

However, much like today, eighteenth-century innovators stepped into the marketplace, offering devices designed to improve ventilation. Chapter 3 ('Artificial Airs') highlights some of these technologies. Readers may recognise their own modern window fans in Thomas Tidd's 'Aeolus', introduced in the early 1750s and named after the ancient god of wind. Such devices were popular among royalty and other élites: 'ventilation stirred an enormous public interest and soon lived to become an emblem of enlightened rationality and domestic ideals of comfort' (p. 69). Jankovic argues that such interest indicated a re-definition of health and disease that only made sense when the body was analysed in relation to its immediate surroundings.

Clothing may seem an unlikely candidate for inclusion in a book ostensibly about air, but chapter 4 ('Intimate Climates') shows that it was an essential part of the eighteenth-century British health regimen. The concept of 'insensible perspiration', first popularised by Sanctorius in the early seventeenth century, convinced physicians that the control of sweating – encouraging and discouraging it as appropriate – was vital to the maintenance of health. Accordingly, 'experiments on thickness, texture, colour and hygroscopic and insulating properties of materials formed a basis for an emerging theory of dress' (p. 94). While the medical profession defended traditional English wool flannel for its insulating properties, the public increasingly embraced new, lighter and more comfortable cotton and linen offerings. In his discussion of 'friction between the flannelists and the fashionable', Jankovic illuminates the fascinating and unexpected convergence of fashion, medical theory and the economics of textiles (p. 106).

In his final chapter ('The Choice of Airs'), Jankovic explores the rise and fall of health travel. Although Edenic images of the Mediterranean made such travel popular during most of the eighteenth century, criticism of the practice increased by the 1830s as medical experts sought more than just anecdotal evidence before recommending it to their patients. Jankovic shows how two factors – the release of health data on the British Navy and changing views on the aetiology of consumption – seemed to contradict long-held assumptions about the salubrity of warm, mild climates. Jankovic shows that the ensuing debate was less about the healthfulness of the Mediterranean than about 'the proper place of science in medical travel and professional credentials' (p. 142).

Jankovic has painted a lively and fascinating picture of a 'society on the defensive' (p. 154) against a wide range of aerial threats. Importantly, he reminds us that the *quality* of air was a luxury that only privileged classes could afford to contemplate. For most of the year, the poor faced the daily challenge of simply staying warm. But among the better-off, it was the 'manufactured propriety and the ritual care of material accoutrements in indoor space by middle-class households that made cleaning, airing, heating, ironing, bleaching and dusting necessary ingredients of a decent life and – by degrees – the social origins of modern notions of a healthy environment' (p. 153).

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Lars Ole Andersen, *Før placeboeffekten. Indbildningskraftens virkning i 1800-tallets medicin* (København: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 2011), pp. 249, \$43/€ 34, illus, paperback, ISBN: 978-8-7635-2590-9.

In 1801, after having performed several trials on the medical treatment Perkins' tractors and fictitious tractors, the British physician John Haygarth (1740–1827) concluded that

'Imagination can cause, as well as cure, diseases of the body'. And, he added 'I have long been aware of the great importance of medical faith. Daily experience has constantly confirmed and increased my opinion of its efficacy'. Haygarth's statement, which is quoted in Lars Ole Andersen's book on the history of imagination in medical practice, could hardly have been written as a medical text today. Imagination is no longer a medical term. Nevertheless, the statement is a good illustration of our everlasting fascination with the relationship between body and mind.

Inspired by Reinhardt Koselleck and his theorising on the history of concepts, Andersen starts his book with a discussion on the differences and similarities between different medical concepts. In particular he concentrates on how the concept *imagination*, which is known as a medical term from the Renaissance, has been used. He discusses how the meaning has changed over time, and how the concept itself has caused social change. The purpose of the book is furthermore to examine the origin of the so-called blind and double-blind trials using intentionally non-effective treatments (placebos) in history. The first trials Andersen pinpoints to 1784, 1799 and 1835.

In the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries imagination referred to how body and mind could impose upon each other, and how disease could be influenced by the mind. Besides, it was understood as the messenger that transferred and translated information from the senses into the mind. But, towards the end of the nineteenth century imagination was deprecated in medical discourse, and 'suggestion' and 'psycho-therapy' took over. The concept 'was increasingly regarded as a negative force which could cause diseases and weaken the will of the patient', says Andersen (p. 227). Today, and from the 1950s onwards, we speak about the 'placebo', i.e. a treatment which is a simulated medical intervention. And, if the patient has a perceived or an actual improvement in her or his medical condition, we talk about a 'placebo effect'. However, the notion placebo is much older and stems from the 1780s. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was defined as medication given to please. The change of concepts and their meaning, says the author, implied a shift from an interest in the faculties of the patient to an interest in the effect of the treatment and the effect of the healthcare provider.

Andersen examines the use and meaning of 'imagination' by means of four narratives: the influence of the maternal mind upon the fetus, and three different medical methods, namely mesmerism, Perkins' tractors and homeopathy, all initiated by physicians in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. Andersen studies contemporary discussions on the efficacy of the methods, and trials performed to test whether they were humbug or had a real effect. The narratives are fascinating accounts of how physicians have initiated, marketed and practised methods which we today would characterise as suspect and fanciful, if not as pure quackery. However, at the time such treatments were sought by numerous patients all over Europe and in overseas countries, and had plentiful supporters within the medical profession. A hundred years from now, many of today's medical methods will probably be questioned in the same manner.

Andersen's account is based mainly on English sources and literature. An obvious question is, therefore, why is the book published in Danish and not in English? Nevertheless, I miss more references to the development of the ideas in Scandinavian countries. Sometimes I find that the author wants too much, and that his many questions are neither clearly posed nor clearly answered, and that there are too many repetitions. Neither do I find his last chapter, where he draws the line from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, entirely successful. However, the book is an exciting contribution to

the history of medical concepts, medical practice and shifting views on the connection between body and mind.

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Kathleen P. Long (ed.), *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture*, Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. xv + 313, £65.00, hardback, ISBN: 978-0-7546-6971-5.

This collection of essays examines aspects of alchemy and midwifery ‘where new ideas could be tried out, old ideas given new twists, and women could participate’ (p. 3). The range of topics is very wide and provides alternative reading of familiar and unfamiliar texts. To some extent, the essays in this volume continue the enterprises begun in the 1980s to widen the canonical meaning of scientific revolution to include gender and women on the one hand, and alternative scientific enterprises, particularly natural magic and alchemy, on the other. These two different but related themes result in a rich but somewhat incoherent collection.

The first two essays, by Elliott Simon and Alain Ekorong, discuss the relationship between astral magic, alchemy and the Kabbalah. Ekorong’s conclusion that the work of the sixteenth-century French Renaissance thinker Guillaume Postel is an example of ‘triumphant esotericism’ can be applied equally to these essays. Both attempt to explain the kabbalistic principle of ‘shechinah’ (Ekorong) or ‘shekhinah’ (Simon). The shechinah is a kind feminine principle in which the divine dwells, and the adept can use it to achieve knowledge and union with God. Simon argues that most of the figures we associate with the natural magic tradition, including Ficino, Pico and John Dee, united astral magic with Kabbalah in their search for human perfectibility and union with the divine and that they particularly emphasised the faculty of imagination in this quest. Ekorong demonstrates that in order to understand Postel’s discourse, commentators must be familiar with the Kabbalistic tradition. There is some redundancy in these essays, and their connection with gender discourse is somewhat tangential, but they present an interpretation of magical and alchemical theories that expand the understanding of some very complex works.

Alchemy is also the focus of Kathleen Long’s very interesting essay on gendered bodies in the works of Michael Maier, who authored an influential alchemical text, *Atalanta fugiens* (1617), which was illustrated by Matthäus Merian. Long disputes William Newman’s and Lawrence Principe’s concentration on the actual practice of ‘chymistry’ and instead argues for its continued symbolic significance. She insists that alchemy made a space for difference in its use of hermaphroditical images, particularly the bi-gendered depiction of the ‘rebis’ or two-sexed human. The strangeness engendered by such illustrations abolished borders between binaries like male/female and human/animal and allowed thinkers like Montaigne to envision a political unity where the monstrous other (human or religious) is possible. The connection between Montaigne and alchemy is odd, considering that the French sceptic lived decades before Maier published. Equally problematic is Long’s claim that if the alchemical tradition had been taken more seriously through time, it might have allowed for a more tolerant view of homosexuality and disabilities, and the rejection of ‘eugenics, forced sterilization, institutionalization, selective abortion, and aesthetic surgery’ (p. 86).