Cup
	Croutons	1 Slice Bread
	Boiled Onions	2 Small
	Baked Potato	1 Large
	Molasses Cookies	2
Supper:	Cream Toast	2 Slices Bread
	Rice Pudding with Milk and Sugar	1 Cup
	Milk to Drink	5 ozs.

NUTRITIVE VALUE AND COST.

Material	Weight oz.		Protein gms.	Fuel Value Calories	Cost
Rolled Oats	1.3		6.1	150	0.0045
Prunes	1.3		0.7	100	0.0100
Milk	34.4	(1 Qt.)	32.2	675	0.0800
Bread	3.0		10.5	300	0.0120
Peas—Split	1.0		6.9	100	0.0046
Onions	4.0		2.0	56	0.0120
Sugar	1.0		6.9	115	0.0046
Potato	5.0		2.5	96	0.0039
Cookies	1.0		2.0	100	0.0040
Rice	1.0		2.3	100	0.0050
Butter	0.5		0.1	100	0.0110
			65.4	1892	0.1496

SUBSTITUTES OR ADDITIONS.

For Rolled Oats: Other Cereals, as suggested on previous page.

For Onions and Peas: Strained dried beans; other vegetables carefully cooked; fresh letttuce.

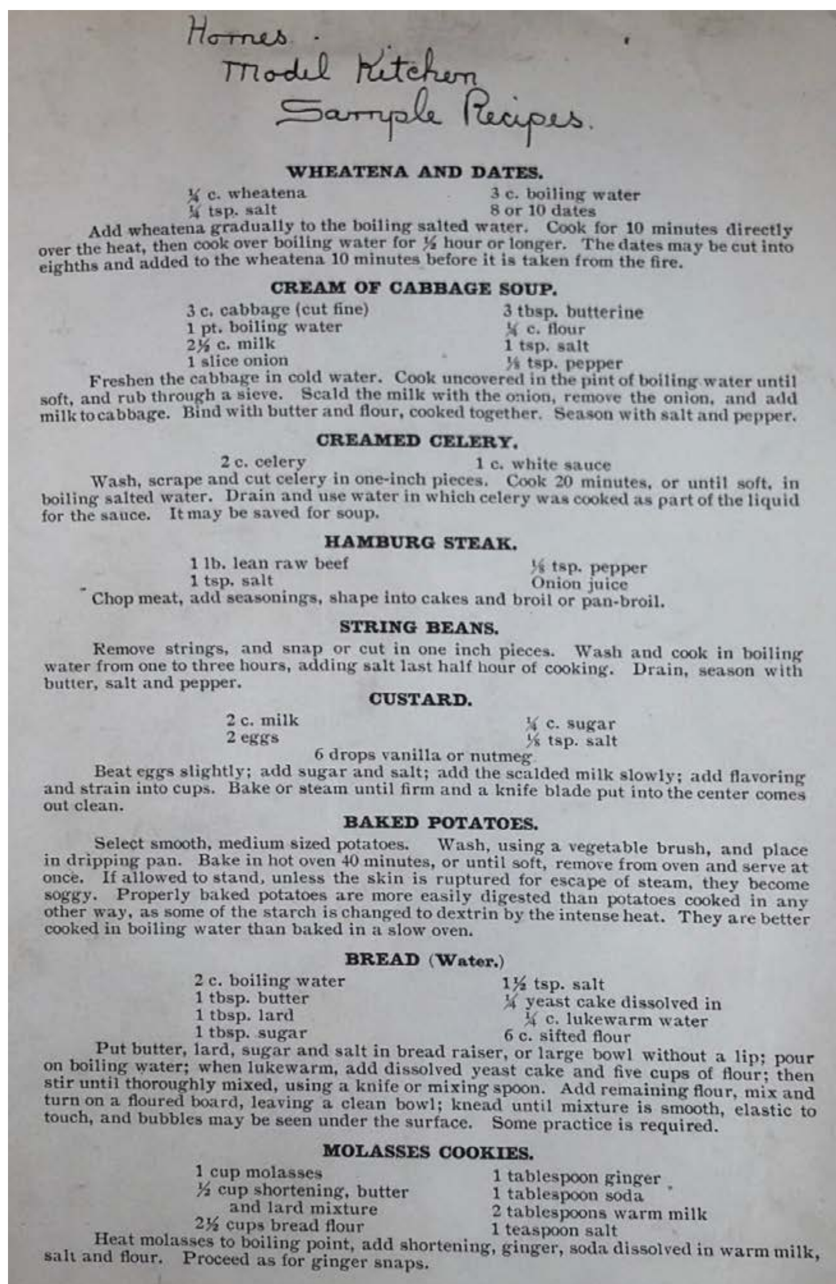
For Prunes: Fresh ripe apples, baked bananas, other mild fruits well cooked.

For rice pudding: Junkets, custards, blanc manges, bread puddings, and other very simple desserts.

For Cookies: Gingerbread, sponge cake, or very plain cookies.

Figure 3.7 Suggested menus for children 2 to 4 on the left and 4 to 8 on the right. These were part of a pamphlet available for ten cents at the Chicago exhibit. Source: Mary Swartz Rose, "The Feeding of Young Children," 1911, Box 1, Folder 3, 6-7, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection.

[51] *Child in the City,* 20.



Homes.
Model Kitchen
Sample Recipes.

WHEATENA AND DATES.

¼ c. wheatena
¼ tsp. salt
3 c. boiling water
8 or 10 dates

Add wheatena gradually to the boiling salted water. Cook for 10 minutes directly over the heat, then cook over boiling water for ½ hour or longer. The dates may be cut into eighths and added to the wheatena 10 minutes before it is taken from the fire.

CREAM OF CABBAGE SOUP.

3 c. cabbage (cut fine)
1 pt. boiling water
2½ c. milk
1 slice onion
3 tbsp. butterine
¼ c. flour
1 tsp. salt
⅛ tsp. pepper

Freshen the cabbage in cold water. Cook uncovered in the pint of boiling water until soft, and rub through a sieve. Scald the milk with the onion, remove the onion, and add milk to cabbage. Bind with butter and flour, cooked together. Season with salt and pepper.

CREAMED CELERY.

2 c. celery
1 c. white sauce

Wash, scrape and cut celery in one-inch pieces. Cook 20 minutes, or until soft, in boiling salted water. Drain and use water in which celery was cooked as part of the liquid for the sauce. It may be saved for soup.

HAMBURG STEAK.

1 lb. lean raw beef
1 tsp. salt
⅛ tsp. pepper
Onion juice

Chop meat, add seasonings, shape into cakes and broil or pan-broil.

STRING BEANS.

Remove strings, and snap or cut in one inch pieces. Wash and cook in boiling water from one to three hours, adding salt last half hour of cooking. Drain, season with butter, salt and pepper.

CUSTARD.

2 c. milk
2 eggs
¼ c. sugar
⅛ tsp. salt
6 drops vanilla or nutmeg

Beat eggs slightly; add sugar and salt; add the scalded milk slowly; add flavoring and strain into cups. Bake or steam until firm and a knife blade put into the center comes out clean.

BAKED POTATOES.

Select smooth, medium sized potatoes. Wash, using a vegetable brush, and place in dripping pan. Bake in hot oven 40 minutes, or until soft, remove from oven and serve at once. If allowed to stand, unless the skin is ruptured for escape of steam, they become soggy. Properly baked potatoes are more easily digested than potatoes cooked in any other way, as some of the starch is changed to dextrin by the intense heat. They are better cooked in boiling water than baked in a slow oven.

BREAD (Water.)

2 c. boiling water
1 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. lard
1 tbsp. sugar
1½ tsp. salt
¼ yeast cake dissolved in
¼ c. lukewarm water
6 c. sifted flour

Put butter, lard, sugar and salt in bread raiser, or large bowl without a lip; pour on boiling water; when lukewarm, add dissolved yeast cake and five cups of flour; then stir until thoroughly mixed, using a knife or mixing spoon. Add remaining flour, mix and turn on a floured board, leaving a clean bowl; knead until mixture is smooth, elastic to touch, and bubbles may be seen under the surface. Some practice is required.

MOLASSES COOKIES.

1 cup molasses
½ cup shortening, butter and lard mixture
2½ cups bread flour
1 tablespoon ginger
1 tablespoon soda
2 tablespoons warm milk
1 teaspoon salt

Heat molasses to boiling point, add shortening, ginger, soda dissolved in warm milk, salt and flour. Proceed as for ginger snaps.

Figure 3.8 Sample recipes for the Home section of the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Box 1, Folder 3, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection.

In her history of food and nutrition in Quebec, Caroline Durand characterizes the food table presented at the MCWE as a limited educational tool because of its ambiguity (figure 3.9). She describes it as a hierarchy of foods, which delineated no clear values for cost compared with body fuel. Published in a pamphlet distributed at the exhibit, it appears to have accompanied

information similar to that published in the United States[52] Based on the American exhibits' publications, the table was likely indented to serve as a comparison tool, to show mothers which foods should be purchased based on cost per pound and nutritional value. The effect was to emphasize that nutritious food can be cheap.

Figure 3.9 "A Chart of Food Values and of prices per pound." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 11.

To add concrete examples to the theoretical information, a model kitchen presented many cooking demonstrations every day (3.10), filling this area with good smells. As with the other

[52] Durand, *Nourrir la machine humaine*, 104.

model rooms displayed at the exhibition, the kitchen was set up by experts and equipped and furnished at a cost meant to be

Figure 3.10 Photograph of a cooking demonstration in the model kitchen at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. The Montreal exhibit had demonstrations that would have looked similar. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

affordable for working-class families. The exhibit guide specified that the demonstrations would "illustrate the way in which bad cooking may completely spoil the food value of otherwise good foods, whereas, good cooking may make digestible foods of material which otherwise might be very difficult to digest."[53] Such a statement implied that lack of nutrition in food was an important issue. However, Durand finds that women taking cooking lessons were more interested in learning new recipes than in nutrition theory.[54] This was probably also the case at the exhibition. The food experts addressed issues of food safety, discussing basic hygienic measures

[53] *Souvenir Handbook*, 11.

[54] Jeanne Anctil and her colleague Antoinette Gérin-Lajoie gave day and evening cooking lessons at the Écoles Ménagères Provinciales and outside the institution starting in 1906. Durand, *Nourrir la machine humaine*, 94.

that could prevent diseases and infant mortality. *The Montreal Gazette* reported a simple example of a common behavior that could easily be changed, stating that

> It is a common sight to see a baby on a hot summer's day squatted on the sidewalk, eating, for instance, a cucumber, which from time to time it drops in the dust. The cucumber is replaced in its hands by an elder brother or sister, and the nibbling continues. Then the parents wonder why the baby is bothered with stomach or bowel trouble that finally carries it off.[55]

The New York and Chicago handbooks also specified items that should not be given to children to prevent common mistakes made when feeding them. They stated for example, that mothers should refrain from giving tea or coffee to their children.[56] Accordingly, James Marten analyzes newspaper reports stating that working-class mothers from diverse ethnic groups argued with upper-class women over proper food for their children at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. He describes *The Tribune* journalist reporting that although they started by contesting the new ideas and nutritional notions that were presented, in the end the mothers were convinced by demonstrations and explainers not to feed their babies certain items, such as beer and cabbage. The reporter's racial, ethnic, and class prejudice was palpable as he depicted the women in very different terms, referring to the upper-class women's attire as nice and carefully put together whereas the working-class mothers were presented as "shabby" and badly dressed.[57] Similar experiences took place in the clothing and food sections, challenging women and creating tension between them based on the groups they belonged to or identified with. What went on in the homes and kitchen of mothers was reflective of their culture, ethnicity, and class. We find that the experts' teachings and interactions were not without prejudice against working-class mothers. Speaking in terms of mothers' mistakes and practices needing to be changed or ceased, the new

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[55] "The Care of the Child," *The Montreal Gazette*, Monday Oct. 7, 1912, 10.
[56] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 18; *Child in the City,* 19.
[57] Marten, "No Beer for Babies," 44.

nutrition experts attacked mothers' competencies and authority in their home. Therefore, while progressive women claimed they wanted to empower mothers by teaching them about nutrition and meal planning, combining a balance diet and a realistic budget, they condemned their behavior, culture, and class.

Furnishing the Home

Keeping the budget in mind, the Home exhibit also presented a model living room and play room (figure 3.11). The living room was filled with handmade furniture. The exhibition guide stated that: "all the furniture in this room could be made by hand without too great expense, by a man or a boy with proper training. It is in good taste, comfortable and durable. The object of this exhibit is to stimulate the handicrafts of Canada, and also to give an idea of a well decorated living room, inexpensively furnished."[58] The model play room aimed to present the reformers' choice of best books and toys for children. It had many such items on display. The exhibit emphasized the importance of a specific space for children to call their own, and their need for simple toys to play with and stimulate their imagination.[59] The model play room was comparable to the toy shop in the New York and Chicago exhibits, where experts exhibited selected toys, demonstrated how to use them "properly," and even how to make some of them, emphasizing the importance of play (figure 3.12).[60] Once again, the experts claimed to provide economical and realistic options for working-class families. However, the statements they made, asserting that the standards presented were attainable for everyone, highlighted their perception that the living conditions of poor families were due to their bad choices and bad moral character. If their home did not resemble the models and if they had no toys or designated play space, it was because they were

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[58] *Souvenir Handbook*, 11.
[59] *Souvenir Handbook*, 12.
[60] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 22.

ignorant and did not care. Thus, reformers imposed their moralistic views on working-class families, their furnishings, and spending.[61]

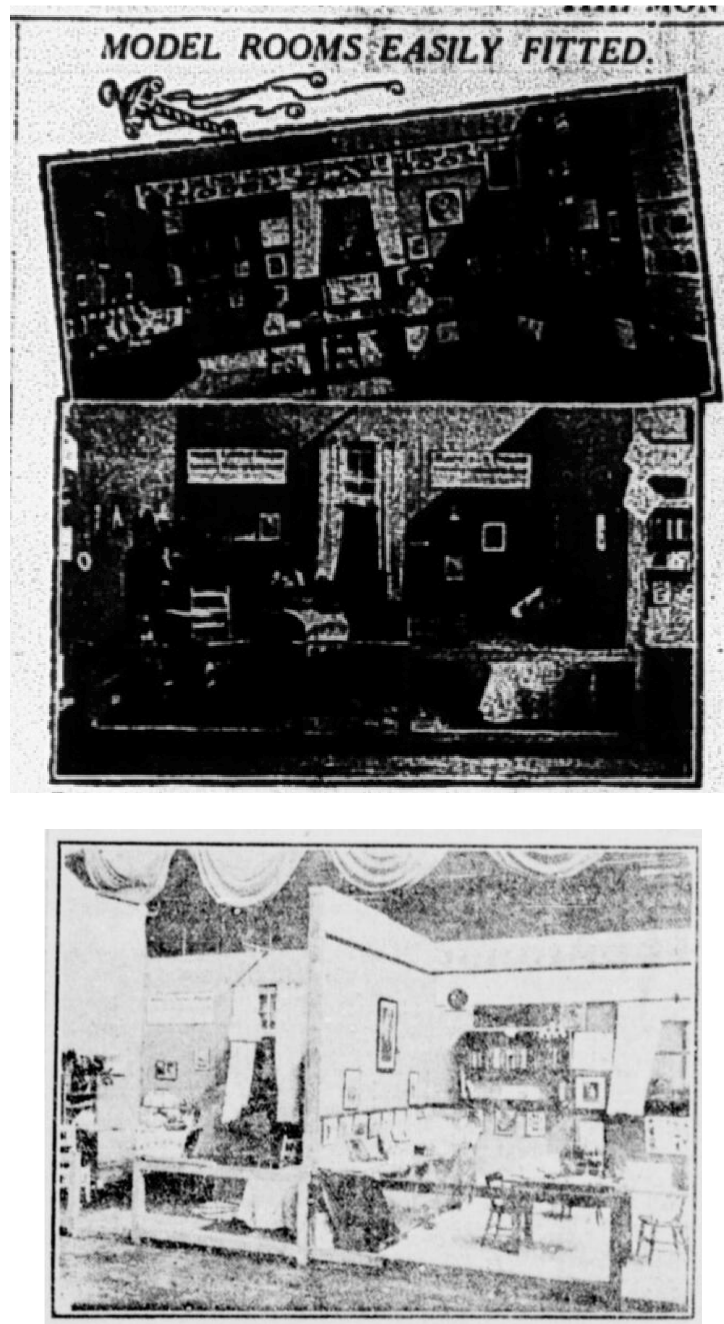

Figure 3.11 "Model Rooms Easily Fitted." Photographs of the model playroom on top and the model living room under it presented in the home section of the MCWE. Source: "Furnishing a Home Complete for 100$," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 16, 1912, 2. Photographer unknown. Photograph of a model bedroom and a child's room. Source: "Oeuvre des religieuses enseigantes à l'exposition socio-pédologique," *La Patrie*, Oct. 14, 1912, 3. Photographer unknown from *La Patrie*.

[61] Flanagan, *America Reformed,* 283-85.

The toy shop.

Figure 3.12 Photographs of the toy shop at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.; *Child in the City,* 23. Photographers unknown.

Similarly, an article from *The Montreal Daily Herald* stated that replicating the staged rooms in the visitors' home could be accomplished affordably: "a model dwelling complete in every particular furnished tastefully and comfortably, can be equipped for less than a hundred dollars. This seems an exaggeration, but it is borne out by the booth in question."[62] The reporter

[62] "Furnishing a Home Complete for $100," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 16, 1912, 3.

described the booth's living room in detail, including a children's toys and books section involving many decorations. This dedicated space for children really resonated with the play room exhibits' main ideas mentioned above. The kitchen, bedrooms, and toilet were also covered briefly by the article.[63] The cost and the specifics of furniture were highlighted, making sure everything amounted to $100, as the reporter indicated that "it is understood, of course, that considerable ingenuity and mechanical skill must be employed by members of the family."[64] Overall, this article amounted to blaming working-class families, declaring that a thrifty and creative household could live well on a low income. The reality was much different. The exhibit section on the standard of living suggested that an unskilled worker in Montreal earned $1.75 per day, averaging to $550 a year. A proposed balanced family budget based on this salary did not allow for any household furnishing and implied that families would have to rent unsanitary dwellings.[65]

This depiction of this portion of the Home exhibit fits very well with a section of two American exhibits. Correspondingly, an important part of the New York exhibit, which was also presented in Chicago, was a model three-room apartment furnished for $100. It consisted of a bedroom, living room, and kitchen. This apartment also had dedicated room for children.[66] This distinctly similar model-room exhibit, reproduced in figure 3.13, is an example of travelling knowledge and ideas across North American exhibits. Progressive women such as exhibit expert

[63] Gilles Lauzon finds that between 70% et 84% of Montreal housing and other premises had water closets by 1895, although 50% of the lowest income households still had outdoors privies. He notes that poverty was an important factor in toilet accessibility, and that water closets were most likely installed in households of extreme poverty between 1901 and 1904. Gilles Lauzon, "Eau courante, toilettes à eau et dernières latrines à Montréal, 1856-1915," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 73, 4 (Spring 2020): 26-31.
[64] "Furnishing a Home Complete for 100$," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 16, 1912, 3.
[65] We will discuss this further in chapter 6. *Souvenir Handbook*, 32.
[66] *Child in the City,* 22-23.

Anna Louise Strong, who shared information and material with different local exhibitions, contributed greatly to this circulation of ideas.[67]

Furnishing a three-room flat for one hundred dollars.

Figure 3.13 Photograph of model three-room apartment furnished for one hundred featured at the New York and Chicago exhibitions. The children's dedicated space can be seen in the back-right corner of the middle room. Source: *Child in the City*, 19. Photographer unknown.

The American exhibits went further with their advice on the family home. Experts in Chicago showed how old boxes could be used by creative parents to make furniture. They discussed colour arrangements, wallpapers, fabrics, and furniture lines and forms in connection to an attractive and restful home for children and their parents.[68] For example, a wall panel presented different wallpaper and fabric samples, explaining why some were "bad" or "good" for the home (3.14). Home experts gave instructions on choosing quiet colours over restless design and advised on where certain patterns should be used in the home. In New York, the Home Life Committee focused on aspects that could make a modest apartment a pleasant home, highlighting the importance of music, literature for different members of the family, and tasteful pictures on

[67] Mrs Learmont was inspired to hold the Montreal exhibition after visiting the New York exhibit in 1911. "L'exposition du bien-etre de l'enfance," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 9, 1912, 2.

[68] *Child in the City*, 22-23.

the walls.[69] Although based on new expertise in housekeeping, this type of invasive and specialized advice on the home was excessive and intruded on families' personal choices and taste. It is another illustration of reformers imposing their ideals and attacking the moral values and capabilities of working-class families.

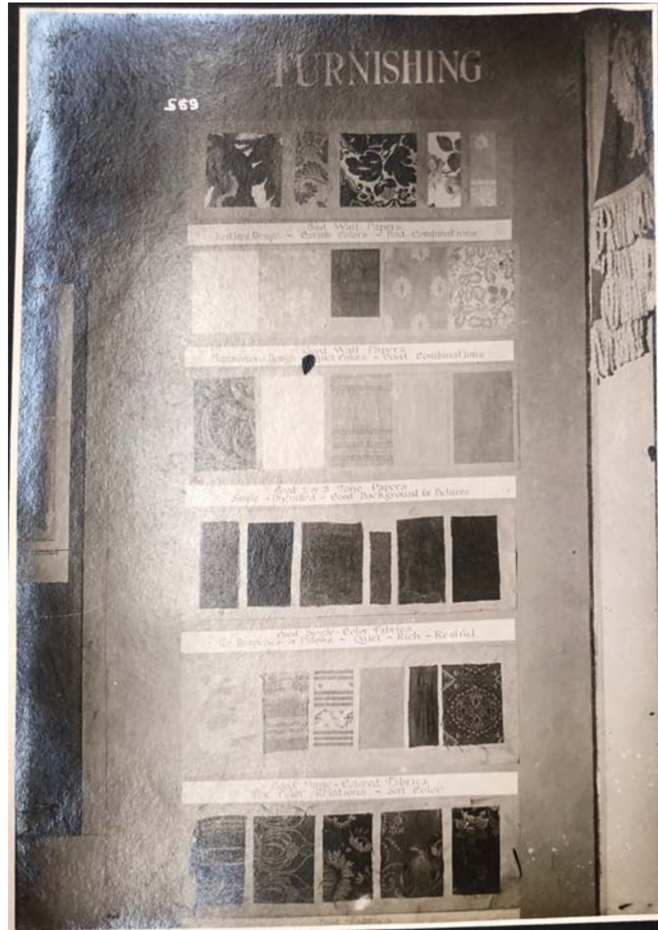

Figure 3.14 Photograph of a slide presented at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit representing bad (first row) and good (other rows) wallpapers for the home. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

Overall, addressing detailed topics supported the purpose of child-welfare exhibitions to educate visitors on all aspects of the children's life. With a goal of improving children's life, the Home section of the Montreal exhibition focused on the basic needs of children while also

[69] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 24.

considering their overall development. Experts sought to teach mothers how to find affordable quality clothing and how to dress their children according to middle-class standards. They aimed to teach them how to feed their family balanced meals on a realistic budget. Experts also gave advice on furnishing the home in a way that stimulated the child's individual and global development. Given that the materials displayed in the Home section were often used or reproduced in different local exhibitions, such as the fabric testing charts and demonstrations and the model-room exhibits, they contributed to the transnational movement of ideas and scientific knowledge among progressive experts and across countries. Their international training also contributed to this movement. Nonetheless, although based on new science and knowledge redefining the nature of childhood, the advice on the home presented, class, ethnic, and racial biases that proliferated during the Progressive era.[70] There are no clear examples of prejudice directed specifically against French Canadians in the Montreal exhibition, although they were surely targeted for their high infant mortality and often precarious living conditions, but they were the object of negative working-class preconceptions.

Trying to relieve poverty and improve child welfare, progressive maternalists used their own values and ideas about domesticity and childcare in their reforms to promote a normative motherhood.[71] Moreover, they drew upon the child-welfare crusade to blend "the private and public roles of motherhood,"[72] with women entering the previously forbidden public and political arena, advancing their professional development, and participating in transnational movements. Progressive women were empowered by claiming the classically feminine areas of the home, family, and motherhood. As Yolande Cohen has shown, they successfully moved their concerns

[70] Alice Boardman Smuts, *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), Chapters 2-4 and Tomes, *Gospel of the Germs*, 129.
[71] Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood,* 7-13.
[72] Smuts, *Science in the Service of Children*, 59.

from the private domain into the public sphere.[73] This was certainly the case for women taking part in the 1912 MCWE, and especially the Homes Committee.

The City Environment

Starting with a reiteration of the poor housing conditions in central districts of the city and their proposed connection to infant mortality and juvenile delinquency, the next section of the exhibition explored another important contributor to the child-welfare problem in Montreal. Reformers believed that the urban environment and the home were equally responsible for devastating deficiencies in children's well-being. Research shows that their concerns were evidence based. In their study of Montreal's population in the late nineteenth century, Olson and Thornton found that infant mortality was mainly related to the family environment, including housing conditions and breastfeeding, whereas childhood mortality (children from one to four years old) was more connected to environmental factors outside the family, such as the economic status of the neighbourhood.[74] This section of the exhibition addressed the city environment with the objective "to show some of the best ideas, both in this city and in other lands, for improving the physical environment which surrounds the child, and thus making it possible for him to grow up healthy and wholesome, and with fulness of life."[75] This part of the child-welfare exhibition was clearly aimed at the municipal and provincial governments, as well as elite reformers, which organizers wanted to convince to make changes and finance their reform projects for the city. Many committee members were prominent Montreal men involved in city planning, among them four architects, William Sutherland Maxwell, professor Jules Poivert, Joseph Venne, and McGill

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[73] Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes,* 181-95.
[74] Olson and Thornton, *Peopling the North American City,* 105-8.
[75] *Souvenir Handbook*, 12.

professor Percy Erskine Nobbs. The committee also included landscape architect Rickson Outhet, city councillor Victor Morin, and Dr J. E. Laberge, superintendent of the city's infectious disease department.[76]

Park Spaces and Model Tenements

The relative lack of parks and open spaces for children to play and for adults to enjoy in their leisure time was highlighted by a chart comparing Montreal with Paris, London, Boston, and Toronto (figure 3.16). Members of the Metropolitan Park Commission of Montreal compared their city with Boston and Toronto, due to their similar sizes. They found that Montreal had significantly less park space; Boston had ten times more and Toronto—a smaller city than Boston—still had 400 acres more. They emphasized the importance of parks as "breathing spaces," preserving health and welfare, as well as providing "wholesome enjoyment," appealing arguments for social reformers of their time.[77] Studying scientific child study and reforms in the United States, Alice B. Smuts finds the playground movement developed at the turn of the twentieth century as a combination of new scientific findings on children's development and cultural trends. Reformers, educators, and psychologists valued play and supervised recreation.[78] Accordingly, experts at the Chicago exhibition claimed that delinquency was reduced in neighbourhoods where parks and playgrounds were established, that they helped preserve

[76] Xenia Benivolski, "E. & W.S. Maxwell," The Canadian Encyclopedia, last modified May 30, 2016, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/e-w-maxwell; "Poivert, Julles," Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1734; *Lovell's Montreal Directory, for 1912-1913*, (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, Limited, 1912), 1970; Susan Wagg, "Percy Erskine Nobbs," The Canadian Encyclopedia, last modified May 20, 2008, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/percy-erskine-nobbs; *Lovells's Directory*, 1678; "SHM16 Fonds Victor Morin", Archives de la ville de Montréal, last modified January 25, 2013, http://archivesdemontreal.com/greffe/guide-archives/pdf-catalogues/SHM16.pdf; *Lovell's Montreal Directory*, 1399.

[77] *Souvenir Handbook*, 12.

[78] Smuts, *Science in the Service of Children*, 67.

children's morality, and improved their health.[79] David Nasaw, in his study of urban working-class children in the early twentieth century, explains that reformers presented the city streets as the children's dangerous playgrounds and campaigned for supervised playing spaces for them. They wanted these new spaces to serve children but also their own agendas of Americanization and reformation of poor and immigrant children. He also demonstrates how children had little interest in attending playgrounds that insisted on rigid play schedules and were often located far from children's apartments.[80] Thus, child-welfare exhibitions presented parks as essential for city children's welfare, especially in dense districts, but they also understood them as spaces of social and moral regulation that could promote reform.

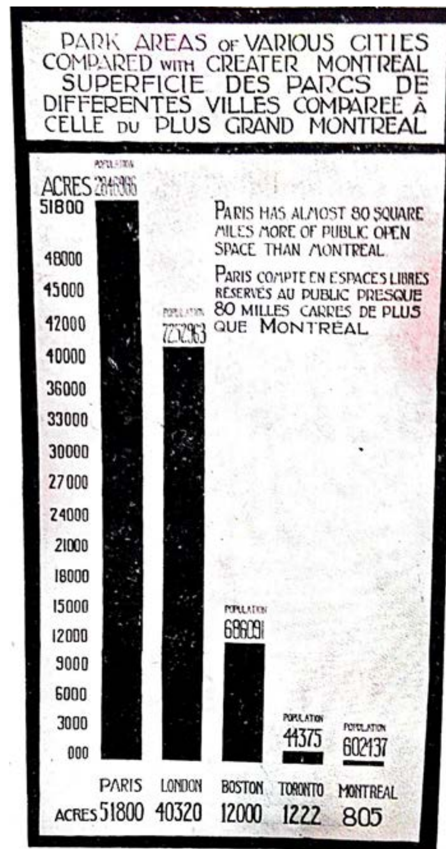

Figure 3.15 "An Argument for the New Metropolitan Parks Commission of Montreal." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 12.

[79] *Child in the City,* 31-34. We will address in more details the regulation of playing spaces and juvenile delinquency in chapter 4 and 5.
[80] Nasaw, *Children of the City*, 32, 22, 36-37.

Regulating housing was also a crucial element to improve the city environment. In this regard, the exhibit presented the "best model tenements in the world," which the exhibit organisers found to be in England and Germany. Montreal experts excluded New York model tenements because they found their ventilation to be deficient.[81] American specialists agreed that their current tenements did not meet the basic conditions required to grow healthy children, pointing to building laws regulating new apartments, but leaving out existing buildings. The New York and Chicago exhibitions' handbooks noted a recent increased "interest in scientific housing for workingman," which could improve elements such as construction, sanitation conditions, and sunlight in the tenements.[82]

Meanwhile, there were no real attempts to create model tenements in Montreal.[83] Reformers claimed in the exhibit guide that recurring problems in crowded districts included houses that covered practically the entire lot and back houses with rear entries. As some lots were covered with two houses, with an inner court and a rear house, this limited the amount of air and light entering the apartments, and hygienists connected these living conditions with the propagation of tuberculosis.[84] This discourse is in line with the findings of many historians who have shown that reformers identified slum housing in the city as a social cause of illness and especially tuberculosis.[85] Contemporary reformer Herbert Ames claimed that the "privy pit" and

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[81] *Souvenir Handbook*, 13.

[82] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 21; *Child in the City*, 24.

[83] Attemps would come much later in Montreal, in the 1950s and 1960s with for example Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance linked to "slum clearance." See Martin Drouin, "De la démolition des taudis à la sauvegarde du patrimoine bâti (Montréal, 1954-1973)," *Urban History Review / Revue d'Histoire Urbaine* 41, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 22–36.

[84] *Souvenir Handbook*, 13, 10.

[85] See Katherine McCuaig, *The Weariness, the Fever, and the Fret: The Campaign against Tuberculosis in Canada, 1900-1950* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 12; Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, 70-87; Tomes, *Gospel of the Germs*, 129; Vanier "Tuberculose, foyers et familles," 85-95.

the rear tenements were unsanitary and "a danger to public health and morals."[86] In a study of rear tenements in Montreal, Luc Carey explains that this type of housing made it possible to increase residential densification on the lot scale and met two essential needs for low income households: to stay within walking distance of the workplace, and to have low-cost housing while awaiting a move to a better, more airy and sunnier home. He finds there were 1,276 rear tenements between 1880 and 1920, and mostly all located south of Sherbrooke street, in working-class neighbourhoods.[87]

For the exhibitors, one solution to Montreal's housing problem could be found outside the city limits. They mention that new houses were being built close to the site of new factories along the Lachine canal. Erected on cheaper land, these houses were more spread out than in the city. However, exhibit experts thought the new neighbourhoods only postponed the same problems as the overcrowded districts.[88] Similarly, in his study of the development of Montreal's industrial geography between 1850 and 1929, Robert Lewis explains that housing shortages were a recurring problem for the city's workers, although the industrial suburbs were extending to new residential districts on the outskirts. The Canal district was developed for housing and industry by the 1850s and continued to expand over the next decades. Lewis finds that "small contractors and speculative developers constructed a suburban quilt of cheap housing." He adds that "cheap, two-storey rowhouses on small lots close to firms was duplicated throughout the fringes."[89]

Reformers believed that without "the presence of wealthy citizen interested in the beauty of their city, these industrial communities are likely to grow up without parks, without

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[86] Ames, *City Bellow the Hill*, 45.

[87] Luc Carey, "Le déclin de La Maison de fond de cour à Montréal, 1880-1920," *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* 31, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 19-20.

[88] *Souvenir Handbook*, 13.

[89] Lewis, "City Transformed," 25-7.

boulevards, without open spaces, without any resources for the recreation and wholesome relaxation of the young people."[90] This is evidence of value judgment in the reformer's discourses, clearly showing their paternalist vision of the working class. For them "a co-partnership plan," such as found in the English Garden Suburbs would be the best solution. The exhibit guide explained: "The garden suburbs of England pay 5% dividends and provide for improvements, recreation for the tenants, and the sinking fund. The houses rent for $1.00 to $2.25 per week, which is far less than decent housing can be secured for, in Montreal."[91] Consequently, members of Montreal's St. James Methodist Church discussed workers' housing during a congregational meeting on October 20, 1912. *The Montreal Gazette* reported that they suggested that one hundred wealthy Montrealers should participate in a workingmen housing project following the English garden suburbs model. The congregation recommended each man could invest 10,000$, with a 5 percent return on their investment, in order to give 500 families better living conditions.[92] The experts exhibited the new Hampstead Garden Suburb as an example, noting that infant mortality there was one third of what it was in Montreal. Terry Copp puts this comparison in perspective, as he finds that this specific suburb was only residential and not really relevant "to the needs of the working class." For him, this was just an illustration of Montreal reformers' romantic and unrealistic vision for the city.[93] On the contrary, Lewis explains that "the growing number of small, cheap dwellings on the periphery made the suburbs an attractive area for industry and workers."[94] Thus, the industrial suburb was a more realistic model for the working class in Montreal than the garden suburb.

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[90] *Souvenir Handbook*, 13.
[91] *Souvenir Handbook*, 13.
[92] "Half the City Will See Exhibition. Find for Workingmen's Houses," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 21, 1912, 5.
[93] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 86.
[94] Lewis, "City Transformed," 27.

A Plan for the City

In concluding the City Environment section, the exhibition experts were unanimous: "A city plan is a necessity, if Montreal is to keep its place among other great cities."[95] The plan they proposed for Montreal was designed by the Architects' Association of the Province of Quebec. Members of the City Environment Committee were actually also members of this professional association, as architect W.S. Maxwell, landscape architect Rickson Outhet, and others contributed to both groups. They were also members of the CIL, having proposed their initial city plan in the League's 1909 report. Their proposal mentioned several cities as models to follow in terms of city improvement to beautify streets and lanes, such as London, Rio de Janeiro, Chicago, and German cities in general.[96] Contributing to strengthening these transnational inspirations and networks, two architecture professors on the committee were trained in Europe.[97]

In the exhibit handbook, the city of Paris was used as an example to support their proposal. There, reformers insisted, the municipal government had invested millions to beautify the city, with the result that tourists spent more than the original investment each year. The handbook specified that the proposed plan was a work in progress and had not been accepted by the government. Its main features were described in the exhibit guide: "a beautiful boulevard connects Park Lafontaine with Fletcher's Field, and passes on to still other parks. In Park Lafontaine itself, the ugly forcing houses, now used for plants, are replaced by beautiful

[95] *Souvenir Handbook*, 14.

[96] Maxwell explained that the city plan was prepared by a sub-committee of the Architects' Association made up of practising architects, landscape architects, and the Professors of Architecture in McGill University and the École Polytechnique, along with two members of the City Improvement League The aim was to get inputs from layman and professional architects. City Improvement League, *First Convention City Improvement League,* 48-54.

[97] McGill professor Percy Nobbs was trained in the United Kingdom and Polythechnique professor Jules Poivert was trained in Paris. See Susan Wagg, "Percy Erskine Nobbs," The Canadian Encyclopedia, last modified May 20, 2008, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/percy-erskine-nobbs; "Poivert, Jules," Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1734.

conservatories in which band concerts can be held, and to which all citizens may come."[98] More generally, the plan suggested improvements such as street widening, creation of boulevards, and creation of parks (figure 3.16). It was complemented by suggestions to improve school architecture in terms of hygiene and of play space.

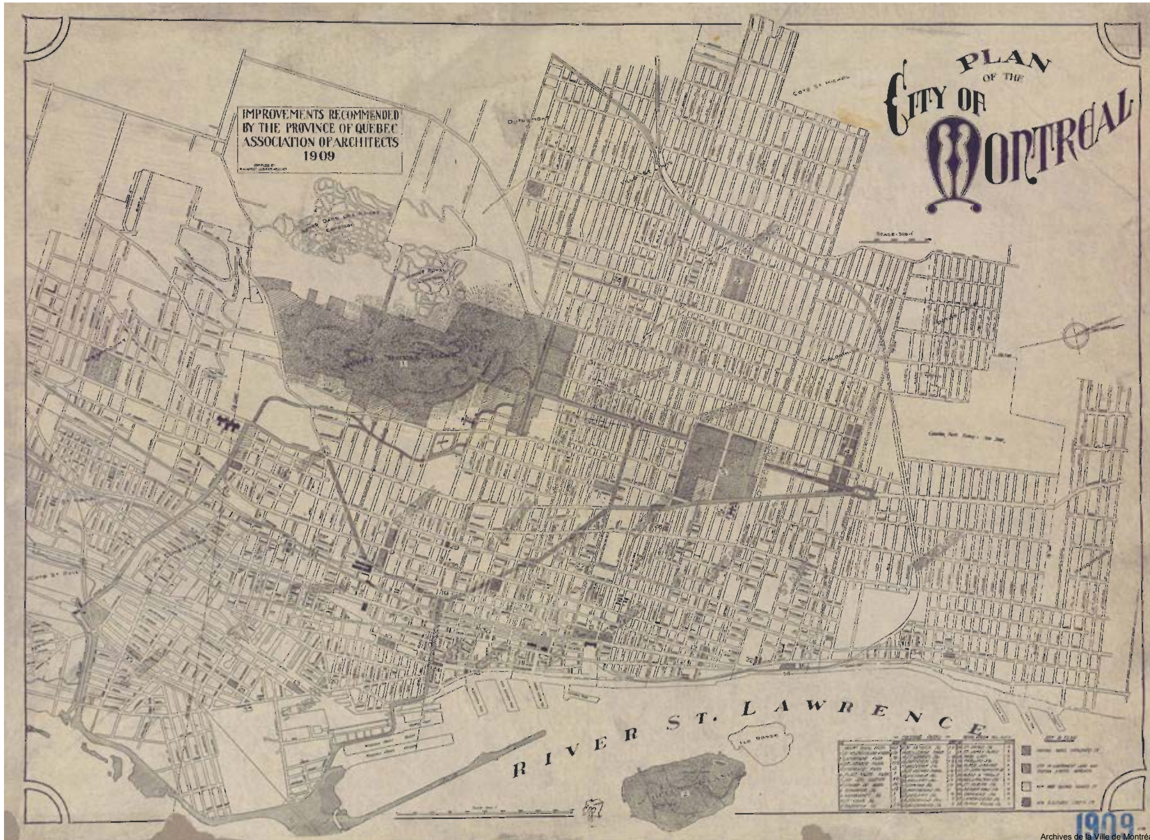

Figure 3.16 Proposed city plan by the Architects' Association of the Province of Quebec. Source: "1909-1: Plan of the City of Montreal: Improvements recommended by the province of Quebec association of architects Compiled by R. A. Outhet, landscape architect. – 1909," 1909, VM066, Série 5, P098, 1901-01, Collection Cartes et plans de la Ville de Montréal, Archives de la ville de Montréal, Ville de Montréal, Section des archives. https://archivesdemontreal.ica-atom.org/uploads/r/ville-de-montreal-section-des-archives/1/0/10718/VM66-S5P098op.pdf.

The city plan emphasized beautifying "ugly" spots of the city at no cost, but it discreetly implied a rise in taxes to pay for it. The exhibition experts considered that a well-thought-out plan, designed by the Metropolitan Parks Commission, was necessary to increase the city's

[98] *Souvenir Handbook*, 14.

beauty and the health of its residents.[99] This newly founded Commission was also supported by the CIL, exposing the very close relationships between the hygienist reformers.[100] This initiative is reminiscent of the City Beautiful movement that emerged in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Connecting beauty and utility, this movement was mainly propelled by municipal improvement associations to harmonize cities through park and boulevard systems, combining aesthetics with sanitation and safety.[101] Thus, in Montreal proposals for a city plan were influenced by homegrown issues, but inspired by global concepts and international examples. This reinforces the view of Montreal as a modern city with transnational connections, but with specific local concerns.

Challenging City and Provincial Administrators: Alarmist or Romantic Discourse?

Under the theme of the city and the child, the exhibit was concerned with poverty and lack of places to play, problems that reformers believed could erode family life and result in delinquency, crime, and general misery.[102] Aimed at the municipal government, this section called for specific changes and investments to make Montreal a healthier place, especially for children. Exhibitors used an alarmist discourse that linked the city, children, and crime. Organizers put the city environment section right after the housing section: a decision that seems to have been part of a strategic scheme to alert city and provincial administrators. Once again, they paired photography with dramatic captions, using shocking images of children in insalubrious settings to appeal to officials' sensibilities and strengthen the connection between the city environment and children's ill-health (figure 3.17). By making such associations,

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[99] *Souvenir Handbook*, 14.
[100] *First Convention City Improvement League*, 52.
[101] William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 78-86.
[102] *Souvenir Handbook*, 11.

reformers wanted to convince the authorities to invest in city planning. While alarmist language was a common method in this era to advance social causes, it consistently portrayed the working class in a negative light.[103] This group was persistently associated with poverty, degrading behavior, and responsibility for their living conditions.

Figure 3.17 "Montreal Garden Suburbs? No, an unsanitary garbage dump. Wanted a City Plan." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 14. Photographer unknown.

The showcased city plan was never implemented, and housing conditions remained precarious. Copp points to incapacity and the lack of will of the municipal and provincial governments to regulate the free market economy. He explains that municipal authorities tried to legislate concerning sanitary housing issues without success, outlining heated debates over the city's responsibility for the poor conditions in Montreal housing.[104] Copp reiterates that Montreal housing, as in other North American cities at this time, was controlled by private contractors. He explains: "the experience of Montreal, with regard to housing regulation, was similar to that of most cities. There was no clear concise consolidated housing code. Wide discretionary powers were granted to inspectors and their appointment was determined by the politics of patronage." [105] All of this led to the spread of slum conditions. Copp claims this could have been avoided if "a

[103] Koslow, *Exhibiting Health,* 76.

[104] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 70, 76; Terry Copp, "Chapter I – Metropolis: The Economy, The Working Class Majority," *Montreal At War 1914-1918,* June 12, 2017, https://montrealatwar.com/2017/06/12/metropolis/

[105] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 83.

reasonable housing code properly enforced" was put in place by municipal and provincial governments, but none of them acted, as they did not have de financial capacity or the will to do so.[106] He goes further and declares that the Montreal CIL, lobbying for a city planning board, created a "diversion of reform energies" "into grandiose scheme," as it was "operating without a popular base and without a realistic programme."[107] Indeed, a critical factor preventing the implementation of the proposed plan was lack of support from the elites. The wealthiest citizens did not want to pay more taxes to participate in this urban reform. The CIL exhibit also failed to unite reformers, whom Copp presents as composing distinct associations. He argues that civic organizations contributed to the government's inaction regarding housing. [108]

Finally, the depiction of the working class as responsible for unsanitary housing probably contributed to the lack of action and consideration from the upper classes and government. Thus, the exhibit highlighted the ills of the city and presented a plan to improve and beautify Montreal, but it failed to rally governments and wealthy citizens to fund this project. This leads us to conclude that, just like Claudine Pierre-Deschênes demonstrated for medical experts in Quebec during the same period, the exhibition experts aligned themselves in a system conservation perspective, perpetuating the bourgeois social order.[109]

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Through the Homes of the Children section, organizers hoped parents would learn about "proper" housing, food, clothing, and toys, conforming to their ideal social and moral construction of

[106] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 84.
[107] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 86, 85, 86.
[108] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 84-86,
[109] Pierre-Deschênes, "Santé publique," 116.

modernity. Reformers presented this section as different from other exhibits because it did not emphasize “the evil results of present methods.” Instead, it was specifically designed to be more educational than alarming, as it focused on making recommendations to parents.[110] However, photographs and demonstrations consistently highlighted parents’ wrongdoings. Moreover, the housing exhibit turned out to be one of the most visually striking for visitors, hitting home like no other section could. Putting private life on display provoked strong public reactions, and reinforced prejudices against the working class. Claiming it aimed to inform and teach mothers, this exhibit once again linked mother’s ignorance with her responsibility for child mortality.

Nonetheless, the exhibition conveyed mixed messages on housing responsibility. Organizers realized that working-class families had limited options when it came to choosing an apartment, but claimed they could improve sanitary conditions by changing their behavior. In the City Environment of the Child section, they concluded that “all these facts point to the need of a City Plan for Montreal,”[111] finding that child welfare depended on the city as much as on the home. The responsibility was thus shared between parents and governments, although embarrassment for shortcomings generally fell on the former, not the latter.

[110] *Souvenir Handbook*, 9.
[111] *Souvenir Handbook*, 12.

Chapter 4: Education, Recreation, and Moral and Religious Life: Developing Children's Identities

Les enfants sont vraiment partout dans cette exposition. Pas juste sur les affiches et les modèles, ils grouillent dans les allées et s'affairent en groupe pendant des séances impressionnantes. En après-midi, on s'est assis au centre du manège militaire pour regarder une belle démonstration des jeunes irlandais. Ils ont fait de la gymnastique, tous beaux avec leurs habits blancs et leurs rubans verts. Ça fait du bien de s'arrêter pour se divertir comme ça mais c'était tellement bruyant qu'on n'arrivait pas à se parler madame Lebrun et moi. On est allé se promener dans la section des écoles pis on a décidé de monter en haut pour voir les démonstrations des élèves des écoles catholiques, où des jeunes faisaient de la couture pis de la vannerie dans des petits kiosques. C'est agréable de voir des enfants vaillants, concentrés sur leur ouvrage et qui ont l'air fier. On a même vu la grande fille des Lemieux qui tapait à une vitesse impressionnante sur une dactylo. Elle nous a fait un beau sourire en restant ben droite pis au travail, entourée de ses copines de classe. On est redescendu vers la section sur le travail des Sœurs pour les pauvres orphelins. J'ai entendu dire que demain il va y avoir des vues sur le Champ de Mars et une grande soirée canadienne-française avec des chants pis de la dance. Je vais essayer de convaincre mon mari de revenir avec moi et les enfants. Un beau spectacle gratuit ça nous ferait une belle sortie de famille.

At 8:00 pm on the opening night of the exhibit, on Tuesday May 8th, 1912, six hundred children sang together in the Central Court of the Craig Street Drill Hall. The choruses were comprised of three hundred children from English Protestant schools and three hundred from French Catholic Schools.[1] Their voices resonated in the large room where thousands of people gathered to attend this "brilliant party" marking the opening of this great event. The children sang national anthems, setting the tone for a series of demonstrations that would take place during the two-week exhibition. Different national school groups displayed their skills, participating in a public-education endeavor designed to bring together Montrealers of all ethnic and religious origins. For example, *La Patrie* mentioned the presence of Israelite and Syrian children among the opening night English Canadian little singers.[2] A photograph published in *The Montreal Daily Star*

[1] *Souvenir Handbook*, 35.

[2] "L'inauguration de l'Exposition du Bien Être de l'Enfance fut une fête brillante, hier soir," *La Patrie*, Oct. 9, 1912, 1, 4.

emphasized the success of this night by showing a bird's-eye view of the packed drill hall filled with indistinguishable individuals in a human tide (figure 4.1).

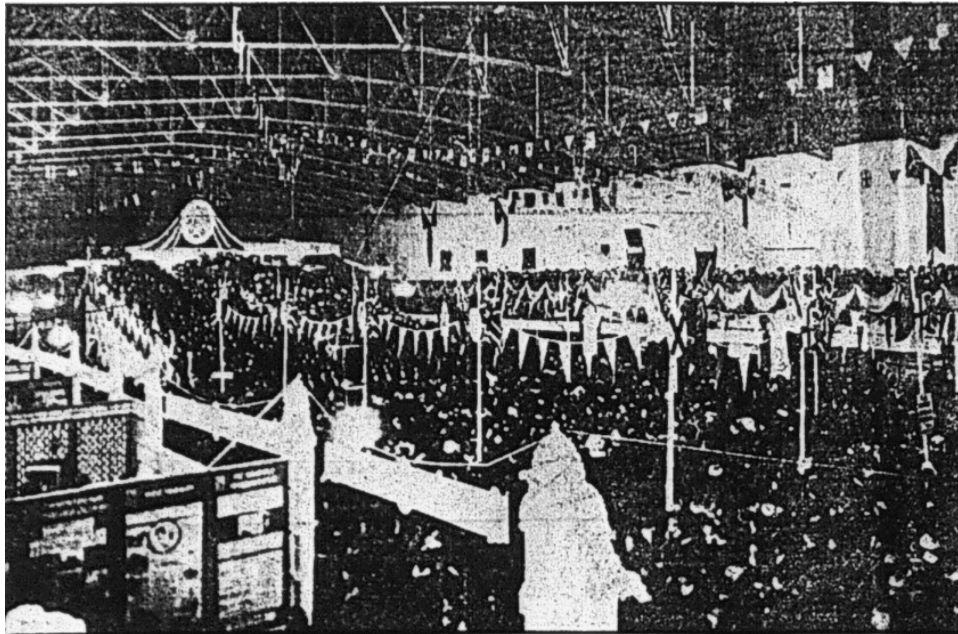

Figure 4.1 View of the immense crowd that thronged the Montreal Child Welfare Exhibition. Source: "Child Welfare Exhibition Is Formally Open," *The Daily Montreal Star*, Oct. 9 ,1912, 2. Photographer unknown.

The special event welcomed a host of politicians, industrialists, representatives of the judiciary, tradesmen, and members of the liberal professions, many of whom were reformers, hygienists, and dignitaries.[3] Along with these prominent men, the large crowd for this first night nonetheless featured an overwhelming number of women. Representatives of the MLCW and the FNSJB sat in the front row, but many mothers were also present. Moreover, thousands of children sat in the stands applauding the performances, but had a hard time staying quiet during the many speeches, making it difficult to hear what was said.[4]

From this first night, children were omnipresent at the exhibition. Inclusive, entertaining, educational, informative, and drawing curious crowds, demonstrations played a significant role in

[3] "L'inauguration de l'Exposition," *La Patrie*, 1, 4.
[4] "Child Welfare exhibition Is Formally Open," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 9, 1912, 2.

the exhibition. Every day and night, children of different origins, from various schools or clubs, presented their skills before visitors. Newspapers published daily schedules to promote the different performances and to encourage people to attend the exhibition. The media continued to report on the diverse national groups participating in the exhibit, often emphasizing the lack of conflict and the tangible rallying effect of the child saving movement in the organization of the exhibit.

This chapter will provide a rhetorical tour through the five sections of the exhibit that showcased children most prominently: The School Life of the Child; Other Educational Movements; The Recreation and Social Life of the Child; The Religious and Moral Formation of the Child; and Philanthropy and the Child. In doing so, this chapter will explore the practical role children played in the child-welfare exhibition. Moreover, the analysis of these sections will highlight the contributions of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish institutions to the healthy development of the child as a whole. This examination of identity will help to explain the choice of the exhibition medium for the child-welfare movement. Mindful of the reformers' slogan which said: "The home makes the best citizen,"[5] this chapter will also argue that raising good citizens in good homes was a unifying goal for activists who were otherwise divided along linguistic and religious lines. But first, the specific features of Montreal as a predominantly French-Canadian, Catholic city will provide the framework for a transnational analysis of the educational and philanthropic features of the exhibition, as I will compare Montreal with New York and Chicago.

[5] *Souvenir Handbook*, 30.

School Life of the Child

Montreal Specificity

In the early twentieth century, Montreal's school system operated in two separate streams representing the two largest religious communities in Quebec, Catholic and Protestant. This was based on the British North America Act of 1867, which guaranteed the province a denominational school board system. Although Catholic schools only admitted Catholic students, the 1903 Quebec Education Act allowed Jews to attend Protestant schools. In short, this law guaranteed that, in exchange for tax revenues to the Protestant school board, their children would be treated on equal basis with Protestants, and would be subject to the same obligations, rights and privileges. Jewish children would be exempt from Christian religion classes, and could be absent from school on their religious holidays.[6] However, the confessional aspect of schools was non-negotiable for religious and social leaders and Jewish children did not receive the promised rights and privileges.[7] In 1911, Montreal's Jewish population was around 30,000 and there were very few Jewish schools.[8] In this context, most Eastern-European Jewish families enrolled their children in Protestant schools.[9] This meant that in Montreal, children either went to Catholic or Protestant elementary day schools and high schools. Historians Michael Behiels and Jean-Philippe Croteau explain that in this denominational system, Catholic and Protestant social and religious elites refused to accommodate other ethnic groups by altering their structure or their religious and nationalist doctrines. The absence of real public schools, as elsewhere in Canada

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[6] Jean-Philippe Croteau, "Les immigrants et la Commission des écoles protestantes du Grand Montréal (1864-1931)," In *Vers la construction d'une citoyenneté canadienne*, eds. Jean-Michel Lacroix and Paul-André Linteau (Paris, France: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelles, 2006), 31-48.

[7] Michael Behiels, "Neo-Canadians and Schools in Montreal, 1900-1970," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 8, 2 (1988): 7-8.

[8] Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1992), 158; Jean-Philippe Croteau, "Les écoles privées juives À Montréal (1874-1939): des instances de reproduction identitaire et de production sociale?," *Études d'histoire religieuse* 78, no. 2 (2012): 86, 91, 93.

[9] MacLeod and Poutanen, "Little Fists for Social Justice," 73-74.

and especially in the United States, would lead groups within the Jewish community to call for a democratization of the school space and to create their own institutions.[10]

Thus, Montreal's denominational public-school system set the city apart from New York and Chicago.[11] These American cities had dual systems as well, but they were made up of public and private schools. The latter category included "parochial schools, corporate schools, private endowed schools, commercial schools, industrial and trade schools, technical schools and unendowed private schools."[12] In the Chicago exhibit, the school portion was actually the exact New York exhibit section transposed in the Coliseum with a few added panels pertaining to the windy city.[13] This is an example of exhibition material being shared with their North American progressive circles. In the Montreal exhibit, there were simply parallel sections for Catholic and Protestant schools, both presenting similar information about their work.[14] The visible difference between Montreal and these American cities was the religious aspect. In the United States, the exhibits included different sub sections dealing with their local specificities. This included sections dedicated to kindergarten and to specific local groups, such as the Jewish or the Black communities, or summer vacation schools and public evening schools. The American exhibits also presented the work of industrial and trade schools, whereas Montreal did not have specific trade-school exhibits, but rather exhibited similar children's skills learned in classes (figure 4.2). Nonetheless, all of the exhibits had more in common than they had differences.

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[10] Behiels, "Neo-Canadians and Schools in Montreal," 14-5; Croteau, "Les écoles privées juives à Montréal," 87. For more on the Jewish school question in Montreal, see David Fraser, "*Honorary Protestants*"*: The Jewish School Question in Montreal, 1867-1997*, (Toronto: Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History by University of Toronto Press, 2015).

[11] Only 2% of Catholic and Protestant elementary schools were private in 1900. Roger Magnuson, *The Two Worlds of Quebec Education during the Traditional Era, 1760-1940*, (London, Ont.: Althouse Press, 2005), 70. However, Montreal had a few private schools, such as Lower Canada College or Collège de Montréal. See Ollivier Hubert, "De la diversité des parcours et des formations dans les colleges du Bas-Canada: le cas de Montréal (1789-1860)," *Historical Studies in Education* 21, no. 1 (2009): 41–65.

[12] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 46.

[13] Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

[14] *Souvenir Handbook,* 14-5.

Figure 4.2 Children from the Industrial School of Lincoln St. M.E. Church demonstrating their skills at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

As the child-welfare exhibitions' school sections were designed to show what was done and what should be done for children in schools, the overall educational goals, curriculum, and the idea of instilling good citizenship in children transcended national boundaries. Public schools were given the most space in each section of the exhibits, replete with charts and statistics showing relevant elements of their work, such as their staff, finances, and educational aims. Reformers had similar concerns for pupils across the border. Overall, these exhibits argued that the public system needed more money and emphasized the importance of working-class children learning a trade to find a "calling in life," which would ultimately increase their economic opportunities.[15] In every city, the highlight of the school and education sections, if not of the whole exhibit, was the entertainment provided by actual children demonstrating their skills and

[15] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 47.

accomplishments. Before analyzing children's participation in the exhibit, a tour of The School Life of the Child section in Montreal will set the stage.

Denominational Schools and Special Schools

The Catholic and Protestant School Commissions each organized their respective parts of the school exhibit, as the plan shows a clear divide in the middle. This section was representative of the way the Montreal school boards operated: completely separately. Their members were appointed by the provincial government, the city council, and the archbishop for the Catholic board.[16] They included parish priests and ministers, as well as lawyers, doctors and aldermen.[17] On their separate wall spaces, the Catholic and Protestant schools presented the improvement of their school buildings and playgrounds, their curriculum and course of study, as well as statistics on enrolment, buildings, teachers, and expenses. In the Catholic schools' section, different methods of teaching special subjects were also illustrated: "Manual work done by the Boys, Domestic Science and Sewing by the Girls, the Science of Physics, Chemistry and Botany." The exhibition handbook highlighted the value of "thrift training" in Catholic schools, combining this section with information on children's banking and savings programs. Finance was a constant concern in the exhibit, addressed in almost every section, for instance when discussing the costs of furniture, clothing, food, toys, or other household items.[18] As thrift and saving were among the values that reformers were constantly trying to instill in working-class people, starting with their children made sense.

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[16] Magnuson, *Two Worlds of Quebec Education,* 124.

[17] Montreal Catholic School Commission, *Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Schools Controlled by the Catholic School Commission of Montreal,* Montreal, 1915, 9-10, 18; Protestant Board of School Commissioners, *Regulations of the Board; Manual for Teachers; and Handbook for Principals in the Protestant Public Schools of Montreal: Session 1919-1920,* Montreal, 1919, 3.

[18] *Souvenir Handbook*, 14, 10-1.

The handbook also emphasized that Catholic schools provided classes "in cooking, sewing, manual training, drawing and painting, and calisthenics." These classes aligned with the goal of helping children to find their path in life. Similarly, the exhibition handbook stressed that "the Protestant schools show an extensive exhibit of the work done by their pupils, in the Kindergarten, in color work, in sewing, in sloyd and in woodwork."[19] They held demonstrations of each of these as well as of cooking in a big room upstairs. Most of the participants were from elementary schools but some of them were high schoolers.

Other Educational Movements

Child-welfare exhibitions were prime spaces to present the most innovative educational methods. The first example pertained to children with disabilities. In Montreal, as in New York and Chicago, children described as "defective" or "special" were educated in separate schools.[20] Without identifying them by name, the Montreal exhibition guide mentioned two French institutions teaching deaf children, one for boys and one for girls, and the Grey Nuns training blind children.[21] In 1912, the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets and the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes, founded by the Clercs de Saint-Viateur, supported by the Soeurs de la Providence in the girls' school, cared for Catholic children and taught in French and English. However, the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes, the English Protestant institution which had existed since 1870 and welcomed both boys and girls, was not explicitly

[19] *Souvenir Handbook*, 15. Sloyd was a practical course in manual training originating from Sweden, predecessor of woodworkind and metalworking. Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen, *A Meeting of the People: School Boards and Protestant Communities in Quebec, 1801-1998*, Studies on the History of Quebec, 15, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 286-7.

[20] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit* 46; *Souvenir Handbook*, 15.

[21] *Souvenir Handbook*, 18.

discussed in the guide. These institutions welcomed blind children until specific care was organized independently for them later in the decade.[22]

The committee working on other educational movements consisted of eight members. It included five educators and three health specialists: Prof. J.A. Dale, professor of education at McGill University;[23] Reverend Philippe Perrier, priest, educator, and school visitor;[24] F. C. Harrison, school principal;[25] A. Watson Bain, teacher;[26] C. F. Fosbery, headmaster at Lower Canada College;[27] Dr. J. H. Sinclair, physician; Dr. E. P. Chagnon, psychiatrist;[28] and Carrie Derick, professor of Comparative Botany at McGill University and proponent of the theory of eugenics.[29] These last two experts were particularly interested in psychological examination, mental state, and singling out "defectives." These hygienists and educators believed that it was best to put these children in separate institutions where they would be trained to support themselves in the future. They were also compelled to exercise outdoors, a measure designed to prevent bad health, which experts claimed may have caused further damage to deaf children. The exhibit handbook explained that "Classes in training the Blind and the Deaf-Mutes are shown in constant operation, using the methods by which these unfortunate children are trained for

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[22] The guide also fails to mention that these three institutions also eventually welcomed blind children. Christine Richard, "Institution des Sourds-Muets," Mémoire du Mile-End, last modified October 1, 2016, http://memoire.mile-end.qc.ca/fr/institution-des-sourds-muets/; Ronald Rudin, "Thomas Widd on Education and the School He Founded," Lost Stories, accessed April 13, 2020, http://loststories.ca/widd/widd.html#school; Clifton F. Carbin, *Deaf Heritage in Canada: A Distinctive, Diverse and Enduring Culture*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1996), 77-80, 83-7.

[23] Christie and Gauvreau, *Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada,* 147.

[24] Omer Héroux, Lionel Groulx, and Louis-Athanase Fréchette. *Monseigneur Philippe Perrier, 1870-1947,* (Montréal: L'Oeuvre des tracts, 1947), 1; Robert Gagnon, *Histoire de la Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal: Le développement d'un réseau d'écoles publiques en milieu urbain*, (Montréal: Boréal, 1996), 95. Rev. Perrier was also a member of the 1909 royal commission on school administration in Montreal.

[25] *Souvenir Handbook*, 39.

[26] *Lovell's Montreal Directory for 1911-1912,* 740.

[27] *Lovell's,* 1136.

[28] Alienist was the former term for psychiatrist. Normand Trudel, "Les Chroniques Exlibris – La riche collection de l'aliéniste Éloi-Philippe Chagnon," Université de Montréal, last modified Ocober 9, 2018, https://medecine.umontreal.ca/2018/10/09/les-chroniques-exlibris-la-riche-collection-de-lalieniste-eloi-philippe-chagnon/.

[29] Normandin, "Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church," 67.

selfsupport."[30] Visitors could see examples of the ways deaf children were taught to speak and to read lips, which were modern methods praised in North America and Europe.

In his history of the deaf community in Canada, Clifton Carbin explains that at the turn of the twentieth century, it was believed that children should be taught the oral method and prevented from learning sign language. They were even separated from those who were deemed unable to learn this way and thus labelled "manual students." Carbin finds that the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets' teachings were so successful that the school was chosen as one of the three schools for the deaf representing Canada at the Chicago 1893 World Columbian Exposition, where they proudly exhibited their student's work. The girls' institution had also won two medals at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1878.[31] Such exhibitions promoted their cities' and countries' vision of progress, modernity, nationalism, and imperialism. Similarly, Stéphane-D. Perreault finds that the two institutions' participation in the Columbian Exposition aimed to portray Quebec education as modern and progressive and to promote aspects of French-Canadian nationalism. He explains that contemporary observers commented on the high quality and the progressive aspect of the educational methods, as they presented numerous books, photo albums, and examples of the work done by the students including drawings, paintings, and needle-work. Materials were displayed but no students were present, unlike at the Montreal exhibition. Visitors praised the fact that these institutions offered training that would lead pupils to earn "a decent living."[32] The male and female institutions' participation in international exhibitions shows that

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[30] *Souvenir Handbook*, 15.

[31] Both boys' and girls' institutions participated in the 1893 exhibition. See Clifton F. Carbin, *Deaf Heritage in Canada: A Distinctive, Diverse and Enduring Culture*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1996), 76, 80, 86.

[32] Stéphane-D. Perreault, "National Identities on Display: Québec's Deaf Schools at the World's Columbian Exposition 1893," *Études d'histoire religieuse* 75 (January 2009): 40, 54-5.

their educational work was among the most progressive and thriving in the country and that they were part of a greater North American network of schools for the deaf.

Similarly, the child-welfare exhibitions showed these children in action to highlight progressive methods to visitors. Carefully selected photographs exalted the pride in the work done by the institutions and promoted their success in educating children with special needs. These images were also tools in fundraising in hopes to expand the institutions which were unable to serve all children applying. As Robert Sink has shown, the "promotion of important services and the courting of a major donor went hand in hand."[33] Thus, the Montreal exhibition handbook provided compelling photographs of disabled children's work in the classroom, learning useful skills to support themselves in the future. These were most likely hung, one below the other, on a screen in the Drill Hall with the subheading: "How the Handicapped children are being taught to take their place in the world and to support themselves. Work shown by the Deaf and Dumb/Blind Institutions of Montreal."[34] For example, a photograph showed six girls sitting in front of a mirror with a nun standing behind them (figure 4.3). A heading explained that girls observed their teachers' and their own lips during a lesson in lip reading. This concrete image presented the girls as well-dressed, calm and focused.

A photograph of the Chicago exhibition presented a student and his teacher in an active lesson: the child touches his teacher's throat to feel the vibration and tries to reproduce the sound with his mouth wide open (figure 4.4). As the exhibits showed many similarities across the different cities, the Chicago photograph serves as an example of how the living demonstrations took place at the Montreal exhibition. Such an image offers an exceptional glimpse of what contemporary visitors could see and feel at the exhibit. Two other photographs from the

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[33] Carbin, *Deaf Heritage in Canada,* 76-7; Sink, "Children in the Library," 16.

[34] *Souvenir Handbook*, 16-17.

handbook displayed blind children in action; one showed a boy taking an organ lesson and the other presented a group of three boys and two girls learning typewriting. The images visibly reveal that the children, and even the organ instructor, were blind, while emphasizing a sense of dignity, as the children had a straight posture and were exhibited as performing a task requiring specific skills. Therefore, the children in the photographs were presented in a positive light, as models of success, ready to go out in the word and to contribute to society.

Figure 4.3 Photograph of a lesson in lip reading. Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 16. Photographer unknown.

Figure 4.4 Teaching deaf children to speak and read lips at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

Just as the school commissioners stressed the importance of technical training so that children could learn a trade to be independent and useful in the world, they also emphasized advice for parents of deaf children. They said: "If the child is deaf, the parents should do exactly as [the specialist] tells them. They should take special care of the child's general health, teach him to stand straight, not to drag his feet, to breathe through his nose, not to utter discordant cries." Instructions like these were presented at the exhibit to educate parents so that the children's day training at school could be continued in the home. The support undoubtedly helped parents to feel proactive about their child's situation and the successful examples presented at the exhibition provided hope. When it came to blind children, the Grey Nuns explained how they would train them to dress themselves and be autonomous in the first few months before learning more practical skills such as tuning the piano, printing, sewing, knitting, ironing, and chair-caning. Again, the goal was for them to be self-sufficient and not to depend on charity.[35] The positive images presented in this exhibit section supported this goal.

The education section in Montreal also included American examples drawn from the New York and Chicago exhibits. Among the educational movements and ideas "which have not yet been adopted here," reformers presented a children's library exhibit arranged as "a model children's room of a public library, with books in French and English." At the time, Montreal only had two free children's libraries, one in Westmount, supported by public funds, and one at the University Settlement. By comparison, New York had 88 free libraries, in which one-third of the books were for children.[36] Abigail Van Slyck demonstrates that children used the library in a way that indicated they "did not submit passively to reformers' effort to remove them from the streets." She finds testimonies showing that some immigrant children were eager to learn from

[35] *Souvenir Handbook*, 18.
[36] *Souvenir Handbook*, 15, 18.

the library books, while others used the reading rooms and rooftops as space to play, bringing their noise and toys with them. Although it was a noisy environment, some urban children confided that they came to the library and did their homework there because for them it was a safe and heated space.[37] The New York exhibit showcased the contribution of libraries and museums as an important part of the work done for the city's children, whereas the Montreal exhibit aimed at showing the need for library branches in every ward of the city, and for promoting reading to children as a fun activity beyond school.

The large photograph collection from the New York libraries and the booth prepared for the child-welfare exhibit demonstrated the popularity of their installations with children. From children of all ages lining up outside the building waiting for it to open, to full reading rooms, the photographs, presented on the wall and in scrapbooks, indicated that libraries were an important institution for working-class children in that city (figure 4.5). However, Robert Sink explains that the exhibit was also created to reach out to the community, inform parents of children's services at the library, promote the positive influence of books, and stress the generous donation made by Andrew Carnegie. The images taken by accomplished photographer Lewis Hine were directed by librarians to assure the spontaneous interaction with children would be captured.[38] Sink finds that

> Ironically, despite Hine's acknowledged skills, the librarians themselves did not anticipate that the child's mind in action in the library could be so dramatically revealed. Hine's photographs, juxtaposing the condition of city children with a course of positive remedial action, caught the children's pleasure and intensity and thereby successfully appealed to the progressive social impulses. His photographs of children using libraries made a vivid, positive impressions on New Yorkers stunned by the plight of the city's children.[39]

[37] Abigail Ayres Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 210-5. Quotation at p. 212.
[38] Sink, "Children in the Library," 15-7.
[39] Sink, 21.

Figure 4.5 Photographs of children at different branches of the New York Public Library as presented in the New York Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: New York Public Library Archives, The New York Public Library, "Seward Park, 'Daily line waiting to enter Children's Room,' April 11, 1910," New York Public Library Digital Collections, Accessed April 15, 2020, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-82c6-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99; "A July afternoon in the roof reading room at Rivington Street," https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-8304-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99. Photographer: Lewis Hine.

Thus, Hines' photos of children in the library aimed to show that it was a respectable and orderly environment for children, but also that children enjoyed reading and felt comfortable in this setting. Likewise, the Children's Library at the University Settlement in Montreal also showed it was popular among children (figure 4.6). This photograph is very similar to the Hines Public Library series. The room is busy, with mostly young girls sitting at tables and standing around the two librarians' desk, while a line of children, seemingly all boys, is waiting across the doorway. This gender division suggests they took turns to come in. Some of the children are looking straightforwardly at the photographer but the most are busy with reading or borrowing books. Children seem disciplined and provided a good representation of respectable behavior. Van Slyck has shown that children of all classes and cultural backgrounds claimed the library space, which led them to act with a sense of entitlement that would not necessarily resemble these photographs. So, by exhibiting these progressive images, exhibition organizers aimed to convince city representatives of the necessity to further invest in such educational endeavors.[40]

Figure 4.6 "The Children's Library at the University Settlement." Source: *Souvenir Handbook,* 18. Photographer unknown.

[40] Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 213.

Another exhibit argued for the expanded use of school facilities, suggesting primarily that the buildings should function as social centers offering "free lectures, clubs, mothers' meetings, neighborhood entertainments, dramatic clubs."[41] The organizing committee education specialists argued that times when schools were not used were wasted, and that buildings should be accessible to taxpayers during off-school hours. During vacation time, they recommended the school buildings and their yards be used for regulated play, manual training, and even the manufacture of objects. The exhibitors gave examples of American cities which, in their view, made profitable use of their schools. In Rochester a school auditorium was used as a gym and a social gathering space after class hours, in addition to its library being available in the evenings for the public. In California, schools had served as polling stations since the advent of woman's suffrage, apparently resulting in saving of $50,000 a year for cities. Based on this section's tone and content, it appears to have been aimed specifically at taxpayers and city executives. By repeatedly mentioning the financial benefits that could be gained if schools were used extensively by the community, exhibitors wanted to convince citizens to pressure their governments to take action, saying: "it is time that the tax payers of the community began to use their positions to the fullest extent."[42]

Lastly, the education section presented the open-air school movement, created for children at risk of tuberculosis. Based on the principles of fresh air, sunshine, and proper nourishment, the open-air schools were said to bring about great results for children in terms of weight gain and quicker advancement in lessons.[43] Examples from Germany, France,

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[41] *Souvenir Handbook*, 19.

[42] *Souvenir Handbook*, 19.

[43] For information on open air schools see Richard A. Meckel, "Combating Tuberculosis in Schoolchildren: Providence's Open-air Schools," *Rhode Island History* 53, no. 3 (august 1995): 90-100; Anne-Marie Châtelet, "A Breath of Fresh Air: Open-Air Schools in Europe," in *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children*, ed. Marta Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 107–27; Marta, Gutman and Françoise Balogun, "Entre moyens de fortune et constructions

Switzerland, and the United States were used at the Montreal exhibition to portray this as the best way to save children from the white plague. Children were to work and sleep in the open air.[44] In Chicago, a leading city in this movement, an entire section was dedicated to a replica of an open-air school with an actual tent and the costumes worn by children studying outside (figure 4.7). The exhibit also showcased the tangible benefits of open-air schools for their students, presenting information about precise weight gain, regular school attendance, grade completion, and more on eleven panels.[45]

Figure 4.7 Open-air school exhibit at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

Overall, the open-air school movement provided a good example of the transnational movement of ideas and scientific knowledge among hygienists and educators presented at these exhibitions. Inspired by the success of the Chicago schools, the Royal Edward Institute, the Protestant tuberculosis dispensary in Montreal, had set up its own open-air school by the end of

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spécifiques: Les écoles de plein air aux États-Unis à l'époque progressiste (1900-1920)," *Histoire de l'Éducation*, no. 102 (May 2004): 157–80.

[44] *Souvenir Handbook*, 19.

[45] *Child in the City*, 43-45

1912.[46] These initiatives were funded by prominent philanthropists in their respective cities, who gave their name to the open-air schools, including the Elizabeth McCormick open air school in Chicago and the Jeffrey Burland school in Montreal.[47] Clearly, the cause of child welfare had attracted the interest and sympathy of Montreal's reformers and philanthropists, combined in this case with their great concern over tuberculosis. It was the deadliest disease after infantile diarrhea, and doctors also thought parental tuberculosis was the actual cause of other deaths in children, reported to be due to abnormalities or other unspecified diseases.[48] Four years earlier, moreover, the Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition had highlighted the connection between the disease and the domestic environment.[49] For these reasons, tuberculosis was also addressed in the health and homes sections of the exhibitions.

Children Performing at the Exhibit

One of the goals of the Montreal exhibition was to plant the seeds of curiosity for "knowledge of sound hygiene" in spectators, especially in children who attended, in order for Canada to grow as a strong and healthy nation.[50] As Dr. J.G. Adami, co-president of the event, explained:

> the member of the community who thinks most upon and remembers the lesson taught by an exhibition of this nature, is the susceptible school child. It is easier to influence the open mind of the growing individual to recognize the defects of old habits and methods, and to carry out what reason tells them is a right and acceptable mode of action. […] The novelty of new facts appeals to the child; he talks over the matter at home, and time and

[46] Vanier, "Tuberculose, foyers et familles," 150-2.

[47] The Chicago school was named in honour of Mr. and Mrs McCormick's daughter who died at a young age. As discussed in chapter 1, Mrs. McCormick was the main matron of the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. The Montreal school was named in honour of Lieutenant-Colonel Jeffrey Hale Burland, principal donor to the institution, and a new building was dedicated in 1926. Breckinridge, "The Child in the Midst," 814; Gutman and Balogun, "Les écoles de plein air aux États-Unis," 168; Poutanen, "Containing and Preventing Contagious Disease," 402, 414.

[48] *Report of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis*, *Province of Quebec 1909-1910*, (Montreal, Quebec, 1910): 16.

[49] Valerie Minnett, "Disease and Domesticity on Display," 381-400.

[50] Adami, "Child Welfare Exhibitions," 372; *Souvenir Handbook*, 3.

> again his lively enthusiasm for what is obviously right and reasonable, as opposed to the old-time and wrong method, impresses the needed change in home conditions.[51]

Thus, putting living children at the heart of the display materials was designed to impact the children themselves, as well as adult visitors. Although this quote shows that the child was at the center of the thinking guiding the exhibition, it also highlights the prejudices of this eminent progressive reformer in terms of class, values, and ideals. The participation of children emphasized the importance of the exhibition as a communication medium for the child-welfare movement. Involving children in demonstrations, as well as giving them center stage on panels and photographs affected children in many ways. By showing what children should be doing, the different exhibits presented children performing normative identities. In the school demonstrations, they were well-behaved and well-dressed students acting out specific tasks they would have rehearsed many times before the ultimate performance. They showed visitors a constructed image of a perfect childhood, whereas the reality of these children was very different from this representation.

In the School section, reformers, hygienists, and school commissioners repeatedly stressed the importance of skills training to give young students a brighter future. The lack of such training was framed as a serious issue that undermined the population's well-being in Montreal over the years, especially among French Canadians. The situation was further addressed in the Standard of Living exhibit, part of the larger Industrial Conditions Surrounding Child Life display, discussing work and family budgets. The data presented linked a lack of training to unskilled labour, and from there to a cycle of poverty and dependence on charitable institutions.[52] These factors contributed to the prominence given to children's demonstration of skills training.

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[51] Adami, 372, 374.
[52] *Souvenir Handbook,* 32. We will discuss this further in chapter 5.

By portraying skills acquired in schools that could lead to skilled occupations, children's performances played an important role in the argument for raising living standards for Montrealers. Accordingly, on the stages of the Philanthropy and Recreation sections, children participated in mock classrooms. As children presented their skills in daily demonstrations, they also entertained the large crowds, offering a reprieve from the intensity of the child-welfare exhibition's subject matter. The *Chicago Tribune* described children in the classroom demonstrations in the "twenty small rooms" making up the "Living Exhibit" as "the most interesting feature" of the entire Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, providing relief from the "somewhat depressing character of the booths on the main floor" (figure 4.8).[53] Similarly, during the MCWE, every afternoon between 2:00 and 3:00 and every evening between 8:00 and 9:00, visitors could watch demonstrations that might, for example, feature girls cooking or boys working with wood (figure 4.9).[54]

Figure 4.8 Photograph of boys working on wood at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

[53] Marten, "No Beer for Babies," 48.
[54] *Souvenir Handbook*, 35-36, 14.

Figure 4.9 "One of the classes of the School Children giving Demonstration of Domestic Science at The Child Welfare Exhibition." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 15. Photographer unknown.

As the photographs show, children usually participated in of the exhibits as homogeneous groups in terms of age, gender, and race. They were a direct representation of the white, middle-class ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes promoted throughout the exhibition. There were a few exceptions. One photograph of the school section of the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit showed a few Black students ironing alongside their White counterparts. There were also a limited number of photographs showing boys and girls sitting together working on arts and crafts. This gender grouping was also visible in some of the Montreal photographs, suggesting that certain activities were deemed suitable for mixed training and presentations. Overall, the organizers seem to have chosen to represent a unified vision of childhood, just as they presented themselves as a united front in the fight for child welfare, though the co-operation of the different groups was not always as easy as portrayed.[55] They presented the reformer's vision of good citizens in training. In Montreal, this vision excluded Black, Indigenous, or immigrant children from these displays. Parents from different background were welcome at the exhibition, but their children would not

[55] Adami, "Child Welfare Exhibitions," 374.

be displayed as model citizens. Instead, nationality would be celebrated in the thematic entertainments offered by specific communities on the bigger central stage.

In the Central Court of the Craig Street Drill Hall, entertainment by children from different schools every afternoon and every evening certainly pleased the large crowds gathered there. The variety of the program was such that no one was left out. On the exhibition's St. Patrick's Night, Wednesday, October 9th, children from an orphanage, a boys' school, and a girls' school (all named for St. Patrick) as well as the boys' and men's choirs from St. Patrick's Church presented gymnastics routines and sang popular Irish songs, such as *The Campbells Are Coming* and *Killarney*. The stage's background was even decorated with a Celtic harp lit with green bulbs, in keeping with the evening's theme (figure 4.10).[56] It was probably the event that received the most praise in local newspapers, with seven hundred children reported to have participated in the choruses and drill.[57] The next day, the crowd was delighted by drills and choruses performed by the English Schools in the afternoon, and a group of girls from the Pensionnat Saint-Basile playing musical dumb-bells followed by Catholic School children singing choruses in the evening. Later that week, another group sang patriotic French-Canadian songs.[58] Physical education was also an important part of the demonstrations, as reformers had called for this subject to be added to the school curriculum to improve children's physical well-being.[59]

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[56] "Child Welfare Work Advancing," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 7, 1912, 2; "Éclatant succès de la séance d'hier soir dite de 'Saint-Patrice,'" *La Presse*, Oct. 10, 1912, 14; "Les Irlandais à l'exposition," *La Patrie*, Oct. 10, 1912, 1-2.

[57] "Child Welfare Demonstration Is Now Ready," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 8, 1912, 2.

[58] *Souvenir Handbook*, 35-6.

[59] This was done only a few years after adding hygiene to the curriculum. Gagnon, *Histoire de la Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal,* 106-8.

Figure 4.10 Girls from Saint-Patrick's school after their ribbon drill performance at the MCWE. It consisted of a set of exercises done with ribbon. The city's motto is visible in the background. Source: *La Presse*, Oct. 10, 1912, 1. Photographer unknown.

Professor Henry T. Scott, the first gymnastics teacher appointed by the Catholic School Commission in 1905, was praised in newspaper reports for his gymnastics drills. Swedish gymnastics developed in the early 1800s, spread across Europe in the second part of the century, and across the Atlantic at the turn of the twentieth century. This type of exercise was strongly connected to health and had scientific and medical foundations.[60] *La Presse* reporters claimed that the Swedish gymnastics exercises were designed to assist the "rational development of organs," and more specifically to foster development of children's thoracic cage, thus allowing free play for children with weak lungs. It was therefore supported by the Institut Bruchési, the Catholic tuberculosis dispensary in Montreal, which further suggested that gymnastics made children more vigorous, gave them discipline, confidence, and self-worth.[61] These discourses on

[60] Grégory Quin, "The Rise of Massage and Medical Gymnastics in London and Paris before the First World War," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 34, 1 (Spring 2017): 208; Patricia Vertinsky, "Transatlantic Traffic in Expressive Movement: From Delsarte and Dalcroze to Margaret H'Doubler and Rudolf Laban," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, 13 (October 2009): 2032.

[61] "Nos corps publics à l'exposition pour le bien-être de l'enfance," *La Presse*, Oct. 18, 1912, 5; "On se rend par miliers à l'exposition pour le bien-être de l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 11, 1912, 5.

gymnastics are consistent with contemporary reformist and hygienist ideas on athletics prevailing in other countries.

Correspondingly, Ivan Jablonka explains that sports were believed to improve student's discipline, strength, dexterity, and sociability, terms associated with modern definitions of masculinity. He notes that gymnastics was popular in France in the early twentieth century and was perceived as regenerative for the morale and body of the youth, at a time when hygienists and pedagogues were promoting physical education to "cultivate virility in boys."[62] In addition, as Rebecca Edwards has shown, sports became an important part of the white privileged youth's existence in the US during the progressive era, even for girls. New physical standards for men (muscles and masculinity) and women (thinness) were becoming part of their identity.[63] Moreover, Gertrud Pfister explains that Swedish gymnastics was used in Europe in the late nineteenth century to "control and discipline girls from the working class."[64] Thus, the gymnastics and calisthenics demonstrations were an example of a transnational educational movement presented at the exhibition. Through their physical and playful character, these exercises had a social regulation function.

Over the two-week course of the exhibition, many Montreal newspapers such as *La Patrie*, *La Presse*, and *The Daily Montreal Star* celebrated and promoted the children's performances at the Drill Hall. Whether they published the day-to-day schedule or described in detail the demonstrations, newspapers often emphasized the obedience of the children

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[62] Ivan Jablonka, "Childhood, or the 'Journey Toward Virility,'" In *A History of Virility*. *European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism*, eds by Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine, and Georges Vigarello (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 232-3.

[63] Rebecca Edwards, *New Spirits: Americans in the "Gilded Age," 1865-1905* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 101-17.

[64] She mentions Germany, France and England. Gertrud Pfister, "Cultural Confrontations: German *Turnen*, Swedish Gymnastics and English Sport – European Diversity in Physical Activities from a Historical Perspective," *Culture, Sport, Society* 6, 1, (Spring 2003): 79, 81.

performing, their agility, speed, or vigorous musculature. Although some gymnastic exercises lasted up to forty-five minutes, the media never reported on any disruptive behavior for any of the demonstrations, pointing again to this promotion of perfectly well-behaved children as a norm in society.[65] This presentation of children undoubtedly clashed with the experienced reality of many working-class parents visiting the exhibition.

Many of the children attending the different exhibits did not behave in accordance with the model version. The reality of misbehaving children clashed with the ideal of them as good citizens-in-the-making. A *Chicago Tribune* reporter described the crowd of children that made up the large majority of visitors at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit: "The tide was not only irresistible, but impolite. It nudged, pulled, complained, talked back, and occasionally kicked."[66] Every review of the opening night of the MCWE emphasized the children were very noisy and could not be tamed.[67] Although the reporters had an amiable tone writing about the little visitors, they revealed that the children's presence was overwhelming and disruptive for many other attendees. These observations opened the door for discussions about the children's needs and what the Montreal community was doing for them. As the small living exhibits and large demonstrations meant to show the children's skills and the value of their education and training, they also provided entertainment and a much-needed break for visitors who were most likely overwhelmed by all the information, much of it dark and discouraging, plastered on the exhibition's walls.

[65] "Les Irlandais à L'Exposition," *La Patrie*, Oct., 10, 1912, 1; "Le bien être de l'enfant," *La Presse*, Oct. 10, 1912, 12; "Sweet Childish Voices Entertain at Exhibit, *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 10, 1912, 2.
[66] Marten, "No Beer for Babies," 43.
[67] "Welfare Exhibit Inaugural Draws Large Gathering," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 9, 1912, 9.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"

Playgrounds

Agnes Chesley, the women's editor for *The Daily Montreal Star*, commented on children visiting the exhibition, describing the scene she witnessed in the miniature playground at the centre of the Drill Hall (figure 4.11). She said:

> The particular portion of the Child Welfare Exhibit which goes most directly to the heart of every child-lover is that of the children themselves at play in the miniature playground. Hundreds of little boys and girls crowding into the limited space for a little real play – dozens waiting their turn at the slide – dozens more eagerly trying to get on to the crowded merry-go-round – little groups digging in the sand as if for very life. It makes one think of a lot of starved puppies or kittens let loose in a wellstocked larder. They are so eager for fun, so eager for a break in their drab and cheerless lives. What a lesson these children at play present to us! How a voice in which will not be quiet says "in asmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto Me." And how do we do it? How do we look after these little children of the poor, these little children who live in crowded streets, in wretched homes?[68]

Figure 4.11 Photograph of children playing in the small indoor playground at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Montreal's Miniature Playground would have been larger than this. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

[68] Chesley, "The Children at Play", 8.

The journalist used the experience of the exhibit to raise public awareness of children's need for safe spaces to play. She advocated for the creation of playgrounds, especially in congested districts of the city, so that children could play happily and safely. Published in the section "Of Interest to Women," the column drew on women's feelings and emotions, attempting to get their sympathy and to get them involved with her program.

Playing outside safely was one of the big themes of the exhibition's recreation display. This section of the handbook started with a strong statement: "Play is the Child's birthright." It added that children have always learned by playing with other children and, as the saying went, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."[69] Therefore, the lack of playgrounds in Montreal was an important issue for reformers and hygienists, as the playground movement was well established by the 1880s.[70] Children would play wherever they could in such a crowded city, be it a dirty street or a garbage dump. This was dangerous and led to growing numbers of traffic accidents.[71] Some parts of the Exhibition, such as the Homes section, emphasized the insalubrious improvised play area. However, in the Recreation display, organizers chose to present pictures of children cheerfully playing at the existing installations of the city, focusing again on an idealized norm.

Ultimately, the Miniature Playground, designed by the Parks and Playgrounds Association and reviewed by Agnes Chesley, was "the largest single exhibit in the entire hall." Describing the installations, the souvenir handbook stated that it had "swings, slides, teetertotters, sand boxes,

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[69] *Souvenir Handbook*, 19.

[70] The playground movement was pionnered in the US. See Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); Ocean Howell, "Play Pays: Urban Land Politics and Playgrounds in the United States, 1900-1930," Journal of Urban Studies 34, 6 (2008): 961-94; Kyle James Fritch, "'The Right to Play' The Establishment of Playgrounds in the American City," (Master's thesis, University of Massachusetts Boston, 2018).

[71] See Catherine Cournoyer, "Les accidents impliquant des enfants et l'attitude envers l'enfance à Montréal (1900-1945)," (Master's thesis, Université de Montréal, 2000); Tamara Myers, *Youth Squad: Policing Children in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), chapter 5.

baby swings, and all other apparatus of a first-class playground as far as it can be condensed into this space."[72] It was offered as a model to be replicated all over the city. However, at the time, the city's playgrounds were managed privately. Accordingly, in her study of leisure spaces in Montreal, Valérie Shaffer explains that the city allowed the installation of playgrounds in public space but was not involved in their organisation until World War I.[73] Thus, many progressive women were involved in Parks and Playgrounds Association to promote playgrounds and safe recreational activities, given how dangerous the city had become for children.[74] Putting so much effort on this exhibit was certainly profitable for the organizers. It promoted the work of progressive female reformers involved in the exhibition, contributing to legitimizing and valorizing their presence in public sphere. Moreover, *The Daily Montreal Star* columnist argued that seeing the children at play was the most heart-warming experience for people who loved children. This showed again that putting children on display, even unknowingly, conveyed the exhibit's message in the most effective manner.

Recreation

The exhibit also presented organized play options for children in the city. The panels displayed "pictures of the ball field apparatus, swimming lessons, and children playing many kinds of games." A map highlighted where there was dire need for safe outdoor play spaces, in the midst of the city's overcrowded districts with the highest death rates. While in the school section

[72] *Souvenir Handbook*, 21.

[73] *Souvenir Handbook*, 22; Valérie Shaffer, "Les rapports à la ville à travers les espaces de loisirs: Montréal, 1881-1940," (Master's thesis, Université de Montréal, 2009), 52-3.

[74] The association was founded by Julia Drummond and included, among others, members of the Montreal Local Council of Women as well as prominent business men who served as administrators. See Jeanne M. Wolfe and Grace Strachan, "Practical Idealism: Women in Urban Reform, Julia Drummond and the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association," in *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment*, eds. Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 60-70.

specialists argued for wider use of the school yards, the recreation exhibit showed that "the Catholic School Commission opened three school yards for children to play" in the summer of 1911. Praising this initiative, it was again suggested that this should be reproduced under supervision to insure safe play for children.[75] Similarly, the Parks and Playgrounds Association emphasized the importance of the recreational quality, educational, and moral value of children's leisure activities, providing working-class children supervised recreation by trained play leaders.[76] These were positive models presented to visitors, again using photography as a promotional tool (figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12 "Organized play at one of the gatherings of the Parks and Playgrounds Association." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 19. Photographer unknown.

As play time increased for children in cities during the progressive era, reformers sought to regulate children's recreation, wanting to protect them by controlling their reading, movies, or street play.[77] Reformers worried about the dangers introduced by commercial recreation and warned that "the instinct for play, so wholesome in itself, may frequently be distorted and perverted by people who furnish amusement, not for the sake of the welfare of the child, but for

[75] *Souvenir Handbook*, 22.
[76] Shaffer, "Les rapports à la ville à travers les espaces de loisirs," 39-42.
[77] Macleod, *The Age of the Child,* 120-131. Also see Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

the sake of financial gain." Thus, the exhibit committee investigated dance halls, pool rooms, river excursions, and movie theatres. Among their findings, they disclosed that their concerns were with the conditions of the theatres, lacking ventilation and light, and with the children getting there without adult supervision in dark streets, more than with the content of movies themselves, although they were not all found to be appropriate for children.[78] In fact, a 1911 investigation by the newspaper *Daily Witness* had already highlighted the unsanitary conditions of theater and emphasized that fire protection was neglected.[79] Fifteen years later, these issues remained largely unsolved, as seen in Madga Farhni's account of the 1927 Laurier Palace fire.[80]

Still, moving pictures were the most popular recreational activity in the city.[81] A survey of children in eighteen Montreal-area schools, conducted by the exhibition committee, revealed that children "spent nearly $5,000 in moving picture shows in six months." The handbook reported that in order "to meet the demand of children for moving pictures, and to provide free entertainments for the public, the Child Welfare Moving Pictures have been shown during the past summer in the parks. During the warm months, about 50,000 people each week viewed these moving pictures."[82] As a result of this success, the organizers decided to show a moving picture on the Champs de Mars on the last night of the exhibit (figure 4.13). Building on this work, the Parks and Playground Association also surveyed recreational activities in Montreal in October 1912, looking at outdoor spaces, schools, private and commercial resources, and the city's

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[78] *Souvenir Handbook*, 20.

[79] Montréal Parks and Playground Association Inc, "Recreational Survey of the City of Montreal," 1912, 27, Fonds MG2070, Series 5, File 333, McGill University Archives, Montreal (hereafter cited as Recreational Survey of the City of Montreal).

[80] Magda Fahrni, "Glimpsing Working-Class Childhood through the Laurier Palace Fire of 1927: The Ordinary, the Tragic, and the Historian's Gaze," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 8, 3, (Fall 2015): 426-450.

[81] Recreational Survey of the City of Montreal, 24.

[82] *Souvenir Handbook*, 20.

attitude towards recreation. They found that overall the city lacked recreational spaces for children.[83]

Figure 4.13 "Child Welfare Exhibition. Moving Pictures in the Park, a hint for the future." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 20. Photographer unknown.

The Social Life of the Child

In the section on the Social Life of the Child, organizers chose to focus on Boys Clubs and settlements, thereby continuing to address the subject of organized play. The committee responsible for this display included, among others, K.J. Hollinshead, assistant secretary of the Y.M.C.A, and Elizabeth Helm, manager of the University Settlement.[84] They emphasized the importance of associational life and foregrounded the idea that clubs could take as many forms as there were different types of children. Whereas the streets fostered gangs that could trouble public peace, for example, boys clubs were said to encourage a good "spirit of loyalty." Moreover, groups like the Y.M.C.A. and the Boy Scout Camps were believed to strengthen health through outdoor activities.[85] These two specific clubs were part of international

[83] Recreational Survey of the City of Montreal, 22-51.

[84] *Lovell's Montreal Directory for 1911-1912,* 1263; Julien Mauduit, *Susciter la démocratie à partir de l'université: les projets de University Settlement à l'Université McGill, 1889-1939* (Montréal, Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales, 2011), 37.

[85] *Souvenir Handbook*, 22-3.

movements that were founded in England. They both had social missions that reflected values and ideas concerning child welfare and youth development that spread across nations. They promoted Anglo-Saxon ideals of masculinity and citizenship.[86] Therefore, they were oriented to inculcate good citizenship in city boys. They were represented in pictures on the panels at the exhibit and were also part of the living exhibit presented on the small stages in the recreation section (figure 4.14). Pierre Savard explains that until Catholic groups and troops were promoted

Figure 4.14 Photographs of boys in supervised group activities. "Y.M.C.A. Boys' Club with their Adult Leader" and Photograph of a Boy Scouts demonstration at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 22, and Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographers unknown.

[86] See Benjamin René Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America : Citizenship, Race, and the Environment, 1910-1930*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Jay Mechling, *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Harald Fischer-Tiné, Stefan Huebner, and Ian R Tyrrell, eds. *Spreading Protestant Modernity: Global Perspectives on the Social Work of the YMCA and YWCA, 1889-1970*, Perspectives on the Global Past, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press of Hawaii Press, 2021); Thomas Winter, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877–1920,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

by the Church, in the mid 1920s, Catholic children avoided these organizations.[87] The Montreal exhibit would have mostly presented Anglo-Protestant children taking part in these activities.

Started in London and further developed in New York and Chicago in the 1880s, the settlement movement interested Montreal progressives early on.[88] Settlements were buildings where university professors, students, and volunteers lived among the working-class. Under the values of democracy and fraternity, the settlement residents organized activities together such as sports, a library, arts and craft, and conferences. In Montreal, there was a strong McGill connection to the settlement movement, with women alumnae and professors inspired by the work of Arnold Toynbee, Jane Addams, and Lilian Wald in British and American settlements.[89] Montreal had two settlements in 1912: University and Iverly. Each was different, based on the needs of its neighbourhood, respectively St. Lawrence and St. Joseph wards.[90] The settlements served as milk stations, playgrounds, libraries, or schools, and did much more. They offered a kindergarten, clubs and classes for boys and girls, as well as lectures to mothers on hygiene. The pictures presented at the exhibit implied that these community centers taught useful skills to working-class children and provided them wholesome organized play. For example, there were photographs of children making baskets, home cooking, shirtwaist making, and taking gymnastic classes.[91]

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[87] Pierre Savard, "L'implantation du scoutisme au Canada français, " *Les Cahiers des dix* 43 (1983): 220.

[88] Edwards, *New Spirits*, 212; Recchiuti, *Civic Engagement,* 97; Irving Mortin, "Program Development at the University Settlement of Monteal," (Master's thesis, McGill University, 1953), 10-7.

[89] Mauduit, *Susciter la démocratie à partir de l'université,* 25-39.

[90] University Settlement was on Dorcherster West Street, close to Dufferin Terrace, in St. Lawrence Ward. Charles. E. Goad Co., *Atlas of the City of Montreal and Vicinity in Four Volumes, from Official Plans - Special Surveys Showing Cadastral Numbers, Buildings & Lots*, (Montreal: Charles E. Goad, Co., Civil Engineers, 1912-1914), volume 1, plate 5. Iverly Sttlement was located on Richmond Street, next to Richmond Square, in St. Joseph Ward. "Iverly Settlement," CHRS - Centre d'histoire des regulations sociales, accessed October 2023, https://chrs.uqam.ca/index.php/institution_montreal/iverley-settlement/.

[91] *Souvenir Handbook*, 23.

The child-welfare exhibitions showed that settlements were much more developed in American cities, with New York having, for instance, twenty-six settlements in Manhattan and nine in Brooklyn. They offered a variety of services and activities like the Montreal settlements, but they also aimed to teach people to use the city's social resources and cooperated with existing organizations.[92] Settlements were an important part of the transnational social reform movement that hoped to better the life of the working class and to build bridges between classes. The settlements portrayed working-class people and their neighbourhoods positively in order to get support from philanthropists.[93] The MCWE was clearly using this same method in these areas of the Drill Hall, presenting photographs of happy children rather than telling sad stories about their living conditions.

Based on the exhibition handbook, one might reasonably conclude that the Recreations and Social Life of the Child displays in Montreal focused almost solely on boys. In fact, nearly all of the photos were of boys, and the clubs mentioned were exclusively male. This seems surprising given the transnational importance of clubs and organizations for girls that focused on public service and citizenship, especially the Girl Guides and the YWCA.[94] Although clubs and settlements offered some activities for girls, the implication is that, in the eyes of Montreal reformers, they were destined for a life of a mother and homemaker. As historian David Nasaw explained in the case of American cities, since the majority of working children were boys, girls often took the role of little mothers, watching out for their young siblings. They also worked in

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[92] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 52-3.

[93] Huyssen, *Progressive Inequality*, 139-43.

[94] On the Guiding Movement,see Kristine Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls: Girlhood, Empire, and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017); Tammy M. Proctor, *Scouting for Girls : A Century of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts*, (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2009). The YWCA had been active in Montreal since the 1880s. See Diana Pedersen, "'Keeping Our Good Girls Good': The Young Women's Christian Association of Canada, 1870–1920," (master's thesis, Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1981), 7.

the home with their mothers but without pay, and as a result girls did not get to explore and enjoy the city like their brothers.[95] Organizers seemingly did not perceive girls to be as vulnerable to the temptations of commercial recreation and street gangs. However, in Montreal, labour intensive light industries employed lots of girls and young women as did domestic service. Therefore, the heavy silence on girls and the lack of concern over them in the displays does not mean they were absent from the workforce and associative life. It rather indicates an inconsistency in programming. Furthermore, as the exhibit emphasized Boys' Clubs, there was no mention of group activity that would not pertain to white boys. This is indictive of the masculine bias of citizenship discourses and shows that reformers were especially concerned with the dangers of juvenile delinquency for boys.[96] Although this might explain why exhibitors chose to focus on boys, the absence of girls' recreational activities noticeable to today's reader was probably obvious to little girls visiting the 1912 exhibit (figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15 Five little girls looking at panels in the school section of the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

[95] Nasaw, *Children of the City,* Chapter 7. Things were different for teenage girls and questions of respectability especially came into play. See Peter C. Holloran, *Boston's Wayward Children: Social Services for Homeless Children, 1830-1930* (Rutherford [N.J.]: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989); Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Myers, *Caught*; Jean de Bonville, *Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit, Les travailleurs montréalais à la fin du XIXe siècle,* (Montréal: Les éditions de l'Aurore, 1975), 55.

[96] Little mothers and juvenile delinquency will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

The Religious and Moral Formation of the Child

Although the Religious and Moral Formation of the Child section related to education, it was located instead between the lively Recreation booth and the large Philanthropy section. Religious teaching was understood as essential to instill good citizenship in children. This display included the three major religious groups in the city and was under the supervision of a representative of each group: Rev. Dr. Herbert Symonds; Dr. H. Abramovitz; and Rev. J.O. Maurice. The Catholic Church outlined its religious training programs for different phases of their adherents' lives, including day nurseries, schools, and parents' and work associations. They emphasized the role of religious training as the most important and necessary part of a child's culture. Next, the Protestant Churches displayed the work of their Sunday schools and Mission study classes, and their work with the temperance movement. Based on their goal of religious teaching to develop character, the Protestant Churches criticized the small amount of time spent in Sunday school in comparison to the time in regular public school.[97] Lastly, the activities of Baron de Hirsch Institute, the free Hebrew School, and the private religious schools were depicted in the Jewish section. This display highlighted the primary role of the family in Jewish education and the instilment in the child of a "sense of the duties he owes to God, his fellowmen, and their country."[98] Jewish home life was expected to reinforce moral and religious teachings children received in Jewish religious school.

Beyond the differences in the aim and methods presented by each denomination, there was a noticeable discrepancy in the amount of space taken by each religion in the handbook and it was probably visible in the exhibit as well. The Catholic Church spread over more than twice

[97] *Souvenir Handbook*, 40 and 25.

[98] *Souvenir Handbook*, 25. For more on the education of Jewish children see MacLeod and Poutanen "Little Fists for Social Justice," 73-74.

the space of the others. This was primarily because it represented the majority of Montreal's population, but it also showed the social force it exerted over the city.[99] The influence of religion was strong and it had important repercussions on the institutional care of children.

Philanthropy and the Child

The display devoted to philanthropic work with children harmoniously followed the moral and religious life section and served as a bridge to the final sections of the exhibition, devoted to social issues in the city. Philanthropy was extremely important in a province that had almost no public social safety net.[100] The committee was made up of some of the city's prominent philanthropists, including Charlotte Smithers Learmont and Rufus Smith, general secretary of the Charity Organization Society.[101] While promoting the work of charitable institutions caring for dependent children, this section, in alignment with the overall exhibit, emphasized "the need for proper relief in the homes, in order to avoid breaking up the family," and the idea that "the family should be strengthened in such a way as to make Institutional care unnecessary."[102] These statements from the exhibit handbook reflect the thinking of the reformers and hygienists who hoped to change Montreal society and improve child welfare. However, institutionalized care was the preferred method of the Catholic Church and would remain the prevalent practice for decades to come.

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[99] *Souvenir Handbook*, 25 and 23-5.

[100] Historians have documented the situation and emphasized the denominational nature of philanthropic work in the city. See Janice Harvey, "La religion, fer de lance de l'aide aux démunis dans la communauté protestante montréalaise au XIXe siècle et au début du XXe Siècle," *Historical Studies* 73 (January 2007): 7–30; Huguette Lapointe-Roy, *Charité bien ordonnée. Le premier réseau de lutte contre la pauvreté à Montréal au 19e siècle*, (Montréal, Le Boréal, 1987); Cohen, Yolande. *Femmes philanthropes.*

[101] *Lovell's Montreal Directory for 1911-1912,* 1797. Other members included Mrs. Louis Beaubien, F.X. Turgeon, Mrs. J. A. Henderson, Mrs. C.A. Workman, Miss Essie Hirsh, Mme I. Bruneau, Mrs. A. Chevalier, and Mrs. A. M. Duquette. *Souvenir Handbook*, 40.

[102] *Souvenir Handbook*, 25.

Poverty, Homes, and Institutions

The central area of the Philanthropy section concentrated on the causes of poverty and what could be done to keep children in their homes, with their mothers. A chart showed that children were sent to industrial schools and became dependent primarily because their fathers either deserted, abused alcohol, or were in jail. In all cases, the mothers could not support the child because of unemployment, sickness, or widowhood. Reformers identified the reasons for the organization of relief societies, but hoped that improving living conditions, particularly in targeted, poverty-stricken areas, might prevent many issues altogether.

The handbook stated that: "poverty, sickness, and bad living conditions go together." This statement was meant to remind authorities that child welfare was a social problem that needed to be addressed on many fronts. Reformers wanted to get the governments on board with their project to prevent child dependency and keep children in their homes. They provided a concrete example to support their argument: "If a mother with five children lacks only $10.00 a month to keep her home together, wherein do we help their mother by sending them to an institution at a cost of $36.00 a month? […] A good mother should not be forced to give up her children, when it is better and cheaper to keep the family together." In addition to the financial motives, reformers had ideological grounds, as they argued that good citizens were best raised in the home setting.[103] This argument contrasted with the discourse presented on the responsibility of the ignorant mother, stressing the importance of structural factors rather than individual responsibility and praising the mother as the unifying force in the family.

[103] *Souvenir Handbook*, 29-30.

French Canadian Institutions

The dominant charities in Montreal were large, Catholic institutions responsible for the care of thousands of children. Besides the institutions for foundlings addressed in the health section, such as the Grey Nuns' foundling hospital,[104] the exhibit guide mentions twelve Orphan Asylums for French-Canadian girls and seven for French-Canadian boys. In addition to physical care, the children received school instruction and religious training.[105] There were also three institutions caring for neglected boys outside the city environment. At the Sisters of the Good Shepherd at Parc Laval, the Montfort and Huberdeau schools, boys were taught trades, especially connected to farming.

The exhibit also showcased organizations aiming to help children in their home environment by supplementing their needs. Many reformers promoted income supports as an alternative to institutional care, as they helped to keep families together. They presented groups such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which assisted families by giving material relief in the home.[106] Women and girls' sewing circles made clothes for poor children or sold embroidered items for charity. There also were six day nurseries for children between two and eight years old to be cared for while their parents were working. In their exhibit, these institutions conveyed the hope that mothers would soon be able to care for their own children in their home, through protection from the law.[107] This reference to something resembling what would become mother's

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[104] Peter Gossage, "Abandoned Children in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," (Master's thesis, McGill University, 1983).

[105] *Souvenir Handbook*, 25 and 28. See Marie-Christine Giroux, "Accueillir, vêtir, nourrir, instruire, éduquer et soigner : la protection de l'enfance à l'Hospice Saint- Joseph des Sœurs Grises de Montréal (1854-1911)," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique Française* 65, 2/3 (September 2011): 153–78.

[106] Éric Vaillancourt, "La Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul de Montréal. Reflet du dynamisme du laïcat catholique en matière d'assistance aux pauvres (1848-1933)," (Doctoral thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2004).

[107] Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "Les garderies au XIXe siècle: les salles d'asile des Soeurs Grises à Montréal," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 34, 1, (June 1980): 27–55.

pension legislation was very forward-thinking and also endorsed the reformers' ideal of strengthening the family.[108]

English Institutions

The English institutions addressed the same needs as their French counterparts. The exhibit section presented the different institutions for children of different ages; the youngest were sent to the Montreal Foundling, children between the ages of one and six were sent to the Protestant Infant Home for children, and children six and up were welcomed by the Ladies Benevolent and the Hervey Institute. The section also included the work of St. Patrick's Orphanage that cared for and educated English-speaking Catholic children between two and fifteen years old. The Montreal Boys' Home was presented as being specifically for working boys paying their own board, when able. The philanthropy section also presented options for children and women to go to the countryside for a few days to get fresh air and good food, as a respite from urban life.[109] The handbook indicated that the city of Montreal contributed financially to most English and French charities and exempted benevolent institutions from real-estate taxes.[110] By doing so, they encouraged philanthropists to continue supporting these institutions.

A popular display within of this section was the model nursery by the New York Association of Day Nurseries (figure 4.16). Divided into nine rooms, it prescribed a certain model of childcare for working mothers. Photographs of this model, published in the Montreal

[108] For more on mothers' pensions/ see Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled*; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Early Experience with Income Supplements: The Introduction of Mothers' Allowances," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice / Études Critiques Sur Le Genre, La Culture, et La Justice* 4, no. 2 (March 1979): 35–43.

[109] Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan Asylum"; Janice Harvey, "La religion, fer de lance de l'aide aux démunis dans la communauté protestante montréalaise au XIXe siècle et au début du XXe Siècle," *Historical Studies*73 (January 2007): 19, 20, and 24-5.

[110] *Souvenir Handbook*, 28.

exhibition souvenir handbook and in a Chicago photo album, showed a well-organized nursery ready to welcome children of all ages. The photos also made a case for the visual appeal of such a model to the mothers visiting the exhibit. This is another element that underscores the importance of the exhibit medium for the promotion of child welfare, as the immersive experience of the exhibit made it a convincing agent of social change. Lent by reform-minded women of New York, the display in itself connected Montreal's exhibition with the New York and Chicago exhibitions.[111] Moreover, it owed its presence in Montreal to the networks that united progressive women across North America.

Figure 4.16 The nursery model prepared by the New York Association of Day Nurseries presented at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, 1911. It was also presented at the Montreal exhibition. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II. Photographer unknown.

Jewish Philanthropy

This section of the exhibit was where the Jewish community was given the most consideration and praise. The exhibition's organizers presented the ways Jewish philanthropists worked to care for their community's dependent children as the ideal model. Children were given personal care

[111] *Souvenir Handbook*, 27.

in the home rather than in institutions.[112] Although reformers favored this approach mainly for economic reasons, the Jewish community also chose to keep children in their families to preserve their moral and religious education. Reformers attributed this achievement to the relatively small size of Jewish population and its slow growth. Moreover, research has shown that Jewish families had the lowest infant mortality rates in the city, probably due to prolonged breast feeding.[113] They also had a lower mortality rate from tuberculosis.[114]

The exhibit explained that Jewish philanthropies were concentrated and organized by the Baron de Hirsch Institute.[115] For example, in families having lost one parent, weekly allowances were given to the remaining parent caring for the children, when they were found fit to do so. Children having lost both parents were often adopted. Orphans were not sent to institutions but cared for by poor families, who received money and oversight from the Institute.[116] Nonetheless, there was also a small Hebrew Orphanage Home, which served as a temporary lodging for destitute children until a family took them in. The exhibit showed the homes where children had been placed and explained that the allowance provided for poor families meant that they could move to the northern part of the city, where conditions were less crowded and more sanitary. Reformers stressed that widows were able to stay home to care for their children instead of working in factories due to the allowance given by the Institute.

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[112] *Souvenir Handbook*, 28.

[113] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité*, 53; Lewis, "The Problem of Infant Feeding," 186; Olson and Thornton, *Peopling the North American City,* 97.

[114] Katherine McCuaig, *The Weariness, the Fever, and the Fret: The Campaign against Tuberculosis in Canada, 1900-1950,* (Montreeal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 270-1.

[115] For more the organization of welfare in the Jewish community see Mordecai E Zeitz, "The History of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Montreal," (PhD dissertation, Yeshiva University, 1974); Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*, 49-57, 146-7, 172; Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), chapter 4.

[116] We found this same type of social assistance and home care for tuberculous patients under the care of the Baron the Hirsch Institute. Vanier, "Tuberculose, foyers et familles," 77.

Besides money, they also provided food, clothing, wood, and other necessities with the help of groups such as the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Young Ladies Sewing Society, and the Hebrew Orphans Protective Society. Children were also taught to make their own clothes in Monday afternoon classes with the Jewish Endeavor Sewing Society. In addition, the Institute also held classes to prepare Jewish children to enter Protestant Public Schools. The Fresh Air Fund had been newly created to allow children and, at other times, their mothers to spend a week in the country to rest in fresh air. Similar funds had emerged in cities of Western Europe and the United States since the 1870s, showing again that Montreal adhered to programs and ideas of children's moral and physical salvation removed from the city environment promoted internationally by hygienists and reformers.[117] The handbook emphasized that dependency of Jewish children was "caused through death, sickness and desertion, but not a single case is attributable to drunkenness."[118] This indicates that reformers saw alcohol abuse as the source of many other evils, particularly for the working-class people. It was also a serious concern in the New York and Chicago exhibits, as they had many panels addressing the dangers of alcohol.

Different methods, different means?

Despite separate organizations, the philanthropic groups associated with the three main religions had one idea in common. They found that fresh air getaways would provide good rest for children. The fresh air cure was a contemporary movement that aligned with medical prescriptions for good health during this period. It would lead to the summer camp movement,

[117] James C. Albisetti, "Sending City Children to the Country: Vacations in 'Nature' ca. 1870–1900," *Paedagogica Historica* 56, no. 1/2 (February 2020): 70–84.

[118] *Souvenir Handbook*, 29.

sending city children to summer camp for a sunlight and fresh air cure.[119] The Montreal exhibition souvenir handbook featured photos of boys in camping scenes, emphasizing the positive effect of "the out-of-door life" on strengthening their health and their characters (figure 4.17).[120] Institutions and charities depended on government funding but also on the generosity of volunteers and contributors to support dependent children. The Catholic and Protestant charities

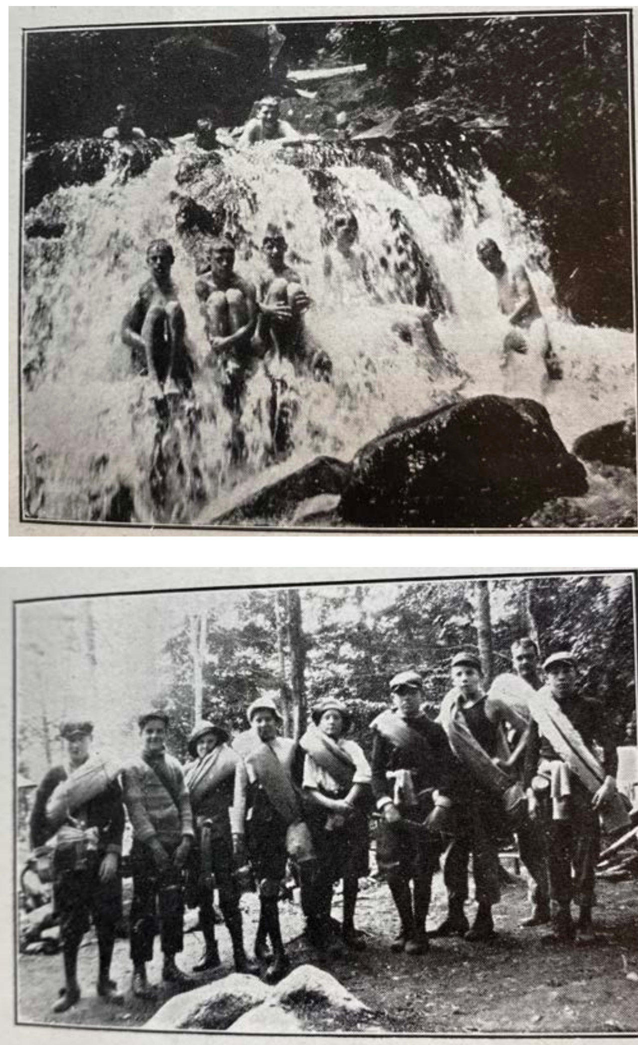

Figure 4.17 Boys in camp scenes: "Water Sprites" and "Starting for a hike." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 22. Photographer unknown.

[119] Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

[120] *Souvenir Handbook*, 22-3.

for children were centered around institutions. Jewish organizations emphasized aiding individual families; moving children to other families or institutions was the last resort. The example of the Jewish community demonstrated that the ultimate goal of strengthening the family while providing relief was attainable in Montreal.

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As reformers displayed the efforts deployed by Montreal's schools and charities to educate and care for the city's children, exhibiters from different organizations and national and religious groups stood next to each other. They had distinctive strategies but the same goals. The sections analyzed in this chapter were markedly less moralizing than the previous ones and more focused on the positive representation of childhood, acknowledging the social problem. Through demonstrations, photographs, and wall panels, exhibitors presented a model of a well-educated, well-behaved, religiously, morally, and physically strong child. They presented a united front for the common cause of child welfare, but also for a nationalist ideology. In each section of the exhibition, they described the importance of children in building a strong nation. The nationalist discourse was ever present overall in the handbook and in the media coverage.[121] In this chapter, we highlighted that little Canadians sang national anthems and celebrated their culture during patriotic demonstrations, to the delight of the public visiting the exhibition. In this context, children's performance served as live representations of the future of the nation and embodied the importance of the child-saving movement. With these specific sections of the exhibition, it is

[121] For example, in this specific section, a photo had a sub-title that embodied this discourse: "Nine fine fat Foundlings. With modern care these will all grow up strong Canadians." *Souvenir Handbook*, 27.

clear that organizers hoped the nation would take action to save the children, as properly trained and cared for children would one day save the nation.

Chapter 5: The Social Problem: Laws, Work, and Wages

Alors que la visite s'achève, je me sens épuisée. Depuis plus d'une heure, partout où je regarde, il y a tant de choses à voir, à comprendre, à ne pas oublier. Je me dis qu'une chance qu'on a pu s'arrêter un peu pour regarder le spectacle des petits Irlandais avant d'entrer dans les dernières sections de l'exposition. Ça m'a bien fait sourire de voir ces jeunes bouger tous ensemble sur le rythme. Madame Lebrun et moi on a décidé de traverser rapidement la partie sur la loi sans trop s'arrêter sur les panneaux traitant de la criminalité et des jeunes délinquants. Tout le monde connaît des jeunes qui traînent dans les rues et comment ça peut finir par déchirer la famille. Moi en tout cas, je voudrais pas voir un de mes enfants passer devant un juge, non madame! Je suis plus intéressée par la dernière salle d'après qui parle du travail. Mon mari travaille à la shop. Mon aînée et mes deux plus vieux garçons ont aussi des jobs. Malgré tout, les fins de mois semblent toujours arriver trop vite. Je suis pas surprise de voir que le budget proposé n'est pas réaliste, je le sais trop bien. Je me reconnais, je reconnais ma famille pis mes voisins dans les difficultés présentées. Moi aussi je pense que ces petits sont le futur de notre pays et j'ai l'impression que les choses pourraient peut-être s'améliorer pour eux si on leur donnait la chance de grandir et de jouer un peu plus.

Walking towards the last sections of the exhibition, in the south-east corner of the Drill Hall, visitors came to recognize the exhibition's central argument: Most child-welfare issues, from infant mortality to improper home and city environments, were caused by ignorance. Reformers insisted that scientific education would lead to the prevention of delinquency and to greater control over child-welfare matters in the city. But insufficient financial resources often restricted people's ability to act on the recommendations. Working-class families did not have the means to follow the middle-class norms promoted throughout the exhibits.[1] Industrialization and rapid population growth were altering the landscape of many western cities, and intensifying the attendant social ills. Increasingly, poverty stood out as being the root cause of most problems afflicting Montreal children and their families.

The final galleries of the MCWE compelled visitors to confront the reality of urban poverty. Entitled The Law and the Child and Industrial Conditions Surrounding Child Life, these displays highlighted what organizers called "the social problem." After visitors toured the

[1] *Souvenir Handbook,* 5, 45.

exhibition, learning about the dramatic health crisis afflicting Montreal children and what local institutions tried to do to save them, the two final exhibits presented the government's role in guarding the well-being but also the morality of the city's children, including its shortcomings. As they completed their tour, visitors were again faced with wall panels full of statistics, tables, graphics, pictures, and text, presenting the information in various ways.

This chapter will show how the tension between the indictment of structures of poverty and the trope of the "ignorant mother" played out on exhibition floor. It will highlight the role of juvenile courts, which provided a new space for and promoted elite child-saving ideologies to achieve a certain level of social regulation of the working class across North America. The child-welfare exhibitions served to legitimate these new courts, fostering the perception of a trustworthy and modern institution, genuinely attentive to children's needs. I will show that this was a nuanced practice; families took part in the process and different avenues served to reform "delinquent" children. Looking at institutional responses to juvenile delinquency, the role of the Catholic Church and Catholic institutions in shaping the discourses of reform will be emphasized. Furthermore, the chapter will present an analysis of the discourse surrounding industrial conditions and how this affected families. Finally, I will explore the concept of nationalism in the context of child-welfare exhibitions.

The Law and the Child

Juvenile Court

At the turn of the twentieth century, a time of unprecedented and rapid change, cities provided as many new threats as opportunities. Many young boys were sent to prison for petty crime, such as theft, insubordination, or public disorderliness. Reformers presented a narrative stating that

confined with adult felons, “delinquent boys”[2] would learn their illicit tricks and come out of prison only to return to crime. The Law exhibit in the Drill Hall showcased these ideas in cartoons illustrating the reformers’ discourses and what they called the “old ways,” before the creation of the courts, when boys sent to prison were subject to the influence of hardened criminals (figure 5.1). Reformers identified these practices as the “old ways” of dealing with young delinquents, and pushed for a reform of court systems across North America.[3] As part of the child-saving movement, Montreal’s juvenile court was created on January 12th, 1912, and exhibition organizers claimed that this major reform established the status of Montreal as an “advanced” modern city.

Inspired by the American juvenile justice movement, Montreal reformers lobbied for years to finally pass the 1908 Juvenile Delinquent Acts. In his analysis of this law and its implementation, Jean Trépanier has explained that this private initiative was the first step leading to a new model of youth protection and to the establishment of juvenile courts in Canada. Reformers hoped that by protecting children, this law would also protect society.[4] Adding to the text of the law a few years later, legislators declared that “certains enfants –fugueurs, désobéissants, incontrôlables, se livrant à la paresse, tenant une conduite immorale, un langage obscène ou indécent” would be considered delinquents and be prosecuted by the new juvenile court.[5] In 1912, the Montreal juvenile court began its activities under judge François-Xavier

[2] I use the socially constructed term “delinquent” to refer to young offenders considered deviant by reformers, as the scholarship on this subject also uses this term. In 1912, young delinquents were mostly working-class teenage boys convicted of minor offences. Sylvie Ménard notes that the problem of boys' delinquency determined the early policies adopted by the Quebec government. See Centre d'histoire des régulations sociales, “Délinquance,” Déjouer la fatalité: Pauvreté, familles, institutions, accessed October 10, 2023, https://dejouerfatalite.uqam.ca/; Ménard, “L’Institut Saint-Antoine,” 74; Ménard, *Des enfants sous surveillance*.

[3] *Souvenir Handbook*, 30-1.

[4] Jean Trépanier, “Protéger pour prévenir la délinquance,” 72, 60-5.

[5] Renée Joyal, “L'Acte concernant les écoles d'industries,” 45.

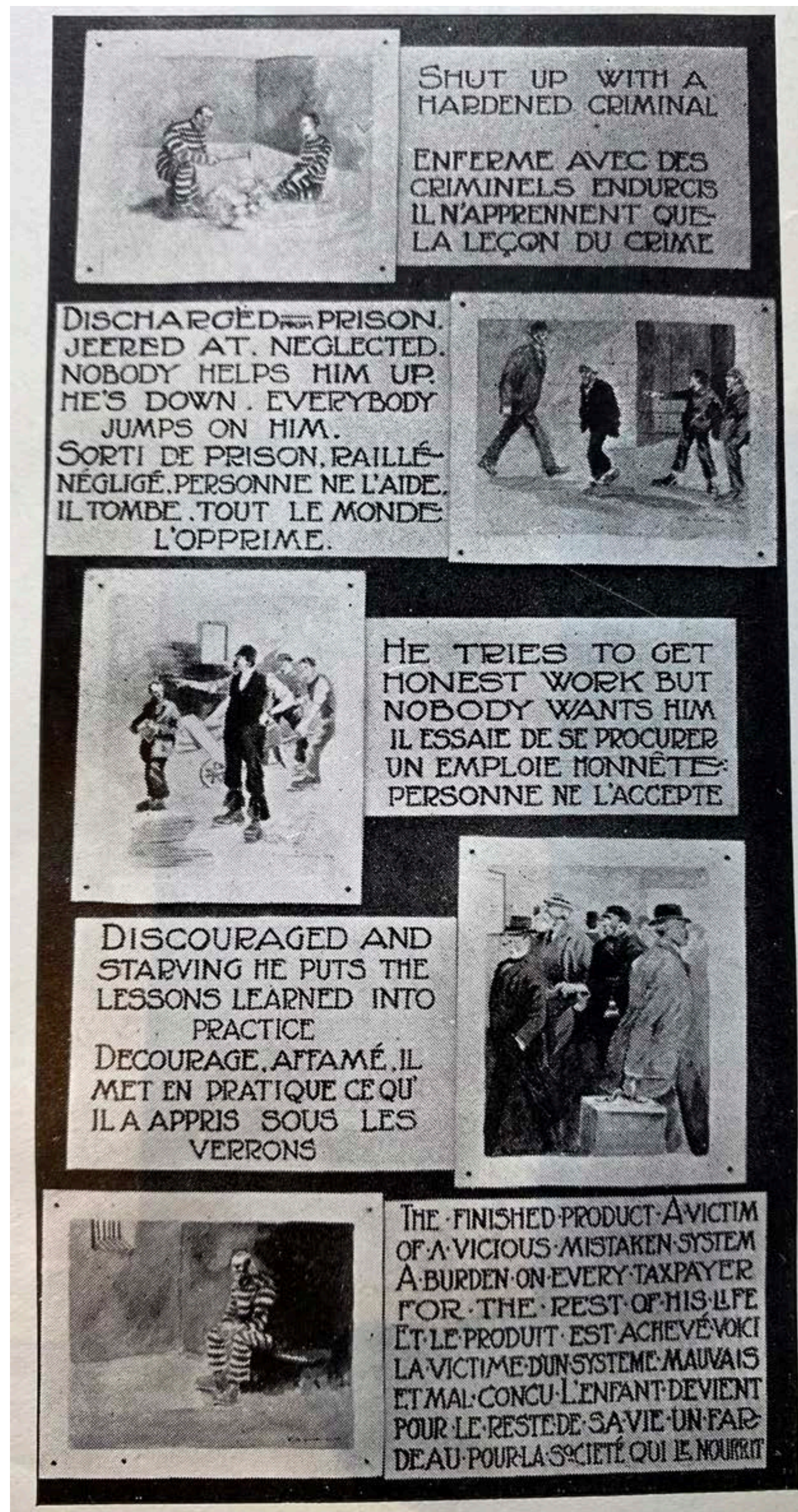

Figure 5.1 “Before 'The Juvenile Court' started.” Cartoon part of a series presented in the Law and the Child exhibit illustrating the “old way” and “new way” of justice. In this cartoon, discouraged after getting out of jail, the boy becomes a bigger criminal using the lesson he learned from fellow prisoners. Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 31.

Choquet, who would retain the position until 1924. David Niget, in a comparative study of the French and Quebec juvenile courts, describes Choquet as “le réformateur emblématique de la justice des mineurs à Montréal. Stratège politique, consensuel, à la conjonction des communautés protestante et catholique, homme médiatique dont la presse véhicule une image quasi-héroïsée.” This judge was one of Montreal's most active advocates for a juvenile court system based on the American model of probation since its inception.[6] Interestingly, if not surprisingly, Choquet was a member of the Law and the Child exhibit committee.

The exhibition handbook describes the Montreal juvenile court in terms that reflect what Tamara Myers refers to as the “gendered notions of salvation and rehabilitation.”[7] In this new system, reformers claimed

> the child is treated as he should be, not as a criminal to be punished, but as a delinquent to be reformed. He is not tried, but he is questioned and advised by a fatherly judge, who is himself assisted by a committee which is composed of responsible citizens, ladies and gentlemen of the religion and nationality of the delinquent child. He is not imprisoned, but he is put in a detention home until his case can be properly disposed of.[8]

This meant the juvenile court would decide if a child would be sent to a reform school or be put on probation. These were the “new ways” of dealing with so-called juvenile delinquents, and the exhibition included cartoons depicting their merits. Such illustrations presented reform schools teaching trades in healthy environments, making for good citizens instead of burdens for tax payers, and were exhibited alongside images of the outdated court system. Images were featured on wall panels, some were even reproduced in the exhibition handbook.[9] Once again, the use of illustrations, especially cartoons, demonstrates the reformers’ desire to reach the largest possible audience, children and adults, and especially the working class, as cartoons were often chosen to

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[6] Niget, *La naissance du tribunal pour enfants,* chap. 1, 53 and 48, iBook. Citation on p. 53.
[7] Myers, *Caught,* 20.
[8] *Souvenir Handbook,* 30.
[9] *Souvenir Handbook,* 31.

illustrate abstract ideas.[10] Although cartoons are usually associated with caricatures and humour, they were mostly used by child-welfare exhibiters to address serious subjects in an editorial way. Similarly, Worth Robert Miller shows that cartoons were used by the populist press in the 1890s to educate the masses and convey messages that were at times "cutting, controversial, or even poignant," and in a way that could "leave a more lasting impression than the written word."[11] Moreover, the contrasting concepts of old and new ways presented together are reminiscent of other dichotomous displays in the exhibitions, such as the naturally versus bottle fed babies or the good versus bad rooms.

Analogously, the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit painted a picture of the evolution of the juvenile court system in major American cities.[12] Although a law had prohibited the detention of minors with adults in Chicago since 1845, the first juvenile court law was passed in Illinois in 1899.[13] On a wall panel (figure 5.2) full of photographs of children in county jails, reformers asked: "Who is the Criminal – the State or the Child?" An initial photo showed children gathered around a man in a jail cell while he was showing them something. This image is a perfect representation of the situation condemned by reformers across North America, in which children jailed for petty crime are seem to have been recruited into criminal networks by convicted adult offenders. The other photographs on the panel depicted children still in jail, but with other young boys only. The last image even showed a jail school, for which exhibitors stated that "occupation

[10] Strong, *Child-Welfare Exhibits,* 34.

[11] Worth Robert Miller, "Educating the Masses: Cartoons from the Populist Press of the 1890s," *American Nineteenth Century History* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 104 and 105. On cartoons also see Brandon Webb, "Boundaries Drawn: The Cultural and Labour Politics of American Political Cartooning, 1945-1973," (PhD dissertation, Concordia University, 2022).

[12] The Chicago exhibit presented wall panels on the juvenile courts for Chicago, New York, Brooklyn Buffalo, Denver, Boston, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. These panels were prepared for the New York exhibition. Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

[13] The Cook County Juvenile Court in Chicago was the fisrt children's court in the United States. Anne Meis Knupfer, *Reform and Resistance: Gender, Delinquency, and America's First Juvenile Court,* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

and training take place of idleness and harmful association."[14] This represented the reformers' goals for rehabilitating delinquent boys.

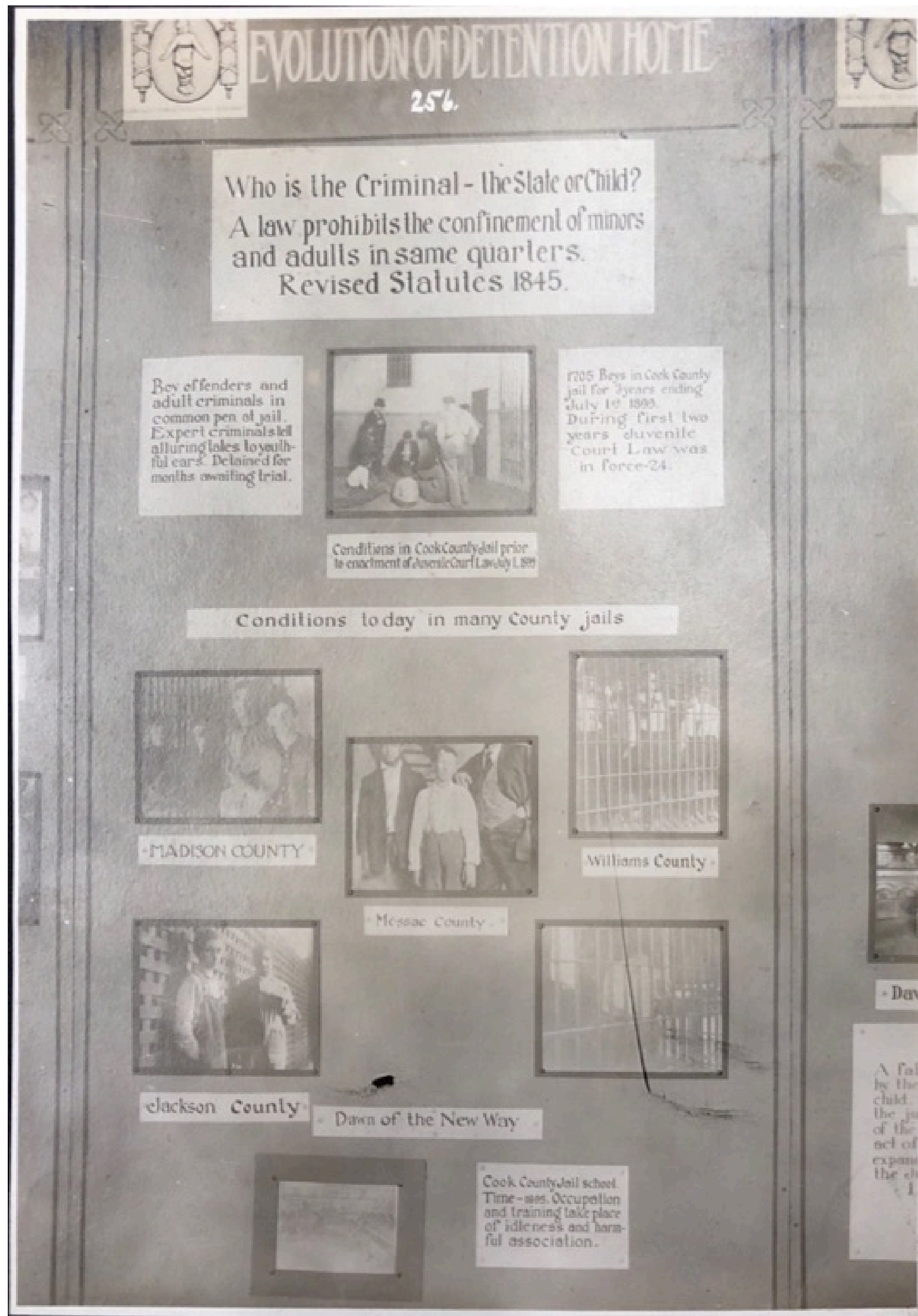

Figure 5.2 Wall panel promoting the Juvenile Court Law at the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

[14] Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

The Chicago exhibition handbook explained that the juvenile court put the child's welfare rather than a vengeful application of the law at its center. In this new court, the child would explain his version of the incident without an intermediary and standing next to the judge, who would act as a parent by providing help "for a child either physically, mentally or morally unwell," which was found to be the case of three out of four delinquents.[15] Accordingly, in her study of the emergence of juvenile justice in the United States, Naama Maor finds that contemporaries of the new court described it as revolutionary and an important part of the child-saving movement, as it removed children from the criminal system. She explains that the juvenile court emerged from the social reformers and maternalists ideas around "proper" care and regulation for children's physical, mental, and moral conditions. Maor shows that however benevolent, reformers promoting juvenile justice aimed to maintain social order and to discipline children and especially their immigrant parents based on their American middle-class values, as fear of the newcomers increased in rapidly industrializing cities.[16]

In her study of delinquent youth in Montreal, Tamara Myers shows that juvenile delinquency was a gendered concept. Boys were cast as "more 'in danger' than dangerous." She explains the double standard whereby "the juvenile court focused primarily on boyish behaviors that could be treated and on rehabilitating boys brought to court by their parents or the police," whereas girls were policed for their sexuality. Boys were portrayed as neglected by their families and in need of rescue by the state: "thus images of delinquent boys tended to emphasize their prepubescent, sexless, and neglected state."[17] This is exactly what the juvenile justice exhibits in Montreal, Chicago, and New York presented. The juvenile court served as a moral guardian with

[15] *Child in the City,* 28.
[16] Maor, "Delinquent Parents," 23-28, 35.
[17] Myers, "Embodying Delinquency," 383-5.

its “fatherly judge.” The displays focused on boys in prison and presented them visually as young and vulnerable (figure 5.3 and 5.4). Girls were not explicitly omitted in the exhibit, as the text refers to “the delinquent child,” but only boys were pictured on the walls, perhaps simply because they accounted for the majority of those brought to the court.[18] The absence of girls on the display is surprising, given reformers' moral concerns about them, but it is another example of the silence of the exhibition in the light of girls' experiences. However, they were included in the exhibit on reform schools. Myers also finds that the juvenile court system worked with the complicity of the working class, as parents used the courts to discipline their children based on their ideals surrounding their children’s behavior.[19] This means parents trusted this new system to reform their children and prevent them from engaging in further criminal activity. The exhibition potentially contributed to this trusting feeling, promoting the new juvenile court as modern and truly caring.

Figure 5.3 Image on a wall panel on Probation at the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

[18] In the early years of the Montreal juvenile court, 83.4% of the children brought to court were boys. Trépanier, “Protéger pour prévenir la délinquance,” 78-9.

[19] Myers, *Caught,* 12.

Figure 5.4 Children at the Chicago Juvenile Court. Source: *Child in the City,* 29. Photographer unknown.

Reform Schools

In the nineteenth century, child-savers believed that it was best to remove children from their problematic family situation and to put them in institutions especially created for them. There, they would be trained in every aspect of becoming decent, useful citizens. As urban children spent much of their time in the streets, reformers sought to protect them by creating institutions to care for them. An act of 1869 created the industrial and reform schools, setting the stage for the treatment of young delinquents in Quebec for the following century.[20] Industrial schools were developed to prevent delinquency in neglected, vagrant, or destitute children, whereas reform schools were designed to rehabilitate delinquent children. Although different in essence, in the mid nineteenth century, in practice, the two types of institutions received convicted or dependent children based on their age than their offender's status. The two groups were even combined and

[20] Myers, 12, 23-4.

housed in the same premises. They had the same moralizing goal and same means to train the inmates in low-skilled jobs.[21]

Studying the 1869 legislation, Renée Joyal notes that elites were unlikely to differentiate between young delinquents and those at risk, as they perceived the mores of the working class as being dangerous, a vision which would inform their moralization work to protect children and preserve social order in the period under review.[22] The first girls' reform and industrial schools opened in 1870 under the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and the reform school for boys was opened in 1873 by the Brothers of Charity.[23] As Tamara Myers points out, "if the reform school system was an expression of the new child-saving ideologies, in Québec this was informed by the belief in Catholic redemptive strategies at the hand of priests and nuns." This is also a reminder of how central Catholic religious orders were in the province's intervention on the family, especially among the working class.[24]

At the MCWE, progressive reformers emphasized the importance of reforming young delinquents, rather than punishing them as if they were criminals. They believed these children were a product of their environment and that reform institutions would provide them with everything they needed to become good citizens. The new juvenile courts provided a means of getting them to these institutions. Presenting reform schools, the Montreal exhibition handbook explained that "the idea behind them all is that the boy or girl who has been delinquent, needs to have plenty of air and good food, to do useful work, and to learn some trade by which, he may

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[21] The two types of establishments were created simultaneously and were administered on charitable basis with very little means. In this context, no distinctions were made between sentenced or admitted girls. Ménard, "L'Institut Saint-Antoine," 78-9; Joyal, "L'Acte concernant les écoles d'industries," 42.

[22] Joyal, 46.

[23] Trépanier, "Protéger pour prévenir la délinquance," 52.

[24] Reform schools received children under sixteen whereas industrial schools were for children under fourteen. Myers, *Caught,* 26. For more on the *mouvement familial* see Marie-Paule Malouin, *Le mouvement familial au Québec: les débuts, 1937-1965*, (Montréal: Boréal, 1998).

later support himself."[25] As the Quebec child-saving policies were organized on denominational lines, the four gender-based institutions in Montreal were either under Catholic or Protestant jurisdiction. The Catholic institutions had a strong symbolic legitimacy in the field and endorsed the moral reform discourse put forward by the juvenile court. The Protestant community created smaller institutions supported by progressive philanthropists and had correspondingly less funding than their Catholic counterparts.[26]

Catholic reform schools were quite large, with the boys' institution hosting around 200 children each per year. Reformers stressed the importance of fresh air, good food, and sleep, aiming to train children in the physical, mental, and religious realms. Young delinquents could expect different treatment based on their gender. The Catholic boys were taught a useful trade so that they could support themselves after their stay.[27] At Mont Saint-Antoine, boys were reformed through religious instruction, physical education, and manual labour, as discipline of the body was at the heart of their institutional experience.[28] The exhibition handbook claimed that delinquent girls often had "worn out nervous systems, driven at the high pressure maintained in our great cities, where both work and play are carried under a strain." Therefore, reformers set them out to play in the open air to strengthen their bodies.[29] Although some girls were sent to reform school by court order, many were placed at the Institut du Bon-Pasteur at the request of their parents, given that they perceived their daughter's behavior as deviant. Under the nuns' supervision, girls were set out to strictly work, study, and pray.[30] The Protestant institutions

[25] *Souvenir Handbook,* 31.

[26] Niget, *La naissance du tribunal pour enfants,* chap. 1, 73-4, iBook.; Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan," 101-5.

[27] At the Boys' Reformatory, Institut du Mont Saint-Antoine, under the Brothers of Charity, the training included trades such as tailoring, printing, shoemaking, and tinworking. *Souvenir Handbook*, 31.

[28] Centre d'histoire des regulations sociales, "Institut Saint-Antoine," last modified in 2023, https://chrs.uqam.ca/index.php/institution_montreal/institut-saint-antoine/.

[29] *Souvenir Handbook*, 31.

[30] Deviant behavior included disobedience, vagrancy, and irregular sexuality. Centre d'histoire des régulations sociales, "Délinquance"; Myers, *Caught*, 8-9.

differed from the Catholic ones in size and form. Instead of a school, boys were sent to a small farm in Shawbridge for a period of two to three years, depending on their good conduct.[31] Girls were sent to an industrial school in St. Lambert, which could only accommodate thirteen young delinquents.[32] The exhibit guide notes that the Protestant institutions could probably provide more individual care to their pupils, given their smaller numbers. However, due to the lack of room, Protestant girls risked being sent to the Catholic establishment to avoid being driven "back to their evil surroundings." This process could leave young women in the care of an institution that was not truly responsible for them and could decide to simply not take them in, showing both the power of religion in Québec to influence ideas of morality and the prominence of religious orders in social reform.[33]

In Chicago, in 1911, the Detention Home for Children was located above the juvenile court. It provided detention and school facilities for ninety delinquents, but had yet to provide outdoor space for exercise. Juvenile Protective associations were created to prevent crime and protect children in American cities. Reformers explained that children were still incarcerated with adults in some counties, although they promoted "modern methods," such as reform schools and farming over jails.[34] Although contemporaries saw their work with the new juvenile court as innovative and humanitarian, the reality was that the progressive ideal was far from realistic. Maor explains that the juvenile court was rather "a continuation of previous practices used in houses of refuge and reformatories."[35] With 2500 children declared young delinquents in 1910,

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[31] Ménard, "L'Institut Saint-Antoine," 86.

[32] The History of the Batshaw Centres, "The Girls' Cottage School," accessed on October 10, 2023, http://batshawcentreshistory.ca/girls_cottage_school.html.

[33] *Souvenir Handbook*, 31.

[34] *Child in the City,* 30.

[35] Maor, "Delinquent Parents," 25.

Chicago sent children to various institutions or on probation under an officer, as the "fatherly" court could not directly help each child as much as they claimed they wanted to.[36]

A third option existed outside of institutional walls for delinquent children, especially boys. Both in Montreal and in American cities such as New York and Chicago, probation served to distance young boys from criminal activities while remaining in their environment. In addition to probation officers, the juvenile courts called for Big Brothers to supervise probation, describing them as friends helping boys to overcome their base instincts.[37] Probation was clearly a less expensive method of rehabilitation than detention, and probably a necessity given the limited resources available in major cities of the early twentieth century. This method also aligned with the court's values, being non-punitive and more preventive. Nevertheless, while advocates of Chicago's juvenile justice system declared their intention to maintain the family unit and favored probation officers monitoring the homes, they still committed a large number of children to the state reformatory.[38]

In Montreal, Judge François-Xavier Choquet was a strong advocate for the probation model established in Chicago in 1899. He had already experimented with such practices before being appointed to the juvenile court, with the Children's Aid Society of Montreal, in 1908. As president of the organisation, he had hired two social workers to investigate families. Both were women and they attended separately to Catholic and Protestant children. Maria Clément and Rose Henderson would continue their probation officer work under the new court.[39] Tamara Myers further explains that the Montreal Juvenile District Court hired these probation officers to investigate working-class homes and extend surveillance through the lens of maternalistic justice.

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[36] *Child in the City,* 28.
[37] Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.
[38] Up to 1/3 of boys and 2/3 of girls were committed to the reformatory. Maor, "Delinquent Parents," 30-33.
[39] Niget, *La naissance du tribunal pour enfants,* chap. 1, 52, 62, iBook.

Ideologically, this satisfied those who argued that innate differences between the sexes conferred upon women a maternal nature that predisposed them to help children, even during the judicial process. Myers argues that maternalistic justice was a good fit in the context of a court under paternalist Judge Choquet.[40]

The organizing committee for the Law and the Child section of the child-welfare exhibition reflected this gendered vision, as it was comprised of seven men and five women. Among them, many were lawyers and reform specialists, such as Judge Choquet and probation officer Rose Henderson.[41] The committee therefore reflected the organisation of the juvenile court and gave maternalist reformers a prominent place in designing this exhibit. However, Myers explains that reformers' power over delinquent children and their families was "less hegemonic and more diffuse than social control theories had allowed." Indeed, parents used the court to discipline their children; adolescents resisted and showed agency in the contexts of juvenile court and reform schools as, for example, when girls tried to escape detention at the Institut du Bon Pasteur.[42] In this respect, this overview of the juvenile court system departs from the social control model, where institutions and benevolent reformers are seen as dominating over the working-class. It aligns with what historians such as Jean-Marie Fecteau and Janice Harvey

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[40] For more on maternalist justice see Myers, *Caught,* 99-105.

[41] Other committee members included advocates J. S. Buchan and Peers Davidson, Judge S. P. Leet, a representative of the Frères de réforme, Mme Choquet, and Mme F. L. Béïque. Judge Choquet's wife, Marie-Caroline Barry, was an active advocate for child welfare, as she established the Children's Aid Society of Montreal with her hunsband in 1908. Mme Béïque was the wife of Montreal lawyer and senator Frédéric Ligori Béïque who defended the 1908 Bill and worked with Judge Choquet in the 1870s. See *Souvenir Handbook* 40; *Lovell's Montreal Directory for 1912-1913*, 919, 1065; Myers, *Caugh,* 104; Campbell, *Rose Henderson*; Tamara Myers, "Choquet, François-Xavier," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, last modified in 2005, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/choquet_francois_xavier_15F.html; Trépanier, "Protéger pour prévenir la délinquance," 62.

[42] Myers, *Caught*, 12-13; Centre d'histoire des régulations sociales, "Délinquance."

have described as social regulation, where attempts at disciplining the working class are assessed in terms of the resilience and agency, focusing on power relations and instances of domination.[43]

Through the child-welfare exhibitions, the new juvenile court system was presented as a symbol of modernity in large cities such as Montreal and Chicago. Maor explains that the latter became "the nation's leading laboratory of criminal justice reform" and was part of "a network of juvenile justice proponents."[44] Influenced by each other, legislative reformers claimed to protect society against delinquents and future criminals. Although families used the courts to regulate their children, the new courts and institutions justified unprecedented intervention by the State in working-class families, arguing it was in the best interest of the child.[45]

Industrial Conditions Surrounding Childhood

Laws Affecting Children

The exhibition on Craig Street in 1912 also showed that children were affected by laws outside of the juvenile court in its Industrial Conditions section. The exhibit guide described a husband's drinking habits and the consequences of such actions on his family. Failing to support his wife and child, the husband left them to starve. He might also have beaten his wife, and terrified his children. Reformers found the contemporary ways of dealing with such situations to be inadequate, to say the least. The Society for Protection of Women and Children prosecuted such men, who could be sentenced to city jail if found guilty. Reformers saw this as another revolving wheel in which families were left to starve and men were immersed in a cycle of criminality,

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[43] Jean-Marie, Fecteau, Janice Harvey, and Centre d'histoire des régulations sociales, *La régulation sociale entre l'acteur et l'institution: pour une problématique historique de l'interaction,* Collection Pratiques et politiques sociales et économiques, (Sainte-Foy Que.: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2005), 3. For more on conceptual issues around social regulation, see Thierry Nootens, *Fous, prodigues et ivrognes: familles et déviance à Montréal au XIXème siècle* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

[44] Maor, "Delinquent Parents," 12.

[45] Maor, 158.

leading them to continue in their same ways when they got out. Once again, the exhibit used cartoons to illustrate this pathetic situation but unfortunately, none of them were preserved for us to see.[46]

Accordingly, in his study of drinking in Canada, Craig Heron explains that

> moral reformers talked about how the saloon drained scarce family income and promoted loutish drunkenness that flowed out into the streets and in the front door of family households. They tended to cast all working-class drinkers as degenerate drunkards, and repeatedly insisted that public drinking was the root cause of working-class poverty. […] Police-court columns in the daily press provided regular examples of women publicly denouncing their drunkard husbands for failing to provide.[47]

Most child-welfare reformers were temperance activists concerned with the effects of drinking on society. They were interested in regulating morality, including working-class leisure time and self-control, and they saw temperance as central to the larger moral reform movement, including the social gospel and social purity movements.[48] The international movement promoted a vision of masculinity described by Heron as "earnest and responsible, sober and restrained, purposeful and productive," which could only be attained without drinking.[49] Revealing the alarmist character of the reformers' discourse, Heron finds that only a minority of men had serious drinking problems and casts doubts on the significance of drinking contributing to poverty in working-class families.

Because some men used drunkenness to justify their violence against their wife or children, temperance activists and reformers used this example as an argument against drinking. However, Heron explains that courtroom records reveal that when wives took their husbands to court for their drunken behavior and violent excesses, it was usually part of an ongoing conflict

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[46] *Souvenir Handbook*, 33.
[47] Heron, *Booze*, 121.
[48] For more on the social gospel see Allen, *The Social Passion.* On social purity, see Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*.
[49] Heron, *Booze*, 132.

within the household that did not only revolve around alcohol. Even though “the police and courts were unreliable allies” for wives given the lack of enforcement, they chose to use the system to increase their wellbeing, hoping to put a stop to the violence and abuse and to gain support for their family.[50] This is therefore another example of working-class families using the courts to gain control over their home. Just like they did for their delinquent daughters, women brought their husbands before the court in attempts to regulate their “deviant” behavior and morality.

Aiming to end the cycle of criminality and idleness in drunkard fathers, an exhibit presented a “modern” approach, inspired by new methods developed in Buffalo, Kansas City, Cleveland, and other American cities. It involved a probation officer visiting men accused of drunkenness or non-support before they went to court and reporting to the judge on the family’s living conditions. One sentencing option for first-time offenders was probation, compelling the man to meet with the officer regularly and handing his wages to his wife in front of him. This method, it was hoped, would solve much of the problem of husbands drinking away their wages. More serious offences led to men working on the municipal farm instead of going to jail. While most of these farms' revenues were dedicated to city projects, the men received a small wage for their families. Reformers saw this punishment as a blessing. The men were sent to work in a healthy environment instead of languishing in jail, and families were supported instead of becoming impoverished. Although a Montreal law provided for prisoners’ wages to be paid directly to their families, the exhibit guide specifies that there was no wage work available for Montreal prisoners, unlike their American counterparts. Reformers hoped the system could be

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[50] Heron, 124, 138-9.

modified to allow convicted men and their families to benefit from the time away rather than starve and decay.

This discussion logically led to the topic of "mothers' pensions," which was an important one for reformers across America. They all agreed that it made much more sense economically and emotionally to keep children in their homes with their mothers.[51] But in Montreal, a majority of children were sent to industrial schools when their fathers deserted the family. Reformers suggested mothers be given the means to support their children in their homes instead of being condemned to lose their families, saying: "How much longer shall the judge say to the mother 'Woman, you stand convicted of not having any money, you are sentenced to have your family taken from you.'"[52] The Montreal exhibition did not expand on the subject of dependent or neglected children, but organizers criticized the fact that it was difficult to remove children from a harmful family environment, finding that, overall, these children were very vulnerable under Quebec law in 1912.[53] However, Trépanier shows that to the Juvenile Delinquent Acts applied to neglected children in 1912, given new amendments. Although they were not declared delinquents, neglected children were included in the population targeted by the law, allowing a judge to send them to industrial school.[54]

In Chicago and New York, An important part of the work of the juvenile court was to care for dependent children. Reformers argued that pensions for mothers would keep families together, asserting that mothers and children should not be separated because of poverty.[55] Progressives stated that "supporting dependent child in its own home is not only the humane way

[51] *Souvenir Handbook*, 31-2; Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.
[52] *Souvenir Handbook*. 34.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Trépanier, "Protéger pour prévenir la délinquance," 73-4.
[55] *Child in the City,* 30.

but the most economical way."[56] In the Chicago exhibit, this statement was paired with a photograph of a dignified mother surrounded by her four children, along with other declarations in favor of keeping children in the home (figure 5.5). The simple picture projected the image of a caring mother in control of her home. Her children are clean, well dressed, and their hair is meticulously styled with ribbons. One child holds a book, showing that the mother took time to read to her kids. The overall effect is of a mother who looks after her children more than adequately. The scene's iconography echoes the middle-class cult of domesticity and such an image would serve to touch visitors and convey the message even further.[57]

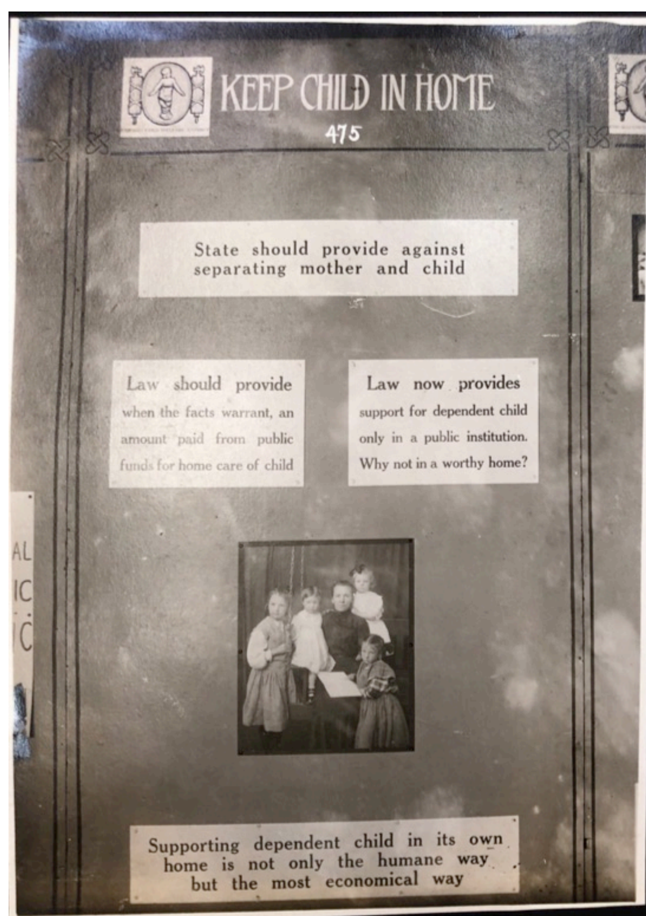

Figure 5.5 "Keep Child in Home," wall panel at the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

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[56] Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.

[57] Shannon P Hart, "Female Leadership and the 'Cult of Domesticity,'" *American Educational History Journal* 38, no. 1/2 (Spring 2011): 131-2.

While modern North-American social science findings suggested that keeping families united was the most effective policy, in Montreal, the hegemonic power of the Church worked in favor of institutionalized care. Looking at the institutional care for orphans, Denyse Baillargeon has shown that the Church resisted "placing children in family settings" because it trusted its own religious orders more than working-class families to transmit religious and moral values to children.[58] Paradoxically, Montreal reformers praised institutions for their work in the exhibition, but also lobbied for families to stay together.[59] This was one of the many opposing ideals that cohabited in the child-welfare exhibition.

The idea of financially supporting families was gaining ground in Montreal. *The Montreal Daily Star* reported that in an evening conference he chaired, ex-Mayor Dr. J. J. Guerin proposed a "bounty" for parents of large families and a prize for mothers when healthy children reached five years old.[60] *The Montreal Herald* further explained that Guerin recommended the government give "ten cents a day for children in families of more than five," so that mothers could spend money for their proper care rather than save for their burials. For Guerin, such a measure was justified by the city's devastatingly high infant mortality rate which, he argued, was caused by poverty, large families, and overcrowding.[61] As this strategy to support mothers who already had many children was quite elaborate, it must have been carefully designed and considered for some time. This shows that Montreal reformers were seriously studying the possibility of a mother's pension.[62] Thus, North-American reformers agreed that things had to

[58] Denyse Baillargeon, "Orphans in Quebec: On the Margins of which Family?" in *Mapping the Margins: The Family and Social Discipline in Canada, 1700-1975*, eds. Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 306.

[59] *Souvenir Handbook*, 34.

[60] "Child Welfare Exhibition Has Big Attendance," *Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 11, 1912, 18.

[61] "Ten Cents a Day When More than Five, Dr. Guerin's Plan," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 12, 1912, 5.

[62] This stipend for large families was however qualitatively different from mother's pension that would be granted on women's compliance with a set of rigid moral and racial standards, See Joanne L. Goodwin, "An American Experiment in Paid Motherhood: The Implementation of Mothers' Pensions in Early Twentieth-Century

change, that governments should not only support dependent children in institutions, but also in the home.[63] Meanwhile, the critical economic situation of working-class families contributed to their disadvantage in the face of adversity, often leading them to take desperate measures to keep families together.

Standard of Living

The MCWE ended with an exhibit on the industrial conditions surrounding the lives of children, referred to as Work and Wages in the exhibition plan. Before re-entering the outside world, visitors were invited to consider an issue that "touches the most fundamental problem in the entire Child Welfare Exhibit."[64] The fundamental fact was that unskilled workers' standard of living was insufficient to provide even a basic existence for their families. In this section, prepared by a committee almost entirely composed of women, reformers offered a harsh critique of the findings presented by domestic experts in the Homes exhibit, thus bringing to light an internal tension at work in the exhibition. The committee consisted of, among others, Louis Guyon, chief inspector of Industrial Establishments and Public Buildings; Recorder Robert Stanley Weir; Mrs. Alonzo King, inspectress of Industrial Establishments; Helen Reid, activist of the Montreal Local Council of Women and social worker; and Ethel Hurlbatt, activist, co-creator of the University Settlement of Montreal, and warden at McGill's Royal Victoria College.[65] They

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Chicago," *Gender & History* 4, no. 3 (November 1992): 323–42; Margaret Hillyard Little, "Claiming a Unique Place: The Introduction of Mothers' Pensions in B.C," *BC Studies* no. 105/106 (Spring1995): 80–102.

[63] Untitled, photograph, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.

[64] *Souvenir Handbook*, 32.

[65] The Industrial Conditions committee was made up of six women and two men. Besides their gender, I found no further information on the last three members: Mlle Marie Auclaire, Mlle Annie Godbout, and Mlle F. Marin. Fahrni, "Accident Prevention," 52; *Lovell's Montreal Directory, for 1911-1912*, 1315; Louise Bienvenue, "McIntosh, Eliza Ann (Reid)," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, last modified in 2005, http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/mcintosh_eliza_ann_15F.html; Suzanne Morton, "Hurlbatt Ethel," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, last modified in 2021, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hurlbatt_ethel_16E.html; *Souvenir Handbook*, 40.

used a rotating wheel to analyze the cycles of successive working-class generations: “Low Wages. Working mother. Child labor. No School. Unskilled Labor. Leading around again to Low Wages.”[66] The apparatus, resembling a roulette wheel, attracted children who were amused by making it spin and did not seem to care where the needle landed. However, a *Montreal Herald* reporter revealed that onlookers could not help but wonder who among these children would be “the victims of the fates they drew.”[67]

The exhibit committee went through the proposed family budget (figure 5.6) and explained how and why it was unrealistic for a family of five to live on the $550 yearly salary of an unskilled labourer. First, reformers showed that, for this budget to balance, a labourer had to have a daily wage of $1.75 and work six days a week, fifty-two weeks a year. They deemed this unrealistic, explaining that many were out of work in the winter, given seasonal trades, and that this budget did not allow for “sickness, no change of jobs, and he must not waste his money on drink or dissipation.” Instead of presenting the example of a worker with a healthy family and a balanced budget, reformers claimed that this unskilled labourer “and his family fill the hospitals and charitable institutions, increase infant mortality, life of vagabondage, courts and jails.”[68]

A FAMILY BUDGET.

Rent, $9.00 per month	$108.00	per year.
Food, 25c. a meal, or 5c. per meal per person	273.00	"
Heat, 4 tons of coal at $7.50 per ton	30.00	"
Light, Cooking, $2.00 per month	24.00	"
Water tax	6.00	"
Clothing for 5, winter and summer	75.00	"
Car fares, 8c. a day, 300 days, including family trips	24.00	"
Extras	10.00	"
Total	$550.00	

Figure 5.6 Proposed budget for a Montreal family of five with a yearly income of 550$. Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 32.

[66] *Souvenir Handbook*, 33.
[67] “Priest Causes Deaf to Speak at Drill Hall,” *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 12, 1912, 5.
[68] *Souvenir Handbook,* 32.

Addressing specific budget items, reformers found that the amount allotted for rent, $ 9 per month, would only allow for an unsanitary apartment comparable to the worst examples presented in the Homes section's exhibit. The budget also failed to allow for proper meals, suggesting 5 cents sufficed for each family member's meal.[69] This amount corresponds closely to what Bettina Bradbury describes as the food budget for cigarmaker's family of two or three children in Montreal in 1888.[70] Caroline Durand explains that the food exhibit designers at the MCWE were well aware of the importance of economic factors in nourishing the family. Food was the biggest budget expense for working-class families and they often could not feed the family on one person's wage. Dietetics' experts viewed girls' education as a solution to the wheel of poverty, claiming they could stop perpetuating their mother's bad habits out of ignorance.[71] This reasoning emphasized, once again, the mother's responsibility for the family's predicament.

The industrial conditions' committee highlighted the contradictions in the exhibition:

> In the Home section of the Child Welfare Exhibit, domestic science experts show that, with the most thorough planning, 25c. per day is needed for food for a growing child of 10. The list of foods given here in the section on Industrial Conditions are, quite evidently, not enough for a family of five, yet, even this standard is maintained only if the mother buys carefully, does not waste, and does not let the children overeat. How shall an untrained girl who went to work at 14, or earlier, know enough to prepare the meals for her family, with such rigid forethought?[72]

Reformers found that the numbers simply did not add up. It was also the case with the 75 dollars allocated to clothes for the entire family, with specific items and their prices discussed to prove their point. The rigidity of this proposed budget required all purchases to be strictly planned, leaving no room for sickness, unaccounted expenses for elements such as replacing furniture or

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[69] *Souvenir Handbook,* 32.

[70] She finds that food was the biggest expense in the family budget at that time. Her evidence come from the Royal Commission on the relations of Labour and Capital in 1888. Bradbury, *Working Families,* 90.

[71] Durand, *Nourrir la machine humaine*, 107.

[72] *Souvenir Handbook,* 32-3.

church donations, and definitely no room for savings. Accordingly, in his examination of the real income of hourly wage earners over the first two decades of the twentieth century, based on the 1901 and 1911 censuses, Terry Copp finds that unskilled wage-earners had an income that did not allow them "to place their families above the poverty line." It was also the case for most wage earners under his scrutiny, including skilled building tradesmen and building construction labourers.[73]

Reformers exhibited the outcomes of financial hardship on family life with the revolving wheel display. Additional charts connected actions with their results, such as mothers going to work or families taking in boarders which in this version could lead to child neglect and infant mortality. This alarmist vision presented a *misérabiliste* narrative which is contradicted by Bradbury's discussion of working-class wives' work in the family economy. She finds that wives worked inside and outside the house to stretch the family budget, while taking care of their children; they avoided boarders when they had newborns and enlisted the help of older daughters to care for younger ones, contradicting the child neglect narrative.[74]

Moreover, reformers discussed the cost of financial adversity to society:

> When the family goes to pieces, Society pays the bill in the form of Children's Institutions, Free Hospitals, Relief, Widow's Pensions, Social Insurance and many other forms of charity. Infant mortality is three times as heavy in the families of unskilled labourers. Every premature death means waste of human capital.[75]

With this in mind, they exhorted Canada to experiment with potential solutions from Europe: fixed minimum wages, Old Age Insurance, Accident Insurance for working men, free recreation and medical advice.[76] However, the exhibitors failed to mention that some measures were being

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[73] He also finds a pattern of decline in real income of Montreal wage-earners over that period. Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty*, 33.
[74] Bradbury, *Working Families,* 107-10, 174-8.
[75] *Souvenir Handbook*, 33.
[76] Ibid.

developed or were already in place. For example, Quebec adopted a law compensating workers for workplace accidents in 1909.[77] Also, the idea of a family allowance was already promoted by the Jesuits in the 1910s, in accordance with the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, although it would not be supported by the upper clergy until decades later.[78] Nonetheless, as the sample budget was found to be inadequate, the reformers' critical analysis set the tone for the other topics they addressed in this exhibit section, highlighting the dire consequences of a miserable standard of living and the internal tension at work at the exhibition.

Child Labour

The section of the exhibition showing the causes and consequences of child labour described the hardships families experienced and the measures they took just to subsist. The handbook described a particularly heart-wrenching case in which

> A mother came into the office of one of Montreal's large charities, to ask for help. There were five in the family. The father was dead, the mother was ill. There were two small babies, a crippled child and a boy of 12. The boy of twelve was the sole support of the family. The mother had sworn that he was 14 years old, and had secured a job for him at a place where, as she said, "they aren't so particular". What is to be done about a case like this?[79]

Reformers explained that female charity workers who heard such stories were sympathetic but puzzled, not knowing how to advise such families. There was no sound solution. Either the child went to work to prevent starvation or the family was broken by poverty. These women witnessed situations in which child labour laws were broken to avoid a worse fate, and often found it easiest to ignore them. Examples like this show that reformers were really concerned with child labour

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[77] Fahrni, *Accident Prevention*, 49.

[78] See Dominique Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Québec Families, Compulsory Education, and Family Allowances, 1940-1955*, Studies in Childhood and Family in Canada. Waterloo, (Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006), 14.

[79] *Souvenir Handbook,* 31.

but understood that vital needs drove children into the workforce. They abstained from condemning families, analyzed the situation and options available to them, and even turned a blind eye in order to keep households together. Although Quebec law stated that children under fourteen could not work in factories, the lack of inspectors and a lax birth registration system allowed families to easily bypass the rules when needed. When they failed to make ends meet, the consequence was the breaking up of the household with children being sent to charitable institutions, namely reform schools, and the mother to the hospital. To prevent this, Montreal reformers often refrained from prosecuting the families when they became aware of child labour.[80]

Louis Guyon, Chief Factory Inspector for the province and member of the Industrial Conditions committee, had led a campaign to end child labour since the turn of the twentieth century. However, he understood that child labour was a necessity for the poorest families in Montreal. He therefore aimed to limit children's working hours, improve their conditions, and increase their literacy. Terry Copp explains that although workers had to have a certificate signed by their parents to prove they were of legal age to work, inspectors discovered that children often seemed much younger than their document stated. Guyon and his inspector colleague Louisa King, also on the exhibit committee, found themselves constantly suspicious and frequently deceived as they tried to enforce the law. During their annual visits to factories, they discovered boys under the age of twelve and girls under fourteen hard at work, with valid certificates. Inspectors noted that the children looked small, frail, and unmistakably young. They also discovered boys working in shops at night, violating yet another law forbidding night work for people under eighteen. Copp shows that many loopholes existed. Guyon admitted that not all

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[80] *Souvenir Handbook*, 31-2.

child labour laws were applied. Small boys were necessary for certain types of work, and many families would become destitute if children could not contribute to their income. Guyon also revealed that street trades, including newsboys and errand boys, were excluded from the child labour laws, leaving many vulnerable children at the mercy of employers.[81] The Montreal exhibition did not address these trades in detail, focusing on the types of work that employed children full time. Nonetheless, this brief reference shows these conditions existed in the city and the American exhibitions allowed for a good survey of child labour outside factory walls.

The New York and Chicago exhibitions focused on a variety of different types of work for children. Street trades and home-work were the subjects of many wall panels in the Work and Wages section. Deploring the fact that many children found themselves working in the streets despite the law, reformers argued for better enforcement but also for the wider exercise of good citizenship. By informing people of the minimum working age, the legal hours to work, and the badge and permit required of legitimate traders, reformers hoped people would buy from proper sellers and report violations, thus helping keep children off the street and in school. For example, newsboys had to be at least ten years of age and newsgirls sixteen. Boys under fourteen needed a badge issued by the District Superintendent of Schools, and they could not sell between 10 pm and 6 am. Photos on the wall and text explained that these rules were often carelessly broken. For example, a wall panel on newsboys at the Chicago exhibition had seven photos presenting infractions (figure 5.7). There were many images of boys working under the legal age, and one photo showed that there was one badge for twenty-two newsies.[82] The use of many photographs

[81] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 50-3; Terry Copp and Alexander Maavara, *Montreal at War, 1914-1918. The Canadian Experience of War,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 18-19; John Bullen, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario," *Labour / Travail* 18 (Fall 1986), 176–77; Thérèse Hamel, "Obligation scolaire et travail des enfants au Québec: 1900-1950," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 38, no. 1 (June 1984), 53-5.

[82] For more on newsies, see Vincent DiGirolamo, *Crying the News: A History of America's Newsboys*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), 2019.

along with short texts was thought-provoking, as seeing small children practicing street trades made visitors wonder why they were not in school. The posters featured the negative effects this work had on children, highlighting the many harmful consequences, including risks of "moral depravity" and physical exhaustion.

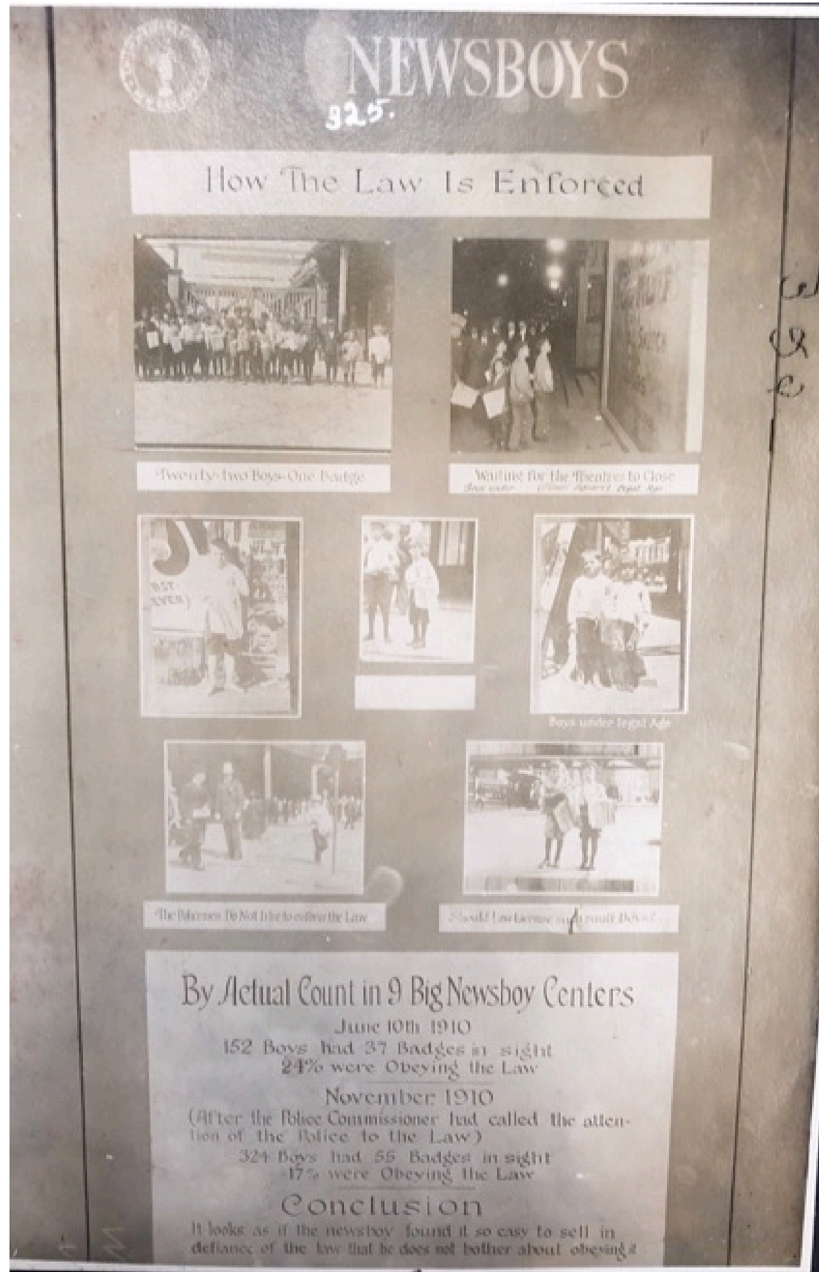

Figure 5.7 Wall panel on newsboys at the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

Other forms of trade were also exposed, such as street peddling, bootblacks, and home industries. In this latter setting, children worked in tenements doing chores such as finishing clothing, making artificial flowers, hats, or willow plumes (figure 5.8).[83] This type of work was

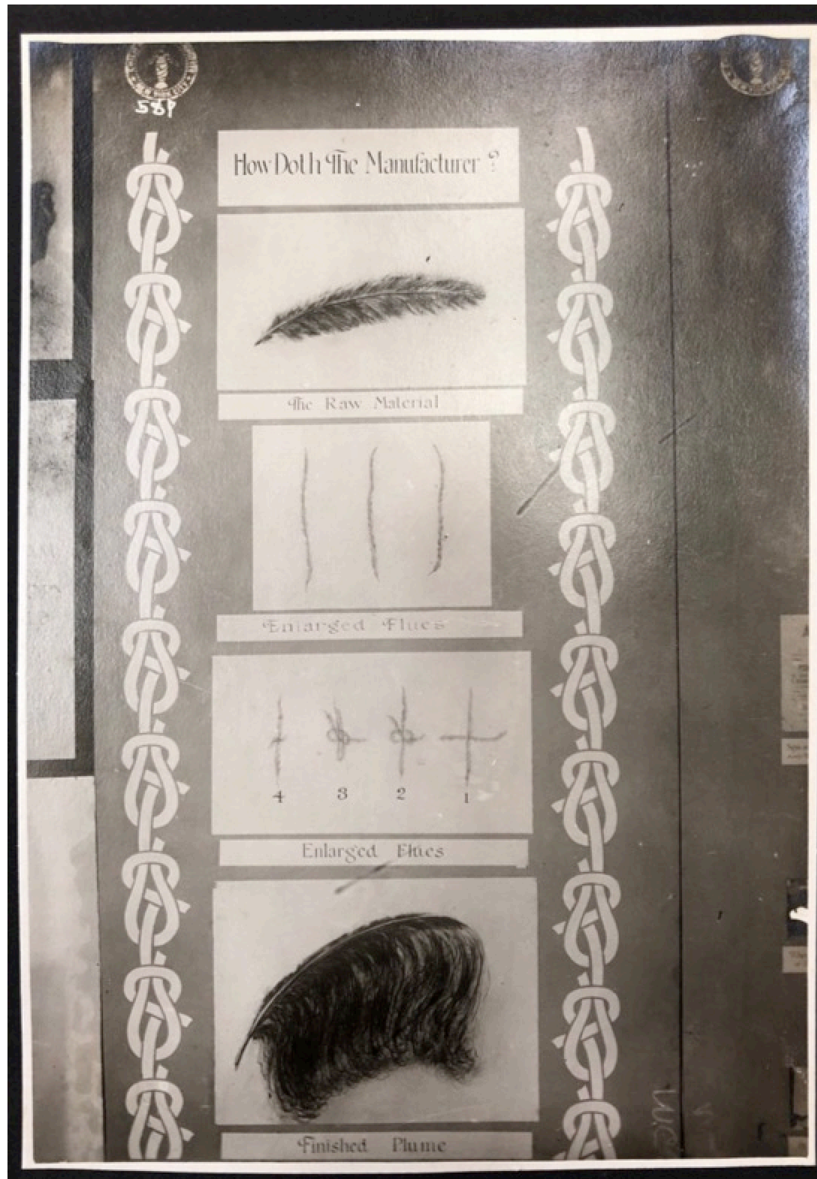

Figure 5.8 Wall panel showing the different steps to make a willow plume at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

[83] Willow plumes were large hand-made feathers used as a fashion accessory, mainly on hats. They were made by tying knots in ostrich feathers.

not regulated and young children often worked twelve hours a day, straining their eyes and bodies. Home industries kept children from playing but also from attending school, which was an increasing concern for reformers.[84] They put up many wall panels exposing how widespread the home industries were in New York, finding for example eighteen willow plume factories in basements spanning just one block. Figure 5.9 shows such a home factory, as a mother and her three children, aged seven to twelve, are working on willow plumes in their New York tenement. Likewise, numerous pictures of small children sitting at a table in a tenement, next to their mother, performing some form of home work adorned the wall of the Chicago exhibition. In these pictures, the youngest child was often sitting on his mother's lap (figure 5.10) or sleeping in

Figure 5.9 "4:00 P.M. Mrs. Frances Rosep, 309 E. 110th St., New York., ground floor; and three children who work on willow plumes. Tony is 7 years old, Annie, 10. They are learning. Ruby, 12 years old, has worked some months. All make $2.50 a week. Father is a butcher. Location: New York, New York (State)." Source: Lewis Wickes Hine, Photograph a willow plume factory in a New York tenement, December 1911, Lot 7481, Hine no. 2707, National Child Labor Committee collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., https://www.loc.gov/resource/nclc.04107/. Photographer: Lewis Wickes Hine.

[84] The experiences of working children are reminiscent of Carolyn Steedman's account of the little watercress girl, an eight-year-old street seller in London in 1850. Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives*, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 128-9.

the corner of the room while the rest of the family was still at work, showing the long working hours required by this type of industry. Cartoons also reproduced such scenes (figure 5.11), using familiar nursery rhymes to appeal to children directly.[85] This brought to light the hidden work conditions of many children, showing the dark and crowded living spaces they used as work space, but mainly their strikingly young and tired demeanour.

Figure 5.10 Photographs of children working alongside their mother in a tenement: rolling cigarette wrappers and making flower wreaths. The caption for the second photo mentions they speak no English and have been in the US for four months. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

Figure 5.11 Cartoon on home work of children exposed at the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

[85] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit*, 33; Untitled, photographs, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. For example, posters used the nursery rhymes “Baa! Baa! Black Sheep!” and “This Little Piggy.”

Just as reformers used photography to tug at visitors' heartstrings, they pushed even further by having children recreate scenes commonly seen on city streets. In a photograph taken at the Chicago exhibition reproduced in figure 5.12, a young boy pretends to sell newspapers next to an even younger girl pretending to sell gum. They are standing in front of wooden characters representing street vending children, the little girl barely as tall as the sculpted figures. Nearby signs indicated that this display was designed to promote a Bill before the Illinois legislature to regulate street vending. The presence of children not only attracted visitors but also made the situation tangible and the sympathy for these children more compelling.

Figure 5.12 Children embodying street vendors in front of an exhibit at the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

Youth and work conditions were major concerns for reformers across America. In Montreal, children mostly worked low paid, unskilled factory jobs and were in a very vulnerable position as employers knew how crucial the money was for their families. Therefore, employers fined or physically disciplined young workers to punish them for infraction. Bettina Bradbury explains that although employers' extortion made children pliable, their work conditions outraged the public.[86] The exhibition committee appealed to compassion and insisted that families had no other choice but to send their children to work. Instead of blaming families, they requested social programs to counter the main issue, poverty. Far from blaming parents, Judge Choquet asked for compulsory education based on his experience with over six hundred cases in one year.[87] Likewise, inspector Guyon advocated for literacy requirements for working children from the late 1890s, and labour unions did the same.[88] These reformers showed real empathy towards working-class families, blaming the lack of laws instead of the individuals, and endorsing systemic improvements. Nonetheless, it would be decades before Quebec enacted this reform. Not until 1943, in the context of World War II, was school made compulsory for children under sixteen.[89]

Although child labour was a major problem for which regulation was profoundly needed, not all working children were as pitiful as the exhibitions aimed to depict. Viviana Zelizer shows that there were many opponents of child labour legislation, from mill owners to parents and clergymen, who defended the legitimacy of child labour.[90] In his study of children in American cities in the first two decades of the twentieth century, David Nasaw shows that children were not

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[86] Children were commonly beaten by their employers. Bradbury, *Working Families,* 128-9. See also Greg Kealey, ed., *Canada Investigates Industrialism: The Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital, 1889 (Abridged)*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

[87] "Compulsory Education is Advocated at the Canadian Charities Conference," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 11, 1912, 7.

[88] Copp, *Anatomy of Poverty,* 52.

[89] Marshall, *Social Origins of the Welfare State,* 1.

[90] See Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child,* 64-70

just victims of the new dangers of the city depicted by reformers. He finds that street traders were better off than factory and mill workers, being exposed to less physical danger and sensory deprivation. Children had agency in the city streets, which he presents as their playgrounds. By contrast, reformers thought these children had too much freedom and feared for their morality amid newly accessible forms of recreation. Nasaw reveals that children worked part time around school hours, passed on the secrets of their trades, and were able to spend some money from their earnings on entertainment and candy. He also finds that "the danger, as reformers presented it, was potential rather than factual" for boys of the city who "were, most of the time, capable of taking care of themselves."[91] While the exhibits on child labour exposed real fears for children's futures, they were not as miserable as reformers' narrative made it seem.[92] However, the gendered approach to work, morality, and salvation enhanced their preoccupation with working girls, as reformers emphasized their future role as mothers.

Working Girls

In the early twentieth century, women's work was directly linked with child labour. Terry Copp suggests this might be because of the temporary aspect of their working status and the fact that most women worked prior to marriage, or before the age of twenty-five. Working mostly in textile mills and garment trades, women were seen by reformers as vulnerable to dangerous and unhealthy conditions.[93] Accordingly, Denyse Baillargeon finds that all the interviewees in her study of working-class mothers in Montreal in the 1930s had worked as children in the early twentieth century, before getting married, with a large majority starting at the legal age of

[91] Nasaw, *Children of the City,* 137-41.
[92] On the concept of children's "agency" see Gleason, "Avoiding the agency trap," 446-9.
[93] Copp and Maavara, *Montreal at War,* 18.

fourteen.[94] Although the Montreal exhibition guide had a section entitled “Working Women,” they only referred to women as girls, reinforcing this perception of any female labourer as a child. Reformers expressed their concern for working girls as future mothers, stressing the impact of work on their ability to become good mothers and raise healthy children.

The Montreal exhibition presented the results of an investigation based on the signed statements of several hundred girls working in factories. Reformers thought the girls were “sufficiently educated” to answer the detailed questionnaire and therefore were probably earning better pay than the average factory girl. Their findings show that half of the girls started working before sixteen and one-third before fourteen. The majority started at thirteen but some were as young as nine years old when they began to work outside the home. Their age at the time of the survey was not reported. Half had left school for work to support themselves, while the others were driven to work because their families needed the money. Reformers found that although a large number of these girls lived at home, they mostly helped to support the family, and were left with little money to spend. Most received wages between $4 to $6 per week. Reformers suggested “that a girl who gets $5.00 per week, and spends $3.00 for board, 25c. for car-fare, 50c. for washing, $1.00 for clothes and 25c, for extras” is left with little for recreation, medical care or saving for rough days. They concluded that a girl working in a factory did not have a decent standard of living and that, over time, this would lead to a difficult adult life, adding that a “life of this sort wrecks the health of the future mothers of the nation and leads again to child labour in the next generation.”[95]

The newspapers covered this specific subject, which they deemed important and new. In *Le Devoir* on October 19, 1912, Omer Héroux explained that these statistics on the work of girls

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[94] Baillargeon, *Making Do,* 34.
”[95] *Souvenir Handbook*, 32.

were the results of the first investigation of this type, and would compel even the most distracted to consider their situation.[96] A journalist from *The Montreal Star* stated that "it does not require much consideration to realize how great a loss to the community is caused by the employment of girls at such an age. Apart from the danger to morals, it means the impossibility of their growing into healthy mothers."[97] Reformers and reporters alike found that work threatened the health and moral values of girls, leaving them permanently fatigued, weakened, and less likely to become good mothers.

A similar investigation in 1910 by the Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago examined interviews with two hundred department store girls. This organization was based at Hull House, the iconic settlement house founded by Jane Addams that employed a large number of social reformers.[98] In her report, Jane Sheldrick Howe found that 173 girls lived at home with 124 giving their entire wages to their families. Half of the women and girls interviewed were between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one, 36 per cent were aged between twenty-one and thirty, while 2 per cent were under sixteen, and the rest over forty. The weekly wages varied from $2.50 to $18 but the majority earned between six and eight dollars or less. The reformers noted that girls spent at least ten cents for carfare and ten cents for lunch daily, but that the majority would spend $1.50 per week for these necessities. As she found that girls paid up to five dollars for their board, Howe said the salary left for many girls was "not enough to talk about." An interesting part of this report discusses the strains caused by work. Howe discovered that department store girls usually worked over 10 hours daily and spent an hour and a half to two hours travelling to and from work on uncomfortable trolley rides. Thus, she asked in her report,

[96] Omer Heroux, "Profitez de l'heure!," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 19, 1912, 1.
[97] "The Voice of the Child Cries out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.
[98] Juvenile Protective Association, "JPA's History of Service to Chicago's Children." JPA Chicago, last modified in 2023. https://www.jpachicago.org/our-history.

"Is it any wonder, then, that 173, or 86.5 per cent, of the 200 girls complained that they were always tired?"[99] Moreover, close to half of the interviewees said they had no time for recreation in their life, and slightly more than half revealed that they never spent time reading. Howe reported that all girls said "Oh, if we only had some time during the week when we could get a little rest; when we could get caught up; when we could go some place for a little recreation!" Instead, their work conditions left them "too tired to read," to have recreational activities, and sometimes to simply sleep. The purpose of this report was to raise awareness of the need for leisure time for working girls, with its title saying just that: "All Work and No Play. A Plea for Saturday Afternoon."[100]

In the same vein, a column written by Agnes Chesley in the *Montreal Star* on 15 October 1912, raised similar concerns for working girls, a vulnerable group whose needs were rarely aired in public. Chesley raised many issues she thought were missing from the exhibition. She asked what working girls did for recreation, how they supplemented their low wages, and moreover, if it was possible to make an honest living on five dollars a week. She insisted that girls were "shockingly overlooked" and asked, "Are not the future mothers of the race as well worth the attention as the future fathers?" When would associations such as the YMCA be created for women? What about social housing? Chesley questioned if philanthropists would "wake up and do something for our young women on the same scale as things are done for the young men?"[101] This feminist comment is exceptional and interesting given its straightforwardness. It gives an insight as to the strength of the transnational maternalist feminist current in Montreal, as women

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[99] Jane Sheldrick Howe, *All Work and No Play, a Plea for Saturday Afternoon. Stories Told by Two Hundred Department Store Girls,* (Chicago: The Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago, 1910), Box 1, Folder 8, 3, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit Collection.

[100] Howe, *All Work and No Play,* 5-6, 1.

[101] Agnes Chesley, "A Missing Slide at the Child's Welfare," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 15, 1912, 8.

were seen as essential but often given secondary roles or excluded from projects and leadership positions.[102] The previous chapter showed that the Recreation section only spoke of boys' clubs, omitting girls organized activities, confirming the columnist's concerns. This expression of forward thinking further demonstrates that questions pertaining to girls and women were lacking at the exhibition and progressive visitors noticed these shortcomings.

Other limitations of the exhibition became clear in the discussion of women's work. Reformers knew that many mothers had to work. However, the North American exhibition guides did not even consider the type of jobs available to women but discussed their employment in almost exclusively unfavorable terms. In this discourse, women's working outside the home was an outgrowth of poverty, nothing more. On the one hand, reformers such as probation officer Rose Henderson described mothers working outside the home as bad mothers.[103] On the other hand, philanthropists and charity agencies encouraged mothers to work for wages *inside* the home, if this would not harm their childcaring efforts, as it strengthened the household environment.[104] But mothers' work had a big impact on families, because so many daughters ended up leaving school early to help at home, doing house work or caring for their younger siblings. Girls' domestic work was unpaid but contributed greatly to the family economy.[105]

In fact, it was so common for girls to care for younger children that they were called "little mothers."[106] The Montreal and Chicago exhibition guides included photographs of a "little

[102] Dumont and Collectif Clio, *L'histoire des femmes au Québec,* 280-1.
[103] Myers, *Caught,* 116.
[104] *Child in the City*, 70-1.
[105] Bradbury, *Working Families,* 150. Bradbury discusses at length how working-class women worked to make ends meet.
[106] Miriam Forman-Brunell situates the rise of formal babysitting in middle-class families the 1920s in the U.S., as previous generations of mothers relied mainly on the help of older girls. However, the Clio Collective explains that in Quebec, daughters' help in the home was still common in working-class families in the 1920s. Miriam Forman-Brunell, *Babysitter: An American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 22-24; Dumont and Collectif Clio, *L'histoire des femmes au Québec*, 285.

mother," in which very young-looking girls were holding babies (figure 5.13 and 5.14).[107] A brief caption provided the only context for these images, hinting that everyone understood what "little mothers" were. Although the images were placed in the philanthropy section, there can be no doubt that they depicted girls at work. However, one photo titled "Little Mother" was part of a wall panel on home work in the Work and Wages section of the Chicago exhibition, which also acknowledges that taking care of younger siblings was work for these "older girls" (figure 5.15).[108] The photo shows a young girl holding a baby with two other children close to her in a hallway, with a caption indicating that the children's mother had gone to work at a local factory. From this image, the visitor can tell that this young girl was very busy and had a lot on her plate.

Figure 5.13 La "Petite Mère." Source: *Exposition pour le Bien-être des Enfants tenue au Manège Militaire rue Craig, Montréal, Octobre 1912, Guide-Souvenir* (Montreal: La Patrie, 1912), 2.

[107] For examples of working-class children's similar experiences in London see Anna Davin, *Growing up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914*, (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996).

[108] *Souvenir Handbook*, 45; *Child in the City,* 29.

Figure 5.14 A “Little Mother.” Source: *Child in the City,* 71. Photographer unknown.

Figure 5.15 Photograph of a seven-year-old little mother on a wall panel on home work at the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I.; Lewis Wickes Hine, “3:30 P.M. Group in tenement hallway. Ages, 14 months, 2, 5, and 7 years. Mother in shop sewing. Father out of work, bartender. Family, Novi, 189 Chrystie Street. Location: New York, New York (State),” February 1910, Lot 7483, v. 1, no. 1314-A, National Child Labor Committee collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., https://www.loc.gov/resource/nclc.04628/. Photographer: Lewis Wickes Hine.

The importance of the “little mother” phenomenon was so widely recognized that Dr. Josephine Baker organized Little Mothers Leagues in 1908 under New York City’s Department

of Health. They provided training for girls twelve to sixteen years old, including girls as young as ten years old after 1912, given the many requests. The girls attended meetings where they received instructions on infant care. The various leagues had badges and banners, and some even gave out prizes, encouraging the girls' interest and participation.[109] This initiative became a model reproduced in different cities. By 1916, Montreal had its own "Ligues des petites mères."[110] Although only discussed briefly in the exhibitions' Health section, reformers praised such initiatives, and saw them as tools to reduce infant mortality.[111]

A wall panel titled "Little Mother's League" at the Chicago exhibition presented many photos of girls in their childcaring role (figure 5.16). The images show girls with their young siblings in different settings, from the playground to the league's classroom. A few photos are especially striking. In the top image, a girl leans against a fence, garbage at her feet, hugging her younger sister who is no more than two years old. The older sister looks serious and strong while the younger one is seeking her comfort. Another impressive picture shows a young girl sitting on a park bench, holding a baby, focused on him. What is striking is that her feet do not touch the ground, reminding the onlooker that a young child is caring for another child. Visitors might wonder, just as they would in front of the photos of young newsies, why is this child not on a school bench instead of a park bench? These photographs appealed once again to the visitors' emotions and their sympathy, with their touching depiction of very real situations exposing human connections.

[109] Elizabeth Rennert, "Little Mothers' Leagues of New York State" *The American Journal of Nursing* 16, no. 4 (1916): 306–9.
[110] Baillargeon, *Médicalisation de la maternité,* 114.
[111] *Handbook New York Child Welfare Exhibit,* 37.

Figure 5.16 Wall panel on Little Mother's League at the 1911 Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit. Source: Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. I. Photographer unknown.

Although this type of work kept girls out of school, it also contributed greatly to keeping working-class families united. As "little mothers" were showcased next to nurseries and home trades, this type of child labour did not fit the classic mould of paid child labour. Nonetheless, it must be seen as a form of work that contributed to the family economy and impacted children's

welfare. Moreover, these little girls were very important as they represented the future mothers of the nation, holding a great responsibility for society as a whole.

Save the Children: Nationalism in the American and Canadian Exhibits

In the Montreal exhibition handbook, discourses centred on baby-saving and on children's health went in two main directions. On the one hand, reformers focused on ignorant mothers whose children were sick because they did not know how to properly care for them.[112] On the other, they emphasized the root causes of poverty, explaining that working-class families' wages were insufficient to provide decent living conditions. A third perspective incorporated conceptions of nationalism and the importance of healthy children to the development of the nation. Allowing delinquent behavior and child labour could be detrimental to the national cause. Organizers addressed politicians directly as they spoke of the importance of legislating and educating mothers on matters of health and hygiene and of the future of the "race," hoping this would motivate them to join the fight for child welfare and finance forthcoming ventures. Attempting to reconcile the first two visions, exhibitors jumped on the nationalist train, claiming that educating mothers could save the children and thus the nation.

In the early twentieth century, there were different definitions of race. Carl Berger notes that contemporaries used this term ambiguously, sometimes as a synonym for culture, other times to define a biological grouping. It was also often associated with the fitness of a group. [113] Looking at what he calls "national manhood" in Quebec, Jeffrey Vacante argues that at the turn of the century, French Canadians saw race as biological, a nationality based on blood, with an

[112] Chapter 2 explored the representation of the ignorant mother at the exhibition.
[113] Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*, 2nd edition, (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 117-8.

inherited genetic but also moral attributes. Mothers played a central role in transmitting the race and guarding the nation. In the same period, Vacante suggests that English-speaking Canadians were strongly influenced by British imperialism and associated the concept of race to "the superiority of Anglo-Saxon civilization."[114] However, Berger shows that some Imperialists included French Canadians in their definition of a Canadian people as a race, finding common northern origins (including whiteness) and character traits.[115] It appears that reformers involved in the MCWE used a definition of race closest to this last instance, as they presented a united front of French and English-speaking Canadians and refrained from differentiating between them. They emphasized the Canadian nation, interchangeably using the terms race and nation, while assigning an important role to mothers but also to men in building a strong the nation.

Children and Nations

In the early twentieth century, child welfare was connected to nationalism in North America and in Western Europe, as both movements rose simultaneously. The fight against infant mortality was seen as a solution to the social issues created by industrialisation and urbanisation. As Denyse Baillargeon explains, nationalistic pursuits often revealed the alarming state of childcare around the world. Military recruitment in England revealed the poor health of the population; viable births decreased in France; immigrants in the United States reproduced at a greater rate than those born there; and in English Canada, the growth of the nation was an increasing concern.[116] Moreover, Cynthia Comacchio describes clearly that "fears about the future of nation

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[114] Jeffery Vacante, *National Manhood and the Creation of Modern Quebec*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 71-93 and 97.

[115] Berger, *Sense of Power*, 128-33. Berger explains on p. 129 that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, "the adjective "northern" came to symbolize energy, strength, self-reliance, health, and purity, and its opposite, "southern," was equated with decay and effeminacy, even libertinism and disease."

[116] Baillargeon, "Entre la 'Revanche' et la 'Veillée' des berceaux," 115; Baillargeon, "Fréquenter les Gouttes de lait," 30-32.

and empire reached fever pitch over the Boer War crisis, when a startled British public learned of the great number of young men classified as unfit for military service."[117] These concerns formulated by early twentieth-century social reformers reflected their natalist and racist discourses at work. Child-welfare exhibitions exploited these discourses around the future of the race and the making of good citizens by emphasising the important role of families, and especially mothers, in protecting and shaping the nation's children. Canadian and American exhibitions addressed nationalism differently but they each promoted a form of civic nationalism.

The Canadian "Race"

Montreal was changing rapidly in terms of its demography, with an increasingly cosmopolitan population. However, the city had a long history of inter-ethnic relationships favoring institutional separation to reduce conflicts between the French and the British. Paul-André Linteau notes that ethnic tensions were omnipresent in Montreal, but mitigated by the separation of the groups in their national institutions.[118] Moreover, Baillargeon explains that in Quebec, elites were worried about the "survivance de la race," as many French Canadians were leaving for the U.S., but also because of the high infant mortality rate within their national group. In Montreal, infant mortality was higher in French Canadian families than among other populations, reaching 224 per thousand in 1910. By contrast, Anglo-Protestant families had a rate of 163 per thousand, Anglo-Catholics families 207 per thousand, and Jewish families 94 per thousand. Baillargeon indicates that cultural behaviors might account for the higher mortality rate among French-Canadian babies, in addition to social inequalities and unsanitary living conditions.[119]

[117] Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies,* 18.

[118] Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal,* 163-166.

[119] As research shows that French-Canadian mothers weaned their children earlier than others in the city, Baillargeon suggests that this could be connected to the higher number of pregnancies, leading to close births, increased maternal exhaustion, and ultimately more risk for the babies' life. Baillargeon, "Fréquenter les Gouttes de lait," 30-32.

Despite the city's clear divisions, the exhibition organisers presented themselves as a united front of Canadian progressive reformers, working together for the greater cause of child welfare.[120]

Discussing the exhibition's inception, journalists feared that the religious diversity in Montreal could have been an obstacle to collaboration. However, the cause "proved itself high above all religious differences."[121] The team that organized the exhibition was composed of the main language groups that comprised Montreal's population; Francophones and Anglophones of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faith. Correspondingly, the exhibition promoted Canadian nationalism. Within the exhibition, Francophones and Anglophones coexisted in harmony as they did within a growing Canadian nation. Organisers portrayed nation and community as encompassing the entire population of the city, regardless of linguistic or religious differences.

In the souvenir guide, the executive committee defined child welfare as "a National cause" and children as "the Canadian race of to-day and to-morrow." The Canada they envisioned was a young country full of promise and potential, a great nation in the making, requiring healthy children to "develop into strong and capable men and women," and become "the most useful citizen."[122] One photograph depicted babies lying next to each other on a table, with the caption "Nine fine fat Foundlings. With modern care these will all grow up strong Canadians" (figure 5.17). The combined image and text embodied perfectly the hopes and possibilities for the nation promoted by the exhibition. In many ways, exhibition organisers depicted the young country of Canada as a child, full of possibilities but needing nourishment and guidance, just as did its youth. This vision went hand in hand with the natalist discourse of the time glorifying fertility and large families in Quebec, equating it with national prosperity.[123]

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[120] "The Child in the City," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 8, 1912, 4.
[121] "Child Welfare Exhibition Open," *The Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 9, 1912, 5.
[122] *Souvenir Handbook*, 45, 3, 9.
[123] Gauvreau, Gervais, and Gossage, *La fécondité des Québécoises,* 49-55.

Figure 5.17 "Nine fine fat Foundlings. With modern care these will all grow up strong Canadians." Source: *Souvenir Handbook*, 27. Photographer unknown.

Media coverage of the event also emphasized its nationalistic aspects, with French-language commentators contributing to the promotion of a Canadian nationalism. In *La Patrie*, a journalist called the child-welfare exhibition "un devoir national," and emphasized the importance of raising heathy children so that they could become strong men and women "pour que le Canada prospère et progresse."[124] Moreover, reporters insisted that people of all classes and "races" should visit the exhibition. They described the collaborative work of the city's philanthropic organisations, mentioning Catholic, Protestant, Greek, Syrian, and Jewish charities.[125] *La Presse* clearly connected child-saving and child-welfare work with the contemporary global concern of nationalism and summarized the vision behind the MCWE.

> Sauver l'enfant: voilà le grand problème chez les nations à l'heure actuelle: car l'enfant aujourd'hui, c'est l'homme de demain: c'est l'espoir et l'avenir de la patrie. Il ne suffit pas qu'il naisse. Il faut surtout qu'il vive et dans des conditions telles qu'il acquière le plein

[124] "Les enfants sains font les nations saines," *La Patrie*, Octobre 8, 1912, 2.
[125] " Brillante ouverture," *La Presse*, Oct. 9, 1912, 4.

> développement de ses forces intellectuelles, morales, physiques, pour d'abord accomplir sa propre mission dans le monde et pour, ensuite, devenir la source d'une nouvelle génération pleine de santé, de force et de vertus.[126]

Another quote from *La Presse* shows that the exhibition was able to transcend this ideology on opening night saying, "on sentait qu'il s'agissait d'une œuvre nationale, universelle, et qu'il n'existait plus qu'une chose: l'enfant, c'est-à-dire l'avenir du monde civilisé."[127]

It is worth noting that the Montreal exhibition guide and the media coverage overlooked Indigenous children and their families by completely excluding them from their texts and displays. However, a short publication from the Grey Nuns about their overall work in Montreal, produced specifically for the Philanthropy exhibit, briefly mentions Indigenous children. The document states that the Grey Nuns' Montreal industrial school had received eight Indigenous girls since 1908, and it mentions six boarding and industrial schools for Indigenous children in Western Canada.[128] The silence on Indigenous children at the exhibition emphasizes the dichotomy around the care of children in the settler Dominion. Although Canadian reformers agreed that keeping children with their families was best for them, Indigenous children had been removed from their families and institutionalized in residential schools run by religious organizations since the mid-nineteenth century. In their transnational study of taken Indigenous children, Christina Firpo and Margaret Jacobs find that reformers "downplayed the coercive nature of the practice." They also show that maternalists used religious language and metaphors to characterize their assimilation work with these children.[129] This silence on Indigenous children at the child-welfare exhibition speaks volumes on the hegemony of the Church, the lack of

[126] "Œuvre humanitaire et nationale," *La Presse*, Oct. 7, 1912, 4.

[127] " Brillante ouverture," *La Presse*, Oct. 9, 1912, 4.

[128] *What is "Being Done" at the General Hospital (Grey Nuns) of* Montreal *[microforme]: souvenir from the Children's Welfare Exhibition*, (Montreal, October, 1912), 4, 7.

[129] Christina Firpo and Margaret Jacobs, "Taking Children, Ruling Colonies: Child Removal and Colonial Subjugation in Australia, Canada, French Indochina, and the United States, 1870–1950s," *Journal of World History* 29, no. 4 (December 2018): 539, 542, 544.

consideration urban reformers had for them, and on their perception of them as "uncivilized" and thus not really part of their nation.

Making Good American Citizens

Although the American exhibitions did not address nationalism as directly as in the Montreal handbook, their guides contained many references to this ideology. Outwardly, the New York and Chicago exhibitions focused more on a sense of belonging to their city than to a nation. The Chicago handbook stated

> This Exhibition aims to give the boys and girls of the city a better chance —and so to give a better chance to the city itself. It is evident that child welfare means city welfare. Just as all the private property in the city is said to pass through the surrogate's office once in each thirty years, so the welfare of the city may be said to rest once for each generation in the hands of the children. "The city that cares most for its children will be the greatest city."[130]

The American exhibition guides emphasized the importance of good citizenship, referring to visitors, organisers, and particularly to children. For example, speaking of the new approaches to juvenile delinquency, Chicago progressives explained that "the modern method makes good citizens instead of criminals." Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of formal play space for boys "to develop into a valuable citizen." Many progressive reformers involved with the exhibits worked for national associations, implying that child welfare was also a national cause for Americans. For example, Florence Kelley, general secretary of the National Consumers League, contributed to both the New York and Chicago exhibitions with her expertise on child labour.[131] Diffusing her knowledge to various cities did not dilute the national cause, merely delegated it to local authorities.

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[130] *Child in the City*, 12.
[131] *Handbook New York Child Welfare*, 65; *Child in the City,* 30, 36, 95.

More distinctly, these American exhibitions spoke of foreign children, thus addressing nationalism through exclusion and inclusion. The New York exhibition's school section included a panel labelled "Americanizing foreign children," while the Chicago exhibition had a conference on May 22, 1911, under the theme of "the foreign child." Chicago organizers insisted on the importance of acknowledging "old world customs and skills" and on the role of foreign-born children in reaching their "un-Americanized" parents. The exhibition's playground and city play sections highlighted that foreign-born and black children were excluded from playgrounds by white children in cramped neighbourhoods, presenting this discrimination as natural and inevitable. In fact, the American exhibitions not only treated immigrant children and children of foreign-born parents as different from white Anglo-Protestant Americans, they also singled out black Americans, labelling to them as "colored" and analysing their issues and challenges separately.[132]

These examples are consistent with Theodore Roosevelt's promotion of civic nationalism as described in Gary Gerstle' *American Crucible*. Roosevelt's civic nationalism embraced European immigrants into American citizenship, promoting the idea that the state should confer them access to "social rights." In his conception of American citizenship, immigrants had to be thoroughly Americanized, and leave their Old-World ways behind, especially their language and culture. Along with leading social welfare progressives, Roosevelt advocated that all members of the nation endow the state with economic and political power. However, this vision of the nation excluded most non-whites. For example, Roosevelt believed that African Americans "belonged to [an] "inferior" race."[133] Accordingly, the American child-welfare exhibitions promoted ways to

[132] *Child in the City,* 47, 94, 17, 41, 31, 36, 93.

[133] Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 51-79.

strengthen their nation throughout their displays, including Americanising immigrant children and their parents. However, organisers consistently placed Black Americans in a separate category.

Threats to the Nation

Reformers agreed that certain dangers threatened modern nations. In Montreal, Dr. Adami and Prof. Carrie Derick were both proponents of eugenics, and believed in stopping reproduction amongst intemperate families and "defective" people.[134] The Chicago exhibition also presented panels on eugenics with labels such as "The Mating of the Unfit" or "A Better Crop of Boys and Girls," describing the consequences of heredity on the nation.[135] Accordingly, *La Patrie* reported on evening conferences discussing an apparent rise of "feeble mindedness" amongst nations. Experts such as Dr. Goddard, director of research at New Jersey's Vineland Institute for the Feebleminded, claimed that alcoholism was directly linked to "stupidity." He proposed a causal relationship; that stupid people were more likely to drink to excess. This was contrary to prevailing beliefs concerning alcoholism, as well as criminality and prostitution. Goddard went as far as arguing for sterilization, as he believed "feeble-minded" people would end up criminals or paupers. In addition to his eugenicism, he argued against marriage for the blind, describing this as a real threat to the nation.[136] Drinking was a real problem addressed in many sections of the exhibition. It connected the parents' morality to home and family neglect. Newspapers reported on the ravages of drugs and alcohol, which affected children directly, but imperiled the entire nation.[137]

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[134] Eugenics was presented in the Other Educational Movement section of the exhibition. For more on eugenics see Normandin, "Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church," 59–86.

[135] Untitled, photographs, 1911, Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit photo album vol. II.

[136] "Une constatation bien désolante," *La Patrie*, Oct. 10, 1912, 1-2; "Feeble Minded Menace Country Says Dr. Goddard," *The Montreal Daily Herald*, Oct. 10, 1912, 2.

[137] "The Voice of the Child Cries out Against You," *The Montreal Daily Star*, Oct. 19, 1912, 21.

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The final sections of the exhibition at Montreal's Drill Hall in October, 1912 unpacked a range of social problems thought to be at the root of all dangers threatening child welfare. Poverty was no secret to those who lived in working-class neighbourhoods. Therefore, visitors ended their tour of the exhibition on a dramatic note, as the Law and Work and Wages sections showed the direct consequences of poverty for children and their families. Necessity might have brought working-class families into the judicial system, but the new juvenile court proposed to reform delinquent children in order to help them become good citizens, rather than merely punishing them. However, the reality was that families were often torn apart by the judicial system. Children were sent to religious institutions instead of prisons under the claim of moral and social regulation, where they were subjected to excessive restriction and discipline. Poverty also frequently required young sons and daughters to work for wages. Exhibitors decried this practice, which in their view impacted not only the children's physical health but also their morality. As threats to child welfare left reformers fearing for children and what this meant for their future, North American child-welfare exhibitions contributed to educating but also regulating local populations in hopes of saving the children and the nation.

Conclusion

As the Montreal child-welfare exhibition drew to a close, a movement emerged in the city to keep the child-saving work going. Seen as the first step in a popular education campaign by its organizers, the exhibition sowed seeds of hope that seemed to inspire progressive reformers. Talks of a permanent exhibition or of a Childhood Museum were echoed in the newspapers, with organizers suggesting that the government should buy the exhibition materials and build a dedicated space for them where lectures for mothers could regularly be held. Other suggestions were to have the permanent exhibition in a disused room of the Congregation Notre-Dame convent on Saint-Laurent Boulevard or in their Saint-Jean-Baptiste street convent. As different options were proposed, all agreed that the teachings, and especially public education around motherhood, should continue and that the work done in 1912 should not go to waste.[1] Doctors and social activists were especially encouraged by the large attendance over the two weeks, which they saw as a measure of the success of the exhibition.

In the interim, the materials were to be loaned to Toronto and Winnipeg, as those two cities planned to hold their own exhibitions after representatives had visited the Montreal event. This sharing of resources shows once more that the MCWE was an integral part of the transnational project, as it was common to lend wall panels and displays for child-welfare exhibitions at this time.[2] There would be many exhibitions sharing content and expertise across the globe during the early 1910s. With the growing popularity of these grassroots endeavors, the transnational movement developed and grew quickly in various formats from the inception of the

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[1] "Une exposition permanente de puériculture," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 16, 1912, 2; "Toronto et Winnipeg auront des expositions comme en notre ville," *La Presse*, Oct. 17, 1912, 9; "À l'exposition pour le bien-être des enfants," *Le Devoir*, Oct.14, 1912, 1; "Exposition permanente de puériculture," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 17, 1912, 4.

[2] "Toronto et Winnipeg auront des expositions comme en notre ville," *La Presse*, Oct. 17, 1912, 9; "Les étudiants de Laval à l'exposition pour le bien-être des enfants," La Patrie, Oct. 17, 1912, 5.

New York Child Welfare Exhibit to smaller exhibitions embedded in larger ones, such as the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition.[3] The model was adapted to the needs of the communities organizing them, with a tendency to focus on babies rather than children as time went on. The American Red Cross also adopted the model and held numerous child-welfare exhibitions between 1914 and 1918 in French cities such as Lyon, Marseilles, and Saint-Étienne.[4]

The golden age of the child-welfare exhibition reached its peak in the mid 1910s, with over seventeen large events having taken place across the world.[5] However, the declining frequency and popularity of these events also started at this time, with the advent of the Great War. As Elizabeth Kirkland explains, the war "changed the tenor of elite culture in Montreal indefinitely. This, in turn, affected the ways women interacted with each other and exacerbated new and existing tensions. In many ways, the Great War signaled an abrupt change in women's activism as it did in many other realms."[6] Thus, as a movement predominantly carried by women, the child-welfare exhibitions were affected by these changes in relationship. Profound social divisions were revived and the progressive unity dissolved within and across nations. This sounded the death knell for the progressive era.

After two weeks of activity and effervescence, what can be said about the MCWE and its accomplishments? As Robert Sink notes about the 1911 New York event, "the CWE had more success in studying and revealing the plight of children than it did in finding answers. Given the range of concerns and proposed solutions, it was much easier to describe the existing problems than to reach consensus on reform proposals. But the description of the problem was

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[3] Strong, *Child Welfare Exhibits*, 57.

[4] See for example "Dr. Bonness examining children brought by their mothers to the American Red Cross child Welfare Exhibition," July 1918, LC-A6196- 6992 [P&P], American National Red Cross photograph collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. Also see Irwin, "Sauvons les Bébé," 50.

[5] Strong, 7.

[6] Kirkland, "Mothering Citizens," 5.

impressive."[7] And it was similarly impressive in Montreal, where the exhibition benefited from the expertise and the lessons of the New York and Chicago exhibitions that came the year before. It was probably one of the most effective and well executed events of its time, with local organizers working tirelessly to present a polished exhibition with the help of their progressive reformers' networks.

In a balancing act between blame and compassion, the reformers presented serious problems in contrasting ways at the MCWE. Social documentary photography reflected living conditions and a city environment in need of serious improvements, while provoking compassion and sensibility in the viewers eyes. Cartoons appealed to youth and adults. Certain displays used mechanical designs to provoke visitor interaction or to portray dramatic facts on infant mortality. In contrast, children were also presented in endearing situations, especially while posing with their mothers, and their performances and demonstrations over the two-week event were presented as the highlight of exhibition. The work of religious orders and philanthropic organizations towards children's education and recreation was celebrated, for example, by presenting their students at work. Reformers addressed their hopes for the youth with their positive portrayal of the new juvenile court and other reform institutions. They were harsher in their descriptions of Montreal's industrial conditions and their impact on children's lives. Nonetheless, with children performing daily in the central court, organizers were able to convey their vitality and, above all, their eagerness to live. The visual and experiential elements of the exhibition were central to the choice of this medium for the transnational public-education project on child welfare. And they contributed enormously to the widely acknowledged success of the two-week event.

[7] Sink, "Children in the Library," 14.

One of the main achievements of the MCWE was certainly to have brought together progressive reformers who usually worked in separate charity structures and practices, divided along sectarian lines. Especially in Montreal, child-welfare exhibitions united reformers and brought them to work together despite their linguistic, religious, or ideological differences. They fought side by side to improve all aspects of children's lives in the city, claiming that their mission was to save the nation's children. The Montreal event stands out as a successful cooperative endeavor for the city. It allowed reformers who participated in the various committees to establish their legitimacy in the public sphere, especially French-Canadian professionals and women. As noted throughout this study, these exhibitions were largely feminine endeavors, which is important in terms of female leadership in general, as well as in the specific world of exhibitions. The MCWE empowered women who participated in its design and demonstrations. The displays showed that mothers were not merely passive receptacle for the medical and expert discourses, but that they were active in finding and choosing child-rearing advice. In the exhibition context, feminist maternalists could engage in social activism in a powerful and meaningful way. Moreover, the on-site clinics, demonstrations, conferences, and performances served to highlight the quality and necessity of the reformers' work. Their implication also contributed to elevate the status of new medical and social science professions and professionals in Quebec. It also established Quebec society as rather modern and progressive in 1912, although there were also elements of conservatism and distinctiveness.

The outreach of the exhibition was also one of its exceptional features. Over three hundred thousand people visited the Craig street drill hall in October 1912. This was made possible by the affordable nature of the exhibition, with free admission and organized transportation for people from the outskirts of the city. The important media coverage also benefited the exhibition, as newspapers promoted the event and summoned people to visit the

installations. Overall, the public responded to the invitation and people from all walks of life visited the event, from working-class families to dignitaries and politicians, who turned out in force throughout the event. Another incentive contributing to the influx of people was the fact that the Drill Hall was set up to accommodate mothers. The baby room allowed them to visit the exhibition at their own pace, enjoying the entertainment and taking in the desired information while their babies were being cared for by nurses. This on-site service offered mothers a freedom they most likely did not often have. In addition, children who stormed the exhibition in their hundreds each day contributed to the exhibition by their very presence. They lit up the smaller and larger stages and were examined in the clinics. As they played and shouted while browsing the Craig Street Drill Hall, they reminded everyone of the exhibition's raison d'être.

Although many aspects of the child-welfare exhibitions sought to connect visitors with their emotions, as it most likely did, it remains difficult to discern if concrete actions followed. Overall, visitors, were most definitely affected in some ways by their participation or contemplation of the exhibits, whether they were adults or children. Parents would have at least walked away with a yearning to hold their children while they still could and a desire to take good care of them. As for the exhibition's impact on governmental actions, no public-health measures were implanted following the exhibition. The status quo was maintained, with the municipal and provincial governments financing private institutions managed by religious communities and philanthropic organizations rather than involving themselves directly. There would, however, be new private and philanthropic undertakings instilled in the following decades such as the *Gouttes de lait* milk depositories and baby clinics, specific programs for children, and boys and girls clubs. Infant mortality would eventually decrease. But none of this can be explained solely by the holding of the exhibition, just as no one change or event can explain child-welfare improvements.

One last repercussion of the 1912 exhibition has to do with the advent of the scientific motherhood in Quebec. Along with their scientific and medical advice, reformers promoted their elite ideas and values. Their discourses presented "ignorant mothers" as responsible for their families' health. These mothers were to be educated at the exhibition. A journalist for *Le Devoir* reported the words of Mme Béique to this effect:

> Je voudrais bien que vous insistiez en passant, sur le fait qu'on ne cherche pas assez à se renseigner sur la raison d'être de chacun des pavillons. Plusieurs dames sont là prêtes à fournir des explications. Lorsqu'elles tentent d'en donner, les gens se retirent en disant: Nous savons lire. Ce n'est pas tout de savoir lire, il faut comprendre et l'explication d'un spécialiste dans telle ou telle branche ne nuirait sûrement pas à certaines personnes qui présument peut-être un peu trop de leurs connaissances.[8]

Such a quote shows that the perception was deeply rooted in the minds of elite social reformers: coming to the exhibition was not enough, mothers should ask and get explanations from experts because they were unable to figure it out on their own. But mothers were in fact free to take any information they wanted, however they wanted, and they did so. Moreover, they were at times presented with conflicting advice, as was the case for breastfeeding and bottle feeding. In practice, as Rima Apple has shown, mothers chose to follow their preferred advice and acted based on what seemed best to them regarding their children.[9]

Finally, the MCWE contributed to legitimizing the regulation of motherhood through experts' advice, as contemporary ideas and scientific advice on child rearing were centralized at the child-welfare exhibition. The exhibition itself was a powerful means of creating awareness and disseminating knowledge on child welfare. Exploring in depth the dissensions and consensus in the Montreal microcosm in 1912 through the MCWE, this thesis thus contributes to the scholarship on the medicalization of motherhood and stands out for two important contributions

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[8] "Exposition permanente de puériculture," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 17, 1912, 4.
[9] Apple, *Perfect Motherhood.*

to this field. First, it provides a new perspective on the subject through the educational medium of the exhibition. Indeed, the visual presentation of information and the immersive nature of the exhibition allowed for a unique form of knowledge diffusion. Reformers undertook this elaborate exhibition to present information in a very graphic and sensorial way, hoping to make a lasting impact on visitors. Putting children at the forefront, each section was carefully designed based on newly available scientific data, but also on class as well as gendered ideologies and moral values. These social activists used standard exhibit methods to express their point of view, making use of transnational expertise developed in the North-American public-education project.

Hence, the transnational approach of this thesis is the second original contribution adding to the body of work on scientific motherhood in Quebec. The transnational lens highlights the movement of ideas, knowledge, and values, as well as the progressive networks that shared affinities, concerns, and resources on child welfare. As we have seen, Montreal reformers, especially women, were closely connected with their American counterparts. The Montreal gathering, moreover, was similar to its American predecessors but also unique due in part to its bilingual and religious organization. Contributing to this distinctiveness, the exhibition's organizing committee represented the city's composition and respected the important Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish elements of its society. In this regard, it is noteworthy that, although they were the target of most recommendations and criticism, French Canadians felt seen and recognised for their work at the exhibition, as *Le Devoir* reported that "la partie canadienne-française de l'Exposition a reçu des éloges de la population anglaise."[10] Lastly, the transnational approach shows that, despite the high infant mortality rates, Montreal was a scientific forerunner

[10] "Exposition permanente de puériculture," *Le Devoir*, Oct. 17, 1912, 4.

in Canada and at the cutting edge of modern technology, just like other great North American metropolises holding child-welfare exhibitions in the early 1910s.

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Quand je sors finalement du manège militaire, mes pieds me font mal et je suis épuisée. Je suis contente de reprendre mon bébé pis je lui fais des gros becs avant de le déposer dans son carrosse pour aller remonter Saint-Laurent. Je le trouve beau pis fort mon petit bonhomme. J'ai juste hâte de rentrer chez nous et voir mes autres enfants. Mes précieux enfants que j'aime ben fort même s'ils ont souvent le don de m'étriver! En-tout-cas, avec les images déprimantes que je viens de voir, moi j'ai juste envie d'avoir mes enfants proches de moi. En fait après ma visite de l'exposition, je ressens comme un mélange de peur, de tristesse pis d'espoir. Je le vois ben que la ville peut être dangereuse pour les enfants et qu'il n'y a pas grand-chose qu'on peut faire pour changer ça quand on vit ou survit d'une paie à l'autre. Ça me donne envie de protéger mes enfants du mieux que je peux contre la misère. Mais en même temps on dirait qu'y a des gens qui vivent près de la montagne qui veulent changer Montréal et qui réalisent que nos enfants sont notre plus grande richesse, surtout pour nous les Canadiens français. C'est ma fierté ces petits-là. Notre fierté. J'aimerais ça qu'il y en ait une couple qui aillent à l'école plus longtemps que leur père pis moi, qu'ils se trouvent un métier pis qu'ils gagnent leur vie dignement. Je sais pas mais j'ai comme l'impression que ça pourrait être possible pour eux de s'en sortir mieux que nous autres. Avec les vues, les conférences et les activités organisées pour les mères pis les bébés, peut-être qu'on va arriver à sauver nos enfants plutôt qu'en faire des petits anges.

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