

## Book Reviews

*Darwin* (1991), however, this new Huxley biography is a great read.

**Nicolaas Rupke**, University of Göttingen

**Roger French**, *William Harvey's natural philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. xii, 393, £40.00, \$64.95 (0-521-45535-9).

The reception of Harvey's doctrines of the movement of the heart and of the circulation of blood was the result of a complex interaction of intellectual, political and social factors. As French's book shows, Harvey's views were not simply accepted or rejected; they were interpreted—and often misunderstood—in the light of different philosophical and religious ideas. In university faculties and colleges of physicians, in both Catholic and Protestant countries, the defence of tradition, order and stability was often invoked against Harvey. The story was, however, a complex one and it is the merit of French to give a comprehensive and detailed account of the reception of Harvey's discoveries in England and on the Continent. Early reactions in England were somewhat embarrassing to Harvey, who saw his views defended by Fludd, the Rosicrucian, and attacked by Thomas Winston, censor of the London College of Physicians, a position which Harvey himself had occupied. One of the arguments against Harvey often employed by his opponents was that circulation had no practical significance in medicine. As French argues, Harvey made little attempt to meet this criticism, since he considered his discoveries as part of natural philosophy, rather than of medicine. Philosophical issues became immediately associated with Harvey's discoveries. Ent and Glisson played a prominent part in the production of consensus in England. The former's defence of Harvey became part of his fight for mechanical philosophy—which Harvey never subscribed to. Glisson, as French shows, adopted the theory of circulation, but departed from Harvey's view, as he developed it in connection with the notion of active matter and spirit.

In Holland Harvey's discoveries became an integral part of Cartesian medicine, and, as such, they were contentious. In France Riolan championed the anti-Harvey reaction which prevailed both in Paris and Montpellier. Riolan's changing positions on circulation are thoroughly investigated by French up to Riolan's final partial admission of blood circulation.

Both the German and Italian stages are closely investigated by the author, who aims to understand discussions of circulation in the institutional and religious context. French's analysis is, however, not free of unproved assumptions and oversimplifications. For example, he claims that the Protestant Sennert—whom he styles a “fundamentalist” (p. 226)—reformed medicine, “introduced chemistry in its Paracelsian and Protestant form in Wittenberg” (pp. 224–5), and ruled out Greek learning as pagan. Unfortunately, this interpretation is not correct, since Sennert advocated a moderate position in medicine and natural philosophy, as attested by his well-known *De chymicorum cum Aristotelicis et Galenicis consensu ac dissensu*, which makes it clear that he aimed at reconciling chemistry with Aristotelianism and Galenism. Sennert also criticized Paracelsus and adopted some crucial aspects of Aristotelian philosophy.

In his informative study of Marco Aurelio Severino, the Neapolitan physician who supported Harvey's doctrines, French states that “It was undoubtedly because Severino explicitly denied the truth of Aristotle's natural philosophy that he was unable to publish in Italy” (p. 241). It is true that Severino's *Zootomia democritea* was not published in that country, but his *Vipera pithia* was published in Padua in 1650 and his *Antiperiatis. Hoc est adversus Aristoteleos* . . . was published in Naples in 1655–1659. One has the impression that French overstates the power of religious control in seventeenth-century Catholic countries, which in fact was not as tight as he asserts. After all the anti-Aristotelian philosopher Patrizi was invited to teach in Rome, and Severino himself was employed by the Neapolitan authorities during the plague.

## Book Reviews

While the study of Harvey's natural philosophy, in particular the analysis of the anatomy lectures and of *De motu cordis*, is insightful and persuasive, the section devoted to philosophy teaching in Cambridge when Harvey was a student is somewhat cursory and it is not clear why French decided to base his investigation on John Case's *Ancilla*, which was published in 1599—when Harvey had already moved to Padua—and on Magirus's textbook, which appeared in 1608.

The book is handsomely illustrated with an intelligent choice of images, but unfortunately it is marred by some irksome mistakes in the spelling of Latin and Greek titles. Although *William Harvey's natural philosophy* does not deal with Harvey's theory of generation, it stands out as a major contribution to the understanding of William Harvey and his rôle in seventeenth-century medicine and natural philosophy.

**Antonio Clericuzio**, Università di Cassino

**Katherine Arnup**, *Education for motherhood: advice for mothers in twentieth-century Canada*, University of Toronto Press, 1994, pp. xiii, 251, illus., UK £32.00, USA \$50.00, Europe \$60.00 (hardback 0-8020-2861-6), UK £12.00, USA \$18.95, Europe \$23.00 (paperback 0-8020-7361-1).

Inspired by the birth of her first child and the frustration of the vast amount of “expert” child-rearing advice she was relying upon, Katherine Arnup began to question the sources and validity of twentieth-century baby care advice manuals during her PhD training as a social historian. Her book, *Education for motherhood*, attempts to situate Canadian child-rearing advice as it appeared in popular form between 1900 and 1960, in its proper historical context. The book's central thesis echoes the work of historians Rima Apple, Richard Meckel, and Nancy Pottishman Weiss, among others, as it describes child-rearing advice more as a social construct of opinion on gender, class, and society, than as an “exact science”.

Relying primarily upon advice books, pamphlets, films, radio scripts and a series of oral histories with eleven Canadian mothers who used these materials during the years' studies. Dr Arnup notes that there are many historiographical problems in using advice books as historical documents. For example, who actually read these baby care books as opposed to simply putting them on a convenient shelf?; Was the advice actually followed?; How did these advice books change child rearing practices? Citing the work of social historian Jay Mechling, she correctly notes what many paediatricians have known for years: “there is no persuasive evidence that the official advice affects the parent's behavior” (p. 123). Nevertheless, the historical documentation Arnup provides to assess the impact of child-care advice manuals on the daily lives of Canadian mothers is an almost exclusive use of these advice manuals and materials.

The book briefly discusses the rise of infant health as a social and political issue in Canada during the early decades of the twentieth century. The alarming rates of infant and maternal mortality during these years in Canada, as well as in many other industrialized nations of the era, were instrumental in the movement to educate and medicalize motherhood. Arnup does not compare these movements abroad or even below Canada's border in her book. Not surprisingly, however, the advice offered to Canadian mothers during this period bears striking similarities in attitudes and tone to the infant welfare movement in the United States and Great Britain. From Arnup's account, the reader gets little sense that there were any intellectual or philosophical interactions between those Canadians offering the child care advice and other child care experts practising their trade in different national contexts. Subsequent chapters explore the baby care advice materials themselves in order to assess what was being advised and what impact it may have had on the lives of Canadian mothers.

Perhaps most jarring is that a key historical voice is essentially absent in *Education for*