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Bergdolt is attentive to the periodic challenges posed by more dualistic understandings of body and mind, such as those developed by Plato and famously reinforced much later by Descartes. As the author notes, the Cartesian revolution was an 'event of enormous consequence for European theories of health' (p. 202), for by dividing the human organism into mind and body the latter came to be viewed mainly in terms of technical concepts like motion, size, tubes and temperature. Henceforth the body would be frequently analysed using concepts borrowed from mathematics and mechanics. Although it would not be until the nineteenth century that traditional notions of hygiene would be eclipsed by biomedical models of the body: 'people's health from the seventeenth century on was increasingly subject to measurement' (p. 204).

In a work of such impressive erudition and scope it may seem unfair to quibble over issues of coverage, but Bergdolt's treatment of the nineteenth century (and almost complete silence on the twentieth) seems somewhat hurried and unsatisfying, with biomedical emphases on the measurable body apparently becoming so dominant as to relegate holistic views of health entirely to those interested in 'Asiatic doctrines of salvation and redemption' (p. 288). Bergdolt anticipates this concern, explaining that space limitations allow him to treat this period 'only in outline' (p. 5). While this is fair enough considering the length of the book, the subtle persistence of traditional hygienic concepts into the twentieth century begs some explanation. The hydrotherapy and spa culture Bergdolt observes in the nineteenth century persisted into the twentieth, as did the central European life reform movement which, in at least some of its manifestations, continued to stress more holistic and 'natural' approaches to health than those prescribed by mainstream medicine. Moreover, the various outlooks and practices associated with 'alternative' medicine today do not all stem from non-western traditions, a fact that encourages a more nuanced analysis of how some repackaged but still old ideas continue to coexist, albeit in a marginalized way, with the reigning biomedical model of the body. While Bergdolt's fascinating study does not offer this analysis, it remains essential reading for anyone interested in the western world's oldest perspective on the body.

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**Peter Cryle and Christopher E. Forth (eds), *Sexuality at the Fin de Siècle: The Making of a 'Central Problem'*, Newark: University of Delaware Press. 2008. Pp. 201. £42.50. ISBN 978 0 87413 037 9.**

The late nineteenth-century biomedical conceptualisation of sexuality as an essential and powerful force in human experience is the basic theme of this collection edited by Peter Cryle and Christopher Forth. In the introduction to this ten chapter volume, they call attention to an ambiguity in numerous historical works on the modernisation of sexuality, which have appeared in the wake of Michel Foucault's epoch-making *La volonté de savoir* (1976). On the one hand, scholars have critically analysed the medical-psychiatric assertion of having uncovered a fundamental secret of human life and they have unmasked this claim as a social construction. On the other hand, historians have rather uncritically assumed that this construction has shaped the experience of modern man, so that we have indeed adopted the idea that sex is inevitable and everywhere, and that it is a key element of personal identity. Such historiography, Cryle and Forth argue, confirms rather than questions our sexualised

view of modern man and even tends to a 'transhistorical celebration' of this notion of sexuality (p. 12). Characterising the volume's purport as reflexive and revisionist, their aim is to interrogate this self-evident continuity between the late nineteenth-century medical claim and twentieth-century social reality. Shifting the research-focus from scientific-medical theories to literary, visual and other, more popular, source material, the authors, although not denying the importance of the biomedical discourse, attempt to offer a more differentiated and refined historical view of the making of sexuality into a 'central problem'.

In their interesting contributions on the relation between sexuality on the one hand and dietetics and excretion on the other, Forth and Alison Moore argue that the history of sexuality should be inserted into the wider history of the body. In the context of popular adherence to the pre-modern tradition of corporeal holism, attention to sexuality was part and parcel of the panoply of bodily concerns that preoccupied the middle classes in the nineteenth century. Digestive and hygienic issues in particular stood out in the care for the embodied self. Far from denying the importance of sexuality for the self-identity of the middle class, Forth and Moore in fact advocate a broadening of the historical perspective on sexuality by studying medical self-help literature, sanitary engineering and urban reform. Sexual meaning, according to Moore, 'is constructed in places where cultures appear to be talking about other things' (p. 127).

In addition the papers by Cryle and Jonathan Marshall about the connection of the understanding of disordered sexuality with the neuro-psychiatric view of epilepsy and hysteria as manifestations of intense and unrestrained bodily experiences stress rather than question the centrality of sexuality in late nineteenth-century society. In her article about the important role of photography and popular as well as scientific anatomical museums in visualising the sexualised female body, Elisabeth Stephens too discusses the link between hysteria and deviant sexuality. Comparing photographs of professional 'freaks' in New York's popular anatomical museums and those of female hysterics taken at Charcot's la Salpêtrière in Paris, she concludes that the representation of such bodies was ambivalent. As a medium, photography was used to medically identify, survey and regulate deviant bodies, but at the same time freaks and hysterical patients were not just passive victims of the public and scientific gaze. Some of them more or less actively participated in the exhibition of their bodies in order to profit from their deviant status and resist social conventions with regard to the proper role behaviour of women.

A similar tenor can be found in the contribution of Michael Wilson about the representation of male same-sex desires and behaviour in popular French novels. Wilson explains that these novels do not simply reflect established notions of homosexuality, but reveal contradictory assumptions and attribute 'pederasts' an interior life driven by authentic emotion, suggesting empathy in the reader. Homosexuality is also the focus of a rather muddled paper by Carolyn Dean. Apparently she wants to convey the message that historians have underestimated 'the dimensions of hate and fear embedded in sexual regulation' (p. 160). If I have understood her argument correctly—I must admit, however, that I found the chapter difficult to read—Dean claims that liberal democratic strategies of tolerance for deviance are always contained by barely hidden prejudices and even 'homicidal' anxieties (p. 165). I think this conclusion is simplistic and over-exaggerated. Another contribution I consider shaky is Heike Bauer's paper about the psychiatric and colonial representations of female sexuality in non-western cultures. Her comparison of Krafft-Ebing's view of the treatment of women in different societies in the past and the present as an indicator of the level of civilisation with the treatment of homosexual behaviour among women under colonial rule as a means of justifying Western moral superiority, is rather arbitrary and far-fetched.

The article by Gabrielle Houbre as well as the epilogue by Vernon Rosario focus on the medical conceptualisation of hermaphroditism. Houbre argues that the period 1880–1914 witnessed an increasing biomedical determinism in this field, which implied a more restrictive and stigmatising treatment of hermaphrodites than in the more distant past when their personal feelings were more respected as far as their preferred gender role was concerned. Quite in contradiction to what the editors of this volume suggest, Rosario asserts that the present understanding and judgement of sexuality in general and homosexuality and ‘intersexuality’, in particular, still resonate strongly with nineteenth-century biomedical theories. Although some of the papers offer interesting viewpoints on the history of sexuality, the flaws of the volume as a whole outstrip its benefits. It lacks coherence, the quality of the individual contributions is variable—some seem to be based on underdeveloped conference papers—and more often than not authors ignore, or even contradict, the basic assumptions of the editors. The chapters hardly substantiate the editors’ grandiloquent claims that this collection opens up an innovative and more balanced historical view on sexuality. Their reading of existing historical works is rather one-sided and simplistic. As many recent studies have put forward, the late nineteenth-century modernisation of sexuality was much more than just a medical conceptualisation and controlling of deviance. Apart from the fact that medical theories were far from static and coherent, several historians have shown that they were closely interrelated with other social and cultural factors, such as class, gender, ethnicity, the changing experience of the body, the shift from the procreative norm to the relational and affective dimension of sexuality, and the growing psychological understanding of the self. In this sense, the volume hardly adds anything new to the historiography on the emergence of modern sexuality.

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**Kenton Kroger, *The Sleep of Others and the Transformation of Sleep Research*, Toronto, Buffalo, London: Toronto University Press, 2007. Pp. vii + 553. £29.95. ISBN 978 0 8020 3769 5.**

Anyone wanting to understand the development of the science and medicine of sleep will need to read Kenton Kroger’s *The Sleep of Others*. It is a substantial, impressive book. The main focus is the period from the late nineteenth century to the present, and it is particularly strong in dealing with the United States, but it is confident in offering a broader picture geographically and chronologically, the opening chapters taking us all the way back to the Greeks, and the coverage of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century centring on European developments. At the centre of the book is a transformation in the nature of sleep as an object of research. Most fundamentally, sleep moves from being an issue for private reflection to one of serious public (health) concern in the present. Research moves from the introspective, subjective study of the self to an objective, instrument-driven focus on ‘the sleep of others’; from the mind to the body; from the psychology of dreams to the physiology of fatigue and respiration; and from the behaviour of the sleeping subject (or often the subject unable to sleep) to the study of the sleeping body in the laboratory and sleep clinic, and ultimately to a focus on underlying physiology and neurology and to the graphical traces of this physiology. Drawing on a mix of scientific writing, archives and interviews, Kroger is outstanding in mapping the complex, interconnected and fluctuating shifts in sleep as an object of research.