

Introduction

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The following articles are selected from the papers presented at the International Congress on the Social History of Alcohol in 1993. In their focus either on drinking practices or on social responses to drinking, they exemplify the primary concerns of alcohol history. Approaches are often interdisciplinary, exploiting new types of sources such as material culture and oral history as well as exploring new uses of traditional documentary sources. These studies invite comparison among the experiences with alcohol of various societies and suggest the utility for social historians of examining international discourses over the use and governance of a set of substances persistently intertwined in human affairs.

Les articles suivants ont été choisis parmi ceux qui ont été présentés à l'occasion du International Congress on the Social History of Alcohol, en 1993. Ils portent sur les habitudes de consommation d'alcool ou les réactions de la société face à la consommation d'alcool et illustrent ainsi les principales préoccupations de l'histoire de l'alcool. Les auteurs adoptent souvent une démarche pluridisciplinaire et exploitent de nouvelles sources, telles que la culture matérielle et l'histoire orale, et examinent de nouvelles façons d'utiliser les sources documentaires traditionnelles. Ces études incitent à comparer les expériences vécues par diverses sociétés au chapitre de l'alcool et démontrent l'utilité pour l'historien social d'étudier les traités internationaux sur la consommation et la gestion de substances qui ont toujours été intimement liées à la vie des hommes.

ETHYL ALCOHOL — C_2H_5OH — the defining substance of alcoholic beverages — is produced by fermentation, the action of yeast upon vegetable or fruit sugars. When consumed by human beings, ethyl alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach and small intestine and oxidized largely in the liver. In the long history of human dealings with alcohol, little but these elements has been constant. Who controls the fermentation or a subsequent process of distillation; what beverages are produced by fermentation or distillation; how those who do not produce the

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product obtain it; who drinks the product, where, how, and why; what effects the drinker feels and how he or she behaves; how others perceive that behaviour and respond to it: all these and many other aspects of the human use of ethyl alcohol have varied among societies and across time. In that fact of change and variability lie the fascination and the opportunity of alcohol history for the social historian, for every one of these aspects of alcohol use has been subject to *social* determination. How they have been determined defines societies in contrast to one another, and whether and how a single society's determinations change over time offer a measure of what that society is and has been.

The task of the historian of alcohol, most generally stated, is to describe and to explain historical patterns of beverage alcohol use and the social response to drinking. Pursuit of this objective, motivated by a concern with human relationships to a substance or set of substances, often creates some untidiness about normal academic disciplinary boundaries. Found mostly in departments of history or sociology, and less often in anthropology, alcohol historians frequently wander onto the terrain of historically-minded economists, geographers, and political scientists as well as that of political, economic, legal, cultural, intellectual, medical, and even diplomatic historians. The ostensibly economic activities of production, distribution, and sale of drink, for example, have often been carried on within a framework of government taxation or regulation. Government policy toward alcoholic beverages, in turn, is made and implemented in response to considerations of public health or morality, economic policy, or political imperatives. All of these may be shaped by social movements. Those movements arise from complex mixtures of economic conditions, class relations, cultural values, religious beliefs, and patterns of alcohol use. Patterns of use themselves are defined by, among other forces, gender roles, class structures, and ethnic identities — as well as government policy and the supply of alcoholic beverages. In its shameless appropriation of methods and concepts from various disciplines, in its refusal to brook any limitation to its inquiry, alcohol history exemplifies the expansive thrust of social history.¹

Writing the history of the use of alcoholic beverages and the social response to that use also directs the gaze of the historian beyond the national boundaries within which so much history continues to be written, despite calls for professional internationalization. Temperance movements, the intellectual point of entry to alcohol history for many historians, arose at about the same time in many societies whose distinguishing characteristics

1 Susanna Barrows and Robin Room, "Introduction", in Barrows and Room, eds., *Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 4; Peter N. Stearns, "Coming of Age", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 10 (Winter 1976), pp. 246-255. No attempt is made in the notes to this essay to provide a full bibliography for the points discussed; for a recent bibliographical essay, see Jeffrey Verhey, "Sources for the Social History of Alcohol", in Barrows and Room, eds., *Drinking*, pp. 425-439.

have only recently come under scrutiny.² Some scholars have suggested that the volume of alcohol consumption in various societies has followed broadly similar patterns of rise and decline, which, adopting the terminology of economics, they have referred to as “long waves” of consumption.³ Alcohol policy, even in the influential United States, has been shaped at times by debates that were international in scope.⁴ Discoveries such as these tend to rock the foundations of nationally bounded conceptual schemes.

Recognition of alcohol history’s interdisciplinary impetus can filter into the scholar’s consciousness as citations to unfamiliar journals multiply in his or her bibliography. Cognizance of its international and comparative dimensions tends to be apparent, however, at topical conferences involving historians of other countries. The first such conference took place in January 1984 at Berkeley, California, and engendered both a defining moment for alcohol history and the impulse to transform a loose five-year-old association founded by American temperance historians, the Alcohol and Temperance History Group, into a more coherent interdisciplinary and international professional society.⁵ The second international conference on the social history of alcohol was held in May 1993 at Huron College, an affiliated college of the University of Western Ontario, and was initiated in an attempt to consolidate and build upon the research advances of the previous decade.⁶ This issue presents selected papers from that conference. The essays have been chosen both for their substantive achievements and for their ability to convey the distinctive perspectives and foci of alcohol history,

2 Harry Gene Levine, “Temperance Cultures: Concern About Alcohol Problems in Nordic and English-Speaking Cultures”, in Malcolm Lader, Griffith Edwards, and D. Colin Drummond, eds., *The Nature of Alcohol and Drug Related Problems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 15–36.

3 Pekka Sulkunen, “Drinking Patterns and the Level of Alcohol Consumption: An International Overview”, in R. J. Gibbons, Yedy Israel, Harold Kalant, Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt, and Reginald G. Smart, eds., *Research Advances in Alcohol and Drug Problems*, vol. 3 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976), pp. 223–281; Klaus Mäkelä, Robin Room, Eric Single, Pekka Sulkunen, and Brendan Walsh, with 13 others, *Alcohol, Society, and the State*, vol. 1, *A Comparative Study of Alcohol Control* (Toronto: Addiction Research Foundation, 1981), chap. 2.

4 Ian R. Tyrrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire: The World’s Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), chap. 12.

5 Selected papers from the International Conference on the Social History of Alcohol were published in Barrows and Room, eds., *Drinking*, as well as in special issues of *Contemporary Drug Problems* following the conference. Discussions and abstracts were published in Susanna Barrows, Robin Room, and Jeffrey Verhey, eds., *The Social History of Alcohol: Drinking and Culture in Modern Society* (Berkeley, Calif.: Alcohol Research Group, 1987), available from ARG, 2000 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, California 94709, U.S.A. The Alcohol and Temperance History Group publishes semi-annually *The Social History of Alcohol Review*. Subscriptions and membership in the ATHG are available through Richard Hamm, Department of History, University at Albany — SUNY, Albany, N.Y. 12222, U.S.A.

6 The conference was supported by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine.

although they do not exhaust the range of topics chosen or approaches taken among historians of alcohol use and its social response.⁷

The conceptual starting point for investigation of alcohol ingestion or its consequences should be the act of drinking itself. Questions about the nature and extent of that act lurk menacingly among the assumptions made by alcohol historians, no matter what topic they address. Who drank, what they drank, how much they drank, and how often are fundamental questions that must be answered before the historian can proceed to formulate answers to the range of other questions that drive our inquiry. Do we investigate the cultural meanings attached to drinking by a society? How many members of the society drank must be known or assumed if the inquiry aspires to produce a significant statement about the culture. Do we debate the causes of a temperance movement? Who drank must again be known or assumed if we are to reach a basic decision on the degree to which reformers' actions were defensive in nature — aimed at protecting themselves or members of their social group from the attractions and dangers of alcohol — and to what extent their activities were undertaken to control the drinking behaviour of an "other". Do we assess the power of a governmental action intended to control drinking? We must know the size of the drinking population and the contours of drinking before and after the measure's implementation.⁸ If these assertions seem self-evident, one might ponder the fact that most social science research on drinking has historically focused, not on normal drinking and drinkers, but rather on drinking defined as pathological.⁹ Basic questions, such as the size and composition of drinking populations, have gone unanswered by historians as well as social scientists.

Describing normal drinkers and drinking behaviour in the past brings the alcohol historian face to face with one of social history's most durable problems: how to find sources that portray unexceptional acts. The problem is exacerbated for the alcohol historian by the fact that most contemporaneous delineations of drinking practices were created for the purpose of changing those practices, and therefore may properly be suspected of exaggerating or otherwise distorting what they purport to reveal. A less common category, sources sympathetic to past drinking mores, often manifests the opposite bias. What makes the study of drinking so interesting to the historian — its contested nature — puts roadblocks into the path toward understanding drinking.

7 Other papers from the conference are to be published in special issues of *Contemporary Drug Problems*, vol. 21, nos. 3 and 4 (Fall and Winter 1994).

8 Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Who Drank? The Achilles' Heel of Alcohol and Temperance Studies", paper presented at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association, Bloomington, Indiana, November 1982. This view is not universally shared among alcohol historians. See Harry Gene Levine, "Comments" at the session at which this paper was delivered.

9 Harry Gene Levine, "Manifesto for a New Alcohol Social Science", *Drinking and Drug Practices Surveyor*, no. 17 (September 1981), pp. 20–29.

One strategy to surmount the problem of the bias of documentary sources is demonstrated in Peter Pope's essay: the interrogation of artifacts representing the material culture of the society under examination. Pope uses evidence from the site of a seventeenth-century Newfoundland fishing camp to investigate alcohol consumption among fisher-folk, placing the artifacts in context through the use of documentary sources bearing on trading patterns and drinking behaviour. Combining analysis of such artifacts with explication of documentary sources allows Pope to construct a more ample account of his subject than either type of source alone could support. In her pioneering exploration of gender roles in the drinking practices of early modern Germany, Ann Tlusty takes another tack, excavating local court records in an effort to circumvent the biases inherent in contemporary writings — invariably produced by male elites — that professed to describe drinking behaviour. Police, marriage, and baptismal records, none of which were created to describe drinking places or practices, are used by Scott Haine to define patterns of sociability in nineteenth-century Parisian cafés and the role of the café owner in the social life of his or her patrons. The more copious government records of the twentieth century are exploited by David Gutzke, together with sociological observational studies, to specify the changing clientele of the English pub. Clearly, innovative strategies such as these will be necessary if we are to pass beyond temperance rhetoric to a more nuanced account of past drinking and the conditions under which it took place.

In explaining drinking practices the alcohol historian can choose between two broad types of explanatory schemes, which may be referred to respectively as the social-control or top-down or perhaps supply paradigm and a cultural or bottom-up or demand model. The former tends to portray mass drinking behaviour as a product of more or less deliberate action by an elite or elites. Within this framework, political elites (government officials, for example), economic elites (liquor manufacturers or other businessmen with an interest in social control), or social elites (aristocratic trend-setters, for example) define the conditions under which everyday drinking takes place. Ordinary drinkers exercise the choices left to them only within the constraints — on type of beverage or container, timing or site of drinking, or amount consumed — thus imposed. Alternatively, their choices are channelled or moulded by advertising or by advice from above.¹⁰ In contrast, a cultural model emphasizes the power of group norms in determining individual drinking behaviour, whether the group is defined by gender,

10 For examples of this approach, see John J. Rumbarger, *Profits, Power, and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America, 1800–1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); David Fogarty, "From Saloon to Supermarket: Packaged Beer and the Reshaping of the U.S. Brewing Industry", *Contemporary Drug Problems*, vol. 12 (Winter 1985), pp. 541–592; John C. Burnham, *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

nationality, social class, ethnicity, or race.¹¹ Much of the common-sense and academic view of the failure of prohibition measures has been formulated within this framework. That view is weakened, however, to the extent that it ignores the limits within which group norms operated under prohibition or other systems of liquor control, or the effect of law in moulding group norms. Similarly, simple social-control models ignore the extent to which control measures can be shaped or reshaped in response to popular resistance.¹²

As these examples suggest, in practice the alcohol historian must invoke both types of model, giving due weight on one hand to elite efforts to stimulate or limit consumption and on the other to cultural values that guide mass drinking practices. In defining and explaining the demand for wine among fisher-folk in seventeenth-century English Newfoundland, Peter Pope incorporates both types of explanation. His argument holds implications for both a macro-economic portrait of early modern transatlantic trade and for our understanding of the much-heralded (and apparently long-lasting) consumer revolution. Cod from the Grand Banks went to the Iberian Peninsula to pay for wines and sherries that flowed down upper-class throats in England. Some portion of that wine trade was diverted back to Newfoundland, where it helped to pay the wages of those who caught and dried the cod. But fisher-folk's demand for wine was no mere artifact of merchants' convenience or greed. Indeed, the indignation of critics who bewailed "debauchery" on the Newfoundland shore was provoked by the ability of relatively well-paid fisher-folk to participate in new consuming behaviour from which members of their class in England were excluded by wine's cost. Through the lens of the humoralist physiology of the time, wine was perceived as far more suitable for those who had to endure the cold, wet climate of the North Atlantic coast than beer, a socially more appropriate beverage.

Ann Tlusty too discerns order in a social setting, the tavern, more commonly perceived as a site of tumult. Scrutinizing tavern behaviour in early modern Augsburg with an anthropologist's eye, Tlusty finds not the disorder perceived by moralists throughout the ages but rather a world tightly structured by cultural expectations and norms. The tavern contributed to the construction of masculinity both by excluding most unaccompanied women and by offering men a set of rituals through which to affirm both their

11 See, for example, the work of the "sociocultural" school of alcohol sociologists discussed in B. Gail Frankel and Paul C. Whitehead, "Sociological Perspectives on Drinking and Damage", in Jack S. Blocker Jr., ed., *Alcohol, Reform and Society: The Liquor Issue in Social Context* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), pp. 14–25. The investigations of these scholars focused on nationalities and ethnic groups.

12 Harry Levine makes this point in discussing post-Prohibition alcohol control measures in the United States, in "The Birth of American Alcohol Control: Prohibition, the Power Elite, and the Problem of Lawlessness", *Contemporary Drug Problems*, vol. 12 (Spring 1985), pp. 108–109.

gender and their class identities.¹³ While not entirely absent from the tavern, women entered this male preserve only in clearly defined roles: as tavernkeepers' wives or servants, artisans' wives, or peddlers. Even tavern violence seems to have been ritualized. This was an overtly patriarchal society, yet, as historians of slavery have argued, patriarchy imposed duties and obligations at the same time as it conferred power.¹⁴ In early modern Augsburg, public enforcement of husbands' responsibility to provide for their households gave wives a means of control over male drinking behaviour and therefore indirect power over what went on in a male space such as the tavern.

How the English pub in the twentieth century became transformed into a space open to respectable women is the question posed by David Gutzke. Challenging other historians' claim that English women's drinking habits began to change only after World War II, Gutzke demonstrates the impact of two forces for pub reform during World War I and the inter-war period. First, the government acted decisively through its Central Control Board to restrict and interrupt opening hours, to raise liquor prices while diluting the product, to strike down gender-discriminatory provisions affecting public drinking, and to change pub architecture as well as to augment pub functions. These reforms were then pushed forward after the war by brewers anxious to refurbish the disreputable image of the pub and thereby to attract a higher-class clientele. Such changes, according to Gutzke, succeeded in shifting the profile of pub customers higher in the class structure, bringing in middle and upper working-class women while repelling the poor, both men and women. Although the motivations of the reformed pubs' new customers remain obscure, Gutzke's article shows clearly the impact of both government and liquor industry in changing the conditions under which drinking took place and, sometimes inadvertently, in shifting either the composition or the behaviour of the drinking population in the process.

The changing relationship between the commercial drinking place and its customers is also the focus of Scott Haine's analysis of Parisian café life in the nineteenth century. Drawing upon studies of eighteenth-century Parisian popular culture, Haine argues for a significant shift in the place of both the café and its owner in the lives of its patrons. Whereas in the eighteenth century owners had little contact with customers, and the café provided poor shelter from the tumultuous life of the streets, by the mid-nineteenth century installation of the modern bar — "the zinc" in Parisian slang — had helped to bring the owner into close contact with his or her customers. Post-revolutionary decline of clerical authority and massive migration from the country-

13 Bradley Brooks, "Fill the Other Bowl, Boys: Alcohol, Behavior, Gender and Social Group in 18th-Century American Gentlemen's Clubs", paper presented at the International Congress on the Social History of Alcohol, Huron College, London, Ontario, May 13–15, 1993.

14 Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974).

side, leaving behind traditional social institutions, combined with this development to make the café “the centre of proletarian sociability”. As part of this change, domestic life began to extend beyond the doors of cramped working-class apartments and into the cafés, where the smaller, more affectionate families of the late nineteenth century now carried on important parts of their lives. Thus the café helped to bring about a “domestication” of public life during a period of urbanization and industrialization.

Gutzke’s work should remind us of the important role that governments have often played in shaping the contexts in which drinking occurs. Paradoxically, prohibitionist episodes seem to have focused historians’ gaze, leading to an apparent assumption that, beyond such interludes, the influence of government upon drinking is minimal. Phenomena such as the “gin epidemic” in early eighteenth-century England, whose course was powerfully though not exclusively shaped by excise levels, should suggest otherwise.¹⁵ For the United States, the post-Prohibitionist system of alcohol control, which embraces multifarious aspects of production, distribution, and consumption, represents, except for National Prohibition, “probably the most striking twentieth-century example of government force used to fundamentally reshape an entire industry and the way its products are consumed”.¹⁶ The same might be said for other modern societies as well.¹⁷

In his examination of the state and liquor revenues in the British colony of Gold Coast and the independent nation of Ghana, Emmanuel Akyeampong traces government’s multiple roles in influencing alcohol production and consumption even as he makes clear the long-standing dependence of both colonial and national governments upon liquor revenues. His narrative is striking for the continuity it demonstrates between colonial and post-colonial government policy, a phenomenon whose roots lie deep in the unbalanced relationship between a Third World society and the world economy. While emphasizing the role of government, Akyeampong also notes the complex and changing mixture of motives that led Ghanaians to drink, from the ritual use of alcohol in facilitating communication with the spiritual world to imperatives arising from migration, urbanization, and a taste for “modern” styles of consumption. Nevertheless, indigenous leaders regarded government dependence on liquor revenues with ambivalence, as became evident in 1929 when legislative representatives demanded a commission of inquiry into spirits consumption after the colonial governor refused to continue the custom of investing the proceeds from customs duties in infrastructure development. Akyeampong’s pathbreaking study

15 Peter Clark, “The ‘Mother Gin’ Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (5th series), vol. 38 (1988), pp. 63–85.

16 Levine, “Birth of American Alcohol Control”, p. 99.

17 See Eric Single, Patricia Morgan, and Jan de Lint, eds., *Alcohol, Society, and the State*, vol. 1, *A Comparative Study of Alcohol Control*, and vol. 2, *The Social History of Control Policy in Seven Countries* (Toronto: Addiction Research Foundation, 1981).

should provide a model for future inquiries into the complex relationships among drinking patterns, government policy, and economic development.

To these and other historians, the drinking practices of a society furnish a window through which various aspects of a society may be examined: cultural values, gender roles, economic patterns, and the actions of government. For this purpose, drinking behaviour acts as a receptacle for other social behaviours or, more precisely, as a vector whose direction and speed are determined by the interaction of social forces. The articles also show, however, that drinking mores play an active social role by helping to define culture, gender, economy, and politics.

These two perspectives on drinking practices should be kept in mind as we turn to the social response to drinking, examined in this issue in the essays of George Bretherton, Patricia Prestwich, Joanne Woiak, and Ian Tyrrell. As noted above, temperance movements have historically constituted the principal topical route through which historians have come to grips with past drinking and its social response. The first modern historians of temperance reform tended to picture it as, if not an epiphenomenon of other social changes, at least associated with such developments as industrialization or societal friction caused by class, ethnic, or religious divisions.¹⁸ In Joseph Gusfield's classic work, for example, temperance reformers appeared as symbolic defenders of native born, middle-class American cultural values against the folkways of burgeoning immigrant working-class groups.¹⁹ For Brian Harrison, in contrast, English temperance reform during the nineteenth century furnished a weapon for religious and political dissenters to use in their attacks against aristocratic cultural domination.²⁰ To such forces influencing temperance reform recent historians have added the effects of drinking itself.²¹ The nonviolent marches of American women against retail liquor dealers in 1873 and 1874 have been portrayed as arising primarily from the fears middle-class women in small towns felt about the threat male drinking represented to themselves and their families.²² One hundred years

18 Jack S. Blocker Jr. *Retreat from Reform: The Prohibition Movement in the United States, 1890–1913* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976); Harry Gene Levine, "The Discovery of Addiction: Changing Conceptions of Habitual Drunkenness in America", *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, vol. 39 (1978), pp. 143–174. This approach continues to be followed in studies such as Rumbarger, *Profits, Power, and Prohibition*.

19 Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963).

20 Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815–1872* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).

21 Norman H. Clark, *Deliver Us from Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition* (New York: Norton, 1976); Patricia E. Prestwich, *Drink and the Politics of Social Reform: Antialcoholism in France since 1870* (Palo Alto, Calif.: The Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1988); Jack S. Blocker Jr., *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform* (Boston: Twayne, 1989).

22 Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Give to the Winds Thy Fears": *The Women's Temperance Crusade, 1873–1874* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985).

later, women who inaugurated a successful prohibition campaign in the Micronesian island of Truk were described as provoked by “men’s unbridled drinking and drunkenness” which “contribute[d] to social problems that perpetuate the subordination of women”.²³

Even when the level, style, or effects of alcohol consumption are emphasized, however, changes in these measures can be seen as resulting from other social transformations; drinking thus becomes an intervening variable between economic or social change on one hand and temperance movements on the other. According to one view, industrialization may increase drinking by raising levels of stress or by boosting disposable incomes; according to another, industrialization may reduce drinking by imposing new workplace discipline and a new definition of self-control. Either or both types of change can be interpreted as a cause for emergence of a temperance movement. To cite another example, shifts in gender roles accompanying industrialization may affect both men’s drinking behaviour and women’s readiness to participate in temperance activity. To place temperance reform in its historical context is both to explain it and to employ it as a means of illuminating structure and conflict within the society in which it emerges.

Just as drinking practices can be seen as both vector and force, so temperance movements should be examined as a possible source of the assumptions, limitations, and frames of reference through which their societies thereafter understand and attempt to shape drinking practices — and other behaviours as well. It should be obvious that, even if a movement fails to achieve all that it seeks to accomplish, it may still exert a considerable influence upon its society. This latter point becomes clear when one places temperance movements conceptually alongside other societal responses to drinking — such as medical theory and practice — both those contemporaneous with the movement and their successors.

No matter what explanation for the emergence of temperance reform they favour, most historians have agreed on what is to be explained: change, not continuity; novelty rather than tradition. A focus on what is new about temperance movements is certainly appropriate as well as consistent with the historian’s obligation to describe and explain change over time, yet it may still miss an important part of the story. A newly emerging temperance movement, as Joel Bernard has suggested for the United States, may recast and reformulate traditional forms of response to drinking and other social problems.²⁴ In this view, the traditional elements of the temperance appeal may be as important in building its grassroots strength as temperance leaders’ innovations. George Bretherton makes a similar point in his re-

23 Mac Marshall and Leslie B. Marshall, *Silent Voices Speak: Women and Prohibition in Truk* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1990). The quotation is from p. 141.

24 Joel Bernard, “From Fasting to Abstinence: The Origins of the American Temperance Movement”, in Barrows and Room, eds., *Drinking*, pp. 337–353.

examination of the massively popular early nineteenth-century Irish temperance movement led by the Capuchin friar Theobald Mathew. By closely examining Mathew's actions in the context of traditional beliefs and practices as well as the work experience of cottiers and spalpeens, Bretherton is able to assess these actions in light of the Christian or pre-Christian concepts of pilgrimage and Carnival. Migratory agricultural labourers were accustomed to travelling long distances to sacred places for blessings and celebrations and to attributing magical powers both to special persons and to objects associated with them. The travel necessary to reach Mathew's friary in Cork or the site of one of his mass meetings — he seems not to have been welcome in most dioceses in Ireland — fit easily into the structure of such beliefs. So did the temperance medals Mathew distributed, to which many folk ascribed curative powers. The small amounts of cash that Mathew gave to needy pledge-takers, the heavy drinking that often preceded and sometimes followed taking the pledge, and the temperance bands equipped through Mathew's donations all contributed to the atmosphere of Carnival. Dreams of social overturn that were briefly flaunted during Carnival accompanied the temperance campaign, too, as the loud and not very musical temperance bands disrupted Protestant church services and visually affronted Protestant sensibilities with their conspicuous and subversive green and white dress. When such visions looked beyond Carnival, however, Mathew's followers became millennarians and, as such, turned toward the Repeal campaign of Daniel O'Connell, despite Mathew's resistance. Bernard's and Bretherton's insights need to be tested in the case of other temperance movements, but they promise a more ample explanation for the mass appeal and the durability of temperance as well as other varieties of reform. At the same time, they suggest the persistence of traditional forms at the heart of movements normally viewed as agents of social change.

Patricia Prestwich's and Joanne Woiak's essays move beyond temperance movements to other forms of social response to drinking, focusing specifically on medical discourse. Historians have long acknowledged the leading position in American temperance reform of the Revolutionary-era physician Benjamin Rush, but other medical voices in American and other societies have gone largely unheard until recently.²⁵ As medicine has become professionalized over the last two centuries, it has constantly expanded its scope, taking into its realm a multitude of behaviours and conditions once untreated or managed by folk healers or other therapies alternative to its own. The concept of "medicalization" used to describe this process is critically examined by Prestwich as it applies to relations between French

25 For exceptions, see William F. Bynum, "Chronic Alcoholism in the First Half of the 19th Century", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 42 (1968), pp. 160–185; James H. Cassedy, "An Early American Hangover: The Medical Profession and Intemperance, 1800–1860", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 50 (Fall 1976), pp. 405–413.

psychiatrists and habitual drunkards during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As other scholars have found, heavy drinkers posed problems for physicians when they attempted to define chronic drunkenness as a medical condition. In France, an 1838 law specifying alcoholic delirium as a criterion for internment filled asylums with various types of problem drinkers. Asylum doctors were not particularly pleased with this situation, however, as such drinkers created difficulties both for asylum order and for physicians' claims of therapeutic efficacy. When offered an opportunity to produce a clinical definition of alcoholism, psychiatrists eagerly sought to define various groups of alcoholics out of, not into, their asylums. This rejection of power over certain groups of patients stemmed both from embarrassment over the custodial function of asylums, heightened by the presence of a contemporary anti-psychiatric movement, and a perceived need to treat only those who could be "cured" of their afflictions. Professional needs therefore led not to medicalization but to an attempt at de-medicalization where habitual drunkards were concerned. The power of this story, Prestwich suggests, lies in its implication that medicalization may be a complex and sometimes contradictory process, in which decisions over who is to be treated reflect both the political position of physicians and their practical experience.

In France the anti-alcohol movement was led by physicians, but the powerful temperance movements in the nineteenth-century United States and Britain were initiated primarily by lay persons, often impelled by a Protestant evangelical reflex.²⁶ Even if they were motivated by religious values or proselytizing impulses, however, temperance reformers found it necessary to broaden their message in order to appeal to citizens of a religiously heterogeneous society. By employing arguments appealing to personal health or social welfare, however, they promoted the process of secularization that was advancing on other fronts at the time. As science began to supersede religion as an authoritative belief system in the late nineteenth century, physicians created alcohol science as a new realm in which to assert claims of professional expertise. Some of these were superintendents of asylums to which habitual drunkards were being committed, while others were clinical physicians or researchers who came to the new field from the temperance movement or from research projects involving alcohol.²⁷

Woiak's article presents a survey and analysis of the medical debate over alcohol in Britain from the early nineteenth century to the 1920s. Three

26 Ian R. Tyrrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1979); Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*.

27 Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*; Virginia Berridge, "The Society for the Study of Addiction: 1884-1988", *British Journal of Addiction*, vol. 85 (1990), pp. 983-1087; Jim Baumohl and Robin Room, "Inebriety, Doctors, and the State: Alcoholism Treatment Institutions before 1940", in Marc Galanter, ed., *Recent Developments in Alcoholism*, vol. 5 (New York: Plenum Press, 1987), pp. 135-174.

definable groups appeared during these years: those associated with the Medical Temperance Association, founded in 1867 as an arm of the temperance movement; the Society for the Study of Inebriety, established in 1884 by teetotal physicians but which gradually moved to arm's-length from the temperance movement; and the medical scientists affiliated during and after the First World War with the Advisory Committee to the Central Control Board and later with the Medical Research Council, which offered the first "science-based alternative to the temperance and prohibitionist solution to the drink problem". All three groups, of course, advocated the use of scientifically established "objective" "facts" to solve the drink problem, but their remedies differed. Despite their advocacy of science, these groups rarely sponsored or conducted research into alcohol use or its effects. Instead, each group interpreted research findings to support preconceived ideas on alcohol control, either total abstinence and the outlet-restriction measures advocated by the temperance movement or the reforms of pub hours, beverage strength, and prices already instituted by the government — without benefit of research — during the war. Meanwhile, over the half century preceding the war, British physicians had gradually been shifting toward therapeutics less dependent on alcohol. Woiak's article joins and advances a recently initiated dialogue over the emergence and characteristics of alcohol science in modern societies, as the findings and recommendations of alcohol scientists are increasingly used by policy-makers and the direction of alcohol science becomes more contested.²⁸

Public dialogue over alcohol has of course usually been an arena of dispute. As historians, we have been accustomed to conceiving of this dialogue as occurring, except in the case of colonial societies, largely within relatively impermeable national boundaries. Even for colonial societies we have thought of dialogue over alcohol as taking place either within the colonial power or, at most, between colonizer and colonized.²⁹ That is, we have perceived a series of national debates over alcohol use and control, each proceeding according to more or less unique national histories and circumstances.³⁰ As Ian Tyrrell's recent book on the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WWCTU) points out, however, from at least

28 Ron Roizen, "The American Discovery of Alcoholism, 1933–1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1991); Virginia Berridge and Betsy Thom, "The Relationship Between Research and Policy: Case Studies from the Post-War History of Drugs and Alcohol", *Contemporary Drug Problems*, vol. 21 (Winter 1994); Stanton Peele, *The Disease of America: Addiction Treatment Out of Control* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989).

29 For an analysis of one such dialogue, see Charles Ambler, "Alcohol in Imperial Discourse: The 1909 Southern Nigerian Liquor Commission", paper presented at the International Congress on the Social History of Alcohol, Huron College, London, Ontario, May 13–15, 1993. Emmanuel Akyeampong's article in this issue offers another example.

30 For an exception, see Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States, 1820–1920* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984).

the late nineteenth century dialogue over alcohol included a significant international dimension.³¹ Not only the WWCTU but other temperance organizations as well, notably the International Order of Good Templars, spanned national boundaries. The success or failure of liquor control measures anywhere in Europe or North America quickly became grist for the mills of temperance folk or their opponents everywhere else. A series of international conferences on alcoholism took place regularly starting in Antwerp in 1885. Beginning in the 1880s, the WWCTU together with missionary organizations urged upon the imperial powers measures to diminish the international traffic in opium as well as alcohol, an effort that reached partial fruition with a 17-nation agreement at the Brussels Conference in 1889 and 1890 to restrict the importation of spirits into parts of Africa.³² To ignore the international dimensions of modern dialogue over intoxicating substances is to misconstrue the nature of the debate.

Ian Tyrrell takes up one episode in the international dialogue over alcohol with his examination of the drive to spread American prohibitionism during the 1920s. Although dialogue over alcohol control was international from the late nineteenth century, discourse took place more on the model of the United Nations Security Council than on the pattern of the General Assembly. That is, the initiators and shapers of the dialogue were temperance reformers from the major powers, and their definitions of the problem as well as their proposed solutions were formulated on the basis of their experiences at home. The internationalism of American temperance reformers during the 1920s provides a good example of an attempt to impose American solutions throughout the world. Their effort was more extensive and wide-ranging than historians have previously recognized. Although the campaign failed miserably, its conduct reveals a cultural dimension that contributes to our understanding of American behaviour on the world scene in the United States' first decade of economic supremacy. In particular, Tyrrell argues, the drive for prohibition reveals the dynamics of an American hegemonic impulse: how that impulse sought to disrupt existing power arrangements, spread American values and institutions abroad, utilize collaborators in the process, and overcome indigenous resistance. Although American reformers failed in their ultimate goal, they often defined the terms of other countries' debates over alcohol. Tyrrell's argument should stimulate further investigation of the international dimension of discourse over alcohol as well as debate over the nature of that discourse.

The articles presented here display the diverse foci of alcohol history research in the 1990s: the nature, cultural meaning, and economic and social impacts of drinking practices; the composition and size of drinking populations and how these are determined; the characteristics of temperance reform

31 Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*.

32 *Ibid.*, chap. 7.

and its relation to other social movements; the use of science by temperance reformers and their opponents; and the determination and effects of government policy toward alcohol. Material culture and oral history as well as traditional documentary sources are exploited, as is anthropological theory. Through explication of these and other questions, alcohol historians seek to contribute to understanding of historical change in folkways and mass culture, gender roles, race relations, trade and consumption patterns, class relations, social movements, criminal justice systems, medical thought and practice, ethnicity, political behaviour, government policy, and international relations, among other topics. The range of topics, approaches, and sources must be expansive if we are to comprehend humankind's shifting relations through history with our near-constant companion, ethyl alcohol.