

appropriate for a robust and virtuous body. 'A criticism of succulence was accompanied by portrayals of a new alimentary persona at once medical and economic' (p. 114). *Économie* linked the nutritive and the financial, the physical and the political.

This was a political program, and also a scientific one: rational consumers and charity administrators alike depended upon experts to define economic choices. Chemists offered their analytical techniques in the service of a broader epistemological and moral project. Philanthropic and governmental institutions strove to apply *économie* to their charges and relied on expert authority to do so. Gelatine, for example, mobilised enormous administrative and scientific interest because it promised a cheap substitute for meat. Paupers, hospital patients and other institutionalised populations could be sustained – given nutritive value – at lower cost. *Économie* relied upon a program of quantification, monetary accounting and scientific authority.

But this is no bloodless history of nebulous instruments of power. This is also a story of 'technologies of the senses' (p. 71). Scientific-industrial foodways developed a unique sensory, aesthetic and emotional experience. When chemists like Antoine Parmentier weighed, analysed and manipulated potato flour or gelatine, they also created new ways of feeling about food. When eighteenth-century consumers bit into a scientifically formulated bar of chocolate, specially designed potato flour or other 'health food', they undertook a knowledge-based act. Spary calls this eating as an 'epistemological transaction': health foods came to represent health, in the same way that scientific experts represented natural knowledge (p. 162). Knowledge was not always transparent, however: chemists and state administrators built a sensory world around techno-nutritive experiments in deception, substituting ingredients on the sly.

Feeding France juxtaposes high and low scientific practices, humble supermarket goods and powerful debates over materialism and epistemology. Things like potato bread and beet sugar lead Spary to examine debates over expert authority and the truths of nature. What are the political implications of finding truth through chemistry? How did scientists come to see substitution, surrogacy and public deception as legitimate paths to truth? What might it mean to speak of a 'politics of matter' (p. 321)? The politics of matter are at the heart of this project, for Spary is concerned here with the co-constitution of social facts and natural facts. Food proved a pivot for political economy, natural history and government. Food made the individual body and defined the body politic.

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Corinna Wagner, *Pathological Bodies: Medicine and Political Culture* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2013), pp. xii + 258, \$39.95, £27.95, paperback, ISBN: 9780520289529.

'Medicopolitical discourse *does* certain things: it disqualifies female bodies, it pathologizes rebellious radicals, and it censors luxuriating elites' (10). Corinne Wagner's rich and well-researched book does a very useful job in connecting Romantic medicine and politics via representations in literary and visual cultures in the widest sense. No-one has, as yet, produced a book-length study that shows the importance of medicine to politics and its transmission in a variety of cultural media (mainly literary and visual) so well.¹

¹ Although the intersection of literature, medicine and politics in this period is well served in different ways by

Wagner acknowledges her debt to the Habermasian (and post-Marxist) approach of her PhD supervisor, John Barrell, but also deploys Michel Foucault's arguments concerning the operation of power through discourse, with the emphasis on the medical in this case – she is attentive to the actors and 'their beliefs, motives, goals, fears, interests, and narratives' (10). In this concern, Wagner responds to the difficulties many critics have found with Foucault's seeming lack of engagement with agency, and his correspondingly greater emphasis on the passivity and helplessness of 'docile bodies'. Wagner follows Foucault in observing that, while medico-political discourse 'did not *belong* to anyone, intentional agents used language in moral and political struggles': hence her aim in this book is to 'demonstrate how medically inflected narratives built up around bridging concepts were debated, negotiated, and dispersed throughout society' (10). Via these and a variety of literary-critical influences, most notably feminist, Wagner builds a case for the mainly negative uses of medical discourses in the political arena, both in the traditional sense and in terms of gender.

The book divides into three main sections, which themselves contain two chapters of 'case studies' that seek to demonstrate the effects of medico-political discourse on three areas of Romantic identity and society. Part I, 'Revolutionary pathologies', investigates the use of biology (specifically, the emergence of the 'two sex' model of gender difference) to police and defines the roles of women in both politics and wider society. Chapter One, 'The case of Marie Antoinette: revolutionary politics and the biologically suspect woman', argues that medical ideas about 'diseases' like uterine furor, nymphomania, masturbation and hermaphroditism were used by both 'political pornographers as well as serious political writers' to reduce women to their inferior biological essentials and thus to prevent their participation in political life (11). Part of the strength of Wagner's study is her enthusiastic embrace of the 'visual turn' in both history and literature to illustrate the power of such media (which actually combine both language and image) to propagate medico-political ideas that have serious, real-life effects on their targets.

The second chapter, 'Monstrous mothers, constitutional Amazons, and the medicalisation of the breast', discusses the role of breast-feeding in political terms, and argues that the allegedly natural and healthy practice of maternal breast-feeding was intimately bound up with notions of the healthy and natural state, such that 'by the 1790s' it was 'a political act' (52) with a 'higher cultural purpose' (53). Whereas some critics have found the breast to be an empowering symbol in this period, Wagner finds these symbolic uses to be oppressive, and the breast just another instance of the use of essentialist biology to confine women to a certain apolitical role in this age of Revolution, however much the breast might feature so centrally in its iconography.

Part II, 'Radical pathologies', deals (as the title suggests) with political and social radicals, and begins with a chapter on some prime instances of both genders. William Godwin's notorious and allegedly utilitarian and rationalistic account of Mary Wollstonecraft's (his wife) death from childbed or puerperal fever was a literary anatomy that proved his inhumanity and the corruption of his radical politics. Wollstonecraft's death also provided conservative critics with the ammunition to argue that female disorders differed in kind from those of men, thus proving the intrinsic inferiority of women and their politics – gendered, sexual and revolutionary. The next chapter, 'Hygiene, contamination,

the work of (for example), Alan Bewell, Ildiko Csengei and Sharon Ruston.

and Tom Paine's toenails' treats Thomas Paine's allegedly dubious personal hygiene as an occasion to besmirch his radical politics: Wagner argues that the late eighteenth century saw an increasing emphasis on cleanliness and its relation to political order.

Part III, 'Royal pathologies', is drawn once again to representations of monarchy, and begins with a chapter describing how George IV's notorious dietary excesses were represented by a censorious middling order as the very symbol of aristocratic excess. Here again, writers mined medical sources, popular and scientific, to inform their satirical illustrations and writings in a medico-political manner. Chapter Six moves from this bloated body politic to 'Hottentot buttocks, "strange Chinese shapes," and George IV's oriental appetites', in which the food of the 'other' becomes a sign of corruption of bodily and political boundaries. The Oriental cuisine so relished by George flouts the injunction to be true to the orderly, healthy, local, national diet: to consume foreign food so conspicuously raises anxieties about the contaminating power of empire, where the periphery can displace the centre. Wagner ends her book with a flourishing 'Coda: medicine, politics, and the production of the modern body' which makes the case that the bodies of public figures (today as well) are measured against certain medico-political norms that determine whether both their personality and politics can be considered pathological or healthy, clean or dirty, worthy or corrupt.

One might quibble with Wagner's interestingly complex but ultimately rather insistent emphasis on the destructive effects of medical discourse – perhaps her choice of materials for analysis dictates such an approach, as most are satirical in nature. The works we do see are indeed designed to employ medical discourse for social regulation (even the non-satirical ones), and thus far Wagner's nuanced study is well judged. One wonders whether one might discover more liberatory instances of medicine being deployed by, for example, feminists themselves. Did Wollstonecraft's views on 'true' sensibility (with its medical underpinning) have made a difference to the way she was viewed by a different audience in the period? The same applies to class as well: could certain diseases be liberatory for the some of the lower orders (as consumption or melancholy could be for working-class poets)? Could a political celebrity be invested with positive medical associations (with sensibility, for example)? One of the images of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, comes close to this point (62).

Overall, however, Corinna Wagner is to be commended for writing a stimulating and well-researched book which will be a standard text of reference for those interested in the medicine and politics of Romantic culture.

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Keith Wailoo, *Pain: A Political History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), pp. 296, \$16.32, electronic, ISBN: 978-1-4214-1366-2.

This book is a lively and readable account of the complex and evolving interplay between pain medicine, public policy and politics in the United States, beginning with the signing into law of disability support by President Eisenhower in 1956. Physicians concerned about the complexities around pain management will find this book fascinating. Pain is