"hinting" at a history of children's own experience of illness and medicine. Deborah Thom perhaps comes closest to uncovering children's views when she uses oral history to assess the extent of physical punishment in the home and at school.

One of the goals of the workshop was to reflect upon advances in the historiography of child health since the publication of Roger Cooter's landmark collection of essays, *In the name of the child: health and welfare 1880–1940* (1992). For this reason Cooter was invited to contribute the final chapter of this book. Cooter regretted that children had still not become a major focus for historical research except in relation to more general historical agendas or in connection with specific foci, such as the history of sports, masculinity and "mental defectives". Yet the fifth conference of the European Association for the History of Medicine, held in Geneva in 2001 and entitled 'Health and the child: care and culture in history' demonstrates that the situation is not as bleak as indicated by Cooter. This conference attracted over 90 papers and 120 participants. Unfortunately no publication has emerged from the meeting (though some of the participants contributed to the present volume). This contrasts with another conference held the previous year, at the University of Michigan, which resulted in *Formative years: children's health in the US, 1800–2000* edited by Alexandra Minna Stern and Howard Markel (2002). Child health does appear to be developing its own specific historiography and this volume is an important contribution.

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John Waller, *Fabulous science: fact and fiction in the history of scientific discovery*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. xi, 308, illus., £18.99 (hardback 0-19-280404-9).

Clearly intended for the "popular" market, Waller's book leaves a lot to be desired as far as the readership of this journal will be concerned. In spite of the author's repeated attempts to point to the unifying themes of his book, it comes across to the reader who knows something about the history of science and medicine, or something about the philosophy and sociology of science as a ragbag of *causes célèbres* of such differing kinds that it presents no sound conclusions about the nature of modern science.

Divided into two parts, the first presents five case studies which reveal "conduct unbecoming of a good scientist" (p. 284), by "distorting experimental results until they are consistent with strongly held beliefs" (p. 110), and could be said, therefore, to be concerned with the nature of science itself. The eight case studies of the second part are said to be concerned with "offences committed against the historical record" (p. 284), by inventing myths to displace historical truths. The naïve reader will no doubt be persuaded. The not so innocent reader will wonder, however, whether it is legitimate to include a notorious case of the dangers of scientism, Frederick Taylor's "scientific management", or a clear case of ideologically driven "science", the "Hawthorne Experiment", alongside Robert Millikan's attempts to measure the charge on the electron, or Arthur Eddington's attempts to confirm general relativity, or Louis Pasteur's efforts to disprove spontaneous generation (even granting the ideological dimension to these efforts). The lessons of each case study do not build up to provide a cumulative picture of the dangers or pitfalls of the experimental method, or of the institutional organization of science, they simply remain interesting cases in their own right.

Some readers of this review will already have noted that there is nothing original in Waller's choice of case studies either. It is clear from reading his accounts that they are entirely derivative upon earlier studies; often a single study (John Farley and Gerald Geison on the Pasteur-Pouchet debate, Gerald Holton on Millikan, John Earman and Clark Glymour on Eddington). Waller talks throughout of the importance of history for understanding the nature of science, but by repeating familiar case studies he is in danger of showing the poverty of historicism. Instead of repeating old lessons of history, wouldn't it be better to reinforce them with new case studies?

The same disparity of historiographical themes can be seen in the second part. Is there a general lesson about science, *qua* science, to be learned from the pathological dishonesty of Charles Best, self-professed discoverer of insulin? Surely there is a world of difference between the simple storybook account of John Snow's role in the discovery of cholera germs, or Joseph Lister's role in antisepsis, and the much more scientifically significant myth-making around Gregor Mendel and the establishment of so-called Mendelian genetics? What is the link between these cases and the efforts of T H Huxley and others to promote their own professionalizing strategies by deliberately severing age-old links between science and religion? To be sure, these case studies can all be seen to include myth-making at the expense of sound history, but their real interest lies in the unique details of the historical contingencies which shaped them.

For those who do not know these famous cases, Waller's book will no doubt seem fascinating and revealing. But the cases are justifiably famous, being full of intrinsic interest, and all Waller has done is to string them together in an accessible way.

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Robert S Desowitz, *Federal bodysnatchers and the New Guinea virus: tales of parasites, people and politics*, New York and London, W W Norton, 2002, pp. x, 262, £19.95 (hardback 0-393-05185-4).

For more than half a century tropical epidemiologist Robert Desowitz has pleased his readership, professional as well as more general readers, with a variety of articles and books. The professional papers, ranging in main subjects from trypanosomes via kala-azar to malaria, have reported results obtained on expeditions to tropical locations: field research carried out over more than thirty years from the River Kwai and Burma, Gambia and Papua New Guinea, and WHO consultancy on kala-azar in India and Bangladesh; such reports were published in peer-reviewed professional journals, and written to inform colleagues in the medical sciences. Then, from the late 1970s onwards, Desowitz wrote in addition a series of books aimed at informing—and warning—more general readers of what René Dubos in an early review said revealed how "the life complexities of the microbial agents of disease are more than matched by that of human behaviour". From *New Guinea tapeworms and Jewish grandmothers* (1981), *The thorn in the starfish* (1987), and *The malaria capers* (1991), they have all included subtitles which are variations on the p-words: parasites and people. Still as concerned as ever with developments in Papua New Guinea, Desowitz now offers us *Federal bodysnatchers and the New Guinea virus* and this time adding, significantly, "politics" to the subtitle of the book which is aimed so thoroughly at the general reader that it dispenses with footnotes and "Further Reading" altogether. By now long into formal, if still very active, retirement, the author firmly, if disappointingly for his loyal readers, declares this to be his final volume.

More than fifty years ago, young Desowitz was in London, finishing graduate work at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and planning to make a career as an epidemiologist in malaria-ridden tropical countries with the support of his then mentor, H E Shortt. He was told firmly on arrival in Nigeria by the colonel in charge to concentrate instead on trypanosomiasis research, since malaria was about to be "totally eradicated, and you will never make a career, let alone a living, from it". By the 1970s, malaria was more of a threat than ever, at the expense of interest in the trypanosomiases. Undaunted, Desowitz continued his own interest in both.

The early chapters of the present volume are concerned with the spread and epidemiology of the West Nile virus. First making itself felt in northern Uganda in 1937, in the early days of virology, this virus later spread via Egypt to France's Rhone delta and on to the Danube delta, and from Montpellier to Bucharest, mainly killing birds and horses, before attacking humans there in 1996. Finally, in the summer of 1999, it appeared initially unrecognized, in birds and