

historians. However, caution is urged regarding comparisons between pre- and post-1775 attitudes toward punishment of offenders.

Walter J. KING,
Northern State College, Aberdeen, South Dakota.

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MARK THOMAS CONNELLY. — *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980. Pp. x, 261.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century the United States witnessed a crusade against prostitution unprecedented in both scale and approach. Mark Thomas Connelly's attempt to explain this phenomenon is an intelligent and useful contribution to the literature on both Progressivism and sexuality. It is his contention that the movement cannot be accounted for without reference to the transformation of American life from 1890 to the end of World War I which, while it provided much that was "forward-looking and modernizing", was also accompanied "by contrapuntal themes of tension, anxiety and fear" (p. 7). Anti-prostitution shared both of these characteristics, for while it had a positive side, it was also negative and confused. Of particular importance in shaping this crusade, he maintains, was nineteenth-century sexual morality, or, as he refers to it throughout, "civilized morality". The declining public acceptance of this creed engendered in its adherents a "sense of moral crisis" (p. 8) and this in turn gave the anti-prostitution campaign much of its zeal, and accounts for many of its eccentricities and fantasies.

Connelly does not attempt to trace the history of every anti-prostitution group, but rather examines several broad themes: public perception of the relationship between prostitution on the one hand, and women's work, immigration, and venereal disease on the other; the "white slavery" hysteria; the scope and nature of the Chicago Vice Commission Report; and finally, the climax of the anti-prostitution campaign during World War I. Given this approach, and the shortness of the actual text (153 pages), the reader gets an episodic and suggestive, rather than comprehensive, account of the movement. This is not said to denigrate Connelly's achievement: the book is filled with insights of unusual sharpness and originality, which, even when they are questionable, should serve to provoke both new research and the rethinking of old assumptions.

A few of his contentions should be mentioned. One is that prostitution was frequently vaguely defined in this era, and came to include any expression of sexuality outside the limits of civilized morality. This demonstrates, he suggests, that it was the perceived crisis in sexual morality, rather than prostitution alone, which sparked the repressive crusade. Also noteworthy is his argument that the Progressive claim of a close link between prostitution and the low wages of working women was only partially correct; in fact, he says, the causes of prostitution were more complex. What the claim revealed was a traditional tendency to stereotype women as suffering victims, and as so innately asexual that they would be unwilling to enter prostitution except out of sheer economic pressure. Moreover, he says, the claim grew out of a profound uneasiness about the fact that, contrary

to traditional ideals, a growing number of women were leaving the parental home and entering the work-force. Connelly's treatment of the relationship between prostitution and immigration is also suggestive, and includes a good summary of the evaluation of federal law in the area, as found in the Immigration Act and the Mann Act. Also valuable is his treatment of the "white slavery" scare, which he argues was a reflection not of reality but of the fears of conservative Americans. The tendency to portray the alleged victims as children reflected, he claims, "an inability or unwillingness to confront prostitution as a manifestation of *adult* sexuality totally outside the prescriptions of civilized morality" (p. 127). This is part of a larger pattern of evasion, he maintains, in which the prostitute was variously seen as a victim of wage slavery, a deprived immigrant, or as "feeble-minded". His treatment of the anti-prostitution crusade during World War I, and its success in committing the armed forces to a policy of total repression of vice, is skillful; it certainly reinforces the view that the war represented the fulfillment of Progressivism. In his conclusion he argues that concern over the issue diminished rapidly after 1920 because "the cultural crisis of which anti-prostitution was so preeminently an expression was largely over by that date" (p. 153).

Readers may question some features of this work. Connelly is capable of making points which, if not flatly contradictory, certainly tend to run in opposite directions: thus on p. 34 the prevailing stereotype is of women as "asexual creatures" unwilling to enter a life of prostitution except out of dire necessity; on p. 39 we find the "absence of any insistence that women were innately moral". Again he is capable of downplaying the importance of the link between low wages and prostitution at one point, but emphasizing it at another. His points may be compatible, but it would be nice if it were clearer how this was so. Readers will further note the fact that while his bibliography is formidable, and seems to include all published primary and secondary sources relevant to the topic, no manuscript sources have been used. Also questionable is his assumption that the cultural crisis which created the movement was largely over by 1920. A final observation, not necessarily a criticism, is that while the book contains a number of sharp and original observations, it is solidly anchored within the by now orthodox views of both Progressivism and the history of sexuality in America. However, while it will not likely be viewed as a pivotal or revolutionary work, it is literate, intelligent and useful. We can hardly reasonably ask for more.

Keith CASSIDY,
University of Guelph.

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JENNIFER S. H. BROWN. — *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980. Pp. xxiii, 225.

SYLVIA VAN KIRK. — "*Many Tender Ties*": *Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870*. Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980. Pp. 301.