

pêche par manque de finition du projet scientifique. Ces publications restent trop souvent de simples vitrines de travaux en cours, arrachés momentanément à leur destination d'origine, des mosaïques où l'entier du programme annoncé par le titre et l'introduction d'usage doit être assumé par le lecteur, laissé seul dans son activité de « braconnage ». Ici, l'introduction/présentation est par trop économe. Tout en prétendant faire le tour du débat sur les rapports entre culture et politique, L. Turgeon l'évite soigneusement et porte plutôt à l'avant-scène les perspectives qui confortent le projet éditorial. L'absence de conclusion nuit également à l'efficacité et à l'unité de ce projet. Cette conclusion aurait pu alimenter la perspective comparative adoptée par le CÉLAT et ainsi mettre systématiquement en évidence certaines pistes de recherche dévoilées par les différentes contributions et pouvant enrichir l'étude de l'histoire culturelle des pouvoirs au Québec et dans la francophonie nord-américaine.

Malgré ces réserves, ce recueil dirigé par L. Turgeon demeure un ouvrage de qualité dont chaque contribution, véritable « scripto-clip », reste une porte ouverte sur les multiples facettes de la problématique relation entre culture et politique.

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Peter Ward — *Courtship, Love, and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. Pp. x, 219.

Peter Ward's *Courtship, Love, and Marriage* explores the fascinating and important topic of the romantic rituals and practices of men and women in the period leading up to marriage. It is an immensely readable book brimming with interesting and illuminating anecdotes. While a pioneering contribution to Canadian scholarship, raising topics that will be addressed by other historians from a wide variety of approaches, the book was in many ways outdated before it ever reached print. This is a book focused on the relationship between men and women that just missed being able to take advantage of the wave of Canadian and international feminist scholarship produced in the second half of the 1980s.

The study looks at English-speaking Canadians in Central Canada and the Maritimes during the long century of the 1780s to the First World War. English-speaking Canadian is not the same as Anglo-Canadian and this broad sweep hides important ethnic differences such as the relatively late marriage age among many Canadians of Scottish origin or the relative economic independence among women of African-descent. Given the broad sweep that Ward undertakes in examining both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions, would his findings be any different if the project had included francophones?

Private life and emotions are difficult terrain for the historian and Ward provides his readers with a rich feast of sources based on diaries, letters and memoirs of literate middle-class, men and women who he insists on calling "quite ordinary folk" (6). It is too bad he uses this group to build a universal case (he does admit the sources are biased, but insists not "hopelessly so") rather than emphasising how much they do reveal about a particular class in society. As a result, the discrepancy between the

ultimately respectable diaries and letters and the more broadly-based ecclesiastical correspondence is striking. Not only are the sources in themselves selective, so is the choice of diaries and letters used. How did he happen upon these particular diaries and letters in the large collections of the archives he visited? While one of the authors is included, the variety of perspectives on courtship and love that appear in a recently published collection of Nova Scotian women's diaries, *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938*, are not represented in Ward's account.

Ward begins with the premise that heterosexual couples did not fall in love or pursue their courtship in isolation, and it is vital to consider the social context of this process. Furthermore, the presence of a courting couple within a community setting led to an irresolvable conflict between the "community's on-going interest in the reproduction and defence of the family as a social institution" and the "couples search for privacy and intimacy in the face of public intrusiveness" (4). The author's desire to breakdown simplistic rigid classifications between public and private is successful and important. However, as he moves to erase the boundaries between public and private, he continues to dispense with all polarities effectively eliminating region, religion, civil or military society, urban or rural residence, class, and even male and female.

In the first two chapters, Ward reminds his readers that both the church and the state shared jurisdiction in the area of marriage laws and practice. The church's monopoly in conducting marriages was supported by ecclesiastical laws that regulated sexuality, dictating chastity before marriage and monogamy after. The state utilized both civil and criminal laws to govern aspects of marriage that ranged from breach of promise suits and illicit pre-marital intercourse to the issue of marital property. In the third chapter, the author moves beyond the legal and ideological basis of marriage to look at the ages of brides and grooms and understand the marriage market in Ontario. He notes that the age of marriage rose gradually over the last half of the 19th century with women usually marrying slightly older men.

The fourth chapter outlines the spatial dynamics of courtship. Ward accepts a literal version of separate sphere ideology based on a prescribed urban middle-class experience that offered men and women equal power with women positioned in the home and men situated in the public. The fact separate spheres is viewed as a description of reality rather than an ideological construct confuses Ward's perception of the relationship between who controlled space and how this affected the marriage market. He simultaneously argues that although couples experienced increased spatial freedom over the course of the century, women maintained control over the marriage market through domestic hospitality and regulating the entry of single men into the household.

From space, Ward moves on to the rituals surrounding respectable courtship. His use of material culture in discussions of valentines and the series of illustrations by Alicia Killaly (1868) is original and insightful. The section on outings, gifts, gossip, the rituals of the engagement and the wedding is less successful as the individual experiences examined do not merit the universal conclusions claimed. The final two chapters address the efforts of courting couples to achieve privacy and autonomy from their families. While chapter six is concerned with the financial and property repercussions of independence, chapter seven concerns itself with the emotional, the development of intimacy and romantic love.

Despite Ward's original contention of the need to understand the social context within which courtship occurred, absent from this book are many questions that touch upon power such as gender ideologies, class, the social pressures that promoted obligatory heterosexuality, and even what it means to be an "English-speaking Canadian". (Certainly, this has distinct implications in Québec.) While Ward explains why society had an interest in the protection of the family, he fails to question (or takes for granted) the desire of couples to acquire privacy and intimacy.

Romantic love is not timeless and must come under the careful eye of historical scholarship. Ward recognizes this to an extent, but does not push the investigation. He acknowledges the contradiction between romantic love as one of the "quintessential personal experiences" that at the same time can be said to "conform to clear and predictable patterns of behaviour" (149), yet he does not truly seem to grasp (nor does he question) what this contradiction may mean. The lack of inquiry around the meaning of romantic love is troubling. Ward paints an image of romantic love that is changeless, and largely free of conflict. There is no differentiation between ideals around romantic love and actual experience. Romantic love must be problematized (like all discussions of power) and historians can not fall back on adages around the "great mystery of life". The sentimental love that emerges from the book is as unreal as the beautiful allegories on the valentine card that marks the cover.

Love is complicated and is no less so as a historical subject. We are indebted to Peter Ward for opening this area in the Canadian literature and can look forward to the exciting directions it may take those interested in the histories of gender, sexuality, society and mentalities. *Courtship, Love, and Marriage* tells us about a group of respectable middle-class, Anglo-Celtic Canadians in the pursuit of love. Further investigations will touch upon the many Canadian suitors and sweethearts who did not take part in the bevy of calls, visits, balls, and coming out parties described in the book.

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