

lucrative contract to purchase discounted crude morphine from Taiwan's Opium Monopoly Bureau. Hoshi's dealings in opium resulted in a public outcry, as they contradicted the firm's claims to humanitarian interests above profit. The incident tarnished Hoshi's reputation and resulted in its bankruptcy.

Although the close-knit relationship between businesses and the state is well known in the context of Japanese capitalism, Yang's work is nevertheless important in understanding the extent to which companies acted as agents of modernity and imperial expansion. Given the attention that the pharmaceutical industry has received over the past few years, this book comes at an important time. As the author notes, the business of medicine is "always deeply political and deeply flawed" (p. 15). *A Medicated Empire* is a thorough and intriguing story of the development of the pharmaceutical business in modern Japan and should appeal to historians interested in business, medicine, and imperialism.

EMILIE TAKAYAMA, *New York University Shanghai, Shanghai, China*

Emilie Takayama is assistant professor in Interactive Media Business at New York University Shanghai. Her current book project focuses on the history of the beauty industry in modern East Asia.

. . . .

Ingenious Trade: Women and Work in Seventeenth-Century London. *By Laura Gowing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021. x + 275 pp. Bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$39.99. ISBN: 978-1-108-48638-5.

doi:10.1017/S0007680523000119

Reviewed by Charlie Taverner

The seventeenth century is a significant moment for the long-running debate about the prominence of women's work in the preindustrial era. In a classic study first published in 1919, Alice Clark (*Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*) argued that this was when women's labor was marginalized, particularly within skilled and more prestigious trades, as part of England's capitalist transition. This chronology has since been rewritten, with greater emphasis on the continuing restrictions that women workers endured. Recently, several large-scale projects have stressed the complexities of the gendered division of labor across early modern Europe. Laura Gowing's *Ingenious Trade: Women and Work in Seventeenth-Century London* is a major intervention centered on the period that intrigued Clark. The book illuminates how, in the flux of fast-growing London, women were a regular,

recognizable presence as they learned crafts, trained apprentices, and ran businesses, though gender-based differences still defined their experience and opportunities.

At its core, this is a reconstruction of the working lives of girls who signed on as apprentices and the mistresses who supervised their education, as well as how these women operated around the male-dominated guild system that governed formation and privilege. Gowing focuses primarily on women in London's textile industries, the great numbers of seamstresses and female shopkeepers at the heart of the flourishing fashion trades. The book begins with an account of the Royal Exchange, the mercantile hub and shopping complex in the midst of the city. The following chapters examine the extent of female apprenticeship; how singletons, wives, and widows variously acted as mistresses; how young girls were trained in crafts; and how they were expected to behave but also deviated from these norms. This descriptive structure is effective, bringing into view the deep roots, vigor, and nuance of women's skilled work. The final chapter broadens, looking at how these women, at different points in the life cycle, had access to or were excluded from London's privileged political and economic community. Though Gowing carefully situates women's training and trade within the wider period, the second half of the seventeenth century receives the most attention. This was a peculiar moment, when the livery companies enrolled more girls into formal apprenticeships. The fact of young women picking up a trade was not new, but at this point the coincidence of numerous forces made women more visibly engaged with the formal institutions of metropolitan business.

Ingenious Trade is deeply concerned with the archives of business and work. Despite the well-known difficulties of quantifying women's economic contributions, the author demonstrates it is possible to show that women's work was "structured, regulated and valued" (p. 244). Digitized sources, including the Records of London's Livery Companies Online (ROLLCO) database, assist in the identification of women enrolled in the apprenticeship system within the guild records. Gowing also makes productive use of a fascinating corpus of suits to dissolve apprenticeships and claim back premiums lodged at London's Mayor's Court. As well as providing rich detail about women's training and the expectations of both apprentices and mistresses, these cases prove that girls were being trained by company members and their wives over an extended period but not being officially registered. The book additionally contains sustained and valuable reflection about how the documents that have been come down to us—above all, indentures—were produced, adapted for the use of women, and used by contemporaries as evidence in petitions and disputes.

The exhaustive work of recovery buttresses Gowing's central thesis. Challenging the standard view that women's work was "generally underpaid, unskilled and informal," *Ingenious Trade* makes the case that within and without London's livery companies, their work could be "organised and recognised, with an investment in training that anticipated future rewards for both mistresses and apprentices" (p. 245). But women's training and skilled work did not match the traditional model based on men and boys. Girls were expected to conform to feminized modes of diligence, modesty, and submissiveness; lived in differently formed households, sometimes headed by women; carried out other domestic tasks; and faced restrictions on their ability to trade independently, especially after marriage. Craftwork and apprenticeship were far from exclusively male domains. Historians of work, business, and gender need to account for this argument's implications.

Where the book is especially powerful is in laying out the consequences of its findings. The ubiquity of female training and its emphasis on personal decorum mean that we need to expand our conception of the sphere of work. As Gowing puts it, "Apprenticeship . . . might usefully be seen not only as training for artisanship but as the crafting of gender" (p. 177). Gendered identities were shaped by the practices of apprenticeship, from the way girls controlled their gaze to the sureness of their sewing hand. While the scope of the book's arguments reaches beyond the capital, its conclusions make us see seventeenth-century London differently. Not only were the streets, shops, and houses full of industrious women, but these women were creatively and cunningly navigating the structures of power and trade that have up to now been perceived as overwhelmingly dominated by men. The "feminine and feminised shop world" of the Royal Exchange, for example, was a prominent, heterosocial space in London's center (p. 53). Gowing also shows how women's training developed social and economic networks between London and the country, chiefly among the middling and gentry families who sent their daughters to find a foothold in trade. Furthermore, she makes a conscious effort to compare the position of London's apprentices and mistresses with that of their counterparts elsewhere in Britain and Europe. A fruitful area for further exploration might be why women were so able to establish themselves within London when controversies flared up in other towns.

For all its conceptual robustness and archival rigor, the book is grounded in the life stories of individual women and girls. Several appear in a Who's Who section that follows the conclusion. Each chapter opens with a slice from the biography of a London apprentice or mistress. Some of the stories are upsetting. Some elucidate the

substantial businesses that women were able to establish and pass on, even if individual biographies frequently tail off in the records. This approach underlines the universality of a history deeply relevant to scholars of more distant times and places: these women and girls tried to make a success of their lives and work in the face of institutions and competition that limited their opportunities to thrive.

CHARLIE TAVERNER, *Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland*

Charlie Taverner is a research fellow at Trinity College Dublin and part of the ERC-funded FoodCult project. A social historian of food and cities, he is the author of Street Food: Hawkers and the History of London (2023).

. . .

Agents of Reform: Child Labor and the Origins of the Welfare State. By Elisabeth Anderson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. xvi + 384 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$95.00; paper, \$29.95. ISBN: cloth, 978-0-691-22090-1; paper, 978-0-691-22089-5.

doi:10.1017/S000768052300017X

Reviewed by Yukako Otori

Elisabeth Anderson's *Agents of Reform: Child Labor and the Origins of the Welfare State* helps us rethink the nature and origins of the modern welfare state in significant ways. She takes full advantage of the term "regulatory welfare state" to explore how regulatory and protective functions of the state overlapped, while many of us are inclined to treat them separately and associate the latter exclusively with social insurance. In this vein, this fascinating book echoes the literature underlining the expansion of governmental interventions into socioeconomic affairs, which indeed preceded the provision of welfare benefits in many places. Yet, in comparison to the works of historians such as William J. Novak and E. P. Hennock, Anderson's sociological inquiry focuses specifically on the emergence of worker protection, exploring more subtle aspects of the extension of the state's power into our lives.

Agents of Reform contributes to a better understanding of child labor, showing its centrality in the development of the modern state. Chapter 1 is an introduction that delineates the initial contours of child labor reform that made legislative advancements in continental Europe and the United States in the 1830s and 1840s, "when there was little demand for it from either above or below" (p. 5). Anderson highlights the role of middle-class and elite reformers in fighting for justice for toiling children in their localities. On the surface, her