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Carolyn Cocca, ed. *Adolescent Sexuality: A Historical Handbook and Guide.* Westport: Praeger, 2006. 208 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-313-33399-6.

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Adult Anxieties, Youthful Passions

Adolescent sexuality is a tricky business. We of the modern era understand adolescence to be a time of learning the skills of adulthood, and certainly knowledge of one's body and its expressions of desire is an important part of being an adult. Yet, at the same time, the specter of young people exploring their sexuality independent of supervision has caused generations of parents to cringe and fear. Historically, this tension between growing and going too far, between guidance and control, has generated a huge amount of activity and commentary around issues related to adolescent sexuality. As the authors of *Adolescent Sexuality: A Historical Handbook and Guide* point out, adults have repeatedly used the sexual knowledge and expression of young people as a site on which to exhibit their own anxieties about changing cultural standards.

This book is part of Praeger's Children and Youth: History and Culture series, which aims to introduce students to the major issues involved in studying the history of young people in the United States and beyond. As with the other books in the series, the volume is divided in three roughly equal parts: synthetic essays, primary documents, and resources for further study. The major themes of the book are addressed in each section, allowing for students interested in, say, adolescent sex education to read a historian's synopsis of the issues, explore those issues using historical documents, and then launch into their own research using the bibliography provided.

The synthetic essays cover various facets of the history of adolescent sexuality. Vern Bullough begins this section with a sweeping tour of adolescent sexuality through the ages, pointing out the challenges of studying this aspect of the past. The essay ranges from ancient Greece to pre-industrial Europe to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of childhood innocence, on up through Sigmund Freud. Presumably, the purpose of this introductory essay is to emphasize that ideas and experiences of adolescent sexuality vary significantly between historical moments. However, the piece, with its "Western Civilization" approach, seems a bit out of place in a collection that otherwise confines itself in scope to the United States and that makes a clear effort to consider the experiences of a variety of Americans, not just those descended from Europeans.

After this first chapter, the volume becomes more focused with regard to place and time, devoting most of its attention to the United States since the late nineteenth century. Carolyn Cocca, the book's editor, describes statutory rape laws and the larger historical trends that influenced them. James W. Reed and John C. Spurlock analyze the debates around teen pregnancy, pointing out the common conflation of teen pregnancy with unmarried pregnancy. Susan K. Freeman explores changing approaches to adolescent sex education, from the social hygiene movement through mid-century family relations classes to today's emphasis on abstinence education. Finally, David M. Considine offers an engaging tour of adolescent sexuality as presented in American mass media.

The topics presented are wide-ranging and successfully convey the richness of the topic. Another strength lies in the fact that each essay carries its discussion to the present day, adeptly illustrating the ways that history informs current debates. Because of the choice of topics, however, the essays offer more perspective on the ways adults have constructed and mediated adolescent sexuality, rather than on substantive consideration of the experiences of young people themselves. Perhaps this situation could have been rectified by the simple inclusion of an essay on the changing ways young people have chosen to explore their sexual sides (through courting, dating, petting, etc.) and represent themselves to the outside world as sexual beings.

The second section of this volume offers a series of primary documents exploring issues similar to those an-

alyzed with the opening essays. Grouped under categories that roughly correspond to the essay topics, the sources represent a variety of viewpoints from a variety of eras. Introductory remarks preceding each selection place the documents within their historical context. While the documents may not be the most engaging possibilities, if the intended readership is high school or undergraduate students, the collection as a whole includes a nice range of influential works, such as excerpts from Sigmund Freud and G. Stanley Hall, important court decisions, and texts of various laws designed to mediate adolescent sexual expression. One group of documents, "Images of Adolescent Sexuality," displays selections from a World War I era poster series aimed at boys and girls. It deserves special mention for incorporating pictorial sources and providing an engaging example of how messages about adolescent sexuality were conveyed differently according to gender.

The final section of the volume provides sources for further study, grouped again by broad topics paralleling the opening essays. These bibliographic lists are essential for a book that bills itself as *A Historical Handbook and Guide*. At less than two hundred pages, the volume can offer only a taste of the issues. After presenting students with an overview of a given topic and a sample of relevant primary sources, the next step is to point them in the direction of further research. Since the book is clearly intended for laypeople, it would have been nice had the bibliographies somehow differentiated between high-level academic studies and more general overviews, but even without this guidance, the lists go a long way toward demystifying, for students, the often puzzling question of how to learn more about a topic of interest.

Overall, *Adolescent Sexuality* is a useful starting point for students to learn more about the history of this topic. It successfully conveys the point that understandings about youth, and about sexuality, are historically contingent and are useful vehicles for accessing a society's values and anxieties. The book could have been enhanced by additional focus on the experiences of young people themselves and by some annotations in the bibliographies to help guide students in their research. Nevertheless, this concise and accessible volume provides a useful tool for introducing the issues.

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