

Anne-Marie Moulin (ed.), *Médecines et santé—Medical practices and health. Les Sciences hors d'occident au XX^e siècle—20th Century Sciences: Beyond the Metropolis*, vol. 4, Paris ORSTROM Editions, 1996, pp. 247, Fr 50.00 (2-7099-1298-8).

This is the fourth in a series of collections under the general editorship of Roland Waast, on the history of western science beyond the West. While concentrating on medical practices and health, it is not simply another volume on “tropical” or “colonial” medicine but a more general survey of the spread of western medicine and its modification in non-western contexts, colonial and post-colonial. The emphasis throughout is very much on the dynamic nature of the relationship between western medicine and other systems, and some of the thirteen essays are written from a contemporary, non-historical perspective.

In her introduction to the volume, Anne-Marie Moulin provides a somewhat broader context in which to locate the essays which follow, discussing the changing face of western medicine at the beginning of the twentieth century, exemplified by the emergence of tropical medicine. The birth and development of this new specialism is then problematized in one of the most interesting essays in the volume, by Harish Naraindas, who asks why tropical medicine could exist when it was realized that there were very few strictly “tropical” diseases. Naraindas finds an answer in a broadening conception of “the tropical”, which embraced the habits and practices of colonized peoples. Tropical medicine held cultures as well as climates to be pathogenic. However, as Laurence Monnais-Rousselot points out in his chapter on tropical medicine in French Indochina, the fact that tropical medicine served the interests of colonial powers did not mean that it was totally subordinate to them. It was profoundly shaped by the peculiarities of its colonial context and became, progressively, liberated of much of its colonial baggage. But despite these peculiarities, tropical medicine remained unified between the wars by its emphasis on

the eradication of disease and in this, as Ilana Löwy shows, the Rockefeller Foundation was the guiding light, funding and directing campaigns against yellow fever, hookworm, and other vector-borne diseases.

Sections I and II, which consider tropical medicine and vector eradication, are the strongest parts of the book. The merits of individual contributions notwithstanding, the last two sections are less successful. The essays in the section entitled ‘unity and diversity’ are so diverse that collectively they add little to our understanding of the interaction between “traditional” and western medical practices, and the development of western medicine in non-western countries. The subject deserves fuller consideration in a separate volume. Nevertheless, Diana Obregon has interesting things to say about the social construction of the leper in Colombia, showing how the professionalization of the Colombian medical corps brought a change from traditional (biblical) images of leprosy to more modern, medical ones by the 1920s. This new approach to leprosy also reflected Colombian national pride, and the nation’s desire to be seen as part of the “civilized world”. The remaining chapters provide overviews of non-western medical systems and of recent developments in ethno-pharmacology. However, the quality of these chapters, as in the earlier sections is uneven. Some are little more than digests of secondary literature but some provide serviceable introductions to their respective fields.

Mark Harrison, Sheffield Hallam University

Josep Lluís Barona, *Ciència e historia: debates y tendencias en la historiografía de la ciencia*, Godella, Seminari d'Estudis sobre la Ciència, 1994, pp. 270, no price given (84-920303-0-5).

Josep Lluís Barona’s ambitious kaleidoscoping of trends and debates in the Spanish, European, and world historiography of science is part textbook, part membership