

become a definitive work on the complexities of Protestant mission efforts in the region and beyond.

———Matt Tomlinson, College of Asia and the Pacific,  
Australian National University

Corinna Wagner, *Pathological Bodies: Medicine and Political Culture*. Berkeley: University California Press, 2013, 315 pp., \$39.95 pb.

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This book explores the knotty interrelation between medicine and political culture. Relying on Michel Foucault's theory of disciplinary power that brings an increasing number of individuals under its scrutiny, Wagner presents a sophisticated analysis of British political culture in the late eighteenth century by exploring the connection between new understandings of the body and public discussions about who is fit for political power. To determine who was suitable and unsuitable for the world of politics, both specialists and ordinary observers often focused their attentions on the medical conditions, body parts, or unsavory habits of public figures, dissecting both literally and metaphorically their anatomy and private life. This approach will be familiar to cultural historians of medicine, but Wagner's book is notable for its method of treating medical discourse as protean and contradictory in its varied political uses.

Wagner charts how different individuals or groups became the targets of political pamphlets, philosophical treatises, novels, cartoons, biographies, and memoirs that incorporated medical knowledge for political ends. She brings together a remarkable variety of examples, including the hypersexualized portrayal of Marie Antoinette, the sensationalized death of Mary Wollstonecraft, the dubious hygiene of Thomas Paine, and the gout of George VI, as well as debates about breastfeeding mothers and the link between national identity and food consumption. Each chapter shows how perceptions of public figures were shaped by discourses of normality and deviance and, most important, that their political trustworthiness was defined through an amalgamation of the medical and the political.

Wagner is at her best in disentangling how gender and sexuality were used in cultural texts to justify the exclusion of women and men from political life. Political pornography that portrayed Marie Antoinette's clitoris and sexual appetite as pathological provided British reactionaries with fodder to argue for restricting women from politics. Images of single-breasted French Amazons and Frenchmen raping Frenchmen elicited anxieties about republicanism and national degeneration. The gory biography detailing the death of women's rights advocate Mary Wollstonecraft diminished the influence of her proto-feminist writings for decades. Through these and other case studies Wagner

demonstrates how political propagandists employed medical knowledge about the body to judge the conduct of royals, revolutionaries, reactionaries, and radicals.

Yet the sense of process and fluidity accorded to gender and sexuality is not fully developed in Wagner's treatment of race, which only appears in the last chapter, in her discussion of George IV's appetite for Oriental-style architecture and food and scientists' interest in Sarah Baartman, the Hottentot Venus. In a book devoted to the making of British political culture, the absence of empire is surprising given the fixation with racial taxonomies in the decades around 1800. By limiting her focus to British responses to the French Revolution, Wagner seems to suggest that British political culture was almost exclusively shaped by events across the Channel and unaffected by those across the Atlantic. Fears about colonial bodies, environments, and diseases also had profound effects in the formation of political culture, and these pathologies deserved fuller discussion. Still, Wagner offers an important contribution for understanding the historically contingent relation of medicine, politics, and culture and a remarkable model for juxtaposing and interpreting textual and visual sources.

———José Amador, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

*Chasing the Spirit: Gorovodu in Southern Togo.* A film by Eric J. Montgomery and Christian N. Vannier. 66 minutes, color. Detroit: CultureRealm Films (culturerealm.com), 2012 (available from Amazon.com).

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This is one of two films by Montgomery and Vannier, each dealing with separate aspects of Ewe Gorovodu religious life (see also their *African Herbsman*, 2012). In both, there seems to be a creative tension between two time-honored and much debated aspects of ethnographic visual documentation, finding the proper balance between “the need for long, uninterrupted takes of interactive behavior” and the need to tell a story that encapsulates some kind of ethnographic whole (Balicki 2009: 384).

*Chasing the Spirit* relies on a more diachronic approach, given the nature of the ceremonies being filmed, each of which requires “time on screen,” as it were, for events and performances to unfold. In this sense the film walks a kind of ethnographic line between art and description (explored recently in Schäuble 2015). Although the film does not privilege long, unbroken camera shots—it does employ standard editing and some temporal overlays—it devotes more time to being visually “embedded” into several ceremonial contexts. Its visual style eschews the journalistic, and interviews and discussion take a back seat to drumming, dance, and chant. The soundtrack is centered around the multilayered textures of *brekete* drumming, as well as the male and