

philosopher, David Cooper, on the “Frankensteinian” nature of biotechnology. Other “technologies” are apparent here—financial, managerial, professional, and legal, among them—but these are not implied in the opening statement, nor do they come within the analytical scope of the volume. Rather, as the subtitle has it, the theme is ‘From paternalism to autonomy?’—the question mark signifying an effort to transform into a “useful heuristic” (p. 8) an otherwise commonplace historical structuring for medical ethics in the twentieth century.

Yet, notwithstanding the philosopher Susan Lowe’s well-penned castigation of the concept of autonomy as “fundamentally misconceived” and a “show of rhetoric” (p. 129) in relation to physician-assisted suicide, none of the contributors seeks historically to unpack the idea of patient autonomy, nor explain socially and culturally what may have been displaced by its rise to prominence. All too readily they fall back upon describing the displacement of the medical profession’s paternalistic authority and privilege—a possibly historically misinformed notion, which in places here is presented even with a whiff of nostalgia.

This is not to suggest that the contributors have nothing new, interesting or insightful to say on ethics in medicine. Not least through German comparisons, they contribute significantly to this still too little known and under-researched area. Andrew Morrice explores the rise (c. 1900) and the demise (post-1945) of the British Medical Association’s Central Ethical Committee, exposing how class-based codes of gentility in Britain counted for more than ethics as such in the profession’s patrol of its boundaries. Andreas-Holger Maehle, on the emergence of doctors’ ethics in Germany in the late nineteenth century, stakes a greater (if still limited) claim for some “real ethics” among the profession by referring to controversies over issues of “confidentiality” and “informed consent”. The latter is more fully articulated in the German context through the contrasting evidence presented by Cay-Rüdiger Prüll and Marianne Sinn in relation to consent to surgical procedures, on the one hand, and consent to autopsies, on the other—different stories born of different professional relations. However, as

Lutz Sauerteig makes clear in his useful chronicle of compulsory sickness insurance in Germany, at the root of most medical morality and doctor-patient relations is money. Sauerteig has nothing directly to say on medical ethics. His object, rather, is to trace how, within the German sickness insurance system, a discourse on social progress and a practice of greater equality of access to health care gave way in the 1970s to a rhetoric of market economics and a reality for the German working population of paying “an unnecessarily large proportion of its income for a financially inadequate health care system” (p. 68). Ulrich Tröhler’s chapter on the national and international codes governing human experimentation since 1947 also hints at important recent shifts in discourse. Most intriguing is the move away from “rights” to the more flexible (and corruptible) concept of “human dignity”. Tröhler makes too little of the political economics behind this trend, but his chapter, like Sauerteig’s, serves at least to remind us that medical ethics, like technology, is more fruitfully pursued intellectually when treated as socially constitutive, rather than causal. Its real motor always lies elsewhere, in places where this volume, alas, largely fails to reach.

Roger Cooter,

The Wellcome Trust Centre for the
History of Medicine at UCL

Dan Healey, *Homosexual desire in revolutionary Russia: the regulation of sexual and gender dissent*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2001, pp. xvi, 392, illus., \$40.00 (hardback 0-226-32233-5).

Studies of same-sex Eros are still relatively few in the historiography of Russia and the Soviet Union. The limited accessibility of Russian archives under Soviet rule has been one major reason for this gap. The collapse of communism and the opening up of the archives made it possible for researchers to address this important subject. Dan Healey’s book is a welcome contribution to this relatively under-investigated

topic. The author uses an impressive array of primary sources: archives (including sentences and court materials on cases of homosexuals tried in Moscow courts), medical publications, and contemporary periodicals. His exploration of the history of homosexuality in Soviet Russia also takes account of a broad range of secondary sources on gender, sexuality, and Russian/Soviet history.

The study is divided into three parts. Part I explores the social landscape of the emerging homosexual subculture in major urban centres in late imperial and early communist Russia. Part II examines the regulation of same-sex desire in its evolution from the punitive model under Tsarist rule to the medicalization and decriminalization of homosexuality in the 1920s, and to the recriminalization of homosexuals in 1934. Finally, Part III traces the effects of the punitive policies towards same-sex desire introduced under Stalin on the lives of homosexuals in late-Soviet Russia.

According to the author, the earlier studies of homosexuals in Soviet Russia (most notably by Simon Karlinsky) have been largely informed by the totalitarian perspective on Soviet communism which is characterized by the exclusive focus on the state. This approach tends to ignore the diversity and multiplicity of discourses on same-sex desire which existed in early Soviet Russia. Karlinsky, for example, has argued that the Bolsheviks had no intention of legalizing homosexuality when they abolished the Tsarist criminal code after the revolution. His argument implies that the decriminalization which transpired in the early Soviet legal codes of 1922 and 1926 was a result of oversight. In contrast, Healey convincingly shows that Bolshevik views on homosexuality were anything but monolithic, arguing that the Bolsheviks entertained a wide variety of perspectives on same-sex relations. On the one hand, they espoused libertarian, utopian, and modernizing perspectives on sexual dissent, which they inherited from the old regime. The decriminalization of homosexuals in the early Soviet codes was due to this influence. On the other hand, as in pre-revolutionary Russia, a counter-discourse existed alongside these

secular, medicalized, and gender-neutral views on sexual order. Even during the relatively liberal 1920s, this anti-modern discourse was applied to classes which were deemed by the Bolsheviks to be ideologically opposed to the Soviet regime and to the so-called “backward” elements in the areas populated by ethnic minorities in the south and east of the Soviet state.

With the beginning of the drive to industrialize the country and collectivize its agriculture in the early 1930s, the recriminalization of homosexuality and the imposition of a compulsory heterosexuality replaced the ambivalence of the attitudes towards same-sex desire. Underlying the repressive policies towards homosexuals was the conservative, anti-modern counter-discourse of the 1920s. The author shows that the neo-traditionalism in the treatment of same-sex relations introduced by Stalin’s government persisted throughout the Soviet period and began to ease up somewhat only under *perestroika*. The revealing statistics that he includes show that the number of convictions under anti-sodomy laws actually increased in the wake of de-Stalinization, despite the limited liberalization in other spheres that occurred during the same period.

A brief review can hardly do justice to the richness of Healey’s study. In addition to homosexuality, his nuanced account covers a variety of related topics, including construction of gender, legal and medical debates on sexuality and sex crimes, and policies towards ethnic minorities. Not only does the study explore a relatively under-investigated aspect of the history of Soviet Russia, but it also suggests some interesting avenues for rethinking current interpretations of this history. The ambivalence of Soviet Communists on issues related to sexual dissent, so convincingly documented by Healey, raises, in the mind of this reader at least, questions as to their attitude towards the private sphere in general. What is the source of this ambivalence? Did it disappear completely under Stalin? Some evidence provided in the book suggests that it did not. It documents inconsistencies in persecuting same-sex desire, particularly among women, even at the

height of Stalin's repressive policies. The increased persecution of homosexuals following de-Stalinization is also puzzling given the generally more liberal climate that existed in the country under Khrushchev.

As the author himself recognizes, much work still needs to be done to further our understanding of sexual politics and the treatment of sexual dissent in the Soviet Union, as well as their implications for understanding Soviet experience in general. For example, if one can accept, with some reservations, the author's arguments about the reasons for decriminalizing homosexuality under the early Soviet regime (this reader at least was not entirely convinced by the author's use of evidence related to the German Social Democratic Party to illustrate the attitudes towards homosexuality among the Bolsheviks; or by his inferences about Lenin's views on the subject based on his writings), it is harder to accept his argument that the recriminalization of homosexuality under Stalin was motivated by the need for "a marshaling of resources into a narrow range of endeavors" (p. 171). One also wonders why Stalin abandoned modern approaches towards homosexuality while pursuing an aggressive policy of modernization in many other spheres.

However, these and some other reservations do not diminish the overall positive impression of the book. It will be a welcome addition to a variety of graduate and advanced undergraduate courses on the history of gender, sexuality, and, of course, Soviet Russia.

Gennady Shkliarevsky,
Bard College

Arnold I Davidson, *The emergence of sexuality: historical epistemology and the formation of concepts*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001, pp. xvi, 254, illus., £27.50 (hardback 0-674-00459-0).

Arnold Davidson's book has been a long time in the making, and much of it has already been seen by historians of psychiatry and students

of Michel Foucault's writings. However, familiarity with many of the essays published in *The emergence of sexuality* should not encourage contempt. Davidson's work is one of the most significant applications of Foucault's (and in part Georges Canguilhem's) "historical epistemology" to the development of psychiatric thinking about sexuality. Not only are the chapters written with style and wit, but they explicate some of the most important problems faced by any historian of medical knowledge, particularly historians of psychiatry. Davidson's essays in *Critical Inquiry* in the late 1980s and his commentaries on Foucault elsewhere are by no means old hat: they can be appreciated fully only when read in conjunction with one another. And, furthermore, the remaining chapters of the book provide the missing elements from an overall system. No historian of sexuality can afford not to pay close attention to Davidson's work. It is for this reason that he has already been lauded by David Halperin, Ian Hacking and others.

In a discipline where historiographical pronouncements are often regarded as the equivalent of After Eight mints, it is easy to dismiss methodological statements as the banging of a hollow drum. Good historical investigation is assumed to stand for itself, and, indeed, this view is often substantiated. But the quality of theory is often strained, or is lost in its own world of post-modern discourse, lacking the significance to justify numerous obscure readings. This criticism is not at all the case with Davidson's work. The first five chapters might be characterized as the application of theory: they are detailed, brilliant, and insightful essays about sex and sexuality, about how new styles of reasoning come into being, and about how we came to be sexual beings. The essays rely on intensive primary research into published documents in numerous languages. Only a historian who was overly obsessed with the context of production of a statement would fault Davidson's investigations into the formation of sexological knowledge, and it should be remembered that he is first and foremost a philosopher, not a social historian. The remaining chapters might be considered a profound exegesis of Foucault's archaeological