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Childhood and the State--The State of Childhood. Society for the History of Children and Youth (SHCY),

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<cite></cite>. <p> "Childhood and the State--the State of Childhood" was the second international conference arranged by the Society for the History of Children and Youth. The program included no fewer than 79 papers spread over 27 two-hour sessions. It included both cohesive sessions, and others loosely bound by a common theme. Participants came from many disciplines and scientific traditions-for instance political science, sociology, history and pedagogy-but all shared an interest in historical processes of change. This created an atmosphere conducive to interesting sessions and parallel discussions. Following the Anglo-Saxon tradition, most papers were read from a script which at times limited intra-session discussion. <p> Participants ranged from doctoral students to established researchers, strengthening the overall impression that children's history is a broadly based and expanding research field with significant links to research on, for instance: welfare systems, social policy and structure, equality, and gender studies. Clearly, studies of children fulfill different functions for different researchers. For some, studies of children and childhood is a way of gaining insight into other arenas of historical and social change, while for others, a focus on children and childhood enlarges the historical perspective. Consequently, varied points of view were represented in the sessions, both in terms of structure and individual focus. However, these differences were rarely explicitly expressed in theoretical terms. Discussions of method and empirical material were frequently lacking. It was obvious from the conference papers that many different types of data sources were used, encompassing popular culture and the media, pictures and oral history, conventional material from legislation and the courtroom as well as pedagogical literature and manuals on upbringing. <p> The all-embracing theme of the conference was to problematize the relationship between state and child from a historical perspective. This connection to the state illustrates an ambition to relate the history of childhood to a significant facet of historical research, both traditional and radical. Traditional scholarship has perceived the history of the state as being the core of history, but scholars with more radical perspectives have also understood its significance.[1] The conference theme marks a willingness to relate research on the history of childhood to a broad spectrum of historical change. However, these lofty ambitions were not fully realized. Many papers were only marginally related to the theme and some avoided problematization of state and child relationship through references to general historical problems or to previous scholarship on the history of childhood. Many papers thus reflected traditional narrative and descriptive scholarship by focusing on a specific institution or some local historical experience that could not be fully comprehended without tacit knowledge or a shared cultural experience. Some discussions were therefore quite internal, being

based on the value commonality of North American academics able to appreciate unique details of, for instance, a Pennsylvanian child care institution. Moreover, global comparisons were not always obvious in the sessions, since North American conditions were assumed to be the norm. It seems clear that a more systematic comparison would have contributed considerably to the discussions and would have demystified many concepts of national characteristics. <p> Children and childhood as subjects of research need to be put into scholarly and historical context. Many papers failed to do so, and to define the relevant national concepts. In other papers, the subject of children and childhood were peripheral to the studies presented. In the latter cases, a focus on childhood might in fact have helped redefine the issues at hand. Whether children and childhood are treated as a core or peripheral point has bearing on how scholars view children's agency in historical processes. Much recent research has discussed structure and agency in more or less theoretical terms but little focus has been on the study of children as agents. This is, we would argue, necessary to develop the history of childhood. It has paramount importance in that it relates to children's perspectives. In analogy with a gender perspective, the relevance and application of children's perspectives must be discussed. Furthermore, the concept child rightfully includes teenagers and young people on the basis that a definition of childhood is historically negotiated and defined. These categories were, however, far too often left unproblematized. <p> Many of those papers which did relate to the conference theme of children and state dealt with the state's interests and ambitions to direct and control its citizens in various nation-building contexts. These papers agree well with the present traditions of scholarship. The interest of the state in directing and controlling children did not mean there was a one-sided imbalance of power, whereby children and their families allowed themselves to be directed by the state. Some contributors pointed out that both had action space. Here, in the long term, there seem to be many significant theoretical contributions and methodical insights that may be gained through study of children's history and childhood's constructs. This indicates that research on children and childhood can contribute to a broad and clear understanding of general historical processes. Historical perspectives make it possible to question our presentist and modernist notions of childhood as they appear in the current interest in the active and competent child. This kind of social science scholarship sometimes seems as much a part of the creation of this contemporary notion as of the study of that phenomenon. Such views can be nuanced in historical analyses.[2] A study of the history of welfare systems from the viewpoint of children can uncover other factors that influence decision making and agency than when the focus is on gender or policy-making. <p> Although childhood and the state was the central theme of the conference, education in a more narrow sense was rarely touched upon. Traditionally this would have been the case as history of childhood was often confused with aspects of history of education or seen as its extension. This indicates that history of childhood points to a need to relate educational studies research to refine and strengthen arguments. However, many papers could be broadly defined as educational since they dealt with experiences inside and outside scholastic institutions. For example, the relationship between social welfare institutions and its clients, i.e. children and parents, is de facto an educational relationship. A broad definition of the term education subsumes many of the papers presented and indeed shows that the conference was rich in intellectual content for the educational historian. <p> Studies of children often bring to the fore a normative standpoint which may surpass a scholarly attitude, approaching instead contemporary political issues. Consequently, the history of childhood at times has a special flavor of moral and normative agendas. This obviously can influence how scholarly prob-

lems are posed and how research is carried out. For example, the study of children's rights and issues as these relate to policy-making. In such cases a historical perspective engenders a distance to normative and moral agendas often inherent in childcare professions and institutions. Such distancing is particularly essential for underlying ideas of the true nature of a child. Such assumptions were at times demonstrated in conference papers, which touched on historical problems with high relevance for present-day policy. <p> The history of childhood is no longer viewed as a subset to education, but is evolving into a research field in its own right, with distinct traditions and academic conflicts. In this light, it is interesting to note the conflicts between a theoretical orientation along social science lines and one along traditional empiricist historical lines, and conflicts between normative research and research that clearly aspire to be non-normative. The various conference sessions provided good examples of how research into children and childhood closely reflects the shift of humanist and social science research to vital new issues such as democracy and racial politics, children's rights and protests, the nature of nation-building processes, culture, welfare institutions and social reproduction as it relates to health, body and sexuality. It is interesting to note that history of childhood can contribute constructively and independently to discussions of these issues. One significant theme was the relationship of children and young people to the state, and their opportunity for protest; another was the use of images of children and childhood by minorities seeking equal access to education and equal rights. <p> The conference was not divided into sub-networks, which doubtless benefited the interaction between disciplines but perhaps also contributed to a certain lack of stringency and analytic depth in the discussions. We would like to exemplify this by touching upon some topical papers. By setting up themes that show research promise, we hope to illustrate important facets of modern scholarship. To this end, we are able to conjoin papers with sometimes contrasting perspectives and discuss them from unexplored angles. We hope that this will enhance conference discussions. <p> EDUCATION, DEMOCRACY and RACIAL POLITICS <p> The conference posed some classic educational and historical questions.[3] One touched upon the influence of nature and nurture in child development. Working from an eighteenth-century English educational experiment designed to foster genius, Anne Christina Rose traced the origins of today's view that a child's development can be directed and controlled through stimuli. Though this experiment had little value per se, it was described in educational manuals for parents and teachers and so propagated a perception of childhood as a time for development and control. Another classic question dealt with was whether education meant social control of the masses or whether it strove for individual self-development. Especially the political debate about education's role in the early years of the American republic was discussed. It was assumed that notions of democratic responsibility and individual freedom could co-exist with societal order with no conflict between these two ideal states. Today's tendency, however, is to define order as being opposed to individual freedom. A plausible explanation for the emergence of democratic values in education is that formerly every child was regarded as bad and potentially violent, so reforms were applied to all children in all social classes. <p> In sessions like this, individuality and freedom were portrayed as being virtually universal rights. The overall picture was that thoughts on individuality and freedom were exclusive in the sense that they were a norm created by and for the middle-class white male and his progeny. However, alternative perspectives were heard in sessions where racial politics and related issues were discussed. Focus was then on how aspects of race and class were of vital for the relationship set up between the state and the individual, this led in turn to sessions on how racial politics was intertwined with the pre-

vailing notions of children. Several lines of reasoning, or theoretical frameworks, deserve special mention. <p> One perspective held that subordinated groups that lacked civil rights at the beginning of the eighteenth century were to some extent responsible for their subordinate or excluded position. A key goal of the Afro-American struggle for civil rights was to improve the self-image of the black population with a consequent attitude change. The black press depicted Negro children with the same imagery used by the mainstream press for white children. This stood in stark contrast to how black children were portrayed by the mainstream press. When blacks were portrayed and perceived as helpless victims, it was legitimate for the state to assume the role of foster parents and protect black rights, but at the same time this limited the support that Afro-Americans were given when acting as responsible citizens. Although some progress was achieved through the state's protective attitude, in the long term this strategy perpetuated the concept of blacks as a segregated group and was detrimental to goals of the civil rights movement. Another perspective argued that Afro-Americans won their civil rights at the cost of adopting a white middle-class norm. Images and representations of black children played a crucial role here too. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People employed photographs of happy and healthy black youngsters to build bridges to the white middle class. An emphasis on the similarities of blacks and whites was an argumental springboard to obtain equal rights in education because black parents were shown to be as good as white parents. Indeed, parenting norms defined by a white population came to be shared by the black movement for civil rights. <p> Other discussions dealt with examples of excluding strategies that were directed towards ethnic groups by a well-educated white middle class. Juvenile youths were appraised and judged by ethnic stereotypes, rather than by individual qualities. Even scientific circles that studied the human condition made use of stereotypes, using them to represent the Other, the deviation from the norm. Researchers and professionals in child-related fields established supposedly scientifically based segregation discourse on the local level. <p> CHILDREN vs. THE STATE: The Rights and Protests of Children and Young People <p> Since the 1989 passing of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, child rights has been a highlighted issue in Scandinavian and other European research.[4] A recurring question has been: What notions of childhood and the child have been created by the UN Convention itself? Other questions concern the implications of the Declaration as it affects child advocacy and child agency-in other words, how adults can advocate the interests of children and how children can be perceived as agents of their own lives and rights. Despite the topicality of these issues, they were dealt with in only a few papers. One was authored by Afua Twum-Danso who discussed the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child from an international perspective. The concept of childhood, in the sense that children differ from adults, is certainly universal, according to Twum-Danso, while the conception of what these differences consist of varies. Nigeria was mentioned as an example of a country that has refused to ratify the convention on account of its 18-year-old marriage limit, a clear expression of the differences of opinion as to what a child is or ought to be. An interesting question which Twum-Danso posed was whether a universal conception of childhood is necessary for an international implementation of a declaration of child rights or whether there is room for multiple and varying conceptions of what childhood is. This question points to the difficulties of child advocacy, i.e. the problems involved when adults strive to advocate the best interests of the child nationally and internationally. <p> In a similar vein, Mary Jean O'Sullivan's paper on the Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC) in New York dealt with the shifting meaning of the expression child advocacy. O'Sullivan held that during the second world war

it became easier in the USA to push through social legislation that in effect amounted to state intervention in family matters. The ground was laid by a strong public belief in the state's good intentions in child welfare matters. The "best interest of the child" became an irresistible argument. During the second half of the 1960s, child advocacy took on a new meaning in the backwash of a growing human rights movement. Whereas the CCC had earlier seen its role as representing the child's right to welfare, it now came to argue on the child's behalf against the authorities that administered these measures. O'Sullivan's paper touched upon, but did not further explore, a central element in child advocacy, namely to what extent an adult can represent children's interests. The concept of child advocacy in the building of a welfare state is a vital issue for the history of childhood. Other pertinent questions are why children became important in this process and how the concepts of child advocacy and children's agency relate to each other. <p> The latter question and the struggle by young people for their rights was discussed in the paper by Gael Graham on the 1960s high school student movement. The high school uproars aimed to increase student influence over teaching in particular and school in general, including school newspapers, political activities and the rights of the individual student to wear the clothes and hairstyles he or she wanted. Many cases went to court and students often won. In this way, according to Graham, student protests can also be seen as endowing the American child with citizenship, since they were now taken seriously and young people's rights were entered on the public agenda. Graham's paper certainly has an interesting thought that calls for further investigation and opens questions like the following: Had there been earlier high school protests that were less successful? If not, why did protests suddenly become possible in American high schools? Is this a unique American experience or are there equivalent movements in other countries? What does endowing the American child with citizenship actually imply for children's living conditions? <p> Graham's paper portrayed young people who represented themselves against the state and against those public institutions such as schools, that curtailed their individual rights and freedom. In such circumstances, the state constitutes the de facto base for youthful protest and revolt. A parallel question was posed in Michael Willard's paper, namely: What happens with protests of youth cultures, such as skateboarding, when these are perpetrated in a stateless society, by which Williard meant late twentieth-century USA? The fact that the state has become less visible with a corresponding lack of state intervention to protest against has, claims Willard, robbed youth culture of its political potential. Instead youth culture has become increasingly commercialized, not only from the outside but also from the inside. For example, young skateboarders are no longer mere consumers, but to a large extent producers of popular culture. That young people perform death-defying skateboard tricks for money, but without social or health insurance, is regarded by Willard as one of the most extreme expressions of the Market State. Protests against the state such the high school riots of the 1960s seem remote options. An interesting question, though not discussed by Willard, is the way these youth cultures still can be perceived in terms of children's agency. Instead of viewing young skateboarders who perform for money as victims of commercialism, they may as well be seen as free agents and entrepreneurs participating in the work market. Our unwillingness to do so points to the very core of what might well have been a key question of the SHCY conference: the notion of childhood. Why is the image of the professional teenage skateboarder so disturbing? Is it because he is ill-paid and unprotected? Or is it because he is well-paid and independent? Are we resigned to the fact that he is working because we view him as exploited or because he is actually earning his own money? In the research field of childhood sociology, the questions of children's agency, compe-

tency and independence as set in relation to the notion of childhood are much debated. Questions like the preceding might have provoked discussions on the underlying cultural and moral values of researchers, an issue which unfortunately was lacking throughout much of the conference. The question might also have made a fruitful starting point for a debate on childhood as a phenomenon bound by cultural, social and historical contexts. <p> What can perhaps be said about the context described in Willard's paper is that it has changed. After September 11, 2001, the American State has promoted itself more and more visibly, introducing new interventions against individual freedom and rights with reference to the security of the nation. In contrast to the stateless society's dearth of conditions for youthful revolt, that Willard describes, this ought to give many opportunities for protest. <p> NATION-BUILDING and NATIONAL IDENTITIES <p> Many conference participants suggested ways of advancing themes related to nation-building, including how national identities are created in relation to children and childhood and how nation-building processes variously affect them. Many papers illustrated how children's lives are affected by war, and how children are exploited to promote specific forms of patriotism, such as collecting money for military weapons. When research focus is on the child rather than strict policy-making or warfare, agendas otherwise hidden can be uncovered to give insight into the nature of nation building and the social and cultural significance of war effort. There have been many attempts to persuade children by through cultural means or physical chastisement, as discussed below. Lastly, teenagers and their youthful sexuality are addressed as symbols and figureheads in the creation of an American national identity, and are as such viewed as being both promising and threatening. Nation-building ambitions are a recurring theme as manifested in a multitude of activities aimed at children in wartime and peacetime. <p> An important conference theme was childhood and war with focus on how authorities and organizations cared for war orphans. The papers illustrated the wide range of life experiences embodied in the simple term "orphan". Childhood research reveals a multitude of notions of childhood and it is clear that orphaned children in various countries were confronted with a diversity of adult opinions. <p> Valentina Tikoff discussed how orphaned Spanish boys (1600-1850) trained to become naval cadets were thus transformed to implements for adult warfare. She reflected upon possible interpretations of these childhoods: dangerous, exciting or educational. This highlighted the importance of problematizing childhood from two angles, not only the adult and contemporary moral point of view (how childhood should be experienced), but also what childhood might have meant for the boys themselves. The ultimate of the caretaking was, however, to foster the boys for military careers. <p> Brian J. Els described a different policy which treated orphans as the children they were and which viewed them as family members, dependents with no adult responsibilities. During the first world war, Berlin authorities invested financial resources to find well-functioning foster homes for abandoned children and to provide financial help to mothers, Muttershilfe. Even if Els did not discuss it, it is obvious that German policies strove to keep a notion of the innocent child in spite of wartime, and that family values were regarded as a dominant discourse. <p> These examples highlight the constructive aspects of childhood and the fact that childhood varies from one context to another and how the notion of childhood changes when viewed against a wartime backdrop. Then the state does not regard children en bloc, but as individuals, as future citizens. This relates to how "the sociology of childhood" proponents prefer to see the analyses of children's agency. Their perspective has emerged as a critique of how developmental psychology has traditionally described and prescribed children, and serves as a forward-looking alternative approach.[5] <p> But children have also been assigned positive

roles during wartime. They have been targeted as contemporary ideals of wartime behavior and as future citizens. Todd Alexander Postol's paper described on how American youth supported the war effort on the U.S. home front by selling war stamps. The youthful efforts were noticed at the highest political level as making a difference in the war economy. As presented in the paper, emphasis was on the boys as individuals and not as family members, an aspect that could have been exploited given the topic of the conference. Here Postol might have added that popularity was part of home front propaganda that contributed to the notion of active, competent boy heroes. Even though this paper lacked a theoretical framework and references to other research on childhood, it gave insight to how children can be used for practical purposes during wartime although this fact was not touched upon in the paper. <p> Some papers provided an interesting commentary on literature and radio programs produced for children during wartime. These addressed the ways cultural production for children has been an instrument to strengthen national heroic identity in wartime. The descriptions of policymaking in the Soviet Union and Germany may serve as grounds for modern comparisons. This field of research has not been fully explored and there is a need for basic research of the kind presented in these conference papers. It would have been particularly interesting to draw parallels with contemporary culture produced for children. What can an historical perspective make visible in our own times? How, for instance, are notions of modernity produced and spread to children and by children in different societies? What do children take for granted and what do we adults take for granted? Such questions would bring the papers closer to the latter half of the conference topic: the state of childhood. <p> An interesting comparative perspective was presented by Jacqueline Olich who described how modernity was manifested in children's books produced in the former Soviet Union. The Stalinist vision emphasized the value of work, technical progress and the mechanization of farming and industry. It looked only toward the future, and history hardly existed. Richard Jobs's work on culture's role in rewriting the national identity of the French postwar generation was built around a totally opposite set of notions. The ideal built upon classic republican virtues and was thereby clearly rooted in the past. These ideals were expressed and communicated in schoolbooks, the national curriculum and cultural youth houses. French ideals were made homogeneous. The new element that was introduced in the identity creation process was strategic: to address young people directly. Contrasting examples like these latter two may generate questions about our own standpoints, which we take for granted. As was noted during the post-presentation discussion, those who live in democracies have a tendency to view their culture production as autonomous and humane, as opposed to that of totalitarian states. It would be a stimulating task to extend the comparative perspectives to probe the theoretical issues in greater depth. <p> BODY, HEALTH, and NORMALITY <p> Throughout the twentieth century, children's bodies have had strong symbolic value for the state's upholding of its image as a modern, democratic and successful nation. Several papers discussed the role of children's bodies in terms of building and preserving the nation. At the turn-of-the-twentieth century, the discourse on children's bodies was articulated around concepts such as health and morals. Given the historical and unfixed character of childhood and children, however, a variety of definitions of the normal child were possible. And indeed, the concept was constantly negotiated in many different institutional settings.[6] <p> Amanda Brian presented a paper that analyzed pedagogic manuals for German schools from around 1900. In these, children's bodies were presented as sickly and unstable. Normal, healthy development called for careful study, record-keeping and shaping of children's bodies.[7] With reference to childhood studies on schooling and state forma-

tion, it would have been interesting to explore the ways in which the manuals contrasted the more typical Western view of a normal childhood, i.e. an innocent, playful and educative child. Another question, not raised, was whether there were connections between the images of children as presented in the manuals and the emerging field of developmental psychology.[8] Did actors from different fields proffer competing discourses on what children should be like? And if so, what did the struggle for hegemony look like? <p> Katherine S. Bullard discussed how the growth of the United States Children's Bureau was an important element in nation-building and imperialist expansion. The Bureau's interest in children's physical health was partly aimed at creating good future citizens and partly at establishing a child welfare system, which could serve as a model for other countries. Cynthia Ann Connolly shifted the focus somewhat to the interaction between health organizations and parents. This interaction can be seen as negotiation about what American society's basic values should be. Rachel Schulman presented a paper that described the mapping of health and physique among English working class children in the early 1900s. Schulman referred to this as quasi-colonizing. The knowledge obtained could serve to improve children's health and physique, but could also be used to contrast a more desirable state, qualities which were regarded as being genuinely English and which would guarantee the empire's survival. Schulman's theoretical framework helped reveal relations of power and the construction of normality. This spurred an interesting discussion among the audience on the practical differences between colonization and nation-building and how these concepts can be used as analytical tools. <p> SEXUALITY and YOUTH <p> Other aspects of the body were subsumed under categories such as youth and sexuality. In connection herewith a number of interesting papers focused on the teenage girl. Using data from popular culture, such as advertisements, movies and literature, several researchers were able to show how the teenage girl has been pictured as both promising and threatening. <p> Ilana Nash argued that body and sexuality of the teenage girl became complex symbols for American ideals. Nash showed how American movies during the second world war portrayed two conflicting images of the teenage girl. On the one hand, the girls were a threat to moral values and societal order, while on the other hand they served as icons for true American values. Seen through the male gaze, the ideal teenage girl was construed as sexually able but not sexually active.[9] The teenage girl's body was presented as physically mature while her character made her morally incapable of sexual activity. The movies bridged the tension thus created by evoking strong feelings of patriotism where the girl's relationships with American soldiers could be interpreted as an important contribution for the nation. <p> Ann Kordas discussed how a fear of teenage female sexuality was made part of the postwar discussion about the increasing youth crime in the United States and Europe. She described popular culture's portrayal of criminal girl gangs who took on traditional male appearance, wearing men's clothes, assuming male names, swearing and pestering other women. Kordas interpreted this as a specific male fear of women's increased independence in American society during the postwar years. <p> David Pomfret's paper on the public ceremony surrounding the crowning of a muse in French towns around 1900, gave a different angle on the symbolic value of the body of the teenage girl. Here the threat to the nation was not embodied by the girl but was linked to the fear of a lack of societal stability and order. Through her youthfulness and purity, she was accepted as a town symbol by all social classes. Her crowning was, according to Pomfret, an embodiment of political unity, national strength and desirable ideals. The nation's glory and honor were embodied in and manifested through the young girl. In this, she possessed what Pomfret called iconic power. <p> Aspects of culture that

hitherto were not recognized by historians are made visible by these studies. The value of this research is obvious. The interdisciplinary field of research on body and sexuality can be greatly enriched by studies that pinpoint the historical and changing character of these study areas.[10] In all of these studies, changing notions of body and sexuality are contextualized and linked to political processes as opposed to research that reduces cultural expressions to mere trends of thought. Furthermore, studies like the above can contribute not only to contemporary discussions on body and sexuality but also on the general status given teenage girls by society. <p> CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS <p> As is evident from this review, research into children and childhood is extremely wide ranging. The various conference sessions gave significant and deep-probing insight into study approaches to children and childhood. Many papers emphasized important perspectives into how societal change affects children, whether through war or welfare institutions, discipline or control, or through the possibilities of individuals (including children) to deal and negotiate with power brokers under difficult conditions. The conference was definitely an example of evolving and significant scholarly research with great potential. There is however good reason to reflect upon the research area and the traditions which were revealed by the conference papers and discussions. <p> Important societal processes can be made visible by studying children. Many researchers limit themselves to using children as examples. In order to develop the field of study, it is important to probe more deeply, why children are so interesting as objects for study. What do we learn by studying children and childhood? The study of children can have an important function for developing knowledge of children's living conditions. However, such study can also relate to central societal processes such as nation-building, the development of welfare systems, and to knowledge of how childhood is constructed. This type of question is important as a challenge for childhood research. For many of the researchers at the SHCY conference, childhood research seemed subordinate to other issues. Child research or, better still, generation research, may need to develop through focus on the de facto changes of childhood. Generation research may be problematized like women's and gender research. It is particularly important that discussions about children's agency and social influence are taken further. As with research into women and gender issues, child research is easily associated with specific moral and political agendas having normative starting points as to how children's conditions should appear. These are not always explicitly expressed but affect both the questions asked and the methods used to get answers. <p> Because moral agendas differ and because they answer to different professional perspectives and traditions, it is important to problematize and discuss matters relating to values. The conference seemed to lack a more critical challenge of established points of departure, for example, by asking how present child research relates to the overall development of the field of child studies. North American self-images formed an implicit starting point in many papers. Because most researchers had backgrounds in North American traditions, there was little opportunity for deeper comparisons between countries, comparisons that could have made the various national models more precise and concrete. It would have been interesting to collect papers into sessions focusing on the same questions in different national environments. As it was, some commentators contributed with valuable surveys and opinions, but conceptions of American exceptionalism often went unchallenged because no points of comparison could be established. <p> To all appearances, this research area on and about children and childhood attracts researchers in many disciplines and there is much to be gained from interdisciplinary research. Unfortunately, theoretical and methodological discussion was missing in most contributions. Many papers would have profited by stipu-

lating at least provisional definitions of terms such as <cite>state</cite>, <cite>professional</cite>, <cite>child</cite>, <cite>young person</cite> and <cite>organization</cite>. These expressions can mean quite different things in different contexts and to researchers in different disciplines. Above all, conditions must be created for a meeting between various disciplinary traditions to make a real dialogue possible. Despite these criticisms, our overall impression of the SHCY meeting was very positive. The conference showed a research field developing strongly with many different traditions but with a willingness to engage in discussion. It is a hopeful sign that so many researchers have chosen to hold discussions on children's history and that the organization wishes to expand into other countries. <p> Notes: <p> [1]. See for instance Thomas S. Popkewitz & Marie Brennan (eds) <cite>Foucault's Challenge. Discourse, Knowledge and Power in Education</cite>, New York & London, 1998; Kenneth Hultqvist & Gunilla Dahlberg, <cite>Governing the Child in the New Millenium</cite>, New York & London, 2001; Nicolas Rose, <cite>The Psychological Complex: Psychology, Politics and Society in England, 1869-1939</cite>, London, 1985; Jacques Donzelot, <cite>The Policing of Families: Welfare versus the State</cite>, London, 1979; David Armstrong, <cite>The Political Anatomy of the Body</cite>, Cambridge, 1983; Julian Henriques, Wendy Hollway, Cathy Urwin, Couze Venn & Valerie Walkerdine, <cite>Changing the Subject. Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity</cite>, London & New York, 1984. <p> [2]. For example Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), <cite>Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood. Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood</cite>, London, 1990; Berry Mayall (ed), <cite>Children's Childhoods Observed and Experienced</cite>, London, 1994; Jens Qvortrup, "From useful to useless. The Historical Continuity of Children's Constructive Participation" in <cite>Sociological Studies of Children</cite>, vol 7, 1995, pp 49-76; Jens Qvortrup, Marjatta Bardy, Giovanni Sgritta & Helmut Wintersberger (eds), <cite>Childhood Matters. Social Theory, Practice and Politics</cite>, Aldershot, 1994; Allison James, Chris Jenks & Alan Prout, <cite>Theorizing Childhood</cite>, Cambridge, 1998. <p> [3]. These kind of questions have for example been discussed by Hugh Cunningham, <cite>The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century</cite>, Blackwell, 1992. See especially chapter 8. <p> [4]. See for instance Lorraine Fox Harding, "The Children Act 1989 in context: four perspectives in child care law and policy" in <cite>Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law</cite>, vol. 3, no. 4, 1991 [page numbers not available]; Johanna Schiratzki, "Custody and custody disputes", English summary, dissertation in Swedish, <cite> Vårdnad och vårdnadstvister </cite>, Stockholm, 1997; Anna Singer, "Parenthood in Legal Light", English summary, dissertation in Swedish, <cite> Föräldraskap i rättslig belysning </cite>, Uppsala, 2000; John Eekelaar, "The Interest of the Child and the Child's Wishes: The Role of Dynamic Self-Determinism" in Philip Alston (ed), <cite>The Best Interest of the Child. Reconciling Culture and Human Rights</cite>, Oxford, 1994, pp 42-61; Patricia Holland, <cite>What Is a Child? Popular Images of Childhood</cite>, London, 1992; Harry Hendrick, <cite>Child Welfare. Historical dimensions, contemporary debate</cite>, Bristol, 2003; David Buckingham, <cite>After the Death of Childhood. Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media</cite>, Cambridge, 2000. <p> [5]. Sandy Hobbs, "New Sociology and Old Psychology" in Barry Goldston, Michael Lavalette & Jim McKechnie (eds), <cite>Children, Welfare and the State</cite>, London, 2003, pp 29-41. <p> [6]. Historian Harry Hendrick has argued that what can be termed "modern childhood"--as shaped by legislation, medicine, psychology and education--had its beginning at the turn of the century, see Harry Hendrick, <cite>Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990</cite>, Cambridge, 2001 (1997), pp 9-15. See also Viviana A. Zelizer, <cite>Pricing the Priceless Child. The Changing Social Value of Chil-

dren</cite>, New York, 1985; Hugh Cunningham, <cite>Children and Childhood in Western Societies Since 1500</cite>, London, 1995; Bengt Sandin, "Split Visions, Changing Childhoods and the Welfare State in Sweden. Reflections on the Century of the Child" in <cite>Working Papers on Childhood and the Study of Children</cite>, 1995, vol. 4, Linköping, 1995. <p> [7]. Brian here draws upon Michel Foucault's classical study <cite>Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison</cite>, London, 1977. For a Foucauldian approach to changing notions of children's health, see also Karen Baistow, "From Sickly Survival to the Realisation of Potential: Child Health as a Social Project" in <cite>Children and Society</cite>, vol. 9, no. 1, 1995 [page numbers not available]. <p> [8]. For a critical discussion on the emergence of psychology and changed notions of children's bodies and souls, see Nikolas Rose, <cite>Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self</cite>, London, 1999 (1989), pp 123-155 . <p> [9]. The classic article on "the male gaze" is Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in <cite>Screen</cite>, vol. 16, no. 3, 1975, pp. 6-18. <p> [10]. For examples of studies of femininity and the body, see Valerie Walkerdine, <cite>School Girl Fictions</cite>, London, 1990; Helle Rydstrom, <cite>Embodying Morality: Growing Up in Rural Northern Vietnam</cite>, Honolulu, 2003; Carolina Överlien, "Innocent Girls or Active Young Women? Negotiating Sexual Agency at a Detention Home" in <cite>Feminism & Psychology</cite> vol. 13, no. 3, London, 2003, pp 345-367.