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Mary Jo Maynes, Birgitte Søland, and Christina Benninghaus, Eds., *Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills: Placing Girls in European History, 1750-1960*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2005. 312 pp. \$24.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN: 0-253-21710-5.

Review by Jennifer J. Popiel, Saint Louis University.

Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills explores the varied life experiences of unmarried post-pubescent females in Europe during the more than 200 years between 1750 and 1960. The subtitle, "Placing Girls in European History, 1750-1960," may have less flair than the primary title, but it characterizes the project well. This is a book that examines the spatial dimensions of girlhood--the places that girls shaped and were shaped by. It also intends to remedy the historiographical deficit that has resulted in youth being treated as a part of an intermediate stage in the history of the family[1] or childhood's being examined primarily as it was experienced by boys and young men.[2] This collection thus offers us an historical placement of girls as an historiographical corrective even as we see the physical place of girls in their European landscapes. While almost all of the essays would easily fit into larger literatures of family, sexuality, consumer culture, and/or domesticity, their publication together is especially illuminating as a way of seeing shifts in institutional and social perceptions of young unmarried women.

The book, which is the product of a workshop on modern European girlhood, focuses on the girls of Western Europe. It does so because of the marriage patterns that meant that a substantial minority of girls never married at all and those that did often remained unmarried even at the advanced age of twenty, though young women in much of the rest of the world married shortly after the age of puberty. This means that "girlhood," or the age between puberty and marriage, was relatively long for western European women and, because this was unusual, it makes the girls' position distinctive and their social impact substantial. Though this marriage pattern was sometimes less marked in the upper classes, girls of these classes also had a substantial impact due to their economic and social influence. Not surprisingly then, the subjects of the chapters range from wealthy to poor.

The ways in which these girls shaped society are examined in three primary areas: labor, sexuality, and consumer culture, all of which underline some of the key features in historical debates over the meaning and appearance of modern European society. Few of the individual articles are theoretical in bent; most intend to describe an aspect of girls' lives or of the societies that surrounded them more than specifically to enter into particular historical debates. Nevertheless, the volume as a whole moves toward an important argument. By the end of the volume, the editors can argue that, although these girls' understandings of themselves and their social positions and obligations were not all the same, in very important ways, girls from all classes and walks of life were "bearers of emergent European modernity" (p. 2). Even though most of these girls found themselves in social positions which left them relatively powerless, each article helps us to see its protagonists as active agents, ones who challenged, shaped, and responded to social norms. This is, of course, another primary aim of this collection. These articles attempt to read through the normative and adult-produced sources, sifting for evidence of the girls themselves. If the "place" of girls is important, it is no less significant to understand how girls' everyday actions might offer us signs of their own senses of location as well as their placing of themselves into their world. As a result, the articles use varied sources, which range from statistics on women's employment to images of women in their gardens. This is a truly interdisciplinary collection, a characteristic which adds strength to its findings. It does, however, also mean that the parts of the book that share similar questions and approaches are in some sense more discrete than the introduction might

lead one to believe. While the book as a whole is concerned with questions of autonomy, place, and modern identity, in the end, those questions are approached somewhat descriptively and the different sections remain, perhaps unfortunately, relatively detached from one another, though such a situation is almost to be expected from a volume such as this.

Part one, "Working Girls' Labor and Lives in the Preindustrial and Early Industrial Eras," examines girls' experiences as workers in the preindustrial and early industrial eras. The articles demonstrate the ways in which work was a crucial aspect in forming young girls' identity. This section not only emphasizes the fact that almost all girls saw substantial work as a reality in their lives but also adds a necessary corrective to the usual accounts of economic growth and change. Unlike women in the twentieth century, who gained more independence and freedom of action through their work, young women in the preindustrial economy contributed in ways that were routine and increasingly taken for granted, even as they paved the way for massive economic change.

In "Bringing Up Girls in Preindustrial Europe," Deborah Simonton examines the types of work and training that families provided for their girls in Great Britain. Simonton argues that girlhood—the stage between puberty and marriage—was a significant economic stage that was the primary time to guarantee a daughter's future. While girls' opportunities may have been limited compared to those of boys, work and work-related training were a substantial component in the lives of most young women. Importantly, the period of growing up that preceded marriage served not only as an initiation into specific skills but also into the "responsibility of citizenship and adulthood" (p. 34). The young married woman therefore not only relied on the skills that she learned as a girl in order to contract a marriage of appropriate status but also to learn adult values outside the parental home.

Mary Jo Maynes continues the analysis in "In Search of Arachne's Daughters: European Girls, Economic Development, and the Textile Trade, 1750-1880." Maynes demonstrates how the unmarried textile worker—the spinster—is central to an understanding of paid industrial labor's relationship to the female life cycle. Like Simonton's girls, the girls in Maynes' article also left home for their training and employment, and their labor was critical for the explosion of textile production in the later eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries. After all, an unmarried woman could produce more than the married woman with children as she had more uninterrupted time to devote to spinning. Maynes also broadens our context, offering us not only individuals who valued older unmarried girls' work, but also governments that recognized how crucial their work was to economic progress. Girls themselves benefited from the arrangement, as their pay allowed them to dress above their rank and enjoy relative power as consumers. These changes did not happen without raising concern, however, as some worried that the unmarried woman in a large manufactory would be "denatured." In the end, however, girls' work was too valuable to be tightly regulated and "convent factories" were an exception to the rule. "Arachne's Daughters" deepens our understanding of the work process, as we see the ways in which unmarried labor was central to both home industries and larger manufacturing and entered into debates about women's roles and consumer culture.

Andreas Gestrich amplifies the family and society subtext that is present in the first two articles in "After Dark: Girls' Leisure, Work, and Sexuality in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Rural Southwest Germany." Gestrich focuses on *Lichtstuben*, which were evening gatherings for young people. These evening events were not only leisure gatherings for young women. While boys and young men had no evening obligations, girls continued their work in a family context. Many, however, were able to work for themselves at preparing their dowry rather than continuing their participation in cottage industry. Girls were also often entertained while they spun by young men, who would sit opposite the spinner of his interest and court her by his ability to hold a conversation. In this and other ways, girls often found that they had some independence from traditional forms of surveillance; youth exerted more control over matchmaking than has been previously believed.

Like Maynes and Simonton, Clare Crowston uses one city's example to demonstrate how vocational training for girls demonstrates the centrality of women workers to the early modern economy. In an article that further illuminates Simonton's findings, Crowston's, "An Industrious Revolution in Late Seventeenth-Century Paris: New Vocational Training for Adolescent Girls and the Creation of Female Labor Markets," explicitly links the increasing participation of girls in the skilled labor market to the "industrious revolution" where families redeployed their labor in order to respond to consumer demand. Like Simonton and Maynes, Crowston's evidence points to female careers begun during girlhood, where young women gained skills, became consumers, and worked outside the home before contracting marriages.

The last article in this section, Carol E. Morgan's "Work for Girls? The Small Metal Industries in England, 1840-1915," moves forward in time and away from textiles to its examination of paid labor. Morgan's work confirms that female labor was taken for granted as a central part of the economy. However, unlike young women of an earlier era, these girls tended to live at home with their families and concern about their sexuality and respectability played a much larger role in their relationships with their communities. In this way, Morgan's study makes a nice transition to the second section of this book, which concerns itself with girls' locations in the world and changing ideas about their sexuality and self-identity.

Part two, "Spaces of Socialization of Middle- and Upper-Class Girls in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," builds on the previous articles. However, instead of working girls in *Lichtstuben*, factories, and shops, we move to the formation of girls in upper-class homes, convents, and gardens. As one might expect, this section involves fewer questions of economic impact and more questions of cultural and sexual identity. The well-to-do young women of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could find proper matches not when they had become trained workers but only insofar as they had resisted seduction. While these girls certainly had more leisure than the girls of part one, seclusion was not always the solution to the protection of virtue and, as Irene Hardach-Pinke demonstrates in "Managing Girls' Sexuality among the German Upper Classes," even a focus on virtue rather than economic and social training did not mean that education ceased. Instead, advice manuals and didactic novels demonstrated how the path to adulthood was very narrow and clear, with girls learning appropriately feminine behaviors and steering clear of dangerous avenues. First and foremost, young women were to avoid pregnancy and they were to do it by forming their own judgments and avoiding seducers. Girls could "even ignore supposedly feminine attributes and become quite energetic and active if the circumstances demanded it: 'A girl who defends her honour, is allowed everything'" (p. 111).

The German experience, which allowed some freedom, was often depicted in its contrast to the French model examined by Rebecca Rogers and Céline Grasser. In "Porous Walls and Prying Eyes: Control, Discipline, and Morality in Boarding Schools for Girls in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France" and "Good Girls versus Blooming Maidens: The Building of Female Middle- and Upper-Class Identities in the Garden, England and France, 1820-1870," we see the formation of a convent identity. Secluded schooling was no less concerned with the avoidance of seduction and sexual behavior, but it lacked the freedom and autonomy that German and British schooling of girls relied upon. As Rogers and Grasser explain, we might see the different descriptions of British and French schoolgirls and middle-class identities as being founded in response to the social strictures that surrounded them. Together, they provide us a picture of French girls who grew up in secluded yet public spaces, creating their identity in contact with other girls and with encouragement to be emotional and imaginative mothers. British girls, on the other hand, flourished in situations that prioritized their autonomous rationality and powers of organization or educative capacities. While the contrast breaks apart in places (for example, was the British girl who educated and even parented her sister any less a potential mother than the French girl in her garden?), these are provocative articles that suggest new avenues and approaches in the cultural history of girlhood.

Changing ideas about gender and adolescence are the focus of part three, "Redefining Girlhood: Competing Discourses on Female Adolescence, 1880-1950." For example, in "The Authority of Experts: The Crisis of Female Adolescence in France and England, 1880-1920," Kathleen Alaimo examines how scientific discourses helped to promote an increasing gendering of adolescence in the later nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. In both countries, girls' physiology and "nature" were linked to their psychological makeup, which reinforced the growing demand for physical and emotional limits on young women's freedom as well as demands for increased surveillance.

Even though scientific discourses expanded at the turn of the century, Mary Lynn Stewart's research indicates that sex education remained unchanged on the eve of World War One. While doctors increasingly theorized the physical and psychological underpinnings of female adolescence in medical manuals, "Sex Education and Sexual Initiation of Bourgeois French Girls, 1880-1930," demonstrates that the rhetoric of sex and science had little impact on middle-class French girls' understanding of their changing bodies or heterosexual intercourse. Many girls were as unprepared for menstruation and their wedding nights as they would have been a century before. Though sexual handbooks and increasingly liberal views became more common after World War One, institutional education changed little; both secular and religious schools still avoided the topic of girls' sexuality.

"In Their Own Words: Girls' Representations of Growing Up in Germany in the 1920s," by Christina Benninghaus, examines nuances in the transmission and reception of expert ideas about adolescence. Her essay demonstrates the ways in which German girls saw adolescence through the lens of class as well as gender. Middle-class girls were often able to use the new scientific ideas about leisure and girlhood to their advantage and saw adolescence as a time in which girls would develop, change, and become independent. On the other hand, instead of seeing themselves as a discrete interest group, working-class girls were much less likely to focus on adolescence and generational conflict or to assert their own wills against those of parents and society. Female adolescence was thus a middle-class creation and had little impact on the lives of working girls in this era.

Benninghaus' conclusions add an additional layer of interest to Pamela Cox's essay, "Girls in Trouble: Defining Female Delinquency, Britain, 1900-1950," which analyzes adolescence, juvenile delinquency, and obedience. While Benninghaus' working-class girls tended to be obedient and reluctant to use the scientific rhetoric that might allow them to rebel, "bad" British girls were those who failed to conform and elicited concern from the authorities over their strategic use of their sexuality. If the delinquent girls in Britain came from poorer homes (as Cox's evidence suggests), much work remains to be done to tease out the relationships between science, class, sexuality, and adolescence.

In many ways, the preceding themes come full circle in part four, "Changing Patterns of Work and Leisure, 1880-1960." In this section, issues of gender and sexuality, class, leisure, and employment allow a broad analysis of the ways that "modern" girls found – and made – their places in the modern world. Anna Davin's "City Girls: Young Women, New Employment, and the City, London, 1880-1910," looks at office workers at the turn of the nineteenth century. She argues that even as working- and middle-class girls were increasingly educated, economic and technical changes offered women new employment prospects as "lady clerks." While workers were not unaware of class and gender distinctions, their employment was, Davin suggests, one way for a girl to find herself a new place in the modern city, even as it promised new freedoms and, for working-class girls, new levels of respectability.

In "Girls in Court: Mägde versus Their Employers in Saxony, 1880-1914," Elizabeth Bright Jones also examines employment at the turn of the century, although she looks at German women in rural service as farm help. Though the women who worked as farm servants may not have been "New Women" who made waves in urban society, Bright Jones' women were no shrinking violets. The court cases in which

they appear demonstrate the ways in which many of them refused to accept miserable or abusive working conditions or simply asserted their rights to control their own lives.

Much like the German Mägde who recognized that there were multiple options available to girls, Tammy M. Proctor's girls insisted that they receive some of the same options as the boys around them. In "Something for the Girls': Organized Leisure in Europe, 1890-1939," an analysis of female youth organizations demonstrates how girls could demand activities and autonomy. Even as the courts in Germany tried to maintain control over rebellious workers, youth organizations puzzled over the best ways to provide enjoyable leisure experiences that would simultaneously shape young women into good citizens and mothers. Perhaps most explicitly of any essay in this volume, Proctor's work examines the collision of adult expectations and young women's demands, looking at the ways that girls shaped and were themselves shaped by social expectations.

Going slightly farther afield in Europe but remaining in the same era, Birgitte Søland looks at work and leisure in Denmark. Her essay, "Employment and Enjoyment: Female Coming-of-Age Experiences in Denmark, 1880s-1930s," uses memoirs to examine feminine awareness of the particular life stage of youth as distinct from adulthood. In a study that might also shed light on Benninghaus' findings about working-class German girls in the 1920s, Søland argues that Danish working girls who came of age in the thirty years between 1900 and 1930 increasingly remembered their adolescence as a distinct stage. Even though they entered the work force and were not entirely free to do what they pleased, they perceived their youth as a period designed especially for leisure and fun, including participation in sports and youth organizations like those that Proctor described. Enjoyment and independence of action continued to mark the "modern" girl's understanding of her youth into the middle of the twentieth century.

Claire Langhamer's "Leisure, Pleasure, and Courtship: Young Women in England, 1920-1960" finds that women in England also identified youth as a period designed for leisure time when work was done. In fact, while adult women remembered and complained about limitations upon their freedom and fun as girls, they accepted that marriage had marked the end of this era and accepted without complaint the constraints that adult life brought. There is a notable difference between the girls of the Lichtstuben in the nineteenth century and the English girl of the middle twentieth century, who would surely have understood evening spinning as a constraint upon her right to leisure time (like that of her male counterparts).

Karin Schmidlechner addresses postwar concerns about respectability and the control of young women's sexuality in "The Emergence of the Modern Teenage Girl in Postwar Austria." The modern "teenage" girl was influenced by American culture and often chose it in opposition to more conventional Austrian girlhood, which resembled the idealized girl of the Nazi past. Because of the conflict between the old and the new, adults who were threatened by teenage appearance and behavior attempted to socialize girls into domesticity. The phenomenon whereby "[T]he family was regarded as a shelter from the pressures of the outside world" (p. 285) seems to directly echo American studies of the same era, especially the cultural phenomena described by Elaine Tyler May.^[3] While May's study emphasizes escape from Cold War pressures, Schmidlechner describes the family as a retreat from dealing with questions about Austria's Nazi past. It is ironic that American culture, which in May's study emphasized child-bearing and conforming for adult women, seemed to allow Austrian girls a short-lived rebellion. Perhaps if May had used Schmidlechner's methods, she would have found that American girlhood had its own widespread cultural rebellion and that youth offered more resistance to the domestic ideal than she assumed. Alternately, Langhamer offered us a vision of women who found leisure time to be a central part of youth culture and then became adult women who did not complain about their constraints. Do these lead to a picture of girlhood as a period for girls to sow wild oats and then sign on to the dominant ideal?

As these final questions indicate, there are much larger issues implied throughout this work, most of which involve more historiographies than a volume like this can even begin to address. In the end, it is a sign of the strength of this volume that one is continually tempted to ask for more. The essays point readers in the direction of much current work on girlhood and outline projects for the future. However, they also indicate just how much more remains to be done in the field in order to integrate the descriptive materials of the articles into a broader theoretical framework. Since it would be petty to fault this volume for not having accomplished all of the tasks that remain for those who work in the history of childhood and youth, this reviewer will be content with thanking the individual writers for having pointed us down such interesting paths. This is a fine collection of articles that adds to our understanding of girlhood and even serves to justify a new historical focus on young girls who might otherwise have been overlooked for their historical “unimportance” as both young and female.

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- Birgitte Søland, "Employment and Enjoyment: Female Coming-of-Age Experiences in Denmark, 1880s-1930s"
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NOTES

[1] For example, Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex, and Marriage In England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) is more interested in infancy and adulthood, as is David Hunt's *Parents and Children in History: the Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France* (New York: Basic, 1970). Others who deal with childhood specifically, like Colin Heywood (*Childhood in Nineteenth-Century France : Work, Health, and Education Among the "Classes Populaires"* [New York : Cambridge University Press, 1988]), rarely find children as agents. The fact that this collection explicitly focuses on youth means that agency is a much more prominent question and one that can be fruitfully explored in many of the essays.

[2] In addition to the previous works, the editors specifically cite Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (London: J. Cape, 1962) and John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770 to the Present* (New York: Academic Press, 1981) as examples of work that read childhood and youth through a masculine lens.

[3] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (Chicago: Basic Books, 1999).

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