

custom locked into the church he had been brought up in. To switch allegiances took an exceptionally strong conviction and a strong individual. To marry a Roman Catholic was, for either man or woman, completely out of the question, unless of course, one had been born into the faith. Exceptions, of course, happened—but the pressures of Kinship and Community were very strong. This was certainly still the case when I grew up in the '30s in a small town in Southern Ontario. In fact, I believe that the present furor about the issue of "same sex marriage" which is often linked in the press with "family values" might well be more specifically linked to the continuing pressures and prejudices of kinship, community, and religious affiliation.

One of the strengths of this study is the frankness and charm of the many quotations from the letters, journals, and diaries of Noël's sources. Abraham Joseph, for instance, the son of a wealthy Jewish importer of tobacco and snuff, is a notably social bachelor who in the mid-19th century obviously suffered no discrimination in Quebec City society: "Because of religious food laws, he also declined most of the oyster parties which were frequent at certain time of the year: 'Oysters are now and have been for a week the nightly suppers. As I eat none I cannot join much their suppers to which I am frequently very much pressed in vain.' These seemed to have been the only restrictions that being Jewish placed on his social life."

Noël places a good deal of stress on the prevalence of marriage for love and on what she terms "companionate marriage," the mutual regard and friendship of marriage partners. While her examples certainly bear her out, one needs always to keep in mind that courtship and marriage were subsumed in the customs, beliefs, and prejudices of Kinship and Community and also in the ever-present if usually unvoiced considerations of class. There was always and everywhere a social hierarchy,

just as there was always a socially acceptable family hierarchy with the father at the top. That, of course, was undermined in countless instances by the presence of a strong woman—and we have never had any shortage of such!

Though I believe that Noël has somewhat overstated the freedom of choice young people enjoyed in courting and marriage, Part II, *Parents and Children*, assembles an excellent record of the stages of childhood, from pregnancy through childbirth, illnesses, and accidents to the interaction of parents and children. Sections on pregnancy and childbirth are especially informative and also especially linked to her Part III, *Kinship and Community*. In this final section she does acknowledge its overarching importance. The abundant evidence of community helpfulness and caring, especially offered by women to other women in times of childbirth and illness, is both moving and heartening to read: "The early nineteenth century has been associated with the rise of individualism and the ideology of the self-made man, but the reality, for most individuals, was that they were nurtured and supported by a dense matrix of family, kin and friends."

In Upper Canada, Catharine Parr Traill has long since become an icon of women's solidarity, not only for her frequent services as a midwife, but also for her lifelong code of helpfulness and love. Noël has widened our knowledge and appreciation of a host of other women like her.

LEARNING TO BE OLD: GENDER, CULTURE AND AGING

Margaret Cruikshank
Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003

REVIEWED BY SHERRILL CHEDA

Do Not be misled: This is not a self-help book but a scholarly exploration of how cultural attitudes determine what it means to grow old in the United States, based on research, with recommendations for policies that could improve the situation, as well as a comprehensive bibliography. The author is well qualified as a Women's Studies lecturer and faculty associate of the Center on Aging at the University of Maine. This text is such a gem that it is tempting to quote from it non-stop. The main research finding of the book is "the current incidence of illness among old women and men, far from being inevitable, is more determined by culture than by biology." A medical system and political policies which stressed preventive medicine and exercise programs would go a long way to improving this situation for many older citizens. The way we age depends on where we live in the world, as aging is culturally determined. The US medical model that sees aging as illness and infirmity is not universal. Older people are more than just a bundle of illnesses that need medication. Many elderly people have illnesses from which they fully recover. Class, race, sex, education, and income are all-important factors in how we age and how healthy we are as we age. Research into aging indicates that what we call aging results from lack of exercise, smoking, other addictions, poor nutrition, falls, and stress. Cruikshank points out that there are no broken hips in the jungles

of Borneo. Cruikshank looks at healthy physical aging and explores alternative medicine. Because they build strength and flexibility, yoga, tai chi, and qi gong would form a part of any healthy program for older people, just as it does in China. As we know, both physical and mental exercise help stimulate brain function. Add good nutrition to this mix and we would have a much healthier aging population. A study of 50,000 people aged 20 to 90 to measure intellectual ability found that decline varied greatly. Those who sustained a high level of mental functioning had several things in common: a high standard of living marked by above average education and income, lack of chronic disease, active engagement in reading, travel, cultural events or professional associations, willingness to change, an intelligent partner, the ability to grasp new ideas quickly, and satisfaction with accomplishments. As Betty Friedan noted in *The Fountain Of Age*, psychological strength in late life depends partly on acceptance of one's life stage and on self-esteem and those characteristics, in turn, depend on freedom from internalized ageism. The later state is difficult, as our society is full of ageism.

The message that being old is funny or embarrassing is so ingrained in our culture that many older people take this view of themselves. Old women are depicted as hag, spinster or grandmother but seldom as fully functioning individuals with a variety of characteristics. Cruikshank ends with a plea for feminists to look at gerontology from a woman's point of view. As we know, women's lives differ a great deal from the lives of men, especially in terms of power and income and these are important factors in healthy aging. This would be an excellent college or university course textbook.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER, SECOND EDITION

Alice H. Eagly, Anne E. Beall, Robert J. Sternberg, Eds.
New York: The Guilford Press, 2004

REVIEWED BY SUSAN THOMAS

Reproductive rights, HRT, the use/abuse of anabolic steroids, same sex marriage, leadership by women, commercial stereotypes, domestic violence, sexual and gender harassment, challenges faced by women entering the skilled trades—news reports and coffee time conversation abound with these subjects. These issues are the meat of debate amongst ordinary citizens. Yet, they also fall under the purview of those who carry out relevant research. The “psychology of gender,” a widely ranging and contemporary concept, now also finds its niche in biology, sociology as well as in the various approaches to psychology. It is the focus of undergraduate and graduate courses; the professional literature lists hundreds of titles. Given this vast and varied range of information and interest, the publication of *The Psychology of Gender, Second Edition* is a significant undertaking on the part of editors, Eagly, Beall, and Sternberg.

In an expanded second edition, *The Psychology of Gender* presents a banquet of information on the study of gender. With a mission to foster discussion and debate amongst scholars from several fields, the editors selected samples of “best work” with various approaches to clarify the similarities and differences between men and women. These ideas are presented as a continuum where men and women overlap in their characteristics and behaviours. In creating this second volume, the editors stress that the field of research has advanced to the point that current inquiry is now based on “increasingly

subtle questions about the contextual patterning of difference and similarity.”

How does biology play a role? The first chapter discusses the extent to which the prenatal environment and exposure to gonadal hormones influence the development of the brain and subsequently gender identity, personality, sexual orientation, and social behaviour. The second considers the effects of the hormones in men and women with a particular focus on cognitive functioning. Next, an evolutionary approach begins with Darwin to explain gender differences.

Conversely, the following chapter highlights the manner in which society socializes male and female infants into their adult roles and stresses that cultural design (messages from parents, peers, the media, school systems, and organizations) rather than “biological endowment” brings about stereotypical attributes and roles. The subsequent chapter explores the role that parents' expectations play in endorsing stereotypes and in responding differently to male and female children. Feminist psychoanalytic theory follows with an examination of how unconscious and unresolved conflicts influence personality and how gender is always coloured by the personal unconscious. In studying how we connect with those around us; authors of another chapter find that both men and women define themselves socially, use social networks, and draw on social values but differ in where they look for intimacy and connectedness.

Social constructionism asserts that meanings for concepts are not fixed but are constructed through language, social activities, and other social processes and are constantly changing in differing situations. Hierarchical structures which lead to gender inequalities in status and social power form the basis for discussion in two chapters, Social role theory of sex differences and similarities is used to explain that in many societies men