

drawn from medieval family life. Shahar explains that she tried to mine her sources with "empathy, a feeling for nuances, and objectivity," at the same time trying to set aside her own cultural assumptions (p. 5). However, she lays out much of her discussion in frameworks suggested by her thorough knowledge of modern neonatal, paediatric, and psychological theory. Thus "Piaget and Erikson point to additional indications to those cited by medieval sages for each stage of childhood" (p. 30). Sometimes theory leads Shahar to infer beyond what she finds in the sources. She notes, for example, that Erikson regards toilet training as a major step in the process of creating a sense of self. Since she found no reference to the topic in her sources, she concludes that it is "highly feasible that children learned gradually and at their own pace through imitating adults, without specific 'toilet training'" (p. 98).

On the whole, Shahar writes clearly and vigorously. She surveys her evidence thoroughly and presents her conclusions without equivocation. She is, however, partial to extremely long paragraphs, some of which extend over two or more pages (see, for example, pp. 33-35, 66-68, and 79-80). *Childhood in the Middle Ages* does not include a bibliography. Nonetheless a careful (but time-consuming) examination of Shahar's very extensive footnotes takes us into primary literature she explored. She also refers to, and often comments on, much of the secondary literature in the history of childhood, not only for her own period but to the field in general. Both stu-

dents and scholars will find these notes useful.

If most of Ariès' notions have been refuted then why do I continue to urge people to read *Centuries of Childhood*? I do so for the same reason that historians of the United States must continue to read Frederick Jackson Turner on the role of the frontier in American history and historians of colonialism must read Harold Innis on the historical economics of staples. Reading each of these seminal works helps one recreate the sense of excitement which came upon their original readers, to say with them: "This is how it must have been!" More important, of course, these pioneers shaped the ways in which their fields subsequently developed. Most who have written on the history of childhood or the history of the family over the last thirty years have been acutely conscious of the long shadow that *Centuries of Childhood* casts over their work. The fine books of Linda Pollock and Shulamith Shahar would have taken a very different and probably a much less invigorating form if they had not had to contend with Philippe Ariès. I suppose I should now say: "read all three of them!"

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Peter Ward. *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth Century English Canada*. Montreal &

Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. Pp. 218, illustrations. \$24.95.

Peter Ward's study of courtship, love, and marriage gives us plainer fare than his title suggests. Nonetheless, while not quite reconstructing the nuances and charms of past sensibility, he succeeds admirably in fulfilling the mandate he sets himself early in the work of examining the "two great themes that lie at the heart of the inquiry."

One is the community's ongoing interest in reproduction and defence of the family as a social institution. The other is the couple's search for privacy and intimacy in the face of public intrusiveness (p.4).

To do this he skillfully juxtaposes quantitative methodology and data alongside the interpretation of experiential sources such as journals, diaries, and correspondence. In particular his use of the diary of George Stephen Jones, a young Quebec city clerk who wrote in 1845-46, provides a focal point to which Ward returns throughout. The diary provides a case study in the egocentric and throbbing introspection of someone "in love" and consequently projects feelings, frustrations, and expectations with which we are all too familiar a century and a half later.

Ward pursues the relationship between the private emotional world with the public social world in seven thoroughly documented chapters: the Christian ethos that shaped the morés

of courtship and regulated the institution of matrimony; the interests of the personal and the public, best represented in a legal system with its emphasis on property, duties, and rights; the "marriage market"—age and choice of spouse, who married whom, and who did not marry at all; the territory of courtship, rituals of romance, and the emotional landscape of familial relations; and finally—indeed almost lovingly—the transforming affective domain of intimacy and companionate love whose roots he ties more to the discourse on romantic love rather than in the context of the power relations such a discourse entrenched.

While there are several matters with regard to evidence—selection, bias, and kind—that perplexed me on first reading, ultimately I decided to concentrate less on these in favour of a discussion of interpretation and assumption from which evidence itself is derived and in turn shapes.

It seems, therefore, that the matter of representativeness of population is partially at the root of the problems I see in assumption and interpretation themselves. For example I am far from convinced that "most of the private papers on which this study rests come from the pens of quite ordinary folk" (p. 7). Too many ordinary folk are missing from the narrative and while the sources are not those of the rich and famous they certainly represent the mentality and social class of the bourgeoisie. Neither do I find his claims that "the courtship and marriage rites of English Canadians cut across social boundaries," and that "they offer no support for the claim that nineteenth century Canadian

working men had a culture of their own" (pp. 174-75), compelling given the sources he uses. Apart from wondering whether this conclusion embraces working *women* I concede that "the language of class structure, class culture and class relations which comes to us from the Atlantic" (p. 7) cannot be used with much precision in the English-Canadian geo-cultural setting. But to generalize from Ward's study that ethnicity and social class do not have any special significance with regard to courtship and marriage remains doubtful. Therefore I look forward to complementary studies which conceptualize these variables in order to distinguish geo-cultural regions, different times of settlement, length of residence (therefore degree of assimilation), and generational conflict among specific immigrant, rural, and urban groups.

Ward deftly organizes his evidences and argument to establish his central proposition—that unlike Europe, marriage in the new world did not depend on the transmission of wealth and property from parents to children. Free movement, abundant land, high rates of transiency and migration, and a bolder response to adaptive forms of social organization led to an economic independence that facilitated greater autonomy in marriage choices (pp. 42-43). To this end he constructs a persuasive case about domestic law, matrimonial contracts, and marriage acts (comparing the Quebec and English-Canadian civil codes), which "buttressed the familial basis of the family's economic enterprise" (p. 49), at the same time as it adapted to a more permissive emo-

tional culture. In this instance the colonial setting was a forerunner to similar transformations that would occur in Europe at a later period.

If the introductory chapter on the relationship of theology and religious institutions to the moral and social climate remains the most strained, it is his chapter "The Territories of Courtship" that proves the most tantalizing. A pivotal chapter, it exemplifies the conservative assumptions about the "complementariness" of male and female natures to which his work as a whole is a testimony. Such complementariness was ritualized in courtship patterns and institutionalized in specific social arrangements that legitimized reproduction. Nowhere is this overall view more striking than in the pages that describe courtship's "prescribed spaces" and "social territories" (pp. 64-89), wherein the basic assumption of complementariness generates the argument and articulates it through the metaphor of "separate spheres," which describes the public and private domains of male and female cultures.

Ward's predisposition to see the triumph of romantic love "romantically" and as complementing the concept of complementariness itself (is there a tautology here?) emerges from that philosophical libertarianism also a legacy of the debates of the eighteenth century. Not only did marriage come to be founded on romantic love and personal preference but Ward seems unequivocally to agree with Freud's axiom that "civilization threatens love with substantial restrictions" (p. 169). Romantic love is *a priori* a social as well as an individual good.

Such assumptions also inform his section on marriage markets (pp. 50-64), a subject not usually interpreted positively by women historians. He asserts that as marriage chances diminished and the competition for husbands became fiercer later in the century, women assumed "far greater collective influence over marriage markets than did men" (p. 71). This was at a time when women were finding alternatives to marriage (p. 51). However, while migration to the United States and to Western Canada might explain a demographic shift in Central Canada in gender-relations this seems less likely for the prairies where women were in high demand. The British anxiety about the "surplus women," so warmly discussed by contemporaries and commented on by historians, was based on the imperial reality; many marriageable men were in the colonial civil service, had emigrated to the colonies, or bore the economic burden of supporting dependent female relatives which circumscribed their possibilities for marriage. The surplus woman question rarely assumed the same proportions as a "problem" in New World societies but be this as it may, even if we concede to Ward on the matter, we must nevertheless insist that he place this purported female collective influence over marriage markets in a more critical light.

In Ward's framework, "patriarchalism"—a somewhat benign form of patriarchy—is also interpreted positively as a set of relationships between all members of a family unit where family interests come before those of individual family members (p. 49). Of

course Philippe Ariès said no less when he observed that romantic love and the concomitant rise of the bourgeois family emphasized loyalty of family members over and often to the exclusion of broader loyalties; that we cannot separate romantic love from a consequent urge to privatization in human relations which in turn precludes the possibility of sociability and communitarianism. Whereas Ward equates this familialism with civil, cultural, and even moral progress, Ariès sees such exclusivity and obsession with privacy and absorption with self as problematic. For Ward romantic love, manifested in courtship territory and ritual, provides the dynamic that bridges the social construction of a gendered world.

If romantic love unites separate spheres (as in "two become one"?) this is more apparent than real; the institution of marriage as both an emotional and economic currency shifts the perspective radically. Romantic love, in the nineteenth century no less than today, was a means by which those separate spheres have been maintained to the advantage of men. As Linda Kerber says in "Separate Spheres...The Rhetoric of Women's History," in *Journal of American History*, 75 (June 1988): 9-39, "Separate spheres is a trope that both defines the boundaries of women's experience but also provides the interpretation of it." In an argument I wish were my own she elaborates: "When they used the metaphor of separate spheres historians referred often interchangeably to an ideology *imposed* on women, a culture *created* by women, a set of boundaries *expected to be observed* by

women." Only in this sense can we accept the growth of women's influence over marriage markets, not as an empirical fact, but in the profounder social context of power relations.

For all its seductive explanatory power the metaphor of "separate spheres" overlooks a critical point. Female culture spaces, whether they be marriage markets or some other form of territory, are created precisely because of and in response to patriarchal structures. Separate spheres co-exist to the advantage of the public (male) domain. We construct our spaces to answer the imperatives that binary oppositions impose on us as well as out of our own experience as historical actors, but in Ward's study men still remain the deciding factor. Ultimately it was they who decided who was marriageable and who was not. It was they who controlled the distribution of a precious social resource—women as commodities in a sexual and reproductive marketplace.

The persistence of "separate spheres" either as a moral and spatial ecology or as a metaphor remains faithful to phallogocentric homophobic norms. Indeed Ward's descriptions of marriage markets with their rituals and etiquette is far from romantic and far from separate (from men): rather a world of women competing for that status ascribed to them—in, by, and through men. His social context differs only in detail from Jane Austen's, which abounds with desperate Mrs. Bennets, or Thackeray's, which gives us the plucky but male-identified Becky Sharp. The rituals he so ably

depicts may make the ethos more palatable but no less political.

Thus my objection to the overall tenor of Ward's historical study of love and courtship in a particular social setting is that he fails to grapple with interpreting the new structures of experience he describes. The liberation in sexual relations from social control is a synthesis of affirmation and contradiction which leaves the tensions of separate spheres unresolved despite the intimacy and loving intentionality by lovers on an individual basis. Passion dissolves in marriage. Men go their ways and women stay at home and rear the children; at least this was the nineteenth-century bourgeois ideal notwithstanding the emotional asymmetry and reciprocity of the growing sensibility. The semantics of romantic love provide a code for the ideology of reproduction. In the final analysis, Ward succeeds in recreating his first great theme—"the community's ongoing interest in reproduction and defence of the family as a social institution." He also succeeds in reconstructing the "couple's search for privacy and intimacy in the face of public intrusiveness," but the facts of history he compiles do not speak for themselves. No amount of empiricism and quantification alone can recreate the ambiguity and paradox of that particular social experience. He needed to ruthlessly dissect it.

Good history makes for lively debate. This review has dealt with a matter of interpretation and not dwelled on matters of fact. Because Peter Ward's timely study of a hitherto neglected subject in Canadian history has opened up this avenue for discus-

sion and because his book was interesting, well crafted, and richly documented, it seems redundant at this point to remark that his is a good book.

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Carmen Luke. *Pedagogy, Printing and Protestantism: The Discourse on Childhood.* Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989. Pp. xii, 171. \$14.95 U.S.

This is a small book with big aims. The author's basic objective is explained right at the outset: "This book describes and explains how the relationship of printing, literacy, and early German Protestantism influenced the reconceptualization of childhood and pedagogy" (p. ix). The author is careful to make clear that she is concerned not with the history of childhood as such, but with changes in the way that children were perceived, discussed, and controlled by adults. Drawing on the work of Philippe Ariès and other historians, the author posits that "the concept of childhood changed from the 'premodern' concept typified by alleged adult indifference towards children, to the early 'modern' concept marked by increased and more systematic attention to children" (p. 1). Ariès, writing about France, placed this shift primarily in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The author

notes, however, that many of the changes involved in this shift had already become evident in sixteenth-century Germany. This, she argues, was due to a number of factors peculiar to Germany, particularly the profound impact of printing and the Lutheran Reformation.

"Those looking for new historical data," the author makes clear, "will not find it here" (p. xi). Nor, in fact, is there anything new about the actual topics examined in this book. The relationship between the development of printing and the spread of the German Reformation has long been a familiar subject of study. The ways in which Martin Luther and his followers promoted new ideas about the training and education of children have also been carefully examined, notably in the rich and subtle book by Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (1978). What makes Luke's book original is the author's attempt to discuss all of these subjects by using the method of discursive analysis pioneered by the late French philosopher and social critic, Michel Foucault. The author should be commended for the clear and lucid way in which she summarizes Foucault's methodology, and there is much to be learned from the way in which she applies the concepts pioneered by Foucault to the familiar issues examined in this book. What is less clear is whether this approach actually adds anything substantive to what is already known about these topics.

One can see this, for example, in the author's discussion of the influence