History (1972) and in *Acadiensis* (1973). Readers can now look forward to MacKinnon's next book as he completes his research, now well under way, on the first full generation of loyalist refugees in Nova Scotia. To aid him is an array of recently published guides and manuscript materials, some of them generated during the last few years as part of the international scholarly co-operation marking the bicentenary of the American Revolution and the War of Independence, which completed it.

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Robert Muchembled — *L'invention de l'homme moderne : sensibilités, mœurs et comportements collectifs sous l'Ancien Régime.* Paris: Fayard, 1988. Pp. 513.

Readers familiar with Muchembled's previous work will not be surprised by the thesis of this book, but many surely will be joined by first-time readers in applauding the visionary scope, interdisciplinary methodology and considerable synthetic abilities Muchembled brings to the writing of history. Using monographs and a variety of primary documentation from literature (like the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, or Guillaume Bouchet's *Serées*) to paintings, from civility manuals to *mémoires* and travelers accounts, from letters of remission to post-mortem inventories and royal *lettres de cachet*, Muchembled, in part echoing Norbert Elias' by now classic formulation of the civilizing process, consistently and forcefully argues that "the invention of modern man" is at once a product of "a growing perception of difference between the elite and the vulgar and a...power struggle within the human being against himself in order to repress his animality beneath a code of civility" (11).

In the premodern fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in contrast to our own or even the seventeenth century, Muchembled contends that all social classes shared a world where violence was as "quotidian as bread" (16) and "filth, foul odor and scatology" (*la saleté, la puanteur, la scatologie*) were omnipresent. Indeed, the emergence of "the importance of odor as a factor in social differentiation" (51-52) came only in the seventeenth century, a clear sign for Muchembled that there was little cultural distinction, in the ethnological sense of the term, before that. In this rough-and-tumble world, all social groups mingled in a "universe" centered on the tavern, which functioned as a sort of school and, in the absence of institutions of justice, served as the choice place where the "eternal cycles" of vengeance and peace were balanced (Muchembled, here as elsewhere, reveals his methodological debt to structuralism and its assumptions about homeostasis). It was the place *par excellence* where the constantly rent social tissue was as constantly mended (32).

If there is a world that we have lost, however, it is this one. Muchembled repeatedly invokes the metaphor of a cultural trench which the modernizing process dug between the urban and rural worlds, and the first spadefuls were unearthed in the sixteenth century. This transitional period witnessed a widening gulf between city and country which led simultaneously to a "depreciation of the peasant" (44). One very

important reason for this was the advancing "criminalization of modern man". During the sixteenth century, the system of "private peace" (*paix privée*) which had adjucated violent contests within traditional communities began to be enfeebled by the expansion of the influence of judicial tribunals. Muchembled suggests that in the process, city-dwellers, especially from the *couches supérieures* of society, were largely brought to heel in what was to be a new stage in western civilization, but he also cautions against exaggerating the extent of the power of official justice, even in the eighteenth century, especially in the countryside. True, the rural world was pacified, if slowly, but according to Muchembled, the moralistic program of criminalization (which marched arm in arm with the tridentine reform) largely failed there. The result was a society increasingly "fractured into two unequal blocs" (153) with a distinct frontier, both cultural and geographical, separating the urbanites from the peasants.

Riding the vehicles of the absolutist state and the counter-reformation church, both of which championed obedience channeled through a patriarchal system capped by the "super-fathers" God and king whose power "cascaded" to the nuclear family, France's social elites self-consciously trumpeted the increasing need for social distinction. The signs of such distinction, which aimed above all at separating the privileged (and those desperately seeking to join them) from, in Muchembled's frustratingly sociologically imprecise words, *la plus grande masse* (238), the social elite, paraded on the human body, proclaimed through its comportment (like erect posture, clean clothes, perfume for body odors, etc.), and regulated by conscious "self-control" (*autocontraintes*). The successful moralization of priviliged city-dwellers was consequently marked by a culturally-specific invention of the "self" which, in its outward behavior, distanced itself from animality and, necessarily, from the netherworld of vulgarity. Thus, for Muchembled, "the progression of self-control...rested on a devaluation of the peasant model that seemed more and more crude and nearer to the behavior of animals" (229).

Paralleling and reinforcing the internalization of constraint and the emergence of social distinction was a shift in the way youths constructed their personalities and defined their social roles. For Muchembled, before the sixteenth century, the "education and apprenticeship" of youth were dominated by peers and functioned in a very exteriorized culture of shame. During the sixteenth century, however, the peers' influence was challenged by fathers who offered an internalized culture of guilt. Sacralized by the Tridentine Church and provided legal muscle by a series of royal edicts and *lettres de cachet*, the challenge of the unprecedentedly invigorated paternalistic system was quite successful in the urban upper classes. Among the rural *masses populaires*, where, according to Muchembled, it met heavy resistance, however, it was forced to arrive at a system which incorporated elements of both. Paternalism, then, was yet another brick in the wall separating Muchembled's two cultures.

A short review can not do justice to the scale of Muchembled's account. His strokes are broad and his cultural picture (of which readers of his earlier work will be familiar) unrepentantly dichotomous. He himself admits that his general interpretation of "the invention of modern man" is based on too few and too isolated instances of primary research, and he calls for more "microhistory", but he seems confident that findings from such ventures will support what he has argued here. He applauds the English historians, their by now deeply entrenched local history approach, and he wishes the French would move away from systematic and generalized approaches and

toward the English model, an ironic plea, given the highly systematic nature of this book. Still, while reading this book and after putting it down, one finds oneself both marvelling at its conceptual magnitude and pondering critically its bold assertions, which, in the end, is what a good, even great book should accomplish.

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Roberta Pollack Seid — *The Dissolution of Traditional Rural Culture in Nineteenth-Century France: A Study of the Bethmale Costume*. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1987. Pp. v, 475.

In the 1909 *Annuaire de l'Ariège*, images of old and new coexisted. According to the editors, villagers still wore traditional local dress; at the same time, an advertisement for the healing baths of the department carried a picture of a woman in a modern bathing suit (349). This juxtaposition is just one of the tangles Roberta Pollack Seid attempts to unravel in her study of the celebrated Bethmale costume.

Pollack Seid, a member of the Institute for Historical Study, has taken on the modernization problem in a study of the commune of Bethmale, located in south-western France, not far from the French-Spanish border, in the Pyrenees. The point of departure is Eugen Weber's notable study, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France* (1976) and a collection of essays edited by J. Beauroy and E. Gargan, *The Wolf and the Lamb: Popular Culture in France from the Old Regime to the Twentieth Century* (1977).

Challenging the description of traditional rural society and the process of its disappearance presented by many historians, the author argues not for the abandonment of the model, but rather for its modification. She questions several key aspects of the conventional model. Village-centered, socially cohesive, static and isolated are qualities generally invoked to describe traditional French peasant culture; these are re-examined by Pollack Seid. She forces the reader to listen carefully as she attempts to answer the following questions:

> Was peasant culture in France really so autonomous a system, so divorced from urban and even regional contact? Were there only simple stages in traditional culture; did it cling to its medieval roots until it disappeared in the nineteenth century?...[I]f peasants were so attached to their traditional ways, practices, festivals and world views, how did the agencies of change wean them? (7-8).

One might wonder why dress should be the subject of a study of the dissolution of traditional rural culture. When historians, anthropologists and other scholars speak of traditional culture, they refer to a complex of threads making up a way of life: language, dress, beliefs, rituals, production. According to Pollack Seid, dress, or more specifically the traditional village costume, stood as one of the most prominent symbols of that culture. Beyond being visibly identifiable (and they were frequently described by contemporaries), traditional dress fit the model of analysis "for they were village-centered, tradition-bound and highly structured" (9).