

## Book Notices

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STEWART WOLF, *Social environment and health*, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. x, 135, illus., £5.40.

Stewart Wolf's little book summarizes much of the experimental, epidemiological and clinical evidence on the relationships between psychosocial parameters and health. As befits a distinguished researcher in many aspects of psychosomatic medicine, Wolf is particularly concerned with the impact of social dislocation and stress on a wide variety of cardiovascular and other diseases. He marshals his evidence well and argues his case with elegance and lucidity. Although this book has little direct historical relevance, its anthropological perspective is refreshing. He shows, quite simply, that happy, socially-adjusted people, on average, live longer than those who are not.

PAUL HIRST and PENNY WOOLLEY, *Social relations and human attributes*, London and New York, Tavistock Publications, 1982, 8vo, pp. xii, 297, [no price stated], (paperback).

This book is probably intended primarily as a textbook for social science students, more stimulating than the run-of-the-mill exposition of the founding fathers of the discipline through being focused upon the enduring conceptual problems of constructing a *science of human* behaviour. One section, 'Biology and culture', explores the conceptual and ideological issues surrounding the positing of an idea of human nature. Another, 'Mental illness and personality' (which examines the medical history writings of Foucault in some depth), discusses the social functions of social scientific knowledge and its applications. The last, 'Witchcraft and rationality', questions the objectivity and neutrality of the anthropologist's stance. The platform of the authors is even-handed, and the work is free of the Althusserian jargon which enveloped Hirst's earlier writings. All in all, a livelier and up-to-date survey of the issues of rationality and ideology within modern debates in the social sciences.

M. OLIVER KEPLER, *Medical stewardship. Fulfilling the Hippocratic legacy*, Westport, Conn., and London, Greenwood Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xviii, 280, \$29.95.

Dr. Kepler's book opens with a modest proposal: that physicians ought to abide by the ethical responsibilities to patients indicated in the Hippocratic Oath. Banal indeed. But his book then becomes moral dynamite. For he asks how well the American medical establishment fulfils its professional stewardship, in treating patients with *philia*, and concludes that what he finds is "evil". Time and again, the American Medical Association is found self-serving, protecting its monopolies, maximizing its pecuniary rewards, protecting incompetent practitioners against the public, barring improved public health and preventive medicine, squalidly in league with the drug companies, and milking federal schemes such as Medicaid for gain. Dr. Kepler's attack is more in sorrow than in anger; he rides no political or ideological hobby-horses. This is what makes his indictment so devastating and sickening.

ANITA CLAIR FELLMAN and MICHAEL FELLMAN, *Making sense of self. Medical advice literature in late nineteenth-century America*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. vii, 198, \$16.50.

The Fellmans offer sensible digests of the main currents of medical advice, focusing upon the constant call for moderation, the particularly American strand of hygienic utopianism, and the paradox that American physicians such as S. Weir Mitchell simultaneously flattered the nervous patient (especially the nervous woman) and condemned the over-sophisticated society that spawned such conditions. The authors carefully show the moralizing component running right through the discourse on health, not least the demand that the will be exercised to counter bodily complaints (positive thinking, nineteenth-century style). Ultimately, however, the book does not penetrate beyond bland paraphrases. Medical writers are all lumped together, as if no

significant divisions of opinion existed, and no questions are asked about the relations between the advice literature and its readership.

JOANNE TRAUTMANN (editor), *Healing arts in dialogue. Medicine and literature*, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xix, 178, \$16.95.

This book emerged out of a symposium series bringing together medical men (practising and academic), literary scholars, and poets, to discuss the interfaces between medicine and literature considered as distinct but allied modes of understanding and treating man's ills. Some of the most interesting discussion focuses on the psychic healer, or psychoanalyst, seen as story-teller, and on medicine as sympathetic magic. But the attempt to preserve the texture of the original dialogue results in pages of authentic trivia such as: DENISE LEVERTOV (laughing) You got pissed off, right? JO TRAUTMANN At some stage, yes. I can definitely identify a pissed-off stage somewhere in the middle of my other emotions!

ELIZABETH H. THOMSON, *Harvey Cushing. Surgeon, author, artist*, with a foreword by John F. Fulton, 2nd ed., New York, Neale Watson Academic Publications, 1981, 8vo, pp. xviii, 347, illus., \$17.50 (\$7.50 paperback).

It was said of Cushing's biography of Sir William Osler that only Osler himself had done so much for his immortality. The same could be said of John Fulton's life of Cushing. In both cases, a less formal biography quickly followed the more massive, "official" ones. For Cushing, it was this one, by Elizabeth Thomson, now reprinted unchanged from its original 1950 version. Elizabeth Thomson's narrative gifts are well known and her biography presented a readable and sympathetic account of Cushing's eventful life. She does not neglect his surgical career, but the biography is at its best with Cushing the man: collector, traveller, and friend of Osler, Welch, Sherrington, Fulton, and many other leaders of scientific medicine in the early twentieth century. In its reprinted form, her book will undoubtedly find a new generation of readers.

LILLIAN C. RICHARDSON and CHARLES G. RICHARDSON, *The pill rollers. Apothecary antiques and drug store collectibles*, Fort Washington, Md., Old Fort Press, 1979, 4to, pp. [vi], 170, illus., \$12.50 (+\$4.00 postage overseas).

This volume is essentially intended as a collector's handbook. It refers almost entirely to nineteenth-century American objects and ephemera relating to apothecaries and druggists. It contains sections on glassware, tools, shop fixtures, etc. As a guidebook it is extremely useful, explaining in detail many basic terms, such as those used in bottle-collecting. There is also a sufficient range of illustrations to enable most objects to be easily identified. The decision to print in sepia adds quaintness if not clarity.

MICHAEL B. SABOM, *Recollections of death. A medical investigation*, New York, Harper & Row, 1982, 8vo, pp. xii, 224, £6.95.

Dr. Sabom's book collects and analyses extensive clinical data of Near Death Experiences (NDEs), demonstrating that under conditions of near death and deep unconsciousness (commonly cardiac arrest prior to resuscitation), many patients experience a separation of mind or spirit from the body, and the feeling of observing one's own body from a position above it (autoscopy). Some have been able to describe in vivid detail surgery which their bodies underwent during major heart operations. As a fortaste of death, patients generally found this condition of disembodiment tranquil ("There is something after life. It is a good feeling"). For Dr. Sabom there are at present no psychiatric or biochemical explanations of this phenomenon. He is concerned, however, to point out its implications for writing the history of death (the interface of medical and spiritual experience); and for medical care (the fact that some patients at least are participating audiences to their own surgery, and deaths, should deny their usual treatment as mere objects). Medical scepticism at NDEs, and the contrasting relish of patients for them (releasing them from fear of terrifying death) will tell medical historians and sociologists much about the current crisis in thanatology.

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GABRIEL JANER MANILA, *Marcos. Wild child of the Sierra Morena*, trans. by Deborah Bonner, London, Souvenir Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. 167, illus., £8.95.

The story of Marcos Rodriguez Pantoja is a contemporary addition to the literature of the "wild boy". Abandoned at the age of seven to look after goats in the desolate Sierra Morena in south west Spain, Marcos had almost no contact with other humans for the next twelve years. His autobiography, here printed with analysis by the psychologist Gabriel Janer Manila, shows that during his time of isolation Marcos largely lost the power of speech, and that subsequently he has noticeably lacked the capacity for forming close human relations. It is interesting that, living in close harmony with animals in a natural environment, Marcos discovered for himself a very effective range of herbal remedies.

JOHN CAMP, *One hundred years of medical murder*, London, The Bodley Head, 1982, 8vo, pp. 221, illus., £6.95.

This survey of ten well-known cases of murderous physicians, from Palmer the poisoner to the legal travesty of American justice in the trial of Sam Sheppard, adds little to medical history, and the banality of its writing and psychological comments limits even its entertainment value.

BARBARA GRIGGS, *Green pharmacy. A history of herbal medicine*, London, Jill Norman & Hobhouse, 1981, 8vo, pp. xii, 379, £8.95.

Barbara Griggs has written a sprightly survey of herbal medicine from Neanderthal Man to the present, skilfully compiled from up-to-date secondary sources. A certain diffuseness in the conception of the topic means that in parts the book tends to become a general history of pharmacy, or of fringe medicine, or simply an anecdotal and biographical history of medicine. But this breadth has its advantages, in permitting Ms. Griggs to chart relationships between herbal and other, dominant, therapies (especially mineral ones). Occasionally, assimilationism has prevailed, leading to the chemist's preference for pure and controllable extracted alkaloids in preference to the whole plant. At times, the medical establishment has deployed rejectionism, damning herbalism as quackery and unscientific old wives' tales. Why have the great drug combines of the present century been so hostile to herbal remedies? Her answer: herbs cannot be patented. Yet neither does Ms. Griggs spare the egoism and arrogant ignorance of the great entrepreneurs of herbal medicine, especially the mystagogue Albert Coffin. In its quiet way, this book is an eloquent reminder how far the history of medicines is actually the social history of medicine men.

ROBERT MEISTER, *Hypochondria: towards a better understanding*, London, Peter Owen, 1981, 8vo, pp. 194, £8.95.

Robert Meister's little book on hypochondria is a timely reminder of the continuing relevance of this traditional medical diagnosis. Unfortunately, the volume hardly does justice to either the historical or contemporary dimensions of the subject. The historical chapter is a rather breathless overview of a much more complex concept. Meister fails to assimilate much of the scholarly literature on hypochondria, such as Esther Fischer-Homberger's monograph, and his bibliography (there are no specific references) cites many works which he does not discuss and fails to cite others which he does. Meister's contemporary case-histories are too brief to be of much use, and are in any case mostly culled from the existing literature. Little mistakes (such as calling the late Richard Hunter a psychoanalyst) cast doubt on Meister's grasp of the contemporary psychiatric scene. Hypochondria deserves a better book.

BARUCH A. BRODY and H. TRISTRAM ENGELHARDT jr., (editors), *Mental illness: law and public policy*, Dordrecht, Boston, and London, D. Reidel, 1980, 8vo, pp. xvii, 225, [no price stated].

Like the other volumes in this ongoing series on 'Philosophy and medicine', the present collection of essays is based on a conference dealing with a theme of contemporary medical sig-

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nificance. As might be expected from an American volume on the law relating to crime and mental disorder, Thomas Szasz looms large. Szasz's polemical writings against what he sees as psychiatric imperialism receive some qualified support from the present group of authors, who are primarily lawyers or philosophers. The essays deal with such issues as definitions of legal insanity, problems associated with involuntary civil commitment of the mentally ill, and the practical application of the notion of diminished responsibility. Of paramount interest to readers of this journal will probably be Michael Moore's perceptive historical essay on legal conceptions of mental illness, where the connexions between the British and the American experience are elucidated. Engelhardt's introduction to the volume neatly sets out the historical and philosophical framework.

CLIFFORD WHITTINGHAM BEERS, *A mind that found itself*, with a preface by Robert Coles, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xvii, 205, \$12.95 (\$4.95 paperback).

As a companion volume to Norman Dain's recent biography of Beers (reviewed *Med. Hist.*, 1981, 25: 454–455), the University of Pittsburgh Press has reprinted Beers's classic study (1908) of his own mental breakdown and recovery. In addition to its importance as a historical document, it still retains its narrative power. To read it is to be reminded why it had such an impact on its own time and why it has continued relevance for ours, for many of the issues which Beers raised are still with us.

### BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

VERNON COLEMAN, *Guilt. Why it happens and how to overcome it*, London, Sheldon Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. [iv], 87, £1.95 (paperback).

[Exhibition catalogue], *An exhibition concerning Nicolaus Steno (1638–1686), in celebration of the addition of the fifth thousandth volume to the History of Science Collections*, Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Library, 1982, 4to, pp. 16, illus., [no price stated].

'Kanffekeningen bij erkende etiketten. Natuurwetenschap en geneeskunde in de 17 en 18e eeuw', *Tidjschrift voor de Geschiedenis der Geneeskunde, Natuurwetenschappen, Wiskunde, en Techniek*, 1982, 5, no. 1, pp. 64, illus., Dfl. 10.00 (paperback).

J. PERELLO, *The history of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatics, 1924–76*, 2nd ed., Barcelona, Editorial Augusta, for IALP, 1982, 8vo, pp. 92, illus., [no price stated], (paperback). (General Secretary of IALP: Dr. A. Muller, Av. de la Gare, CH-1003 Lausanne, Switzerland.)

*Revista Ecuatoriana de Medicina Perinatal*, edited by Dalton Avila, M.D., vol. 2, (1982), no. 1 (address: P.O. Box 10322, Guayaquil, Ecuador).

WILLIAM THOMPSON, *Denied a child*, Belfast, The Library of the Queen's University of Belfast, 1982, 8vo, pp. 20, illus., 40p + postage.