

Book Notices

MOLLY LADD-TAYLOR, *Raising a baby the government way. Mothers' letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915–1932*, New Brunswick and London, Rutgers University Press, 1986, 8vo, pp. x, 212, \$18.00.

Government comes out rather well in this book. Some 125,000 women a year wrote to the US Children's Bureau during the late 1910s and 1920s. They were mainly native, white women, living on isolated farms and in small towns. Their letters are profoundly touching and reveal much of the fabric of poor, early-twentieth-century women's lives in America.

This collection of letters shows clearly that poor American women, like their English counterparts, wanted non-stigmatizing, unpatronizing advice and information about their own physiology and about childcare. Their trust in the Children's Bureau, which was run by women, seems to have been deep and genuine and stands in marked contrast to their frequent complaints about the medical profession. Certainly, the women staff at the Bureau replied sympathetically and often at considerable length, offering reassurance to women afraid that eating fruit out of season would mark their babies, and practical help, sometimes via local women's clubs, to women too poor to afford either the essentials for a confinement or an attendant during the birth.

The letters show how women did not and could not separate issues of infant feeding from their day-to-day struggles to fit childcare into their heavy domestic routines, or to manage the family budget. In turn, the women at the Children's Bureau also paid due attention to women's material circumstances, something missing from the medical agenda. The increasing medical control of the Bureau's work during the 1930s marked the beginning of a new, but not altogether improved, era in its history.

HELGE KRAGH, *An introduction to the historiography of science*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. viii, 233, £19.50.

Kragh offers a reliable guide to modern debates within the historiography of science, focusing on such issues as objectivity, explanations, prosopography, scientometric history, and so forth. The emphasis is more philosophical and conceptual than practical; Kragh is more concerned to evaluate historians of science than to illuminate the history of science in its own right. The boundaries of science are also drawn very narrowly, and nothing, unfortunately, is said about the relationship between the history of science and the history of medicine.

BRIAN S. TURNER, *Medical power and social knowledge*, London, Sage Publications, 1987, 8vo, pp. vi, 256, £25.00 (£7.95 paperback).

Turner offers a crisp, condensed and up-to-date digest of the main topics within medical sociology. There are appreciative but critical accounts of the Parsonian idea of the "sick role", of Foucault's critique of models of madness and sexuality, and modern feminist exposés of the patriarchy of medicine today. Turner also contributes some more original discussion of the relationship between sickness, class and capitalism, and the comparative provision of medical care in the different regimes of the developed world. This book can be recommended as the best brief introduction to medical sociology.

W. PREST (editor), *The professions in early modern England*, London, Croom Helm, 1987, 8vo, pp. viii, 232, £30.00.

Old-style in-house histories of the professions and their organizations have been displaced over the last generation by the so-called insights of the historical sociology of the professions. To those who doubt whether this shift represents progress, the present volume, securely grounded in empirical reality, will prove extremely welcome. Successive substantial contributions on the clergy, lawyers, teachers, estate stewards, and soldiers all stress the dangers of imposing modern and bureaucratic concepts upon the diversity of occupations of Tudor and Stuart times. In a particularly fine historiographical reevaluation, Margaret Pelling ('Medical practice in early modern England: trade or profession?') stresses how deceptive it is to focus attention primarily upon the colleges, upon London, or indeed even upon the towns, and emphasizes how blurred were the boundaries between the practice of medicine and other occupations (e.g., the food and drink trades). There were more practitioners than we commonly believe, but they were less "professional": accepting these two facts is the key to understanding medical provision before the nineteenth century.

MICHAEL S. ROTH, *Psycho-analysis as history. Negation and freedom in Freud*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. 196, \$25.00.

Using the notion of history as meaningful memory, Roth interprets Freudian psychoanalytic theory as an emancipatory project hinging upon the attempt to make sense of the (personal, unconscious, and repressed) past. Roth's approach is to proceed through careful and lucid explication of Freud's key ideas (repression, transference, etc.) as sited in *The interpretation of dreams* and subsequent writings. The historical value of the account is diminished by the author's taking "Freud's theory" as a rather timeless, hypostatized body of doctrine; Roth says he is uninterested in "Freud's personal views on history, philosophy, politics, science, or, for that matter, . . . his personal views on psycho-analysis". One may doubt the historical truth of what remains.

MARIANNE KRÜLL, *Freud and his father*, London, Hutchinson, 1986, 8vo, pp. xxi, 294, illus., £16.95.

Around 1895, Freud began to attribute the neuroses and hysteria of his patients to childhood seduction by the father. Yet he himself suffered from hysterical symptoms. Did that mean he himself had suffered parental seduction? It is against this background, argues Marianne Krüll, that we must understand Freud's abandonment of the "seduction theory" shortly after the death of his father. Freud chose to shield his father, and developed the notion of the Oedipus complex in its place. Dr Krüll offers us the fullest account of the life of Jacob Freud currently available. There remains, however, tantalizingly little solid information as to the actual relations between the young Sigmund and his father, and Dr Krüll is excessively willing to fill up these gaps in our knowledge with speculations about what Freud "must have" thought and felt, on the basis of his later theories, thus perpetuating an explanatory circularity.

RONALD L. NUMBERS (editor), *Medicine in the New World. New Spain, New France, and New England*, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. 175, illus., \$18.95.

This volume contains three substantial essays: Guenter B. Risse's 'Medicine in New Spain', Toby Gelfand's 'Medicine in New France', and Eric H. Christianson's 'Medicine in New England', together with a substantial introduction by Numbers. They address a question which arises naturally from Turner's "frontier thesis": did a "frontier society" like North America generate a fundamentally different pattern of medical practice from that earlier established in

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Europe — a structure more “open” and free of oligarchy and monopoly? All three authors show that the frontier effect did not operate. Rather, New World medicine tended to establish itself upon institutional lines, which, as far as was feasible, mimicked the orders of the Old.

MAUREEN McNEIL, *Under the banner of science. Erasmus Darwin and his age*, Manchester University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. viii, 307, £27.50.

For those chiefly familiar with Darwin's life, this contextualization of his thought will prove extremely illuminating. Successive chapters examine his approach to industrialization, agriculture, politics, machinery, and medicine, juxtaposing his views against other leaders of the Lunar Society and more radical thinkers such as Blake. Darwin emerges, convincingly, as one of the ideological champions of an industrializing capitalist society. It is somewhat disappointing that relatively little is said about *Zoonomia* or indeed about his medical *practice* in the context of recent work on the social position of Enlightenment doctors.

MICHEL LAGUERRE, *Afro-Caribbean folk medicine*, South Hadley, Mass., and London, Bergin & Garvey, 1987, 8vo, pp. viii, 120, illus., £28.45.

The Caribbean medicine of the slave plantations has been extensively studied recently by Richard Sheridan, above all. This slim volume offers a nice pendant to such research. A helpful brief survey of the historical roots of “native medicine” is followed by an interesting analysis, both contemporary and historical, of the medical beliefs themselves. Faith healing and voodoo are touched upon, but the most substantial section examines the centrality of teachings about the blood. The equilibrium of health and sickness was largely seen as a function of blood variables (quantity, purity, circulation, temperature, generation, etc.). There are fascinating parallels with European humoralism.

ERICA-MARIE BENABOU, *La prostitution et la police des moeurs au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Perrin, 1987, 8vo, pp. 547, Fr.150.00 (paperback).

This massive study, based heavily upon official archives, offers a comprehensive historical sociology of prostitution, particularly in Paris, with substantial chapters on both the girls and their clients. Public attitudes are surveyed (prostitution was most widely regarded by opinion-makers as a necessary evil), as are the regulations for municipal policing. A brief chapter examines venereal disease and the role of the medical profession. As Dr Benabou demonstrates, what was regarded as an improper trade during the Enlightenment was to be transformed into an example of psychopathology in a later century.

PETER BURKE, *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy. Essays on perception and communication*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. x, 281, £25.00.

In this crisply-written book, Burke tests what the historian can discover about renaissance Italy by examining the archives of popular life—legal records, church court transcripts, etc.—through the spectacles of an eclectic cultural anthropology which draws heavily upon the “Chicago School” (symbolic interactionism, social drama, presentation of self, etc.). His foci lie primarily with a grammar of social perception and the symbols of self-expression. Of particular interest is his section on ‘Rituals of healing in early modern Italy’, in which the congruence between professional, ecclesiastical, quack, and popular rituals is underlined.

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VIRGINIA BERRIDGE and GRIFFITH EDWARDS, *Opium and the people. Opiate use in nineteenth-century England*, paperback ed., New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. xxx, 370, £8.95.

This excellent book, first published in 1981 and the subject of an essay review in this journal (1982, 26: 458–62), now makes a most welcome appearance in paperback. It can be wholeheartedly recommended to everyone interested in the social history of medicine.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

ANNE DICKSON and NIKKI HENRIQUES, *Menopause. The woman's view*, Wellingborough, Thorsons, 1987, 8vo, pp. 112, £4.99 paperback.

H. WINTER GRIFFITHS, *The complete guide to symptoms, illness, and surgery*, Wellingborough, Thorsons, 1987, 8vo, pp. 894, £9.99 paperback.

MAURICE HANSEN and JILL MARSDEN, *The new E for additives*, Wellingborough, Thorsons, 1987, 8vo, pp. 384, £3.50 paperback.

ISABEL HUNTER and SHELAGH WOTHERSPOON, *A bibliography of health care in Newfoundland* (Occasional Papers in the History of Medicine, No. 6), St. John's, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1986, 8vo, [no price stated].