

temper". While one of the founding fathers of the Indian nation defined "Indianness" as opposed to modern science, the other embraced it in his attempt to bring the Indian nation into contact with the modern world. How the relation between science and nationalism was played out by a number of prominent Indian scientists and how difficult it was to reconcile an alleged Indian spirituality with modern science, form central and highly interesting themes in Chakrabarti's book. The scope of the book is, however, much broader. Chakrabarti aims to investigate the position of science in the (colonial) relation between metropolis and periphery; how science was transmuted, redefined and perhaps dislocated as it travelled from one to the other and—as he rightly insists—often back again. This is not so much—as the subtitle would indicate—an analysis of colonial scientific *practice*, as of colonial *perceptions* of science.

Chapters two, three and four deal with science in nineteenth-century India. The first two chapters focus on the Asiatic Society and the first half of the century, the last on late-nineteenth-century India and the geologist Thomas Holland in particular. Chakrabarti takes issue with Deepak Kumar's (and D R Headrick's?) contention that scientific practice was basically an extension of economic imperialism. For the first part of the century Chakrabarti emphasizes the need to explore other links between science and imperialism and tends to portray early colonial scientists as insulated romantics pursuing a "tragic quest" for scientific truth. This point should, however, not be taken too far. Most scientists in nineteenth-century India were after all servants of the colonial state and could not have been all that insulated "from the logic of the politics and economics of the state" (p. 89). A study of nineteenth-century medicine—which is only touched upon lightly in the book—could have added a useful perspective to this issue. Despite a number of interesting observations in these chapters, the treatment of science in nineteenth-century India is too sporadic. It is possible to gather much information, but there is a lack of coherence. To this reviewer at least, the gap between the amateur scientists of the Asiatic Society and the relatively detailed discussion

of Thomas Holland and late-nineteenth-century geology is simply too wide.

From chapter five onwards the issue of nationalism is introduced and this gives the last half of the book a coherence that is lacking in the first. Through analyses of individual scientists, Chakrabarti succeeds in illuminating the tensions between nationalism and science from the 1890s onwards. Mahendra Lal Sircar, the doctor, seems to have remained largely within orientalist stereotypes. He saw science as fundamentally alien to Indian culture and remained eternally grateful to the British for having brought it to India. Yet, he refused to give up Indian spirituality. The physicist Jagadish Chandra Bose first pursued an exceptional scientific career and became an icon for the nationalist movement. Then—in an attempt to link nationalism and science—his work took a metaphysical turn and Bose (perhaps sadly) "became what he was always expected to be, a *sanyasi* from the spiritual world of the East who brought the wisdom of that world to science" (p. 218). Prafulla Chandra Ray, the chemist, argued that India had a scientific tradition every bit as rational and materialist as the Greek but eventually came to accept orientalist notions about a "slumbering" Orient and a "vibrant" Occident. These analyses of the way in which these scientists struggled to reconcile Indian nationalism and modern science and to be both "Indian" and "modern" are highly recommendable, even if the rest of book does not quite reach the same standard.

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Sander L Gilman and Zhou Xun (eds),  
*Smoke: a global history of smoking*, London,  
Reaktion Books, 2004, pp. 408, illus., £29.00  
(hardback 1-86189-200-4).

Eugene UMBERGER, in his chapter in this book on lady nicotine, points to a fifty-year explosion of publication on tobacco and smoking. There is a stream of tobacco literature and one can hardly imagine that there is room for much more.

## Book Reviews

This book, edited by Sander Gilman and the Chinese historian Zhou Xun, nevertheless adds a distinctive visual and cultural dimension. Thirty-five topic specific chapters on smoking are written by an eclectic range of contributors from museum curators, to anthropologists, art historians, collectors and social historians.

The book is divided into four broad sections dealing with smoking in history and culture; smoking in art and literature; smoking, gender, ethnicity and culture; and, finally, smoking as a “burning issue”, the health dimensions. Each section is followed by an inserted grouping of illustrations on related topics.

Gilman and Xun’s introduction surveys the cultural positioning of smoking over time, with the transition of tobacco from the New World to the Old and its consumption as an élite activity. Pipe smoke was a “gentleman-like” smell for Europeans and smoking proliferated because of its perceived healing power. In China smoking tobacco paved the way for the later smoking of opium. Smoking was fashionable and a sign of modernity in the seventeenth century. The advent of the cigar was one of the many examples of tobacco reinventing itself—the cigarette and mass production was to be another, later nineteenth-century development.

Rituals—in the gentlemen’s clubs and smoking rooms—helped define the cultural positioning of tobacco use. An extensive paraphernalia of smoking was linked to these rituals, a forgotten world of cigar cutters and piercers, ashtrays, lighting up, parlour sets of matches and other equipment. All are testimony to a time when smoking was part of a mannered society. There is a cornucopia of cultural information. Smoking fitted into early modern humoral medicine in England, its benefits being in drying the body to a state of manly vigour. In Iran, tobacco smoking preceded opium smoking, opium being eaten and not smoked before the nineteenth century. In Ayurvedic medicine, smoking was essential in the daily regime for healthy living, but was not seen as a relief from stress. In Muslim and Indian worlds, crossing substances was common and smokers would move between tobacco, khat, and marijuana/hashish.

As with all such compilations the quality of the chapters is variable. Not all present new material, and there is some repetition of well known themes such as the “myth of the opium den” and the late-nineteenth-century role of cocaine. The chapters on cultural history and those on art and literature are generally the most valuable, in part because such material on the cultural positioning of smoking is relatively rare. Bruno Tempel’s survey of smoking in art since the seventeenth century is a useful résumé of the changing artistic role of smoking from the Dutch Golden Age paintings through to 1960s pop art or the proletarian supermarket shopper of more recent times.

The sections which deal specifically with gender, ethnicity and smoking, and the health dimensions of smoking are the weaker sections of the book. This is in part because some of the earlier chapters have touched on similar ground, in particular the rise of women’s smoking. These chapters also have suggestive material on the cultural connotations of the new hostility to tobacco that emerged from the 1950s. Matthew Hilton, in his chapter on smoking and sociability, delineates an alternative sociability which emerged from the 1970s as smokers formed new groups which associated through trying to give up. There are some useful cross national case studies. Communist China took the opposite route to the decadent West. In the decades when western nations were imposing restrictions on smoking and mandating health warnings, China was encouraging smoking as a mass commodity. In Japan, meanwhile, the government tobacco monopoly saw high levels of smoking in the country but the health campaign after the 1970s was tied to specifically Japanese notions with an emphasis on self control and politeness. “Good smoking” was the aim, rather than elimination of tobacco. Such cultural norms and their modification are too little discussed. The book’s introductory chapter is also weak on the recent health concerns, so this issue is not taken up by the editors.

The book also strangely ignores issues of collective smoke: of industrial pollution and the symbolic significance of other forms of smoke, like fog. It does not question its own cultural

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focus on individual smoking. Its great strength lies in its wonderful illustrations, which range from Mayan art through to Lucky Strike advertisements and the Bogart/Bacall film stills. For these alone, the book is worth having on your coffee table—although, of course, there will not be a box of cigarettes and an ashtray alongside it.

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**Lianne McTavish,** *Childbirth and the display of authority in early modern France*, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005, pp. xiv, 257, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-7546-3619-4).

Of perennial interest to historians of medicine and gender are the power relationships that exist between men and women, patients and practitioners. Such questions as how did men gain control over women in the birthing chamber (or even banish them entirely) and what the character of that ascendancy was have produced a series of works ranging from frenzied polemics to sophisticated scholarship on the broader cultural issues involved in disciplining (or medicalizing) society. Lianne McTavish raises a related issue, examining “how men-midwives began to *appear* at deliveries” (emphasis the reviewer’s, p. 1). But if one expects to find here yet another study of the victimization of women through “the development of male medical knowledge and the use of instruments” (p. 1) one will be pleasantly surprised to discover that McTavish has no such facile explanations in mind. Hers is a more profound set of questions centring less on the putative male suppression of female practitioners and more on the subtler question of how men came to be recognized as experts “embodying obstetrical authority, instead of threatening intruders” (p. 1). Although she hardly neglects issues of power and struggles over authority, the purpose of the book is to reveal how the body—and its display—“participated in the negotiation of social status, gender roles, and medical hierarchies” in seventeenth-century France (p. 16).

McTavish draws on traditional sources—primarily obstetrical texts (twenty-four produced in France between 1550 and 1730)—to demonstrate how these “sites [functioned] for both the production and contestation . . . of authoritative knowledge in childbirth” (p. 2). Drawing on the perspectives of medical and cultural historians, anthropologists, philosophers, and, in particular, on her own expertise in art history (in “thinking visually”), McTavish concludes that images did not inevitably or reliably mirror reality. Images in these works were often at variance with textual elements or even ran counter to them. As she points out in her tightly-argued analysis of the frontispiece to Louise Bourgeois’s *Observations diverses*, . . . (1626), such portraits are “complex and contradictory” (p. 91). Thus, appearances often deceive. For instance, apparently awkward visual representations of unborn figures did not denote an unfamiliarity with anatomy but rather conveyed relational essences. Relying on the philosopher, Charles S Peirce, McTavish presents these images as diagrams and iconic signs. Engravings of the unborn, therefore, were not supposed to show real cherubs *in utero*, but rather were schematics “meant to provide support for surgeon men-midwives’ haptic acquisition of knowledge of the womb” (p. 190). This is only one example of how McTavish’s visual readings of texts and images illuminate the cruciality of “display” in the process though which men-midwives acquired the standing of experts in the birthing chamber. Refreshingly, this “triumph” is not envisioned as the outcome of a nasty struggle between men and women or between male and female forms of knowledge in which women were predestined to fail. McTavish sees reflected in these texts (as well as constructed through them) a more flexible system of gender than generally acknowledged; men-midwives and skilled (women)-midwives were to possess many similar characteristics; men were to demonstrate tenderness and feeling, and women were expected to exhibit a masculine character and physical strength. The demonstration of all these things fits—and had to fit—with the culture of display fundamental to seventeenth-century French society as a whole.