

literature representations of adolescence and borrowings from fictional narratives glorifying nature and the natural. The formative idea of a utopian "education province" in Goethe's *William Meister's Wanderjahre* may go a long way toward explaining why reform pedagogy became more important in Germany than in France! Imitations of fiction structured the reality of the Boy Scouts and the German youth movements. The rituals, practices, and ethics of the Boy Scouts and the Wandervogel were distilled from contemporary discourses about adolescence, chivalric romances, and popular novels of the day. The Wandervogel play at American Indians. And Baden-Powell found the inspiration for his Boy Scout movement in Sir Thomas Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, and Kipling's *Kim*.

The Fin-de-Siècle Culture of Adolescence itself as literature is Modernist: impressionistic, fragmented, amorphous, almost to the point of being formless, and indeterminate. *The Fin-de-Siècle Culture of Adolescence* doesn't conclude so much as just end, abruptly and ambiguously. All texts are ensnared in the matrices of ideology: "Ideology cannot be eliminated from literature. Like adolescent minds, texts speak with many voices; again and again they also bombard us with saving messages from the soapbox" (p. 219). The end. This mawkish ending is not encouraging. Neubauer will not refer to the present. He neither projects the present onto the past, or the past onto the present. But Neubauer cannot have studied the past "for its own sake." The ending of *The*

Fin-de-Siècle Culture of Adolescence is unsettling. Neubauer's final words are unaccountably cheerful. The question remains not what happened next. We know what happened after 1920. The question is, what happens now? Whither adolescence at our fin-de-siècle? Who are the adults who will deliver adolescents from the "culture of adolescence" at our fin-de-siècle, and from what "soapbox" will their "saving message" come?

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Michael Mitterauer. *A History of Youth*, trans. Graeme Dunphy. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992. Pp. 256. \$49.95 U.S. cloth. \$19.95 U.S. paper.

Michael Mitterauer's *A History of Youth* attempts to provide a critical overview of the history of youth in Europe from the Middle Ages until the present time. The book is organized thematically in order to investigate "the immediate world in which young people lived in the past," through the institutions of family, workplace, school, and the youth group. Mitterauer argues that changing economic and social conditions did much to influence historical understandings of youth as a separate stage of human development, as well as to shape the experience of adolescence over time and space. The bulk of the material in this book forms a catalogue of these developments.

The first part of Mitterauer's discussion outlines the debate concerning the definition of "youth" as an historical category. Here Mitterauer surveys sociological, historical, and anthropological definitions of youth, showing that the term "youth" carries with it social, not simply biological, meanings which are historically constructed. For example, while "youth" may be considered to be that stage of development between childhood and adulthood, the meanings of what it is to be a "child" and an "adult" change over time and do not simply refer to processes of biological change. In this way, "youth" is not synonymous with "puberty," since "its form, content, duration, and period in the life cycle are differently determined by various cultures and societies." In Europe, definitions of youth have changed from "a time of gaining independence through marriage," to "a time of forming an autonomous personality." The changes in the nature and duration of adolescent dependence can only be explained with reference to wider structures of authority in European society.

In order to determine whether the duration of youth has increased or decreased over time in European society, Mitterauer examines five traditional "milestones in youth": leaving school, finding employment, leaving home, setting up home, and marriage. The danger of such an approach, though, which he brings to our attention, is that these milestones are not universal categories but themselves are socially and historically determined. It is difficult to compare modern milestones of youth such as buying one's own clothes, going on holiday inde-

pendently for the first time, or no longer being restricted by a curfew, with older indications of the transition from child to adult status. Thus Mitterauer writes that "youth cannot be seen as a period of time between clearly defined starting and finishing points, but rather as a phase of many partial transitions." With that said, he notes several broad historical trends in the demarcation and duration of youth, including the de-ritualizing of status transitions, the increasing multiplicity of partial transitions, the tendency towards greater self-determination, the diminishing importance of family circles with respect to wider social factors, and the decline of both class- and gender-related differences.

The difficulties inherent in measuring youth as a social and historical phenomenon according to age indicate the need to examine "the different forms of community which determine the social status of young people." Mitterauer begins his discussion with an examination of the family and the changes brought about by industrialization to the structure of the family economy. He broadly describes a trend towards "individualism" by looking at young peoples' growing power to choose their own careers, to determine how to spend money and leisure time, and to adopt a different set of views and values from that of their parents. In terms of the changing structure of the workplace, Mitterauer argues that the broad shift from "forms of personal service" to "forms of individual paid labour" changed the dependent nature of adolescent work. The personal ties of family became the impersonal ties of the marketplace;

workplace dependence was tied to wage levels, not relationships based on age, and in this way "the development of paid labour...brought about a closing of the gap between youth and adult in the work situation." Industrialism also brought about changes in the learning component of young people's work as factory work increased the amount and availability of jobs which required no training. Again this served to increase the similarities between adolescent and adult work, for "the problems of dependent workers became a matter of class conflict which went far beyond the difficulties of youth."

Mitterauer devotes approximately one-third of his discussion to an examination of youth groups, "those social forms in which young people are by themselves." He makes an important distinction between rural and urban forms of youth groups and the two types receive separate treatment as the change from formal, ritualized youth groups to informal ones is described. The oldest forms of rural youth groups primarily were composed of young, single men, which indicates that the central function of such rural fraternities in traditional society "was the regulation of sexual relations in adolescence by ritualized forms of courting." Dances and "night-visits" to young women were two such important courting traditions. A second important category of activities of the rural youth fraternities falls under the broad heading of "censure" activities. Participation in charivaris, "rough music," and traditional nights of misrule are examples of such activities. Rural fraternities usually were structured

along the lines of a formal system of rank according to age, and fulfilled important social and educational functions by "preparing members in a general way for later participation in the adult male community." Mitterauer classifies "spinning-rooms" as traditional female youth groups, although they did not share the formal structure or the autonomy of the male fraternities. In the cities, associations of journeymen and students were the most significant youth groups. Urban youth groups often enjoyed less autonomy than did rural fraternities, for their rules frequently were imposed by the outside city authorities.

Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the growth and diversification of youth clubs resulted in the "de-ritualizing of adolescent community life." Now informal groups are preferred to youth clubs and older forms of territorial and professional youth groups. Choices about the intensity and the duration of membership are left entirely for the individual to determine, and such changes indicate both the rejection of formal ties and the development of "personal freedom of expression." While "new rites of youth" have developed, such as rock concerts or sporting events, these "are not regimented patterns for the meetings of informal groups so much as formalized modes of expressions at big events." The social interaction of young people has become less formal, less ritualized, and less institutional, especially in the decades since the Second World War.

Mitterauer provides a general introduction to important themes of the social history of youth in Europe. His

work is based exclusively on secondary sources, and is intended to be a general synthesis of the major studies of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. The bulk of the text concentrates on the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, and research is heavily weighted towards Germany, with occasional references to England and France, and even fewer references to Southern and Eastern European countries. Unfortunately, the book suffers from lack of attention to detail. The goal of any broad historical overview is to demonstrate sweeping changes over a long period of time, but it is necessary to provide specific examples to support such claims. Greater use of specific historical examples would have strengthened Mitterauer's arguments considerably, for at times it is difficult to determine the time and location of the events he discusses. As well, little attention is paid to divisions along the lines of class or gender and in this way the historical category of youth Mitterauer presents us with is a homogenous one. After problematizing the notion of "youth" at the beginning of his study, Mitterauer proceeds to describe the experiences of a group of people he presumes to be youths, and in this way he assumes the category "youth" to be fixed. While the distinction between rural and urban youth is maintained nicely throughout the study, the failure to distinguish the experiences of male and female, working- and middle-class youths is a significant one. While this book might be useful as a text in an

undergraduate history or sociology course, it does not contribute in significantly new ways to our understanding of the field.

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Wally Seccombe. *Weathering the Storm: Working Class Families from the Industrial Revolution to the Fertility Decline.* London and New York: Verso, 1993. Pp. 286. \$74.95 Can. cloth.

This fascinating book is the sequel to *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe*. *A Millennium* focused on the development of peasant families through the Middle Ages and their transformation during the early modern era with the development of the proletariat. *Weathering the Storm* deals with changes in family forms in the first and second industrial revolutions and with the fertility decline in Northwestern Europe during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The author expects the book "to stand on its own, intelligible without reference to its predecessor," and it certainly does.

The central thesis questions the poorly explored assumption that "the stable family of recent memory is apparently continuous with 'the Western family' as far back as we can discern." The author successfully demonstrates that the so-called traditional family is