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dynamic unconscious, and evolutionary theory's creation of a psychology of adaptation. Leahey has read widely in recent secondary sources; his account therefore stands out as a genuine attempt at synthesis (and is not a rehash of E. G. Boring; e.g., in the account of Wundt's ideas). But though there is reference to social change, the institutional discipline – and certainly explanatory social factors – receive little attention. The significance of the claim that “Wundt's long-term importance for psychology has proven to be institutional” (p. 182) is not followed through.

There are errors and misleading generalizations: Hume shows “the first glimmerings of the psychology of adaptation” (p. 113) rather than the preoccupations of the Scottish Enlightenment; Mendel is “an obscure Polish monk” (p. 153); from the fourteenth century “there was a long hiatus during which science did not advance” (p. 76); Spencer's work is minimized by the label “Lamarckian psychology” (p. 246). An antagonism between science and religion remains implicit and linked to progressivist assumptions (most damagingly, David Hartley's theodicy, the context for his association psychology, is not mentioned). It would surely be simpler to refer to “worldview” rather than “The Classical-Medieval-Renaissance Episteme” (p. 82). Such specific points aside, the overall structure around behaviourism is challenging. If indeed psychology can be called “humanity's attempt to understand the self” (p. 2), then much behaviourism hardly qualifies as psychology (Part III notwithstanding). It is said that “[James] Mill expounded his psychology for the purposes of reform. He was not a psychologist” (p. 45). Why should the same not be said about J. B. Watson?

Roger Smith
Department of History
University of Lancaster

CELIA DAVIES (editor), *Rewriting nursing history*, London, Croom Helm, 1980, 8vo, pp. 266, illus., £11.95 (£5.95 paperback).

This book combines a critical stance towards the writing of history with examinations of neglected areas of nursing history. It does not set out to be a new text, but it does hope to open the field to research. Several of the contributors have been nurses, and they aim to enable nurses to see and investigate their job in new ways.

In the first paper, after an introduction on past nursing history by the editor, Christopher Maggs examines the records of four provincial hospitals between 1881 and 1921, and contrasts the account drawn from them of the probationer nurse with the prescriptive account found elsewhere. The interdependence of the two in practice is stressed. This theme is continued in Katherine Williams's paper, in which she discusses nursing and medical views of the history of nursing published for the 1897 jubilee. She relates the differences to the conflicting interests of the two emerging professions. The system of training and control of nurses, and the separation between nursing and domestic duties in the hospital are discussed. Mitchell Dean and Gail Bolton's paper is very different. They situate mid-nineteenth-century nursing within the development of forms of control and administration of poverty, through the workhouses, hospitals, and in the homes of the poor. Nursing is seen as part of the “curative economy of the hospital, [which] placed discipline, regulation, normalisation and observation first” (p. 87). Celia Davies looks at nurse education in Britain and the U.S.A. in the next paper. The struggle to establish the training of nurses in each country up to 1939 is linked with differences in political and educational systems. Nursing education is seen as a casualty to the labour requirements of the hospitals and to an orthodoxy about the nature of the profession. Mick Carpenter's paper is on asylum nursing before 1914, which he sees as part of the history of labour. The custodial and disciplinary function of both the asylum and the nursing is stressed. The poor wages, long hours, and conditions of work, which were little different from the living conditions of the inmates, are linked with the growth of trade union consciousness and the formation of the National Asylum Workers' Union in 1910. The differences between men and women attendants in their pattern of employment and unionization are noted. Paul Bellaby and Patrick Oribabor discuss a contemporary survey of unionization of various types of nurses. They demonstrate the greater understanding possible if the history of nursing unionization and

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the organization of nursing in different types of hospital is studied. Margaret Connor Versluysen points out that to study nursing history without the "amateur" medical work carried out by women is misleading. She discusses the response to and limitations of Ehrenreich and English's *Witches, midwives and nurses*, and stresses the importance of power differences between the sexes in analysing the history of health care. Finally, Janet Foster and Julia Sheppard present a guide to sources for nursing history, and Charlotte Kratz comments on the book in an epilogue.

The authors of this book are too varied in their subjects and approach to make general comments possible. The book should provide a needed stimulus to interest in and work on nursing. Many of the authors hope that this will not only inform the history of medicine, but will also allow greater understanding of the present position of nurses. There are two aspects which are, regrettably, little mentioned. One is the role of the development of medical techniques and technology, and what nurses do in their daily work. The other is the relationship between nurses, doctors, and patients; it is clear that many of the authors are concerned with the power over nurses held by doctors and employers, but little is said about the power of nurses over patients. This tends to support the view of nurses as either guardian angels or cruel trade unionists. That said, I look forward to more detailed studies of the questions raised in this book.

Antonia Ineson

Wellcome Museum of the History of Medicine
Science Museum, London

RENATO G. MAZZOLINI, *The iris in eighteenth-century physiology*, (Berner Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften, Neue Folge, Band 9), Berne, Hans Huber, 1980, 8vo, pp. iv, 193, illus., S.Fr. 36.00/DM. 39.00 (paperback).

Here is a very single-minded attempt to solve a deliberately very circumscribed historical problem, the cause of the motion of the iris. The advantages of working within such confines are clear: virtually all the primary and secondary material can be tackled, and Mazzolini demonstrates impressive scholarship in doing so. The concrete and discrete nature of the anatomy and physiology involved is a safeguard against being sidetracked and is a convenient peg on to which to hang the history.

But there are disadvantages. The coherence of the intellectual and empirical techniques of each of the authors listed slides imperceptibly into a coherence that stretches over generations. Ideas take on a life distinct from that of the minds in which they existed, and their history becomes a kind of Platonizing account of how pre-existing and external ideas are implanted in minds, each idea representing an ultimate reality (or error) at first seen only indistinctly by the mind. The subsequent "evolution" of these ideas clarifies the reality or exposes the error: new ideas are formed by the coming together of parental ideas (p. 39) and evolve under the influence of other ideas. They decline and die, sometimes by fighting each other (p. 8) or by being negatively selected (p. 6); those that survive their crises (chapter 5) complete their evolution by a final assimilation to the reality they represent, as we may see by the judicious use of modern science and microscopes (appendix F). During their passage through different minds, ideas appear as mental parasites, old ones producing symptoms of "archaicity" and new ones "modernity", sometimes in the same host (p. 61) and the historian becomes a natural scientist describing the morphology and transmission of ideas, ideally in quantitative terms (tables I-V).

This, of course, is an unfair parody, born of a suspicion of a closed history of ideas approach. Given that the muscularity of the iris in the eighteenth century is a historical *explicandum*, perhaps there is no better way of explicating it; given that the author has limited himself to the "logical and empirical reasons for scientific change", we can be grateful for the immense fund of technical information he extracts from the literature, and we cannot grumble at the absence of a consideration of non-scientific elements of history. The grumble perhaps comes when we ask where we could dovetail into this account others that are wider than the logical and empirical components of science; we are left little scope when the duty of the historian of ideas is supposedly to establish "the exact meaning of a term", that of the social historian to clarify "the material context in which it was expressed", and part of that of the historian of science to