

herself before Judge Emily Murphy stands out, as does Tim Stanley's story of school segregation in Victoria, Peter Gossage's work on an infamous case of child abuse in 1920s Quebec, Dominique Marshall's study of the origins of the category "children's rights", and Mary Louise Adam's study of sex education. But on the whole many of the articles in this anthology — especially the earlier ones — do not wear their age particularly well. They display mechanical and wooden treatments of identities, considering race, in particular, in an unreflective fashion. They are strangely confident and matter-of-fact about their subjects, reflecting few of the complexities about definitions of childhood that Parr suggests in her introduction. I react a bit as I do to photos from the 1970s and 1980s: did we really wear our hair so big? Who thought platform shoes were a good idea?

Where Canadian history has *not* been is sometimes a more interesting, and revealing, question. Despite Parr's cautions in the introduction, few historians have really considered what it means to acknowledge the social construction of age in children's history. There is, of course, a vast difference between children and childhood, and this anthology is by far weighted towards the former. Childhood is another matter, and historicizing this is complicated. Why are we so invested in ideas about childhood innocence, and where have our ideas about the social meaning of childhood come from? No one — at least no one here — has explored children's culture or the vast issues this raises around consumption, literature and film, changing definitions of play, and the representation of childhood in cultural practice. Few — with the exception of Marshall — have explored how children have become potent political symbols, who have represented national or racial aspirations, grievances, and stereotypes.

The history of childhood has wonderful potential to shed light on many of the big questions historians worry about: the creation of national identities, new discourses of politics, racial hierarchies, and gender boundaries, to name a few. To some, children as social beings are inherently interesting — and as a collection of children's social history, this book is definitely useful and important, with great potential as a teaching tool. Further ahead, I hope, we will see a historiography of childhood in this country that asks broader and bolder questions.

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Shawn Johansen — *Family Men: Middle-Class Fatherhood in Early-Industrializing America*. New York and London: Routledge, 2001. Pp. ix, 249.

Shawn Johansen challenges historians of family life in antebellum America, and in industrializing societies generally, to reconsider a central concept, that of separate spheres. He is not the first to question the salience of gendered regimes that separated husbands from wives, breadwinning from homemaking, or public from private. But he joins a small yet growing number of American family historians, including Ralph Larossa, Robert Griswold, Steven Frank, Anthony Rotundo, and

Margaret Marsh, who have critiqued the strict separation of roles by focusing on men as fathers. As recent work underscores, fathers' roles as parents, as marriage partners, as providers, and as citizens with a stake in their social positions multiplied over time rather than contracted, crossing thresholds between public and private life that earlier scholarship has ignored. The variety of histories that can be considered through the lenses of fatherhood has just begun to be appreciated.

Johansen's contribution is based on some wonderfully evocative samples of life-writing from fathers and other family members in the antebellum period (110 from the northeastern states, with an emphasis on some 20 life stories), drawn from fathers' letters, diaries, and autobiographical writings. This book goes farther than most new work to critique the separate spheres model. Johansen also challenges the value of the advice literature related to fatherhood from the period, the prescriptive texts that he stresses tell us more about the framers of an ideal role for fathers than they can possibly reveal about the men themselves who fashioned their own paths. Basing his work on the ordinary life-cycles of middle-class family men living in the larger northern cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago and their rural hinterlands, the author illustrates across six chapters how family men shaped paternal roles that changed as the demands of being a father shifted. The family life-course of white, middle-class men in the northern states, establishing careers, supporting pregnancies and births, caring for infants, guiding adolescents, and providing a gendered, middle-class launch in life for daughters and sons, determines this book's thematic sequence. It makes sense to recognize that "histories" of fatherhood drawn from individual instances of life-writing, rather than "the" history of fatherhood (as plotted through the prescriptive literature of the period), can be coherently organized along a stage-by-stage path, both "manful" and "domestic".

Whether at home or pining for the family circle while at work, a man's sense of self could be shaped in fundamental ways by domesticity. When Lincoln Clark, a circuit court judge, confided to his wife Julia in 1845, "I am becoming to believe that I am the greatest home man in the world", he expressed regret that his life at home as a father seemed so limited, both for him and for his wife. Lamenting his time away from home, he added: "I sometimes think I can not endure this judgeship, it will keep me so long from the only place that I am satisfied" (p. 17). Johansen avoids taking Clark's words, or those of others, at face value in claiming "home" as the "only place" to be truly "satisfied", but he recognizes the force and historical significance of such sentiments.

*Family Men*, in fact, goes farther than any work I have read in fatherhood history in critiquing the shifting boundaries between past practices and customs embedded in patriarchy and emerging signs of paternal involvement. We learn, for instance, that, on the birth of his first child, farmer and schoolteacher Samuel Cormany's diary entry retraced a highly charged moment, one men seldom revealed publicly: "The Little Pet came.... A sudden thrill flew through us all when Darling spoke out 'There it is' — the Moment — I knew it was here. I felt like pressing my Dear precious Rachel to my bosom and covering her with kisses. ... we have our desire — a Baby! — a dear Innocent — Angel Angelic — precious Baby" (p. 58). Or, from Johansen's well-crafted chapter on the struggles between toddlers and fathers, we

can sense the frustrations and mutual stubbornness of Baptist minister (and future president of Brown University) Francis Wayland and his son. Wayland senior “resolved to seize” and subdue his infant son’s temper when his son, on being separated from his nurse, would not eat from his father’s hand: “If a crumb was dropped on the floor he would eat it, but if *I* [italics in the original] offered him the piece of bread, he would push it away from him” (p. 95). So things went all day, and into the next. Finally, the crisis of will between father and son dissolved. A famished Heman Wayland gave in and ate from his father’s hand, as Wayland senior claimed with pride in his determination to parent with effect. Later, on the paternal parenting of older children, we learn how Navy purser Kieth Spence challenged his wife’s suggestion that their adolescent daughter embark on a New England journey. The 16-year-old would be taking care of, rather than being cared for by, her aged Aunt Whipple enroute: “My God! Can this be suitable employment for a young, delicate & beautiful girl! To me it appears masculine and improper in the highest degree; and I may add vulgar” (p. 116).

I found Johansen’s evidence of the problematic nature of separate spheres in approaching his individual fathers intriguing, yet at times frustrating. His questioning of the salience of separated worlds divided by the threshold of private, family life strikes me as a deliberate call for us to think about the need to nuance, to challenge, and even, where appropriate, to discard notions that men have no appreciable domestic existence in wage-earning economies, an idea that has, indeed, been too influential for too long. When historians took up “the concept of separate spheres”, as the author puts it, “they became predisposed to see men only in public roles. If men were public beings, there was no need to study their limited private lives” (p. 7). All this seems a useful pairing of invitation and caution for including fathers in ongoing research on family life.

On closer reading, however, his case against a separate spheres orientation to fatherhood is easier to make at the beginning than at the end of a man’s family life. To begin, as the author does, his study at the birth of children takes us immediately to new and convincing evidence of paternal domesticity, of the “manly love” of fathers. As Johansen sums up, “Contrary to what the separate spheres model would lend us to believe, men could and did get involved in the most intimately domestic of matters: pregnancy and birth” (p. 62). Samuel Cormany’s “Little Pet”, for instance, is born to a man clearly overjoyed and clearly prepared to display some fluidity in his manful decorum.

But things begin to change in early childhood. It was not only transitional for infants becoming young children, but — as Johansen himself recognizes — early childhood ended a brief phase for most fathers: “This period of relative friction-free interaction, however, was short-lived as children grew out of infancy and into the early years of childhood. In this transition, fathers and children both develop new responsibilities — fathers to teach and govern, children to learn and obey” (p. 82). In other words, the power of a sphere outside the home began to intrude.

In the chapter that follows on late parenting, with mothers and fathers negotiating their respective roles, we see this trend continue as much as we find Johansen struggling somewhat to interpret it: “My purpose has not been to determine the exact

share of power that men possessed in childrearing because, as shown here, the family was an interactive and flexible institution at this time.... There is no easy separate spheres answer to the issue of domestic power” (p. 107). Yet in terms of guiding maturing children, fatherhood seemed to dictate paternal responsibilities not only to live in two worlds, private and public, but also to become increasingly concerned about how, on different gendered paths, daughters and sons coped with the latter as they prepared to leave home as young adults.

This was something that Johansen’s fathers seemed to express more stridently, more often, and with increased resolve as they grew older and as their children neared departure. He even sees the realization and exercise of such power as “essential” to fatherhood in this period in general: “Fathers who had governed and encouraged their children for so many years inherently understood that power and authority were the essence of nineteenth-century fatherhood” (p. 140). While for the most part working successfully to avoid essentializing fatherhood’s complex and changing relationships across the public/private thresholds, Johansen alludes more and more to the power of the public sphere as fathers grew older and as children grew up: “Fathers could advise and guide, but it was not men’s place to teach daughters the domestic arts”, to which he adds that a “son’s career, however, was much more central to a father’s concerns in the antebellum period” (p. 144). Men had a place determined by society and brought back to the home.

A father’s legal standing as “head of the family” outside the home could translate into a stark, ugly exercise of power within it. Apart from the loving, caring, and concerned fathers upon whom this book focuses, Johansen includes references, aided by Linda Gordon, to the violent, abusive exercise of power that fathers displayed more than mothers. He finds this relatively rare, given his reliance on source materials that might try to mask such acts (he cites only one instance from a wife’s report of her husband’s sad recourse in driving their son from their home). Nonetheless, he concludes, men more than women “may have been more disposed to abuse children, but their place as the dominant power in the home definitely gave them the opportunity to be the primary perpetrators of domestic abuse” (p. 158). Losing this “place” as the “dominant power” was something Johansen suggests some family men stridently resisted as their children grew toward dependency and their influence over them waned: “When fathers abused semidependent children it was usually in the context of the tensions over the growing independence of the child and the father’s desire to retain control” (p. 158). Here again we find a conflation between the patriarchal positions of men in society — men’s dominant place in the public sphere — translating into their paternal power at home. Fathers more than mothers crossed that barrier, whether bringing the frustrations of work home or, more generally, manfully girding their offspring for what lay ahead.

While Johansen’s life-course approach to fatherhood seeks to challenge the saliency of separate spheres, his evidence still points to the fact that, as fathers of America’s early industrial era matured, their special task as family men lay in mediating the private-versus-public divide as both domestic and masculine agents. Without being as explicit as he might have been in recognizing the power of the public sphere in shaping fatherhood as family men grew older, Johansen provides a good

deal of evidence for it. His reading of the sources uncovers at the same time an involved, active, and significant place for American fathers in the middle-class home. He does a remarkably sensitive job of translating their words and worlds in the antebellum period across the threshold between family life and the world of men beyond the home.

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Rebecca E. Karl — *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002. Pp. xii, 314.

*Staging the World* explores the intellectual context of the Chinese anti-dynastic radicalism that brought millennia of rule by emperors abruptly to an end in 1911. In simplified accounts, the revolutionaries who established the Republic of China were impelled by Social Darwinist fears that the Manchu monarchy was unfit to ensure survival of the nation. Rebecca Karl's persuasive analysis, in contrast, identifies the radical anti-Manchuism of the turn of the twentieth century as part of an emerging resistance to the ideological hegemony of Euro-American imperialism in Asia and Africa.

According to simplified accounts found in both Chinese and Western historiography, China's intellectuals a century ago had been forced out of isolation by Western imperialist attacks and emerged blinking to discover a world outside their ancient Empire. They then reluctantly recognized the necessity of modernizing along Western lines and were inspired in their anti-monarchism by the French Revolution and the model of a strong republic established in the United States. Karl makes a crucial contribution to recovering the aims of Chinese radicals by revealing their sophisticated and detailed knowledge of current world affairs. She describes members of China's educated elite as such avid readers of world news that the recent history of far-flung places such as the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and the African Transvaal provided them with analytic terms such as "to Poland" (meaning to dismember and destroy a state) with which to diagnose their own situation. Chinese radicals thus identified China's Manchu monarchy, established by an ethnically distinct group of conquerors during the seventeenth century, as a colonial power congruent with British power in India and the United States in the Philippines.

Karl's central focus is on how Chinese nationalism was constructed by observers of international affairs. She demonstrates the astuteness of Chinese radical intellectuals who were becoming keenly aware of the power of colonialist regimes to define the targets of their violence as primitive "others". Emerging sentiments of anti-statism in the news-reading radical group led to analytic links between Euro-American imperialism and China's dynastic regime, despite the fact that China's monarchy was itself the victim of Euro-American scorn. Karl makes the important argument that the intellectual leaders of China's early-twentieth-century revolutionary movement clearly distinguished "nation" and "state" in their analyses. She argues that resistance