

columns of advertisements for condoms, coils or contraceptive advice manuals.

Hodges has focused on two of the most important of these groups. The Madras Neo-Malthusian League was made up of prominent businessmen, largely from the Brahmin community, working to an essentially paternalist agenda (like many of these movements it was almost exclusively male): it wanted to link India to the worldwide Stopesian movement and saw contraception as a way of reducing India's population of fecklessly breeding poor. The League poured out pamphlets and posters to little discernable effect: it was pointed out acidly by one critic that, since one of its founders had no children and another thirteen, they clearly either knew nothing of birth or nothing of control.

More radical was the Self-Respect movement, which swept through the south in the 1930s and 1940s. This was a political and cultural movement which sought to galvanize the Tamil population—not least through using the Tamil language—into a strong sense of their separate and personal identity. It was particularly aimed against domination by the Brahmins; there seemed little point in removing relatively remote British control only to replace it with much closer and tighter Brahmin control. The Self-Respect movement held its meetings in the open air and, unlike the Neo-Malthusians, it welcomed women to its ranks. Contraception was not to be women's way of contributing responsibly to the new nation, but a means of personal emancipation, to break the hold of the traditional maternal role forced on them by India's hierarchical society. In many ways, the Self-Respect movement foreshadowed feminist enthusiasm for the Pill in the 1960s, with a similarly broad agenda of personal and collective liberation.

These are important stories, of relevance well beyond the confines of colonial medical history, and Professor Hodges tells them with characteristic and infectious enthusiasm. She shows that the nexus between nationalism, colonialism and control of the birthing process is much more nuanced than the traditional

Foucaultian model of the colonized body allows for and, in a pleasing coda to the book, she addresses the popular cliché of Indian over-population, not perhaps to destroy it but certainly to point out its oversimplifications. This is a handsomely produced volume which advances our knowledge and understanding of an important area not just of colonial biopolitics, but of the interplay between birth and politics itself.

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Mark Jackson (ed.), *Health and the modern home*, Routledge Studies in the Social History of Medicine, No. 31, New York and Abingdon, Routledge, 2007, pp. ix, 339, £60.00 (hardback 978-0-415-95610-9).

This substantial and excellently edited collection of essays faces up to some of the big variables in contemporary and recent social and medical history—home, environment, modernity, health. In his introduction, Mark Jackson admits that the volume is only a preliminary beating of the bounds rather than a definitive map of an area that still borders on *terra incognita*. Pondering these essays, a reader may conclude that, in addition to being a foreign country, the past becomes ever odder and more alien when it lies so chronologically close to hand. Older subscribers to *Medical History* will come across essays—by John Stewart on child guidance, Sarah Hayes on maladjustment, and Ali Haggett, Jo Gill and Rhodri Hayward on women's "suburban neurosis"—that summon up yesterday's yellowing headlines and ways of conceptualizing social problems. Most of these are now as antique as the First Crusade.

A more committed engagement with transnational comparisons and a wider sampling of the ways in which the home has been sociologically theorized and conceptualized during the last thirty years would have strengthened the volume. Ruth Schwartz Cowan, so perceptive and predictive

in her analysis of the twentieth-century ideal and anxiety-laden American home, makes a brief appearance. But nothing is said about Jurgen Habermas's infuriatingly flawed, deeply suggestive and massively discussed work on the private and public spheres. Europe looms small in this collection and that reduces its impact.

The USA, on the other hand, is heavily featured. Jo Gill bases her arguments on a close reading of Anne Sexton—exhilarating to come across a major twentieth-century poet in a collection on socio-medical history. The ever reliable and incisive Nancy Tomes examines the kinds of advertising that accounted for the presence of so many “skeletons in the cupboard” in inter-war American homes. Gregg Mitman provides a titillating flyer for his recent and brilliant monograph on the history of asthma and allergies. (In their contributions, Mark Jackson and John Welshman do the same for their excellent surveys of allergy and social science, housing and transmitted deprivation respectively.) The British-based Matthew Smith probes the now long forgotten Feingold diet and its inventor's best-selling *Why your child is hyperactive*—more yellowing headlines loom into consciousness. Smith ventures that Feingold's idea may soon come lumbering back into fashion. This is an excellent essay on an important theme.

Some of these essays pinpoint significant similarities between experience and practice in America and the UK. However, in his synoptic survey of child guidance, John Stewart detects British social workers predictably shying away from psychiatric theory. Stewart also notes that, “not for the first time in British welfare history, the child slipped from view, to be replaced by an attitude that ... ‘blamed’ parents for children's mental or emotional ‘ill-health’” (p. 123). Unlikely stirrings of R D Laing *avant la lettre*? Several essays focus on social workers, psychiatric social workers and other newly self-confident state-driven, progressive professionals, and sub-professionals ever more assuredly breaching the defences of middle-class suburban privacy.

But too little is said about working-class experiences. (Welshman is an exemplary exception.) Laudably, several of the contributions challenge social-historical orthodoxy—Hayward excellently summarizes heavily documented recent scholarly interpretations of housewives' alienation and ennui on post-war housing estates that have echoed and reinforced rather than interrogated contemporary headlines. *Health and the modern home* would not have been written fifteen years ago, when medical and social and cultural historians ploughed their own deep, separate and lonely furrows.

Three articles fall into the domain of environmental history and each makes intriguing connections between the home and the world outside. Confirming his position as our leading chronicler of atmospheric pollution, Stephen Mosely extends his narrative up to 1945 and detects continuing attachment to the cosiness of the domestic hearth. (Would it ever end?) Catherine Mills presents a well documented account of differential response to the Clean Air Act of 1956 and dots the i's and crosses the t's of Peter Thorsheim's recent and impressive history of air pollution in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain. Focusing on childhood lead poisoning, the ever-reliable John Burnham tells a compelling tale and, together with Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy and Christopher Sellers, points to the ““multitudinous exposures permeating our modern world”” (p. 298). This is a succinct and subtly theorized piece of work, which locates detail within a determinedly comparative framework.

Finally, in the best essay in the volume, Michael Clark draws on theatrical and cinematic sources to examine marital breakdown in a dysfunctional upper-middle class family in the 1920s. Clemence Dane's *A bill of divorcement* is rarely mentioned in the early twenty-first century. But between the early 1920s and 1940 it was a London stage smash that was filmed and refilmed in Britain and Hollywood. Clark uses Dane's text and ideas to show that there were few grounds “for

optimism about the effects of modernity on the health and happiness of young middle-class British women and their homes and families” (p. 36). As Jo Gill notes, a generation later the American confessional poet Anne Sexton would write: “I am actually a ‘suburban housewife’ only I write poems and am sometimes a little crazy” (p. 63). There is much more to be said about this topic and several of the others in Mark Jackson’s collection.

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Klaus Bergdolt, *Wellbeing: a cultural history of healthy living*, transl. Jane Dewhurst, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009, pp. ix, 366, £60.00, (hardback 978-0-7456-2913-1), £18.99 (paperback 978-0-7456-2914-8).

Klaus Bergdolt’s masterly contribution to the bibliography of health has been a long time coming, but is no less welcome for that. Readers will perhaps be startled to see warm words of praise from the late Roy Porter on the back cover, which apparently derive from a translation originally completed in 1999 when the first German edition appeared. Porter suggested that Bergdolt’s text would be “central” to the enterprise of reconstructing the history of health care, which “traditionally constituted the mainstream of medicine”.

Bibliographic work on the genre of health care regimens has been painfully slow since its first beginnings in the social history of medicine in the 1970s. This is mainly because interest in “medicine from below” quickly switched to integrated empirical local studies which made bibliographic research look old-fashioned and detached from the wider world. As a result we still have very little idea of the numbers of these health-books in circulation in different periods and places, let alone their titles, authors, editions, content and sub-genres. What Bergdolt has undertaken here for German health bibliography has yet to be done

with the genre in (for example) Italy, France, Britain, the USA—or indeed Hungary, Russia, India, China or anywhere else. There is a lot of number-crunching and archive-combing waiting to be done by future research students. However *Wellbeing* is not that sort of quantitative bibliographic history.

Wellbeing is a traditional literary study which takes us carefully through all the major and many of the minor authors of European health history in chronological order. Bergdolt is particularly strong on the classical and Renaissance texts, and on German texts at least up to c.1900, providing a useful introduction to the vast German health archives, and to the work of modern German scholars such as Heinrich Schipperges and Gundolf Keil. Each primary source cited (roughly 600 of them) is conscientiously described and analysed, and the book is lively and well written. Moreover, Bergdolt has attempted some sort of comparative European survey. Italy is well covered, although the shorter sections on the English and French traditions are less assured. American health bibliography is not mentioned.

At least half the book covers the earliest definitions of health from the pre-Socratics to the Renaissance. It describes how “health” emerged from a combination of early Greek science and moral philosophy, and developed as a mature professional art during the Roman empire. Bergdolt illuminates the health regimen of the medieval period through deft biographical sketches of key authors from the early Islamic and Christian empires, when religion was heavily involved in promoting Galenic science. New printing techniques combined with sixteenth-century Humanism and Paracelsian doctrines created a flood of popular health literature, ranging from published self-help manuals and herbals, to individual house-books (receipt books) and detailed diaries of self-experimentation in health care. Many fascinating themes and details emerge—such as the influence of Petrarch, the history of utopias, and the history of scholarly health. These first five chapters in particular will set a benchmark in health studies.