

trois: les étudiants. Non seulement causent-ils des maux de tête au gouvernement et aux professeurs, mais ils éprouvent, eux aussi, certaines difficultés à se situer dans la société d'alors. La caractéristique toute première de ce mouvement étudiant est son esprit très corporatif, sa conscience très aiguë de sa spécificité et un très fort attachement (même après 1906-7, à un moment où le corps étudiant s'accroît en nombre et, conséquemment, se diversifie) à une histoire et un code d'éthique, à des traditions, responsabilités et intérêts communs qu'incarne le concept de *studenchestvo*. Au nom et par fidélité à un tel idéal, des étudiants s'impliquent régulièrement dans les luttes politiques du début de ce siècle, soit sous forme de grèves (1899, 1905, 1908 et 1911) ou de démonstrations de rue (1901). Fait intéressant et très révélateur de la mentalité étudiante, cet engagement se rebelle (en 1905, par exemple) à l'idée de toute prise en charge par quelque parti politique que ce soit. Néanmoins, ce corps étudiant vit une perpétuelle crise d'identité, en raison de la réticence chez plusieurs à passer de la rhétorique à l'engagement révolutionnaires et, de noter Kassow, parce qu'il est déchiré "between the pressure to live up to the ideals of the *studenchestvo* and the fear of succumbing to acquiescent philistinism after graduation" (p. 397)—crainte d'autant plus réelle que plusieurs étudiants souhaitent entreprendre, un jour, une carrière professionnelle...au service de l'État.

Longtemps victorieux, le gouvernement tsariste sera finalement renversé en février 1917; cette chute

de la dynastie des Romanovs recevra, de conclure l'auteur, "an enthusiastic response from faculty councils and students alike" (p. 382)—preuve de l'échec des politiques du gouvernement tsariste en matière d'enseignement universitaire.

L'intérêt principal de ce livre réside dans la démonstration que l'auteur fait de l'incapacité du gouvernement tsariste, engagé dans un processus de modernisation du pays, à se gagner les sympathies et la collaboration des milieux universitaires. Bref, Kassow reprend les thèses, bien connues, de la polarisation entre *obshchestvo* et autorité politique établie, et de la faiblesse du libéralisme russe.

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Mariana Valverde. *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991. Pp. 205, index. \$16.95.

Mariana Valverde's book is an excellent account and analysis of moral reform in turn-of-the-century "English Canada." It is not only an important contribution to scholarship in this area, taking on a complex treatment of state formation, moral regulation, and the work of so-called voluntary reform organizations, it is also a good read. Val-

verde has a crisp writing style and a clarity of expression which she uses to weave together controversial recent social and literary theories to reconsider the story, or rather stories, of "the age of light, soap, and water." Although the book is not about schooling in the narrow sense, it certainly is educational in so far as the shared goal of the many groups and individuals involved was "to reshape the ethical subjectivity of both immigrants and native-born Canadians" (p. 17) through a variety of pedagogical practices. One crucial feature of this reshaping was that it was meant to work productively and positively through the building of good character and habits, rather than coercively and negatively through the exercise of external forms of discipline.

Valverde reviews temperance work, the so-called white slavery panic and social purity activists' attempts to medicalize and regulate sexuality (especially women's sexuality), discussions about immigration policies, as well as attempts to purify poor and working-class families and neighbourhoods. She tells us about the writings, talks, and activities of church and women's organizations, medical professionals, social workers, social scientists, journalists, and philanthropists. The work of Presbyterian and Methodist church organizations is considered, as well as that of the Salvation Army. Women's groups such as the WCTU, the YWCA, and the National Council of Women are discussed at length, as is the work of women professionals or semi-professionals in public health or-

ganizations, the court system, church organizations, and settlement houses.

Much of the book is devoted to an analysis of language, to the use of metaphors, allegories, and rhetorical strategies in social purity discourses. Valverde shows that the effects of moral regulation and social purity activism cannot be understood without paying attention to the cultural forms through which its messages were presented, such as newspaper articles reporting on research surveys with a scientific veneer, case studies or purported eye-witness accounts, or visual images appearing in popular media, postcards, or even match boxes. All the groups considered were involved in organizing public debates and educational events, each specializing in certain types of gatherings and venues, for example mothers' meetings, formal conventions, church events, street marches, or revival meetings. Valverde gives a fascinating account of the ways in which the Salvation Army appropriated features of popular culture—street spectacle, meetings in community halls, marching bands playing "up-beat" tunes, and people in uniforms—to broaden the appeal of their work to moralize the slums (pp. 139-54).

She manages to convey how moral reformers' discursive strategies incorporated, reproduced, and at times helped to shift the meanings of binary opposites, such as male/female, good/evil, moral/immoral, native/foreign, and white/black, to mention some. Such opposites were crucial to justify the often intrusive interventions organized by moral reform groups into the lives of those

deemed to be on the wrong and dangerous side of these pairs. Nevertheless, the structuring of binary pairs was not fixed, and Valverde shows paradoxes and shifts in meanings over time, for example in the twists and turns of white Canadians' use of nativist discourses to discourage "foreign" immigration, which completely obliterated the historical presence of peoples and cultures prior to English and French colonization and white settlement.

By considering a multiplicity of cultural forms and strategies together, Valverde is able to show that no sharp distinctions can be maintained between moral and scientific approaches to social purity work. That is, even though she traces important shifts in debates and practices from early charity work towards scientific philanthropy between 1885 and 1925, Valverde maintains that these shifts were uneven and incomplete. Nor is it possible to argue, she claims, that moral regulation is within the sole purview of either the state or civil society. That is, although turn-of-the-century moral regulation is closely linked to state formation, and especially to the formation of a welfare state apparatus, she suggests that "the state has no monopoly on moral regulation" (p. 165). Indeed, private or voluntary organizations continue to play a crucial role in health and social welfare in English Canada, although many of the activities which Valverde describes have become incorporated into state institutions.

An important theme throughout the book concerns might be termed a re-revisionist history of turn-of-the-

century feminism in Canada, as Valverde traces the use of feminine and masculine metaphors in social purity and moral reform discourses as well as the activities of women's organizations, female physicians, social workers, and deaconesses working with poor, immigrant, and working-class girls and women. Although she is sensitive to the ways in which Anglo-Saxon, middle-class feminists were positioned within their own race and class, and were limited by the kinds of positions made possible in prevailing discourses, she concludes that most of these women were not innocent of racism and classism. The position taken on immigration by the National Council of Women provides a strong case, while the work of deaconesses of the Fred Victor Mission in Toronto with poor and working-class women offers a much more nuanced picture. Likewise, Valverde's account of women reformers in settlement houses is sensitive to the ways in which settlements offered both practical assistance while also contributing to regulation of and intrusion into working-class people's lives.

Many parts of the story in this book are familiar to educational historians, but the combination of elements and fresh interpretation adds new dimensions to it. The period from 1885 to 1925 was one in which English Canada was transformed from a largely rural to a more urban-centred society, industrial and finance capitalism gained a firm hold on the economy, the population was growing through large-scale, mostly white immigration, and there was a proliferation of working-class social and

political organizing activity. The moral reform movements, Valverde says, constituted multifaceted and sometimes inconsistent responses by a mostly Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie towards these transformations. But while their efforts have previously either been applauded as well-intentioned help to the poor or written off as attempts to control working-class people, Valverde argues that "the social reform movements of the turn of the century helped to shape the bourgeoisie, which led the movements, as well as the working class, toward which they were generally aimed" (p. 15). Thus, the story she tells is about how these organizations and their social and cultural activities were integral to the construction of bourgeois class relations and bourgeois class subjectivities in English Canada, as well as being about forming "proper" relations among and subjectivities of the poor and working-class targets of these activities. Valverde is thus making the crucial point that "class" is not simply about working-class people, "gender" is not simply about women, "race" is not just a matter of people of colour (p. 16).

Although Valverde recognizes the centrality of economic factors, she argues that the construction of social relations and formation of subjectivity through turn-of-the-century purity organizations cannot be reduced to a question of class; it was equally and sometimes more importantly, a matter of gender, sex, and race/ethnicity (p. 166). The discourses, metaphors, and narrative strategies around the so-called white slavery panic, for example, were flexible enough to be

utilized by socialists and conservatives, feminists and anti-feminists, racists and assimilationists to represent "everything that was dangerous to single women in the new urban environment—and everything that was dangerous about such women" (p. 95). In this, as in other sections of the book, she is critical of Anglo-Saxon, middle-class feminist organizations for not challenging the racism or classism inherent in the "white slavery" panic, while at the same time acknowledging that there were differences among such feminists, and that they found themselves simultaneously arguing positions which today appear quite contradictory.

This book will delight many historians of education who are weary of what they see as too much jargon and not enough history in recent writings informed by post-structuralism. Although not a self-proclaimed post-structuralist by any means, Valverde borrows some approaches developed by such theorists. She explains why she chooses to do so, and then she gets on with the job of demonstrating by example what kind of history can then be written. Reading through the book, the uses of deconstruction, for example, are demonstrated in the ways she pays attention to how the discourses of moral reformers were organized, how they used allegories and rhetoric to structure meanings and relations among categories in discourse, and how the speech, writing, and public performance of moral reformers relied on dominant and popular cultural understandings and practices.

I have two minor reservations about the arguments made by Valverde

in *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*. Having read through the book, I would draw different, and perhaps not quite so sharply drawn, conclusions about the distinctions between the state and civil society. Although I agree it is important to attribute leadership of moral reform to a wide range of organizations, and that the formation of the welfare state in English Canada was (still is) uneven and inconsistent, some of the possible implications of this study are lost by drawing such clear boundaries between "the state" and "civil society." It seems to me that the issue is not so much one of determining which sphere was more important, but to consider the rich texture of educational, discursive, cultural, and organizational forms through which moral reformers worked to change social relations and social subjectivities in this period. Valverde has corrected the common error of attributing all agency to "the state," but she may have gone further to reject attribution of agency to "the state" altogether. Indeed, the accounts she gives in the book demonstrate that the state is not an "it" which acts in any kind of coherent or consistent fashion, but rather a particular (and particularly legitimated) form of organizing class, gender, and race/ethnic relations.

Likewise, there are places where Valverde moves quickly from analysis of discursive strategies (around racial and sexual purity, for example) to drawing conclusions about people's motives and intentions. It seems to me that she uses notions and strategies from post-structuralism, such as the centrality of language to the formation of subjectivity and the viability of

deconstruction for historical inquiry, while holding on to assumptions from more traditional social science, in which the investigation of writing is used to read off or reconstruct their authors' intentions. As I finished reading the book, I kept wondering whether such an alliance of theories and methodologies were possible. Although I did not arrive at any conclusion on that score, this is precisely the kind of question that important books ought to stimulate.

Mariana Valverde's book ought to be widely read by historians of education, and other historians and social scientists in Canada and North America. In rich detail and often brilliant interpretation she confronts a important period in Canadian social history and a controversial set of movements, many of whose social, cultural, and political legacies we continue to live with.

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Jean Barman. *The West Beyond the West—A History of British Columbia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. Pp. 429. \$35.00.

The West Beyond The West is the first major history of British Columbia since Martin Robin's two-volume political work of nearly twenty years