

## Book Reviews

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KENNETH DEWHURST and NIGEL REEVES, *Friedrich Schiller, medicine, psychology and literature with the first English edition of his complete medical and psychological writings*, Oxford, Sandford Publications; University of California Press, 1978, 8vo, pp. xii, 413, illus., £12.00.

The combined efforts of a psychiatrist and medical historian, Kenneth Dewhurst, and the German literary scholar, Nigel Reeves, mark a significant departure from the traditional approach to Schiller's works. Earlier literary critics had either avoided or glossed over Schiller's training as doctor and psychologist at the Karlsschule in Stuttgart during the 1770s. The few medical historians who have commented on Schiller's medical and psychological writings have consistently failed to relate them to his subsequent works and, more seriously, have ignored their eighteenth-century context: indeed they have misguidedly attempted to portray Schiller as a brilliant anticipator of twentieth-century psycho-somatic medicine. This new study sets the record right, fulfilling Sir William Osler's unrealized project of sixty years ago of undertaking a serious examination of Schiller as a doctor. At the same time it exposes the rash assumptions of both literary critics and medical historians that Schiller's medical and literary activities may be treated in isolation. Dewhurst and Reeves convincingly argue that Schiller's intellectual development and maturity cannot properly be assessed without looking first at the current medical and psychological theories he mastered as a student and subsequently utilized as an army doctor. Indeed it is surprising to read that his medical studies and practice lasted seven years or a quarter of his reasoning life.

The book is divided into four sections. The first gives a lively account of Schiller's years as a medical student, depicting life in the Military Academy and as an army doctor in the late eighteenth century. The second section outlines the contemporary theoretical background against which Schiller's own medical works should be placed. He was faced with a mass of overlapping, contradictory, anachronistic, and occasionally novel theories ranging from the still surviving humoral pathology of the Ancients to Stahlian animism, neural pathology, and Boerhaavian empiricism. As an early psychiatrist Schiller associated himself with the new generation of "soul doctors" in the contemporary psycho-somatic tradition. The third section is the core of the volume. It presents for the first time in an English translation with full commentaries and notes, Schiller's entire medical and psychological oeuvre; his necropsy report, his two dissertations on psycho-somatic relations (*The philosophy of physiology*—a fragmentary manuscript—and *On the connection between the animal and spiritual nature of man*), his clinical reports on his treatment of a fellow-pupil suffering from depression, and a dissertation on inflammatory and putrid fevers, together with some letters with a medical content and even a prescription. These cover a wide range of eighteenth-century practice and are of basic historical importance. Indeed the authors are able strictly to claim that this is the first complete edition of Schiller's works in a modern language since there is neither a full nor accurate German text available of the Latin fevers dissertation including its footnotes. Nor does any German edition print in full the comments of Schiller's examiners, indicating the extent to which he departed from their reiterated wisdom. This is least noticeable in the fevers disserta-

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tion (a good record of contemporary ideas) and most obvious in his controversial psycho-therapeutic approach to a victim of nostalgia or reactive depression. Schiller's major dissertation on the "animal and the spiritual nature of Man" is both the culmination of a century of psychosomatic medicine and a revelation of his originality. His examination of the "Nachlass" or relaxation mechanism after a build-up of nervous tension ending in swooning or sleep indicates that he might have gone on to further significant work in neuropsychiatry. But that was not to be, and, in the last section, the authors argue instead of the importance of his medical and psychological theories and observations on his early dramas, his stories and theoretical works, particularly *The aesthetic education*. It is controversially claimed that Kant should not be regarded as the central formative influence on these theoretical works (as has been conventionally assumed for a century and a half) but Schiller's interpretation of Kant and disagreement with his strict dualism (especially the categorical imperative) should instead be viewed in the light of his earlier psycho-somatic persuasions. And it cannot be denied that at the heart of Schiller's notion of aesthetic education lies the psychological effect of the aesthetic experience on the psycho-somatic totality of the individual personality. The previous over-emphasis of Kant can be seen in this context as a direct result of critics having ignored or taken too lightly Schiller's prior exposure to a quite different, medical and psychological, tradition.

This impressively documented and closely argued book is a milestone in Schiller scholarship. It throws down a challenge to others to collaborate in like manner and so open up new perspectives on authors previously thought to have been exhausted as sources of fundamental new research. The relationship between medicine and literature in German-speaking countries could prove a rich vein indeed—one need only think of Kleist, on the one hand (whose stories Reeves has also recently translated), or Jung, on the other, who, as this study points out, admitted a considerable debt to Schiller. But the final verdict on this scholarly book rests with the German publishers and it is my guess that it will soon be translated.

**BRIAN BRACEGIRDLE**, *A history of microtechnique: the evolution of the microtome and the development of tissue preparation*, London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1978, 8vo, pp. xv, 359, illus., £22.50.

The history of the microscope itself has been given much attention in the past, although its optical parts have been only occasionally dealt with. The development of methods for preparing specimens for viewing with the instrument have hardly ever been considered, and the history of the microtome has been grossly neglected. This book redresses the imbalance, and for the first time allows a balanced view of the history of microscopy—stand, optics, and preparations—to be achieved.

Detailed consideration of histological processes from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century is provided. In addition, every microtome described until 1870 has been discussed and evaluated, as has a selection of the more important models from 1870 to about 1910. The author worked with the most important instruments so as to see them as they would have appeared to contemporary users. He also inspected more than 40,000 preparations as a check on the literature. This is the strength of the book—it is based not only on a detailed survey of the