

***Pamela Cox & Heather Shore (eds) (2002) Becoming Delinquent:
British and European Youth, 1650–1950, Ashgate, Aldershot,
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Juvenile delinquency, as both a uniquely conceptualized category of criminal activity and a social problem requiring its own policy and institutional responses, has returned to the historian's agenda. After pioneering work in the 1970s by the likes of Anthony Platt, Margaret May, Susan Magarey and John R Gillis, the subject had languished somewhat before the recent new work by Peter King, the late Jan Noel and Heather Shore (an editor but, sadly, beyond the introduction, not a contributor to the present volume). Their work has forced us to rethink the substance and chronology of the subject. This valuable new collection of essays widens the context of the enterprise to western Europe as a whole, whets the appetite for the major studies that several of its contributors have in train, and makes available in English the work by some authors who thus far have published only in their native languages.

The temporal and geographic coverage is impressive for so slim a volume. The first contributors address the extensive evidence for serious cultural concerns with and institutional responses to the problem of criminal youth during the early modern era. Paul Griffiths, an expert on youth culture in Tudor and Stuart England, reminds us that the notion of wayward youth and the need to tame it via confinement within appropriate disciplinary and institutional channels was hardly an invention of the Victorian era. Benjamin Roberts provides a fascinating survey of the social and cultural contexts of the problem in the seventeenth century Netherlands, while Valentina Tikoff provides a close analysis of the combined charitable, educational and punitive objectives of eighteenth century Seville's *Torobios* institution. And Cat Nilan's study of the discourses surrounding murderous children in nineteenth century France suggests that, even in scientific and medical circles, the influence of Rousseau's notions of the innocence of childhood gave a decidedly non-modern feel to discussions of such 'monsters' long after one might expect more dispassionate modes of analysis to be coming to the fore.

Equally interesting are the new perspectives brought to bear on the modern era of thinking and responses to juvenile delinquency. Chris Leonards shows how new notions of defining and dealing with juvenile criminality were disseminated across borders (and even oceans) by the adoption from the mid-nineteenth century onwards of international penal congresses at which members of the various emergent sociological professions exchanged and reinforced one another's ideas on various aspects of the subject. Jenneke Christiaens uncovers the hidden record of resistance to institutional discipline in her close analysis of the records of Belgium's Gent Prison for Incurable Delinquent Boys at the turn of the twentieth century. On the other side of the gender divide, Astri Andresen's analysis of post-institutional supervision of delinquent youths in inter-war Norway suggests how the persistence of traditional gender perceptions had the effect of stigmatising girls in a more potent and persistent fashion than boys. In one of the volume's most intriguing contributions, Sarah Fishman argues that French criminologists of the Vichy era unconsciously misread the statistical record in continuing to attribute wartime surges in juvenile crime to the influence of broken homes and the inadequacy of single-parenting by

mothers. Similarly culturally-driven preoccupations appear to have limited and distorted otherwise well-meaning efforts amongst commentators and social workers in post-war Britain, as Pamela Cox's study of the 'problem' of mixed-race children and black youth suggests.

Here then is a wide-ranging and imaginative series of essays that will appeal to sociologists, criminologists and historians of crime and punishment. One hopes that future volumes will give us further access to the more substantive work of so impressive a group of scholars and so interesting a body of work.

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