

## Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-1954

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Article abstract

Little historical work has been done in Canada on public drinking in general and public drinking after prohibition in particular. For British Columbia this neglect is a real oversight because hotel saloons were transformed into hotel beer parlours after prohibition. The first parlours opened in Vancouver in 1925, and, like saloons, they catered to a working-class clientele. Parlours held sway until 1954 when a new Government Liquor Act provided for additional venues of public drinking. One did not have to sit long in a Vancouver parlour to realize that more than alcohol consumption was being regulated. Parlours also regulated class, gender and sexuality, and race.

Parlour regulation is better understood as moral regulation rather than social control. Moral regulation is a useful analytical perspective because it emphasizes the dynamic qualities of regulation, the multitude of regulators, and broad conceptions of knowledge and power. Advocates of moral regulation, however, tend to deemphasize state power. I argue that the state's influence should not be minimized to a point that obscures the significance of internalization, acquiescence, and coercion. In Vancouver's beer parlours the state remained an important manager of the marginal.

# Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-1954

Robert A. Campbell

FOR THE FEW CANADIAN HISTORIANS involved in alcohol history, temperance and related issues remain alluring themes. Little historical work has been done in Canada on public drinking in general and public drinking after prohibition in particular. This neglect is a real oversight in British Columbia because hotel saloons were transformed into hotel beer parlours after the province's brief experience with prohibition between 1917 and 1921. The first parlours opened in Vancouver in 1925, and, like saloons, they catered to a working-class clientele. Parlours held sway until 1954 when a new Government Liquor Act provided for additional venues of public drinking. One did not have to sit long in a Vancouver parlour to realize that more than alcohol consumption was being regulated. Parlours also regulated class, gender and sexuality, and race.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Despite the title of Cheryl Krasnick Warsh's collection, *Drink in Canada: Historical Essays* (Montreal and Kingston 1993), the majority of the essays are oriented to temperance subjects. The same is true, of course, of Jan Noel's award-winning *Canada Dry: Temperance Crusades Before Confederation* (Toronto 1995). As for Sharon Cook's study of the Ontario WCTU, it is as much a work on evangelicalism as temperance. See Sharon Anne Cook, *"Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal and Kingston 1995). *The Changing Face of Drink: Substance, Imagery, and Behaviour* (Ottawa 1997), a collection edited by Jack S. Blocker Jr. and Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, is more diverse. Yet of the three articles devoted to Canada, temperance is an important theme in two of them. On prohibition and its aftermath, see Robert A. Campbell, *Demon Rum or Easy Money: Government Control of Liquor in British Columbia from Prohibition to Privatization* (Ottawa 1991), especially Chapters One and Two.

Robert A. Campbell, "Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-1954," *Labour/Le Travail*, 44 (Fall 1999), 109-27.

As Jack Blocker has noted, alcohol historians have adopted two broad explanatory approaches to analyze drinking. The first emphasizes social control in which the state and allied elites "define the conditions under which ordinary drinking takes place." The second is a "cultural model" that "emphasizes the power of group norms in determining individual drinking behaviour, whether the group is defined by gender, nationality, social class, ethnicity or race." He argues that historians must use both models to understand drinking and its regulation. Without a doubt, though, social control has been the dominant perspective.<sup>2</sup>

Many scholars have become disenchanted with the concept of social control. The phrase implies a linear process of regulation that emphasizes state coercion and reactive resistance to it. As Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde succinctly put the matter: "The historical past is far too complex, and people's lives shot through with too many contradictions and ambiguities, to be easily captured by this tired dichotomy of top-down domination versus bottom-up resistance."<sup>3</sup>

Social historians seeking some more flexible analytical tools have delved into moral regulation literature. Much, but not all, of this work is grounded in Foucault's idea of governmentality, "the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self." Joan Sangster has described moral regulation as "the process whereby some behaviors, ideals, and values were marginalized and proscribed while others were legitimized and naturalized." Moral regulation refers to a process of normalization, the attempt to render natural and obvious what is actually constructed and contested. Ultimately, as Mary Louise Adams has noted, "moral regulation limits the forms of expression available to us by masking difference with an illusion of social unity. What are taken for 'normal' are, for the most part, representations of dominant interests."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Jack S. Blocker, "Introduction," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 27 (November 1994), 229-30; see also, Patricia E. Prestwich, "The Regulation of Drinking: New Work in the Social History of Alcohol," *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 21 (Fall 1994), 369-71; Gareth Stedman Jones, "Class expressionism versus social control? A critique of recent trends in the social history of 'leisure,'" *History Workshop Journal*, 4 (Autumn 1977), 162-170.

<sup>3</sup>Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, "Introduction," in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, ed., *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* (Toronto 1992), xviii; see also, Stanley Cohen, "The Critical Discourse on 'Social Control': Notes on the Concept as a Hammer," *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 17 (1989), 347-357.

<sup>4</sup>Mitchell Dean, "'A Social Structure Of Many Souls': Moral Regulation, Government and Self-Formation," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19 (1994), 158 (quoting Foucault); Joan Sangster, "Incarcerating 'Bad Girls': The Regulation of Sexuality through the Female Refuges Act in Ontario, 1920-1945," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7 (1996), 241; Mary Louise Adams, "In Sickness and in Health: State Formation, Moral Regulation, and Early VD Initiatives in Ontario," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 28 (Winter 1993-94), 119; see also, Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, ed., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (London 1991), 102-103; Philip

Regulation is informed by and reinforces particular kinds of knowledge. "Knowledge" here means more than given information that is true or absolute. It is also a process of ordering reality, and its truth is made not discovered. Moreover, by linking power to knowledge Foucault broadened conceptions of power to include much more than coercion. "Power" also refers to the contingent process of creating understandings, of naming. Foucault shifted his gaze away from state coercion and examined power and its effects in the "capillaries" of society. From this perspective regulation is a process that involves many actors, including those being regulated. The state is not necessarily the only regulator, and some would argue not even the most important one. As well, the state does not act consistently, and the results of state regulation are not always those desired or expected.<sup>5</sup>

Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo have described the history of moral regulation in Canada as "a way of managing the marginal, whether that marginality was conferred by race, class, or gender." While the behaviour of people was important, it was so because *behaviour categorized individuals. Much of the power of regulation was derived from defining people and space, and regulation was closely linked to status and place. Most of the regulatory initiative came from state officials, but Strange and Loo emphasize that state success was often less than spectacular. The "lofty goals and high hopes" were well-nigh impossible to achieve, and regulation often "failed by its own standards." Moreover, regulation was expensive, complex, and time consuming. In the end negotiating morality often proved to be cheaper and easier than eliminating vice.*<sup>6</sup>

Moral regulation is a useful analytical perspective because it blends cultural and control approaches to regulation. Yet moral regulation and state power are not

Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford 1985), 4.

Another stream of moral regulation literature winds its way back to Marx, usually via Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Mariana Valverde has argued that Marxian and Foucaultian approaches to moral regulation share much "political common ground" because they both focus on "power and domination." See Mariana Valverde, "Editor's introduction," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19 (1994), vi-vii (quotations).

<sup>5</sup>Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*, Colin Gordon, ed. (New York 1980), 96-7, 119, 133; Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York 1988), 2. Foucault discussed his conceptions of power in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1, An Introduction* (1978; New York 1990), 92-102.

<sup>6</sup>Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939* (Toronto 1997), 149-51; see also, Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, "The Traveling Show Menace: Contested Regulation in Turn-of-Century Ontario," *Law and Society Review*, 29 (1995), 639-667. On space and regulation see Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill 1992), 15-21; Mary Louise Adams, "Almost anything can happen: A search for sexual discourse in the urban spaces of 1940s Toronto," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19 (1994), 217-232; Nicholas K. Blomley, "Text and context: rethinking the law-space nexus," *Progress in Human Geography*, 13 (1989), 512-34.

necessarily in conflict. An examination of the regulation of Vancouver's beer parlours, particularly in regard to parlour patrons, leads to the conclusion that the state remained a powerful regulator. Despite the complexity of regulation and the multitude of regulators, the state's influence should not be minimized to a point that obscures the significance of internalization, acquiescence, and coercion.

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Vancouver beer parlours opened in former hotel saloons in the downtown core. The bulk of the male patrons were drawn from the city's casual labourers, dock, mill, and railway workers, and itinerant loggers. They often stayed in the hotels attached to parlours before they headed back to the woods. A few Vancouver parlours were located in first-class hotels and they generally attracted little official attention. Liquor Control Board (LCB) expectations and policies were oriented to the lower-end hotels with their over-whelmingly working-class clientele.<sup>7</sup>

State officials sought to create licensed facilities that would not offer opportunities for what they considered deviance. As so-called workingmen's clubs, parlours were designated as suspect space occupied by suspect people. The basic assumption was that parlours and the people in them needed to be closely regulated. While temperance groups had lost the battle over the return of public drinking, they had been successful in defining the traditional saloon environment as immoral. Hence the parlours had no stand-up bar, no food, and no entertainment—just beer served by waiters to people seated at small tables. Parlour policy was clearly linked to conceptions of decency. No one issued a document that defined decency, and it remained flexible and unwritten, as much of parlour policy was unwritten. In practice decency generally meant moderate consumption, appropriate comportment, and heterosexual propriety.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>On the working world of Vancouver see Robert A.J. McDonald, "Working," in Working Lives Collective, ed., *Working Lives: Vancouver 1886-1986* (Vancouver 1985), 25-33. In his semi-autobiographical novel, *Deadman's Ticket*, Peter Trower captured the spirit of the urban environment of beer parlours in the early 1950s:

The usual crew of tenderloin regulars thronged the sidewalk around me — knots of carousing loggers lurching noisily from bar to bar; shabbily dressed East End housewives looking for bargains at the Army and Navy or the Save-on-Meat store; scrofulous winos with grimy paws cadging dimes in raspy voices; cut-rate hookers wearily heading for toast and black coffee at some greasy spoon cafe; a furtive heroin pusher bound for the Broadway Hotel — Vancouver's notorious "Corner" [Hastings and Main] — to set up shop at a dim beer parlour table....

See *Deadman's Ticket* (Madeira Park, B.C. 1996), 27.

<sup>8</sup>See Campbell, *Demon Rum or Easy Money*, 50-55. The original parlour regulations can be found in British Columbia, Liquor Control Board (hereafter LCB), *4th Annual Report* (hereafter *4th AR*) (Victoria 1925); *Vancouver Province*, 31 May 1925.

The comportment expectations of decency were clearly linked to class. In most parlours inspectors were always prepared for a rough crowd, and they seemed surprised when they did not find trouble. After touring the Melbourne Hotel in February 1928 an inspector commented that "considering that this premises caters largely to the Longshoremen trade and Fishermen, the patronage is kept pretty well in hand...." A quarter of a century later these sentiments were echoed in an inspector's tour of six downtown eastside hotels: "considering the influx of loggers and construction men ... at this time of year for the Christmas Holidays, conditions were fairly orderly throughout the east end of the city."<sup>9</sup>

The authorities attempted to curb the excesses of working-class sociability. The inspectors tried hard to enforce the ban against games, dancing, and music, including singing, all of which officials believed encouraged a saloon-like atmosphere and excessive camaraderie. Singing caused the most problems for the Board because patrons' voices were difficult to regulate, and some operators condoned it. *A convivial atmosphere with thirst-inspiring songs could enhance beer sales.* Usually parlour operators were just warned about singing, but in March 1951 an inspector stood on the sidewalk outside the Dominion Hotel on Abbot Street and observed:

...mass-singing by the patrons in the ladies's section of the licensed premises, the leader apparently being Mr. [E.M.], licensee, who had a megaphone and was moving from one table to another. At intervals he handed the megaphone to the patrons, who continued to sing.<sup>10</sup>

According to the Chief Inspector, the operator claimed he only used the megaphone for calling customers to the telephone, and "when questioned in regard to patrons singing through it, he stated, 'They took it away from me.'" The LCB took his licence away for ten days. The British Columbia Hotels Association (BCHA) posted signs in parlours that warned patrons about singing and playing musical instruments. Yet with ingenuity and defiance customers still sang, sometimes with the assistance of operators.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), LCB, GR770, Box 12, File 12, Miller to Hosc, 8 February 1928; BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-326, Bruce to Director, 15 December 1952.

<sup>10</sup>BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-327, Chief Inspector to Chairman, 27 March 1951.

<sup>11</sup>BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-327, Chief Inspector to Chairman, 27 March 1951 (quotations); File 121-327, Secretary to Dominion Holdings, 28 March 1951; BCHA notice is from BCA, LCB, GR770, Box 5, File 199. For other examples of singing see the list of notations for the Yale Hotel (BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-367), the West Hotel (Box 9, File 121-366), the Anchor Hotel (Box 7, File 121-310) and Marr Hotel (Box 8, File 121-335). Music initially caught the authorities off guard. The original regulations only banned games, sports, and dancing. Music and musical instruments were explicitly prohibited the next year. See LCB, *4th AR*, and *5th Annual Report* (Victoria 1926). On pub singing

Parlour decency was also quite gendered. Hotel saloons had been closed to women, and provincial regulations barred women from working in the parlours, unless they were part of the parlour business. Yet parlours, technically at least, were open to female patrons. Some observers claimed the presence of women would curb the excesses of male camaraderie. Initially many parlours banned women both to placate male customers who did not want them there and to prevent temperance groups from being able to damn parlours as havens for prostitutes. Soon, however, in concert with the LCB, operators created a separate area for men only and another for women and couples, or "ladies and escorts." The goal was to separate unattached men from unattached women, ostensibly to limit prostitution and the spread of venereal disease. These areas became more rigidly separated by partitions erected during World War II.<sup>12</sup>

In April 1942, when the LCB ordered all Vancouver parlours to install barriers, the partitions had to be at least six feet high and constructed to "permit no visibility" between the two parlours. In 1947 the LCB received statutory authority to force hotels to improve their facilities. Parlour restrictions became more elaborate. Higher, more permanent, partitions moved closer to the service bar, as one bar usually served both parlours. Of some parlours the LCB demanded a partition right to the bar or a gate between the partition and the bar. When simple swing gates failed to control patrons, the Board asked for locked gates or those with electric devices to open and close them. The Board also required that some parlours hire floormen to guard the gated area or the increasingly common separate street entrance for women and escorts.<sup>13</sup>

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as a form of popular radicalism, see Iorwerth Prothero, *Radical Artisans in England and France* (Cambridge 1997), 290-8. On public drinking and sociability in general see, Thomas Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton 1988), 14; Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours For What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York 1983), 40-59; Madelon Powers, "The 'Poor Man's Friend': Saloonkeepers, Workers, and the Code of Reciprocity in U.S. Barrooms, 1870-1920," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 45 (Spring 1994), 3-5; W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Parisian Cafe: Sociability Among the French Working Class* (Baltimore 1996).

<sup>12</sup>All of these issues are discussed in much greater detail in Robert A. Campbell, "Ladies and Escorts: Gender Segregation and Public Policy in British Columbia Beer Parlours, 1925-1945," *BC Studies*, 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995), 119-38.

<sup>13</sup>BCA, LCB, GR770, Box 5, File 199A, Wyllie to Sir, 23 April 1942; British Columbia, *Statutes*, 1947, c.53 ("An Act to amend the 'Government Liquor Act'"), s.11; British Columbia, LCB, *28th Annual Report* (Victoria 1949); see for example, BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-337, Kimberly to Chief Inspector, 12 November 1949 (partitions, Ivanhoe Hotel); File 121-323, list of notations (partition to bar, Columbia Hotel); File 121-350, Pettit to Director of Licensing, 5 August 1952 (gate and floorman, Niagara Hotel); File 121-362, list of notations (electric gate lock, Stanley hotel).

Still, LCB inspectors grew frustrated with their inability to check what they called "crossovers" or "wandering." Crossing over most commonly referred to unattached men entering the ladies and escorts' parlour or walking from the men-only side to the mixed side. "Wandering" was often used in the same way, but it also referred to movement within a beer parlour, particularly male movement from table to table on the mixed side. Inspectors claimed that some parlour operators did little to stop unauthorized movement. In June 1951 an inspector described an unusually blatant example of wandering in the New Fountain on Cordova Street: "two men — un-attached — were observed carrying their table, full of beer, over to two un-attached females."<sup>14</sup>

While the Inspectors' files are full of references to male crossovers and wanderers, occasionally women took the initiative. In May 1949, for example, an undercover investigator in the Royal Hotel on Granville Street noticed "Ladies in the mens [sic] section. One woman standing at the bar drinking beer." From the agent's point of view their behaviour may have been brazen, but it was also brave. Men, properly accompanied, were expected to be on the ladies' side, but the Men's side was completely closed to women. Unescorted women who wanted male company usually encouraged or coaxed men to come to their side where the women could exert more power over space. A woman who received unwanted male attention on her side could have her harasser ejected as an unattached man.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the frustration of the inspectors, we should be mindful of their files. A parlour that caused little trouble warranted little attention or record keeping. Even temperance groups, which damned *all* parlours from the beginning, had to acknowledge during the initial intense debate over them that some parlours were quiet, orderly places. Approximately 1930 (the document is undated), the British Columbia Temperance League compiled a list of what it called "Beer Saloons in Vancouver and Record." For many entries the compiler included a short description, such as "A Dive" (Dominion). Yet the Haddon was described as "Decent" and three others — the Ivanhoe, Kingston, and Martinique — were listed as "Rather Decent," and none was located in an upscale hotel.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, the LCB used its coercive powers to encourage parlour compliance. The Board worked closely, if not always harmoniously, with police and health officials. It also had statutory authority to "suspend or cancel any beer licence for such reason as to the Board may seem sufficient." In addition, liquor authorities

<sup>14</sup>For examples on the flexible use of "wandering" see BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-329, list of notations; Box 9, File 121-349, Inspector to Chief Inspector, 24 June 1951 (quotation).

<sup>15</sup>BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-358, "?" to Chief Inspector, 2 May 1949 (Royal). On women coaxing men see, for example, Box 8, File 121-332, Haywood to Chernecki; 10 March 1952 (Grand Union).

<sup>16</sup>BCA, Alcohol Research Education Council, Add. Mss. 17, Vol. 1, File 12, "Beer Saloons in Vancouver and Record."



sent lists of interdicted persons to parlour operators. People under interdiction orders had lost their right to purchase liquor in stores or parlours.<sup>17</sup>

With full support of the LCB, parlour operators took the initiative to ban specific individuals who were considered troublemakers. The LCB and parlour operators often named women drinkers as suspected prostitutes, which had real regulatory effect. After a December 1947 inspection of the West Hotel, the LCB sent an undercover investigator to watch the parlour. On 23 December he commented that "no open soliciting was seen, but the women companions of the men patrons were rather of the easy virtue type." On 29 December he still saw no soliciting, but "some of the women present did not come under heading of 'Ladies'." On 11 January 1948 he again saw nothing untoward, but "some of the women present looked as if their professions were more ancient than honorable." Later that year the hotel banned all single women from registering as guests.<sup>18</sup>

Effective restrictions placed on male behaviour were less obvious. On the men-only side, small tables and the ban on standing while drinking usually prevented large gatherings, but in small groups men could still chat, boast, and treat. Treating remained the mainstay of beer purchase by men in groups. It reinforced male reciprocity, and opponents had long argued treating promoted excessive consumption since a man would lose face if he left before he had bought his round. Even if treating *per se* did not encourage consumption, men were fairly free, and more free than women, to consume a lot of cheap beer. Serving intoxicated people violated the rules, but intoxication was a subjective and gendered assessment. An unattached woman could find herself ejected from a parlour for intoxication, even if she had little or nothing to drink. The real limits for men were excessive rowdiness, its opposite, sleeping, or the loss of control over bodily functions. In short, parlour regulation circumscribed male sociability, but it certainly did not eliminate it.<sup>19</sup>

Many men continued to long for the old days of a completely-male drinking environment. It was a common opinion that women restricted sociability as much if not more than the state. In 1926 the *Vancouver Province* had supported a proposed ban on all women, even though the paper accepted that women had caused no trouble in the parlours. The paper claimed there was "an instinctive aversion in the

<sup>17</sup>British Columbia, *Revised Statutes of British Columbia*, 1924, c.146 ("Government Liquor Amendment Act"), s.27(5) (quotation); BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-368, Murray to Secretary, 22 April 1954 (interdicted list). On interdiction in general see, British Columbia, *Statutes*, 1921, c.30 ("Government Liquor Act"), s.57-60.

<sup>18</sup>The three investigator's reports are in BCA, LCB, GR52 Box 9, File 121-366, as is the 1948 inspector's report noting that single women could not register.

<sup>19</sup>The Temperance League continued to link treating with a saloon environment; see, for example, *Vancouver Province*, 14 May 1940. The new Government Liquor Act of 1953 did ban treating, but only on the part of parlour operators. See British Columbia, *Regulations Made Under the Government Liquor Act*, (B.C. Reg. 528/59), Division 5 [5.16 (a)].

public mind — it exists, so the hotelmen say, among many of the men who frequent beer halls — against the idea of women in these places.” Mr. Charles Hurt, who supported women in parlours, allowed that “there are many men who can not be happy unless they are telling or listening to lewd stories or punctuating their conversation with a series of oaths, and such men do, no doubt, find their liberty of action circumscribed by the presence of ladies in the parlor.” As late as 1954, Jack Johnson, at 75 still a waiter in the Princeton Hotel parlour, remembered his time in the old saloons. He claimed, “there wasn’t half the trouble there is today.” Saloons were better than parlours “because there were no women allowed in the bars in those days.” In 1963, when the partitions began to come down, one male customer lamented, “where can we go if we want to have a quiet beer and tell a few good jokes?”<sup>20</sup>

As for the public expression of masculine sexuality, the LCB obviously tried hard to prevent unaccompanied men from encountering unescorted women. At best, the results were mixed. These official efforts regulated women more than men and were directed to the Ladies and Escorts side.

On the men-only side the Board tried to make sure male interaction remained non-sexual. By the early 1950s the Castle Hotel on Granville Street was known as a rendezvous for gay men. What provoked the inspectors was not so much gay men drinking together but their attempts to have sex in beer parlours. For example, in July 1952 an inspector responded to a complaint about a hole in the wall between two toilets in the men’s washroom of the Stratford Hotel on Keefer Street. He interviewed the manager and bartender who admitted that this was actually the second hole they had found. The inspector did not leave until a janitor had “put a metal sheet covering over hole.” He also warned the operators that “they must keep a sharp look out for anyone going in Gents washroom for immoral purposes,” and that he intended to notify the police.<sup>21</sup>

As Steven Maynard has argued, “holes made in the partitions of lavatory walls were evidence of the extent to which men who sought sex with other men appropriated public spaces for their own sexual uses.” The city of Vancouver had long been aware of such spatial appropriation. Public toilets built in the 1920s had attendants’ rooms with large glass walls so that officials could regulate the behaviour of patrons. In beer parlours inspectors paid much attention to toilets. The annual inspection forms required that they comment on the existence and kind of male facilities in the Ladies parlour and on the general cleanliness of all toilets. Inspectors tended to conflate cleanliness with morality. They took a particularly dim view of what they described as obscene writing on the walls. Especially on the men-only

<sup>20</sup> *Vancouver Province*, editorial, 29 July 1926, 8 August 1926, Magazine Section (Hurt), 23 November 1954, 4 December 1963. See also Valerie Hey, *Patriarchy and Pub Culture* (London 1986), 69-70.

<sup>21</sup> Trower, *Deadman’s Ticket*, 166, 210; BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-364, Pettit to Haywood, 10 July 1952.

side, gay men had some success in making parlour washrooms a gay site, but they also sought out less regulated places. Beer parlours were subject to both police observation and LCB surveillance, but Vancouver's unlicensed cabarets and clubs were not subject to LCB inspection.<sup>22</sup>

By the early 1950s the New Fountain on Cordova Street was also known for its homosexual clientele. Located in the heart of skid road, it appealed to lesbians as well as gays. Peter Trower's fictional Terry Belshaw described the parlour in 1952:

The customers were mostly women, some of them in black leather jackets and ultra-short haircuts and making no secret of their sexual preference. I recognized Mitch the Witch with a smashing brunette. He acknowledged me with his decadent choir boy smirk. On tighter scrutiny, I saw that his seemingly-female companion was a man in drag.<sup>23</sup>

The LCB considered the New Fountain one of the more notorious beer parlours, but its recorded notoriety was not linked to lesbians or gays. In the summer of 1951 an inspector submitted a long, detailed report on the wild conditions of the New Fountain. His antipathy toward the New Fountain was obvious, but his concerns were prosaic by parlour standards: drunkenness, crossovers, and prostitutes.<sup>24</sup>

The regulatory priority in parlours was the suppression of illicit heterosexuality. The formal regulations prohibited the presence of "persons of a notoriously bad character, or disorderly persons," and since the terms were undefined, they could have been used against just about anyone. Yet they were confined primarily to women named as prostitutes. Inspectors may have conflated "lesbian" with prosti-

<sup>22</sup>Steven Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890-1930," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 5(1994), 237 (quotation); Margaret W. Andrews, "Sanitary Conveniences and the Retreat of the Frontier: Vancouver, 1886-1926," *BC Studies*, 87 (Autumn 1990), 21; David S. Churchill, "Coming Out in A Cold Climate," MA thesis, University of Toronto, 1993, 57-61; BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-326, "1" to Chief Inspector, 22 July 1951 (obscene writing, Dodson). In 1963, for example, the police described the unlicensed Montreal Cabaret on East Hastings as "a hangout for queers and appears unsuitable for a [liquor] licence in our opinion." See British Columbia, Records Management Branch (hereafter BCRMB), Attorney General Files (hereafter AG Files), Reel 619, "List of Premises Operating as Cabarets, etc. in Vancouver, B.C.," n.d. [1963] Please note: these Attorney General Files have been transferred to the BCA.

<sup>23</sup>Trower, *Deadman's Ticket*, 210. In the late 1950s Stephanie Ozard remembered cruising Granville Street looking for a lesbian bar. An unsympathetic man told her she belonged at the New Fountain. Despite its location, she was pleased to find a meeting place for lesbians. See *Forbidden Love: The Unabashed Stories of Lesbian Lives*, prod. Margaret Pettigrew and Ginny Sikeman, dir. Aerlyn Weissman and Lynne Fernie, 85 minutes, National Film Board of Canada, 1992, videocassette.

<sup>24</sup>On the New Fountain see previously cited inspector's report dated 24 June 1951 and BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-349, Chairman to Ely 17 July 1951.

tute, especially after World War II. As Donna Penn has argued, in Cold War United States, officials attempted to make lesbians more visible and dangerous by linking them to prostitutes as examples of sexual degeneracy.<sup>25</sup>

In any event, parlour inspectors were attuned to a variety of gestures and behaviours that brought men and women together. Some inspectors probably did not see or were fooled by the fluidity of gendered behaviour. While a single woman entering a parlour often aroused suspicion, two women or a group of women might not, especially if they were femme rather than butch lesbians. Gay men could pass as straight, but be visible to other gay men with the use of well understood codes. The performance could be much more complex with women acting as men and men as women. They could make a mockery of the separate sections for men only and ladies and escorts, as could more transgendered people whose appearance, performance, or physical attributes defied any simple or fixed categories of "male" or "female."<sup>26</sup>

Ironically, the requirement of a men-only parlour facilitated the gathering of gay men and transformed some parlours into gay sites, but not sites exclusively for gay men. Just as important, the LCB did not appear to make the suppression of gay sociability a high priority, as long as the sociability remained non-sexual. For post-war Toronto David Churchill has argued that liquor inspectors were aware of the presence of gay men in taverns, but anxiety about their patronage reflected the personal feelings of inspectors rather than any board policy directed against them. The Ontario board seemed more interested in explicit violations of the liquor act. At least as far as working-class facilities are concerned, Vancouver and Toronto appear to stand in contrast to New York City. George Chauncey has emphasized that with the end of prohibition and the creation of the State Liquor Authority, New York officials were unrelenting with their campaign against even the presence of gay men in bars. Their efforts intensified after the war, despite a court ruling that the simple presence of gay men was not illegal. It seems fitting that the rebirth of

<sup>25</sup>LCB, 4th AR (quotation). On conflating "lesbian" with "prostitute," see Donna Penn, "The Sexualized Woman: The Lesbian, the Prostitute, and the Containment of Female Sexuality in Postwar America," in Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia 1994), 359; see also, Mary Louise Adams, "Youth, Corruptibility, and English-Canadian Postwar Campaigns against Indecency," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6 (1995), 108-115.

<sup>26</sup>On the performative qualities of gender see Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On The Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York 1993); see also Holly Devor, "Gender Blending: When Two is Not Enough," MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1985, iii-iv; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World* (New York, 1994), 348-9; Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender* (Philadelphia 1993), 238; Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul* (Boston 1995), 88-89. On sexuality in general see, Gail Hawkes, *A Sociology of Sex and Sexuality* (Buckingham 1996).

the gay liberation movement in New York, the 1969 Stonewall rebellion, took place outside a bar.<sup>27</sup>

Beer parlour decency was also quite racialized, and white, Anglo-Celtic, males were the standard by which others were judged. Yet, like gender, "race" was not only a fluid category, it also was sometimes difficult to see because of its behavioural qualities. As Elaine Ginsberg has argued, while appearance is important, racial categories are also performative. The term "passing" refers to how a variety of identities, be they of gender, sexuality, or even class, are constructed and shed. Yet the rationale and agency in passing can be more complex than an individual simply choosing a different identity.<sup>28</sup>

Racial appearance and performance came together in the regulation of the gender relations of parlour customers. In many circumstances men of colour could drink in parlours without incident, but in the company of white women their behaviour marked them as coloured and liable to censure from state authorities, parlour operators, and other customers. The potential for miscegenation threatened the dominance of white men and ultimately destabilized the category of "white."

For example, in October 1952 a man and a woman entered the ladies and escorts side of the Martin Hotel beer parlour. At first the waiter ignored them, and then, according to the couple, they were told that mixed-raced couples were not served. Quite embarrassed, the woman wrote the LCB and said that, on his own, her "Hindu" friend had been served without incident in three other parlours. At the Martin, though, customers had helped to determine that mixed-race couples were not acceptable. According to an inspector, "serving beer to mixed couples generally draws comment from surrounding tables which leads to trouble." The Chief Inspector only informed the woman that the operator had "the right to refuse service to anybody he does not wish to serve." While the LCB did not have an official policy on mixed-race couples, it carefully watched those parlours that did not ban them.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Churchill, "Coming Out," 80-4; Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 2, 338-42.

<sup>28</sup> Elaine K. Ginsberg, "Introduction: The Politics of Passing," in Elaine K. Ginsberg, ed., *Passing and the Fictions of Identity* (Durham 1996), 2-4. On the discrediting of the biological assumptions of race see Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal and Kingston 1991), Chapter One. For a good empirical study of the complexities of race passing see Graham Watson, *Passing For White: A study of racial assimilation in a South African school* (London 1970).

<sup>29</sup> BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-344, Pettit to Director, 24 October 1952 (first quote); H.Y. to Sir, 20 October 1952; Haywood to H.Y., 27 October 1952 (second quotation). In a similar incident at the American Hotel in 1953 a waiter refused to serve a party that included three white men, one Chinese man, and a white woman. An inspector interviewed the operator and was told that American Hotel had a house rule "that no mixed couples were to be served." See Box 7, File 121-309, Bruce to Director, 27 March 1953. For official attitudes on parlours that did not bar mixed-race couples, see the correspondence on the Stratford Hotel: Box 9, 121-364, "1" to Chief Inspector, 1 October 1950; Haywood to Stratford, 3

The most explicitly negative racial comments are about black men, and race, gender, and class all interacted. When H.Y. complained about the Martin Hotel's refusal to serve her and her "Hindu" companion, she stressed that he was a businessman engaged in both the lumber and petroleum industries. She added that "after all a Hindu is a British subject and not a negro." Many black patrons were railway workers, probably porters on the two major railways. Both the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific stations were in the beer parlour district. In a 1946 complaint against the St. Helen's Hotel for refusal of service to a black man, his white colleague, who lived in Ontario, stressed that they regularly travelled "every province from Halifax to Vancouver." A black man who was refused service with his white wife at the Regent sent his complaint on letterhead of the "Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters." In beer parlours black men had more than their race against them. Some of them were transient railway workers who were perceived to be here for a good time, not a long time.<sup>30</sup>

In the records and in the parlours the racializing of a "mixed-race couple" was narrowly defined. A mixed couple referred to a white woman with a man of colour. As categories of official and popular concern, women of colour with white men, or mixed-race couples that included no white member simply did not exist. As real people, though, these couples drank in beer parlours. In particular, aboriginal women were often linked with white men and sometimes with non-native men of colour. Little emphasis was placed on the racialized coupling aspect of these relationships. Instead aboriginal women with non-native men were usually dismissed as prostitutes or concubines.<sup>31</sup>

In British Columbia legislation pertaining to liquor and aboriginal people had been on the books since the 1860s. Yet the primary emphasis of provincial law was to uphold federal restrictions, which banned access to alcohol to status Indians until 1951.<sup>32</sup>

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October 1950. In 1948 an agent had described the ladies section of the Stratford as "full of drunks, mixed couples of white women and male negroes." See "?" to Chief Inspector, 3 June 1948.

<sup>30</sup>BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-344, H.Y. to Sir, 20 October 1952; Box 9, File 121-359, Buckley to LCB, 9 February 1946 (St. Helen's); Box 9, File 121-357, Lawrence to Wyllie, 9 March 1950 (Porter letterhead).

<sup>31</sup>Edwin M. Lemert, *Alcohol and the Northwest Coast Indians* (Berkeley 1954), 309, 319-20; H.B. Hawthorn, C.S. Belshaw, and S.M. Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment* (Toronto 1958), 330, 380; see also Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto 1991), 170-2; Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies*, 115/116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/98), 264.

<sup>32</sup>BCRMB, AG Files, Reel 372; "B.C. Laws pertaining to liquor control"; British Columbia, *Statutes*, 1921, c.30 ("Government Liquor Act"), s. 11, 36, 57-60. On natives and liquor in general, see, Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca 1995); Joy Leland, *Firewater Myths: North American Indian Drinking and Alcohol Addiction* (New Brunswick, 1976); Brian Maracle, *Crazywater: Native Voices on Addiction and Recovery* (Toronto 1993); Jan Noel, *Canada Dry*, 183-188.

Some aboriginal people did drink in Vancouver beer parlours, and the LCB cautioned parlour operators to use "the utmost precaution in serving liquor to Minors and Indians." Yet official documents say little about how aboriginals were defined and assessed in beer parlours. As James Frideres has argued, "Indian" was a legal category under the Indian Act that changed many times. It did "not reflect social, cultural, or racial attributes," and it did not express how First Nations defined themselves. In beer parlours waiters and operators did not generally rely on identity cards. The only natives who had any incentive to offer documents were those enfranchised and thus eligible to drink. "Indianness" was a constructed assessment based on appearance and behaviour. For example, in 1948 a Mrs. K., who was not a legal Indian, was denied service in the Regent Hotel because she looked like one. The LCB Secretary suggested that Mrs. K. obtain an official letter "to the effect that she is not deemed to be an Indian within the meaning of the Indian Act."<sup>33</sup>

Behaviour, however, was just as important as appearance in defining Indians. Aboriginal men, even status Indians, who drank quietly and moderately might never be bothered in a beer parlour. They could pass as whites. Assessing the extent of individual passing is impossible. Natives who fooled parlour workers and inspectors were not captured in the records generated by the state. Yet passing was not just trickery; it could also be a more negotiated process of racial definition. Aboriginal women had both race and gender working against them, but they too could be accepted in parlours. In 1950, for example, an LCB undercover agent claimed he saw, among many infractions, "an Indian girl" drinking in the Dodson Hotel. He did not link her to any of the other problems with the parlour. In the warning letter sent to the Hotel, the Chief Inspector never mentioned the woman. She had not caused any trouble and thus, for the moment, was accepted as white.<sup>34</sup>

Once Vancouver beer parlours legally opened their doors to aboriginal people, status Indians no longer had to pass as whites. Yet the "beer parlour Indian" did not disappear from the official record. For example, in April 1953 an inspector noted that too much beer (the limit at the time was two per person) had been served to a table "at which five Indians were seated" in the Melbourne Hotel. The Chief Inspector wrote a blistering letter to the operator citing the "excessive amount of beer on a table where five Indians were seated." In his letter of apology the operator admitted "an excessive amount of beer was being served on the table where five

<sup>33</sup>BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-327, Wylie to Dominion Hotel, 4 July 1939 (1st quotation); James B. Frideres, *Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts* (Scarborough 1983), 6-9 (2nd quotation); BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-357, Wylie to Peterson, 21 September 1948 (3rd quotation).

<sup>34</sup>BCA, GR52, Box 8, File 121-326, "#1" to Chief Inspector, 1 November 1950; Haywood to Dodson, 3 November 1950. A similar lack of official interest was shown at the Stanley in July 1951. See Box 9, File 121-362, "#1" to Chief Inspector, 27 July 1951 and Haywood to Secretary, 30 July 1951.

Indians were seated." Yet the legal infraction was over-service, not over-service to Indians. Too much beer and native people remained a tenacious conceptual link.<sup>35</sup>

Asians, especially the relatively large population of Chinese, stood out prominently in Vancouver. Popular and official assumptions about the impossibility and undesirability of Asian assimilation translated into policies of exclusion from the dominant society and concentration, geographically in segregated areas and occupationally in menial jobs. Yet it was their alleged behaviour, especially the historic association with gambling and drugs, that racialized them in Vancouver beer parlours. The LCB took a noticeably firm approach to regulating illegal gambling or bookmaking, and race likely provided at least a subtext for that firmness. Just as significant, racialized conceptions of decency resulted in Asian exclusion from parlour operations.<sup>36</sup>

The original 1925 regulations required that a parlour operator be eligible to vote. Since Asians were denied the provincial franchise until after World War II, they could not obtain licences. This official exclusion extended to working in parlours because the regulations also required that parlour workers be eligible to vote.<sup>37</sup>

The Chinese received the provincial franchise in 1947, but that did not alter their inability to obtain beer licences. In January 1952 the lawyer for a Mr. P.C. asked the Chief Inspector "of the policy of the Board as to Canadian born Chinese holding the licence of a beer parlour?" The next day the Chief Inspector replied that "an application from a Chinese is not favourably looked upon by the Board as it has been found that Chinese are not able to handle this type of business." Moreover,

<sup>35</sup>BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 9, File 121-345, Bruce to Director of Licensing, 18 April 1953 (1st quotation); Haywood to Melbourne Hotel, 22 April 1953 (2nd quotation); Brandolini to Haywood, 14 May 1953 (3rd quotation). For a similar example from the Stanley see Box 9, File 121-362, Bruce to Director, 18 April 1953.

<sup>36</sup>On the long history of anti-Asian hostility in British Columbia, see Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal and Kingston 1978) and Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver 1989). On the Chinese and gambling see, Strange and Loo, *Making Good*, 75-78, 121-122; Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, 101-104; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 9-10; Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 16-17; David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada* (Vancouver 1988), 195, 229-30; Greg Marquis, "Vancouver Vice: The Police and the Negotiation of Morality, 1904-1935," in John McLaren and Hamar Foster, ed., *Essays in the History of Canadian Law, Vol. 6, The Legal History of British Columbia and the Yukon* (Toronto 1995), 248-251.

<sup>37</sup>LCB 4th AR. On Asian licensing exclusion before prohibition see Mimi Ajzenstadt, "The Medical-Moral Economy of Regulations: Alcohol Legislation in B.C., 1871-1925," PhD diss., Simon Fraser University, 1992, 111-112.



even after Asians received the vote, obvious Asian surnames did not appear on the list of parlour employees.<sup>38</sup>

Yet the racial regulation of Asians in parlours was more dynamic than simple exclusion. No specific efforts appeared to have been made to bar Asians as customers, and some drank in beer parlours. Asians, again particularly Chinese, worked around and in beer parlours. Some managed the hotel operations that were often separate from parlours until well after World War II. At the New Empire in 1952 an inspector thought it important enough to note that the Chinese room manager "supervises the clerks, who are white persons." Finally, between 1947 and 1954 at least fifteen Vancouver parlours employed Chinese as janitors. As long as Asians did not occupy positions of responsibility within the parlours, in many ways they remained invisible.<sup>39</sup>

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Vancouver beer parlour regulation was a complex process that involved a number of actors. Despite its almost exclusive jurisdictional authority, the provincial state certainly was not the only regulator. From the beginning temperance groups defined the moral limits of regulation as they had successfully discredited a saloon environment, and they kept a watchful eye on the parlours. Parlour operators, both as *individual licensees and members of the BCHA*, had an impact on the direction of regulation. Some operators took the formal regulations seriously. Some paid lip service to them, and a few, perhaps with a megaphone in hand, defied them.

Parlour patrons played a particularly active role in parlour regulation. Separate facilities are a good example of the state's attempt to morally engineer working-class public drinking after prohibition. Yet liquor and health authorities could not simply decide what was appropriate behaviour in beer parlours, issue the decrees, and exercise the proper sanctions. Patrons challenged the dominant discourse, notably decency's ideal of unattached men separated from unattached women. Their success can be measured by both the imaginative ways they bypassed the partitions and the state's ever increasing physical and policy efforts to control them. Parlour partitions were both a material manifestation of decency's expectations and a monument to the undermining of them. Some patrons also exerted regulatory power and undermined the partitions by defying simple definitions of "male" or

<sup>38</sup>Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 363; BCA, LCB, GR52, Box 8, File 121-340, Bradshaw to Haywood, 9 January 1952; Haywood to Bradshaw, 10 January 1952. The LCB required that parlours submit lists of employee names and where they were eligible to vote.

<sup>39</sup>BCA, LCB, GR770, Box 5, File 2 (126), Kennedy to McIntyre, 2 September 1944. Hotels that employed Chinese janitors: Ambassador, American, Balmoral, Carlton, Castle, Commercial, Grandview, Drake (Haddon), Main, Marble Arch, New Fountain, Regent, Royal, St. Helen's, and Stanley. The references are all taken from BCA, LCB, GR52. For the comment of the inspector at the New Empire, see Box 8, File 121-329, Bruce to Supervisor, 5 May 1952.

"female." Patrons and the state, however, were not always at odds. In some parlours customers reinforced official views that mixed-race couples were unacceptable.

In general women in parlours were able to expand the boundaries of heterosocial leisure, but they did not eliminate them. Parlour partitions revealed the gendered, spatial dimensions of decency. For women the partitions were walls. "Female" and "decent" were linked only on the ladies and escorts side. Even there decency was defined in narrow ways. Unattached women were often treated as or akin to prostitutes. As Michaela Freund has noted, naming women prostitutes was a powerful political device designed to "control and regulate their sexuality, and not merely the sale of self." Despite the open parlour door, in many ways little had changed. Women, public drinking, and illicit sexuality remained intertwined.<sup>40</sup>

For men the partitions were more porous as male leisure space embraced female space. Porous, however, did not mean invisible. On the ladies and escorts side appropriate male behaviour was tied to the company of women. On the men-only side patrons were freer to practice variations of traditional public drinking rituals. Some men saw the partitions as protection as they tried to re-create saloon sociability as best as they could in an institution that was designed to prevent it. Men's sexuality was also far less regulated than women's. Men were chastised but not condemned for illicit sex, as long as their actions remained heterosexual.

Indeed, Vancouver beer parlour regulation was a more complex process than can be articulated through a linear model of social control dominated by the state. Regulation involved a number of actors and operated at different levels simultaneously. The state neither controlled all these facets nor were state officials necessarily even aware of the all combinations and permutations of regulation.

Still, the state remained a powerful manager of the marginal. Although the records could tempt one to conclude that the parlour was bedlam born of beer, the impact of the state regulation should not be dismissed. Orderly parlours simply did not warrant much comment. The silence can be read as a measure of decency's achievement. Well-behaved patrons could be construed as regulation by internalization, or government of the self. The state could not control this process, but internalization upheld the values of the state and enhanced legitimacy.

Moreover, state regulation did not require complete success to be successful. While internalization was the ideal, in the end the state required only acquiescence to achieve many of its objectives. Certainly the state counted on compliance, especially on the part of operators. In the 1920s three inspectors covered the province. By the late 1940s about that many watched only Vancouver, but with 63 parlours in the city, the human resources devoted to regulation were minimal. Yet

<sup>40</sup>Michaela Freund, "The Politics of Naming: Constructing Prostitutes and Regulating Women in Vancouver, 1939-1945," MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1995, 10 (quote), 78-79. On the development of heterosocial leisure see, Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the Century New York* (Philadelphia 1986), Chapters One and Three.

the state's ability to suspend or cancel licences encouraged operators to act as regulators. As George Chauncey has argued, liquor licensing made state regulation both less visible and more pervasive. No doubt in many cases state officials conflated acquiescence with internalization. Yet from an inspector's point of view the more important feature of a quiet parlour was that it required less paperwork, which was close enough to the lofty goals of regulation.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time, however, acquiescence should not be confused with consent. As Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer have argued, compliance does not always mean incorporation or internalization. A collective response is not necessarily a unitary one. People may act the same way for a variety of motives. Mark Leier went a step further. He argued that whenever the reality or threat of "unpleasant consequences" exists, "whether these be overt or implied, material or psychological, it is impossible to distinguish between consent and coercion." Coercion operates both formally and informally, and what passes for consent "may be manipulated in a number of ways." *Reward and punishment are two sides of the same coin.* Leier's intent was to declare that "all authority is illegitimate," but his argument reveals some of the subtleties of coercion.<sup>42</sup>

Coercion remained a powerful state tool in parlour regulation. While liberal states have developed a variety of means to negotiate what appears to be consent, the state still has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. In Vancouver's beer parlours the state's authority was fragmented, but regulation was not a process that engaged equals on a level playing field. Officials arrested people, had them barred, and ruined reputations. Parlour operators had their licences suspended or cancelled. In general Foucault was wise to shift our gaze away from power as state-centred repression. Certainly the state risks legitimacy if it resorts to coercion too often or too intensely. Yet state coercion used judiciously and creatively is an effective means of regulation.<sup>43</sup>

Moral regulation and state power are not in contradiction. Understanding the state requires going beyond structures and institutions and placing more emphasis on processes. Colin Hay has argued that the state is a "constantly changing network of relationships and institutional practices and procedures." The state is not an

<sup>41</sup>In 1929 chartered accountant Albert Griffiths completed a report on liquor for the newly-elected Conservative government. He concluded that of three inspectors, only one had "the faintest idea of his duties and responsibilities." See BCA, Attorney General Files, GR1323, Reel B2307, "Report of Investigations and Inquiries in Connection with the Administration of the Liquor Control Board," 31 December 1929, 4; Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 347. The LCB's regulatory resources also included a few undercover agents. The LCB was also assisted by the police, health officials, temperance and other observers, and even the press, which had an appetite for alleged parlour debauchery.

<sup>42</sup>Corrigan and Sayer, *The Great Arch*, 197; Mark Leier, *Red Flags & Red Tape: The Making of a Labour Bureaucracy* (Toronto 1995), 36-38, quotations at 37.

<sup>43</sup>On coercion and consent, see Colin Hay, *Re-Stating Social and Political Change* (Buckingham 1996), 25-27.

object, but rather a process of rule embedded in material relations. From this vantage one neither attributes a single mentality to the state or its institutions. Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer emphasized that the power of the state is not just external and objective, but also internal and subjective. The state "works through us." The state produces knowledge. It helps to organize individual and collective representations. The results are not necessarily consistent, but the effects help keep the state a powerful regulator, as seen, in this case, in Vancouver's beer parlours.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Hay, *Re-Stating Social Change*, 5-8 (quote); Corrigan and Sayer, *The Great Arch*, 180. See also, T. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review*, 90 (1985), 588; Philip Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977)," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1 (March 1988), 82; Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men?: Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West* (Toronto 1992), 9-10.

# International Labor and Working-Class History

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