

Book Reviews

economic theory and cliometric techniques, and using considerable ingenuity to extract the maximum information from three main sources – the Poor Law Report of 1836, the Census of 1841, and the Devon Commission of 1846 – Mokyr seeks to explain why Ireland was poor. Traditional explanations of Irish poverty (overpopulation, lack of natural resources, insecure land tenure, rural unrest, and emigration) are subjected to statistical testing relying predominantly on regression analysis. This produces negative results so Mokyr, paradoxically, is forced to turn from quantitative to qualitative analysis to produce heavily qualified conclusions on the failure of agricultural entrepreneurship and lack of capital as explanations of Irish poverty.

Poverty is defined by the author in distinctive terms as “the probability of a random individual at a random point in time dropping beneath subsistence”. Subsistence crises and the dependence of the Irish on the potato are therefore central to his investigation. Yet Mokyr follows contemporary observers in emphasizing the good health and physical strength of the Irish despite their dependence on the potato for food. And he argues that “poverty had little to do with famine”, rather famine was caused by “bad luck”, since the fungus that attacked the potato crops in the 1840s had not struck before.

The reason why Ireland starved might thus appear as if it remained as elusive as before. However, Mokyr’s book, with its innovative use of sources, and its rich comparative material placing Ireland firmly in a European context, has thrown fresh light on a complex subject. And further discussion will no doubt be provoked by the occasional use of unreliable data, and arbitrary assumptions in this volume.

This is not an easy book to read, and the publisher’s view that “Mokyr’s line of reasoning is transparent and will be easily accessible to readers without graduate training in economics and econometrics” is quite unrealistic. One assumes that the author himself would have made no such claim.

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M. A. CROWTHER, *The workhouse system 1834–1929. The history of an English social institution*, London, Methuen, 1983, 8vo, pp. x, 305, £5.95 (paperback).

Dr Crowther’s book is a valuable survey of the establishment and complex growth of what Poor Law administrators called “indoor relief” and modern social workers refer to as “residential care”. As the embodiment of deterrence and less eligibility which constituted the core of Poor Law philosophy, the workhouses of the nineteenth century achieved the status of myth, and have, correctly in many ways, been regarded as “uniquely reprehensible” by historians and the public. Yet, as Dr Crowther argues, they can also be viewed as simply one of the phalanx of institutions – prisons, hospitals, asylums – which emerged with industrial society representing the tendency to see incarceration as the solution for a wide variety of deviant behaviour. Many faults were not peculiar to the Poor Law, but common to all large-scale institutions. Yet the dichotomy at the heart of the workhouse system *did* create severe problems. The dual function of deterrence for the able-bodied, together with the provision of basic care for other categories of the poor, created an inbuilt bias against the development of the latter in a humane and generous manner. The stigma of inferiority associated with Poor Law services and the endless pressure of financial constraints on a rate-funded organization, constantly hampered the development of more specialized institutions for the sick, children, and the aged out of the all-purpose general mixed workhouse. In the field of medicine, the Poor Law service retained a second-class reputation down to 1914, reflecting financial problems and the limited views of Guardians and Central Authority alike. But this was in turn reinforced by the medical élite, which was only too willing to see the mass of chronic patients – poor and uninteresting – confined to the Poor Law infirmaries whilst the Voluntary Hospitals received the more interesting acute cases. Only in the 1920s did the larger infirmaries break away from the old image, but they were still a minority, and the smaller rural workhouses remained “Victorian”, with a single sick ward and untrained nurses. By then, the able-bodied inmate had largely disappeared, and workhouses were receptacles for the old, the very young, the infirm, and other casualties of

Book Reviews

society. The growth of professionalism amongst Poor Law staff, the relationship of the workhouse to the community, and the neglected subject of the casual poor are amongst the subjects covered, but perhaps the most interesting chapter is that devoted to inmate life and culture. It is a difficult subject for investigation because few bothered to write about paupers, but Dr Crowther manages to convey much about the monotonous routines and stifling dullness that must have constituted the bulk of workhouse life, and was more typical than the spasmodic physical cruelty which is often seen as being widespread. She points out that boredom affected both inmates and staff alike, and created the epidemic tensions and conflicts of institutional life. Interestingly, she concludes that the "total institution" was never completely successful, and that, just as Townsend found of the aged in the 1960s, inmates in the past clung "tenaciously to their individual liberty and ideals".

Despite deterrence, the workhouse did provide an "embryonic social service" and although Dr Crowther does not venture into the wider issues of institutional versus community care, her book should be of great interest to anyone interested in such questions, as well as to students and teachers of social history.

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SHEILA COSMINSKY and IRA E. HARRISON, *Traditional medicine, Vol. II, 1976–1981. An annotated bibliography of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean*, New York and London, Garland Publishing Co., 1984, 8vo, pp. xvii, 327, \$39.00.

The earlier companion volume of annotated bibliography on traditional medicine appeared in 1976 and covered the years 1950 to 1975. Since then, there has been a florescence of interest in the topic. The Alma Ata Conference of 1978, resulting in a joint WHO-UNICEF guideline for the primary health care strategy, specifically advocated that national health systems collaborate with traditional practitioners. Training programmes, especially with traditional midwives, are under way in most Third World countries. A WHO Technical Report (number 622) spelled out the nature of collaboration in more detail, and a Traditional Medicine Unit has been established at WHO Geneva, along with research units in a growing number of Asian, African, and Latin American universities. At least six international journals on traditional medicine have begun publication since 1976, and established journals, both in medicine (especially tropical medicine) and the social sciences, have expanded the proportion of articles they are offering on this topic.

Against this background of interest we can assess the great value of this second volume of annotated bibliography. It is compiled by two people who have contributed substantial original work to the field themselves.

The volume begins with a concise introduction followed by three groupings of bibliography: (1) general, (2) Africa, and (3) Latin America and the Caribbean. Each of these is internally subdivided into: general, ethnomedicine, ethnopharmacology, health care delivery systems, maternal and child health, mental health, and public health. There is a further section giving an annotated bibliography of dissertations. The volume concludes with a comprehensive author index, and a country index.

Conspicuously missing is the literature from Asia. The omission of such a vast literature is not explained. We might hope that Asia will be covered in a third volume.

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STEFAN WINKLE, *Johann Friedrich Struensee. Arzt, Aufklärer und Staatsmann*, Stuttgart, Gustav Fischer, 1983, 8vo, pp. [vi], 655, illus., DM.98.00.

The latter half of the eighteenth century in the German-speaking lands truly deserves to be considered an enlightened age for one very good reason: it produced professional men whose insight into the ways and means of reform issued from a clear-sighted and hard-headed familiarity with the social problems of the day. Among these must be counted Johann Friedrich