

Twist with Mr Brownlow and with the Maylies, and so forth—it is a pity that the chapter is rather slender. Overall this is a stimulating work, but, by contrast with such recent books as John Wiltshire's *Jane Austen and the body: 'The picture of health'* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), it provides less than it promises.

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Lynn Bindman, Alison Brading, and Tilli Tansey (eds), *Women physiologists: an anniversary celebration of their contributions to British physiology*, London and Chapel Hill, Portland Press, 1993, pp. ix, 166, £9.99, \$15.00, (1-85578-049-6).

Physiology is a fascinating field for historians of gender and of women's place in science and medicine. In the United Kingdom at least, since the late nineteenth century, women's presence as undergraduate students in the field, as medical students and as subject specialists, has been relatively strong compared to their representation in science generally. A large body of public lectures and popular writing in "physiology" was produced by women for women from the 1860s onwards. Much of this would now be labelled as health education or even sex education and dissociated from the academic discipline of physiology and its inseparable partner in Britain, the Physiological Society. Victorian women's exposure to academic physiology was controversial because of the subject's association with animal experimentation.

This modest volume is not directly about these broader issues although it does allude to them. Its main purpose is to celebrate the far from modest achievement of a small number of distinguished women physiologists. In the first section, E M Tansey provides a succinct overview of the history of women in the Physiological Society, noting that their admission, in 1915, was controversial, notwithstanding their publication record. Women's presence at the Society's dinners

was clearly not welcome to all leading male physiologists of the time, yet they were accepted into the Physiological Society long before many other scientific societies. Section II gives brief biographies and edited extracts from published research for eight women whose contribution to science led to their becoming Dames of the British Empire or Fellows of the Royal Society. Section III provides biographical sketches of others whose distinguished scientific contribution did not attract such public honours.

The Afterword raises the questions any analytic historian would ask about any patterns in background, career paths, topic research etc. but has to admit that the small sample precludes satisfying answers. It also attempts comparisons with the current situation of women physiologists. Again, the focus on a few very distinguished women is not necessarily the best foundation for such comparisons. The book achieves its main aims of documenting the achievements of the few well, although, as often seems to be the case, these successful women scientists frustrate the historian by not generally indulging in extensive reflection on their own lives. One would hope that it will encourage others to extend the study of women's place in physiology in and outside academia to answer the broader questions it poses more satisfactorily.

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Lawrence C Kolb and Leon Roizin, *The first psychiatric institute: how research and education changed practice*, Washington, DC, and London, American Psychiatric Press, 1993, pp. xx, 258, illus., \$39.00 (0-88048-544-2).

This book describes the history of the New York State Psychiatric Institute from 1896 to 1971. As historical writing it is badly flawed. No reference is made to any sources in the history of psychiatry after 1968 and the repetitive ascription of talent, foresight and

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priority to various players throughout the text reflects this total lack of awareness of recent scholarship. Ira Van Gieson, the first director of the Institute, is praised as a “visionary” while Adolf Meyer apparently had extraordinarily perceptive insights into institutional needs. A series of “firsts” are emphasized: the first multidisciplinary institute in the world dedicated to psychiatric research, the first man in the United States to apply psychoanalysis clinically and to report on the use of chlorpromazine for schizophrenia (August Hoch), the first to devise an experimental model of epilepsy in animals (Nicholas Kopeloff) and so on.

The attitudes conveyed by one or two passages are frankly offensive. Repeated accusations of a racist admissions policy and of failure to offer a clinical service to the local population have dogged the Institute since the 1940s. At times the authors shrug this off as the predictable complaint of social work students (pp. 93, 112), though by their own admission these researchers and educators ignored the mentally ill on their doorstep until 1958 or later. After hearing of the gifts of numerous male doctors, all the reader is told about Antoinette Schob, the supervisor of the employees’ medical clinic, is that she was “a

pert French woman”. The housekeepers, engineers and administrators at the Institute are acknowledged in the same section as the contribution of the laboratory animals.

Given that this book is methodologically and politically unsound can it nevertheless serve as a primary source of information for historians of psychiatry? There is a good deal of detail about the changing pattern of departments, personnel, committees and affiliations and a full review of the research output of the Institute which might form the basis for a study of the relationship between structure and product. However, the general reader could be misled by the rather idiosyncratic choices of emphasis made by Kolb and Roizin. For example, Adolf Meyer’s seven years as director are given an abbreviated treatment in contrast to the lengthy technical review of Leon Roizin’s neuropathological research (including 27 references to papers of which he was first author). Michael Gelder has provided a superior account of Meyer’s work and influence in *150 years of British psychiatry 1841–1991* (eds German E Berrios and Hugh Freeman, London, Gaskell, 1991).

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