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Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender and Anti-vice Activism, 1887-1917*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006. \$ 30.00 hardcover.

Brian Donovan's analysis of widespread crusades against so-called "white slavery" in the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s builds on previous analyses of moralism in the Victorian era, particularly studies of the relationship between race, ethnicity, gender, and class in perceptions of morality. He argues that campaigns aiming to stamp out the vice of prostitution used gender, racial, and religious stereotypes to gather support for their cause. In fact, the assaults on white slavery helped construct a hierarchy of racial groups in the U.S., a hierarchy that included not only African Americans and Chinese immigrants, but also Jewish, Italian, Irish, Hungarian, and other newcomers from Europe.

Donovan's work is based on the use of "narratives" or "stories" related to prostitution and the problems of "fallen women." He uses "narrative" to cover a vast array of written and spoken material from the time, including pamphlets, letters, newspaper articles, novels, investigative reports, and pieces in popular magazines; as well as speeches on lynching, racial purity, and the phenomenon of white slavery. These narratives, he argues, were crucial "in the process of racial group-making and boundary maintenance during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the U.S.," (p. 3), just as stories about "black rapists" helped shape white dominance in the post-Reconstruction South. Donovan posits that white slavery stories provided a cultural resource that people could use to make arguments about gender and sex in the early 1900s.

Donovan examines the reactions of native-born whites to new European immigrant groups in Chicago, African Americans in New York City, and Chinese immigrants in San Francisco. In many cases, such as the Irish, immigrants worked hard to be seen as white, to distinguish themselves from free African American workers. In order to maintain "racial purity," he explains, the non-immigrant white majority felt it imperative to regulate sexual intimacy within and between groups. Racial "outsiders"—Blacks and certain groups of immigrants—were seen as sexually dangerous.

Donovan discusses a number of social reformers, often women, who used the topic of white slavery to warn about the dangers of large cities and the exploitation of poor women, including immigrant women. While many women reformers tended to "blame the victim" (seeing immigrant prostitutes as weak and conscienceless), others, particularly Jane Addams, pointed out the economic forces that drove women to prostitution. However, Donovan notes that even Addams felt that women might exaggerate low wages as the reason for their "fall." Addams was indeed a complex person; a broader analysis of her writings on immigration might have yielded a more comprehensive picture of her views about the white slave trade.

The book ends with an account of the demise of white slavery, brought about primarily, as Donovan explains it, by the rise of the social hygiene movement. This movement developed during the early 1900s as a response to the rise of venereal disease. The approach of World War I brought awareness of the link between prostitution, disease, and the infection of American troops. As the author puts it, "a scientific discourse of social hygiene gradually replaced white slavery storytelling" (p. 135). I found this conclusion to the book rather abrupt and undeveloped—why did this phenomenon bring the fear of white slavery to an end? What other factors might have played a role?

In general, the book is interesting and provocative. The study covers an important topic in social and political history. Its major liability is the vagueness of the concepts of "narratives" and "stories." To group pamphlets, scholarly books, novels, government reports, newspaper articles, cartoons, speeches, and letters all under one umbrella seems a bit haphazard. Are some of these sources more important than others in shaping public opinion? Do they resonate with different groups in society? Could the book in fact been written without using the term "narrative?"

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