

practical guidance on career options and relevant institutes adds and builds on the strengths of Robert Jütte's *Institutes for the history of medicine and health in Europe: a guide* (Sheffield, 1997). Both theory and practice are thus tightly woven together to provide a tome that will doubtless prove a boon to students and enthusiasts of the history of medicine for years to come. The only fly in the ointment is that, as often happens in this field, the book is inaccessible to those without a good knowledge of German. Maybe someone will take up the reins and provide a pan-European volume on the back of this, but until that time a good dictionary remains essential.

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Jan A Witkowski and John R Inglis (eds), *Davenport's dream: 21st century reflections on heredity and eugenics*, New York, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 2008, pp. xiii, 298, \$55.00 (hardback 978-0-87969-756-3).

In 1911 Charles Benedict Davenport published the first edition of *Heredity in relation to eugenics*. Grounded firmly in the belief that a multitude of physical, mental and even career-related (e.g. seafaring) traits followed a pattern of Mendelian inheritance, the American scientist's book was a principal guide to eugenic studies in the early twentieth-century. However, by the mid-1940s his text had become regarded as at best misguided, at worst a resource for earlier US sterilization programmes, and even Nazi race policies. Moreover, "even by the standards of his own day", Davenport's science of heredity was "usually dubious and often plain wrong", the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory he helped found amounting "scientifically to much less than it might have been". (D J Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, MA, 1995, p. 48).

Davenport's Dream, edited by Jan Witkowski and John Inglis (both scientists at

Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory), brings *Heredity in relation to eugenics* to light again, a facsimile of it accompanying ten essays written by eminent voices in the field of genetics, opening with James Watson's discussion of 'Genes and Politics'. As a key document in the history of biology and of the eugenics movement in America, Witkowski and Inglis consider Davenport's book worthy of reconsideration; however, the most compelling reason they identify is that problems he attempted to tackle, moral and ethical issues the eugenics movement highlighted, remain of public interest today and subject to "cautious scientific enquiry" (p. viii). Furthermore, increasingly sophisticated knowledge and techniques—not least the completion of the Human Genome Project—have changed the scale of debate about use of DNA-related information: from efforts to improve a race, to those aimed at individual genetic constitutions.

Read together, these essays—each written with reference to Davenport's work—combine to produce an exposition on aspects of modern genetics, some highly technical, such as mitochondrial DNA technology. The presence of the original text itself is therefore crucial, helping to embed often complex accounts of, and justifications for, modern genetic research in an historical context.

That said, nearly all the authors are scientists. The effect overall is to showcase articulate, considered, frequently persuasive claims, yet each with a pronounced pro-science bias. Lewis Wolpert's closely argued contribution, the last (intentionally?), is especially robust in its placement of human nature within the reach of genetic manipulation. The media's tendency towards "genetic pornography" and "moral masturbators'" objections to human cloning both earn his rebuke in what is a resolutely positivist polemic. Although indubitably erudite and informative, Wolpert's contention, that "reliable scientific knowledge" (as opposed to "unreliable" knowledge or the technology to which "reliable" knowledge is applied) is "value-free" (p. 189) denotes a

strangely ahistorical position, at odds with a volume intended to inform and enrich contemporary issues in genetic research by offering direct comparison and reference to a principal source.

An earlier entry does offer slightly less staunch conclusions. 'Genes in mind' is Lindsey Kent and Simon Baron-Cohen's attempt to disentangle the nature (genetics)/nurture (environment) controversy with reference to current scientific explanation of the nature of human mind. Unlike other essays, theirs is especially explicit in admitting the limitations of genetics so far: that concerning behaviour and personality, genes' known influence "is only modest for many traits"; genetics "*may lead to some important medical breakthroughs*" (my emphases). Hence they conclude that further investment of time and money is warranted less for tangible outcomes, more for intellectual advance: "to teach us how we—and our brains—are made . . . the pursuit of such knowledge is worthwhile in its own right" (p. 156).

By adopting a light touch—a brief preface, then short introductory pieces preceding each essay—the editors permit the contributors and their particular, mainly pro-research agendas to dominate. This does not make for an especially fluent read, or, as suggested above, a balanced account. None the less, echoing another review (R Pollack, 'Thoughts on humane genetics', *Science*, 2008, **321**: 492–3), this is an important work and useful general teaching aid in science, medicine, law and ethics. It demonstrates contemporary scientific justification for continued and appropriate use of genetic information, despite and readily cognisant of past abuses.

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Cynthia A Connolly, *Saving sickly children: the tuberculosis preventorium in American life, 1909–1970*, Critical Issues in Health and Medicine, New Brunswick,

Rutgers University Press, 2008, pp. xiii, 182, illus., £27.50, \$39.95 (hardback 978-0-8135-4267-6).

This brief, but informative and solidly researched book deals with a peculiar type of medical institution in the United States mainly in first half of the twentieth century, the tuberculosis preventorium. The preventorium catered for "pretubercular" children who were not ill but, due to their family history, were deemed at risk of becoming ill with tuberculosis. Here, children were to build resistance to the disease through a regime of fresh air, ample nourishment and moral fostering. In practice, this meant that the preventorium sought to imbue indigent children, often with an immigrant background, with the values of an idealized, white, American middle-class home life, as Connolly convincingly argues. A central theme is the contested, often conflicting, relationship between changing medical knowledge and the culturally and socially grounded practices in the preventorium.

The preventorium was the result of a combination of late-nineteenth-century North American efforts at "child-saving" and scientific discoveries, mainly by European medical researchers, of the numbingly high tuberculosis infection rates in urban populations around the turn of the century. As the overwhelming spread of the TB bacillus was documented, preventive efforts targeted children. Arrangements to boost their organic resistance—and to form them into efficient, healthy citizens—were made in many countries, and the United States was no exception. Through an analysis of the pioneering Farmingdale preventorium in New Jersey, opened in 1909, Connolly explores what went on in these institutions. Drawing on a wide range of sources, effectively applying cultural, social and political perspectives, she discusses the different meanings of the preventorium for the children and their parents, as well as for the institutions' founders, staff and the wider society. Even though there was resistance among parents and