

Book Reviews

Jeremy Taylor, *The rebirth of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital 1874–1883: an architectural exploration*, Research Publications No. 1, Norwich, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of East Anglia, 2000, pp. vi, 70, ill., £4.99 (+ 50p p&p) (paperback 0-9538349-0-5). Orders to: Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ. E-mail: wellcome@uea.ac.uk.

In early February 1877, a *Norfolk Mercury* leader considered the options for enlarging the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, which included the complete replacement of the existing building (opened in 1772). Ten weeks earlier, the hospital's patron the Prince of Wales had publicly spoken on behalf of an appeal for funds to extend the building with two pavilion-ward blocks, a scheme recognized as a compromise, though a satisfactory one; now the *Mercury* asked its readers to "Suppose . . . that the old Hospital is retained, and that £20,000 is spent on additions, and *after* this pyaemia should break out again, not only in the old parts but in the new! *What then?*" In the event, the hospital was built new between 1879 and 1884 (it incorporated one wing of the previous building), but not, of course, before further public discussion. The Prince agreed that new-building was the best solution, even as the *British Medical Journal* (as quoted in the *Mercury*) grumbled that some among the Norwich's governors had evidently fallen sway to the London surgeon John Erichsen's jeremiads about the critical importance of hospitals' design—as opposed to Listerian procedures—to their mortality rates.

This account of T H Wyatt and Edward Boardman's new hospital is the most detailed and best-illustrated study of a nineteenth-century English hospital's planning and construction that we have. As such, this modestly-priced small book represents a bit of a luxury by current standards of academic publishing. Why

should non-specialists indulge in it, even granted that Taylor, the leading authority in the field, shows the new Norfolk and Norwich's place in wider institutional developments? For this reader, the reason is, simply, because the world in which local newspapers, and even Princes of Wales, feel free to assess the relative merits of plan types is the world we have lost. Thanks to outbreaks of pyaemia and the other hospital diseases, hospital planning achieved a glamour and a prominence in the British public's mind during the 1860s and 1870s that it has never enjoyed before or since. To understand that national prominence, we need scholarship like this, prepared to invest in the local, and the particular.

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Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger: sex, science, and self in imperial Vienna*, Chicago series on Sexuality, History, and Society, University of Chicago Press, 2000, pp. x, 239, £20.50, \$29.00 (hardback 0-226-74867-7).

Otto Weininger, the homosexual, 23-year-old, self-hating Jewish suicide and author of *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* (*Sex and Character: an investigation of principles*, 1903), has been the focus of much historical writing. Feminists have chided him, Freudians have shown how he caused the break-up between Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Fliess, philosophers have demonstrated the influence Weininger had on Ludwig Wittgenstein, historians of sexuality have used him as an easy way into medical ideas of bisexuality. What these studies have failed to do, however, is place Weininger's work in its multiple historical contexts of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese philosophy, science, medicine, religion, and culture. This has been finally achieved by Chandak