

Book Reviews

CHARLES E. ROSENBERG, *No other gods. On science and American social thought*, Baltimore, Md., and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xiii, 273, £9.45.

The practice of publishing an author's collected essays has in the past been indulged in mainly by the elder statesmen of science and the arts, or by their colleagues wishing to commemorate a birthday, death, or anniversary. There is today, however, a growing tendency for others to use the technique, thus allowing their articles to render double service, in periodical and in anthology.

Only the introduction and one of the twelve chapters of this book appear here for the first time, the remainder having been published already in journals. Nevertheless, Rosenberg's scholarly essays are stimulating and thought-provoking, dealing primarily with the ways in which the sciences, social thought and values, and the institutional structure of science have interacted, and how scientific concepts have ordered society, particularly as concerns the American scientific community. Being a historian of medicine, many of his examples come from this field: the medical profession and society; sexuality, heredity and disease; the influence of scientific research on medicine; the evaluation of health.

The book can therefore be recommended to those concerned with the history of medicine and science, although many may wish to avoid its high price by perusing the original articles which are to be found in readily available journals.

GEORGE ROSEN, *Preventive medicine in the United States 1900–1975. Trends and interpretations*, New York, Science History Publications, 1975, 8vo, pp. viii, 94, illus., [no price stated].

Professor Rosen produced this paperback as a background document to a National Conference on Preventive Medicine held in June 1975 “. . . to examine preventive strategies and tactics applied to health problems in the United States in the recent past which had produced significant achievements. . . .” and to elicit proposals for improving health in the future. There are five parts to it: ‘The situation c. 1900’; ‘Conservation, efficiency, prevention and social action: ideologies and concepts’; ‘Knowledge and its application: institutions, personnel and techniques’; ‘Population change, chronic disease and new problems’; ‘Whither preventive medicine?’.

Each is an excellent contribution to the recent history of preventive medicine, well written, well documented, well illustrated, and equal to the best of Professor Rosen's many scholarly essays. By studying them carefully present problems can be more readily understood and therefore tackled in a more informed and enlightened fashion. This type of publication will be most useful for student courses in public health, and as a depiction of the American scene it can be recommended unreservedly.

VERN L. BULLOUGH, *Sexual variance in society and history*, New York and London, J. Wiley, 1976, 8vo, pp. xvi, 715, £18.00.

Until quite recently sex has been allowed only a minor role in history, or at times excluded entirely. The results of this have been unfortunate and adequate evaluations of certain individuals or events have been impossible, or worse, exaggerated and inaccurate beliefs have flourished unchecked, often transmitted by otherwise reputable

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historians. The author, a historian, has, therefore, prepared this book, which deals with some aspects of human sexuality, but concentrates on “. . . a history of attitudes toward sex and their relationship to certain forms of stigmatized sexual behaviour . . .” (p. viii). There are six sections: the background (culture and sexuality, sources of Western attitudes and the Jewish contribution); the European inheritance (Greeks, Romans, Christian hostility, early Christianity); attitudes toward sex in the non-Western world (Islam, India, China); the Christian world (Byzantium, early Middle Ages in the West, later Middle Ages); new horizons and the New World; the twentieth century, trends and assumptions.

Although some of the material has been published already, this is the first comprehensive survey of the history of stigmatized sexual behaviour. It includes primarily homo-sexuality, but also masturbation, transvestism, transexualism and bestiality, with information about celibacy, incest, rape, adultery, eunuchism, pornography, phallicism, sadism, masochism, and fetichism to support the main theme. Altogether, this scholarly book forms a mine of information, and Professor Bullough has documented his sources impeccably. But in addition to being an excellent historical survey it also deals with modern attitudes and the reasons for current changes. An understanding of the social and cultural factors that have determined present-day attitudes towards sex and its deviations will be of the greatest assistance to those who are at the moment grappling with its problems.

Professor Bullough's book can, therefore, be recommended to a wide circle of readers, including the historian of medicine, the social historian, the social worker and all those dealing with the sexual deviant.

MARGARET C. JACOB, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689–1720*, Hassocks, Sussex, Harvester Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. 288, £10.50.

Dr. Jacob, a historian, attempts systematically to relate late seventeenth-century scientific concepts to the political, social, and religious background in which they evolved. This type of interdisciplinary study is becoming increasingly popular in the history of science and has already brought about several new interpretations. It involves the exploration of Shryock's external factors and much more of it is needed, especially in the history of medicine, where until recently it has been conspicuously deficient.

Newtonians related their natural philosophy to their social and political context, and it was adopted by the Anglican church for its own ends, after the Protestant revolution of 1688, and by the mercantile classes. The Newtonian cosmology bequeathed to the early Enlightenment was profoundly political and discouraged reforms in case they affected the church's power and social and political stability. Newtonianism conformed with essential social needs and this accounts for its survival and success. The author does not enter far into the eighteenth century, but declares that a re-examination of Newtonian thought in it will now be necessary.

This is an important book not only for the historian of science and medicine but also for intellectual historians in general, and in particular for those concerned with political, social, and religious history of the early eighteenth century. It will, no doubt, stimulate considerable research.