

power. The strength of this book lies in the care with which the definition of colonial medicine is made to interact with the shifting ideologies underpinning the British presence in the Sudan. Colonial encounters are described in a language of accommodated power always modified by the responses and/or collusion of the colonized. In the case of the sleeping sickness camps, authority relied upon the co-operation of the population within and without the camp. Attempts to understand and deal with yellow fever extended the colonial presence, but showed how when it needed to be at its strongest it was, in fact, at its weakest.

Bell interprets the governance of the Sudan, via the Foreign Office not the Colonial Office, and the effects of the changing status of Egypt as significant. In the main, as is her intention, the ideologies discussed are those of the colonizers, but there is an appropriate interweaving and questioning of the views of the colonized such as indigenous administrators and Sudanese practitioners of western medicine at various levels in the medical hierarchy. Moreover, Bell provides insights into the opinions of different groups of non-Europeans as they function amidst the demands of colonial rule and the imposition of external values. In the case of the labourers working on the Gezira cotton fields, perceptions of "Westerners" (immigrants from West Africa) shaped by a medical discourse, are articulated among the local Sudanese. Similarly the appropriateness or otherwise of indigenous midwives is an object of discussion and action among the educated elite in urban centres. Those fearful of the ghost of the imperial apologist might be slightly perturbed by the greater focus on European perceptions. I would argue she has tried and succeeded in illustrating subtlety and diversity in the colonial experience.

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**Waltraud Ernst and Bernard Harris** (eds), *Race, science and medicine, 1700–1960*, Studies in the Social History of Medicine, London and New York, Routledge, 1999, pp. ix, 300, £55.00 (0-415-18152-6).

This is an important book. It tackles the complex question of the construction of race and its effects on the medical profession and scientific developments within a variety of contexts: the European colonies, imperial holdings and the metropolises themselves. The papers, arranged chronologically, encompass a breathtaking range of topics, and highlight exactly how controversial and contested the definitions of race remain in contemporary social science research. And this is, very probably, the greatest contribution of this volume: scholars conversant with the issues and topics it raises will assuredly be careful about using overly simplistic notions of the concept of race, which, as the editors and almost all the contributors point out, have limited many of the existing analyses of the complex interconnections between empire, science and medicine.

The contributions of Norris Saakwa-Mante and Hanna Franziska Augstein are significant as they provide the background against which the other studies can be better understood. Saakwa-Mante uses the works of John Atkins, the early eighteenth-century naval surgeon, on sleeping sickness to show how his notions of "constitutional polygenism", which highlighted the importance of hereditary factors in encouraging the spread of disease, anticipated the racial science of the late eighteenth century. Augstein's focus, on the other hand, is different. Examining the developments in a wide range of national settings during the eighteenth century, she describes the various philosophical and scientific traditions that shaped debates regarding the origin of humankind, particularly the European element.

These papers are followed by two valuable studies examining colonial

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psychiatric institutions. Waltraud Ernst focuses on the developments in colonial India during the first few decades of the eighteenth century, and her main point, reflecting concerns articulated in a range of recent research dealing with the South Asian sub-continent, is significant. She argues that institutional policies in India responded to both global and local discourses, with the latter context determining the nature of British colonialism as well as the varying notions of race. The second piece, by Harriet Deacon, studies the evolving links between racism and psychiatry in the British settler colony of the Cape, and, like that of Ernst, fruitfully locates her arguments within larger socio-political and economic debates in the region. The equally insightful essay by David Arnold looks at the way in which malaria was described and understood by a variety of actors in Bengal. He assesses, on the one hand, the biologicistic views of race presented by prominent European scientists in India and, on the other, examines how many of the strands of these culturally-based notions of race were appropriated by sections of the Bengali Hindu intelligentsia keen to highlight the twin notions of racial decay/enfeeblement and racial/social and political regeneration.

Michael Worboys shifts the focus somewhat by discussing the effects of the changing epidemiological and pathological understandings of tuberculosis on the scientific establishment's definition of race. The value of this piece lies in its conceptual complexity: Worboys is able to demonstrate that factors as diverse as national and geographical contexts, the political and economic expectations of social groups, and the shifting professional and political allegiances of scientists affected the description of tuberculosis and the delineation of the rather suspect theories about the racial basis of the spread of the disease. Mark Jackson looks at the overtly racist descriptions used, and the comparisons made, to define "mongolism"

within Britain. The article highlights the assumed links between physical form and mental deficiencies, a theme discussed skilfully later, with regards to the development of the academic discipline of psychology, by Mathew Thomson.

Bernard Harris analyses the British medical profession's attitudes towards Eastern European Jewish immigrants and the persistence of harmful stereotypes regarding their susceptibility to disease, despite figures that presented a far more complex picture. Paul Weindling, in his examination of bacteriology in Germany, shows how the discipline in that country was adversely affected by the prevalent racial ideologies, especially with regard to Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. His skilful use of sources reveals how overtly racist notions impacted upon the bacteriological cleansing, segregation and hygiene measures attending official anti-typhus operations. Indeed, the paper demonstrates how this situation soon led to the widespread belief that epidemics could be eradicated by eliminating the presumed carriers of disease. The final paper, by Jonathan Sawday, discusses another aspect of scientific racism: the now notorious "Piltdown Affair", when the "discovery" of a skull in a gravel bed in Sussex in 1912 was hailed as the definitive proof for the existence of different racial origins for Europeans and non-Europeans. After myriad twists and turns, the fraud was exposed. However, the whole case—and Sawday's well-researched description of it—highlights the great level of antagonism provoked by the debates concerning the origins of humans.

All in all, this volume will be of use for scholars interested in the interactions between medicine, science and empire. One could have wished for a more thorough treatment of the often contradictory effects of class (by no means a homogenous category either) and, in the case of South Asia, caste. However, this minor fault is

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comprehensively outweighed by the contributions made by this volume.

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**Jonathan Sadowsky, *Imperial Bedlam: institutions of madness in colonial southwest Nigeria*, Medicine and Society 10, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1999, pp. xi, 169, \$45.00 (hardback 0-520-21616-4), \$16.95 (paperback 0-520-21617-2).**

This is a slightly unsatisfying book on an excellent subject. The treatment of mental illness in southwestern Nigeria is widely known from the Aro Mental Hospital, opened during the Second World War and conducted between 1954 and 1963 by Dr T A Lambo as an experiment in combining current Western therapies with indigenous practices in a village setting. Dr Sadowsky has had access to the Aro Hospital records, including case files, as well as the archival sources referring both to Aro and to its more conventional predecessor, the Yaba Lunatic Asylum of 1906.

Sadowsky engages with a series of controversies in the history of mental illness, especially in Africa. In a rather slender account of mental care in pre-colonial southwestern Nigeria, he argues that Africans and Europeans of the time shared common views of madness, although not of appropriate institutions for treating it. Turning to the colonial period, he sees psychiatry as both a method of social control and a means of social reform, the tendency towards coercive control being strongest where patients were of low social status and culturally distanced from their doctors, as generally in colonial Africa. He then examines how colonial authorities decided whom to confine, finding that most

were men who caused distress and confusion to those around them, but that—contrary to conventional wisdom at the time—African families were extremely reluctant to consign their relatives to dreaded custodial institutions, instead pressing eagerly for the release even of those who remained ill. Sadowsky's chief interest, however, is to elicit historical insights from patients' statements contained in the Aro Hospital case files, although he insists that such evidence is too exceptional to form the basis for generalizations, as colonial doctors were often tempted to do. Many of the statements quoted are extremely interesting and Sadowsky claims convincingly that they show how the content of insanity was specific to the time and place, but beyond this they give little more than an impression of incoherence.

The problem with the book is that in pursuing these intriguing questions, Sadowsky has neglected to provide a consecutive history either of the Yaba and Aro institutions or of the colonial authorities' approach to the treatment of mental illness. If the Aro records are to be available to other historians, this failure can be remedied. If not, an important opportunity may have been lost.

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**Leonard D Smith, 'Cure, comfort and safe custody': public lunatic asylums in early nineteenth-century England**, London and New York, Leicester University Press, 1999, pp. ix, 310, illus., £55.00 (0-7185-0094-6).

This book tells the story of public lunatic asylums in the period prior to 1845. While it includes some interesting discussion of subscription asylums founded in this period, its focus is primarily on the early county