

Contemporary Youth Culture [2 volumes]: An International Encyclopedia

By Priya Parmar, Birgit Richard, Shirley R. Steinberg

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Youth as a unique group is a 20th century idea. The changes wrought worldwide by World War II, propelled adolescence to a status and identity that coincided with unparalleled economic growth. While developmental psychologists refined their theories of normal growth and maturation, society and the media were at work constructing youth as consumers,thereby liberating them from traditional family controls. An increasingly smaller world impinges mightily on the culture of youth. An international and inter-disciplinary roster of experts shed light by exploring such topics as hip hop culture; punk culture; social justice movements; video games; political activism; language and identity; post-feminism; television; rites of passage; heterosexuality and homosexuality; race and ethnicity; social class; poetry and literature; visual art; conceptions of beauty and body image; academics; sports; drugs; families; refugee youth; the Internet; youth journalism; fashion; and violence. This authoritative and reliable guide will prove accessible and fascinating to adults and adolescents.

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In addition to excellent essays, users will find a timeline of contemporaneous international develpments in youth culture. An introductory essay places youth in historical and contemporary contexts and underscores the notion that despite their power as consumers in a market-oriented world, youth are still seen?and see

themselves?in contradictory ways. In short, this work brings new understanding to the complex and fluid phenomenon of youth culture.

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Editorial Review

From Booklist
Who comprises today's youth--and what is their culture? In this encyclopedia, *youth* appears to encompass adolescents and what sociologists deem young adults: 18-25 years old. As for culture, the editors include several facets of youth behavior and several environments, mainly from North American and German perspectives. Africa and South America are not represented, and Asian culture is skewed to Japan.

Articles are organized into five sections: "Studying Youth Culture," "Media Culture and Youth," "Youth Identities and Subcultures," "Politics and Youth Activism," and Teaching and Learning In and Out of School." Articles range in length from 3 to 19 pages, with most being about 5 pages long, and cover topics such as "Instant Messaging and Identity," "Fashion and Techno Style," "Goth," and "The Power of Rap as a Form of Literacy." As noted in the preface, some articles are autobiographical rather than scholarly. Hip-hop is overrepresented. Piercing has its own article, but tattooing is given just a couple of sentences. Teenage taste in movies and television tends to focus on MTV and Japanese genres (for example, "Anime," "Otaku"). Youth participation in mainstream religions is neglected, as are teenage pregnancy and parenthood. Bibliographies conclude most articles and provide anywhere from a couple of citations to one page of sources. A few black-and-white photos and about 20 poems are interspersed throughout the two volumes.

This encyclopedia provides a series of snapshots or case studies of existing cultural "artifacts" of largely fringe older adolescents. The international aspect is very uneven. This work probably has most value as an additional browsing source of information about this ill-defined age group and is best suited to academic libraries. *Lesley Farmer*
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Review
"This resource serves as an important beginning for the scholar researching today's youth culture. Using a variety of sources ranging from academic to autobiographical--even poetical--an international group of specialists seeks to make some sense of the post-World War II youth culture by discussing topics like Queer Punk, Emo Music, piercing, and sex bracelets."-Library Journal

"This encyclopedia describes the current image of youth, as created by youths themselves, society, the media, and technology, which has brought the youth of the world together through the Internet. In the past, adolescents developed identity and status; now, in addition, they have tremendous buying power. Worldwide communication has produced an international youth culture that affects economics, politics, music, film, and nearly everything else. Containing information on subjects from homelessness, sexuality, and race to the new body image, hip-hop culture, and video games, this encyclopedia offers powerful insights into today's youth culture and the forces behind it. Written by an international and interdisciplinary group of experts, the essays are insightful and interesting. An introductory essay provides historical background for both adolescents and older generations, and a time line illustrating the development of international youth culture enhances the text. Poetry and lyrics by young writers, and entries on what young people think about a variety of issues, add to this fascinating work. Scholars, teachers, parents, and young people will find this authoritative source useful for research and for starting discussions on a variety of topics. Highly recommended. All levels."-Choice

"While reading these two volumes, one feels like a voyeur getting a rare glimpse of what young people do

with their time."-PsycCRITIQUES

"ÝA¨ wide-ranging and valuable look at many aspects of youth culture... a fascinating study of subcultures ranging from body piercing, sex bracelets and Black Panthers to remix culture, refugee youth and Tamagotchi. Everyone could learn something here..."-Reference Reviews

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?[T]his collection of informative and thought-provoking articles, organized in subject sections, posits that it is more essential than ever for professionals to stay current on recent scientific and sociological research....Pertinent poetry and song lyrics precede each section, with articles on everything from activism and media to immigration, sports, and alternative subcultures. Contributors represent international scholars and educators in a variety of academic disciplines; some articles are more academic, but all are accessible reads....[w]orthwhile for larger libraries, universities, and youth service organizations.?-VOYA

?Focusing on trends in North America and Europe, and embracing the diversity that is the topic's essence, the entries of this encyclopedia are made useful through the seriousness with which each topic whether cultural group, style, or attitude is treated. A sampling of the topics includes the global influence on youth culture of hip hop, adolescent rites of passage, anime, instant messaging, remix culture, reggae, paintball, third wave feminism, various youth activist groups (each with their own article), punk, and a wide variety of alternate learning environments and events. The entries are written like short articles, and include notes and a list of resources.?-Art Book News Annual

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About the Author

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