

of how social and individual problems epitomised by and articulated through exhaustion discourse can generate social changes and new forms of subjectivities.

Each of the chapters is too short to offer substantial analyses of the subject if taken individually. Those that deal with history are at times too broad and lacking in context (especially Chapters 2 and 3), without much archival research, and some authors occasionally make debatable affirmations. For example, in Chapter 5, Wilmar B. Schiufeli equates Shakespeare's use of 'burn'd out' in a sonnet with the 'process of energy exhaustion in relation to love' (p. 107), a complicated statement which over-simplifies the history of the concepts 'energy' and 'exhaustion', and their link to the industrial changes of the nineteenth century. This over-simplification can be understood given the fact that he is a sociologist, not a historian, but a suggestion for improvement would be to have included more historians amongst the authors of the book. Additionally, given the variety of interpretations of exhaustion, it would have been interesting to consider the extent to which it is a metaphor that goes beyond the human body; for instance, by considering issues of climate change and ecological sustainability (but perhaps this is a point for further research).

Burnout, Fatigue, Exhaustion is a book to be read from cover to cover: as a whole, it serves as a very useful and thought-provoking introduction to a complicated subject. Even though there are only a handful of chapters specifically dedicated to the history of exhaustion syndromes, those that deal with other topics still present useful approaches and raise questions that would be of interest to historians of medicine, particularly those in the field of medical humanities. The different parts speak to each other in a cohesive way that demonstrates the depth of the subject and shows the value of using interdisciplinary approaches to tackle its issues, resembling other publications in the fields of the history of pain and emotions that have called for such approaches, including the work of Joanna Bourke and Rob Boddice. Many of the chapters thread historical analyses of neurasthenia, burn-out and treatments like amphetamines with present-day narratives of exhaustion, demonstrating the uses of incorporating history into other disciplinary approaches. Politically charged and methodologically varied, *Burnout, Fatigue, Exhaustion* is a useful introduction and point of departure for thinking about an old problem that affects us in new ways.

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Elizabeth Neswald, David F. Smith and Ulrike Thoms *Setting Nutritional Standards: Theory, Policies, Practices* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2017), pp. vii+230, £80/£19.99, hardback/ebook/ebook for handhelds, ISBN: 9781580465762 / 9781782049197 / 9781782049296.

In 1995 Harmke Kamminga and Andrew Cunningham set off a new era in the history of nutrition science with their edited book, *The Science and Culture of Nutrition, 1840–1940* (Amsterdam: Rodope, 1995). The articles in that volume argued that, as a science, nutrition had to be read in its historical and cultural contexts. Elizabeth Neswald, David F. Smith, and Ulrike Thoms new book, based on a 2010 Brock University symposium, updates that argument looking specifically at the individuals, institutions, and politics of creating nutrition standards in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The editors offer a comprehensive introduction that will be useful for readers new to the history of nutrition science. While outlining the major breakthroughs in the field including the foundational research on proteins, vitamins, and calories, the authors suggest that much of nutrition research took place outside of university settings and was conducted by or sponsored by governments, private groups (corporate food interests) and professional societies. Drawing on the growing literature in the field, the editors argue that nutrition research, for example, on vitamins or the caloric content of food, has political implications particularly in terms of diets and costs of living, and they highlight the role of states in setting those standards. By labelling certain foods as ‘better’ or more nutritional, governments might favour certain agricultural or corporate interests over others but they might also avoid social conflict by subsidising certain products and keeping food prices down. The themes tying the essays together address the creation of nutrition science, how knowledge about food and health was disseminated, the changing nature of scientific and medical authority, and the relations among policy makers, medical professionals, and the public, particularly in terms of the deep cultural and national meanings attached to food and health.

One group of essays argues that, contrary to Foucault’s notion of biopolitics as a top-down assertion of social control, nutrition research involved state and non-state players who engaged in intense debates over what constituted scientific knowledge and who could be seen as experts in the field. Elizabeth Neswald’s article on the search for dietary norms (and the ‘average man’), argues that the development of dietary norms was not a straightforward laboratory process but rather was the product of interactions among all players both inside and outside laboratories. Corinna Treitel’s essay on the debate about the protein standard in Germany suggests that the creation of biopolitical knowledge, in this case, protein standards, emerged out of debate and discussion among civic as well as scientific groups and was most notably influenced by vegetarians outside the mainstream of the scientific community. In this way, nutrition became part of a generalised nineteenth-century liberal discourse about national health and identity. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska similarly suggests that scientific knowledge was limited by both public debate and popular culture. In her case, controversy during the interwar period over the nutritional value of white versus brown bread led to different outcomes in Britain and Germany. In the former, government efforts to promote brown bread failed as popular preference for white bread symbolised cultural progress while in Germany the Nazi regime promoted brown bread as ‘the right fuel for an efficient and healthy Aryan race’ (p. 159).

A number of authors emphasise the professionalisation of science and scientific societies as an important factor in shaping state-sponsored nutrition standards and national food policy. Deborah Neill suggests that French scientific societies promoted a meat-based diet in direct opposition to vegetarian societies that advocated limiting red meat in a ‘balanced’ diet. The debate, Neill says, revealed deep fears that the French would become too like their (presumably weaker) colonial subjects. Ulrike Thoms similarly points to the emergence of a new scientific authority in Germany as the state developed standards for military rations. These standards, she says ‘developed out of the collaboration and competition’ among physicians and physiologists, army administrators, food chemists and food processors (p. 17). Thoms argues that feeding soldiers, once seen as a military problem of logistics and administration, became a much broader matter of national health. In the process, non-military authorities defined health and nutrition standards for soldiers as well as civilians. David F. Smith, writing about efforts to establish dietary causes of infectious diseases during the 1920s and 1930s, suggests that nutrition scientists in Britain used those debates to establish their professional authority. Seemingly arcane

arguments between scientists advocating for vitamins versus those who emphasised minerals went ‘beyond alleviating the effects of malnutrition’ and entered into discussions about national mortality, disability and state responsibility in setting standards for national and international food and nutrition policies.

A key goal of professionalising nutrition science was the effort to establish national and international standards. In this, medical and scientific professionals often allied with voluntary associations and civic reformers. Suzanne Junod, argues that non-governmental actors, notably women’s and consumer organisations were crucial players in setting standard weight and nutrition labels in the early twentieth-century United States. While opposed by the growing food production industry, these efforts ultimately succeeded establishing regulations that ‘could be enforced to a degree unknown with most dietary and nutritional standards’ (p. 18).

A final essay by Nick Cullather, ‘When is a Famine not a Famine?’ centres debates about nutrition standards in an international context. Exploring responses to the 1967 Bahar India famine, Cullather argues that international standards for nutrition – and malnutrition – formed key elements in Cold War geopolitics. International nutrition models based on statistics and ‘abstract comparisons of the calories’ took precedence over local assessments thus allowing national and international players to use famine relief to further their own aims.

The editors intend this volume to contribute to current debates about food, culture and diet. Indeed, the essays presented here suggest that nutrition standards are, and have been historically, the result of a complex interplay of culture, science and politics.

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Thuy Linh Nguyen, *Childbirth, Maternity, and Medical Pluralism in French Colonial Vietnam, 1880–1945* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2016), pp. 254, £80, hardback/ebook, ISBN: 978-1-580-46568-7/978-1-782-04849-7.

Childbirth, Maternity, and Medical Pluralism in French Colonial Vietnam, 1880–1945 reconstructs the history of colonial efforts to introduce ‘modern’ maternity and childbirth practices to Vietnam during the French colonial era. Using reproduction as a lens, Thuy Linh Nguyen illustrates the ways in which the colonial encounter – as it pertained to medicine – was one of adaptation, compromise, negotiation and transformation for both the Vietnamese and the French. In particular, the book examines how French efforts to relocate maternity and infant care into a clinical setting led to a pluralistic medical system due to misunderstandings, the failure of colonial physicians to recognise the cultural and religious significance of embedded maternity and infant care practices, and local resistance by indigenous medical practitioners and pregnant women.

Thuy Linh Nguyen’s detailed examination is based on French and Vietnamese archives encompassing medical legislation, administrative decrees, and medical reports regarding infant mortality, demography, maternity hospitals, medical budgets and colonial health care concerns. Statistical and administrative records are supplemented with personnel files of colonial midwives that provide rich material for understanding the midwives’ personal and professional lives. Thuy Linh Nguyen gains insight into Vietnamese perspectives on French ideas of childbirth and motherhood from daily public discussions in Vietnamese newspapers and magazines and from medical pamphlets and advertisements.