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who take on a feminized role, such material might be seen as an encouragement of gender hierarchy even though a more sensitive reading might view it as a critique. No doubt many consumers take from this material the message Kendall finds in it. When one adds in Kendall's descriptions of some of the erotica he reviewed (52–68) and the lives of some of the performers (69–86), it is fair at least to question why gay men have fought so hard for the right to possess this material. Still, one can accept all of this and nevertheless understand why gay men would strongly oppose government regulation. Throughout *Gay Male Pornography* Kendall takes pornography defenders to task by comparing their liberationist and community-building rhetoric about erotica with ugly details about much of that material (e.g., 50, 143). Yet one may fairly ask whether a fundamentally homophobic government apparatus can be trusted to stand in the shoes of the gay community and determine what material promotes that community's equality (and equality more generally) and what material impedes it.

Kendall's description, analysis, and critique of gay pornography makes *Gay Male Pornography* an important addition to the literature, useful for anyone interested in gay studies, gender studies, or the study of sexuality and sexual expression. As a call for legal regulation, readers may find the book less convincing, especially if they either view the material more ambivalently than does Kendall, are skeptical about the fundamental beneficence of government intrusion into gay social space, or simply are philosophically committed to individual expression unless that expression presents a direct risk of immediate harm. But Kendall presents the case for regulation as well as I have seen; thus, readers without such precommitments may well find the argument more persuasive. Skeptical readers would also benefit from the force with which Kendall makes his claims. For these reasons, *Gay Male Pornography* would also be worthwhile reading for anyone interested in free speech law. It would be especially appropriate for American readers as a counterpoint to mainstream American legal doctrine that privileges speech over equality in almost all cases.

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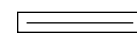

Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London. By Seth Koven. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004. Pp. 399. $29.95 (cloth).

Seth Koven has written a very “queer” book. It is an engaging study of philanthropy in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century London. By philanthropy, he means the activities of journalists, such as James Greenwood and Elizabeth Banks, who exposed the conditions of the poor in

their writings, as well as medical missionaries, like Thomas John Barnardo, who documented his work among the orphans of London in pamphlets and photographs. He also examines the work of other educated men and women from the middle and upper classes who devoted time and energy to the assistance of the lower classes. In particular, he is interested in women's charity work in general and men's involvement with the settlement houses of East London, especially with Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. He points out that these men and women were engaged in a phenomenon called "slumming," which had, by the late nineteenth century, lost its traditional connotation of "sensationalism, sexual transgression, and self-seeking gratification" (8) and which had been redefined as "charity, sociological research, Christian rescue, social work, [or] investigative journalism" (9). However, as Koven demonstrates throughout his book, the boundary between these two meanings was never so clear and simple. Behind the moral altruism of the elites lay "a kind of passion"—to use Henry James's phrase—that Koven sees as distinctly "queer," a term that he uses throughout his book. As he explains himself, "The widely shared imperative among well-to-do men and women to traverse class boundaries and befriend their outcast brothers and sisters in the slums was somehow bound up in their insistent eroticization of poverty and their quest to understand their own sexual subjectivities" (4).

Koven pursues his subject through a close reading of texts and images. He claims to use no single methodological or theoretical approach, although one could classify the work as an example of cultural history at its best. He writes: "If a methodology makes it possible to tease out meaning from my evidence, I have used it to the best of my abilities" (18). His analysis of class and gender differences allows him "to recapture the altogether messier mingling of good intentions and blinkered prejudices that informed [the reformers'] vision of the poor and of themselves" (3). In the process he provides some astonishing insights into the erotic and sexual nature of those well-meaning but prejudiced reformers.

James Greenwood was "The Amateur Casual," the pseudonym under which he wrote his sensational account of spending the night in one of the casual wards for homeless men in Lambert, London, in 1866. What made his account so sensational, according to Koven, was the not-too-subtle implication that the casual wards had turned into male brothels. Upon his arrival at the ward Greenwood was forced to perform a kind of "striptease" (39), after which he plunged his naked body into a pool of cold and dirty water that had been polluted by all the other men who had gone before him. This bath, which was supposed to have cleansed him, had in essence brought him into "a disconcerting intimacy" with the physically corrupt and morally degenerative inhabitants of the ward (39). The sleeping quarters only accentuated the promiscuity of the bath, since it was in the cold dark dormitory that men paired off to "club together," as Greenwood described the physical proximity of the scantily clad men. By playing off of the sexual

anxieties of his readers, Greenwood was able to initiate further investigations into the conditions of the casual wards by politicians and officials, who ultimately enacted a number of bureaucratic and parliamentary reforms, culminating in the 1898 Vagrancy Act. Furthermore, Greenwood inspired "a tradition of writing about culture and society, poverty and sexuality" (74) that included the works of Matthew Arnold, Blanchard Jerrold and Gustave Doré, Jack London, and George Orwell. What fascinates Koven about Greenwood's "A Night in the Workhouse" is "the complex links between sexual and social politics in modern British history, literature, and culture," which were not "exclusively queer" but which certainly did end up in "opening up new lines of inquiry" (86–87).

Thomas John Barnardo was one of the most influential philanthropists of the nineteenth century. Trained as a medical doctor but inspired by Christian missionary work, he founded a child-rescue institution that provided a variety of services to the adolescents of East London. Despite his successes, his unorthodox ways, which contrasted with the secular scientific methods of the Charity Organization Society (COS), came under severe criticism and scrutiny in 1877. Through a sophisticated analysis of the records, Koven reveals that "doubts about Barnardo's personal truthfulness cannot be separated from the anxieties about his sexuality, the sexual conduct of his staff, and the supposedly sexual character of some of his photographs" (93). Ultimately, the charges of sexual misconduct were dismissed as mere rumors in a vindictive campaign, but they helped raise questions about his other practices, especially about his use of photography to document his work and to raise money for his mission. Barnardo freely admitted that he staged his photographs, but he claimed that they were "artistic" or "representational" or "typical" of the "truth" that lay at the core of the subject's transformation. Many individuals, however, saw them as "fiction" that exploited their subjects, and a few even thought that they bordered on the pornographic. Koven argues that "the tension between sexual innocence and sexual experience lay at the heart of the urgent sympathy he evoked in his images of ragged girls," but that "sexuality . . . in his representation of ragged boys was neither explicit nor intentional," because both sets of images appealed to different but related sensibilities (130). These tensions, however, were never fully resolved by Barnardo, his photographers, his subjects, or even his viewing audience.

Elizabeth Banks was "The American Girl in London" who took England "by storm" in the 1890s by impersonating working-class women and by writing about her experiences. Unlike "The Amateur Casual," however, "The American Girl" excluded any kind of sexuality in her writings. Instead, she focused on class, gender, and nationality. Koven explains this choice by writing: "Banks believed that discussing sex and putting herself in sexual danger were incompatible with the delicate balance she sought to maintain between her fairly conservative vision of womanliness, the gender ambiguities of the vocation of female journalist, and her desire for fame and fortune"

(158). In contrast to other female journalists who wrote about the slums of East London, notably Clementina Black and Margaret Harkness, Banks claimed that she undertook her journalistic investigations for no altruistic reasons at all; "I did it for copy!" she explained in her autobiography (160). This frank statement is what shocked Victorian and Edwardian women so much in the 1890s and 1900s, and it allowed them and Banks herself to reflect upon the differences between "The American Girl" and "The English Lady"—a difference that Koven also explores.

In the second part of his book Koven leaves behind his concentration on individuals and events and instead focuses on groups of upper- and middle-class men and women who worked and lived in the slums. In chapter 4 he admits that "for some [elite women], slumming was merely an evening's titillation, fodder for conversations at fashionable dinner parties. But for many others, their encounters with dirt stimulated an abiding desire to clean up the city, to gain deeper empathy for their poor sisters, and to live in loving communities with like-minded women" (198). Koven, of course, is interested in the latter women, who rejected the demands of the marriage market in order to "go dirty," as Alice Lucy Hobson put it. In the process these women formed communities in which they could perpetuate their school-day romantic friendships and form new social ties to their poorer sisters. Some commentators worried that "there will be something the matter with the ladies" (198), but most Victorians and Edwardians were convinced that these same-sex relationships were "pure," because women were considered "passionless" and "selfless."

Upper- and middle-class men, on the other hand, were frequently suspected of improper relationships among themselves and with their lower-class brethren. In a superb comparison of the asceticism of Oxford House and the aestheticism of Toynbee Hall, Koven shows that "settlements were themselves places where young men could try on new masculine styles and explore dissident sexual desires while basking in the limelight for their altruistic sacrifice" (273). Oxford House's rejection of sexuality in favor of celibacy raised questions about its homosocial environment, whereas Toynbee Hall's emphasis on aestheticism raised questions about its possible association with the emerging homosexual subculture. Both settlement houses claimed to be constructing a new "manly" man, a kind of "muscular Christian," but many of the settlers were considered too "effeminate" by other settlers and by the poor.

Many of these male settlement dwellers went on to have distinguished careers in Parliament, the Church of England, and state and municipal governments, and their policies and ideas had a tremendous impact on the development of the welfare state in England in the twentieth century. And yet this extremely nuanced cultural analysis based on class, gender, and sexuality does not provide much insight into the political issues of the day or even the political issues of our times. This is surprising, since Koven concludes his book with comments on the 1983–85 commission assembled

by the archbishop of Canterbury to investigate "Urban Priority Areas." Koven states: "Conceptualizing the past in terms of heroes and villains, saints and sinners, may serve a powerful, even necessary, political message. It does not, however, make for very good history" (284). Nevertheless, Koven's "very good history" with its extraordinary insights into Victorian and Edwardian philanthropy leaves the reader wondering what his own "political message" might be.

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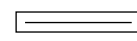

The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865–1920. By Alecia P. Long. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004. Pp. xv + 282. $39.95 (cloth).

When the Southern Historical Association holds its annual meeting in New Orleans, the program committee finds itself besieged with proposals. Historians apparently want their employers to fund a few fun days, or nights, of escape into the wonders of a city known for its food, drink, and open sexuality. If New Orleans's reputation as what one nineteenth-century visitor called "the Great Southern Babylon" has even taken hold among historians, not known for their partying or for being "in the know," then New Orleans truly has gained, as Alecia P. Long writes, "an enduring reputation as a sinful, sensual, and sybaritic place" (3). How that came to be is one of the important themes of her wonderful new book, *The Great Southern Babylon*. Although the creation and operation of Storyville, the legally defined area of the city where respectable New Orleans tried to isolate prostitution, is its central focus, Long builds her narrative around five court cases heard by the Louisiana Supreme Court.

The first involved a former slave, Adeline Stringer, who kept a boarding house and had lived, off and on, with a white man, Joseph Mathis, in a relationship similar to plaçage, an accepted antebellum practice in which white men and women of color established long-term relationships that carried provisions for financial support. In 1884 Joseph told Adeline that he could no longer live openly with her, although they maintained contact. When Joseph died not too long after, Stringer sued for a part of his estate. Joseph's brother fought her claim and won, and Long interprets his victory as a sign that New Orleans's white community had grown less tolerant of sex across the color line.

The second case Long analyzes did not involve race but rather the operation of a concert saloon in a "respectable" part of the city. Concert saloons, which opened in New Orleans in the 1860s, featured performances with sexual themes and drinks served by women generally considered to