

Book Reviews

This collection of papers, like the previous two publications in the series, covers a wide and eclectic range of topics documenting aspects of the development of western medicine in Australia. Such diversity, in methodology as well as content, is not surprising given the open-ended theme and the fact that the conference at which these papers were presented provided a forum for anyone "interested in the history of medicine". While this attracted a fairly representative, Australia-wide selection there is no reference to Aboriginal medicine, and contributions tend to cluster between 1850 and 1950, a period when the plant of British medicine was being assiduously nurtured in an unfamiliar environment. Yet there is little hint of re-rooting difficulties or growth differences. Indeed, the theme notwithstanding, many of the papers are descriptive rather than reflective and, although well informed and often full of interest, generally lack a critical dimension. There are exceptions, but the tendency among medical practitioners, (i.e., most of the 24 contributors) to interpret developments largely within the circumscribed parameters of medicine, and to identify with those who have "laboured in the field" is apparent in the several accounts of clinical entities and the marked preference for biography.

Clinical subjects include the relationship between sunstroke and insanity, treatment of head injuries, the nosology of trophoblastic tumours, chronic skin ulcers, changing disease patterns in colonial South Australia, and a careful evaluation of cold bath therapy for typhoid fever. Of the medical personalities (only one is a woman—a nurse), several gained distinction through their war-time efforts or an unorthodox clinical approach, and others represent sectors of the profession. Papers dealing with institutions, issues, and ideas, by and large, push beyond descriptive boundaries to explore the interface of medicine and society. The Adelaide Children's Hospital and the Queen Victoria Homes for Consumptives reflect typical institutional developments, and discussion of a compensation case at the turn of the century demonstrates a growing medical dominance and paternalism, both of which are evident in the article on early nursing training in South Australia. Policies excluding mental and contagious diseases from the Ballarat District Hospital in the last century highlight contemporary attitudes and medical knowledge against a background of political and economic expediency, issues which are also raised in relation to the federal government's occupational health initiatives this century. Only one paper probes—most skilfully—the implications of adapting Western medicine to Australian conditions and, apart from an abstract referring to mortality trends in Australia and other Western countries, comparative evaluation is noticeably absent.

Considered as a whole, the volume suggests that medical history in Australia continues to be a parochial discipline, a dilettante's pursuit, largely ignored by academic historians as too specialized or of limited consequence in the broader movements of history. There is, however, an encouraging note: the 'Foreword' informs us that the Australian Society of the History of Medicine, inaugurated in November 1986, seeks to develop "critical standards in the field".

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PETER CLARK and CRISPIN WRIGHT (editors), *Mind, psychoanalysis and science*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988, 8vo, pp. xiv, 370, £27.50.

Clark and Wright's collection of papers on the philosophy of psychoanalysis—drawn from a conference at St Andrew's—contains a good deal of fresh material. As the title implies, the accent is on the interpretation of Freudian theory in terms of contemporary analytic philosophy of mind and of science. Since it would be hard to find an interesting question about psychoanalysis that could not be raised in that context, this is not a restrictive brief. Later parts of the book take account of recent work on Freud in other disciplines, and confront psychoanalytic theory with contemporary developments in psychological research. A wide range of attitudes towards Freud is displayed, whilst a high level of intellectual sophistication is maintained throughout.

The immediate stimulus to discussion is Grünbaum's *The foundations of psychoanalysis* which, since its appearance four years ago, has received much attention, well-earned by the seriousness

of its argumentative reconstruction of Freud's writings, in the form of a set of well-defined scientific hypotheses. Grünbaum provides a useful précis of his book at the outset, and his verdict on psychoanalysis' claim to scientific truth is negative. Hopkins and Cioffi take issue with Grünbaum, but for opposing reasons. Hopkins argues carefully and in detail that psychoanalytic thought stands as an extension of common-sense psychology and not on the kinds of inductive foundations that Grünbaum supposes required for it. This, if correct, would make the absence of inductive support irrelevant, since Freudian interpretations would then be no more in need of special scientific corroboration than are ordinary explanations of why people do what they do. Dilman, later in the collection, argues for such a view, with reference to the concept of intention. Cioffi, by contrast, defends the view, promulgated by Popper and by now quite familiar, that psychoanalytic theory, like astrology, illegitimately makes itself invulnerable to refutation. The attitude one takes on this fundamental issue—whether one sees psychoanalytic theory as scientific but false, non-scientific and true, or pseudo-scientific and incapable of truth—is crucial for how one reacts to the later discussions in the collection, and the editors perhaps disappoint in not giving us Grünbaum's replies to the criticisms. (Even if, to this reviewer at least, it seems that Hopkins's arguments would be exceedingly hard to controvert.)

The various tasks to which later papers are devoted include the co-ordination of psychoanalytic theory with topics in philosophical psychology, such as the postulation of homunculi, the "functional" characterization of mental states, and the possibilities of explanation offered by cognitive psychology (Eagle, Haldane, Moore); the evaluation of extra-clinical experimental evidence for psychoanalytic theory (Erwin, Kline); a reassessment of Sulloway's study of the influence of biology on Freud's thought (Crews); and the interconnections of psychoanalytic and literary theory (Sharpe, Lamarque). Of particular interest is the final section devoted to Hobson's "activation-synthesis" model of dream (elaborated in his subsequently published *The dreaming brain*). Squires's acute commentary leaves doubtful the degree to which Hobson's theory does in fact contradict psychoanalytic claims.

There is an irony in the fact that, at a time when many practising psychotherapists and psychoanalysts have been hurrying to declare themselves rid of theoretical commitments, a volume should appear which does so much to demonstrate that the discussion of Freudian theory is, for the very best of reasons, still a live issue.

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KENNETH F. KIPLE (editor), *The African exchange: toward a biological history of black people*, Durham, NC, and London, Duke University Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. vi, 280, £28.45.

The work of historians such as Kenneth F. Kiple in the field of black biological history over the past ten years has shown that the ability of Blacks to withstand certain diseases virtually guaranteed that they would be the chief instruments in the white colonization of Plantation America. We now know, too, that as well as immunities, Blacks carried to the New World a package of susceptibilities which meant that they were especially vulnerable to a range of illnesses of which they had no experience. Much of this work has been done within the context of slavery studies. In this varied and stimulating collection, the scope of investigation is widened from an examination of conditions within slave societies to an elucidation of the details of the "African exchange", by which Plantation America became an extension of the disease- and nutritional environment of Africa.

A characteristically fluent introductory article by Kiple reviewing recent research, complete with exhaustive bibliography, is followed by two studies focusing on disease conditions in Africa. Dauril Alden and Joseph Miller argue that there was a close temporal relationship between outbreaks of smallpox in Africa, upsurges in slave-trading, and the transmission of the disease to Brazil. Philip Curtin, employing newly uncovered data on morbidity and mortality, continues with the epidemiological approach in his consideration of comparative black immunities and susceptibilities in Africa and the West Indies.