

whose male and female residents were marked by high rates of literacy, leisure, and economic privilege. Unfortunately, neither the editors nor the authors highlight the class dynamics of this world as a formative variable on the shaping of girls' culture. The reader is rarely reminded that this culture is literally based upon and shaped by class (although many readers may actually experience the exclusivity of the culture when authors assume a common knowledge of the common practices and characters of this elite world). A parallel study of girls' working-class culture that did not raise the influence of class would be unthinkable. Ironically, the exclusive culture that is investigated in this book is also embedded in the assumptions of the authors, showing that culture is indeed invasive.

Kate Rousmaniere  
Miami University

James Christen Steward. *The New Child: British Art and the Origins of Modern Childhood, 1790–1830*. Berkeley: University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, in association with the University of Washington Press, 1995. Pp. 238. US\$35.00 paper.

Did modern ideas of childhood originate in the eighteenth century? On the basis of his examination of the representation of children in the art of Georgian Britain, Steward argues they did. "[T]he number of works focused on children grew enormously in the late eighteenth century and . . . a large number of these works differ in nature from the paintings of children carried out both before and after" (p. 17). In this period, he claims, children were often portrayed as innocent and vulnerable, and deserving of love and protection. Children in art were directly observed, they became more individualized, more prominent, more central, more emotive, and sometimes even sexual. "The developments of a realistic sense of liveliness and of direct observation of actual children are two of the clearest indications in Georgian art of changing attitudes toward children" (p. 85).

The most immediately striking aspect of the book is its visual richness. There are fifty-one full-page colour plates by such artists as Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Lawrence. In addition, there are 102 black-and-white illustrations, the majority of paintings, but many of engraving after paintings. One typical combination includes a colour plate of Reynolds' portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, "utterly absorbed in playing with her one-year-old daughter, who raises both arms in excitement to the tune of 'Ride a cock-horse/To Banbury Cross'" (ca. 1784–86). Steward also

reproduces the mezzotint engraving of the portrait, which allowed "a large public to consume this image of one of the grandest members of the aristocracy as a playful, indulgent mother . . ." (p. 116). By pairing the painting and the engraving, Steward shows that images of the children of the elite had a public presence well beyond the confines of their class.

In addition to including the paintings and engravings, Steward's text is thoroughly grounded in a wealth of literary sources, 293 of which are listed in the bibliography. Images of bourgeois family life in eighteenth-century art were paralleled in fiction by an emphasis on domesticity in the works of such writers as Richardson, Goldsmith, and Sterne. Steward concludes that new ideas about the family and childhood derive from a rethinking of the idea of nature: "if nature is good, then children must be good" (p. 192).

The text is composed of thematic chapters, one of which examines Georgian families. Steward examines portraits and literary sources to demonstrate the emotional involvement of mothers with their children. He recognizes that this habit was not universal, but argues it was extensive. There are fewer portraits of fathers and their children and they are less domestic in nature. Fathers were portrayed as role models and educators.

Other chapters focus on play and learning. Steward draws on the writings of Locke, Rousseau, Wesley, and others to show the parameters of the eighteenth-century debate on the nature and needs of children. "The visual representation of children's games appears with frequency from the middle of the eighteenth century and offers some of the first images in which children are shorn of emblematic qualities" (p. 133). The substantial body of diaries and memoirs which Steward consulted also suggest that parents first came to a recognition of the uniqueness of childhood through their observations of children's play. Steward has read widely in the eighteenth-century chapbooks, alphabets, readers, and fiction written for children. He concludes that "the construct of childhood in which these early children's books participate is thus one in which the child is controlled as well as nurtured" (p. 151). Nevertheless, after 1760, both art and literature suggest that the parent-child relationship became less authoritarian and more child-centred.

Steward recognizes the difficulties of reaching beyond the construct and experiences of middle- and upper-class children. He seeks rural, poor, and working-class children through an examination of the artistic representation of charity and relief practices and child labour. Artists such as Reynolds used impoverished children as models precisely because those who were poor and young could be completely controlled. Steward concludes that "painters of the 1760s helped the nation collectively submerge the uncomfortable facts of the agrarian and industrial revolutions . . ." (p. 181).

To conclude, Steward examines the boundaries of childhood as it appeared in Georgian art. He decodes the sexual symbolism in two well known

paintings by Reynolds, *Cupid as a Link Boy* and *Mercury as a Cut Purse*. Both are haunting and serve as visual reminders that even when childhood was constructed as innocent, children remained vulnerable.

The author is conversant with the history of childhood and places his argument in the Ariès-Pollock debate. Steward, like Ariès, sees a disjuncture in ideas about childhood, but places the critical moment in the late 1700s, about a century after Ariès. Unlike Pollock, he rejects the idea of a continuity of attitudes to children. One of the few relevant works he does not consult is Shulamith Shahar's study of childhood in the Middle Ages. Shahar, like Pollock, asserts continuity, but claims that modern ideas of childhood were evident several centuries earlier than even Pollock suggests. Nor does Steward consider the arguments of several historians—Neil Sutherland, for example—who date the emergence of modern childhood from the late nineteenth century.

This engaging book was published in conjunction with a travelling art exhibition sponsored by the Art Museum at the University of California, Berkeley, where Steward is curator. The exhibition was Steward's brainchild and grew out of his doctoral work at Oxford. The artistic representations of children and childhood are stunning. The paintings depict children of wealth and children of poverty, loved and pampered children, poor and struggling children, children with their families, their nurses, with other children, and by themselves, children from babyhood to adolescence, children in nature and with animals, children playing, learning, and working, and children who were not children. Steward amply demonstrates that after 1730 images of children abounded in British art. Although debate about the timing of the origins of modern childhood will continue, *The New Child* is an important and substantial addition to the literature.

Helen Brown  
Malaspina University-College

Charles R. Bailey. *The Old Regime Collèges, 1789–1795: Local Initiatives in Recasting French Secondary Education*. New York: Peter Lang, 1994. Pp. x, 292. US\$45.95 cloth.

This book describes a key period in the evolution of secondary French *collèges* into *écoles centrales* after the onset of revolution in 1789. It is organized in three chapters: an introduction to the relations between the central government and *collèges*; a lengthy description of the *collèges* as a collectivity; and a selection of seven exemplars from diverse regions of