

# H-Net Reviews

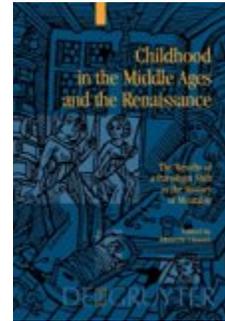
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Albrecht Classen, ed. *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005. vii + 445 pp. Illustrations. \$157.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-11-018421-1.

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## Medieval Childhood

If the broader culture “knows” anything about children and childhood in the Middle Ages, it is that medieval culture didn’t know anything about children. They were considered “little adults” with whom medieval parents had little if any emotional connection, and children (especially girls) were driven as quickly as possible out of the home and into adult roles. A close corollary of this view is that the march of Western culture since the “Dark Ages” has progressed away from the casual barbarity of the past and into our more developed understanding and enlightened treatment of children. However, over the thirty years, medieval historians have firmly put to rest Philippe Ariès’ fundamental though flawed analysis that is the source of these misconceptions. According to Classen, in *Centuries of Childhood* (1960; English trans. 1962), Ariès argued that high infant mortality essentially prevented medieval parents from investing emotionally in their children and Ariès’ examination of iconography and portraiture in particular convinced him that medieval culture did not have a clear, differentiated understanding of childhood as a distinct phase of life. Yet the research of Barbara Hanawalt, Ronald Finucane, Sally Crawford, Michael Sheehan, Nicholas Orme, Shulamith Shahar, and others has emphasized the existence of parental care, community investment, legal consideration, theological reflection, and literary investigation of medieval children and childhood from a wide range of source material and in a number of European regions. This investigation into the children, families, and households of the predominantly Christian West are be-

ing matched by exciting new work in Judaic (Ivan Marcus, Elisheva Baumgarten) and Islamic (Avner Gilead) culture as well.

However, literary scholars generally have been rather slow to integrate these historical findings into their academic studies, that is, until quite recently. Albrecht Classen’s anthology, *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality* is one several recent volumes devoted to medieval and early modern children. Comprised of nineteen chapters, including Classen’s introduction and Christopher Carlsmith’s closing pedagogical essay, *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* treats literature featuring children in Latin, English, Italian, French, and German, ranging from the Carolingian period to seventeenth-century England and America. Classen’s introductory essay, “Philippe Ariès and the Consequences: History of Childhood, Family Relations, and Personal Emotions: Where Do We Stand Today?” provides an overview of the development of some important research, offers a series of “case studies” on Middle High German texts, and examines a variety of disciplinary perspectives into medieval childhood since Ariès, including such notables as Johann Huizinga (*The Waning of the Middle Ages*, 1924), Shulamith Shahar (*Childhood in the Middle Ages*, 1990), James A. Schultz (*Knowledge of Childhood in the German Middle Ages*, 1995), and Elisheva Baumgarten (*Mothers and Children: Medieval Jewish Family Life*, 2007). Classen’s Introduction ends

with a call for interdisciplinary research into pre-modern childhood and brief summaries of the essays to follow, which will “illuminate the complex of mental-historical perspectives on emotions, affections, feelings, and social structures within the medieval and early-modern family, with particular emphasis on the child” (p. 51).

I found the volume thought-provoking but equally frustrating. The greatest virtue of Classen’s introduction is the breadth of his examples, the extent of his research into pre-modern childhood, and his valuable incorporation of important work by German scholars. His interesting, short “case studies” on Middle High German literary texts also directly address Schultz’s devaluation of literary sources for insight into medieval childhood. However, the two schools of thought around which Classen orients his introductory chapter pose conceptual limitations on the analysis. First, Classen’s programmatic approach to pre-modern childhood, focusing primarily upon emotional relationships between parents and children and upon medieval “mentalité” (indebted as it is to the Annales school and its concern for the *longue duree*), is as puzzling as it is limiting. While I too strongly question the idea of any singular medieval “mentalité,” the idea of emotional attachment is still very much indebted to Ariès, and by keeping his analysis wed to a putative refutation of Ariès, Classen nonetheless remains firmly within Ariès’ orbit. With this critique in mind, it is important to be clear about what Ariès actually argued and what has been widely misconstrued. Ariès neither claimed that medieval parents were indifferent to their children nor did he write that pre-modern parents were abusive toward their kids. Such a claim is the hallmark of Lloyd DeMause’s work (see especially “The Evolution of Childhood” in his *History of Childhood*, 1974). In perhaps the most (in)famous passage in *Centuries of Childhood* Ariès wrote: “In medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist; this is not to suggest that children were neglected, forsaken, or despised. The idea of childhood is not to be confused with affection for children; it corresponds to an awareness of the particular nature of childhood, that particular nature which distinguishes the child from adult, even the young adult.”[1] So, when Classen correctly states (in a number of places), “We may confidently conclude that the paradigm established and popularized by Philippe Ariès through his famous study ... now can be discarded” (p. 46), he redresses Ariès’ supposed devaluation of pre-modern parent’s affection, as do most of the essays, rather than the “particular nature” of premodern children. As such, Classen’s pronouncements of an already overturned paradigm seem rather,

well, dated—despite the introduction’s tone of innovation and discovery. To take one example dealing specifically with England, Barbara Hanawalt demonstrated as much in a series of articles dating back nearly three decades, as have other scholars for different eras and regions, many of whom seem not to have been investigated in the collection.

To give Ariès credit, he did establish what might now be termed the “social construction” of childhood. The challenge Ariès presented was not so much whether medievals had affection for their children but in what did the medieval idea of childhood consist? What “particular nature”—if any—distinguished children from adults in the medieval period? Thus, the question concerns not only familial affection but social dynamics, not simply personal love but the entire complex of cultural discourses in which medieval childhood took shape. To be sure, Ariès did see in his limited range of materials a qualitative and quantitative difference in the kind of attachment medieval persons had with children, but that is not at all the same thing as saying that pre-modern persons did not hold their children dear. I would argue that historical inquiry into pre-modern children and childhood has already moved well past Ariès, though he remains the putative “father” that many childhood historians must continually resurrect in order to put him again to death. Similarly, the concept of a “paradigm shift,” indebted as it is to Thomas Kuhn’s pioneering work, (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962), here is applied rather structurally, without any historiographical critique and little analysis of what the new paradigm, if any, the discipline is moving toward, other than descriptions (as opposed to an argument) concerning interdisciplinarity. As a result, Classen lumps together as “followers” of Ariès writers as diverse as Shahar, Schultz, Lloyd DeMause, Linda Pollock, and Lawrence Stone, even when their differences are nonetheless important. Personally, I tend to be skeptical of “paradigms” or “grand recits” in whatever form, so the key question then becomes one of examining medieval children and childhood in specific cultural situations and interrogating the complexities of these representations in particular texts rather than subsuming these variegated phenomena under a single theoretical carapace.

Nonetheless, Classen is spot-on to say, (1) that far too many otherwise well-informed scholars (generally though not exclusively outside of premodern studies) continue to propagate Ariès unthinkingly and uncritically, and (2) that the lack of interdisciplinary effort has hampered the study of pre-modern childhood. How-

ever, it must be flatly stated that too many of the essays in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, to judge from the relative paucity of references to anything other than the immediate topic at hand, simply have not explored the wide variety of work done in other disciplines—much of which is scattered throughout studies devoted to broader subjects like women, family, household, genealogy, inheritance, virginity, violence, and related topics. Though Classen's introductory essay is ambitious enough to draw the above criticism, this robust collection also includes eighteen chapters which are each worthy of individual summary treatment.

In chapter 2, Valerie L. Garver's "The Influence of Monastic Ideals upon Carolingian Conceptions of Childhood" addresses the problem that much of the remaining evidence for Carolingian childhood comes from monastic sources (Odo of Cluny, Alcuin of York, Paulinus of Aquileia, Jonas of Orléans, but not Dhuoda's *Handbook*), which tend to idealize the subjects of their hagiographical vitae and make it difficult to derive data concerning the lived conditions of real, historical children. However, as appears to be consistent in many medieval cultures, Carolingian clerical authorities as well as parents understood that infants (ages 0-7) and children (ages 7-14) had specific educational and emotional needs. The Carolingians excelled at directed personal and spiritual discipline, inculcated through correction, so that children's reading and education could facilitate the complex social, economic, and spiritual networks making up Carolingian culture.

Next, Eva Parra Membrives's "Mutterliebe aus weiblicher Perspektive: Zur Bedeutung von Affektivität in Frau Avas *Leben Jesu*" (Maternal Love from a Female Perspective on the Significance of Affection in Frau Ava's *Leben Jesu*) addresses the twelfth-century anchorite's "Life of Jesus." Likely the author of four or even five poems in Middle High German, Ava is perhaps the first named woman to write in any European vernacular. Membrives argues that Frau Ava exemplifies a particular attitude toward maternal relations found among female writers of the era that is in marked contrast to conventional patriarchal sensibilities. In contrast to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, the tenth-century Ottonian writer who was never a mother (as far as we know), whose depiction of children is often fearsomely cold, and whose exemplary representation of the Virgin Mary and child Jesus is generally dispassionate, Membrives argues that Frau Avas draws upon her own experience as a widow and mother who has experienced the loss of child to reread the life of Jesus through her own maternal experience and

to encourage her (likely) female audience to understand the Passion through their lives as mothers and parents.

Chapter 4, Diane Peters Auslander's "Victims or Martyrs: Children, Anti-Semitism, and the Stress of Change in Medieval England" reconstructs the social milieu of William of Norwich's death in 1144 and examines the cultural impact of the ritual murder charge as it developed in Thomas of Monmouth's writings. Auslander links William of Norwich's martyrdom to theological anxiety surrounding Eucharistic discourse, medieval understanding of the Holy Innocents, and affective devotion to the Christ child, he who himself was destined for the ultimate martyr's death. Auslander's theory is that the innocent vulnerability of the child William, even at age twelve and a tanner's apprentice since the age of eight, played upon community sympathies and enabled the ritual murder charge. William and other child martyrs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were, in Auslander's keen phrasing, "sacrifices to the inexorable forces of change" (p. 114). More innovative, in my view, is Auslander's examination of the Ashkenazi ritual marking a boy's first day of school (as described by Evan Marcus) in relation to the tensions between Jews and Christians in medieval Norwich regarding cultural purity.

Mary Dzon's "Joseph and the Amazing Christ-Child of Late-Medieval Legend," chapter 5, examines the late-medieval texts detailing Jesus' childhood and youth "as an object of meditation for their audiences" (p. 135). Dzon's thesis is that these texts concerning Jesus' rather rambunctious boyhood are a response to the complexities of medieval family life, something that the staid, standard iconography of the Holy Family, based in the canonical gospels, church doctrine, and exemplary narratives, did not readily address. Looking at the Middle English translations of apocryphal infancy gospels, Dzon concludes that they portray a realistic family whose parents must deal with the antics of a sometimes testy child Jesus.

In the sixth chapter, Karen K. Jambeck's "The *Tretiz* of Walter of Bibbesworth," takes the oft-discussed Anglo-Norman vocabulary text in direction different from many treatments, "asking what do the language and the pedagogical approaches in this text reveal about the attitudes toward childhood and children in the context of family" (p. 161). Her answer is that, like many other medieval texts representing or addressing children, the *Tretiz* attends to childhood as a distinct developmental phase. Childhood was a time to prepare for the social roles and cultural expectations attendant upon aristocratic adults, for the *Tretiz* offers a specific vocabulary,

and hence educational program, to facilitate the maintenance of a thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman household.

Chapter 7, Nicole Clifton's "*The Seven Sages of Rome, Children's Literature, and the Auchinleck Manuscript*," argues that the important Auchinleck manuscript (housed at Edinburgh's National Library of Scotland), usually studied for its romance and hagiographical texts, "testifies to a serious and sustained production and appreciation of medieval children's literature" (p. 187). In one of the finer essays of the anthology, Clifton demonstrates the interdisciplinary awareness, literary sensibility, and historical acumen necessary to evaluate a medieval text in its immediate manuscript context and wider cultural milieu. *The Seven Sages of Rome*, a widely known frame tale at the center of the manuscript, serves as the test case for Clifton's claim that Auchinleck's collection of texts, deviation from Old French sources, didactic emphases, youthful protagonists, and linguistic sophistication indicate a youthful—or more likely family—audience.

The next chapter, Juanita Feros Ruys' "Peter Abelard's *Carmen ad Astralabium* and Medieval Parent-Child Didactic Texts," considers Abelard's text as an example of a "real" medieval father's words to his child, Astralabe. The first half of the essay is devoted to a survey of other didactic texts, with the conclusion that such concerted attention to the children's upbringing evidences parental concern, and the actual analysis of the *Carmen* comprises the second half. Ruys' helpfully notes how Abelard's fatherly tone in the *Carmen* contrasts the generally antifamilial stance he takes in his pastoral writings to the monks of St. Gildas and the nuns at the Paraclete. Ruys' also notes Abelard's textual gestures toward his notorious affair with Heloise, arguing that these references indicate Heloise's maternal joy. I found it most interesting that in the *Carmen* Abelard warns against idolizing one's teacher and admonishes Astralabe to follow the dictates of reason in choosing his life's path, even against parental dictates. Intriguingly, Astralabe may have done just that—sort of—by eventually joining the Cistercians, an order with whom Abelard, a Benedictine, "had many personal and theological disagreements" (p. 220). Nonetheless, Abelard clearly understands (but does not sentimentalize) the many differences between children and adults in the *Carmen*.

In chapter 9, David F. Tinsley's "Reflections of Childhood in Medieval Hagiographical Writing: The Case of Hermann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich*" begins by noting that using Middle High German saints' lives as historical sources for understanding medieval childhood requires a

clear awareness of the limitations of genre and an understanding of the "expectations of the intended audience" (p. 230), for "conventional notions of childhood may be inferred not only from negative and positive extrapolations of saintly abnormality, but also from the sanctioning or punitive responses of parents" (p. 234). Tinsley argues that in saintly vitae, childhood was a time of "precociousness" while adolescence was the time of "vocation" (p. 235), and he imagines how *Der arme Heinrich* (Poor Henry) might have been understood by a courtly audience well versed in hagiography.

The table of contents calls Carol Dover's chapter 10 contribution, "Why Did Lancelot Need an Education?" but the essay is entitled "Childhood and Family Relations in the Old French Prose *Lancelot*" in the text. Dover's central claim is that although "childhood is conspicuous by its absence in French Arthurian chivalric verse romances of the twelfth- and early-thirteenth centuries" (p. 247), the prose *Lancelot* depicts a nuanced educational program for the famous hero from infancy until age eighteen. Although Lancelot's adoptive mother, the Lady of the Lake, is of supernatural origin, Lancelot's education is largely conventional, and while he receives knightly training, the Lady of the Lake adjusts his education so that Lancelot overcomes being a foundling and earn his noble status in Arthur's court. Most interesting Dover's examination of the adoptive mother's emotional attachment to her charge, for the Lady of the Lake's pain at "losing her foster son is overcome by her desire for his advancement in the world and her pride in preparing the 'perfect knight' for knighthood" (p. 263).

Chapter 11, Tracy Adams's "Medieval Mothers and Their Children: The Case of Isabeau of Bavaria in Light of Medieval Conduct Books," strikes a contrary note and takes as its starting point the thesis that "one reason for the perception that the medieval mother did not enjoy strong emotional bonds with her children is that noble society constructed her as an intercessor figure with little power of her own, inferior to her children's father, charged with perpetuating the values of her rigidly hierarchical society in her offspring" (p. 266). As a result, "In a world where insecurity and loss were the norm, offering one's child a better situation was an act of motherly love" (p. 267). After surveying conduct-oriented texts like the Lisle letters, Christine de Pizan's *Livre des Trois Vertus*, and *The Knight of the Tour-Landry* for evidence supporting her contention that medieval women were limited by patriarchy, Adams turns to Isabeau of Bavaria (c. 1371-1435). What is most interesting is that Adams takes on not only Isabeau's reputation in contemporary

accounts but takes issue with the reception and uncritical promulgation of Isabeau's notoriously bad mothering by contemporary historians. Adams makes a convincing argument that Isabeau indeed maintained loving relationships with her children but that her maternal shortcomings were the result of the untenable position she was often placed in as queen and the charges brought against her by political enemies.

Chapter 12, Marilyn Sandidge's "Changing Contexts of Infanticide in Medieval English Texts," traces the co-occurrence of infanticide references in historical and literary texts to "flesh out the dynamics between the historical record in medieval England and the popular culture's concept of the practice as reflected in the literature" (pp. 291), a distinction that is not sufficiently theorized. After surveying the difficulties in defining terms like "infanticide" and "homicide," "overlying" and "suffocation," Sandidge turns to texts like Wulfstan's Homily 29, the English "Trentalle Sancti Gregorii," "De Amore Inordinato" from the *Gesta Romanorum*, and the Hypsipyle episode in Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* to note how infanticide is used to call infant killers to repentance, to reveal illegitimate births, to illustrate God's infinite forgiveness, and to police feminine sexuality and autonomy. Sandidge then turns to literary texts featuring child killing more generally, like a twelfth-century Middle English version of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (which features a mother cannibalizing her child), the Slaughter of the Innocents plays from the medieval English cycle dramas, and three Chaucerian tales (the tales of the Clerk, Man of Law, and Parson). In general, Sandidge essentially reads these very different texts as religious allegories of affective piety that illustrate transcendent Christian truths—the grieving women of the texts often evoke Mary suffering Christ's death (p. 299). The final section of the essay finds Sandidge examining legal texts and historical studies of the late medieval and early modern period, though without integrating these findings into her literary analysis. Like so many of the other essays, Sandidge concludes that "these historical records do show ... that infants were valued in this society. The literature, moreover, shows that these infants were loved" (p. 305).

The thirteenth chapter, Jean E. Jost's essay, "Loving Parents in Middle English Literature" (pp. 306-321), is structured very much like Sandidge's, with an opening that surveys different critiques of Ariès' thesis. The essay then moves into a series of brief vignettes examining children in Middle English literature to demonstrate that they take more than a minimal role in "episodic, action-oriented events of extensive tales" (pp. 310-11), partic-

ularly in texts portraying medieval families. Jost briefly surveys the Fleury *Slaughter of the Innocents* (a twelfth-century Latin text), the *Brome Abraham and Isaac Play*, the *Alliterative Morte D'Arthur*, *Amis and Amiloun*, and a bevy of Canterbury Tales (the tales of the Prioress, the Physician, the Monk, the Clerk, and the Man of Law). In regards to Chaucer, Robert Worth Frank made exactly the same point more than twenty years ago, going so far as to classify these as Chaucer's "tales of pathos" in *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion* (ed. Boitani and Mann, 1986). Unfortunately, Jost's analysis goes little beyond different declarations that the literary texts demonstrate, once again, that medieval parents did indeed care about their children and that Chaucer's portrayal of "children doomed" and "children redeemed" evokes the audience's pity. In their prioritizing of encyclopedic breadth over analytical depth, Jost's and Sandidge's essays illustrate both the strengths and the weaknesses of the anthology as a whole. Rather than homogenizing these diverse texts under a single interpretive rubric, any one of the texts Sandidge and Jost cover could be productively subjected to its own extended, differentiated reading.

The next chapter, Daniel F. Pigg's "Margery Kempe and Her Son: Representing the Discourse of Family," another of the finer essays in the collection, returns the collection to more solid analytical and argumentative grounds by closely examining Book II of Kempe's text, in which Kempe first assails her son and then celebrates his conversion. By problematizing the too easy opposition of family life to religious vocation in Kempe's "failed hagiography" (to use Kathleen Ashley's phrase), Pigg argues that in "the medieval as in the modern world, the family was an important semiotic system that underlies the social fabric as a discernable unit, an economic institution, and the name of an important discourse" (p. 332). Kempe's exemplary depiction of her prodigal son operates at the intersection of "the bourgeois, the religious, and familial discourses" (p. 334), allowing her to condemn her son ruthlessly so that she may later intercede for him spiritually (p. 336). Pigg thus shows how Book II, which for many readers seems to be an ill-conceived afterthought, is in fact a powerful demonstration that "Family is material; family is discourse; and family is ultimately caught up with the person that Kempe and her son are in the process of becoming" (p. 338).

Chapter 15 marks the anthology's turn from specifically medieval material and toward early modern considerations, as Juliann Vitullo's "Fashioning Fatherhood: Leon Battista Alberti's Art of Parenting" shows the seriousness with which Alberti treated the responsibili-

ties of fatherhood. Drawing upon classical models like Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, Alberti's dialogue suggests "that the skills related to the manual arts and to the new mercantile economy can help maintain a household and that patriarchs should express their manliness by paying more attention to the domestic routine, especially the raising of their children" (p. 342). A father must observe his sons carefully, identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and proclivities, and then adjust their activities, shared environment, and his disciplinary methods (using praise rather than punishment) to shape their personal development. The father's disciplinary goal is to facilitate his children's abilities to function throughout the stratified social networks in the wider community. Competence in the fine arts, writing, and conversation are emphasized over childish play, and Vitullo convincingly demonstrates that Alberti draws upon but significantly extends classical models of education while articulating a new notion of masculine identity in fifteenth-century Florence.

Chapter 16, Laurel Reed's "Art, Life, Charm, and Titian's *Portrait of Clarissa Strozzi*" is the only essay in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* that engages the question of pre-modern childhood in something other than a written text. Reed specifically takes up an art-historical analysis of Titian's *Portrait* so as to critique Ariès inadequate treatment of visual sources in *Centuries of Childhood*. Ariès collapsed the distinction between art and life, but Reed argues possesses "its own logic; the portrayed or represented is not a mirror of what actually is, but rather an interpretation" (pp. 355-56). In an elegant turn of phrase, Reed states, "Art is, more accurately, reality filtered through the varied lens of aestheticism" (p. 356), while Ariès too closely associated changes in artistic fashion with actual social, cultural, and historical developments. In comparing the child portraiture of Hans Holbein the Younger and Jan Gossaert to Titian, Reed's sensitive, nuanced reading shows how Titian's full-length *Portrait of Clarissa Strozzi*, with its seemingly awkward posing of the young girl cradling her dog, is itself a pedagogical lesson and recognition of childhood development, with the youthful Clarissa imitating—not yet perfectly—a Renaissance ideal. Titian's composition demonstrates that "Clarissa is learning by imitation. Her unwieldy pose establishes her as a young child, not yet adept at the sprezzatura of constructing a proper *figura serpentinata*" (p. 367), or the interplay of graceful beauty and sinuous strength. Although Reed does not see in Titian's portrait unambiguous evidence of parental love and attachment, she does note that the Strozzi family was

committed to their children's development, and "Education in grace and charm is understood as a cumulative, gradual process that begins early in life" (p. 367).

Chapter 17, David Graizbord's "Converso Children under the Inquisitorial Microscope in the Seventeenth Century: What May the Sources Tell Us about Their Lives?" takes the *procesos* (inquisitorial accounts) as ethnographic evidence of "the actual words of pre-modern children" (p. 374), although at least two of his four primary examples, Luis de Aguilar Aragón (17) and Duarte Montesinos (15), are older than the traditional boundary of childhood. Graizbord notes that *conversos* children, on one hand, were usually at the mercy of their inquisitors and conveyed damaging (and sometimes outrageously exaggerated) information but, on the other hand, were sometimes able to use the inquisitorial process to break free from oppressive family structures or to defy specific family members. Although Graizbord attempts to avoid the essentialist presuppositions that often attend the study of the *conversos* identities—the evil or demonic Jew, for example—the inquisitors themselves do not fare as well, for they are generally depicted as evil figures who manipulate *conversos* children to their own ideological needs. Nonetheless, Graizbord's analysis indicates that *procesos* records could become a fruitful avenue of further research into pre-modern childhood, especially in cases like the young Andrés Núñez.

Chapter 18, Allison P. Coudert's "Educating Girls in Early Modern Europe and America," takes a broad look at pan-Atlantic attitudes toward female education and training in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Beginning with the claim that Eurcharius Rosslin, Johannes Coler, Montaigne, and Rousseau all valued education, but for boys only, Coudert argues that "the revised and relatively rosy picture of childhood education in the early modern period minimizes the very real underlying view among parents and educators that children are inherently evil. Consequently, new methods of instruction were required, and these were predicated on an unprecedented degree of mind control, established through the inculcation of humiliation, shame, and guilt" (pp. 389-90). According to Coudert, conditioned by a strong concept of original sin, early modern parents loved their children, to be sure, but were instructed to favor strict discipline so that their emotions for their children would not cloud their parental responsibilities regarding proper spiritual instruction and educational discipline. Here Coudert turns to Calvinist thinkers like John Robinson, John Locke, and Ralph Josselin as well as Cotton Mather, Benjamin Wadsworth,

Jonathan Edwards, and John Wesley before invoking writers and texts as diverse as Jacqueline Pascal of Port Royal, Martin Luther's *Duties of Parents in Training Children*, and Juan Luis Vives' *De Institutione Foeminae Christiane* to argue that early modernity advocated not so much the education as the suffocation of girls under the demands of the patriarchal household and hierarchical church, all to keep women in an inferior social position. Coudert ends her rather strident essay with the invocation of witch burning as the epitome of patriarchal abuse against the threat of feminine autonomy, a position that is stated rather than demonstrated. Much like Jost's and Sandidge's essays before her, Coudert lumps so many different texts from widely different periods, thinkers, and locales under a single undifferentiated theoretical umbrella that their individual subtleties are lost under the glare of an overweening ideological agenda. Even more, many of Coudert's citations are from one of two outdated secondary sources, Philip J. Greven's 1973 *Child Rearing Concepts, 1628-1861: Historical Sources* and Greven's 1977 *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience and the Self in Early America*, rather than the primary texts themselves—a research weakness shared by more than a couple of the collection's essays. Even if one were to grant that the early modern period saw the development of new forms of gender-differentiated disciplinary mechanisms (à la Foucault, who is not mentioned), this is not at all to say that Locke's understanding is identical to, say, Luther's, Wesley's, or any other writer Coudert mentions.

The final essay in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, is Christopher Carlsmith's pedagogically oriented "The Child in the Classroom: Teaching a Course on the History of Childhood in Medieval/Renaissance Europe." Carlsmith's essay is based upon his experience teaching "Childhood in Premodern Europe" at the University of Massachusetts – Lowell (whose website at <http://faculty.uml.edu/ccarlsmith/teaching/43.329> was available as of November 2007). Carlsmith's purpose is to "ponder the rationale, the resources, and the risk-reward ratio of teaching" such a course (p. 416). The primary reason to study pre-modern childhood, according to Carlsmith, is "that we need to know about the roots of modern practices in order to understand their contemporary application" (p. 417)—an assertion that is probably debatable. To Carlsmith, such a course also opposes a Whiggish (developmentally superior) view of Western culture and offers students the chance "to witness a paradigm shift in mid-stride" (p. 417) as the study of pre-modern childhood changes. Carl-

smith then turns to a brief summary of secondary and primary sources that focuses upon their usefulness in the classroom before briefly mentioning the types of assignments one might give and the kinds of student evaluations one might expect. I suspect that since Carlsmith composed his essay, even more academics have taken on the challenge of designing a course like this and would find food for pedagogical thought in Carlsmith's contribution.

As the summaries above demonstrate, *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* is an ambitious but sometimes uneven anthology, as notable in some cases for what it does not do as for what it does, and my several criticisms speak simultaneously to its strengths as well as its weaknesses. First, it is simply not enough to announce the passing of previous scholarly opinion—the volume's eponymous "paradigm"—especially one whose limitations have been established and widely recognized within the discipline for at least twenty years. One must go beyond Ariès to something else, even if in a provisional way. Classen's call for a mentalité-based interdisciplinarity is inadequate if it yields more of the same. Only Dzon and Reed rise to the challenge of interdisciplinarity (as traditionally understood); Auslander, Clifton, and Pigg bring to bear upon their subjects theoretically informed cultural perspectives.

In my view, a better parallel case is not Kuhn's scientifically inflected notion of a paradigm shift, but the growth of feminist thought, which the history of childhood roughly parallels, to which childhood studies is indebted, and whose maturation is often characterized (not unproblematically) as waves. Admittedly "first-", "second-", and "third-wave" feminism are themselves contentious terms, but it is worth noting that Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood* appeared in English in 1962 and Betty Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique* appeared in 1963. What might be called the first wave of historical childhood studies is rooted firmly in (and in reaction to) Ariès and identifies the appearance of children in literary and historical texts. In parallel to the literary-critical analyses of feminism, the second wave investigates the social, cultural, and semiotic systems of which children are an essential part and explores the overly political dimensions of those systems. A third wave in historical childhood studies might explore a variety of issues, including childhood agency and resistance, the cultural deployment of children and childhood, and an ongoing critique of the representation and political dynamics of children and childhood. If generally parallel to feminist studies, third-wave studies in the history of childhood might equally

critique essentialist conceptions of children and childhood and the very presuppositions upon which the discipline has fashioned itself; critique must therefore consistently include self-critique. The dynamism of such a nomenclature describes the ebb and flow of ideas and writers as they build upon one another, one receding though never really disappearing as another waxes toward a powerful crest and intersects with social, political, and cultural concerns. So, what is necessary in the development of historical childhood studies (and what is now appearing in different areas of study) are new approaches informed by contemporary literary and cultural theory—something missing from many of the essays here—and from these theories will emerge different trajectories rather than a cohesive new paradigm.

Second, and allied to the first, the book's introduction and many of the essays register little if any critical self-reflection upon the terms and methods structuring their analyses. To take just one immediate possibility, even if one accepts the troubling trans-historical assumption and assertion that medievals valued their children much like we do in the present, it would be productive to question just exactly what affectivity and attachment, sentiment and emotion not only *mean* but also *do* in these texts and their attendant cultures. These are not unambiguously positive terms in many cases, and parents may be lovingly attached to their children even in the most destructive ways (as Coudert suggests). Or, even if one accepts the premise that medieval parents “loved” their children or were “devoted” to them, was that love expressed in one text of a piece with the love expressed in another? What are the durable cultural affects of that devotion? With important exceptions like Auslander, Clifton, Ruys, Dover, and Pigg (for medieval texts) and Vitullo and Reed (for early modern texts), too many of the essays settle for a first-wave approach that says, “Look! There are children in these texts and there is evidence that they were cared for in their cultures.” Of course, uncovering medieval and early modern texts featuring children is important, but ultimately this method does not actually break with Ariès because even Ariès admitted that pre-modern parents did indeed love their children.

Third, and related to the first two points, on the whole, the anthology is caught in a generally unacknowledged (double) modernist presupposition. That is, the in-

roduction and many of the essays still (1), posit a teleological narrative of historical progress that culminates in the contemporary Western experience, and (2), tacitly embrace the tenets of developmental psychology (itself a modern construct) as a normative model. To impose developmental notions uncritically upon pre-modern persons is to risk a premature and incomplete understanding of the distinctiveness (as opposed to alterity) of medieval and early modern cultures. Fourth, while I appreciate a collection that consciously links the essays to one another through intertextual references and footnotes, Classen's introduction, as methodical as it is, does not warrant the laudatory references to it given by some of the chapters. Classen is neither the first to see beyond Ariès nor is he the most convincing exponent of what one might term the post-Ariès study of pre-modern children and childhood. His chief contribution here is in his encyclopedic summary of some previous work and preliminary engagement with a number of Middle High German texts. His analysis of MHG texts could stand on its own as an essay, while the introduction might have framed more sharply the chapters which followed. Finally, as to the normal quibbles with book construction and production, the text allowed a number of words to be broken at odd moments that appear to be the result of the software used to prepare camera-ready copy, and a volume as large and dense as this one could be more useful with a summative bibliography and detailed subject index.

Despite reservations and criticisms, this is an anthology of substantial weight. It should be read in a variety of fields and can be used profitably in literature classrooms. It is fair to say that we are in the midst of a renaissance in the study of medieval and early modern childhood, and because the value of an academic anthology can be found in the number of questions it raises and the problems it highlights, Albrecht Classen's *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality* is a useful contribution to the ongoing discussion in the quickly developing study of pre-modern children and childhood.

#### Note

[1]. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 128.

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