

The last four chapters of the book will especially interest students of Ontario's education system. Here, the author shows how changing demographic, political and economic patterns put increasing pressure on the local public school system to provide french language instruction and how, ultimately, in the face of hostile provincial regulations, francophones in Prescott County turned to the leadership of the Catholic Church to preserve french language instruction. The author draws a direct link between restrictive provincial language legislation and the growth of the separate school system. Until the mid-1880s, the separate school question was "not of great importance in Prescott County" (161) because the Catholic Church was not a strong institution there, schooling held a low priority for most residents and french instruction was accommodated within the public system. After 1885, and the official requirement to have some English taught in public schools, however, "the potential insulation offered by the separate system" became a powerful attraction for francophones and the separate system flourished (175).

Overall, this book is successful in its goals of linking provincial legislation to developments in Prescott County and demonstrating the interrelationship between changes in the local material environment and demands on the education system. The book would have been considerably strengthened, however, if the author had drawn on comparative examples from other counties with large francophone populations. Less well developed is the author's argument that the roots of the Franco-Ontarian identity can be traced back to the Prescott County of the 1880s. The disintegration of Prescott County in the late nineteenth century into "anglophone and francophone fragments" (186) may have been a necessary development for the emergence of the Franco-Ontarian identity, but does not, in and of itself, substantiate the existence of such an identity.

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Jacques Gélis — *L'arbre et le fruit. La naissance dans l'Occident moderne (XVI^e-XIX^e siècle)*, Paris, Fayard, 1984, 611 p.

En France, la naissance et la mort ont fait l'objet d'études historiques impressionnantes. Cette approche particulière des moments d'introduction dans l'existence et de sa conclusion y est autant privilégiée que l'approche psychologique l'est dans les pays anglo-saxons.

L'ouvrage de Jacques Gélis est un exemple remarquable de la tradition que les historiens français ont établie dans ce domaine. Représentant un éventail unique d'informations, surtout sur la France, *L'arbre et le fruit* évoque à travers tout ce qui concerne la naissance, un monde rural dont les traces sont devenues rares en Occident.

Le livre se compose de trois parties. La première est organisée selon la chronologie des événements et des états autres que la naissance : fertilité, conceptions, grossesse, accouchement... La deuxième traite des « dérèglements de la nature et des hommes », par exemple, la mort de l'enfant, la contraception, l'avortement, etc. La dernière, plus brève (489-546), présente d'une façon fort intéressante l'intégration métaphysique et sociale de l'enfant par le baptême et par l'attribution d'un nom.

Pour faire comprendre les rites, les croyances et les usages, l'auteur évoque sa conception de la métaphysique populaire. Basée sur les principes de la fécondité universelle, de la nature globale et mystérieuse du destin humain, de la qualité révélatrice de significations de tout ce qui se manifeste, cette métaphysique anime avec force chaque situation quotidienne, comme tout ce qui a trait à la venue au monde. La continuité, particulièrement, qui constitue l'esprit des choix de l'homme rural et sa façon d'être la plus profonde, assure le sens à la présence et au développement de l'enfant. Elle s'exprime notamment dans la coutume d'inaugurer la marche sur la terre des ancêtres : « La terre

des ancêtres, le terre du grand repos, est le lieu privilégié où le dernier rejeton issu de la lignée doit faire ses premiers pas » (472).

Comme le montre ce livre, la société paysanne perdra le pouvoir sur elle-même par l'influence de l'Église, de l'État et de la médecine. Les formalisations idéologiques et juridiques qui émaneront de ces systèmes produiront l'éclatement des solidarités locales. L'autosuffisance apparente des individus remplacera le sentiment clair d'appartenir à un cosmos vivant. Ainsi, préférons-nous actuellement choisir des prénoms originaux, plutôt que représentatifs des continuités des lignages, du lieu et du temps, c'est-à-dire des fondements ontologiques de la personne. Autrefois « le prénom familial ne se contentait pas de marquer la filiation; il témoignait aussi de l'appartenance à un territoire, à une terre des ancêtres; il était alors l'un des symboles de l'autochtonie » (543).

Pour un lecteur moderne, membre d'une société qui privilégie l'aspect immédiat et interchangeable des choses, l'*homo magus*, que nous présente si clairement Jacques Gélis, agit comme contraste révélateur. Il devient autant une formule de transparence qu'un maillon d'une chaîne historique; en somme, il se révèle comme ancêtre.

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Robert S. Gottfried — *Doctors and Medicine in Medieval England, 1340-1530*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. Pp. xvi, 359.

Professor Gottfried is a natural choice for a book of this kind. He has already produced works on the Black Death in Europe and more pertinently for this study on the effects of disease and its medical implications in fifteenth-century England, as well as a book on the late medieval English urban situation (specifically Bury St. Edmunds). Since most medical people of the time lived in towns and cities the range of experience that Gottfried holds in both medical and urban concerns in late medieval England is ideal. This particular book also attempts a much more systematic analysis of the subject than has hitherto been attempted. And it has a strong and controversial thesis to advance, in that it argues that the late medieval period was a "golden age" for medicine in England, led especially by war-trained surgeons rather than physicians. In contrast, according to Gottfried, the increasing domination by physicians in the sixteenth century subsequently brought about a stagnant period for medicine.

Taking all this into consideration, it is disappointing, therefore, that the book delivers far less than it promises. As with its predecessors, especially Charles Talbot's book on medieval English medicine, it is still primarily an institutional and biographical history. The various medical corporation and their members in late medieval England dominate the book, and such space is taken up by a sterile reign-by-reign account of the physicians and surgeons who were prominent at court and elsewhere. The practice of medicine, as opposed to its practitioners, gets much less attention and is essentially limited to two of the eight chapters; even then, these two chapters (V and VI) are dominated by the innovations of particular people (such as John Arderne) rather than applying to the profession as a whole.

When Gottfried breaks away from the strictly biographical approach, the book becomes much more interesting and challenging, as in his chapter (VII) on the nature of late medieval English medicine. Here the statistical focus is on the medical profession as a whole rather than on individuals, and Gottfried has many interesting things to say, not least in regard to the sheer number of people practising medicine at the time. Gottfried claims in fact that there was a more favourable doctor to patient ratio in the early sixteenth century than in England today (253)! Much of Gottfried's concern