

Sidney Chalhoub, Vera Regina Beltrão Marques, Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio and Carlos Roberto Galvão Sobrinho (eds.), *Artes e ofícios de curar no Brasil: Capítulos de História Social* (Campinas, São Paulo: Editora Unicamp; IFCH; Cecult, 2003), pp. 428, pb.

Artes e ofícios de curar no Brasil offers a good panorama of the growing field of social history of health and disease that emerged in Brazil in the 1990s. The twelve chapters are organised into five themes—science and ideology; medical theories; medicaments; religiosities; and healers—and has the virtue of expressing also the spatial and temporal diversity of the analysis. Another important point is that the book gathers historians from different institutions and in different stages of their careers, indicating a promising future for the field.

In the first part, Sidney Chalhoub, from the analyses of Machado de Assis' books, relates the appropriations of scientific theories in Brazil, such as social Darwinism, to strategies of domination, such as paternalism, as a means to justify power and privilege in society and therefore the origin and the reproduction of social inequalities. Magali Engel uses Lima Barreto's literature to analyse the process whereby psychiatry was consolidated in Brazil as an autonomous, specialised and 'scientific' field, stressing the arbitrary and violent manner adopted to deal with insanity and restrain the sick. In this sense, the author discusses the tensions and complicity between Lima Barreto's concepts and the 'truths' built up by psychiatric medicine.

In the section named 'medical theories', Luiz Otávio Ferreira, analysing medical periodicals and texts from the nineteenth century, refutes the notion that there was no cultural resistance to the attempts of scientific medicine to monopolise the art of healing. As physicians could not simply denounce 'charlatanism' or 'people's ignorance', they felt obliged to enter into dialogue with popular medical traditions, disputing authority over the art of healing in unfavourable conditions. Marta de Almeida examines debates on the consolidation of the field of microbiology in São Paulo. Analysing medical work in the fight against yellow fever and several publications in newspapers of the period, she presents a framework of uncertainties and disagreements that marked the conflictive process of building up specialised knowledge, as well as the tortuous path by which microbiology was institutionalised in Brazil.

In the section 'medicaments', Vera Marques indicates that practices of healing, such as magic, also laid the basis for the beginning of modern medicine, appearing side by side with physicians' medicine. The 'secret medicaments' and their occult properties perfectly reveal how magic, religion and science walked hand in hand in Brazil in the eighteenth century, ignoring attempts to incorporate a new scientific rationality. Revealing the variety of non-scientific medicaments and practices considered as 'charlatanism' and 'quackery' which circulated throughout the country at the time of the epidemics of influenza in São Paulo in 1918, Liane Bertucci highlights conflicts between representatives of the official

and non-official medicine, who tried to decipher the disease, as well as the various points at which scientific and non-scientific healing practices met.

Two articles treat the issue of religion and faith within healing practices more directly. Maria Leônia de Resende criticises the historiography that is limited to the perspective of the 'Companhia de Jesus', failing to take into consideration the counterpart of the native Guarani. She rejects the claim that the practise of *aldeamento* (village settled by Jesuit missionaries) of natives meant a cultural reduction to which the Guarani were subdued. On the contrary, the natives appeared to identify the priests with a reinforcement of their own beliefs. The author points to the rich universe of healing and beliefs of the Guarani, showing the dilemmas of the missionaries' experience and the natives' strategies to retain their cultural values. Aldrin Moura de Figueiredo shows that in the beginning of the twentieth century the *pajés* continued to heal people as much as the scientific physicians. Analysing the opposition between different healing concepts, the author indicates that this distinction was much more present in the discourse of scientific physicians than in their daily medical practice, where often the prescription was the same as that made by the *pajés*.

The theme of 'healers' is analysed in four articles. In her study of the *Fisicatura* documents, Tânia Pimenta considers the presence of practitioners, *sangradores* and quacks in Brazil during a period when such practices were permitted and regulated by the authorities. With the end of the *Fisicatura* in 1928, physicians begun to alert the authorities to the dangers of medical practitioners without official qualifications, attempting thereby to disqualify popular therapists and so achieve a monopoly of the art of healing, especially after norms were established for the practice of therapeutic activities and the creation of medical institutions. These efforts by physicians indicate that popular therapists continued to practice and that the population continued to seek them out. Regina Xavier stresses that the illegal presence of healers such as *Mestre Tito*, in the town of Campinas, challenged physicians and public authorities who many times consulted with them and even on occasion supported them. The author shows that there tended to be a considerable proximity between the healing of diseases and religious faith. Ariosvaldo da Silva Diniz analyses how a situation of epidemic crises reveals a struggle in which competing concepts of health and therapeutic practices disputed social legitimacy and recognition. Studying the cholera epidemics in Recife in 1856, he illustrates how different medical discourses about the disease were in fact connected to political interests, questioning the supposed neutrality of science and progress. *Pai Manoel*, a healer in Recife, received the agreement of the Hygiene Inspection to work as a physician during the cholera epidemics, demonstrating the officially sanctioned presence of healers despite the efforts of physicians to ensure this did not occur. Finally, Gabriela Sampaio highlights the ways in which integrated understandings of body and spirit in relation to health and disease were disseminated throughout the country among slaves, freed former slaves or members of economically powerful groups. This would perhaps go some way towards explaining the appeal of healers and other kinds of therapists among patients who feared the scientific physicians and their strange prescriptions. Analysing the prosecution of Juca Rosa, legendary religious leader and healer in Rio de Janeiro during the second half of the nineteenth century, Sampaio highlights the fears and prejudices of the elites towards cultural practices of African origin.

This important book is divided by theme, time and space, but this could have been better delineated by the editors in a longer and deeper introduction, which should also have entered into a more explicit dialogue with the Brazilian bibliography. The editors state in their introduction that the book addresses an identifiable relationship between attempts to establish 'scientific speech as the only possible truth' and the 'development of capitalist society' (p. 12) since the mid-nineteenth century. However, the majority of articles do not actually address this issue. In addition, the Brazilian bibliography has disputed the notion of a direct and causal relationship between the two phenomena. Although some of the articles in the collection do explore the links between medicine, science and domination more directly, most in fact show that at least until the early twentieth century relations between popular practices and healing, physicians and their institutions, patients, the sick, and political and social elites were far less hierarchical and more fluid than that implied by the editors in their introduction.

Casa de Oswaldo Cruz-Fundação Oswaldo Cruz

GILBERTO HOCHMAN