

racial and gender bias in Ontario's education system. Aladejebi presents the ways Black women have long combated hostile spaces within Ontario schools and beyond. *Schooling the System* calls on us all to fully acknowledge and address Canada's long history of antiblackness. It is only then, Aladejebi reminds us, that we may begin to reimagine schooling with and for Black women educators and students.

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Janice Harvey

Their Benevolent Design: Conservative Women and Protestant Child Charities in Montreal

McGill-Queen's University Press, 2024. 420 pp.

Janice Harvey's rigorously researched monograph, *Their Benevolent Design: Conservative Women and Protestant Child Charities in Montreal*, pulls back the curtain on Montreal's nineteenth-century charitable institutions to explore the creation, management, daily life, and impact of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of Montreal (POA) and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society (LBS) between 1815 and 1920. In contrast to the bleak picture that would be painted by subsequent reformers who favoured a placing-out system of family-based foster care, Harvey depicts the two institutions—which cared for orphans and the children of destitute widows, respectively—as earnest attempts by privileged women to provide a home-like atmosphere for vulnerable children. She concludes that while the POA and LBS were far from perfect, within the bounds of their conservative views and the economic strictures they faced they were surprisingly child-centred in their policies. Although Harvey does not explicitly say it, one gets the impression that a child could do far worse than to live in either institution.

The heart of the book comprises seven thematically based chapters that focus first on the women who ran the POA and LBS and then on the children and families they served, bookended by an introduction and conclusion, plus an epilogue that carries the story into the mid-twentieth century. The end matter includes an appendix of contemporary charitable institutions in Montreal, extensive endnotes, a full bibliography, and an index that helpfully includes concepts such as “agency of client families” (382) and “children, socialization of” (385). The bibliography makes clear the book's grounding in a huge array of international historiographies, including those of women, children, the family, economy, labour, charity, social services, health, religion, and urban development. The history of education is not a major focus but is well represented in a variety of source material that falls primarily in one of these other categories.

The POA and the LBS were important components of the sectarian (Catholic; Protestant) system of charitable poor relief that emerged in Canada's largest city

during the nineteenth century. Although Harvey's principal concern is the elite English-speaking women who founded the POA and LBS and the inner workings of both institutions, historians of education will find a great deal of value in the details she provides along the way relating to teachers, curriculum, skills-based training, apprenticeships, and the POA's role (for a time) as an industrial school. These discussions appear in chapters three, five, and six. Key findings include the fact that the academic instruction provided went a little further than basic literacy and numeracy, while the limited availability of public schools in Quebec in this period meant that "a child who spent some time in one of these institutions would have had as much schooling as at a public school (if not more)" (194). This was particularly true since the POA and LBS children attended consistently, year-round, while parents often removed their children from public schools for economic or health reasons and attendance was not yet compulsory. One significant difference, however, was that the POA and LBS dedicated a portion of the children's daily schooling to practical skills and/or work in the institution—a variety of chores inside or outside the building, depending on gender, as well as cooking and sewing for the girls—which was meant to prepare them for an adulthood in which they were more likely to *be* servants, than to *employ* servants.

As Harvey notes, the hands-on domestic service engaged in by the children was very much in line with the work done by working class children in their own homes. Notably, however, it was also a vital source of free labour for the POA and LBS, which could not afford to hire out all the work required to keep such large institutions running. The apprenticeships many children were sent to when they left the institutions were more in line with "pauper" apprenticeship (in which labour was exchanged for room, board, and a family setting) than with the more skills-training-focused "trade" apprenticeship (227), but they still gave young people work experience and corresponding references they could parlay into future employment.

The ladies of the LBS and POA were equally (if not more) concerned about the moral and spiritual formation of the young people in their care, as they were about the academic and skills-training components of the program. Sunday church attendance, daily prayer, and moral training in habits valued by Protestants (particularly industry and thrift), were integral parts of life in the POA or LBS. The very existence of the institutions was also a response to the perceived need to keep vulnerable Protestant children within the Protestant sphere, rather than seeing them cared for by Catholic charities that would instill a different set of religious beliefs and practices.

The elite women of the POA and LBS, Harvey shows, were sincere in their desire to assist impoverished children, but held traditional, conservative views of society and did not expect or support upward class mobility among their charges. The education and training they provided, therefore, was organized around exposing "at-risk" working-class children to middle-class values, in the hope that they would emerge from their time in the institution as good Christians and useful, self-sufficient members of the working class. The short duration, and/or intermittent nature of the time many young people spent in the POA or LBS undermined the long-term effectiveness of this strategy, but the ladies persisted in doing what they could to achieve their ends.

Harvey's first chapter provides an exceptionally valuable overview of Montreal's complicated network of Protestant poor relief; the remaining six chapters and epilogue are rife with statistics and anecdotes that can be usefully compared with similar institutions in other nineteenth century urban areas. The author has mined the core archival sources available—institutional records of the POA and LBS—for every bit of insight they can provide, and wrestled the results into a solidly researched, thoughtfully analyzed portrait of these two women-run charities. Although not unproblematic in their views on class, the POA and LBS offered refuge and education at a time when the effects of urban poverty were particularly harsh.

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Dominik Antonowicz and Glen A. Jones

The Role of University Governing Boards in Canadian Higher Education: Sociological Perspectives on the Form and Functioning of Boards

Routledge, 2024. 192 pp.

In this timely study, Dominik Antonowicz and Glen A. Jones explore the integral but often hidden role of governing boards in Canadian higher education. The foundation of universities in Canada, they argue, is a deep and widely shared belief in education as a transformative power for individuals and communities. Central to this belief is the concept of the university as a public institution, with the strong commitment to service to society. As Antonowicz and Jones suggest, the public university in Canada occupies a somewhat grey area; publicly funded and secular, yet private corporations, universities are public institutions that are neither under direct state supervision, nor completely independent from the government. The book maintains that the role of governing boards in bicameral university governance has evolved as part of a broadly shared concept of public higher education. In the bicameral model, governance is divided between the board and the senate. While the senate has authority over academic policy, the board exists as a mechanism to distance the university from direct political interference, maintain public trust, and perform the essential function of oversight.

In the first half of the book, Antonowicz and Jones demonstrate that the social foundation of Canadian higher education rests on the fundamentally pragmatic assumption that universities exist for specific social, political, and economic purposes. Universities evolved away from their colonial roots as private sectarian colleges, to public institutions graduating the teachers, doctors, and engineers needed to support regional economic growth. At the local level, communities regarded the establishment of a university as a means for socioeconomic development, in effect, assuming that the university would serve society by providing postsecondary education. The surging expectations of local communities, the authors maintain, is nowhere