

## Book Reviews

This is a major contribution to the expanding field of the history of alternative medicine in Germany. Martin Dinges, historian and archivist of the Homeopathy Archives of the Robert Bosch Institute for the History of Medicine, demands a new approach towards the history of homeopathy in order to overcome the traditional interest, which concentrated mainly on Samuel Hahnemann and the effect of certain remedies. Future research in this field should concentrate on three aspects: the significance of patients for the spread of homeopathy, the role homeopathy played in the health care market, and the importance of patients' and homeopaths' organizations for the rather different pace and success of institutionalized homeopathy around the world. Homeopathy, therefore, can be understood only when analysed within the political, social and cultural context of society.

This publication, with contributions from authors of different backgrounds ranging from homeopathy to pharmacy, veterinary medicine, social history, anthropology and ethnology, covers three broad aspects. Based on Samuel Hahnemann's case books, Robert Jütte analyses Hahnemann's patients, while Reinhard Hickmann concentrates on the history of one patient, Antonie Volkmann, who was treated by Hahnemann for nine years. Ute Schumann looks into the socio-cultural background of the popularization of homeopathy in India. Dörte Staudt researched the history of a patients' organization between the 1870s and the 1930/40s and shows its importance for the spread of homeopathy. Eberhard Wolff deals with the same questions, but from the perspective of the market for homeopathic remedies.

The second part deals with several non-academic healers. Elisabeth Häcker-Strobusch reconstructs the background of the early-nineteenth-century homeopath, Johann David Steinestel; Ingeborg Streuber writes about Arthur Lutze, one of the most successful nineteenth-century authors on homeopathy. Thomas Faltn compares the career of Eugen Wenz, who based his approach to homeopathy on religion, with that of other healers. Ingrid

Kannengießer's paper deals with a neglected aspect in the history of homeopathy, i.e. the treatment of animals. The repeated assumption of a boom in homeopathy is critically analysed by Reinhart Schüppel and Thomas Schlich, who both reach a rather disillusioning conclusion.

The third part concentrates on institutions and publications like the journal *Hygea*, where Karl-Heinz Faber shows how this journal became the focus of a critical position in homeopathy towards Hahnemann. Joachim Willfahrt examines the nineteenth-century market for homeopathic publications. Reinhart Schüppel deals with the institutionalization of homeopathy in the United States. Finally, Heinz Eppenich studies the history of homeopathic clinics in Germany.

While this volume is not a comprehensive history of homeopathy, it does give the reader an interesting insight into homeopathy and opens new questions for future research. As Dinges admits in his introduction, the question of an interdependence between religion and the spread of homeopathy, as well as gender issues, has yet to be analysed. Unfortunately, most of the over seventy illustrations are very poor reproductions.

**Lutz D H Sauerteig,**  
Institute for the History of Medicine,  
Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg

**Anthony Heilbut,** *Thomas Mann: Eros and literature*, London, Papermac, 1997, pp. xiii, 638, illus., £12.00 (0-333-67447-2).

This is *the* book about Thomas Mann that silences its predecessors and redeems him from his enemies masquerading as friends—the book his serious readers have been imagining almost from the day Mann died in 1955. Despite many biographies in German and English translation this is the only book that confronts Mann's life *and* works as an organic whole: *sans* the embarrassing gaps and silences mandated by over-protective families, executors, curators, archivists, trusts, and—not

least in the Mann industry—territorial academics zealous to promote or retain a particular, usually safe, image of their titan. Forget the body: this is erotic Mann stripped down to his innermost muscle, his mind.

The book's size is vast but it reads like a novel, just as Mann's philosophical fictions of ideas do. It is magnificently researched but wears its learning like a Milanese model, covering the whole life and all the works without forcing either into the straitjacket of a formula, and, not least, written by one of the most erudite Germanists who happens *not* to be a university professor. All this is so, but of what consequence to medical historians and the history of medicine? Wasn't Thomas Mann a famous German writer who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929 after publishing *The magic mountain*?

He was, but his *medical* entanglements—the virtual imbrications of his and his family's communal life—render him of the greatest importance to the readers of this journal. In this sense Mann resembled Rabelais and Céline, Proust and Kafka, who were also *medically* enmeshed: the first two doctor-writers, the third the son of one of France's most famous nineteenth-century doctors who was a chronic "patient" all his life, the fourth a Jewish tubercular homosexual who came to symbolize the degenerative species itself by embodying it more minutely than anyone of his generation—none of the four can be understood without serious reconstruction of the medical contexts.

Nor could Mann, surrounded all his life by a tubercular wife, Katia and her sanatoriums, and wrapped in the psychological flannel of his own unspeakable secret: his darkest erotic side. Mann's "medicine" was pervasive: in daily life, writings, politics, wanderings, exile, routine interior reality. His secret formed the tissue and fibre, the veritable muscle of his masterpiece, *The magic mountain*: the most sustained novel ever written about a medical malady; consumption, tuberculosis in the aftermath of bacillus Koch and before streptomycin Waksman, post-1882 and pre-1944, a book which itself has spawned small libraries in the history of medicine with titles such as *Below the magic mountain*.

Mann's most shaming, yet driving, secret concealed profound medical overtones when he was growing up in Bismarckian Germany in an era obsessed with medical psychology, sexology, psychoanalysis, and the dire personal consequences of nationalism and militarism. In a nutshell it was this: he was virtually obsessed with youthful male physical beauty. Eventually, Heilbut demonstrates, this Dionysian impulse drove the whole engine of Mann's soul, imagination and creative Life Force. He married a heterosexual woman and had children; he loved Katia and the family she gave him (however neurotic the children became); he was a faithful husband and responsible father; but pristine male bodily beauty recharged him and permitted him life as an artist. Katia, who adored him, acknowledged the medical side when she noted in *Unwritten memories* (New York, Knopf, 1975): "No one thought Thomas Mann would live to be eighty . . . He was nervous and sensitive and tended to depression, but I suppose artists are like that. His health was never very stable; there was always something wrong with him" (p. 149). Perpetual his chronic malady may have been, but Katia did not have a clue about his erotic secret, let alone its aesthetic-creative status.

What did the erotic passion amount to *clinically* and why is it of such extraordinary importance forty years after Mann's death? First, Heilbut alone has demonstrated its existence biographically in Mann and the contexts of his passion, and, second, it has taken a generation since Mann died to prove that his erotic attractions amounted to a *preference exquisitely refined by a habit*. Homosexuality has rarely been construed in terms as intelligent, if unusual, as these; either in modern essentialist-constructionalist debates or in the much older psychological aetiologies deriving from degenerating species with recessive fathers and dominant mothers or other inexplicable inherited characteristics. Mann's private habit became ingrained early in life and consolidated through repetition, interiorization, and garnered pleasure. Historians of medicine are just beginning to

## Book Reviews

comprehend the subtleties of the history of sexuality, and its diverse psychological profiles: protean in sexuality's ability to disguise and transform itself while appearing as merely another internalized habit.

So it was for the erotic Mann, who indulged his secret habit every week, every day, almost every hour of his life from early adulthood, and then retired, Kant-like, to the daily serenity of his orderly writing table and favourite pen. Mann's *habit* based on (what we would label) erotic homosexual attraction became his characteristic psychological insignia: specifically, the homoerotic moment framed by the *male-male* gaze, fleeting in its concorde brevity, fundamentally aesthetic for the sparks of pleasure it afforded Mann, regenerative in paving the way for his next paragraph or chapter, always politically charged and encoded in the symbolism of social class given the young men who attracted him, but rarely genital or indulging the physical tactile sense that granted would allow none of the lingering erotic desire implicated in the above crucial fallout of the encounter itself. This sequitur and fallout is what mattered to Mann. It counted more than any tactile fulfilment because these components of the secret fed directly into his literary art. After all, it is the *male-male* gaze between Aschenbach and Tadzio that virtually defines *Death in Venice* and Hans Castorp and his cousin Joachim in *Magic mountain*.

Heilbut therefore provides his readers with a gift in the form of research and discovery. The only appropriate readerly response is applause for, and gratitude to, him for his honest labours in Middle European archives and the superb revaluation he brings to the protagonist and his large oeuvre. More locally within this journal's pages Heilbut's *tour de force* serves to remind us that we have hardly exhausted the approaches to a territory as complex as the history of medicine which will always dwell on human beings, great and small. Book publication cannot, of course, always aspire to this crucible of detective work and discovery. If it did, we might have less publication than we do ( a condition to be desired), and more of

it conducted at this stratospheric level of revelation.

**George Rousseau,**  
King's College, Aberdeen

**Nancy G Siraisi, *The clock and the mirror: Girolamo Cardano and Renaissance medicine*, Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. xiv, 361, illus., £37.50, \$49.50 (hardback 0-91-01189-3).**

A new book from the pen of Nancy Siraisi is always a welcome event for historians of medicine, and this lively study of one of the most intriguing physicians of sixteenth-century Italy does not disappoint. Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) has usually been studied as a somewhat eccentric natural philosopher and mathematician, or as the author of a famous autobiography. Siraisi examines his career as a professor and practitioner of medicine, an enthusiastic participant in the humanist recovery of ancient texts despite his limited linguistic skills.

There seem to be no great quantities of unpublished Cardano manuscripts surviving, partly because there was a lively trade in his papers among publishers after his death, so the modern historian has no privileged private view of Cardano's life. Nevertheless, the epistemological stance adopted by Cardano in his many treatises, elevating his own experience to the status of an authority, provides the historian with a wealth of autobiographical anecdotes and case histories that illuminate the style and circumstances of his practice. Such tales are well suited to the concerns of social historians, so there is a danger of being seduced by Cardano's version of events. Siraisi draws attention to his construction of medical narratives, but she sometimes seems to accept his account of the result of a therapy or autopsy at face value.

Siraisi's great expertise in medieval and Renaissance medicine creates a rich context for Cardano's ideas, but the biographical focus of this book enables her to demonstrate how his medical ideas sprang as much from his practice