

This might seem odd as a point of entry for a history of medicine but it is one of the peculiarities of the early history of homeopathy in India that it has no institutional archive or memory to build its story on. Homeopathic colleges were established years after homeopathy was institutionalized as medical practice through a network of family businesses. Das's book focuses on the 'peculiarities' of the professionalization, pedagogy and practice of homeopathy and in the process redefines some theoretical orthodoxies dominating histories of medicine in colonial India – particularly on the notion of vernacularisation.

Das structures her narrative through a collective biography of five homeopathic practitioners who doubled up as entrepreneurs to manufacture and sell homeopathic drugs through their own retail outlets. They were also publishers connected deeply with the city's print market. They were able to leverage this market to create and consolidate the market for homeopathic medicine. It was within this print market that the discursive terrain of homeopathy was shaped.

Das offers a meticulous analysis of this print archive of homeopathy. She identifies several intersecting genres of writing, from short treatises on the history and efficacy of homeopathic medicine, to biography, autobiography, from didactic literature on family, health, nation and enterprise to trade literature. She also looks into print advertisements that gave homeopathic drugs a new life in the market. It is through these creative interventions in print that homeopathy entered the familial spaces of affect and trust.

There are many ways to read this book but Das draws us to read it through its central analytical tropes – the family and the market. Das engages with the historical literature on both family and the market in Bengal to come to her own nuanced takes on both. Her in-depth study of the Bengali family-firms of homeopathy offers us an insight into the fluid structures of this institution in a colonial context as it precariously balanced itself within the normative strictures of the joint-family system together with the demands of patriliney, descent and ownership in the interests of an individual firm. On the peculiarities of the medical market in colonial Bengal, Das agrees with studies that look at the distinctiveness of medical markets around particular medical products and also regards the 'market' not as an autonomous, pluralist or egalitarian space but as one ridden with hierarchies and power and deeply enmeshed with the political and cultural pulls of state, family, religion and nation.

Finally, it is Das's reflections on the 'vernacular' that take her book into new analytical ground from where she argues correctly that the processes of the 'vernacularisation' of homeopathy through the institutions of the family and market in colonial Bengal pushes us to rethink the category of the 'vernacular' in more tentative terms. The 'vernacular' does not connote a primordial or spatially bounded terrain but rather one that is constituted and reconstituted over time through myriad cultural encounters. The 'vernacular', in other words, embodies complex processes of linguistic, epistemological, political and cultural translations that elude any categorical certitudes.

Das's book drives home this argument as it traverses the sites and spaces of the family, market and state, through which homeopathy was able to transcend its liminal identity and become a trusted science in colonial Bengal. The book breaks new ground in theoretical insight, archival depth and narrative elegance. It stands out as a truly remarkable achievement.

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Paulo Drinot, *The Sexual Question: A History of Prostitution in Peru, 1850s–1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. xv + 328, \$31.99, paperback, ISBN: 9781108717281.

The rise of nationalist movements in many Latin American countries throughout the twentieth century linked public health with notions of moral hygiene in collective efforts to foster the right kind of citizen for the nation. Paulo Drinot examines the 'sexual question' in the context of nineteenth and twentieth-

century Peru. What sexual issues hindered the flourishing of the population in Peru and what solutions did the state devise to address these issues? (7–8).

For the purposes of this review, I have used the vocabulary and terminology included in the reviewed work. Addressing the question from the perspective of different actors in each of the book's chapters, the 'sexual question' serves as the unifying theme of this work. Drinot draws from myriad sources, which include correspondence, documents from the Ministry of the Interior, medical and legal journals, periodicals and group publications. Drinot's work reflects exhaustive research given the lack of sources typically available to scholars researching prostitution, including registers and autobiographical accounts. Nevertheless, the author procured fascinating sources that illustrate the cultural perceptions of and attitudes toward prostitution in the context of early twentieth-century Peru.

Drinot's first chapter contextualizes the historical religious and state debates surrounding prostitution and its regulation in the nineteenth century. In addition to the moral and public health perspectives, state authorities sought to curb the spread of venereal disease in the interest of modernity. The work's second chapter examines the sexual question from the perspective of regulation aimed at protecting Peru's male population. Appropriately checked, prostitution served a purpose in a modern society. From a moral perspective, prostitution 'preserved the sexual and social order' by allowing men an appropriate outlet for their unrestrained sexuality, curbing incidences of homosexuality or masturbation and policing the women who offered sexual services (61). Rather than effectively regulating sex work though, regulation contributed to a 'new sexual economy' of clandestine prostitution (104). Here, Drinot contradicts a top-down narrative of policing, arguing that prostitutes and clientele alike shaped practices and regulation of prostitution through resistance, accommodation and even adherence. The third chapter of this work examines anxieties of the state in its pursuit of modernity. While regulation, as a 'project of improvement' aimed to conceal prostitution by relegating the practice to the *Barrio Rojo* [red light district], spatial reordering failed to remove the practice from the public eye. Likewise, Peruvian officials realized the incompatibility of modernity with the patriarchal order they sought to preserve. The popularity of the '*mujer muchacho*' or the 'flapper girl' particularly worried reformers intent on fostering the right kind citizen for Peru. Drinot's fourth and fifth chapters examine the medical aspects of disease prevention and treatment and identify a discursive shift in approaches to and perspectives on prostitution. Largely in favour of regulation in the early twentieth century, doctors saw treatment as equally important in preventing the spread of venereal disease. After years in which regulation failed to place the same emphasis on treatment, Peru's medical community largely conceded that the system of regulation did not work. Contrary to venereal disease treatment centres in Britain that grew out of feminist pushes for equal treatment of the sexes, Peruvian treatment centres emphasized medical authority and sought to protect men, viewing women as primary vectors for disease transmission. Medical consensus of the failures of regulation and the continued spread of venereal disease alike forced authorities to alter their approach and expand treatment to both men and women and to initiate sex education campaigns aimed at the general populace rather than at prostitutes alone. Public health officials incorporated venereal disease into similar campaigns against illnesses like tuberculosis or malaria. This expansion of sex education in military and civil spheres sought to deter the populace from engaging in sexual commerce rather than to inform and educate. Finally, the final chapter of this work outlines the process by which the *Barrio Rojo* shut down amidst growing pushes for abolition.

While Drinot's work is comprehensive, discussion of intervention from independent institutions, for example, the Ford or the Rockefeller Foundations would have been useful in identifying broader geographical and imperialistic pressures for modernizing the Peruvian state. Likewise, examination of nation building and the construction of national identities would have bolstered the argument for citizen reform. Additionally, given the present struggle for sex worker rights and decriminalisation, a discussion of terminology and the history of language including terms such as 'prostitution' and 'sex work' would greatly benefit this study in order to properly situate the work within historical context.

The strengths of this work lie in Drinot's emphasis of the agency and power of the regulated, rather than a generalized top-down approach of policing and control. This erudite work of scholarship ties the

history of sexuality to the history of medicine and of public health in Peru and would benefit any examination of modern Latin America, feminist and gender studies, the history of sexuality and the history of medicine alike.

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Nadja Durbach, *Many Mouths: The Politics of Food in Britain from the Workhouse to the Welfare State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. vii + 361, £34.99, hardback, ISBN: 9781108483834.

Many Mouths rests on the premise that food is ‘the most visceral connection’ between a government and its people. Ideas about who was entitled to food, how much and which type was at the heart of the British imperial state’s relationship with its subjects. The level of the state’s investment in a particular group of citizens was made manifest by the condition of their bodies.

Through a series of case studies, Nadja Durbach examines the attitude of the British state to paupers, prisoners, famine victims, prisoners of war, schoolchildren and finally, civilians on the home front. The case studies span a crucial period of state formation between the 1830s and the 1940s when political economy rose to dominance. However, rather than tracing a teleological progression of increasing centralisation and efficiency, Durbach demonstrates that state feeding programmes were shaped by ideologies of class, gender, generation, race and nation which often pushed in opposing directions.

The parsimonious conditions in workhouses were designed to demonstrate that those who failed to find a place within the marketplace would be excluded from the polity. The New Poor Law instructed that workhouse Guardians should not even provide the inmates with a festive meal of roast beef and plum pudding at Christmas, arguing that those in the workhouse should not enjoy a meal that honest labouring families would be unable to afford. But here, the new philosophy came into conflict with the older moral economy which through acts of charity, sought to enlist even paupers as loyal subjects of the nation. Guardians and workhouses masters who wished to provide a Christmas dinner were ultimately granted permission to do so. Thus, Durbach begins by showing that the imposition of a rational political economy was a protracted, contested and uneven process.

In the case of prisoners, for example, it would have been more efficient to impose one ration scale within the Empire’s prisons. Instead, multiple dietary regimes were provided throughout the imperial penal system. One Bihari jail employed 53 cooks to prepare food for 504 prisoners. But the myriad different ration scales for white men and women and an array of different ‘races’ – all of whom received different quantities and different types of food – affirmed the more important essentialist racial principle of biological difference on which the colonial social order was founded.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Government of India was constantly faced with the possibility of millions of famine-struck Indians becoming dependent on the state. The Malthusian political economy, which regarded famine deaths as part of the natural process whereby populations were held in check, was countered by a humanitarian sense that governments were responsible for saving their subjects’ lives. But, Durbach shows how, rather than challenging the callous principles of economic liberalism, the humanitarian impulse which saw the administration of piecemeal and inadequate famine relief ultimately bolstered the principles of political economy. By focusing on feeding children who were characterised as the labourers of the future, the state saved life not for its own sake, but in order to secure its source of future revenue.

A similar rationale lay behind the decision in 1906 to introduce free school meals for poor and malnourished children. During the recruitment drive for the South African War (1899–1902), it had become apparent that the British working class were in a woeful physical state. The school meals feeding scheme was an attempt to improve the fitness of future working-class generations who would be needed