

Book Reviews

ascending or crumbling welfare states, and the informal ones around class, race, ethnicity, and gender. The latter receives some attention in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra's chapter, focused on the Dutch medical market in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But, as in the best of these essays, more questions are raised than answered, not least, in this case, around the problematics of gender itself. Only one chapter deals head-on with the older theme of the politics of professionalization: Phillip Nicholls (the only British contributor) offers a revisionist account of the boundary-drawing between homœopaths and regulars in the mid-nineteenth century. Rather than stressing essentialist differences, Nicholls argues that the exclusionary tactics adopted by the struggling regulars stimulated and strengthened the formation of homœopathic organizations which, "once developed, institutionalised the very epistemological differences of which the regular school complained" (p. 166).

Although many of the chapters refer to similar-looking legislation in the early-twentieth century proscribing alternative practices (as in Denmark, Sweden and Finland), none unfortunately explains the phenomenon. Barbara Wolf-Braun's largely descriptive chapter on "magnetopaths" and the occult fringe in *fin-de-siècle* Germany, provides no clue as to why the Prussian Minister of Culture should have issued a decree in 1902 calling for all lay practitioners to register with district doctors, let alone what the connections might be between this measure and the different types of scientific and lay reactions to hypnosis in Germany. Contrary to this usual picture of alternative-practice-under-adversity is Michael Stolberg's contribution on irregular healing in late-nineteenth-century Bavaria. There, the medical market was *deregulated* in 1873, opening it to all comers with or without licence. Drawing on a marvellous collection of late-nineteenth-century statistical surveys of some 32,000 irregular healers, Stolberg explores what has

hitherto been largely neglected by historians of the "fringe", the non-exotic, ordinary practices of lay healing.

In many ways Stolberg's essay comes closest to embodying the sense of this volume, which explicitly is not an attempt systematically to compare alternative medical practices and politics in different European countries, nor rigorously to develop new methodological approaches. Its coherence lies, rather, in its modest display of new or understudied territories (national and therapeutic), and in its provision of shopping lists for future research and conceptualization. For this, and for providing an excellent alternative to the Anglo-American literature on the subject, the volume ought to find a welcome place in the classroom.

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Stephen Lock, John M Last and George Dunea (eds), *The Oxford illustrated companion to medicine*, 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. xiv, 891, illus., £39.50 (hardback 0-19-262950-6).

With issues of health care provision and biomedical science being high on the agenda in daily news and political debate, works such as this *Companion* can play an important role in facilitating public understanding of the medical facts involved, as well as their historical and social dimensions. Clearly, Stephen Lock and his co-editors, together with over 200, predominantly Anglo-American expert authors involved in this volume, have made a significant contribution to this enterprise.

In more than 500 accessibly written main articles, from 'Abortion' and 'Abuse of old

people', via 'Gene therapy', 'Nutrition' and 'Oncology', down to 'Yellow fever' and 'Zombification' (!), this volume shows an admirable coverage. Many contributions review the historical development as well as the present state of knowledge, which makes this book also relevant for readers with chiefly historical interests. Moreover, numerous articles are accompanied by short biographies of key persons mentioned in the text. Cross-references between the articles and four, partly overlapping indices (topic index, list of individual conditions and diseases, people index, and general index) facilitate searches.

Despite the broad coverage, there are certain themes that feature prominently, such as infectious diseases and health care in non-western countries, medical specialties and technologies, and biomedical ethics. It speaks for the editors' perceptiveness and sense for topicality that there are several articles on alternative and complementary medicine, and substantial contributions on biological and chemical warfare and on landmines. Some articles awake interest through their conceptual approach. There is one, for example, on 'Truants—doctors in other walks of life', which includes a list of those medics that made a name for themselves in (non-medical) science, in the church, law, politics, philosophy, and the arts, or as humanists, linguists, and bibliophiles. Conceptually remarkable also is an entry on 'Misadventures', which lists among others the Lübeck disaster with contaminated BCG vaccine in 1930, HIV and hepatitis C contaminated blood transfusion in the 1980s, and of course the thalidomide scandal of 1956–61. It is another strength of this *Companion* that its articles on medical ethics not only pertain to the normative aspects, but also include ethical failures such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.

As one would expect in a multi-authored volume like this, the articles vary in their quality, from illuminating discussions via useful items to standard

treatments of the matter in hand. Among the top class contributions I would rank the one on medical 'Advertising', which not only charts the history of the issue (in Britain), but also provides a good general discussion of the uneasy relationship of the medical profession with a free market economy. In the middle group of articles I would put the piece on the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology, which describes the proposal and evaluation procedures and gives a list of the winners from 1901 to 2000 and their research areas. Standard accounts are given in the article on 'Anesthesia', which brings all the big names and discoveries in a familiar story; and the piece on 'Tuberculosis' (within a highlighted series of articles on 'The Great Killers'). The latter contribution is not quite accurate in stating that collapse therapy or artificial pneumothorax was introduced from the 1920s. This form of treatment had already been pioneered by the Turin physician Carlo Forlanini (1847–1918) in 1888.

In view of such more detailed aspects, it is regrettable that the authors were apparently not permitted to append a few titles of Further Reading to their articles. Only some contributors have circumvented this by citing key literature in their main texts. While it is understandable that a work for a wide, professional as well as non-professional readership omits full references, it is hard to see why a publication of this magnitude (which is also lavishly illustrated) should not provide some bibliographic guidance for its users. Obviously that would require regular updating, but this has been happening anyway in the previous editions (the first appeared in 1986, the second in 1994). None the less, readers seeking brief, basic and accessible information on virtually any medical topic will be very well served by this *Companion*.

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