

# Philippe Ariés, Childhood and the Everyday

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## Abstract

This commentary navigates the oeuvre of Ariés' writings on childhood, family, private life and death, with a focus on interrogating 'who is a child?' Departing from the intellectual history prevalent at the time, Ariés deployed the psychogenic approach to study the cultural history of childhood and family. He examines the quotidian experience of aesthetics and other documents of culture to reveal 'what was thought about' viz. the mentalities' of childhood and family spanning a vast canvas from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries. Ariés provocatively proposes that childhood is a modern construct, highlighting that children were not always seen as precious, dependent and in need of adult protection. The magnitude of his intellectual adventure continues to be debated, particularly in childhood studies. The commentary includes an analysis of Ariés' methods and insights about childhood that unsettle the narrow prisms that refract how we see, understand and educate children.

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Ariés made his reputation as a cultural historian, theorising the everyday. He is best known for his work on reimagining the histories of childhood and family, private life, death in France. At a time when French royalism was retreating and parliamentary politics gaining momentum, Ariés examined the lifestyle of the traditional society whose routines seemed alluring in the modern world. Apprehensive of the role of the state, he was disturbed by the loss of autonomy and privacy of the family in the modern world. He also examines the history of the family, particularly through the changing attitudes towards the child.

This commentary focuses on Ariés conceptualisations with a detailed focus on his treatise *Centuries of Childhood* (Ariés, 1962). Uncovering the history of mentalities spanning over several centuries, Ariés reveals trends and transformations unfolding over long durations. He addressed three research topics that would dominate educational historiography for decades, namely histories of childhood, family and parenting and school. This study also includes his ruminations on private life and death in the traditional, modern and contemporary societies. In *Centuries of Childhood*, Ariés puts forward the thesis that children were not always seen as precious, incompetent and in need of adult protection. The publication of this text was the starting point for problematising the taken-for-granted notions of the child as ahistorical and atemporal.

Ariés was born in 1914 into a Bordeaux family in Blois, Loire Valley of France. He went to college in Sorbonne, studied History and Geography though he could not graduate. He made several unsuccessful attempts to qualify his history examination. Before the First World War, Ariés often visited the right-monarchist circles of *Action Française*. He became an instructor at one of the schools established by the Vichy government, the École des Cadres of La Chapelle-Saint-Serval. In 1948, he published his first book, *Histoire des populations françaises et de leurs attitudes devant la vie* [History of the French people and their attitudes to life] (Ariés, 1971). Though this book did not stir the academic circles, it was welcomed by demographers. Post-World War-II, Ariés abandoned his loyalty towards royalism. In 1949, he became disenchanted

with the ‘university history’, fraught with a ‘radical isolation’, interesting only to the specialists (Ariés, 1971, p. 274). In 1955, he collaborated in the establishment of the weekly journal *La Nation Française*, for which he published pieces on labour disputes and other contemporary events. He disagreed with his contemporaries on questions of national identity and was vociferous in his opposition to racial prejudice. Between 1950 and 1975, he organised a series of academic seminars at Plon Editions. He took a critical stance towards the intellectual life of the universities. His second book, *L'Enfant et la vie familialesous l'Ancien Régime* [Centuries of Childhood], published in 1960, went on to become a seminal text on childhood. A compilation of varied aspects of private life, ‘willed, conceived, and prepared’ by Ariés was published posthumously in five volumes. The editors dedicate the volumes to his memory, as they kept ‘faith with the intentions of the man whose idea this series was—Philippe Ariés’ (Chartier, 1989, p. 611).

## Cultural History and ‘Mentalities’

Ariés occupies a special place in the historiography of the Western world as a definer of socio-cultural history. Although he describes himself as a *Historien du dimanche* [Sunday historian], he was not just an occasional researcher but an original scholar of the everyday (Ariés & Winock, 1980; Hecht, 2003). His conceptualisation of cultural history was novel and stimulating. He documents the attitudes of people towards life, love and death in their daily existence, particularly the conceptualisation of death as a social construct. Demography was the pivot which permitted him to peer into the private domain, and the family was the exclusive axis of his history of mentalities.

Ariés’ work can be located in the intellectual tradition of the *Annales School*. The Annales group was an avant-garde group of French historians on historical consciousness and participated in the redefining of social and cultural history. Annales departed from the prevalent traditions in history through ‘[first] the substitution of a problem-oriented analytical history for a traditional narrative of events, [second], the history of the whole range of human activities in the place of a mainly political history, and [third] ... a collaboration with other disciplines’ (Burke, 2015, p. 2). It brought together historians of many temperaments, but few were as forthright in their political stances as Ariés, nor did they look to the past with such a desire to gain insight into modern society. For Ariés, the

conflict between traditional society and modern society was a daily reality rather than a relic of the distant past, and therefore, relevant to debates of modern politics. Ariés published *Centuries of Childhood* at a time characterised by 'decline of interest in the humanities, and especially in the study of history, which seems inevitable in all completely modernised societies'. (Arendt, 1961, p. 58).

The Annales historians, particularly Lucien Febvre, Marc Bloch and Philippe Ariés ushered in a different conceptualisation of history of the *mentalite* (Hutton, 2002). Mentalities [Sentiment] refers to the 'as the history of the attitudes of ordinary people toward their everyday lives' (Hutton, 2001, p. 396). Ariés engaged with childhood, family and death as 'structures de mentalities' over *longue durée* [long-term] history such that it forms limits 'beyond which man and his experiences cannot go' (Oswell, 2013, p. 19). He is credited with the discovery of mentalities as an operative historiographical concept in the middle-ages. The ability to work through volumes of data to arrive at a conceptualisation of everyday life makes Ariés a pioneer of the 'new social-cultural history'. So imagined and established, 'historiography became a new kind of intellectual history for our times' (Hutton, 2004, p. 3). Following the publication of his texts, *Centuries of Childhood* and *Attitudes towards Death*, the history of mentalities gained popularity. It enabled Ariés to fulfil the scientific need for historicising the social sciences and enable a reading of the family, childhood, youth as well as the relationship between the sexes as historical instead of natural or even structural phenomena (Dekker & Groenendijk, 2012; Heywood, 2010).

In their later writings, Ariés and the Annales historians become acutely aware of the shortcomings of the mentalities approach (Hutton, 2001). Over time, the history of mentalities acquired multiple meanings to include: the shared ways of thinking that bind a group of people together, 'perceptions, knowledge, emotional reactions, dreams and phantasms;... the rites, legal maxims, and rules of decorum, the amalgam of accepted ideas that engulf individual consciences' (Duby, 1971, p. 21), a mental history generated by shared heritage based on collective experiences and the dispositions engendered by shared cognitive structures (Hutton, 1981) and a mutually reinforcing cluster of psychological processes. By the early 1970s, Ariés came to believe that the mentalities had become less visible due to its presence everywhere. Foucault's inquiry of marginality led to an unsettling of the objectivity of archival data. His work revealed that facts were cultural constructs based on effects of power. The foundation of Annales School

was challenged by the post-Foucauldian relativisation of the objectivity of history. As the history of mentalities became loose, less exact and more ambiguous, it transformed into many of the new research areas that include the history of imagination, history of representation, history of ideologies and ideological systems, cultural history, religious history, memory studies and historical anthropology. However, it continues to exist when the interaction between social, material and socioeconomic levels and ideological systems and mental representations is examined (Duby, 1971).

## **Choice of Ubiquitous Methods**

The focus of Ariés' work is the 'image' of the child, family, private life and death in paintings and sculptures. He examined childhood, which he regarded as moulded by social sensibilities. He researched the history of practices of private and family life, interrogating and problematising the way of doing or being, acting and feeling in both quotidian, enduring routines and spectacular creative masterpieces. He reveals how 'death loves to be represented', focused on how society ritualises, dramatises, glorifies and occasionally neutralises or cancels it (Ariés, 1975).

Being a demographic historian of origin, he attributed value to demographic data, but in his avatar as a cultural historian, he used images, painting and personal documents such as diaries, personal correspondence and autobiographies. Being acutely aware of the collective unconscious hidden and manifest in figurative sources, his writings brought these sources into the centre of history of mentalities, particularly the history of education and history of the life cycle. He analysed demographics as a method of responding towards one's private self, one's children and the future. Ariés established the concept of 'stylistics of existence', or the study of how we manifest, invent, forget or reject ourselves as a mortal entity (Foucault in Ariés, 1985).

## **On Private Life and Family**

Private life is a historical conception. As public life has evolved, so has society's interpretation of it. Private life can be best defined in relation to the public life. Ariés believes that the contemporary family's development entails a division of the private from the public, social world.

His framing of the social and cultural problems and issues of everyday life, such as the dynamics of the family relations, sexual habits and morals, attitudes towards dying, death and grieving and the rise of the mentality of privacy left a significant mark on later scholarship. He builds a history of the family, by examining the 'family as an idea' rather than 'family as a reality' (Ariés, 1962). An exploration of relations within a family from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, enabled Ariés (1962, pp. 9–10) to propose changes focusing on 'ideas entertained by these relations', that may be 'separated by lengthy periods of time' and the 'history of the concept of the family'. While the private sphere continued traditional norms, promoted personalism and socialism, children's socialisation and education to be productive adults were relegated to the public realm. Sociability diminished in the public sphere but resurfaced in the modern family.

Ariés wrote at a time when the family as an institution was declining. In his later writings, he concentrated on the contemporary family's crisis, with a particular emphasis on adolescence, the changing relationship between love and marriage across generations and the separation of public and private life as a lens through which to view changes in the modern family and relationships. His views on the family altered in response to the newer threats on its nature. These included engulfing domesticity for women, laissez-faire parenting, apathetic and disaffected teenagers, growing divorce rates and abuse of women and children. His later publications concentrated on the problems of the nuclear family, where privacy was protected but connections weakened, increasing exposure to popular culture.

## Changing Attitudes Towards Death

Ariés outlined his decade-long historical investigation on death in two texts: *Western Attitudes Toward Death* (Ariés, 1975) and *Images of Man and Death* (Ariés & Lloyd, 1985). He examines the shifting ways in which the dead are disposed of and remembered. From Charlemagne until the mid-eighteenth century, Europeans viewed death as natural and inevitable. Death was acknowledged as a fact, whether it was communal, family, clerical or public. According to Ariés, death was 'tamed'.

Modernity introduced new laws, institutions, science and medicine geared at reducing the role of death in human life. Death came to be increasingly linked with the act of dying and familial emotions. As

material existence gradually became increasingly secure, death became more wild, unknown, alien, illogical, aggressive, metaphysical, medicinal and not natural. After sex, death became the most tabooed theme in early twentieth century.

## Childhood as a Modern Construct

According to Ariés, the idea of the child as innocent and in need of protection from contamination by society is a modern invention which emerged in seventeenth century Europe. It emerged in a context where infant mortality rates declined, educational systems changed, the family became a private domestic unit gradually separated from the wider communities and increase in class differentiation and stratification. The sentiment of childhood that Ariés postulates is a specifically romantic and modernist sentiment (Archard, 1993). Ownership of children as private objects, and ownership of one's own body as a private body, were important to the formation of romantic conceptions of the young. Child-rearing as a modernist concept requires an understanding of ownership and the child's care as a private body kept by a private mother (Baker, 1998b).

*Centuries of Childhood* spreads across a vast historical canvas, across seven centuries. Ariés argues that the concept of childhood as a special stage of human life did not exist in the medieval age. The concept of childhood emerged slowly between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries due to changes in economy and society. After industrialisation, the family was gradually deprived of its economic functions but was strengthened and isolated as an effective socialising and emotionally bound unit. He did not find images of children in art forms during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and it led him to conclude that childhood had not yet emerged as an idea. In this period, the peculiarity of images of children portrayed as adults is particularly noticeable. Childhood was not 'even (a) reality for them'. He postulates that in real life, and not just in aesthetic representation, childhood was simply a period, a phase which was transient, passed quickly and was not significantly marked in memory. The first child appeared in iconography in the thirteenth century and was a prototype of an angel, a young person training to be a church clerk. The second kind of child was the sacred, or the infant form of Holy Jesus, which appeared in religious iconography from the fourteenth century onwards. These pictures depicted Jesus with sentimental realism

amidst landscape painting styles. The third type of childhood was the naked child, which emerged in iconography during the Gothic period between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Specific images of the sixteenth century began to depict dead children. Most often, family paintings would include the parents and a shadowy ghost like image of a child, who was 'fixed' in time, depicted at the age at which the child died. By the seventeenth century, children came to be depicted in their quotidian domestic contexts, in 'numerous and commonplace' ways (Ariés, 1962).

Significant changes were observed in the depictions of the 'holy' child, gradually modified in character over time as it '... became more and more profane: the picture of a scene of everyday life' (Ariés, 1962, p. 36). More images of childhood began to be depicted, with groups of holy children painted together. The gradual loss of sacred-ness of the Jesus–Virgin Mary iconography led to newer forms of expression, more banal and profane. It is from these religious images that a 'lay iconography eventually detached itself in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' (Ariés, 1962, p. 37). By the end of the nineteenth century, the iconography of childhood became free of its adult moorings and it is this that 'foreshadows the modern idea of childhood' (Ariés, 1962, p. 38).

Analysis of the images was paralleled by an analysis of the language used to talk about children. The expression 'little child' became frequent only by the seventeenth century. This indicates indifference towards the child before this period. The high mortality rate of children before this period was the reason of the emotional indifference and detachment from children. The little child was believed to have 'neither mental activities nor recognisable bodily shape' as they were placed perilously between life and death (Montaigne c.f. Ariés, 1962, p. 39).

Similar to expansion of the vocabulary on infancy, uncertainty about the definition of adolescence continued. Till the seventeenth century, the idea of adolescence did not exist. It took a longer time to shape. It was only in the seventeenth century that adolescence came to be recognised as a period, through specific practices within the school, namely, the association between age and school class.

## **The Notion of Age**

Before the seventeenth century, chronological age was not considered important. People were referred to as infants, youth or old depending on

their physical appearance. A boy of age six years was oftentimes referred to as an infant. The preoccupation with record keeping of dates and age with precision began in the eighteenth century, first by the church and then by the state. Data from portraits of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the registers maintained by the eighteenth-century parish priests were sources that validated the history of the family. He writes that the 'inscription of ages or a date on a portrait or an object helped to answer the desire to give the family greater historical consistency' (Ariés, 1962, p. 17). The examination of measurement of time and its relationship to family and memory, reveals how far science intersected with the everyday and became '...common property, how far its concepts had entered into mental habits and what it represented in everyday life' (Ariés, 1962, p. 19).

Ariés was of the view that age determines an individual's participation in the modern world. He discusses the absence of gradation in school during the middle-ages in detail. An age-based system of teaching-learning did not exist in the middle-ages, and 20-year olds frequently studied in the same group with 7-year olds. This mixing of ages continued out of school, and in later education as well.

## **Differences in the Representation of Children: Gender and Social Class**

Ariés observed no specific demarcation of dress between children and adults until the sixteenth century. He makes observations about children's dresses, games, pastimes and literature with a focus on class and gender differences. He demonstrates that girls continued to be dressed like smaller versions of women and there was a noticeable continuity in their clothes. It was different for the boys, who at a young age, from infancy and toddlerhood were dressed in long robes like girls and later given breeches and other masculine clothing. This practice continued until the end of the nineteenth century. Boys were the first specialised children, for clothes were made for them much before they were made specifically for girls.

Ariés observed class distinctions, as changes in dress, toys, games and pastimes first emerged in the higher income groups and then percolated down to the lower social classes over a period. From the fifteenth century, parallel to the first appearance of the *putto* or the naked child that appeared as an ornamental motif, children's toys also appeared

in paintings. In these paintings, he could see the hobbyhorse, the windmill, birds and a few dolls. Childhood and lower social classes became a space for the deposition of cast-offs from the higher social classes. The fashions obsolete in the aristocrats or among adults, the artifacts of the real world no longer in use came to be attributed to childhood and lower social classes. Ariés argued that it is through objects that the nature of the individual and profanity get linked. With the loss of sacredness, individualism gained significance and sociability declined.

## **Criteria of Childhood**

Schnell (1979) and Baker (1998b) offer a unique reading of Ariés, arguing that four defining criteria of childhood emerge from his work. These are: delayed responsibility (freedom from work), physical, psychological and economic dependence on adults, segregation from productive work and protection of the child from the immoral lives of the adults. These criteria are inter-related and form the basis of his conception of modern childhood.

### *Dependence*

Ariés argues that the use of the word ‘child’ in its present meaning seems to have appeared in the seventeenth century especially among the middle classes. At that time, he argued that all biological phenomena were viewed with indifference, an attitude which led to the unequivocal acceptance of the long duration of childhood. The idea of childhood became intertwined with the idea of dependence. Ariés argued that the vocabulary often used for children, for example words such as sons, varlets and boys were also the same as used to address those who were subordinate in the feudal system. The child was seen as economically, socially and morally dependent on the adult for direction.

### *Segregation from Adults*

A significant way in which Ariés distinguishes modern childhood is by arguing how children were not kept away from sexual matters. Ariés dwells at length on the socialisation of an aristocratic child in France,

Louis XIII. The child's doctor, Heroard maintained a diary in which he describes in detail the everyday life of young Louis XIII, who is learning to dance, play the violin and learn tennis. He enjoys singing songs, playing with dolls, having fun with soldiers and also gambles. Louis has many servants, maids and nannies. In his uninhibited interactions with them, he is learning the secrets of his body.

In the first three years of Louis' life everyone at the palace, which included servants and family, did not feel inhibited in touching his 'sexual parts'. Louis knew how babies were made, had made everyone at the court laugh with his first erections and explored 'private parts' of some men and women. Ariés talks about the boys especially, who were played around with till age seven. The children did not live in 'an age of innocence' and were not kept away from sexual matters. Moral vicissitudes did not exist to bother a child below the age of seven years. These realities changed in the modern world, after the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century, firm rules were established to show what was considered appropriate behaviour with children, and that they were to be kept away from low social classes and servants. Concomitantly, changes in institutions like schools and colleges, segregation of children and adolescents, the advocacy of monastic-like lifestyle among the scholars gained momentum and contributed to these changes.

### *Protection*

According to Ariés, the recognition of children's vulnerability was also a new concept. It encouraged the segregation of children from adults, their protection and delay into the risk taking of the adult world on grounds of morality (Baker, 1998a). There was no condemnation of games of chance till the early seventeenth century as depictions of children playing cards, dice and backgammon were common. The 'modern attitude to games' developed in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Children began to be forbidden from games of chance. At the end of the eighteenth century, pedagogues and doctors advocated some gymnastic and physical exercise games to develop among children 'bodily hygiene or physical culture' (Ariés, 1962, p. 89).

In the seventeenth century, morality came to be considered a virtue and pedagogic literature for children emerged. Sexual, violent and gory details were deleted from fairy tales narrated to children. Since children's bodies came to be seen as holy, their protection from 'evil' gained

ground. The association of childhood with innocence led to the articulation of principles for parenting, viz. of not leaving children alone, disciplining the child, modesty and purity of the use of language with children and separation of children from servants and their promiscuous ways. Everyday life was to display decency and modesty.

### *Delayed Responsibility*

As the spaces of production shifted from the private domestic to the public factories and workspaces, children no longer participated in production. They came to be seen as economically unproductive, but emotionally priceless (Cunningham, 2005/2014; Qvortrup, 1994). They were of value to parents and families and gave meaning to life.

In the middle-ages, the child participated in the family's vocation of craftsmanship or agriculture, but in the modern age, he/she was no longer seen as contributing economically to the family. Rather, the child was now seen as an unproductive member of the family. Allocation of responsibilities to children was delayed as notions of protection and vulnerability eventually became linked to the modern ideas of progress. The child was to be 'kept away from adult world of work and hardship' (Cunningham, 1998). Contrary to humanistic and liberal pedagogues, Ariés appears to be sceptical of this state of affairs. He regrets that children have lost their position as active participants in society.

### *The Emergence of Schooling*

The ideology of childhood is a snug fit with the ideology of school and college. The beginning of an extended process of segregation of children from adults formed the basis of schooling. Schools made possible the separation of children from adults in the community, prevented waywardness and therefore, led to not only the 'isolation of children' but also 'their delivery to rationality' (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 7). Gradually, systems, rules and norms were put in place so that children were trained for longer periods for productive adulthood. The rise of urbanisation, emergence of the middle classes and the anxiety of parents and religious leaders combined to keep the 'young ones' away from the streets.

Ariés delineates several aspects of the school that include formation of a class with homogenous grouping based on age, moral development

of children, discipline and curriculum. Schooling made it possible to separate adults and children. Two kinds of separation unfolded through the transition in schooling from the middle-ages to the modern. First, the separation of the children from adults and second, the separation of rich from the poor. Ariés refers to this as the ‘...manifestations of a general tendency towards distinguishing and separating’ (Ariés, 1962, p. 314). This was evident in the various practices associated with schooling: distinguishing, separating, disciplining and corporal punishment.

## Legacy

Ariés makes a range of explanations and iconographies that render childhood visible. These iconographies are aesthetic, but also material and culturally persistent, since their influence builds through time, and a distinct conception emerges only as a consequence of this aggregation. Ariés’ audacious approach and ‘descriptive devices’ enable an understanding of how historically, cultures have seen, interacted with and acted with respect to children. The problematisations, conceptions and mentalities in this discourse are entwined in the capacity to act for or on behalf of children.

A reading of Ariés helps examine norms, beliefs and practices about childhood offering a wider, commonplace and meaningful lens to educational discourse than developmental psychology, educational philosophy or sociology. According to Ariés, childhood does not develop in a singular moment, but rather over a prolonged period of historical, social, geographical and economic time. For Ariés, ‘the particularity of childhood is not understood in the context of the historical moment, but across the long movement of historical time’ (Oswell, 2013, p. 20). It is the result of several factors that only come together over a long duration of time to form a singular occurrence (Braudel, 1980). This is a much wider horizon than Sociology’s focus on ‘co-presence’, the ‘here and now’, the ‘micro’ or ‘presentism’ that does not dwell on the long periods of the human condition. The impression that Ariés offers us is that children are infused with a sense of historicity. Child subjects are regarded as having a historical specificity, as comprising not just a social or psychological subjectivity, but also a historical subjectivity.

The following excerpts are drawn from his various texts:

*Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (Ariés, 1962)

[H]ow was I to discover, in the documents of the past, references to things which were too ordinary, too commonplace, too far removed from the memorable incident for contemporary writers to mention them? Our experience of the modern demographic revolution has revealed to us the importance of the child's role in this silent history. We know that there is a connection between the idea of childhood and the idea of the family... How did we come from that ignorance of childhood to the centring (sic) of the family around the child in the nineteenth century? How far does this evolution correspond to a parallel evolution of the concept people have of the family, the feeling they entertain towards it, the value they attribute to it? (pp. 10–11)

[in the twelfth century] ... I saw men of diverse ages: *pueros*, *adolescentes*, *juvenes*, *senes* - that is to say, all the ages of life, for there was no word to denote an adult and one went straight from *juvenes* to *sense*. (p. 153)

It is as if, to every period of history there corresponded a privileged age and a particular division of human life: youth – seventeenth century, childhood – nineteenth century and adolescence – twentieth century. The change from one century to another ... bears witness to the naïve interpretation which public opinion has given.... Medieval art until about the twelfth century did not know childhood or did not attempt to portray it. It is hard to believe that this neglect was due to incompetence or incapacity; it seems more probable that there was no place for childhood in the medieval world. (p. 33)

About the thirteenth century, a few types of children are to be found which appear to be a little closer to the modern concept of childhood. There is the angel, depicted in the guise of a very young man, a young adolescent: a *clergeon* ... The *clergeons* were children of various ages who were trained to make the responses in church and who were destined for holy orders, seminarists of a sort in a period when there were no seminaries and when schooling in Latin, the only kind of schooling that existed, was reserved for future clerks. ... The second type of child was to be the model and ancestor of all the little children in the history of art: the Infant Jesus ... or here, childhood is linked to the mystery of motherhood and the Marian cult ... With the Virgin's motherhood, childhood enters the world of pictorial representation. ... A third type of child appeared in the Gothic period: the naked child. The Infant Jesus was scarcely ever depicted naked. ... It was the allegory of death and the soul which was to introduce into the world of forms the picture of childish nudity. (pp. 35–36)

Like the medieval child - a holy child, or a symbol of the soul, or an angelic being - the putto was never a real, historic child in either the

fifteenth or sixteenth century. This is all the more remarkable in that the theme of the putto originated and developed at the same time as the child portrait. But the children in fifteenth and sixteenth century portraits are never, or scarcely ever, naked children. ... Nobody could visualize the historic child, even when he was very small, in the nudity of the mythological and ornamental child, and this distinction remained in force for a long time ... The final phase of the child iconography was to be the application of the putto's ornamental nudity to the child portrait, and this too was to take place in the seventeenth century. (pp. 44–45)

It is interesting to note that the attempt to distinguish children was generally confined to the boys: the little girls were distinguished only by the false sleeves, abandoned in the eighteenth century, as if childhood separated girls from an adult life less than it did boys. The evidence provided by dress bears out the other indications furnished by the history of manners: boys were the first specialized children. (p. 58)

We confine our attention to the evidence afforded by dress; we must conclude that the particularization of children was limited for a long time to boys. What is certain is that it occurred solely in middle-class or aristocratic families. The children of the lower classes, the offspring of the peasants and the artisans, those who played on the village greens, in the city streets, in the craftsmen's workshops, in the tavern taprooms and in the kitchens of great houses, went on wearing the same clothes as adults: they were never depicted in robes or false sleeves. They kept up the old way of life which made no distinction between children and adults, in dress or in work or in play. (p. 61)

There was probably some connection between the infantile specialization in toys and the importance of infancy in the ideas revealed by iconography and dress since the end of the middle ages. Childhood was also becoming the repository of customs abandoned by the adults of the higher social classes. (p. 71).

Later this game (boys jumping on skins filled with wine and girls swinging) lost its religious symbolism and its communal character to become at once profane and individual. In the process of becoming profane and individual, it was increasingly confined to children, whose repertory of games becomes the repository of collective demonstrations which were henceforth abandoned by adult society and deconsecrated. (pp. 68–69)

The close of the eighteenth century, games found another justification, this time patriotic: they prepared a man for war. This was the time when

the training of a soldier became what was virtually a scientific technique, the time too which saw the birth of modern nationalism. The link was established between the educational games of the Jesuits, the gymnastics of the doctors, the training of the soldier and the demands of patriotism. (p. 89).

In the course of the seventeenth century a change took place by which the old usage was maintained in the more dependent classes of society, while a different usage appeared in middle class, where the word 'child' was restricted to its modern meaning. The long duration of childhood as it appeared in the common idiom was due to the indifference with which strictly biological phenomena were regarded at the time: nobody would have thought of seeing the end of childhood in puberty. The idea of childhood was bound up with the idea of dependence: the words 'sons', 'varlets' and 'boys' were also words in the vocabulary of feudal subordination. One could leave childhood only by leaving the state of dependence, or at least the lower degrees of dependence. That is why the words associated with childhood would endure to indicate in a familiar style, in the spoken language, men of humble rank whose submission to others remained absolute: lackeys, for instance, journeymen and soldiers. A 'little boy' was not necessarily a child but a young servant, just as today an employer or a foreman will say of a worker of twenty to twenty-five... (pp. 26–27)

One of the unwritten laws of contemporary morality, the strictest and the best respected of all, requires adults to avoid any reference, above all any humorous reference, to sexual matters in the presence of children. This notion was entirely foreign to the society of old. The modern reader of the diary in which Henri IV's physician, Heroard, recorded the details of the young Louis XIII's life is astonished by the liberties which people took with children, by the coarseness of jokes they made, and by the indecency of gestures made in public which shocked nobody and which were regarded as perfectly natural. No other document can give us a better idea of the non-existence of the modern idea of childhood at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Louis XIII was not yet one year old: 'he laughed uproariously when his nanny waggled his cock with her fingers.' An amusing trick which the child soon copied. Calling a page, 'he shouted "Hey, there!" and pulled up his robe, showing him his cock'.... 'In high spirits,' notes Herald, 'he made everybody kiss his cock.' This amused them all. (p. 100)

For a long time, in the sixteenth and even in the seventeenth century, this connection remained very vague. The regularisation of the annual cycle of promotions, the habit of making all the pupils go through the complete

series of classes instead of only a few, and the requirements of a new system of teaching adapted to smaller, more homogenous classes, resulted at the beginning of the nineteenth century in an increasingly close correspondence between age and class. The masters then got into the habit of making up their classes to fit in with their pupils' ages. The age groups which had hitherto been confused began to split up in so far as they corresponded to different classes, for since the end of the sixteenth century the class had been recognized as a structural unit. But for the college and its living cells, the middle class would not attach the importance it does to the slightest difference in age between its children, and would share in this respect the comparative indifference displayed by lower-class society. (pp. 239–240)

The history of discipline from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century enables us to make two important points. First, a humiliating disciplinary system - whipping at the master's discretion and spying for the master's benefit - was substituted for a corporate form of association which remained the same for both young pupils and other adults... In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries corporal punishment became widespread at the same time as an authoritarian, hierarchical - in a world, absolutist - concept of society. The second phenomenon ... is the extension of the use of the birch to pupils of all ages: confined at first to the youngest children, it was extended after the sixteenth century to the whole school population, which often approached and sometimes passed the age of twenty. There was therefore a tendency to diminish the distinctions between childhood and adolescence, to push adolescence back towards childhood by subjecting it to an identical discipline. Inside the school world, the adolescent was separated from the adult and confused with the child, with whom he shared the humiliation of corporal punishment, the chastisement meted out to villeins. Thus a childhood prolonged into an adolescence from which it was barely distinguished was characterized by deliberate humiliation. (pp. 261–262)

The great event was therefore the revival, at the beginning of modern times, of an interest in education. This affected a certain number of churchmen, lawyers and scholars, few in number in the fifteenth century, but increasingly numerous and influential in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when they merged with the advocates of religious reform. For they were primarily moralists rather than humanists: the humanists remained attached to the idea of a general culture spread over the whole of life and showed scant interest in an education confined to children. These reformers, these moralists, ... fought passionately against the anarchy of medieval society, where the Church, despite its repugnance, had long ago

resigned itself to it and urged the faithful to seek salvation far from this pagan world, in some monastic retreat. (p. 412)

[I]t was recognised that the child was not ready for life, and that he had to be subjected to a special treatment, a sort of quarantine, before he was allowed to join the adults. This new concern about education would gradually install itself in the heart of society and transform it from top to bottom. The family ceased to be simply an institution for the transmission of a name and an estate - it assumed moral and spiritual function, it moulded bodies and souls. The care expended on children inspired new feelings, a new emotional attitude, to which the iconography of the seventeenth century gave brilliant and insistent expression: the modern concept of the family.... The ethics of the time ordered them to give all their children, and not just the eldest- and in late seventeenth century even the girls- a training for life. It was understood that this training would be provided by the school. Traditional apprenticeship was replaced by the school, an utterly transformed school, an instrument of strict discipline, protected by the law-courts and the police-courts. (p. 413)

The modern family satisfied a desire for privacy and also a craving for identity: the members of the family were united by feeling, habit and their way of life. They shrank from the promiscuity imposed by the old sociability. It is easy to understand why this moral ascendancy of the family was originally a middle-class phenomenon: the nobility and the lower class, at the two extremities of the social ladder, retained the old idea of etiquette much longer and remained more indifferent to outside pressures. The lower classes retained almost down to the present day the liking for crowds... For centuries the same games were common to the different classes; but at the beginning of modern times a choice was made among them: some were reserved for the people of quality, the others were abandoned to the children and the lower classes. The seventeenth century charity schools, founded for the poor, attracted the children of the well-to-do just as much; but after the eighteenth century the middle-class families ceased to accept this mixing and withdrew their children from what was to become a primary-school system, to place them in the pensions and the lower classes of the colleges, over which they established a monopoly. Games and schools, originally common to the whole of society, henceforth formed part of a class system. It was all as if a rigid, polymorphous social body had broken up and had been replaced by a host of little societies, the families, and by a few massive groups, the classes; families and classes brought together individuals related to one another by their moral resemblance and by the identity of their new way of life, whereas the old unique social body embraced the greatest possible variety of ages and classes. (pp. 413-414)

*Une interpretation tendancieuse de l'histoire des mentalities* [A tendentious interpretation] (Ariès, 1973)

Suddenly we noted the ransom we were obliged to pay,... [T]he decay of our cities and of our countryside, the urban and rural landscapes fashioned over the centuries, sometimes millennia, the erosion of sociability, the boredom of man in his family and his work. (p. 9)

*Les Ages de la vie* (Ariès, 1983)

One may wonder, ... if our malaise today does not arise from the brutal hypertrophy of the sphere of the known and the spoken, and of a corresponding shrinking of the sphere of secrecy. Formerly, one's deepest convictions were those least avowed because they were the least noticed. But once they surface in our collective consciousness they lose their universal power and come to be judged from outside, criticized, condemned, or forbidden. (p. 23)

*The Family and the City* (Ariès, 1977)

...[w]hen the city (and, earlier, the rural community) deteriorated and lost its vitality, the role of the family overexpanded like a hypertrophied cell. In an attempt to fill the gap created by the decline of the city and the urban forms of social intercourse it had once provided, the omnipotent, omnipresent family took upon itself the task of trying to satisfy all the emotional and social needs of its members. Today, it is clear that the family has failed in its attempts to accomplish that feat, either because the increased emphasis on privacy has stifled the need for social intercourse or because the family has been too completely alienated by public powers. People are demanding that the family do everything that the outside world in its indifference or hostility refuses to do. But we should now ask ourselves why people have come to expect the family to satisfy all their needs, as if it had some kind of omnipotent power. (p. 227)

[let] us compare the role played by the cafe in that era to that played by the family. The family was a private place; the cafe a public one. But they had one thing in common: they both managed to escape society's control. The family did so by right; the cafe in actual fact. These were the only two exceptions to the modern system of surveillance and order which came to include all social behavior. Thus, alongside the growing privacy of the family during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a new and lively form of social intercourse developed in even the largest cities. This explains why the cities of the era were so full of life, and why the increased

amount of privacy did not weaken the forms of social intercourse, at least among males. (p. 232)

What is truly remarkable is that the social intercourse which used to be the city's main function has now entirely vanished. The city is either crowded with the traffic of people and cars in a hurry or it is totally empty. ... People return to their homes, as turtles withdraw into their shells. At home they enjoy the warmth of family life and, on occasion, the company of carefully chosen friends. The urban conglomerate has become a mass of small islands—houses, offices, and shopping centers—all separated from one another by a great void. The interstitial space has vanished. This evolution was precipitated by the automobile and by television, but it was well underway before they had even appeared, thanks to the growth of the cult of privacy in the bourgeois and middle classes during the nineteenth century. (p. 233)

[Although people claim] ... the family is undergoing a crisis, this is not, properly speaking, an accurate description of what is happening. Rather, we are witnessing the inability of the family to fulfil all the many functions with which it had been invested, no doubt, temporarily, during the past half-century. Moreover, if my analysis is correct, this overexpansion of the family role is a result of the decline of the city and of the urban forms of social intercourse that it provided. The twentieth century post-industrial world has been unable, so far, either to sustain the forms of social intercourse of the nineteenth century or to offer something in their place. The family has had to take over in an impossible situation; the real roots of the present domestic crisis lie not in our families, but in our cities. (pp. 234–235)

*The History of Private Life* (Ariès, 1989)

[In the late Middle Ages] ... private was confounded with public. What did this mean? First, and crucially, it meant that... many acts of daily life were, and for a long time would continue to be performed in public. First, the community that defined the boundaries within which the individual moved - whether rural village, town, or urban neighbourhood - was a familiar world in which everyone knew and kept an eye on everyone else. Outside lay a terra incognita people by figures of legend. The only inhabited space, the only space subject to the rule of law, was communal space. Second, even in periods of relatively dense population, there were places in the community where a precarious intimacy flourished. There were recognized and to some extent protected: a corner by a window or in a hallway, a quiet spot beyond the orchard, a forest clearing or hut. [Compare this] ... to the situation ... in the nineteenth century. ... People

no longer know one another. Work, leisure and home life are separate, compartmentalised activities. Men and women seek privacy. To obtain it, they insist on greater freedom to choose their own way of life, and they withdraw into the family, which becomes a refuge, a focus of private life. As late as the beginning of the twentieth century, however, old forms of collective and communal sociability persist, particularly among the urban working class and peasantry: for men, the cabaret, for women, the public washhouse; and for both, the street.... [How] was the transition between these two historical periods made? ... A periodization that is appropriate for doing political, social, economic, and even cultural history is not appropriate for the history of mentalities. There were so many changes in material and spiritual life, in relations between the individual and the state, and in the family that we must treat the early modern period as something autonomous and original, even bearing in mind all that it owed to the Middle Ages. (pp. 1–2)

Between 1500 and 1800 there was a change among the ‘middling sort’, people who stood below the court but above the common folk. Here a new culture developed, a social life that revolved around conversation, correspondence, and reading aloud... people sometimes joined in ‘society games’ sang or played music, or engaged in debate. In the eighteenth century some of these groups adopted formal rules and organised as clubs, intellectual societies, or academies, losing some of their spontaneity in the process. They became public institutions. (p. 4)

Ultimately the family became the focus of private life. Its significance changed. No longer was it merely an economic unit for the sake of whose reproduction everything had to be sacrificed. No longer was it a restraint on individual freedom, a place in which power was wielded by women. It became something it had never been: a refuge, to which people fled in order to escape the scrutiny of outsiders; an emotional centre; and a place where...children were the focus of attention.... In developing these new functions, the family became a haven, a defence against outsiders. It separated itself more sharply from the public realm. It extended its influence at the expense of the anonymous sociability of street and square. The family head became a figure of morality, a prominent fixture on the local scene.... [The] entire history of private life comes down to a change in the forms of sociability: from the anonymous social life of the street, castle court, square, or village to a more restricted sociability entered on the family or even the individual. (pp. 8–9)

By the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth ... [the] public realm is by now quite ‘deprivatised’. Public affairs are no longer confounded with private interests. Hence it became possible to

create a closed private preserve, or at any rate a private realm totally divorced from the public service and completely autonomous. This liberated zone would be filled by the family. But the men who inhabited this private realm ... felt frustrated, and from this frustration were born a way of thinking about politics and a set of political demands. (pp. 10–11)

### *Images of Man and Death* (Ariès & Lloyd, 1985)

When the image hunter reaches our own decade, he finds himself at a loss, on unfamiliar ground. The abundance of themes and scenes, which has hitherto made choices difficult, seems to have disappeared. ... [the] change consists precisely in banishing from the sight of the public not only death but, with it, its icon. Relegated to the secret, private space of the home or the anonymity of the hospital, *death no longer makes any sign*.... [The] reluctance to give death a symbolic representation- a reluctance that is characteristic of a new culture - is an expression of the growing belief that death is nothing and that nothingness cannot be represented or imagined.... [Thus], a new symbolism ... appears to be forming tentatively around the modern idea of nothingness. But it is a nothingness which is no longer an abstraction and which, as human consciousness has developed, has acquired the density of a span of time, however short, and *the power of the sign*. [Pagination not available]

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